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THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE CIVIL WAR IN SPAIN

One of the most important aspects of the present Spanish developments is the danger of a new imperialist war developing out of them, a war in which the imperialists would disguising the struggle for imperialist expansion as a struggle between fascism and "democracy". Imperialist intervention, which is already carried on by the leading powers in a semi-concealed fashion can light the spark for this new slaughter. The Spanish civil war marks a new high point in the pre-war maneuvering of the different imperialist forces, for points of vantage.

FRANCE and SPAIN

The maturing revolutionary crisis in France has far greater political importance for the fate of Europe and the World, but at the present moment the Spanish developments are such that they will to a large extent determine the pre-conditions for the coming civil war in France.

Whereas a victory of reaction in Spain would greatly strengthen the reactionary forces in France creating conditions favorable for their victory, the victory of the Spanish Workers would pave the way for the proletarian revolution in France.

BASIC ANTAGONISMS OF THE WORLD CAPITALISM

The deep antagonisms within world capitalism today, are again brought to the fore by the Spanish Civil War. A two-fold antagonism flows out of the basic contradictions of international capitalist, i.e.- the struggle among the imperialist powers on the one hand, and on the other the struggle between world capitalism as a whole and the extension of Lenin's October revolution.

The struggle among imperialists is superficially the most prominent aspect of this two-fold antagonism. But that which is decisive is the struggle of the world imperialists against the extension of the October revolution. The imperialist struggles are in a sense, surface indications of a more deep seated antagonism in the present decay stage of capitalism and the actions of the great powers indicate that they understand this reality. This dual antagonism cannot be separated. It is tied into an insoluble contradiction.

THE THREE IMPERIALIST BLOCKS

The imperialist forces, each of which has as its main aim to prevent the extension of the victorious Russian October to western Europe, are divided into the following blocks:

1. The German-Italian fascist bloc, an aggressive group that takes the offensive against Spanish Workers and against the weak and vacillating policies of the bourgeois democrats.
2. The League of Nations bloc, the bourgeois democratic group, led momentarily by France, with England and the Soviet Union. This bloc has been very effectively blocking the extension of the October Revolution. But this bloc is very heterogeneous and will be unable to stand any serious test.
3. The United States is the third force. By itself it stands as the major imperialist power in the world today and can therefore afford to play a lone hand against both of the imperialist blocs using the one against the other for its own ends, in the struggle for markets and in war preparations.

All three groups carry on a struggle against the Spanish workers, against the proletarian revolution, against the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The fascist bloc supports the reactionary rebels while the League of Nations bloc supports the Spanish Peoples Front.

While the forces of these three imperialist blocs are all struggling against the extension of the October Revolution, while dividing their support for the different capitalist factions involved in the internal struggle in Spain, the most reactionary forces in all the countries are siding the reactionary and fascist rebels. The rebels received direct aid from these reactionary forces in France, England and the United States. The Standard Oil interests have sent representatives to the rebel camps. In the U.S. Hearst openly makes propaganda for the Spanish reactionaries. The Spanish workers struggle against tremendous odds on an international scale and need the fullest support of the whole world proletariat including that of the Soviet Union.

THE IMPERIALIST INTEREST IN SPAIN

The inter-imperialist struggle revolves around the following main points: The present civil war in Spain is the result of many years of political and economic crises in a backward country. Due to the inability of the bourgeois democrats to solve the problems of their own revolution this crisis has continued uninterrupted during the five and a half years of the republic. The republic was unable to get at the root of the agrarian question. The church problem, the national question or the economic crisis. The accumulation of these unsolved problems together with the pressure of world capitalism upon Spain created a series of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary explosions. The last of which, the current civil war comes at a most critical period in the realignments and open preparations for the new imperialist war.

Great Britain helped establish the Peoples Front government that is in Spain. Not that Britain especially favors Peoples Front governments but the internal situations existing in France and Spain as well as the strained relations between Britain and Italy determined her attitude on the matter. The Peoples Front was, under the circumstances, the most effective and cheapest method of holding the evermore aggressive working class and oppressed masses in check in the face of a situation that was becoming more revolutionary. A further weakening or defeat of the proletariat in such countries through the channels of reformism would enable the exploiters to carry on for a period before it becomes necessary to switch to a more open dictatorial form of subjection.

Great Britain needs Spain as an ally at the entrance to the Mediterranean. Italy's Mediterranean plans, as well as those other powers, require that a government friendly to Britain to control the regions on both sides of the straits of Gibraltar. This is essential for the protection of the life line of the British Empire.

On the other hand, Italy is openly supporting the reactionary rebels in hopes of securing a key position near Gibraltar. Both Germany and Italy realize the importance of the struggle in Spain. Both realize that it is essentially a struggle between Communism and Fascism and that only in a secondary sense, is the issue of Fascism vs. Democracy involved. Events in Spain having passed beyond the stage of civil peace through "democratic" parliamentary means, the Fascist bloc must now play Spain as another card in the game of war preparations.

France and its Peoples Front government for their own self protection are forced to support the Spanish Peoples Front regime. As is typical with middle class politicians, they do this in the most cowardly half-hearted fashion. France now takes the initiative in the League of Nations for a "neutrality pact" in Spain, and thereby enables England to play the same role in the present struggle that France played in the Italo-Ethiopian war, that of playing both ends against each other.

The United States takes a direct interest in the Civil War, not only for the protection of her investments in Spain, but primarily to prevent Great Britain from utilizing this situation to obtain a European bloc against the United States and in order to prevent the spread of the proletarian revolution in Western Europe. The immense economic might of United States imperialism is brought in to play, diplomatic notes are written demanding protection of property, war ships are dispatched to Spanish waters.

The Soviet Union is playing a secondary role within the "anti-fascist" bloc in Europe without the least semblance of an independent working class policy.

THE MARXIST POSITION

A separate position in the struggle is that of revolutionary Marxism which represents the interests of the workers and oppressed masses of all countries. Its policies are based on the

independent class action of the proletariat against all the forces of the enemy classes. Its line is to divide its enemies and to defeat them; not to support one group of exploiters against another. This essential task can only be accomplished on the basis of the political and organizational independence of the revolutionary Marxian organization in Spain and throughout the world in the ranks of a Communist Fourth International.

IF THE SPANISH WORKERS ARE DEFEATED

The struggle in Spain is but one phase of the international struggle of the world proletariat for its complete emancipation.

If the Spanish proletariat is defeated either by a victory of reaction or by a compromise of the bourgeois democrats through an open betrayal by the Peoples Front, its negative repercussions will have disastrous effects on the whole world labor movement. This will favor the Stalinist and capitalist elements in the Soviet Union to the detriment of the Russian workers. It will favor the reactionary forces in the approaching civil war in France even though it may momentarily stiffen the resistance of the bourgeois democrats (liberals, Stalinists, socialists) in the defensive struggles against reaction and fascism. Isolated and with their backs to the wall the French workers will fight desperately under the greatest disadvantages. A defeat of the working class in Spain would give rise to a consolidation of the fascist forces throughout the world. It would give the reactionary forces every advantage in the impending civil war in France.

A VICTORY OF THE SPANISH WORKERS

Come what may in Spain, the government of the Peoples Front is doomed. Bourgeois democracy is washed out in Spain and the issue is clearly - Fascism or Communism.

A victory of the Spanish workers, fighting valiantly on the barricades today, can only mean the establishment of a Soviet Spain. This will alter the whole international situation turning the tide against fascism throughout the world. This victory will be extended to other countries. It will give the workers of France the needed impulse to smash through the Peoples Front strait-jacket, defeat reaction and overthrow capitalism. It will give renewed energies to the proletarian forces in the Soviet Union against Stalinism and against the disintegration toward capitalism. It will lay a material foundation for the establishment of the Communist Fourth International. It will accelerate the developments of the North American labor movement into left channels and enable the Marxists to gain points of advantage against the reformist socialists and their Trotskyite fringe, the Stalinists and their Lovestonite cam-followers and the reformist labor and farmer-labor fakers.

II

REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION EXISTS

The situation in Spain has for months been a definitely revolutionary one. All of the objective factors are present for a victorious proletarian revolution. Only a Marxist vanguard with an independent revolutionary policy is lacking. Spain's situation is that of a semi-colonial country with a relatively strong bourgeoisie only in Catalonia and the Basque Provinces. Its agrarian base is mainly feudal. The nation's economy was ruined by a dozen or more years of post-war depression, internal struggles among the ruling groups and the wasteful adventure in Morocco. The great mass of workers and peasants are class conscious and affiliated to organizations that have declared in one form or another for the overthrow of capitalism.

The struggle against the monarchy, culminating in its overthrow in April 1931, marked the beginning of the democratic stage of the Spanish Social Revolution which is now overripe for passage to the next stage. The inability of the Spanish bourgeoisie to solve the most elementary problems of the democratic revolution was demonstrated during the two years of the Republican Socialist coalition (1931-33) and also during the six months period of Republican rule under the Peoples Front. Five and one-half years have passed since the overthrow of the monarchy and feudalism still dominates rural economy. The power of the church, the army, the caciques was not broken by the liberal bourgeoisie weak sisters. To the extent that reforms have been realized it has only been through the direct revolutionary actions of the masses who have seized land, burned churches and pressed the class struggle on every front against the opposition of their reformist leaders of the Communist and Socialist Parties.

The two above mentioned parties, and especially the Communist Party, contend that it is necessary for Spain to complete its bourgeois democratic revolution under capitalism. They are opposed to the organization of Soviets and oppose the transformation of the Workers Alliances into organisms that could play the role of Soviets. At a time when only the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship can definitely stop Fascism, they defend the capitalist forms and open the door for reaction.

III

THE AGRARIAN QUESTION

The major democratic task of the Spanish revolution is the solution of the land question. The fact that in almost six years, the republic was unable to more than scratch the surface of the agrarian problem, is the clearest demonstration of the Marxist claim that the democratic bourgeoisie is unable to solve the problems of the democratic revolution.

The peasants have secured land only to the extent that they have been prepared to take matters into their own hands and seize it outright. This was equally true under the more recent period of

the Peoples Front regime. after the peasants seized the lands, the government would either use the troops to oust them, or else pass a law to the effect that the land is now theirs. Such legal action was only the results of the direct mass action of the peasants themselves.

The non-fulfillment of the agrarian demands under the Republican-Socialist coalition government of Azana-Largo Caballero in the 1931-33 period, resulted in large sections of the disillusioned peasantry switching their support to the Rightist parties or else abstaining from participation in the elections of November 1933 thus giving the Rights an important election victory at that time.

The attitude of the peasantry in the present civil war is largely determined by whether or not they have secured or still have hopes of securing lands under the republic. The peasants of Navarre who owe nothing to the republic, support the Catholics and the Carlists. The peasants of Badajoz Province who have fought for their lands and in many cases won them under the Republic, even though this struggle was opposed by the republicans, fought valiantly and desperately against the invasion of Franco's troops. The peasantry will not follow the democratic bourgeoisie which gives them nothing. If their support against fascism is to be relied upon, they must be encouraged to seize the land now. The proletariat is the only force capable of taking the initiative in the struggle for "LAND TO THE PEASANTS". Then, for the defense of their conquests, no sacrifice will be too great for them, and they will be the most reliable allies of the revolutionary working class.

IV

REORIENTATION WITHIN THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Each and every forward step of the Spanish revolution was made through direct mass actions and struggle. Every case of back-sliding was the result of capitulations and the subordination of the workers struggles to the bourgeoisie. Thus, the electoral victory of the Rights in November 1933 resulted from the disillusionment of the petty-bourgeois masses with a government that could not fulfill its own democratic program. This made them easy prey for the demagogy of the Rightist parties. Later, the general strike and armed uprising in Asturias in October 1934, successfully checked the further progress of Fascism. While defeated on the barricades, the Asturian miners were politically victorious. Their struggle laid the basis for a number of re-orientations within the labor movement. It developed the spirit of independent struggle expressed in numerous militant strikes; it laid the basis for the Leftist electoral victory of Feb. 1936; it was a precondition for the creation of the workers Militias which are today doing such effective work in the armed struggle against the counter-revolution.

The victory of Fascism in Germany has also had a decisive influence on Spanish events. Firstly: it showed the danger of divided working class in the face of Fascism. The calls of the "Left Opposition to form a united front in Germany" were later taken up by other forces in other countries on the basis of the German

lessons. But in the application of the united front a number of serious distortions have been made. The Workers Alliance in Asturias was a correct proletarian united front and played a highly revolutionary role, but the concepts of two party pacts without freedom of criticism, organic unity under the slogan of a single working class party, and the People's Front, which is not a working class united front at all but merely a means of tying the proletariat to the policies of the liberal bourgeoisie, are all detrimental and especially dangerous in a revolutionary period.

V

THE SOCIALIST PARTY

The Spanish Socialist Labor Party - section of the Second International - has gone through a series of ideological and organizational changes since it was ousted from the Socialist Republican Coalition Government by the Rightist electoral victory of Nov. 1933. Francisco Largo Caballero, ex-Minister of Labor with a not-to-be envied record for breaking strikes, soon became the leader of the Left Wing within the Socialist Party, declaring for the armed insurrection and proletarian dictatorship. The overwhelming majority of the Socialist Youth and a considerable section of the party rallied to this Left Faction. Indalecio Prieto and the Right Wing continued to support a policy of reformism.

At the outset, the Socialist Youth called for a break with the Second International and was moving definitely in the direction of the Fourth. The new orientation of the international Trotskyist organization and the change in policy of the stalinists who commenced to talk united front and unity with those who but the day previous they had called social-fascists seriously influenced and in a negative sense, the leftward development of the Socialist Left. Instead of continuing on the logical course of leftward development, corresponding to the rising revolutionary wave, the Socialist Left, in the post-October period fell prey to the illusions of organic unity and drew closer to the Stalinist International. Today, following the fusions between the two youth organizations and the Catalonian fusion, the Socialist Left and the Communist Party are on the verge of fusion. Such a step could only be accomplished as in the case of the youth - on the basis of adherence to the Third International and acceptance in the main of the Stalinist line of betrayal in Spain.

Many honest revolutionary workers, unable to stomach the inconsistencies of Largo Caballero on the one hand, and those of stalinism on the other, are connected today with the Right wing of the Socialist Party. They are grouped around Gonzalez Pena who was prominent in the leadership of the Asturias uprising and claim that on the basis of past actions (Oct. 1934) they are as revolutionary or more so than is the faction of Largo Caballero. However the Prieto-Pena group is at present tied to the bourgeois politicians to a degree not exceeded by that of the Left wing and the Stalinists.

The Socialist Party influences the policies of the General Workers Union (U.G.T.) which has one million or more members throughout Spain. Largo Caballero is General Secy. of the U.G.T.

VI

THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Due precisely to the revolutionary situation existing in Spain, the line of collaboration with the bourgeois liberals stands out with extraordinary clarity. The Stalinists, during the whole period preceding the present civil war, called daily in their press for the unconditional support of the Government of Azana-Casares Quiroga, branding as provocateurs and fascist agents all those who favored the intensification of the daily class struggle. Occasionally the attention of the Government would be respectfully called, to some unfulfilled point in the election program of the Peoples Front, "Mundo Obrero", the Stalinist organ became quite adept at the art of slapping the wrists of their bourgeois allies of the Peoples Front.

It is but natural that in this revolutionary period, the toiling masses of Spain should look with hope and admiration towards the Soviet Union, hoping to find their inspiration for their own struggles. On the prestige of the Russian October and the right swing after the German debacle, the Communist Party of Spain has increased its membership many times over. Large sections of Left Socialist workers, realizing the direction in which their leaders are moving, have drawn the logical conclusion and switched their allegiance to the Communist Party.

In Catalonia, the local socialist Party district, fused with the local Stalinist organization a few weeks ago. The Catalan Proletarian Party and the Socialist Union of Catalonia also joined in at this fusion to create the Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia. The whole basis of the new organization rests on the policy of the Peoples Front, a close collaboration with the Esquerra, left bourgeois nationalist movement. Actually, if not formally, it adheres to the Stalinist international.

VII

THE ANARCHO-SYNDICALISTS

The Anarcho-Syndicalist movement has a membership of over half a million, organized in the unions of the National Confederation of Labor (N.N.T.) The political guiding force within this movement is the Iberian Anarchist Federation (F.A.I). Both of these organizations include Portugal.

During the whole period of the revolution the anarcho-syndicalists have occupied a position decidedly to the left of the Socialist Party and they are today far to the left of the Socialist and Stalinist parties, both of which support the republican regime which during the period from Feb. to July 1936, carried on a policy of continual persecution against the syndicalist unions.

Until very recently, the general line of the anarcho-syndicalists had many points of similarity with that of the Stalinists during the "Third Period". Three distinct "putsches" were staged by the

anarchists between 1931 and Jan. 1934. They refused to participate in any united front movement. The concept of the "united front from below" was expressed as the "united front in the streets", and "under our banner". In the Oct. 1934 uprising, this resulted in the non-participation of the anarcho-syndicalists excepting in the Province of Asturias, where due to the pro-united attitude of the local people, the G.N.T. was affiliated to the Workers Alliance. Following the Asturias uprising, great ferment developed within the ranks of the G.N.T. which culminated in the National Congress held in Zaragoza last May. While the old phraseology was retained, and the apolitical principles of libertarian anarchism were repeated, a number of steps were taken in the direction of a more realistic approach to the current problems of the revolution. A resolution in favor of the Workers Alliance was adopted with an attempt to give said alliances an apolitical cloak.

An opposition faction which had split from the C.N.T. several years ago re-entered the Confederation on the basis of the new line on the united front and basic agreement on the main orientation of the Congress in the sense that an immediate social revolution was on the order of the day.

The workers of the C.N.T. are today in the forefront of the struggle against armed reaction where they fight side by side with their class brothers of other tendencies. Although their orientation is not for the perpetuation of the bourgeois state under a liberal Peoples Front regime their non Marxian program prevents them from carrying the revolution to a successful conclusion.

VIII

THE WORKERS PARTY OF MARXIST UNIFICATION (POUM)

The POUM was formed about one year ago as the result of the fusion of the Communist Left (Trotskyist) and the Workers and Peasants Bloc (Maurin group). It is the largest working class political party in Catalonia with a lesser membership nationally. The membership may be estimated at about 10,000 and about six times that many as sympathizers. It published newspapers in Spanish and Catalan as well as a theoretical magazine. It is affiliated to the centrist Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity (IAG).

On the general theoretical problems of the revolution, the application of the theory of the permanent revolution to Spain, etc., the points of view of the POUM are in the main correct and Marxist. But it is not yet a Marxist party. While attacking the Peoples Front theoretically, it joined with the Peoples Front in the election bloc of last February, and has since then played a tail-endist role with regard to other parties. Its own independent activity has for a number of months been conditioned by whatever the other parties are doing. In its programmatic documents, the POUM will severely criticise both the C.P. and the S.P. declaring both to be bankrupt and utterly hopeless. This statement will be followed by the conclusion that "after all unity is essential" and the suggestion that the other parties designate representatives to

a contact commission in which the POUM will also participate for the discussion of the possible political basis for "Revolutionary Marxist unification". The best of theoretical analyses are valueless if such an attitude of non-confidence in itself as the revolutionary vanguard is adopted in action. The POUM has on a number of occasions shown itself to be impotent to lead in the struggle for Marxist clarification and leadership of the working class precisely because of this organic unity line. Priceless weeks and opportunities that might have been utilized in the building of a revolutionary party were thus frittered away.

IX

"UNITY" CONFUSIONISM

In September 1934, the Stalinist Party which had opposed the Workers Alliance as a fascist plot to keep the masses away from the C.P., suddenly reversed its policy and joined the workers Alliance movement. Within two months the Stalinists were claiming internationally that it was they who had forged this instrument of united front action, when in truth the original founders of the Workers Alliance had been the Communist Left, the Maurin group and the Syndicalist Libertarian Federation.

In the period following Oct. 1934, a tremendous general sentiment for unity swept over the Spanish masses. It permeated even the most sectarian forces, was presented in a variety of distortions, and in general ran right up the alley of the Stalinists and the bourgeois liberals. The Workers Alliance had been established as a united front of working class parties and trade unions to the exclusion of the bourgeois and petty bourgeois forces. The Stalinists soon introduced the Peoples Front agitating for the extension of the united front to include all so-called progressive forces irrespective of class. This was in reality a negation of the proletarian united front, for while the Workers Alliances were based on inter-party agreements for joint struggle against fascism and for the overthrow of capitalism, the Peoples Front was built on the agreement of capitalist and working class parties, to preserve capitalist democracy and to patch up the capitalist system. In the very recent period the Socialist Party, Socialist Youth and the C.N.T. have all declared their support of the Workers Alliances, but none of these organizations have the correct concept of what the role of the Alliances should be. Having either opposed the Workers Alliances or else sabotaged their formation for a considerable period, and having only declared in favor of them under pressure from their own followers, they now distort the idea of the Workers Alliance filling it with their own interpretations. Thus the Stalinists favor Workers Alliances which can serve as an extension of the Peoples Front. The C.P. has declared against Soviets for Spain which means that they do not seriously want to build the Workers Alliances to the point where these can play the role that the Soviets did in Russia. The Left Socialists express a different concept of the Workers Alliances in each and every article that they publish. At one point they will declare that the Workers Alliances will be the organs of proletarian dictatorship, then Largo Caballero will declare that the

proletarian dictatorship in Spain must be exercised by the Socialist Party and by no one else, and finally they will make a statement of agreement with the Stalinist line, to the effect that the Peoples Front must be strengthened and that under the Peoples Front the democratic revolution will be achieved.

The C.N.T. has long been divided on this question and even today, after the Zaragoza Congress, a maximum of confusion reigns in their ranks on the question. The organization is now on record for a Revolutionary "Workers Alliance" of the unions, for the overthrow of capitalism. Some of the C.N.T. forces are opposed to any pact with the political parties until the parties renounce their purpose of "seizing power" while the anarchist and syndicalist forces are out to "destroy power".

But on the other aspects of the "unity" fever, the POUM has had, as we have pointed out previously, an extremely erroneous position. Its errors are in the field of building the vanguard party.

On the political field as well as on the field of the united front, much confusion has been caused in the name of unity. Parties and groups of the most divergent origin and heterogeneous character, have fused on hodge-podge makeshift political programs. As these have been dealt with separately elsewhere, we shall only enumerate these fusions at this point.

1. Fusion of the Communist Left and the Workers and Peasants Bloc creating the Workers Party of Marxist Unification, affiliated to the I.A.G.

2. Fusion of the Young Communist Federation and the Socialist Youth into the United Socialist Youth League, with fraternal adherence to the Young Communist International and pledged to the creation of a broad United Youth League to include liberals and Catholics or as it is officially stated "all non-fascist youth organizations".

3. Fusion of the Communist Party of Catalonia, Catalan Federation of the Spanish Socialist Party, Catalan Proletarian Party and Socialist Union of Catalonia into the Unified Socialist of Catalonia, adhering in principle to the Communist International.

4. Unity negotiations now under way between the socialist Left which has not yet split from the official S.P., and the Communist Party.

5. On the Trade Union Field, the Stalinist unions entered the U.G.T.; the opposition unions which had split from the CNT, reentered that Federation at its Zaragoza Congress, and the Labor Federation of Trade Union Unity was created in Catalonia through the fusion of several small federations, with a membership of about 60,000 and under the influence of the POUM. The object of this latter is to serve as the beginning of a nationwide movement for trade union unity through which it is hoped to unite the UGT and the CNT into a single national federation of labor.

Throughout the whole blind striving towards unity by the Spanish working class the Leninist concept of the revolutionary vanguard party is being lost. Every so-called "Marxist" organization agitates for a "united Marxist party" at a time when the crying need of the movement is for clarity rather than unity in the

abstract. Unity with whom and for what? This is the question which must be correctly answered by the POUM before it can hope to successfully fulfill the vanguard role.

THE ARMY

The traditionally reactionary character of the Spanish army was not changed during the six years of the republic. Most of the officers, were drawn from the landed aristocracy and served under the old monarchy. It is only natural that the army officers of the Peoples Front government, who were allowed to plot against the republic undisturbed by the bourgeois democrats, have now become the spearhead of the counter-revolution.

The brunt of the present armed struggle against reaction is now being borne by the civilian militias or workers and peasants. The general leadership of these forces and the responsibility for major political decisions is in the hands of the Peoples Front government and its representatives. "Loyal" officers of the army and Civil Guards decide the military strategy of the struggle against the rebellion, and are thus in an advantageous position to openly betray the workers at any time.

The proletariat as the only force that can lead the struggle against fascism to complete victory must secure exclusive control over its own armed forces. The steps taken in this direction by the workers of Catalonia must be applied throughout Spain and so organized as to guarantee the fullest participation of the toiling masses in the designation of the officers of their militia.

Those sections of the official armed forces which are now fighting side by side with the workers against the reactionaries, must be reorganized along democratic lines with the election of officers from their ranks. This will insure against an eleventh hour betrayal by the "republican" officers.

Unless the Working class takes immediate steps to free its armed forces from the Peoples Front jurisdiction which means their control by the "loyal" army officers, and instead organize workers soldiers and peasants soviets which control the armed forces, the working class will be unable to take the offensive against the counter-revolution.

These two moves -- for the workers control of their own militias and the democratization of the army -- would be steps towards the creation of a Red Army in Spain. This would be the most powerful instrument of the proletariat for the crushing of reaction, for the struggle against the inevitable imperialist intervention, for the insurrection against capitalism and for the revolutionary war of the Spanish proletariat in support of the French workers tomorrow.

X

CLASS STRUGGLE VS. CLASS COLLABORATION

At every crucial point in the Spanish revolution, it has been the independent, direct, mass action of the proletariat which has

made revolutionary progress necessary. This fact has at times been hidden by surface camouflage. It is a common error to assert that the monarchy was voted out of existence by an orderly election. In reality it was a series of general strikes and mass actions in the streets which shattered the whole monarchistic structure before the elections took place. It was similar in the case of the February elections of 1936 where the basis for the electoral victory was created by the armed struggles in the Oct. 1934 uprising. The whole wave of strikes following the February elections and which the Stalinists and Socialists so ineffectively tried to stem, prepared the basis for a new revolutionary advance by the proletariat. The inability of the working class parties to take advantage of this situation was a contributing factor in the preparation of the counter-revolutionary uprising.

The Peoples Front is the organized expression of the forces of class collaboration. Its role is to curb the independent struggles of the masses tying the proletariat to the bourgeoisie. By strangling the Workers Alliances and hindering the independent struggles of the workers, the Peoples Front betrays the very democratic struggles that it is supposed to conduct; it paves the way for reaction and fascism by stifling the only forces capable of effectively smashing the fascist danger.

During the whole period following the Feb. elections, the government of Azana-Casares Quiroga freely and consistently used the armed forces of the state against workers and peasants demonstrations and strikes, while the reactionary forces were allowed to continue their preparations for the counter-revolution under the very noses of, and even inside of the very organs of the government itself. The Peoples Front filled the jails with strike leaders, it outlawed the CNT, closed workers halls, maintained the most rigid press censorship. But in spite of the Peoples Front and the traitors in the leadership of the C.P. and the S.P., the proletariat continued to struggle. General strikes in whole cities, provinces, industries became daily occurrences. Because of the lack of a genuine Marxist party capable of directing this struggle, the CNT was able in the majority of cases to assume the leadership of this movement, thereby gaining tremendously in influence, numbers and prestige at the expense of its rivals in both the political and trade union fields. In many cases, of course, the local strikes were led by the forces of the C.P. and S.P. whose subsidiary organizations frequently get out of hand and "allow themselves to be provoked" into conducting revolutionary struggles.

XI

THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION AS APPLIED TO SPAIN

The menace of fascism in Spain cannot be eliminated except through the setting up of a proletarian dictatorship. Historically only Soviet power can defeat fascism. It may be possible to check the reactionary advance for a period as was done in Oct. 1934. But unless the proletariat follows up its partial victory by aggressive action aimed at the seizure of power, the advantage gained by these strategic victories will be short lived.

Fascism comes to power as the result of the proletariat not having played its historic role and seizing power when the objective conditions were favorable. The question is posed categorically -- Fascism or Proletarian revolution. There can be no middle road.

The Marxist theory of the permanent revolution finds its clearest living demonstration in the Spanish revolution. Spain is today a semi-colonial country subordinated to the financial and economic domination of French and British imperialism. Within the country the Basque and Catalan bourgeoisie carry on a national struggle against the big landlords and feudal elements dominant in the rest of Spain, a struggle which they continually betray and which in the final analysis, can only be victorious under the leadership of the proletariat.

Spain and Portugal are the only countries in western Europe that have not yet completed their democratic revolution. The overthrow of the monarchy in 1931 marked the beginning of what should be, historically the beginning of the final revolutionary struggle in Spain. For in our epoch, no struggle against the feudal remnants in a backward semi-colonial country can be successful unless it is carried over into a general struggle against the imperialist masters and the "revolutionary" national bourgeoisie itself.

Applied to Spain, this means that the democratic revolution commenced by the Republican and Labor forces in 1930-31, cannot possibly be completed in itself. The democratic revolution in Spain is not a separate bourgeois democratic revolution as the Stalinists and Socialists contend. In accordance with today's application of the Marxist theory of the permanent revolution, the present struggles in Spain must be recognized as the democratic phase of the socialist revolution. Even the democratic tasks of the Spanish revolution are insoluble under capitalism as has been demonstrated by the experience of the last six years.

XII

POLITICAL BASIS OF THE PRESENT REBELLION.

As has been pointed out the present revolt was organized under the very nose of the Peoples Front government, and with the connivance of many government officials. Hegemony in the revolt is held by the military chieftains who have their own ax to grind. A definite caste in Spanish society for years, they realize that any trend towards socialism or even bourgeois democracy is the death knell of their age-old prerogatives.

Although some of the forces hesitated at first, it is now clear that all of the so-called Rights are supporting the uprising. A very heterogeneous force, the rebellious movement consists of the Catholic, Fascist, Monarchist and Right Republican parties and tendencies. These represent the feudal interests of nobility, church and landholders, as well as certain reactionary sections of the bourgeoisie, supported by certain elements of the peasantry who having been defrauded of their hopes for agrarian reform by two liberal republican governments have listened to the demagoguery of the Right. The counter-revolutionary Spanish forces are under the direct hegemony of the Italian and German Fascists who were the driving force in organizing the rebellion. In the event of a victory of the rebels, the army officers would attempt to establish a military dictatorship. In this they would soon run afoul of the fascists and other non-military elements giving rise to a new civil strife.

FOR THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

The crushing of the present reactionary uprising is the most urgent task facing the revolutionist throughout the world and the Spanish proletariat today, - but this cannot be considered as an object in itself. Unless a more fundamental struggle against the whole capitalist-feudal economic structure is developed, unless the working class fights independently against reaction and the Peoples Front regime itself, no victory is possible against the counter-revolution. The only way out of the present chaos for the Spanish workers, the only way to defeat the counter-revolution is through the proletariat revolution and its democratic phase under the leadership of the Spanish proletariat.

SPANISH WORKERS MUST SMASH COUNTER-REVOLUTION AND SEIZE STATE POWER.

THE WORKING CLASS MUST CONTROL ITS OWN ARMED FORCES.

STALINISTS AND SOCIALISTS BLOCK ROAD TO PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION.

NO SUPPORT TO AZANA * ORGANIZE WORKERS SOLDIERS PEASANTS SOVIETS

NATIONALIZE INDUSTRY AND BANKS - WORKERS CONTROL OF PRODUCTION

LAND TO THE PEASANTS - EXPROPRIATE THE CHURCH

THE RIGHT OF SELF DETERMINATION - FOR THE UNION OF IBERIAN SOVIET
FOR MOROCCO, CATALONIA, THE REPUBLICS
BASQUES

ORGANIZE A REVOLUTIONARY - ESTABLISH THE DICTATORSHIP OF
MARXIAN PARTY THE PROLETARIAT

EXTEND THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION TO SPAIN

FOUND THE COMMUNIST FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

INTRODUCTORY ARTICLE

Building the Party in a period of Civil War

No precedent for building a party in Civil war.

If a revolutionary Marxian party is not organized in a country before the revolutionary situation develops and a period of civil war opens up, the question which must be answered is, - will it be possible to accomplish this task within the period of Civil War? If the answer is no, then the revolution is doomed because no revolutionary situation can be transformed into a successful revolution without a Revolutionary Marxian party that has influence among the broad layers of the masses. Today there is no precedent for the creation of a

party in the period of Civil War, just like yesterday, there was no precedent for the seizure of power by the masses under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party in a backward country. Therefore, we must present the theoretical outline of this important question.

Revolutionary defeats and disintegration leaves proletariat without Parties.

The years of revolutionary defeats under Stalinist-Socialist leadership and the disintegration following the German debacle with the right shift of the different forms of liquidation under the Stalinist-Socialist and Trotskyites has left the proletariat without an international and without Revolutionary Marxian Parties. Small and scattered Marxian groups, isolated from the masses exist here and there.

This startling contradiction, after decades of revolutionary activity under the banner of Marxism exists upon a background of an objective ripe situation for social revolutions. The period of wars and revolutions as the outgrowth of the present decay stage of capitalism is most favorable for the creation of revolutionary parties.

The role of the party

Without a revolutionary Marxian party there can be no successful revolution. Revolutionary situations may develop time and again, but it will not be possible to transform these revolutionary situations into successful revolutions without a revolutionary Marxian party.

The cadre party with mass influence

The question of organizing a cadre party (a revolutionary Marxian party) with mass influence, which is not a mass party (a party that opens its doors to the masses and does not assimilate them) is the burning question of the moment for revolutionists everywhere. Such above all demands as its AXIS the political and organizational independence of the revolutionary Marxian ORGANIZATION. Without this principle basis the organization of a party, no matter how long a time is at the disposal of a group, a revolutionary Marxian party capable of leading the masses to victory will not be organized. The Marxian organization, no matter how small, must always keep within the guiding framework of its objective - State Power. Such an organization must at each given step coordinate suitable forms of theory and practice. To speak of theory today and practice tomorrow will only lead to sectarian isolation or an opportunist road to the masses once the group attempts to break out of its isolation. As a small organization it must of necessity be a propaganda group with a MASS LINE, and which participates in the class struggle to the degree of its ability at the same time it presents a Marxian analysis of the major and decisive questions which confront not only the class but society as a whole it will not succeed. On such a basis the small isolated organization will be able to win the masses to its line and to transform itself into a cadre party with mass influence.

The will to a party is the will to power

To argue that a Marxian party cannot be organized in a period of Civil War and therefore the revolution is doomed to defeat is to give up the proletariat, is to have no faith in the class and its

small group of Marxists, is a line of defeat and capitulation, no matter how active is the participation in the struggle. We answer in the affirmative. We say it is not an easy task. We state that the odds are against the few Marxists and that more failures than successes under these conditions are sure to follow. But we are confident that it is not only theoretically nor excluded, that it is not only theoretically possible, but that with the will to power it is PRACTICALLY possible for a small Marxian organization to hammer out a Marxian Party capable of leading the masses to power, of holding power and of establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The organization of a party

Above all a party must be organized before the revolutionary situation develops. It is criminal to wait, to say the conditions are not favorable and to say we will wait until more favorable conditions develop. With a party organized BEFORE the CIVIL WAR victory is ASSURED, but with a party to be organized during the civil war, victory is not impossible but is not assured.

To say that a party CANNOT be organized in a period of civil war (not that it is an extremely difficult and major task) is to confuse the TIME element with the DYNAMICS of revolutionary periods. Parties can be organized in periods of "civil peace" under a democracy, or under a reactionary dictatorship with the most adverse illegal conditions -- and a party can be organized in a period of Civil War. Parties can be organized in period of revolutionary upswings and in periods of revolutionary defeats. Certain conditions are far more favorable than other conditions, but to select one stage or period of the class struggle and to say that under this stage no party can be built is to ignore the fundamentals of the class society and the theory of Marxism.

The will to a new party

"HAVE THE WILL TO BUILD A NEW PARTY AND ALL THE OPPRESSED WILL COME TO YOU." This is what Lenin said in the April period, when he arrived in Russia from Europe, when he found the party's position false, when it was clearly revealed that the line of the party would lead to defeat, when Lenin realized that if his line was not adopted he would have to split the party. Lenin threatened to to the masses if the Marxian line was not adopted. THIS WAS IN A PERIOD OF CIVIL WAR. Lenin realized and understood the dynamics of the revolution.

The time to build a party is ALL THE TIME, in period of "civil peace", democratic or Fascist, legal or illegal, and Civil War. If a party is not organized BEFORE CIVIL WAR, THEN IT MUST BE ORGANIZED DURING CIVIL WAR. Insofar as the party is concerned there is no such word as can't, in organizing it, once we have a Marxian group with a revolutionary Marxian line.

More rapid progress in building and in steeling the party can be made in the period of civil war than in any other period. Those who carry on the class struggle in periods of "civil peace" and in this period build the party, and even if they carry on the class

struggle in Civil War and say the party cannot be organized, are in reality not carrying on the class struggle and revolution. To leave out the question of the party, or to seal its fate in advance in the period of Civil War is capitulation, is revisionism.

We have the will to a party but we are "defeated"

As stated before we may have the will to a party but in the Civil War, the objective conditions may be such that the proletariat are defeated and the party is not organized, or the party is not organized and the proletariat is defeated. But such a defeat is the kind of a "defeat" that Lenin's party had in 1905. While all other parties had a negative defeat and politically further disintegrated and laid the premise in 1905 for their 1917 mistakes, the Bolsheviks under Lenin's leadership used 1905 as a stepping stone for 1917. As long as capitalism exists, the class struggle will continue and sooner or later it will break out into Civil War. The WILL to a party in the first defeated Civil War is the absolute necessary prerequisite for the building of the party in the reactionary period following and in the Civil War when it comes once more.

Such a condition is true not only within a country where the general trend throughout the world is on the revolutionary upsurge, or under a condition where the general trend is world wide defeats and disintegration. It will be far more difficult in the period of disintegration but not impossible.

A favorable situation and the party

A favorable situation, such as we have had many times and as we have now in Spain; a situation where the majority of the conditions are favorable for a successful revolution - except there is no revolutionary Marxian Party. Such a condition, if a party is not organized means failure, even though power may be seized momentarily, it cannot be held or extended. But to stretch this and to add that because there is no party no party can be organized is false to the core. This favorable situation is the basis for the rapid organization of a party by a small revolutionary Marxian organization. One day of civil war is worth a thousand days of struggle under "civil peace". In such a period, a small group with a correct line, with a will to power and with correct slogans can move the masses and storm the heights of capitalism and organize a party.

Victory is needed to start process or Revolutionary upsurge

No one will deny that in periods of revolutionary upsurge it is far more favorable for the seizure of power than in periods of defeats and disintegration. But to conclude that it is not possible to organize and create parties and seize power in the present period in those countries where revolutionary situations mature (Spain, next France, etc.) is to say that it is IMPOSSIBLE to ever overthrow capitalism or take power. The need of the hour, to transform the period of disintegration into a period of upsurge, to revitalize the moment on a world scale, is precisely the transformation of a revolutionary situation into a successful revolution.

The revolution is the vehicle for the small organization to organize a powerful party.

Soviets are the instruments of the class under party guidance for the struggle for power. Soviets can and will spring up as class instruments without a party leading and guiding; when the Marxian forces are small and scattered. Of course it is far better if the Marxists can take the reins at the very beginning. But as a minority in these bodies, a correct line will transform the minority into the majority in the period of CIVIL WAR.

A world party

The question of organizing a party in the period of civil war must not only be considered in relation to the dynamics of the revolution (and not TIME) but also in relation to world capitalism and to a Marxian concept of a party - that it must at all times be an international organization. Again international or itself does not merely mean having forces in every, or many countries. It means international in the political sense primarily, however, the greater number of organizations it has in a number of countries the more favorable for successful revolutions.

The Marxists today confront a most difficult situation. No parties, no international. But we have far more theoretical and practical experience to draw from than any Marxian group in the past. Marxists today stand on the shoulders of the whole experience of the past.

When we speak of the creation of a party in the period of civil war we speak within the framework of this experience and of a WORLD PARTY. Lenin and his closest co-workers were not in Russia when the revolution broke out. From the vulgar nationalist viewpoint, Lenin, "did not understand Russia", "was too long in Europe" to be of value for the revolution.

To send capable revolutionists and cadres from one country to another to assist small Marxian groups, or if necessary to "import" a Marxian group, is an essential element of revolution, if such is lacking in the Civil War, within one country.

The international repercussions of Civil War

Above all, civil war in one country, which reaches the point where the rule of the exploiters is seriously challenged or momentarily defeated, is a condition that cannot be confined to that country in the present decay stage. The international complications around the Spanish Civil War once again atests to this fact. This is impetus to start struggles in other countries, to extend the revolution. The permanent revolution carries with it the dynamics for the creation of revolutionary Marxian parties in the most adverse conditions.

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ON STALIN'S FRAME UP OF KAMENEV, ZINOVIEV AND TROTSKY

PREPARING FOR REVOLT

Letter to the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democrat Labour (Bolshevik) Party

End of August 1917.

Maybe these lines will arrive too late, for events are developing at a really giddy speed. However, I am taking the risk of writing them, for I consider it to be a duty.

The Kornilov rising is (at such a moment and in such a form) a formidable and, one might say, a really unbelievable dramatic stroke.

Like every sudden and complete change in the political outlook it demands a revision of our tactics. And as in every revision, we must be more than careful, not to fail our principles.

To admit the point of view of those who advocate national defense or even (like certain Bolsheviks) would go to the extent of coalition with the Social-Revolutionaries, in support of the provisional Government, would be, I am deeply convinced, to fall into the grossest error and at the same time to prove an absolute lack of principle. We shall not become partisans of national defense until after the seizure of power by the proletariat, until after the offer of peace, until after the secret treaties have been cancelled and relations with the banks broken. Neither the capture of Riga, nor the capture of Petrograd will make us partisans of national defense. Until the moment of the seizure of power by the proletariat, we are for the proletarian revolution, we are against the "defensists".

Even now, we must not support the revolution of Kerensky. It would be a failure of principle. How then, it will be said, must Kornilov not be fought? Certainly, yes. But between fighting Kornilov and supporting Kerensky there is a difference; there is a limit to all things, and that limit is passed by a few Bolsheviks when they fall for conciliation, and let themselves be carried away by the torrents of events.

We wage and shall continue to wage war on Kornilov, but we do not support Kerensky; we unveil his feebleness. There is a difference. That difference is subtle enough, but most essential, and it must not be forgotten.

In what, then, does our change of tactics following on the Kornilov rising consist?

In this: that we modify the form of our struggle against Kerensky. Without diminishing the least bit in the world our hostility, without withdrawing a single one of the words we have pronounced against him, without renouncing our intention to beat him, we de-clare that consideration must be given to the circumstances of the moment, that we shall not concern ourselves at the present with overthrowing Kerensky, that we shall now conduct the struggle against him in another way by emphasising to the people (and it is the people who are engaged in fighting Kornilov) the weakness and vacillations of Kerensky. That we were already doing previously. But now it is this which comes to the forefront of our plan of campaign, and therein lies the change.

Another change: at this moment we place equally in the forefront of our plan of campaign the reinforcing of our agitation for what might be called "partial demands": Arrest Miliukov, we say to Kerensky; arm the Petrograd workers; bring the troops from Kronstadt, from Viberg and from Helsingfors to Petrograd; dissolve the Duma; arrest Rodzianko; legalize the handing over of the big estates to the peasants; establish working-class control of cereals and manufactured products, etc. And it is not only to Kerensky that we should put these claims; it is not so much to Kerensky as to the workers, soldiers and peasants who have been carried away by the struggle against Kornilov. They must be carried further, they must be encouraged to demand the arrest of the generals and officers who side with Kornilov; we must insist that they immediately claim the land for the peasants, and we must suggest to them the necessity of arresting Rodzianko and Miliukov, of dissolving the Imperial Duma, of closing down the Rech and other bourgeois newspapers and bringing them before the courts. It is particularly the Left Social-Revolutionaries who must be pushed in this direction.

It would be erroneous to believe that we are turning away from our principle objective: the conquest of power by the proletariat. We have, on the contrary got considerably nearer to it, but indirectly, by a flanking movement. We must at the very same moment agitate against Kerensky, but let the agitation be indirect rather than direct by insisting on an active war against Kornilov. Only the active development of that war can lead us to power, but of that we must speak as little as possible in our agitation (we keep it well in mind that even to-morrow events may compel us to take power, and that then we shall not let it go). In my opinion, these points should be communicated in a letter to our agitators, to our propagandists' training groups and schools, and to the members of the Party in general. As the phrases about the defense of the country, about the single revolutionary battle line of revolutionary democracy, about support of the Provisional Government, they must be mercilessly combated because they are nothing but phrases. Now is the time for action: These phrases, gentlemen of the Social-revolutionary and the Menshevik parties, have already been too much depreciated by your use of them. (Kerensky is afraid of the masses, he is afraid of the people) It is precisely in the war against the Germans that action is now necessary: Necessary immediately and unreservedly to propose peace

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PEOPLES FRONT FAILED TO ACT WHILE REACTIONARY ARMY LEADERS PREPARED
THE REVOLT.

In Feb. 1936 the Peoples Front, which is the instrument of the democratic bourgeois against the reactionary bourgeois and feudal forces to the first of which the Stalinist and Socialist parties have subordinated the working class, gained an election victory. An objective analysis clearly indicated that while on the surface this government aimed its blows against the reactionary elements, in reality the Peoples Front Government was an attempt of the exploiters to find the cheapest way out of the already matured social crisis and to prevent the establishment of the Workers Government based on Soviets. Against the right the Peoples Front Government delivered half measures, while it did everything possible to control the rising tide of the workers and peasants movements.

The Peoples Front Ministry composed of Left Republicans, supported by the Stalinists and Socialists, counting among its many anti-working class crimes, took no serious steps to oust the reactionary army leaders from their posts: yet they knew that these men were avowed enemies of the Republic.

From February to May the military leaders began to take things into their own hands, and confusing the present rumbles of a social revolution with the past palace revolutions, they started a rebellion in the garrison of Alcala de Henares. This was suppressed by the Republic but no action was taken against the army leaders, except a transfer here and there and the retiring of a few with big pensions, to give them a free hand to plan their next revolt.

Some of these reactionary leaders were transferred to Northern Africa. General Franco, who leads the present counter-revolution was sent to the Canary Islands. General Goded, another leading counter-revolutionist, was sent to the Balaeric Islands. In these places of rest, with full freedom and under no restrictions the counter-revolution was plotted.

After the May events, the Peoples Front Government tried to find a hundred officers loyal to the Republic and after an exhaustive search, could only round up some sixty odd, half-baked Republicans. Anyone in Spain who followed events knew that the Peoples Front Government, during this whole period, was living under an armed threat, a growing armed reactionary movement from the right. Instead of warning the class of this danger, the Stalinists and Socialists spoke of the "victories" of the Peoples Front Government.

The treacherous action of the Stalinists and Socialists in supporting the Peoples Front Government, in lulling the class to sleep in the face of the pending counter-revolution which intends to establish a reactionary dictatorship, must be exposed and such leaders driven out of the working class movement.

Instead of heeding the warning of the May events, and the reactionary developments in the leadership of the Army, the Peoples Front Government like all left bourgeois governments, did nothing about it. Words but not deeds.

Revolutionists can expect nothing else from left Republicans, from Peoples Front Governments, from Social Democratic governments, from Labor and Farmer-Labor Governments; - but for the advanced section of the workers to blindly follow the Stalinists and Socialists into this trap, when history is full of warnings, and the Spanish experience speaks loudest, is action of the worst kind against the interest of the working class.

The Workers and Peasants, under these conditions, organize their Workers and Peasants armed forces. They must organize Soviets, and instead of supporting the Left Republican government (Peoples Front Gov't.) must do everything possible to expose its weak and anti-working class measures in relation to the army leaders and its other activity.

Through a Revolutionary Party, the Workers organizations and the developing Soviets in such revolutionary periods, the class must establish its own check-up, its independent action, and to the degree of its growing strength, its own law.

Lenin's letter continued from P. 21 -

to them on definite terms. If that is done, there will either be an early peace or else a revolutionary war; if not all the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries will remain the lackeys of imperialism.

-LENIN

The following is a statement in the N.Y. Times of Aug. 9th, by Jesus Hernandez, C.P. Deputy:

"it is absolutely false that the present Workers' movement has for its object the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship after the revolution has terminated. We communists are motivated exclusively by the desire to defend the democratic republic".

The N.Y. Times of Aug 1st, quotes Dolores Iburruri, La Passionaria, Spanish Communist Party leader:

"we communists and Socialists, the republics loyal forces, respect life and property and religious orders. We respect order, peace and demperacy".

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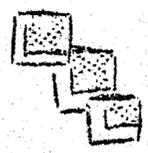
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