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May First in Barcelona

Two Funerals

The New Negrin Government

The Friends of Durruti



The May 3-7 Insurrection in Barcelona

--Eyewitness Account.



The Wagner Labor Act

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THE EMBRACE OF VERCARA

The new, Negrin government which succeeded the Caballero government is the outcome of the latest phase of the continuous governmental crisis on the Loyalist side in the Spanish Civil War. It followed by a number of weeks the governmental crisis in the Catalan Generality.

The specific objective of this crisis was to eliminate the anarcho-syndicalists, left socialists and the trade unions they control from the Madrid-Valencia government. This objective was successfully accomplished. It followed weeks of persecution of the anarcho-syndicalists all over Loyalist Spain, and was the culmination of the drive to exclude them from participation in the capitalist Popular Front Regime.

On April 24 our representatives in Spain sent us a memorandum on the persecution of the anarcho-syndicalists from which we quote several extracts:

"In Bilbao the CNT paper, Del Norte, was suspended by the Basque Government and the print shop turned over to the Stalinists. The Anarchists had to again take it by force. The Basque Government threw the Anarchists out of the government as the Generality threw the POUM out of the government in Barcelona. In Bilbao the Regional Committee of the CNT were thrown in jail months ago. In Madrid the CNT paper, Castilla Libre, has been suspended on several occasions. In Valencia the FAI paper, Nosotros, was recently suspended. CNT members in this area are in jail in Valencia because they shot some Civil Guards who had been sent down to disarm the Workers Militia".

The new government obviously marks a shift to the right. The bourgeois press openly gloats over this fact. For example, Herbert L. Matthews, New York Times correspondent cabled from Madrid on May 18th: "Spain is now seeing the anomaly of Communists (he means Stalinists) as well as Socialists, Republicans, Catholic Basques and Catalan leftists supporting a government that under ordinary circumstances they would ordinarily characterize as bourgeois".

On May 24th, Clarence K. Streit, another New York Times correspondent cabled from Geneva that "It is also understood that Valencia is prepared to go further to the right to stress the democratic character of its government and to give guarantees against Communism in Spain"

The latest cabinet crisis arose out of the position of the bourgeoisie on the Loyalist side in the Civil War. On July 19th the proletarian and peasant masses of Spain rose against the monarchist-fascist uprising to smash it. Almost in the twinkling of an eye.

they advanced on the road to the social revolution. They invaded almost every capitalist property and political right. They took over the administration and execution of many of the political, economic and social functions of capitalist society from which the bourgeoisie all over the world strive to exclude them. In their enthusiasm and awakened class consciousness they created embryonic organs of dual power in the form of the Anti-Fascist Committees. In economy and politics they initiated the first stages of dual power.

Obviously such a situation could be resolved in one of only two ways. Either the proletariat would widen the sphere of its activity finally resolving the dual power by overthrowing the bourgeois state and property relations; or the bourgeoisie would reconsolidate its rule and liquidate the advances made by the masses.

Or to put it another way, the outcome of this duality in the rulership of society would determine whether the struggle against counter-revolution or a struggle fought in the interests of hostile capitalist interests in Spain and through them, because of their subordination to foreign imperialist powers, of conflicting imperialist interests.

A Bolshevik party would have made the first outcome likely. It was the one essential condition for successful proletarian revolution which was missing in the situation. Its absence enabled the bourgeoisie to remain at the head of society and, after weathering the storm to reconsolidate its rule. It is possible to indicate its stages.

The new Negrin government is, seen in this light, the latest stage in this reconsolidation. From July through September the social revolution despite the best efforts of the Socialists and Stalinists to confine it to the bourgeois democratic revolution rose to its highest peak. From October to January the embryonic organs of dual power were liquidated and the first stage of reconsolidation was carried through. For this purpose the POUM and the CNT, the organizations to the left of the Socialists and Stalinists were called into the government. Nin's signature, among others, was affixed to the decree abolishing the Anti-Fascist Committees.

When these organizations had played the role which the bourgeoisie assigned to them the bourgeoisie achieved its first decisive advantage over the social revolution. The problem for the bourgeoisie at this point was to get rid of these left organizations. The POUM was unceremoniously kicked out of the Catalan government. The anarcho-syndicalists were a more formidable enemy because of their greater size and fighting spirit. Their ejection took more than four months. The task of disembarassing its left servitors was

entrusted to the left socialists - the Caballero government. When this social-democratic flunkey discharged his task, he was removed as unceremoniously as the POUM and with as little gratitude.

The next stage in the reconsolidation of bourgeois rule has been entrusted to the right socialists in the form of the Negrin government. This can be seen again from the aims of this government as reported in the press. Matthews in the dispatch already quoted has the following to say in explaining why "Communists as well as Socialists, Republicans, Catholic Basques and Catalan leftists" support the bourgeois Negrin government: "The simple explanation is that this government intends to use an iron hand to maintain internal order..... By so doing, the government hopes to win the sympathy of the two democracies that mean most to Spain - Great Britain and France - and to retain the support of the nation that has been most helpful - Russia".

The Daily Worker of May 20th makes it even clearer and more concrete. G Marion cabled from Madrid on May 19th: "One major weakness of this previous government was a flabby policy of maintenance of public order. As a matter of fact, the failure to repress severely the attempted uprising against the government, resulting in heavy bloodshed in Catalonia, was the immediate cause of the government crisis. There need be no hesitation now in predicting that the Trotskyist Barcelona organ, La Batalla, will be suppressed and drastic punitive measures taken against Trotskyist POUM. For a long time the maintenance of a thinly veiled policy of sabotage of the orders of the central government has been tolerated by the government itself. The termination of this policy of tolerance will permit the wiping out of illegitimate roving and raving militia columns, the collection of arms destined for the Aragon front, and the incorporation of the Catalan industrial apparatus into the national war industry.

From these reports we see that the tasks entrusted to this government by the bourgeoisie is to carry through the suppression of the control by the workers over the armed forces which they raised and equipped and sent into the field against Franco-Mola; and centralization of military authority in the bourgeois government.

The attempt to suppress the workers patrols referred to by the Stalinists as "illegitimate roving and raving militia columns" precipitated the recent events in Catalonia. In this suppression the bourgeoisie attempted to mark a decisive advance in the liquidation of the situation created during the summer of 1936. The resistance of the CNT and POUM rank and file leaves thousands of workers with the means of settling the issue in their own interests, provided, of course, a revolutionary leadership is created.

Incidentally the Daily Worker statement that the creation of the Negrin government makes possible "the collection of arms destined for the Aragon front" supports the charge made by the POUM and others

that arms were deliberately withheld from them in order to force them to submit to the policy and authority of Madrid-Valencia.

The emphasis placed on the intention of the Negrin government to maintain what is called internal order with an iron hand, and the bloody suppression of the POUM and CNT workers shows clearly that the bourgeoisie in Loyalist Spain are moving in the direction of open capitalist dictatorship. This is inevitable. The Civil War demonstrates that the era of bourgeois democracy in Spain is dead.

The Negrin government is trying to disguise its real character and significance by pretending to be a parliamentary regime and promising the early convocation of the Cortes, which, as far as having any influence over events is concerned, is as dead as the dog. The Associated Press reported on May 18th that government leaders ".....pointed especially to the Cabinet's announcement that it would maintain closest contact with parliament and uphold parliamentary institutions. Friends of the new Premier said the change meant that conduct of the war against the insurgents has been taken from the hands of labor organizations and restored to 'normal' parliamentary leaders". This is dust in the eyes to fool the workers. The real character of this government is signified by its intention to maintain internal order and make itself acceptable to British and French Imperialism and the trustee of their interests, Stalinism.

In throwing over Caballero and supplanting it with Negrin the bourgeoisie made use of the Stalinists. The Stalinists were the moving force in ousting the Caballero government. They fought openly for a right Socialist government against the left Socialists. By what token; in whose interests did the Stalinists presume to shift the political axis of the bourgeois government? Obviously not in the interests of the workers but on the contrary against their vital need to overthrow capitalism and destroy forever, in Spain, the influence and organization of the socialists and Stalinists alike.

The real character of the Stalinist policy can be seen when it is recalled that at the time they were deciding the fate of the Spanish government against the overwhelming majority of the Spanish Socialist Party who followed Caballero they were pressing the Socialist Party of France to consummate organic unity with them. How was it possible to oppose the Socialists in Spain without risking injury to their suit in France?

Because in both cases they were serving French imperialism. In France they are pushing for organic unity on the basis of support of the capitalist government and its bourgeois democratic form. In Spain they were fighting to consolidate the bourgeois government against the possibility of armed opposition to it by the workers. Shortly after performing this service to the bourgeoisie they placed it even more in their debt by assisting it to suppress the insurrection in Barcelona as reported by our comrades there.

The consolidation of the bourgeois regime is in the interest of the Spanish bourgeoisie as a whole, including the Franco-Mola forces. But as between the two sides of the Civil War it strengthens the Loyalist bourgeois side against Franco-Mola. In the same way it is in the interest of world imperialism in its struggle against proletarian revolution. But obviously it serves best the interests of Anglo-French imperialism which dominates the Loyalist bourgeoisie, in their struggle against the attempts of German and Italian imperialism to weaken and destroy British control of the western Mediterranean and the line of communication between France and her African colonies.

Following hard upon the heels of the Negrin government came the proposal of British imperialism for a truce in the Civil War. The press is trying to make it appear that Britain out of humanitarian and pacific intentions wants to prevent a world war by bringing the Spanish Civil War to an end. The truth is somewhat different. Britain's chief concern in Spain is to defend her control of the Mediterranean and her economic interests. She confronts two main enemies. The oppressed workers and peasants, her chief enemy, and German and Italian imperialism which are objectively playing the game of American imperialism by attacking and weakening the British empire.

Britain's task is complicated. The complicated situation makes a complicated solution necessary. The consolidation of the bourgeois regime helps Britain against the proletariat. But if its value is not to become a source of defeat for Britain it cannot result paradoxically enough, in the crushing defeat of Franco-Mola. For that would make necessary the widest and intensest activity on the part of the oppressed masses who would once more push forward on the road to social revolution, thus threatening to set the world working class ablaze.

With the working class hitched to the bourgeois state the way is clearer for Britain to attempt a compromise between the warring camps of the bourgeoisie on terms which might make some concessions to her imperialist rivals but would leave intact her strategic advantages and political hegemony in Spain. Peace without victory for the working class is the peace for which Britain is working. Peace without victory. In Spain they call it the embrace of Vergara.

The Negrin government is a step in the direction of this peace. It is not a stable regime. It will be followed by others. If the imperialists and the Spanish bourgeoisie have their way the right-Socialists will be succeeded by other bourgeois scoundrels standing further to the right. If the working class makes its force felt in its own interests the bourgeoisie may find it expedient to execute a shift to the left. If it does it will be not with open arms by

the left flank of opportunism. During the Catalan crisis the POUM proposed a solution including its reentry into the government.

If the efforts to create a revolutionary party in Spain are successful then the entire bourgeois regime in economy and politics can be replaced by a proletarian dictatorship and the Civil War can be brought to a close in the interests of the working class.

THE ARMED INSURRECTION OF MAY 3-7th in BARCELONA

(The following is a brief preliminary report from Barcelona. In the next issue we will publish a more detailed analysis. The extraordinary importance of the material and the fact that the capitalist and labor press have combined to conceal the real character of the events which convulsed loyalist Spain from May 3 to 7th make this document the only available report of what took place.

Its brevity, however, contains a wealth of political information and analysis, which it will pay the reader well to study closely in the light of the theoretical material previously published by the League on the Spanish Civil War. We have here indisputable proof of the correctness of the analysis and line made by the League.)

Barcelona, May 8, 1937.

Herewith is a brief report on the armed insurrection on May 3-6.

1. The armed clashes in different parts of Catalonia prior to the armed insurrection in Barcelona starting Monday, May 3, was kept secret from the class by all organizations. The CNT and POUM only hinted at these clashes between the Stalinist-socialist and "left bourgeois against the local CNT and POUM and workers.

The CNT and POUM leaderships failed to: 1. present the facts; 2. warn the workers; 3. explain and prepare the class. On the contrary they did everything possible to pacify the workers. The NIN convention documents denied that an armed insurrection was ahead.

2. The CNT and the POUM leadership failed to hold a May Day demonstration in Barcelona although the bourgeois state was afraid knowing what such a demonstration would mean.

3. In spite of these setbacks the armed insurrection started from below by the rank and file CNT and POUM members on Monday, May 3rd when the bourgeoisie tried to oust the CNT from control of the telephone building. This happened about 4PM on the 3rd. By night-fall barricades were erected all over Barcelona and its suburbs.

All with arms were on the barricades. There was no organized leadership. The Monday night issue of Solidaridad Obrera, CNT Regional Committee paper came out and told the workers to abandon the streets. Every issue of the Solidaridad added more such betray directions each day.

The Monday night issue of La Battalla came out in support of the armed insurrection but called for a solution WITHIN the framework of the Generality. The POUM did not understand that it was a social revolution against the bourgeois state, that dual power and the struggle for full power was on the order of the day.

4. The forces of the Generality, of the exploiters state were the armed guards, Civil and Assault and the PSUC the united Stalinist-Socialist Party.

For the first time in history in Europe we have a clear cut example of the Stalinists openly supporting the bourgeois state against an armed insurrection of the proletariat.

Whereas the regional committee of the CNT openly betrayed the workers the POUM centrist line as all centrist lines became REFORMIST in ACTION.

5. All of the workers' sections of Barcelona and suburbs were in the hands of the armed workers. The Government and the Stalinist controlled the Government Palace, Banks, Plaza Catalonia, Stalinist buildings, etc.

The small navy was friendly to the workers. The Mountain Cannon and fort guarding the port were in the hands of the workers. Several Civil Guard barricades laid down arms and surrendered without a shot. The bourgeois forces were hemmed in in the middle of the city, cut off from supplies, but had the radios, etc.

6. No Marxian Party. The Friends of Durutti was the best left organization, but naturally fell short. It opposed the CNT regional committee.

The Barcelona Committee of the CNT opposed the Regional Committee and told the workers to stay on the barricades. Later they capitulated.

The rank and file of the CNT and POUM were the best possible. The leadership was the the worst possible, although there is a distinction between the CNT and POUM as presented above.

7. Attempt made each day to organize Central Committee of representatives of Barricade Committees as Provisional Committee to call and organize Workers Councils.

Failed Monday. Failed Tuesday. Succeeded Wednesday. But by this time betrayal at the top made it a still birth.

8. Thursday morning La Battalla joined the CNT paper in telling workers to leave the barricades. Situation was still favorable. Thursday night all barricades were manned properly, showing that the workers of the POUM and CNT did not obey their leaders.

Friday morning the week of betrayals from the top broke the movement.

Each night the workers were holding out, each morning the CNT paper told them to leave the barricades and go back to work. Each day this demoralized the ranks. By Thursday the POUM joined the CNT with the same slogans. By Friday they succeeded in getting the workers back to work.

Each day the demoralization in the workers' ranks was followed by a further consolidation and extension of the bourgeois forces.

Saturday the bourgeoisie sent groups of armed guards with fixed bayonets through the workers neighborhoods to inspect, to check.

LESSONS OF THE ARMED INSURRECTION

Positive on Workers Side:

1. Line of demarcation between the loyalist bourgeoisie and the proletariat was very clear. On the bourgeois side the loyalist bourgeois, the Stalinists, Socialists, CNT Regional Committee, POUM as an organization, tail of the right wing anarchists. On the Workers side: the rank and file of the CNT and POUM, Friends of Durruti as an organization. A few Trotskyites were with us.
2. Line of demarcation between leaders and members in two left anti-fascist organizations, CNT and POUM was clearly drawn. Splits are inevitable.
3. It was clearly seen that the Generality is a bourgeois government and not a workers government. The Peoples Front Government was exposed to masses of workers.
4. The Stalinists were exposed as open counter-revolutionists.
5. Armed insurrection is needed to take power. The capitalist state must be smashed. More workers learned this lesson.
6. Friends of Durutti was the "best" organization. But no Marxian organization existed. Need to work among Friends of Durutti workers.
7. After the event the workers have more arms in hand than before.
8. Section of the bourgeois armed force was disarmed without battle.

Negative factors:

1. Without leadership the fight was entirely DEFENSIVE. It was not transformed into a counter-offensive, although the objective condition for this existed.
2. No new positions were conquered by the workers.

3. The class enemy was allowed to hold the Press and Radio which could have been taken from them. (CNT paper and others were burned on the barricades.)
4. Although attempts were made to build one there was no central leadership.
5. Many of the best militants were killed. Saturday La Battala reported about 200 killed on both sides; A report on the Radio two days before said 600 had been killed on both sides. The workers killed the UGT leader who had just been appointed to the new Generality government.
6. There was no adequate literature and propaganda for workers interest during the struggle. The best leaflet was distributed by Friends of Durutti. They failed, too.
7. Failure to adequately spread the movement to the rest of Catalonia and Spain and to inform the world workers by Radio.
8. Failure to force the armed clash and prepare for it.

The fundamental theoretical lessons, in addition to the above, that must be presented to the class, are:

1. Those who oppose the overthrow of the Generality, the exploiter state are paving the way for Fascism. The enemy says the opposite.
2. A victorious revolution will have to defeat imperialist intervention. The fakors say we must not take power because Valencia, Great Britain and France will send warships. We say that we must take power to extend the revolution to those countries.

On Thursday, May 27, at a public meeting in New York City, Bertram Wolfe of the Communist Party (Opposition), Lovestoneites, who had just returned from Spain, came out for support of the Negrin Govt., condemnation of the "class betrayal" of the Communist Party and for support of the POUM which he said had "a Communist program". No discussion was allowed; questions were permitted. A member of the RWL asked Wolfe several questions based on the foregoing report. In his summary Wolfe denied that an insurrection had taken place, claimed ignorance of the position of the CNT on the events described and ignorance of the reversal of the position of the POUM. He confirmed the fact that the POUM called for a solution of the situation within the framework of the Catalan Generality. The League has challenged the CPO to a debate.

THE WAGNER LABOR ACT

The leaders of the organized labor movement have hailed the Wagner Bill since the N.Y. Senators and Massachusetts Representative presented it to their respective houses of Congress. Both Wm. Green and John L. Lewis are lyrical in their praise for this New Deal measure which has been declared constitutional by a vote of 5 to 4 of the Supreme Court. Both Dan Tobin, the strike breaker of Minneapolis and Homer Martin, the misleader of Detroit; - both Hillman and Dubinsky, to say nothing of the Communist Party have hailed this "liberal measure" as a deadly weapon against the open shoppers of Wall St., the Liberty League, etc. This is not the first time that this crew of Labor leaders have displayed enthusiasm for measures which have left the working class in the lurch.

The Wagner Act, as every one knows, is a development of the policy and practices of the New Deal Administration in dealing with Labor problems. The following quotation is from an analysis of the proceedings of the Senate Committee on Education and Labor in its investigation of the Wagner Bill, reprinted from the American Federationist, 1935, and entitled "Labors Charter of Rights".

"This bill has been branded radical by some and ultra conservative by others, but every one of these principles has been sanctioned by a long train of Laws of Congress. It has been called inopportune and hasty. But is it not time to act upon the ominous industrial disturbances of last summer, when blood ran freely in the streets and martial law in the offing? IS IT NOT TIME TO NOTE THAT DURING THE LAST HALF OF 1934 AND THE FIRST MONTH OF THIS YEAR ALMOST THREE QUARTERS OF A MILLION WORKERS WERE SENT BACK TO THEIR JOBS OR KEPT FROM LEAVING THEM BY THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD AND ITS REGIONAL AGENCIES?" (Our emphasis).

The Wagner Act aims to prevent strikes or when this takes place to get the workers back to the job. The agency to do the trick is the National Labor Relations Board. This Board has been able to stave off a great many strikes by its mediation and arbitration procedure which soft soaps the workers and either gives them nothing at all or far less than they can win by straight working class action. Now that the Board has been constitutionalized so to speak, it will be even more effective.

The policy of the New Deal, of course, is not to provoke working class action against bad conditions, nor to improve these conditions. The capitalist state exists for the purpose of suppressing working class action. The policy of the Roosevelt government does not aim to improve the workers lot because it is impossible to do so

aim to head off working class revolt and harness the workers to the capitalist state. It is significant that the supporters of the Wagner Act compare it so often with the labor disputes law in operation during the World War.

Conditions today are not the same as in the days of McKinley's full dinner pail. Already, during the "normalcy" days of Harding and Coolidge, industry went thru a remarkable expansion and rationalization which had a tremendous effect upon relations between labor and capital.

This is best indicated by the following quotation:

"While from the point of view of duration, disputes appeared to be becoming less serious, the average number of workers involved in each dispute seems to be increasing. In 1935, the average number of workers involved in each dispute was 520 as compared to 301 in 1931 - a gain of about 75%. In 1934, the number of persons involved in disputes jumped to 777." Labor and the New Deal, Nov. 5, 1936; Public Affairs Committee, National Press Building, Washington, D.C.

With the steel, auto and seamen's strikes, the average per dispute must have gone up considerably. The rationalization of technique has tended to diminish the need for the skilled worker, the labor aristocrat. That, plus the increase in exploitation, especially through the dreaded speed up, which makes the mass of workers desperate for a change, pushes the old strike of a few workers in a craft more and more into the limbo of history and brings more into the fore the mass strike of thousands of workers especially in large and basic industries. Such a strike is a revolt of the most oppressed and fraught with the greatest danger to the bourgeoisie.

The danger is increased by the fact that the American bourgeoisie have not succeeded in perfecting a special national strike breaking force on a par with those in Spain, France and Belgium - Civil Guard, Mobile Guard, etc. The agency used mostly by the government in breaking large strikes, is the National Guard which is a force consisting mainly of young workers.

The old method of class collaboration no longer meets the requirements of the capitalists. Semi skilled and unskilled workers, ready for struggle, whose only strength lies in their mass action cannot be kept within the "partnership of capital and labor" on the basis of craft unionism. Therefore, the New Dealers utilize the class collaboration agency of the CIO.

The great mass of disinherited, tortured proletarians can have nothing but undying hatred for the boss and all his direct agents; from the managers down to the foreman and straw boss, who stand over him to see that every nerve, every drop of blood is expended on the line, who are vigilant that no pause, relaxation, no breath of air shall take away from the boss the minutest unit of surplus value. These workers cannot trust their bosses. In order to prevent them from smashing the blessed "partnership of capital and labor" they must be shown an agency which appears neutral. That can be only the State and its agencies; the arbitrators, the Labor Relations Boards, the smiling and ingratiating President or Governor. That is the method employed by the New Deal Administration with its Section 7A, its NLRB, its kept trade unionists, the Lewises and the Martins and now the Wagner Labor Act.

Yet, there are many capitalists who oppose the New Deal in general and the Wagner Act in particular. These do not make up the entire capitalist class, altho the New Deal demagogues and their satellites in the labor movement have succeeded in making it appear that way to the masses. When one looks into the reports of the National Association of Manufacturers, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Liberty League, one is presented with a dark picture of the red (and sometimes Fascist) machinations of the Roosevelt regime. The purpose of the Wagner Act and Section 7A before it, according of the propaganda of these capitalists, is the provocation of large and bloody strikes which would irrevocably tear asunder labor from capital and leave devastation in their wake.

But both the frank statements of the New Dealers and their actions refute any such notion that the New Deal and the Wagner Act in either intent or result meant more labor troubles. On the contrary! What is more, these capitalists certainly know better. Roosevelt is merely the political agent of one group of capitalists whose interests conflict with their own. But these conflicting interests can always be compromised when a common enemy threatens such as a foreign imperialist power or a serious threat from the class enemy, the proletariat. In past issues this publication has dealt in detail with the titanic struggle between the Morgan and Rockefeller groups of imperialists. The struggle over the Wagner Act and mediation boards is part of this general struggle. The organized opposition to the New Deal comes from the Morgan group. The Liberty League is characteristic of this opposition. The Morgan-DuPont General Motors Corporation stated the case for this capitalist bloc in a statement of GM's basic policies concerning its relations with factory employees" on August 15, 1934.

"Management is charged with the responsibility for promoting and maintaining the best long term interest of the business as a continuing institution. Therefore while management should exhaust every means in endeavouring to settle all problems of employer-employee relations which may arise, it cannot agree to submit to arbitration which is a surrender by both to the authority of an outside agency any point at issue where compromise might injure the long term interest of the business and therefore damage the mass of the employees themselves."

Behind this talk, is the fact that the Rockefeller clique representing most closely the interest of the capitalist class as a whole has succeeded in entrenching itself in the apparatus of the Federal Government. The Morgan group, though in the end, it must accept it, fears the strengthening of this apparatus and its role in the economy and politics of the nation. As the federal bureaucracy gains in power, the Morgan interests are hit for the benefit of its rivals. The arbitration boards are part of this bureaucracy. What is more, when, with the aid of labor skates the danger that the class enemy will get out of hand is less, the arbitration boards can take advantage of strikes to harass the Morgan interests. This actually did happen in the G.M. strike.

That does not mean that the mediators, in order to weaken a rival interest, will voluntarily hand a substantial victory to strikers. The leopard does not change its spots. The Marxian theory that the state can be nothing but the agent of the bourgeoisie still holds. It is suicidal for the bosses to permit the proletariat to entrench itself for whatever reasons in such critical period for capitalism. In the G.M. strike, while hitting the corporation, the arbitrators and Governor Murphy saw to it that the workers should get the main blow. It is still true that all workers can depend only on their own strength.

But the Morgan bloc is in a contradiction; a door must be left open for retreat from their position of opposition to arbitration boards. Thus in the same G.M. statement we find the following: " - - that does not in any way mean that impartial or judicial organs have no place in collective bargaining. On the contrary, controversial questions of fact, such as discrimination cases and questions of lay offs, may frequently be more amicably and speedily settled thru an impartial, competent, fact finding agency having the confidence of both sides". In other words, sometimes, if not most of the time, the proletariat can be handled only by an agency not directly exploiting it, namely the Federal Government or its arbitration boards. Also, the pressure of the Government can be so great, that the opposition must retreat.

"Labor and the New Deal", (Nov. 1934, Public Affairs Committee) had the following to say:

"In June 1935 upon the INSISTENT demand of labor and its sympathizers Congress adopted the National Labor Relations Act, sponsored by Senator Robert F. Wagner of N.Y. and Rep. Wm. C. Connery of Massachusetts. This law created a National Labor Relations Board of three neutral members, reiterated the guarantee of collective bargaining that had been written into the NRA but went much further by specifically providing against interference by an employer in the self organization of his employees. This was done by writing into the law what are referred to as unfair labor practices. An employer under Section 8 of the Act is prevented from coercing his employees in their right to self organization, from contributing financially to any labor organization, from discrimination against union members in hiring or tenure of employment, from discharging an employee because he has filed charges under the Act and from refusing to bargain collectively with his employees."

Part of the beauty of the Wagner Act then, is that it "gives more" to the workers, (which means that) the Board can be more effective by talking the workers out of "specifically providing" against the bosses' interference with its own forces, for if company unions are outlawed by the Wagner Act, what is the necessity for the proletariat to outlaw company unions by powerful organization and militant action will be the reasoning of thousands of workers.

On the face of it the employer is forced to bargain collectively with his employees, to recognize the right of the organized majority to bargain for all the workers in a plant. This has already been interpreted by courts to mean that the workers cannot go on strike before a vote is taken. Witness the shoe strike in Maine.

The "Declaration of Policy" of the Board says:

"Section 7A of the NRA has failed to achieve its basic purpose - of protecting the workers right to organize and bargain collectively, free from the employer's interference -- mainly because the statute did not provide for the machinery necessary to enforce these rights.

"The old National Labor Board created under Executive order of the President has no statutory powers and could act merely as a conciliatory agency. The NLRB which succeeded the old Board in 1934 was given only a semblance of power under joint Resolution 44 of the 74th Congress. This Resolution rushed thru both houses of Congress in the last minute of the session, left the NLRB without power to enforce the collective bargaining provisions of the law."

Workers still under the influence of Roosevelt's demagoguery could say to the representatives of the Board: "You fellows are OK; you're with us, but what about the boss? He can tell you to go to hell, we'd better strike." But the Wagner Act has fixed that; it has the power to decide and to enforce its decisions on the question of majority representation. It has the power to force the taking of a vote. What is more, it is left to the Board to decide the appropriate unit to be polled; craft, plant or industry. Tremendous power this.

But there is a joker. "Suppose", writes the Time magazine on April 26, 1937, "an employer consents to go thru the notions of collective bargaining but says NO to every union proposal and offers no counter-proposal of his own". (Time emphasis)

The reply to that was written in advance in the "Report of Senate Committee on Education and Labor Disputes Bill, May 1, 1935:

"Prudence forbids any attempt by the Government to remove all the causes of labor disputes. Disputes about wages, hours of work, and other working conditions should continue to be resolved by the play of competitive forces so far as the provisions of codes of fair competition are not controlling. This Bill in no respect regulates or even provides for supervision of wages or hours nor does it establish any form of compulsory arbitration".

This, then is the Magna Charta of Labor. Its purpose is to perpetuate frauds upon the proletariat. It does not even pretend to offer guarantees on wages and hours or Union recognition. It "forces" the employer to bargain collectively with his employees, i.e., it arranges it so that during the season, or when the workers are strong, on the upswing, they will be talked out of going on strike in return for the questionable right to sit down at a table and talk. Then, when the workers are disoriented and demoralized, when the season is over they will again find themselves in the same position as before and the ax will be applied freely.

But this is only the beginning. Tomorrow, this apparatus will work more and more openly with force. Even today as indicated in the Maine case, the Wagner Act can be used for open strike breaking.

It is time to take to heart the sage of the nineties:

"Don't ask for rights, take them. An' don't let any man give them to ye. A right that is handed to ye f'f nashin' has somethin' the matter with it. It's more than likely it's on'y a wrong turned inside out".

THE FRIENDS OF DURRUTI

An organization known as the Friends of Durruti, has been organized within the CNT. Although it has a legal status it is being sabotaged by the leadership of the CNT because its policy is far to the left of the reformist top. Sunday the 18th they held their first public meeting at a theatre with about 1000 workers present and four speakers.

From a Marxian point of view the ideological level of the speeches was low, but considering the present position of the CNT in collaboration with the Generality the speeches was a left reaction to the whole past trend. Whereas the small anarchist Group of the Ideal that has distributed some leaflets has swung back to "pure" anarchism, the Friends of Durruti are of a far higher and more serious type.

They are not against collaboration in bourgeois governments in principle, but are against the collaboration in the Generality and Valencia governments today. They are against it today because they say the Stalinists are not sincere. They demand that their leaders leave at once. This is a fundamentally false position. But the demand for the leaders to leave the government must be utilized by the revolutionists to show these workers the road to the revolution.

In the speeches the Stalinists were bitterly assailed as bourgeois and agents of the bourgeoisie. One speaker pointed out that the Russians promised them modern arms if they would carry through centralized military work through the government which the CNT agreed to but to this day the supplies have not been sent. (They have been sent to the Valencia Government). The speaker said they would only get arms if the CNT troops give up their flags, etc. He pointed out that one Durruti Column already pulled down its red and black flag, and stated that the CNT had yielded too much already.

One speaker stated that Lenin's method of revolution was correct but the Stalinist method in Spain is completely false.

At no time during the meeting did any speaker mention the POUM.

A message was read from a group, "Those of Yesterday and Those of Today" of adherence to the meeting. It seems as though the Friends of Durruti are organizing throughout Spain.

They demand the cleansing of the CNT union. They want complete socialization of industry. They are alarmed at reaction showing its head more every day. "If the rear does not improve we will bring up the armed forces from the front and will again clean up. If necessary we can be master of the situation again in 24 hours." This was greeted with an uproar. Although it is an exaggerated statement with excellent intention it shows the sentiment of the workers attending.

One speaker wanted to know why the national guard was not sent to the front. Against whom was it going to be used in the rear? They understand, or are beginning to understand the bourgeois policy.

They demand the Syndicates take over power and coordinate their local power through a national Executive Committee and establish workers rule. Any revolution that does not create its own organs of power, economic and political is not a revolution.

The Anti-Fascist Committee of 15 was the embryo organ of the revolution. The Council of Defense of the Generality is bourgeois power. The first big mistake of the CNT was to agree to dissolve the Anti-Fascist Committee of 15 and the local committees.

One speaker gave a fairly good analysis of the imperialist conflict in Spain and the two bourgeois groups in Spain. Said we must fight both groups.

Barcelona, April 18th.

The development of left wing groups within the two non-Marxian, but revolutionary organizations in Spain, the POUM and the CNT, in opposition to the policy and action of the leadership is now being transformed into the first stage of action after eight months of Civil War. Within the CNT-FAI the left wing Friends of Durruti is moving in the correct direction of a proletarian solution of the struggle. This is in opposition to the class collaboration Peoples Front bourgeois governments of Valencia and Barcelona and their inability to solve the crisis in the rear and effectively fight Fascism at the front.

The Friends of Durruti which still has a legal status in the CNT and FAI, although it is being sabotaged and secretly fought by the leadership, now considers that the first crime of the revolution was the entry into the bourgeois governments of Valencia and Barcelona and the liquidation of the Anti-Fascist Militia Committees that functioned as weak organs of dual power. After their first public meeting in Barcelona in the middle of April they have followed up with posters presenting their program of action of which the following is an example.

TEXT OF MANIFESTO ISSUED IN BARCELONA, LAST WEEK OF APRIL, 1937.

THE FRIENDS OF DURRUTI,

TO THE WORKING CLASS:

1. For the immediate constitution of a revolutionary Junta composed of workers of the city and countryside and of combatants.
2. For wages by family. Ration cards. Control of economy and distribution to be in the hands of the unions.

3. For the liquidation of the counter-revolution.
 4. For the creation of a revolutionary army.
 5. For absolute working class control of public order.
 6. Firm opposition to any armistice.
 7. For proletarian justice.
 8. For the abolition of exchanges of personalities.
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ATTENTION WORKERS:

Our organization opposes the continued advance of the counter-revolution. The decrees of public order, proposed by Aiguade, must not be established. We demand the freedom of Maroto and of the imprisoned comrades.

ALL POWER TO THE WORKING CLASS!

ALL ECONOMIC POWER TO THE UNIONS!

AGAINST THE GENERALITY, THE REVOLUTIONARY JUNTA!

This program is far to the left of anything yet offered by the CNT and FAI and counterpose the immediate constitution of revolutionary Juntas of workers, peasants and combattants to the Generality. It is not only far to the left of the leadership of the syndicalists who are in the swamp of class collaboration in the Peoples Front Governments of Valencia and Barcelona but it is also to the left of the official position of the POUM. The POUM leadership have not learned the lesson of the entry into the Generality, have not learned that it was a fatal error to liquidate the Anti-Fascists Militia Committees, have refused to give up the line of attempting to re-enter the Generality and, above all, claim the insurrection is a thing of the past - that to take power in Spain no armed insurrection is needed.

The POUM leadership call for the rule of the trade unions and fight against the left wing proposals for the creation of Councils of Workers, Combattants and Peasants.

The proposals of the left wing of the syndicalists, the Friends of Durruti, follows the same path as that of the proposals of the left wing of the POUM as expressed in its Barcelona resolution of April 14 and its counter-thesis for the POUM convention (postponed to the 23d of May the last we heard - 3d.) on the road to power.

A united front of the CNT and POUM on the policy and program of the leaderships of the two organizations cannot lead to victory. A Revolutionary Workers Front on the programs of the left wing of the syndicalists and the left wing of the POUM can be the first big step toward power, toward the creation of the workers, combattants and peasants organs of DUAL POWER.

Only the revolutionary Juntas of the Workers, Combattants and Peasants can assure workers' democracy and involve the broad masses in the struggle against the capitalists in the rear and the capitalists and landowners at the front.

The development of this working class democracy under the dual power of the Juntas will be the vehicle for the consolidation of the scattered revolutionary forces into a strong Marxian party.

On this basis the revolutionary Juntas will be able to smash the exploiters rule and establish their own.

- Barcelona, April 30.

TWO FUNERALS

Roldan Cortada, an important functionary in the Barcelona UGT and a leading Stalinist, was shot and killed on the outskirts of the city. No one seems to have any evidence as to the guilty persons, but with feeling running high in sections of the political organizations here anyone could have carried it through including the Stalinists themselves.

The CNT bowed to the Stalinists by devoting almost the entire first page of the *solidaridad Obrera* to the question in the April 27th issue. On the same date *La Batalla* printed a note signed by the POUM Executive Committee against individual terrorism.

In other words the POUM and the CNT acted as though they were frightened. These papers have a habit of carrying important news as news without political comment. This could have been handled as a news item stating the facts and one member of the POUM could have added a few words against terrorism by individuals.

In passing it may be well to remark that when the POUM through its member in the Generality agreed to liquidate the Anti-Fascist Militia Committee of 15 the POUM Executive did not see fit to issue a statement on the question. They allowed an individual to write on the matter approving the liquidation of this embryo dual power. On the other hand, on the murder of a Stalinist functionary they issue an Executive statement and the next day an editorial.

The most revealing factor of the killing of this functionary is the utilization of the funeral by the forces against the proletarian revolution. Every funeral here is used as a cloak for some kind of a political demonstration.

The April 14th CNT funeral was used as an excuse for a three hour strike on the Anniversary of the Republic and was a powerful demonstration. But the funeral of Cortada far surpassed the workers' demonstration.

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Although no strike was called by the Stalinists, those who left work to attend the funeral and the long procession which took hours winding down the main streets of the city virtually stopped business the whole afternoon. The CNT-controlled transportation industries kept at work, but only the subways were really able to run. President Companys was prominent in the forefront.

In reality the funeral was a demonstration of the forces that support the Generality, the Peoples Front law and order, the Peoples Army and those against the proletarian revolution. The Stalinists were the spearhead of the demonstration. Thousands of those rank and filers in line and on the sideline watching the procession were sincere in their belief that the support of this demonstration and the Stalinist party is the support of the revolution.

The CNT and the POUM do not draw the lessons, do not point out the meaning of these marches. Instead they get down on their knees.

Several days ago a member of the Lerida Civil Guard accidentally shot himself while cleaning a gun. The local Civil Guard of Lerida happened to be honeycombed with CNT members who, in the funeral march, carried as the second banner, the anarchists red and black flag.

The Generality through the Department of Interior Security, which is controlled by the Esquerra had the Lerida Civil Guard dissolved and 21 of the members arrested. They are now in a Barcelona jail.

The CNT and the POUM have said or done nothing openly about this. What kind of horse trading the CNT is carrying on behind the scenes only they know.

- Barcelona, April 28.

MAY DAY IN BARCELONA

In Barcelona there was no workers demonstration or holiday on May the first. The CNT, the UGT, the PSUC and the POUM informed the working class that demonstrations have been called off and work in the factories will continue because of the war. They present the slogan of work in the rear and war at the front. Under the cloak of war needs and for order in the rear the revolutionary workers in Barcelona are prevented from celebrating their May Day with the workers of the world.

The calling off of the united front May Day demonstration of the CNT and UGT and the failure of the POUM to call its own demonstration cannot be understood upon the basis of the May Day statements of all of these organizations. It is necessary to go behind these shallow excuses.

The bourgeois governments of Valencia and Barcelona have been in a series of crises since the uprising due to the contradiction between the workers' control of certain economic and military aspects of the nation while the bourgeoisie controlled the state and, therefore, political control of the economic and military life. This contradiction can be solved only by the violent overthrow of the capitalist state; or by the disarming and defeating of the proletariat or the capitulation of the workers leaders which will deprive the proletariat of the ability to effectively resist the counter-revolution.

The continuous governmental crises have been "solved" at every juncture up to the present since the liquidation of the Anti-Fascists Militia Committee, each time with a step to the right and greater bourgeois consolidation.

Armed clashes between the Civil Guards supported by the Esquerra, Stalinists and Socialists against the Workers Patrols of the CNT and POUM broke out in many parts of Catalonia the week prior to May Day. In the Cerdana region on the French border the Civil Guards endeavored to oust the CNT from control of the Customs. In the armed clash that followed the Civil Guards were locked up. The Generality sent negotiators and a compromise was reached whereby the first check of the anarchists would be double-checked by the Civil Guard. This truce resulted in a second clash within 24 hours. The reinforcements sent by the Generality from Barcelona were again placed in jail.

Armed clashes and skirmishes between the proletarian and bourgeois forces took place during the entire week. It spread to other parts of Catalonia. In two suburbs of Barcelona the skirmish between the Civil Guards and Workers Patrols reached the stage of erecting barricades. A few days before May Day the workers were in complete control of these suburbs. For this brief period the anarchists established "libertarian Communism". Only workers with CNT and POUM cards were admitted in town.

Last week in Barcelona the Civil Guards disarmed over 300 workers. The Guards ride or walk around in groups and stop workers carrying arms.

These armed clashes as preludes to a new phase of the Civil War precipitated another Generality crisis. On the 29th the Generality issued the following press release:

"In the face of the abnormal situation of Public Order the Council of the Generality cannot continue its work under the pressure, danger, and disorder caused by the existence in several parts of Catalonia of groups which attempt to impose themselves through coercion, endangering the revolution and the war. The Government therefore, suspends its meetings and hopes that all those groups not directly dependent on the Council of the Generality will withdraw immediately from the streets so as to make possible the rapid elimination of the unrest and alarm through which Catalonia is now passing.

"At the same time the Council of the Generality has taken all necessary measures for the purpose of assuring strict compliance with its decisions."

The CNT and POUM papers said nothing about the armed struggles taking place. They only hinted vaguely the same as the above statement. Neither does the Generality inform the public what the disorder is, what the groups are. The "leaders" of the working class capitulate in silence in face of these struggles, too cowardly to explain its meaning to the class. To this day only hints in the workers press have been given. This prevents the coordination of the workers struggles and results in small scattered struggles which confront the centralized bourgeois Civil Guards. One by one these small skirmishes are suppressed. The silence of the CNT and POUM leadership helps it along. No party is at hand to give these small struggles the strategy and political line that will coordinate them into a powerful upsurge to wipe out the bourgeois state.

The CNT controlled evening paper, "La Noche" of April 30 ; that carried the Generality statement given above presented first page captions as follows: "All arms, which are in excess in Catalonia and on the border are needed at the front." The CNT leaders in the Council of the Generality supported the "suspension of meeting" statement of the Council of the Generality. At the same time that civil war develops in the rear and the Civil Guard is disarming the proletariat they call for arms for the front.

The April 30 issue of "La Batalla" presented the following disgraceful line which is as bad as that of the CNT: "There are some men, precisely those who because they occupy certain posts and are under the obligation of maintaining their serenity, are inclined to find solutions based on authority and force, which have never been solutions, and can much less be so now -- the cause of disorder -- resides in the lack of a basis of government, of a government solution.

"Public Order is in a crisis because the Government is in crisis. This and only this is the fundamental cause of that which is occurring

"Today everyone speaks of order. They all want order. But it must be asked: What Order? For the reformists of the PSUC it is a matter of establishing an order based on force, on coercive authority --- we are partisans of the only possible order - revolutionary order."

When the FORCE and AUTHORITY of the working class through Workers Councils is needed against the FORCE and AUTHORITY of the bourgeois government the POUM editorial speaks pure reformism against a "solution based on authority and force, which have never been solutions, and can much less be so now. . . . When the workers are in arms defending their interests the POUM leaders talk against force. In the same editorial they say that the cause of the crisis resides in

the government. This is completely false, as pointed out in the first part of the article.

While this drive continues to pour from the CNT and POUM leadership, a left wing in both organizations is developing and demanding immediate action on a program that fits the situation. In the CNT it is the Friends of Durruti. In the POUM the left wing presents a Marxian position on the road to power. While the leaders spill words in their daily papers, the war in the streets continues every hour.

The Stalinist militiamen returning from the front are signed up in the Civil Guards. And the May Day issue of Solidaridad Obrera, the CNT paper announces that several leaders of the Regional committee of the CNT and the FAI have been arrested. This is a small news item on the last page! Counter-revolution is gaining these precious hours, while the workers with guns are ready to fight and the leaders of the CNT and POUM write in a daze.

The most important aspect of the Generality statement is the following: "The Government, therefore, suspends its meetings and hopes that all those groups not directly dependent upon the Council of the Generality will withdraw immediately from the streets, etc." Instead of dissolving the Council of the Generality, as had been the case in all previous Generality crises the bourgeoisie SUSPEND meetings of the Council. THIS IS IN ITSELF A BOURGEOIS GOVERNMENTAL SOLUTION OF THE GENERALITY CRISIS. It establishes a Dictatorship of the bourgeoisie through the President of the Council who takes orders from the exploiters. Under this cloak of "suspension" the bourgeois state functions freely, swiftly, dictatorially against the workers carrying out the demands of the Anglo-French imperialists and their Stalinist agents.

At the same time the Government dissolved the PEOPLES TRIBUNALS, the Peoples Courts that Nin of the POUM so fondly spoke of as the means through which we will travel on the road to socialism. The Government dissolved the Peoples Courts on the excuse of greater centralization.

The government prohibits May Day demonstrations in Barcelona because the bourgeoisie fear that with such masses assembled the Civil Guard cannot cope with any possible developments. The leadership of the CNT and POUM accepted the decree without explaining what this means or even mentioning it in their press.

The compliance with the government order not to make May Day a holiday, 2 weeks after the bourgeoisie and Stalinists found time to call celebrations for the sixth anniversary of the Republic is capitulation on the part of the workers organizations.

In brief the last week of developing Civil War in Catalonia witnesses the following: 1- The Government crisis is solved for bourgeois by the "suspension of cabinet meetings" and the establishment of dictatorial power, 2- dissolution of the Peoples Courts, 3- Individual terror practiced by organizations with representatives in the Government against each other, 4- Armed struggle and resistance by lower units of CNT and the POUM, 5- disarming of many workers by the Civil Guards, 6- arresting of CNT-FAI regional leaders by the Generality, 7- Leadership of CNT and POUM presented reformist positions, and capitulated before the pressure of the bourgeoisie, 8- left wing of Anarchists, the Friends of Durruti, and the left wing of the POUM are driving forward, with a correct line for the situation, and are giving backbone to the struggles, but as yet are not sufficiently strong to openly take direct lead of a concentrated struggle, 9- Workers reveal readiness to fight if they have leadership, 10- The bourgeois forces are represented by the Esquerra, other left bourgeois parties and the Stalinists and Socialists. The proletarian forces are represented by the CNT and the POUM with a fundamental contradiction between the leaderships on the one hand and the membership and the left wings on the other.

May Day in Barcelona saw the bourgeoisie and their agents further consolidate their death grip on the workers. The revolutionists and Marxists will have to use May Day in Spain as another starting point, to learn these lessons and to drive forward. Time demands quick action.

----- Barcelona, May 1.

The only meetings in Barcelona on May Day was an indoor, small meeting by the "Those of Yesterday and Those of Today" adhering to the Friends of Durruti, and an Anarchist Nudist group meeting on the value of Music. The Friends of Durruti meeting was Sunday May Second.

In Valencia the united Front May Day meeting of the Youth of the Anarchists and POUM was called off by the CNT leaders to allow a united front meeting of the CNT and UGT.

May Day, Saturday, was "work and war" Day to prevent a workers demonstration. But Sunday, May Second, a bourgeois holiday day, the factories did not have to work. Furthermore, the evening indoor meetings in the large halls in the city usually start at about ten or ten thirty. Even an evening indoor meeting, after the workers came from work "for war" the POUM did not see fit to call.

----- Barcelona, May 3.
