

Gaston Leval

**SOCIAL**  
**RECONSTRUCTION**  
in  
**SPAIN**

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THREEPENCE

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RECONSTRUCTION  
IN  
SPAIN



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## PUBLISHERS NOTE.

*This pamphlet represents but a small part of the material collected by Gaston Leval, and only a fraction of the material available in Spanish. In publishing it we hope to reach a large public and especially the workers, who until now have viewed the struggle in Spain as one between "Fascism and Democracy" rather than a bitter class struggle in which the workers have shown, wherever they have been able to take control, that they are quite capable of producing and managing their work without the "control" of employers and capitalists.*

*Gaston Leval in the limited space available, points out that collectivisation is not progressing everywhere unmolested by the authorities. In fact some of the greatest examples of collectivization in Aragon were destroyed by the Communists, headed by Lister, several months before Franco's forces overran that part of the country. Nevertheless, in other regions where the workers have control, collectivization has shown amazing results. The Textile Industry, the Transport Workers and Woodworkers collectives which are dealt with in this pamphlet, not to mention the Agricultural collectives, the Collectivized Printing Works (which have produced some real works of art), and the Public Amusements Syndicate (15,000 members) . . . have all proved completely successful in spite of the fact that Spain is carrying on its armed resistance to fascism.*



*We appeal to all interested individuals and groups to do their utmost so that this pamphlet will reach as wide a public as possible and may thus contribute to a clearer understanding of the real aims of the Spanish Workers' Struggle. We appeal also to that section of the Left Press, still free from "Party Censorship," to give space to review this small, but useful, work in their respective publications.*

## INTRODUCTION

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One of the immediate consequences of the War in Spain in the eyes of world public opinion, has been to leave in the background the actual Revolution which took place as well as the constructive work of this Revolution. Because of the need for arms and ammunition, the necessity for their being obtained abroad; and the necessity for relying on democratic public opinion (in the bourgeois sense of the word) all the creative work of the Spanish people has been passed over in silence. This has been an error which has made the international proletariat feel less drawn to the Spanish people than they would have otherwise been. When the Russian Revolution broke out, it was the Revolution which took first place in the eyes of International public opinion. The war waged by the Austrian and Germans, agents for England—or of English capital; the war carried on by the counter-revolutionary Generals; French intervention and the havoc created by the Czecho-Slovaks, all these took the form of phases in the development of the Revolution. It is not far different where Spain is concerned to-day.

Franco's attack and Italo-German military invasion. These are the dominant points before the public eye. The revolution has been, in fact, the result of a civil war. It is quite understandable that with international conditions as they are, this conclusion should pass practically unnoticed by the immense majority of the public.

Besides, as is the case with many people who defend the cause of Spanish "democracy," at heart they are conservatives in the true meaning of the word. For this reason, and by reason of the Spanish Workers' contempt for publicity, the deepest and most complete revolution, and indeed the most generous which has ever existed, still remains unknown, and will possibly never be sufficiently appreciated, should Fascism unfortunately triumph in Spain. Yet, when one remembers that hundreds of books, studies and pamphlets have been written on the Commune of Paris, one cannot but feel indignant when one thinks that such a movement should be threatened with oblivion. A movement, which by reason of its material extent and the great number of individuals which it binds together, besides the immensity of its socialistic achievements, is a thousand times greater than was the Commune. My aim, therefore in writing this pamphlet is to draw the attention of English speaking peoples to the finest example of Socialization which has ever been known, and to the greatest example which has been offered the world proletariat in its struggle for emancipation.

## THE SURROUNDINGS

I can give but a brief outline, as within the limits of a pamphlet—it is impossible to give adequate details. Spain has about 24 million inhabitants. Three quarters of her population live by agriculture and stock breeding. This does not represent the natural conditions of the country which by reason of its mineral wealth was more suited to become industrial rather than agricultural. But historical circumstances—the expulsion of the Arabs; the domination of the Inquisition, the discovery of America and the industrial setback as the result of the influx of gold; prolonged wars; the disposal of mines by bankrupt Monarchs after they had ruined the country—obliged the autochthonous population to seek a means of existence in work which did not require the use of complicated machinery, and in places which had not already been sold.

Spain, from an Agrarian point of view is not favoured by nature. Some regions, as in Levant, on the splendour of which too many travellers and poets generalise, conditions are ten times worse owing to lack of water and low quality soil, and man is poorly rewarded for his efforts. Thus it is that the average harvest of wheat is 40 per cent. less per hectare than in France, whilst half the amount of grape juice is obtained over a corresponding area of land; rye production again, is half that of Germany, and as a result of the poor pasture land the milk production is inferior to that of England, Switzerland and Holland, and meat also is costly as a consequence of these conditions. These natural conditions account partly for the acuteness of the Social problem. But the social structure also plays a large part. Spain is one of the regions in Europe wherein large landed properties persist, where small properties, due to the general poverty of the land produce very little, oblige the owners to acquire the commodities which they could not obtain on the spot by emigration or by extra jobs of work which are very badly paid. Land which was entrusted to small holders was usually farmed on the system of "Medieros," which consisted in giving the big land owner a half of the harvest. When one considers that the average harvest of wheat was 9 quintals per hectare<sup>(1)</sup> that the expanses of land were far from bearing comparison to those in Argentine or Canada, the miserable conditions in which the peasants lived can readily be imagined.

The industrial workers, it is true, had lived a less miserable existence. Nevertheless their standard of living always figured amongst the lowest in Europe. Having entered the industrial world too late, Spain was unable to capture markets for her goods.

(1) This figure represents a yield of about 401 lbs. per acre.

All her railways had been built and financed by foreign companies, she had no important colonies like the other countries, even less capital invested abroad, and no merchant Navy which might have been a source of income. The deficit which existed in her international dealings was not balanced by "invisible exports," for on the contrary she exports her goods to France, Belgium, England and other countries.

All these circumstances, and in addition, the poor yields in agriculture, have brought about the lamentable situation of the Spanish people.

## POLITICS AND PSYCHOLOGY

To the unfavourable natural conditions, to the long series of disastrous historic events, have been added the political and psychological conditions.

From a political point of view the country has suffered under a monarchy incapable of having any influence, in a progressive sense, on the economic development of the country. The State is a bad administrator, and a bad producer, but in Spain it is worse than in most, if not all, of the great powers in Europe. Petrified by the medieval economic regime, not having carried out a liberal revolution, not having passed through a Renaissance period, dominated by a stagnant Church and crushed by all the racial "caciques"<sup>(1)</sup> and by the conservative parties mixed up with the church and in the agrarian regime of large landed properties, the country remained a long way behind the others.

On top of misery reigned political oppression. Centralist Spain was not a Spanish but a foreign creation. The regionalist tendency, which the State tended to ignore or destroy, has very deep roots. And if, historically, the State has done practically nothing of any use for which the population might have been grateful, it has certainly oppressed and demanded much, in the form of heavy taxation. The tax collector, the civil guard and the Church, which it maintained, these are the classic forms under which the State appeared. There were few schools, very few roads, still fewer canals or sanitary organizations.

All this did not result in inculcating respect or the love of the State in the people. One must add, that geographical conditions,

(1) Large Landowners who dominated local policy. The term "cacique" originally described the Indian Chiefs.

which have separated, very definitely, the regions, giving each one not only a language but also a deep psychology, have added to this feeling. Politically, Spain lacks cohesion. The Spaniard's individual psychology has, in spite of the opposition of many of its facets, this almost universal feature: a rebellious attitude towards the State; man finds the motive of his action in himself.

But one must not conclude, as is too often done, that the Spaniard is an individualist. Nothing is further from the truth. There is a tendency to confuse the grouping around the State as the expression of a collective sentiment, and any disregard of this organism as an indication of the Spanish people's indifference towards general problems.

This is not the case in Spain. There is no respect for the State and an imposition coming from without is hated. The sentiment of national solidarity, in the general sense of regard for the State, is hardly existent in Spain. But in daily life, among the people, solidarity, compassion and generosity exist to a very pronounced degree.

Relations existing between the people are no worse here than elsewhere. But they are not brought about by Law, but by customary right, of habits and traditions of sociability which exist among the population. The individuality—not the individualism—of every man or woman manifests itself by a voluntary adhesion to the norms of society, without which the very existence of collectivities would be impossible.

## INDUSTRIAL SOCIALIZATION

Industrial socialization was the first undertaking, particularly in Barcelona. But obstacles were created from the beginning, which resulted in preventing these experiments from being developed to their logical end. The war, was the principal handicap.

The war demanded that in the rear dissensions existing among anti-fascists should not work to the advantage of the reactionary armies. The petite bourgeoisie therefore had to be respected, as well as the political parties which represented it.

But on the other hand, the desire for a complete social revolution was too deep, too rooted in the minds of the working masses for such a consideration to check all the workers. There was another factor to be remembered, namely that a large proportion of employers, directors and shareholders were either self declared fascists or fascist

sympathisers, who longed for a Franco triumph. Almost all the employers and a good percentage of the small employers belonged to the Right parties, to Cambo's Lliga Regionalista or Lerroix's Republican Party or Alcala Zamora's party, etc.

Many of these employers fled as soon as they saw that the anti-fascists, inspired by the men of the F.A.I. and the C.N.T. (1) had triumphed. Others were arrested. It was inevitable that the factories and workshops owned by these should be seized and run by the workers. This is in fact what the workers did.

To the above should be added, the suspect employers who, in order to defend their interests, were much more in sympathy with the fascists than with the anti-fascists. One did not expect these men to be eager to construct tanks, aeroplanes, rifles and munitions which were essential for the triumph of those who were fighting their bosom friends. They were not going to do all in their power to develop economic production with the intensity required to guarantee the daily life of anti-fascist Spain. The workers understood this instinctively, and established in almost all workshops, control committees, which had as their aim to keep a watch on the progress in production, and to keep a check on the financial position of the owner of each establishment.

In numerous cases, control was quickly passed from the control committee, to the Directive committee, in which the employer was drawn in with the workers and paid the same wage. A number of factories and workshops in Catalonia passed in this way into the hands of the workers who were engaged in them.

**Collectivisation Decree.** It was in view of these facts that the Generalitat—the Government of Catalonia—published the Decree of Collectivization in October, 1936. According to this decree, the workers were allowed to take over all factories which employed 100 or more workers, besides those with less than 100 workers whose owners were officially recognised as fascists.

The decree which apparently answered the needs of the Catalan workers, and which was received with great joy by the majority of them, was in reality a filching of Socialization, for the following reasons:

(1) F.A.I.—Federacion Anarquista de Iberia (Anarchist Federation of Iberia). C.N.T.—Confederacion Nacional de Trabajo (National Confederation of Labour)—Anarcho Syndicalist Union with a membership of 1,700,000.

*Firstly.* The percentage of workers in factories employing less than 100 was greater than that of the factories employing more than 100 workers, which meant that the greater number of workers were condemned to remain under the system of owner's exploitation.

*Secondly.* The workers were prevented from being the real masters of the means of production, for the administrative committees which they had to form had their ramifications in the Ministry of Economy, to which they had to give an account of their activities. This completely eliminated the syndicates and eliminated them in the work of Social reconstruction, and protected a section of the small employers, thus creating a dualism which sooner or later would have to end in the defeat of one of the two parties. But it was a temporary obstacle which the conscientious, responsible elements hoped to settle later.

*Thirdly.* A system which retained private commerce in its entirety obliged each workshop, and each factory to sell that which it produced, independently. The workers then, were competing with one another; were destroying the morale and feeling of solidarity existing among them, and were forced into competition which increased in proportion to the rate at which the economic difficulties became more acute.

The more conscious militant workers were well aware of the dangers, and their reaction was not long in expressing itself. Firstly through their press and by word of mouth, later by Union Meetings. It was understood that if the Unions did not take production into their own hands, and did not eliminate the workers' bureaucracy which had been created by the Collectivization decree, everything accomplished would be invalidated by this irreparable moral and material blow.

Slowly, struggling against the authorities, the Unions from the majority of Industrial centres in Catalonia strove to take over the control of the "collectivized" factories and workshops. They partially succeeded. But the partial triumph was the result of many long months of agitation, and during that time, the non-revolutionary forces had *eliminated* the C.N.T. and the Largo Caballero section from power. The forces opposing Socialization and the reactionary counter-offensive became more powerful. On the whole one can state that the action of the Unions was successful. Unfortunately the difficulties were multiplying. When real industrial Socialization was beginning, the lack of raw materials was becoming more acute. The textile industry lacked wool and cotton. The

metallurgical workshops lacked steel and the carpenter's shops, timber. And, as if these difficulties were not a sufficiently great problem, the policy of the Government made things even worse.

The Government "took control of the raw material." It was a means of depriving the syndicates of power and of sabotaging their work. Then it "nationalized" the greater part of the industries. This was a pretext for them to take possession of those which the workers had put into action, and to destroy socialization. Now, it has completed its interference by laying its hands on all manufactured goods so that, in many cases, the workers or their syndicates, are theoretically masters of their workshops, but they are not masters of the goods they produce. The Government takes them and sells them. It depends for this on the power of the civil guards, the assault guards and all the other forces of repression which it has specially organized. And the workers have lost the battle.

However, everything did not develop as I have just described. Fortunately a few syndicates in Catalonia took the activities of their respective industries into their own hands from the beginning, disregarding Government orders. And in certain towns outside Catalonia, Socialization was put into practice immediately and has shown amazing results.

**Barcelona** In Barcelona, the Sanitary Syndicate, the Urban Transport, (1) the Water and Gas Syndicates as well as the Public Amusements Syndicate have directed work themselves. The first named and the last were created after the Revolution. They have nevertheless accomplished great work. The Sanitary Syndicate spread throughout Catalonia and organized medical service in such a way that every village had its doctor. A scheme was drawn up which was put into practice as far as was possible in the circumstances. It consisted in dividing up the province first of all into nine principal regions and then in subdividing these regions into secondary regions, each of which would have a general clinic to which the surrounding villages would be connected. So effectively was this organized that no peasant cut off in a mountain village lacked the attention of the doctor in the nearest village, nor of the nearest general clinic in the case of a more serious illness, and in the event of dangerous cases, transport by ambulance to the nearest hospital.

(1) The Collectivization of Transport in Barcelona is dealt with in detail on pages 31-35.

The railways in Catalonia are an eloquent example of what the workers would have done had they not been paralysed by the concessions made to the bourgeoisie. The three main lines which belonged to three foreign countries constantly competing with one another, were amalgamated to form one company and recently were directed by a central committee of the U.G.T. (1) and C.N.T. made up of twelve comrades. There were very few engineers, for most of them were foreigners and had returned to their respective countries. Nevertheless wonderful results were achieved.

**Granollers** Apart from Barcelona, one can give noteworthy cases of organization. Take the small town of Granollers for instance. Everything was Socialized by the Syndicates and the Municipality. And everything worked perfectly. The small workshops disappeared—this took place in hundreds of localities where the workers took over production—and redistribution was rapidly assured by the Municipal co-operatives; small business concerns were at first controlled, then eliminated, and the tradespeople given an occupation, either in the co-operatives or in other trades.(2)

**Castellon** If we travel southwards along the Mediterranean coast we reach Castellon. Little or nothing has been said about this town, in spite of the fact that since October, 1936, the metallurgical industry had been entirely in the hands of the syndicates. The other industries were in the process of being socialized in a similar way. And yet in this town there was no revolutionary syndicalist tradition, but the workers were not lacking in common sense and were deeply conscious of their responsibilities.(2)

**Alcoy** If we take Alcoy in the Province of Alicante, we have an even more typical example. The workers have long been well organized and no mobilization decree was necessary for the militants. They quickly took over the factories and workshops and organized production in a new way.(3)

Each industry is centralized in the Syndical Administrative Committee. This committee is divided into as many sections as there are principal industries. When an order is received by the Sales Section it is passed on to the production section whose task it is to decide which workshops are best equipped to produce the required articles. Whilst settling this question they order the required raw materials from the corresponding section. The latter gives instruc-

(1) U.G.T.—Union General de los Trabajadores (General Workers' Union) Socialist. In Catalonia is controlled by the Communist Party.

(2) These two towns are now in the hands of the Fascists.

(3) A detailed description of collective work in this town appears on Pages 19-28.

tions to the shops to supply the materials and finally, the Buying Section receives details of the transaction so that it can replace the material used.

This summary, which, given space, could endlessly be amplified, makes one appreciate the fact that the Spanish Libertarian workers co-ordinate and rationalize production in a much more satisfactory way than Capitalism had done. And I lay special stress on the disappearance of small unhealthy and costly workshops and factories, besides the correct use of machinery for the work most suited to it. Administrative centralization is one of the most outstanding features. One can thus state that wherever collaboration with political parties has not paralysed the workers, the latter were able, even where their syndicates were of only recent formation, to organize production and public services in a highly satisfactory way. There remains to be described the role played by the workers themselves in the administration and industrial management.

The industrial administrative committee is neither an autonomous nor infallible organization. The syndicate still exists, and its central commission controls the ensemble of activities. It is nominated by the general assembly of syndicated workers and has delegates direct from the factories and workshops so as never to lose contact with the workers. In the workshops and factories exist committees elected by an assembly of workers gathered together on the spot. These committees are responsible for the application of instructions received as regards the conduct of work. In their turn they communicate their observations to the central syndical commission. And at assemblies resolutions are passed concerning both the daily work in the factories and work of the administrative committee.

We are not therefore facing an administrative dictatorship, but rather a functional democracy, in which all specialized works play their roles which have been settled after general examination by the assembly.

## AGRARIAN SOCIALIZATION

But it is in agrarian Socialization that one must look for the best examples of Social achievement.

This socialization did not take place simultaneously and completely everywhere at the same time. It was commenced in Aragon, inspired by the Libertarians, then gained ground in Levant and that part of Andalucia which remained in our hands. Finally it extended to the South of Catalonia and in Castille.

The agrarian revolution has inaugurated the practice of Libertarian right. And it has done it with such results that the Anarchist theorists themselves, those who had always defended the concepts now applied, were amazed, and will never forget the beautiful dream through which they lived.

Let us add that deep social feelings, which characterize the Spanish peasant, were required to put these ideas into practice.

**Aragon** In about three months, most of the villages of Aragon, some of which were wrested from Fascist hands by the columns led by Durruti and other "undisciplined" guerillas, organized agrarian collectives. One must not confuse the industrial "collectives" carried out under the aegis of the decree mentioned earlier on, and under instructions dictated by the Catalan Government, with those of the peasants. This word "collectives" describes two quite different things.

The mechanism of the formation of the Aragonese collectives, has been generally the same. After having overcome the local authorities when they were fascist, or after having replaced them by Antifascist or Revolutionary committees when they were not, an assembly was summoned for all the inhabitants of the locality to decide on their line of action.

One of the first steps was to gather in the crop not only in the fields of the small landowners who still remained, but, what was even more important, also, on the estates of the large landowners all of whom were conservatives and rural "caciques" or chiefs. Groups were organized to reap and thresh the wheat which belonged to these large landowners. Collective work began spontaneously. Then as this wheat could not be given to anyone in particular without being unfair to all it was put under the control of a local committee, for the use of all the inhabitants, either for consumption or for the purpose of exchange for manufactured goods, such as clothes, boots, etc., *for those who were most in need.*

It was necessary, afterwards, to work the lands of the large landowners. They were generally the most extensive and fertile in the region. The question was again raised before the village assembly. It was then that the "collectivity" if not already definitely constituted—often this had been done at the first meeting—was definitely established.

A delegate for agriculture and stock breeding was nominated (or one for each of these activities when breeding was extensively carried

on), one delegate each for local distribution, exchanges, public works, hygiene and education and revolutionary defence. Sometimes there were more; on other occasions less.

Workers groups were then formed. These groups generally were divided into the number of zones into which the municipal territory had been divided, so as more easily to include all kinds of work. The number of zones depends not only on the extent of the land but also according to topographical lie of the land, which in Spain is generally very mountainous.

Each group of workers names its delegate. The delegates meet every two days or every week with the councillor of agriculture and stock breeding, so as to co-ordinate all the different activities.

They decide for instance, whether certain fields should be ploughed, or whether they should attend to the wheat or the vines; or to prune the olive trees and other fruit trees; or to plant potatoes or sow beetroots, etc. According to the urgency and the importance of the work, groups are chosen to attend to it, and go, when necessary, from one zone to another.

In this new organization, small property has almost completely disappeared. In Aragon 75 per cent. of small proprietors have voluntarily adhered to the new order of things. *Those who refused have been respected.* It is untrue to say that those who took part in the collectives were forced to do so. One cannot stress this point too strongly in face of the calumnies which have been directed against the collectivities on this point. It is so far from the truth that the agrarian collectivity has brought into force, everywhere, a special current account for small proprietors and has printed consumers tickets specially for them, so as to assure for them the industrial products they require, in the same way as they do for the "collectivists."

In this transformation of property, one must put special stress on the practical sense and psychological finesse of the organizers who in almost all the villages have conceded or given to each family a bit of ground on which each peasant cultivates, for his own use, the vegetables which he prefers in the way he prefers. Their individual initiative can thereby be developed and satisfied.

**New methods of Cultivation** Collective work has made it possible to achieve in agriculture as well as in industry, a rationalization which was impossible under the regime of small land ownership and even under that of big landed properties.

Tractors and other machinery are used where they are most necessary. Forgotten are the days when the means of production remained unused in the barns of the rich, whilst the poor peasants worked the land with roman ploughs drawn by worn out donkeys and mules! Beasts of burden are equally used on work to which they are most suited. All the strong mules do the hard work whilst the weaker ones are put on less arduous tasks.

On the other hand, better quality seeds are used. This was rendered possible by being able to buy up large stocks, which the small peasant could not afford to do in the past. Potato seeds come from Ireland and selected wheat seeds only are used. Chemical fertilizers have also been used. As modern machinery properly used—tractors and modern ploughs were obtained by exchange or bought directly from abroad—permits the soil to be more deeply worked, these seeds have produced a yield per hectare far superior to that which would have been obtained under the conditions which existed during previous years.

These new methods have also made it possible to increase the acreage sown. In Aragon my research on the spot permits me to affirm that generally speaking *the increase in wheat crop has reached an average of 30 per cent.* An increase in yield, though in a smaller proportion has been obtained for other cereals, potatoes, sugar beet, lucerne, etc.

**Stock Breeding** At the same time, fruit trees have been planted and land irrigation vastly extended. Stock breeding, as well, has been intensified. All this work deserves a separate chapter. As I write these lines, almost all the cattle in Catalonia have been killed owing to the lack of fodder and cattle food, whilst the cattle in Aragon have fallen into the hands of the Fascists. But what is specially interesting are the results obtained, independently of external factors, by the Social Revolution, and the collective methods which are a prerequisite of Libertarian Socialism (Comunismo Libertario).

The increased production of animals destined for consumption has been surprising. It has surpassed by a great deal, the agricultural increase. Collective work has again contributed to these results. Large stables, large pig styes, clean, well aired and lighted have been constructed. In certain villages they housed dozens of cows and hundreds of pigs. In Aragon the number of these animals has been tripled over a period of eighteen months. Villages which

possessed in all a few dozen sheep, quickly had hundreds. The pens in which the shepherds of the Collectivity looked after the flocks, were full of lambs, and reproduction was still going on.

In many localities—besides the Levant and certain parts of Catalonia—the rearing of cows was only begun after the revolution. A selection of the existing livestock was made, and careful attention given to the healthy animals, whilst the diseased ones were eliminated so as to ensure that children would have nothing but wholesome milk.

The increase in livestock has been helped by the new improved organization of land cultivation, which has often made it possible to sow in the places where the lazy landowners, lacking initiative, allowed the herds to feed, and to transfer the latter to the mountain pasturages. This new organization has as a result made it possible to increase the production of cattle food, beetroot and fodder, generally.

In these agricultural regions the economic condition of the peasant has, as a result, generally improved. It has only suffered a setback in those localities which had specialized in production for export, and which were consequently unable to place their products and obtain foodstuffs in exchange. This happened in certain regions in Levant whose produce consisted almost entirely of oranges. But this state of affairs lasted only a few months.

#### Family Wage

This latter fact is of utmost importance. It is the first time in modern society that the anarchist principle “to each according to his needs,” has been practised. It has been applied in two ways: without money in many villages in Aragon and by a local money in others, and in the greater part of collectivities established in other regions. The *family wage* is paid with this money and it varies according to the number of members in each family. A household in which the man and his wife both work because they have no children receives, for the sake of argument, say 5 pesetas a day. Another household in which only the man works, as his wife has to care for two, three or four children, receives six, seven or eight pesetas respectively. It is the “needs” and not only the “production” taken in the strictly economic sense which control the wage scale or that of the distribution of products where wages do not exist.

**Mutual Aid** This principal of justice is continually extended. It does away with charity and begging and the special

FACTURAS DE INTERCAMBIO  
CUENTA CON LA COMARCAL DE NAVAL

COMARCAL DE ANGUES (Huesca)

Cargo que esta comarcal hace á la de NAVAL por los diferentes envios de géneros que se le han facilitado á Intercambio.

1937				Pesetas cen.	Totales Pesetas cen.
Enero	3	Por nuestra remesa de harina y envases	....	3.993,30	
id	17	" " " de 20 s/c harina y enva.		1.320,00	
Febre.	2	" " " de harina.....		1.320,00	
Marzo	6	" suministro de Gasolina .....		12,50	
"	10	" envases devueltos .....		141,00	
"	23	" nuestra remesa de harina .....		2.010,00	
Abril	7	" id id de Cabezuela y Menudillo ..		259,00	
"		" cargo la diferencia N° 273 .....		16,20	9.072,00

Data Por las entregas de Mercaderias que se nos hace por la Comarcal de NAVAL.

1936										
Dibre,	20	Nos remite esta Comarcal	s/. data. Fac <sup>a</sup>	N° 225	643,30					
"	27	id id id id	s/." "	N° 255	673,75					
1937										
Enero	3	id id id id	s/." "	N° 273	1.295,00					
"	10	id id id id	s/." "	N° 289	647,50					
"	20	id id id id	s/." "	N° 320	333,00					
"	28	id id id id	s/." "	N° 340	259,00					
"		id id id id	s/." "	N° 346	353,80					
Febre.	9	id id id id	s/." "	N° 392	352,00					
"		id id id id	s/." "	N° 409	310,00					
"	24	id id id id	s/." "	N° 435	321,00					
Marzo	10	id id id id	s/." "	N° 470	1.000,00					
"	14	id id id id	s/." "	N° 481	298,00					
"	23	id id id id	s/." "	N° 509	288,00					
Abril	8	id id id id	s/." "	N° 560	1.040,00					
Enero	17	id id id id	s/." "	N° 308	666,00					
Febre.	2	id id id id	s/." "	N° 364	330,00					8.810,35.



R E S U M E N

Importa el Cargo ..... 9.072,00  
id la Data ..... 8.810,35

Saldo á favor de la C. de Angües Peset. 261,65

COMARCAL DE ANGUES (Huesca)

Cargo que esta Comarcal hace á la de GRANOLLERS por los diferentes envios de géneros que se le han facilitado á Intercambio.

1937					
Abril	3	Por 13.300 Kilos de trigo	á 0,53 ...	7.049,00	
"	10	" 22.050 " " "	á 0,53 ..	11.686,50	
"	14	" 13.300 " " "	á 0,53 ..	7.049,00	
"		" 25 " " " de inter antrior ..		13,25	
"	2	DOS cerdos de la última remesa á 60,		120,00	25.917,75

Data Por las entregas de Mercaderia que se nos hace por la Comarcal de GRANOLLERS.

Abril	3	Por 192 lechones (cerdos)	á 60, ..	11.520,00	
"	10	" 214 id ( id )	á 60, ..	12.840,00	
"	10	" entrega que nos hacen en metálico ..		7.000,00	31.360,00.

The above is a reproduction from an original document showing the method of interchange between the village of Angues (Province of Huesca) and the village of Naval.

budgets for the indigent. There are no more destitutes. Those who work do so for others in the same way as others will work to help them and their children later on.

But this mutual aid extends beyond the village. Before the Fascist invaders destroyed the Aragon collectives, the cantonal federations did all in their power to counteract the injustices of nature by obtaining for the less favoured villages the machinery mules, seed, etc. . . . which were to help them increase the yield of their land. These implements were obtained through the intermediary of the Federation which undertook the delivery of the produce of twenty, thirty, forty or even fifty localities and asked in their name, from the industrial and stock breeding centres, for the products which they required.

In Castille, the "Caisses de Compensation" have been created to bring about a levelling in well being, and in the Levant, enterprises which are too great to be undertaken by the village—the construction of a factory for instance—are met by the Federation of Collectives, and not by the local collective organization. Naturally, profit making does not exist, but the value of the produce goes to the central Caisse, which is ever ready to help groups which fall victims to droughts, storms, hail, etc. And all this without having to refund the money later. The system of insurances is no longer needed. It has been superseded.

All I have said in this synopsis should be sufficient for an understanding of the moral side of the revolution in Spain and justifies my statement, namely, that *never has anything similar being achieved in the history of civilized societies*. But there are other aspects which deserve a little of our attention.

## EDUCATION

Let us take education as an example. Wherever the revolution has been far reaching, serious efforts in this direction are noted.

Schools have been created in convents and in seminaries which generally were the best buildings. They can be counted by the thousand. Each of the five hundred collectives in Levant has its own school, generally in beautiful surroundings, in orange groves or at the foot of snow covered mountains.

In Aragon, Catalonia and Castille, everywhere one notices the same attention to education. Never before had such a great stride forward been made in the history of Spain.

Wherever the Government and the State have not been able to make themselves felt, medical aid has been socialized too, that is to say, put at everyone's disposal. The doctor looks after all sick people. The Collective pays him. The latter also provides all medicines, and sends the more seriously affected patients to the cities, hospitals or sanatoriums. Small dispensaries have been set up in certain villages and are maintained by the canton's efforts. In one way or the other no one is allowed to die or sicken for lack of care and attention.

In almost all the collectivized villages of Aragon "Homes for the Aged" were founded to which came the old people of both sexes who were without family. The best houses were chosen for them, they were looked after by young girls chosen for their gaiety and pleasant appearance. No barrack regime, no annoying rules. The old folk came and went as they wished. They still continue in those places where fascist reaction has not triumphed.

But, apart from these examples of integral collectivization, there are examples of partial success which are worth reporting. In many places our comrades have entered the municipality and have succeeded in putting into practice appreciable reforms, such as the semi-municipalization of medical aid, which places at the disposal of all inhabitants the services of doctors, nurses and midwives and pharmaceutical necessities; the improvement of teaching; the municipalization of lodgings. The rent is paid to the municipality, and having need of no other revenue, this eliminates the payment of rates and taxes. One can understand what this means to the inhabitants who are not rich.

## THE SPANISH REVOLUTION AND HISTORY

I have described on broad lines the new social organization created by the Spanish Revolution. The achievements of the libertarian socialists are a fact, and the excellence of their principles is definitely shown. About three million peasants, men, women and children have succeeded in putting into practice this system of living with immediate results, without the lowering of production which these groupings of new regimes usually produce. At least two million have benefited from the partial achievements. A large section of industry has been successfully directed by the workers' syndicates; these figures must be judged in proportion to the twelve million inhabitants comprising permanent and refugee population in the Spain not under Franco domination. The obstacles met with in

the towns are due to the application of a regime invented by governments whether of Catalonia or of Spain.

In this vast experiment, facts, characteristics, experiments, initiative and achievements of all sorts abound. I do not know if one day a historian will make a complete and impartial analysis. This would be desirable. May these pages excite the interest of honest investigators and make clear to the English speaking proletariat what is to be learnt from this daring experiment in Spain, bleeding and at the point of death, to show the world the path to happiness and dignity.

GASTON LEVAL.

## EXAMPLES OF COLLECTIVISATION

### I. ALCOY AND ITS TEXTILE INDUSTRY

When I say the name Alcoy I find it difficult to restrain my imagination from evoking a little of the history and romance of that town. Alcoy is built on deep ravines—nearly two hundred metres deep—which cross it at several points. Alcoy is thus called, with reason—the town of bridges—it possesses seven, recently built and many more small ones. Among these latter seven—all iron bridges—two particularly attract attention. One of them, which spans a deep abyss, is called the Suicides Bridge, from which many people have thrown themselves. The other is the largest and most modern of them all. And from this splendid iron bridge, thrown across a deep gorge, with a tiny stream at the bottom one sees the smallest and oldest of all these bridges. This little bridge would be insignificant if it had no history, but it was this bridge which marked, during the time of the Arab domination in Spain, the limits of the territories occupied by the Moors—and by the Christians. Generations have battled here for its possession. On the side of a pointed rock, the ruins of a castle recall this epoch of battle, the memory of which remains in the mock battle of Moor and Christian which is renewed in the annual carnival of the townsfolk.

As I contemplated this place—so rich in historic memories—I dreamed that perhaps we were commencing a new epoch of history, from which such struggles would be forever banished. I had also mused, on another bridge, on the old mill still turning slowly under the pressure of the tiny stream, which had already turned, on its progress from the mountains, several other mills, and musing I evoked to myself all the history of the effort of men to live and progress, the memory of the struggles of past times against nature—which is but little generous in these districts—where the least little plots of earth on the mountain-sides have been cultivated since time immemorial. While I was thus musing on this drama of the centuries and humanity, the comrades introduced me to a paleontologist and an engineer who were also looking over the bridge. The former kindly undertook to expand my knowledge of the historic background which interested me. His talk extended over centuries and took us back to the primitive civilisations which had closely encircled the town—after tracing the developments of the peoples who had succeeded each other, up to the present era.

This modest scientist took me to his home and showed me his marvellous collection of fossils, by means of which he was able to reconstruct for me, during our three hours conversation, life during all the geologic periods, and the evolution of the human spirit and its activities. Under the fascination of this conversation I forgot for a time war—and revolution, and was hardly in a frame of mind to apply myself to immediate problems. I left my paleontologist friend, happy that the comrades, who had wished him to consign his collection to a museum, had left him with it to continue his researches. When he told them that if they took it away he would surely kill himself, they understood and respected his feelings. That is much for men who had themselves left school at ten or eleven and to whom science appears, only too often, a pastime for social parasites or a prostitute at the service of the rich.

Alcoy now has forty-five thousand inhabitants. It is an exclusively industrial and commercial town, the second largest in the province of Alicante, and the population of working men and women is proportionately high. The manufactures of textiles and of underwear, which employ many women, are the largest industries; that of paper—also important—ranks second.

Our movement goes back to the beginnings of Anarchism in Spain. Those members of the First International who conducted

the struggle at Alcoy, were among the most serious—and among the most determined also—as the insurrection of July, 1873, bears witness. In this struggle which was commenced by a general strike of ten thousand workers, our comrades made themselves masters of the town after a sanguinary struggle. Pi y Margall, at that time President of the Spanish Republic, refused to send troops to repress this movement, although the bourgeoisie loudly demanded such intervention. In consequence he fell, and was replaced by Nicolas Sarnaion who sent six thousand troops. The workers, scarcely armed, offered to negotiate peace; but they did not negotiate as defeated. They wrested from their employers the eight hour working day, an increase in wages, payment for the days that they were on strike, and the suppression of the police, who were replaced by patrols of workers.

Since those days, in the cause of social struggle, Alcoy has always demonstrated her proletarian consciousness, remarkably. The Anarchist groups were large and in addition to their efforts for the syndical movement, conducted propaganda and educational work which has borne sound fruit. I should mention particularly their journal—"Redemption," which, though started at the height of the Dictatorship, still lived for seven years. Without doubt, Alcoy has the greatest number of Anarchists in proportion to its population, of any town in Spain. For the most part, young men, whose minds have been formed by study and struggle, nearly all those I met—had taught themselves whatever was necessary for that struggle.

The organisation of the trade unions, tending more and more to the formation of industrial groups, has, since 1919, reinforced our movement. In February, 1937, the C.N.T. numbered seventeen thousand members in Alcoy, as compared with only three thousand members of the U.G.T., in spite of the support of the political parties to the latter organisation, and the fact that many shopkeepers and minor government officials were members of the U.G.T. Here is the list of the syndicates which were in existence at that time: The food industries, printing trades (including the manufacture of paper and cardboard destined for printing), The building syndicate, which included every branch of the trade from navvies to tilers; the "syndicate of hygiene," which included hairdressers, washwomen, and sanitary workers; the transport workers; theatre workers; all forms of chemical manufacturers; the union of land workers; the boot and shoe operatives, who included seven boot-blacks; the union of pedlars; that of all branches of the

woodworking industry; that of the liberal professions (school-teachers, writers, artists, etc.), the metal workers; all branches of the clothing industry, the union of textile workers—which included all the workers, men and women, employed in this industry, and finally, the union of industrial experts. Thus all branches of production were represented in the C.N.T.

A clear conception of what socialisation meant allowed our comrades to act firmly and quickly. Alcoy did not present the picture of committees representing independent factories which were found all over Catalonia; from the first moments of their inception the unions directed their course toward revolutionary action in all the industries, without any exception. Thus we have in Alcoy the most complete example of the socialisation of industry ever undertaken by the syndicates.

I wish to halt here, to give the reader an impression of the general organisation of production in Alcoy, particularly in the textile industry, the largest of all in this district. The fascist attack was announced on the 18th of July. It had been awaited anxiously as our press had denounced the fascist conspiracies for several weeks preceding this date—at the same time noting the passive attitude of the government and the political parties towards these manoeuvres. The fascists and the armed forces with them, were surrounded in their barracks, from the first day of their rebellion in Alcoy—until the time when they were forced to surrender. The “syndicate” of the textile industry did not content itself with the political concessions made by the municipality, which, though liberal minded was nevertheless bourgeois at heart. The syndicate at that time numbered four thousand members, a figure which later rose to five thousand five hundred, and was consequently a force to be reckoned with. It presented to begin with, some apparently modest demands, insurance against illhealth, workers’ control, work for the unemployed or, failing which, payment while unemployed. All these demands were met with celerity—including the payment for unemployment. In fact it was necessary to meet them—because the armed workers were masters of the town and would have regarded recalcitrant employers in the same light as they did the besieged fascists! But friction was bound to arise. The employers had not the same conception of workers’ control as had the syndicate—to them it simply consisted in submitting their “books” to a committee elected by the workers. The workers however, interpreted it as a real control by their committees of production and administration of the factories. Again, payment for

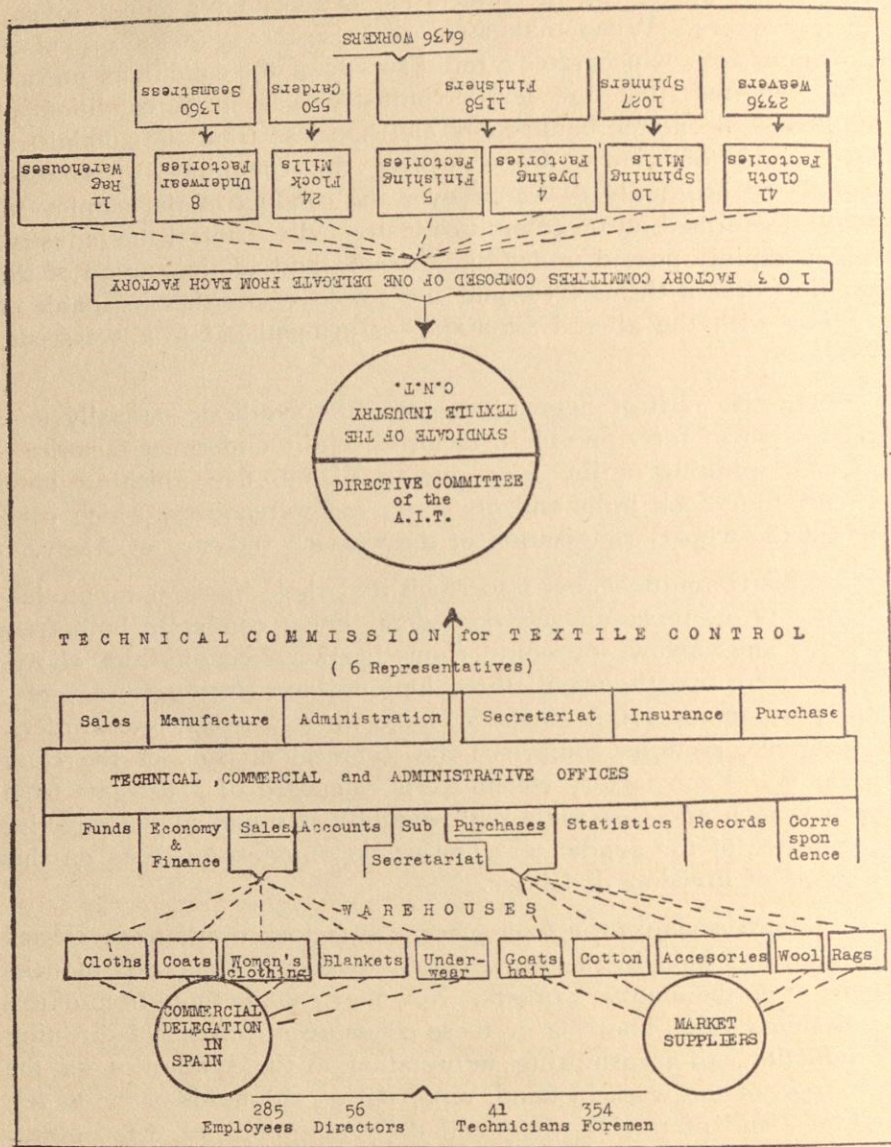
unemployment produced endless difficulties. A number of factories were immediately paralysed by the crisis—others, although still running, had not enough money to pay even their normal staffs. Thus the extraordinary situation arose that the employers had to ask the proletarian syndicate for money to pay their workers. When that situation arose the syndicate organised a commission, which after a rapid survey of the conditions prevailing, reported that the textile industry was in a condition of paralysis—economic bankruptcy and hopeless from the administrative point of view. Consequently the committee of control, appointed originally to watch over the conduct of the employers, was transformed into a committee instructed to control the industry, which rapidly passed under the direction and administration of the textile workers themselves, and the employers—either incapable of coping with the altered situation—or sympathetic to the fascists, excluded.

On the 14th of September, 1936, the syndicate officially took possession of forty-one cloth factories, eight underwear factories—of ten spinning mills, four dyeing plants, five finishing mills twenty-four flock mills and of eleven rag warehouses, which composed the whole organisation of the weaving industry of Alcoy.

This committee now undertook the whole business of production. Its organisation was on federal lines—conducted both from above and below—pressure from below, direction from above. There were two thousand, three hundred and thirty-six weavers—1,027 spinners, 1,158 finishers, 1,360 linen weavers, 550 carders. These five sections comprised the technical division of the cloth industry. Each factory committee is composed of a delegate from each branch and this same representation is found in the directive committee of the syndicate. The whole organisation rests on this method of division of labour.

Before socialisation took place, the factory committees, elected in meetings held in the work place—were only composed of delegates from the manual workers. Now they contain those from offices and shops too. The role of these committees consists of directing production, of transmitting information to the syndicates on the progress of the work in hand, reporting on the needs of the undertaking—and of paying the small daily outgoings of the concern. The representatives of these five technical sections of industry form only half the directive committee. The other half is constituted by that Commission of control of which I have already spoken. This committee had been nominated at a meeting of the syndical com-

# —ALCOY—



## ORGANISATION OF TEXTILE INDUSTRY

(This plan is explained on Pages 23 and 25).

mittee and the representatives of the manufacturing sections, and confirmed by the factory committees which met afterwards. It was divided into five sections: administration, sales, buying—manufacture, and insurance. A General Secretary was added, whose job was to supervise, and if necessary, direct the general work of the Commission.

The sales section had as its head a comrade who personally controlled and directed every sales operation. He received orders—ordered from the specialised warehouses, where all articles were stored according to their special categories, and supervised the sending off of ordered goods. When a sale was made, the warehouse notified him, and he then notified the manufacturing section to replace the goods, or to prepare any goods that might be lacking. Thus, it was known from day to day the condition and total stock of all the factories in Alcoy. Warehousing was also in the province of this section, and it also undertook the preparation of samples. When orders were paid for in cash the head of the sales department authorised the delivery himself, but when a customer asked for an extension of credit it was the whole commission that decided whether or not to give it.

As in the others, the buying section had a responsible comrade at its head. She made the purchases of raw materials, cotton, wool, jute, silk, etc., according to the needs of manufacture settled by the general meeting of the commission.

Fuel, tools, everything needed by workshops and factories passed through her hands. She arranged for technicians to be sent to other regions or abroad, but these journeys had to be authorised by the technical commission.

It was she who kept up to date the statistics dealing with raw materials, and who registered the transfers from one depot to another. Not one kilo of raw cotton could be transferred without the matter being known and noted.

Because of its importance the manufacturing section was divided into three sub-sections: manufacture, organisation of factories and upkeep of machinery and the control of manufacture and statistics. The first of these sub-sections undertook the actual making of articles. It distributed the work according to the equipment and the speciality of each establishment. Having received orders from the sales committee, and having decided which factory should undertake them, it passed on the requisitions to the buying section, so that they might furnish the raw materials.

The personnel was divided into three categories: model-makers, technicians, and manual workers. Each category was consulted before the distribution of work, as were also the workshop technicians. If for example a new fabric was proposed, five toolmaker mechanics would be called in to know if the necessary machinery existed and how it could be employed. The same method was used for every speciality.

Once a project was accepted the technicians put the manufacture under way. The work people carried out their work as carefully as possible, and, through their workshop committees, kept the different technical sections of the syndicate on whatever related to production. Every Monday the model-makers, technicians, and the workers' delegates in each factory examined the books, the output, and the quality of the production. In fact, everything for the normal progress of general activity. These meetings had only an informatory character, but their findings were communicated to the corresponding sections of the whole syndicate.

The machine sub-section undertook the upkeep of machines and buildings, and whatever repairs other committees demanded. But when the expenses were too high they were obliged to first consult the technical commission.

The sub-section for control and manufacture and statistics kept account of payments made by factories and workshops, of deliveries of raw material, of the proportion of the mixtures employed, on any problem arising from each special cloth, of the time employed on manufacture, of the proportionate distribution of work, consumption of fuel and power, and, in fact, on everything in which exact statistics were able to assist the conduct of the work. It was also this section which authorised the transfer of machines from one factory to another.

The administrative sub-section embraced three divisions: accounts, banking, and urban and industrial administration. The first registered all operations of buying, selling, credit, the payment of wages, etc. The second undertook payments which belonged to the local industry, after receiving the authorisation from the head of each section to which these payments belonged. Lastly, the urban administrative sub-section undertook the payment of contributions and rents, etc.

The insurance section takes the responsibility in all matters relating to accidents, and in all negotiations on this subject with

the "Mutual Company of Levant."

Beside the five sections two groups dealing with records had been established: provisional and final records. There are kept, not only the documents relating to judicial procedure, the ancient property deeds, and the deeds signed by the ex-owners when they handed over their factories to the syndicates, but also those which concern all the activities, even the progress of work and business during the Capitalist epoch.

I should like to go more fully into detail on the organisation of accounts. This was almost entirely the work of one man, a Left Republican, who had become attached to our syndicate, and shared its views.

He inaugurated a method which is not new in international accountancy, but which is nearly so in Spain, and was totally unknown in Alcoy. The advantage of this system is that 72 employees now undertake, with better results, work which before needed at least one accountant for each of the 103 establishments of the textile industry.

He showed me the old system, and I compared it with the new. What formerly took 25 pages now summarised the whole of the textile industry of Alcoy in one and half pages.

Only resumés are published. Details are to be found in the books of the thirteenth section of accounts, sales, purchases, payments, receipts, salaries, bills and acceptances, credit, transfer of raw-material, etc., etc., etc. Each of these sections keeps its accounts up to the minute. Accounts are closed at 4 p.m. every day, and before the end of the day, the resumé is made in the ledger.

So perfect is this system of accounts and control that at any moment the most minute details could be furnished of any transaction in any branch of the industry.

In this vast co-ordinated industry the syndicate is the supreme controlling element. Meetings of the syndicate decide the activities of the technical commission and the sections elected by the workshop committees.

It is the syndicate which authorises all banking undertakings, and which has the responsibility, judicial and social, for expropriation and general administration.

The syndicate fixes salaries and, in fact, co-ordinates all activities in the collective interest.

I will not stop to describe other industries, and my stay in Alcoy having been short, I have not been able to investigate the whole communal life. One would have had to stay there at least a month and write a book to fully describe this town. At all events, I can say that the other industries are directed in the same manner. Organisation is principally in the hands of the syndicates. They were very busy in all the shops of the metal industry, and they had even organised in a few months a new industry of the greatest importance, the progress of which gave rise to admiration in all those who visited it.

However, on the other hand, the output of paper had greatly decreased owing to shortage of raw material.

They could have plenty, because the Libertarian technicians had discovered how to use new vegetable fibres, which can replace the cellulose usually employed up till now, but, of course, official support is lacking.

The organisation of production is technically perfect in Alcoy. It must be completed by social organisation. This would have been done but for opposition from political parties, who all fear complete socialisation. They have opposed it in the municipal council, where our comrades also sit, and have said that that would be too revolutionary a programme.

The result is that the merchants, who also have created their committee of control, have centralised the buying of agricultural produce and pay less than before to the peasants. Then they have fixed the sale prices which have risen terribly. Really, they have formed a trust.

Republican, socialist, and communist politicians prefer this speculation to the defence of the interests of the revolution. Their attitude sets a difficult problem which our comrades have decided not to face because the war prevents them giving enough time to it.

In order to avoid the evil which this speculation is doing to the revolution, our comrades have decided to ration certain products. It is the first step in taking over commerce. I advised them to start their co-operatives quickly, which later would be the syndicate and municipal shops. We shall see if they succeed in conquering the evils of private trading and its alliance with the politicians.

At the time of writing—twenty thousand workers in Alcoy are conducting production by means of their unions and proving that industry can do much better without capitalists, without

shareholders, and without employers, whose rivalries prevent the most rational use of raw material and of human effort. They have demonstrated that everything goes much better without government intervention.(1)

GASTON LEVAL.

## II. SOCIALIZATION OF THE WOOD INDUSTRY (2)

Sixteen months have passed since the military insurrection and our work to-day shows what initiative has accomplished and what it may still further accomplish.

We have overcome the obstacles that were put in the way of our attempts; we have struggled against the endless inconveniences that arise in a country unprepared but suddenly thrust into war, and we have socialized the industry.

We the workers have created to-day an important industry, efficient and modern in its operation, controlled not by bourgeois enterprise but by proletarian zeal. We started from the bottom, catering both for civil and military needs and have demonstrated the possibility of carrying on the war and the economic revolution at the same time.

Before the war such enormous disparities of salary existed that it caused internal strife among the workers. To-day the salaries have been almost equalized and the different categories proportionately balanced. For instance all workmen, be they carpenters, coopers, varnishers or carvers earn an equal salary. The salaries are still regulated so that some variation is allowed for specialists—but all workers in any given branch are paid equally. Thus:

	pesetas
General workers receive ... ..	115
Youth and day workers ... ..	105
Clerks ... ..	125-135
Workers in dangerous branches ... ..	125
Administrative-Executive ... ..	135-150
Designers ... ..	150

(1) Opposition continues in Alcoy both by the Government and its supporters amongst the Communists and Socialists. Added to this the numerous bombardments by Franco's Italian and German allies with the consequent heavy loss of life and destruction of habitations and factories have certainly not helped our comrades in Alcoy in their task of Reconstruction—Editors.

(2) This and the articles which follow do not form part of Gaston Leval's work, but are translations of reports which we received from Spain and originally published in *Spain and the World*.—Editors.

So one can see that the salaries are almost equal, and what disparity exists is due to the greater responsibility resting on the technical personnel, and in some cases to allow for necessary further instruction required in the interests of the industry.

Our technicians frequently have to buy books and prints to increase their knowledge. Besides, we must learn from history. We remember the difficulties arising from lack of technicians in the early days of the Soviet Republic.

We have solved the problem of unemployment that no government was ever able to solve. We have abolished the degrading spectacle of workers begging for work from door to door.

Capitalist employers selecting their workers from a vast army of unemployed, choose the conformers or the submissive type, those treacherous to their own class. An improved morale among the workers was one of the immediate consequences of socialization. When the exploiting caste disappeared, dignity and self-confidence were re-established amongst the proletariat.

It has cost blood and years of struggle, but finally on the horizon appears the sunrise of Liberty. We are human at last, and so human that we have production in our hands. No one is able to quote a single case of humiliation or one affront against the former employers and managers who now work in our workshops.

From the first moment of taking over the industry we put them to work according to their capacity. The majority of them now possess the certificate of responsible technicians and we are glad to say that we are pleased to count these employers as comrades and to see them transformed into free workers.

We have organized sanitary workshops, libraries, sports camps, swimming baths, and co-operative dining rooms. All this we have accomplished ourselves without any official support.

Before the war when production was in the hands of the fascists many kinds of wood were imported from N. America, Norway, Sweden, Finland, etc., and the natural resources of Catalonia were neglected, though she abounds in forests of alders, beeches, elms, poplars, oak, chestnut and many more. This naturally caused very high prices and increased unemployment at home.

Socialization of the Wood Industry had become necessary. With the exploitation of our native forests in our own hands, a great deal of unemployment will be reduced. We normally consume 3,572 tons of wood monthly and by employing our native

woods to replace those imported we have closed the door to much exploitation. A big problem which we had to meet was the construction of metal plated boards. These were always made of imported woods, but we are happy to repeat that we have overcome the difficulty of manufacturing this speciality, and that from native woods we are producing a splendid quality.

In addition to wood, we previously imported much caseine. To-day we manufacture liquid glue ourselves and have found it more advantageous than the caseine.

Our Socialized Industry employs 12,000 workers. Our wages bill for the fiftieth week of operation amounted to 478,991 pesetas. Raw materials 751,130 pesetas. Cash in hand 347,304 pesetas. Bank cash 192,200 pesetas. In short, we operate without reserve funds. But unemployment has ceased and the week's wages are paid even if we are without raw materials.

The deadening effect of the mechanical system of production has come to an end. To-day we adapt the raw materials to the needs of the moment. Our designers are uncramped in their initiative, thus allowing free play to the creative urge. New styles arise. Simplicity and natural elegance are united with economy and hygiene when proletarian furniture is manufactured. It is essentially functional. It is modern and reasonably priced.

In house-building a very great degree of standardization has been achieved. Our greatest project—the construction and organization of a professional school of crafts, where the technician of to-morrow will be educated—is already a fact.

### III. THE WOOD INDUSTRY IN CUENCA

The Castille plateau is characterised principally by its lack of rich forest land. The province of Cuenca is in the same condition, though the town itself possesses a few thickly wooded small valleys.

Cuenca offers the traveller a picturesque setting with its houses built into the stone slopes of the mountains, and its ancient cathedral dating back to the XVth century, gives the town the true appearance of old Spain.

The political tendency was republican, but the libertarian ideas predominated amongst the workers. The CNT and the FAI had constituted several groups whose members joined the militias at

the moment of the Rebellion; the latter was defeated in Cuenca.

The mayoralty is made up of four members of the UGT and four of the CNT besides a representative from each of the other political parties.

**The Economic Revolution** From the very beginning the comrades took possession of the factories, workshops and urban property. All was collectivized save landed property which had been municipalized.

Building, transport, paper, and all other trades were collectivized by the CNT. Restaurants likewise were collectivized by one or two important syndicates.

The electricity company was also taken over by the CNT and is under the direction of our comrades.

Commerce and shops being in the hands of small proprietors, continue business as before.

The most important work carried out was the formation of the Federation of Wood Industry. The sawyers, mechanics and others came to an agreement with the small owners of machines and brought about a single industry in which there exist neither exploiters nor exploited. The owners came into the collectivity, which took upon itself to return them the money that they had advanced. The annual production is 70,000 cubic metres, which is distributed in the form of planks for the carpenters and sleepers for the railways. It is also used for the production of frames for fruit transport.

**Development** The collectivity disposes of a capital of 700,000 pesetas, and has besides, a credit of 200,000 pesetas.

For their yearly needs they would require double this amount, but as their stock of wood is considerable the collectivists are sure that they will be able to meet all their obligations, and even be in quite a comfortable position.

The wages they receive are very much higher than before, which results in more comfort in their homes.

The collectivity possesses 35 mechanical saws and other machinery. This was all paid for by the administrative council of the collectivity.

**Retirement** To all those too old to do any work, the collectivity gives a sufficient sum of money to allow them to live comfortably without having to work.

Widows of comrades who have died at the front are also provided for by the Council; further, comrades who are sick continue to receive their usual wages.

In conclusion, all human demands have been faithfully inter-

preted by the federation and have been put into practice.

**Conclusions** The collectivity has many projects on hand for the development of its industry, and is contemplating the purchase of much more efficient machinery. They are also considering the construction of new roads to facilitate the transport of their products.

In all the achievements of our comrades in Spain, whether in industry or in agriculture, we notice that the basis of attack is directed against "big capital" and toward the respect of individual liberty (taking care not to put themselves in the place of dictators), and ever guided by the Anarchist Ideal.

## VI. THE COLLECTIVIZATION OF TRANSPORT IN BARCELONA

On the 24th of July, five days after the outbreak of the military insurrection, the tramway-men of Barcelona decided at a meeting of their trade-union to run the whole enterprise themselves. The directors and the technical personnel had left, were hiding or were abroad. The workers had to depend on themselves. The situation in the other branches of transport was similar.

Two days after this decision, all the damage caused by street-fighting was repaired and the traffic functioned normally. But only externally. The internal transformation was tremendous. A directing committee, composed of seven comrades, had been chosen by the workers. They handled their task differently from their predecessors. The big salaries disappeared. Instead, pensions for workers over sixty were introduced. The collectivized enterprises paid all old debts. In a general meeting the workers decided on the 48 hour week, instead of the legally prescribed 40 hours, as long as the war went on. 657 unemployed tramway-men were employed again. Through these two measures the traffic was substantially increased.

During the last half year of capitalist exploitation the incomes had been reduced by half a million pesetas. The measures of the working-class committees increased the traffic, reduced the tariff on some lines, arranged for new branch lines and had as a consequence during the first half year, increased the income by 421,387 pesetas.

The workshops of the tramway-collective were brought right up-to-date by the addition of modern machinery to a total value of 700,000 pesetas. Thus, the workers were able to carry out all repairs themselves. This resulted in a saving of time and money, for the number of trams in use could be increased. During the first five months of collectivization 236,590km. increase had been run and about 10 million persons more had been carried. In the following paragraph a short survey of the results of these five months, compared with the preceding year, may be seen.

Expenditure	(in thousands of pesetas)	
	1935	1936
Current and subcentrals ...	1,203	1,221
Salaries ... ..	4,850	7,216
Various (lawyer, travel etc.)	2,247	1,110
Purchase of material ... ..	494	783
Taxes, levies ... ..	580	550
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	9,374	10,880
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Income</b>		
From Tickets ... ..	12,724	13,145
Other income ... ..	162	71
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total income ... ..	12,886	13,216
Total expenditure ... ..	9,374	10,880
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Difference ... ..	3,512	2,336

Thus, one sees, greater expenditure on material, general expenditure much reduced, improved service.

Representatives of tramways, general buses, of the two Undergrounds and two funicular railways form together the control-committee of urban transport. The administration of every enterprise is independent. They have, according to their importance, one to four delegates in the control committee. Amongst the collectivised enterprises solidarity reigns. The surplus of the one is used to strengthen another that has to struggle with bigger difficulties. Under no circumstances is the surplus simply divided, like capitalist dividends, but is used always for purposes that serve to counteract fascism, or to improve production.

The buses have difficulties with the upkeep of rolling-stock. Certain parts cannot be produced in Spain and valuta for the import

from abroad is not available. Therefore some buses have been withdrawn, the personnel being transferred to the trams.

The Underground has completely modernized its workshops. Now all repairs can be done there, and even new construction. Thus new cars and trains were put into circulation, the traffic was increased by 150 per cent. Quite an extraordinary result of collectivisation, especially if one takes into consideration the difficulties of obtaining material in the midst of war.

The general meeting of the workers takes place at regular intervals. The directing committees have to give account of their activity and the state of the enterprise. Thereafter the new committee is elected. Within one year and a half the committee of the tramway workers has changed twice—a sign of the democratic management of the committees and the responsibility of the workers.

The prices of all materials rose enormously, especially in the last months. For some the increase amounts to more than 600 per cent. The general increase in the cost of living made necessary an increase in wages. The urban transport enterprises paid, as long as they were in private hands, 700,000 pesetas as levies. At present the collectivised enterprises pay three millions annually. All these are heavy burdens, the collectivisation has to bear. But the prices for tickets, already the lowest in Europe, *have not been raised*. One can travel right through the town for 0.15 pesetas. The means of transport functions regularly, and is kept very clean.

The politicians have tried repeatedly to take the urban transport from the workers and get it into their own hands. A whole crowd of professional hooligans wait to get employment there, to live on the backs of the workers. In vain. The transport workers know how to defend their work. On this fact all the attempts at statism and municipalisation break.

And the fact is, that under no other regime, neither private nor state-capitalist, could the enterprise work as under the regime of collectivisation.

The collectivised transport of Barcelona is a splendid example of the technical and organisational capacities of the proletariat. Without highly paid directors and without shareholders, the technical personnel and the workers together took over a big enterprise and conducted it better than before under the capitalist regime. Collectivisation by the CNT means socialisation from below. Collectivisation is real workers' socialism, no State's capitalism. The proletariat of all countries can learn from this.

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