

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE

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EDITORIAL

UNITY, REAL AND FALSE

THE thinking worker is interested, above all other questions, in the united front. Without unity he knows that his class cannot resist the everyday attacks of the capitalists, much less achieve the Socialist revolution. But this unity is a vexed question. Given that all political parties which have a working class basis had as their aim the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of Socialism, the question would be simple. We would all be in that party and unity would be an established fact. This, however, would imply a party with a consciousness of purpose, a revolutionary Marxist programme, an international perspective and a disciplined, determined mass membership of millions. Such a party does not exist and cannot exist. The evolution of ideas must struggle against historical, ideological and economic barriers which are insurmountable to most minds. Hence we have a confused mass of ideas that cannot be resolved to a strict scientific social outlook.

Marxism, as developed and applied by Lenin and Trotsky, represents the science of revolution. All other philosophies represent merely varying degrees of ignorance and confusion. But since wage slavery implies the exploitation of the many by the few, there must be some points on which a common agreement can be reached. These points alone can form the basis of any united front

agreement. Revolutionary Marxists always approach social, political or historical problems from the point of view of the class struggle. The united front tactic is a method whereby this conflict of classes can be progressively intensified until Capitalism is overthrown. The Marxists, therefore, are the most active and consistent advocates of the united front. Those who fear the independent class action of the masses, who fear the proletarian dictatorship, consistently oppose the united front, but knowing the inherent passion of the masses for common class action, their opposition takes the form of subtle betrayal. They use words that sound good to the workers, but they use their energy on behalf of the bourgeoisie.

During the years of Hitler's rise to power, one of the chief criticisms levelled against the Comintern by the revolutionary Marxists was, that by failing to adopt a united front tactic in Germany the Comintern guaranteed the victory of Hitler. For this criticism at that time the Comintern branded the Marxists as capitulators to social-democracy and as social-fascists. The most elaborate defence ever made of the united front is to be found in pamphlets written about Germany during that time by Trotsky. Yesterday we were social-fascists for advocating a principled united front, to day we are social-fascists for denying the Stalinist version of the united front. But

everyone knows that Stalin was wrong on the German question, and the Marxists correct. Have the positions been reversed to-day? Has Stalin learned from his mistakes and have the Marxists fallen into his error? This is the question. The Marxists pursue exactly the same line of policy as they did prior to 1933, but Stalin has changed his policy—his policy of betrayal—for the most treacherous distortion that has yet existed. The Marxists advocate the united front of action by the broad masses of the people for the class struggle. The Stalinists advocate a united front that has as its object the realisation of "peace, progress and democracy."

Are these the things that the workers want? Are they possible of achievement? Do they intensify the class struggle and bring us nearer to the proletarian dictatorship and Socialism? A brief analysis will expose them for the bourgeois poison that they are. War is inherent in capitalist society and, as Lenin has so often pointed out, the only guarantee of peace is the abolition of capitalism. But surely the Stalinists are not so stupid as not to know that, someone may say. Quite correct. The Stalinists know it all right, but they don't want the workers to know it. Progress, in a capitalist society that has outlived its usefulness as a progressive economic system, can only mean progress to poverty, unemployment and war. Every worker knows what this sort of "progress" has meant during recent years. He does not want any more of it. Democracy is the most vile of them all. Every worker who has ever heard of Lenin knows that he continually opposed this hypocritical bourgeois democracy. He showed that democracy is simply the governmental form through which capitalism imposes its class dictatorship upon the masses. Yes, this is what Stalin offers, nothing less. And Litvinov celebrates the treachery of the Comintern with a toast to Britain's King; the Communists march behind the Union Jack, and Stalin's secret police execute daily dozens of workers who have shown symptoms of Marxist thought. We can understand the best type of young workers entering the Communist Party, with its background of the glorious October Revolution, sincerely believing that they are following in the footsteps of the old Bolsheviks. We see them joining up for the world revolution, but they are joining up in the wrong ranks. The conquests of October are being dissipated every day. The old Bolsheviks are imprisoned and murdered, the works of Lenin are being mutilated or discarded. We defy any young Communist to study the original works of the revolutionary writers and remain in the Party. However, the united front is the question at issue now, and we must outline what Lenin understood as a united front, and what every class conscious worker must understand.

The united front consists in an agreement reached between two or more parties and organisations, which have different programmes, for joint action on specific issues. In this agreement there is absolutely no question of a common political programme. Each organisation retains intact its entire political programme; retains the right to put it forward; retains the right to criticise the other organisation in the agreement, either in general or for failure to carry out the united front agreement properly. Thus, in the united front each organisation guards its full independence, while at the same time the widest

possible unity can be achieved for carrying through some action accepted as desirable by all the constituent organisations. Many different circumstances must be taken into account before deciding upon the specific issues which should be included in the agreement, but in general the following examples form a ready basis on which united fronts can be built. *Unemployment* (resistance to Means Test, Task Work, compulsory training, intimidation into taking work at less than T.U. rates, etc.). *Employment* (against dilution of labour, for 100% Trade Unionism, for support of strikes, right to picket, take street collections, hold meetings, etc.). *For Workers' Defence Corps* against Fascist attacks (as in the East End of London, Leeds, etc.). *For Defence of Proletarian rights* (against Trades Disputes Act, Sedition Act, Emergency Powers, Public Order Bill, resistance to police interference at workers' meetings, demonstrations, etc.). *Resistance to Imperialist aggression* (refusal to load munitions for Spain, Egypt, India, etc., demand for workers' embargo, aid for colonial struggle). *Resistance to war* (demanding money to be used for social services, against gas drill, military training in schools, for soldiers' committees, against threat of conscription, etc.).

At more advanced stages of the social crisis, united fronts must be formed on such issues as the building of a workers' militia, formation of workers and soldiers councils, and for broad all-in councils in the process of imperialist war to turn it into civil war. The united front on such issues is, in fact, not merely possible but indispensable for successful struggle. Through it the widest possible forces are organised, and at the same time, the masses are given a chance to compare *in action* the worth and dependability of ideas and methods of the various organisations and parties which strive for their allegiance.

Independent working class action is the essence of the united front. The methods of parliamentarism have no place in it. If Parliament is forced to legislate upon some issue that is beneficial to the workers, it is because Parliament is afraid of the workers' might. Mass meetings addressed by well known orators must be directed towards winning the masses for extra-parliamentary methods of struggle through councils of action. These councils must elect their own leaders and not have leaders thrust upon them by the parties who originally organised the united front. If these do win positions of leadership in the councils, it must be on their merits as leaders, as organisers, as the best and most efficient workers. The Marxists never fear such a test. This is their "parliament," this is where they demonstrate their right to lead, this is where they win their mass support for the revolutionary struggles ahead.

The reformist Labour Party will have nothing to do with such activities until their own rank and file, sick and tired of their leaders' endless talk and their steady retreat before the bourgeoisie, force them to take some definite action. This does not mean that we believe in the "united front from below" as the idiotic Stalinists once did. Such a manoeuvre plays into the hands of the reactionary leaders. In effect it means that the best and most militant comrades in the reformist organisations are asked to break with their own organisations and leave the leadership in complete control of the party machine. Those leaders can now attack the militants by pointing to their undisciplined action, their weakening of the party that thousands of workers

still believe in, their breaking of "unity" within the party, etc. Such efforts are doomed to failure. They are not united fronts at all, but weak committees, in which the policy of *only one* party is considered. The militants must fight inside their organisations for the leadership to take action in the name of the whole party. We know how the united front intensifies the class struggle, we know how those treacherous leaders fear the class struggle, we know that if we force them into such action they must inevitably, in the interest of their capitalist masters, attempt to betray the struggle. The broad mass of the reformist workers will lose faith in those leaders only when their betrayal is clearly exposed, when they see them in action, when the mighty gas-bags are pricked and their backbone is conspicuous by its absence. The Noskes and the Scheidemanns are no historical accident. Those social-democratic murderers of Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, and the flower of the German proletariat, simply had the opportunity to demonstrate their inherent love of bourgeois democracy and capitalism. Our British Noskes and Scheidemanns gave us a taste of their calibre in the General Strike of 1926. This was the preliminary scuffle for the greater treachery ahead.

What then of the Communist Party, with its United Fronts, People's Front, National Front, etc? Can it be regarded as a party that is prepared to struggle on specific issues that are beneficial to the workers as a whole? We say no. The C.P.'s persistent call for 'unity' has only one meaning—unity with the bourgeoisie, unity for war in the interests of bloody imperialism, unity of the 'peace-loving nations' such as Britain, France, Czecho-Slovakia, with the Soviet Union, for the alleged defence of the latter. Of all the reformist parties, the C.P. is the most reactionary and dangerous. They want this military alliance, therefore they want their allies to be as strong as possible, in the imperialist, military sense. Before an imperialist nation can embark upon war, it must have a docile, confused and ideologically degenerate working class. The class needs of the worker must be completely sacrificed to the class needs of the bourgeoisie, hence the class struggle must be thrown overboard. The C.P. cannot under any circumstances call for or take part in any action that leads to the intensification of the class war and the consequent weakening of the Soviet Union's 'allies.'

In France the C.P. called for the People's Front, because by this means they guaranteed the Franco-Soviet pact. The French workers were concerned, not with military alliances but with the struggle for increased wages, better conditions, etc. They thought that the People's Front was established on this basis so they started their Stay-In Strikes, their fights with the Fascists, etc.

Of course the Stalinists didn't want anything like this, so they immediately sabotaged the struggle. "The workers must know when to stop striking," said Thorez, French Stalinist number one. "We love our country. Bolsheviks of France who love their country, must always do their best for the national unity of our own France." (Cachin, *L'Humanité*, 8.10.35). They hail the tricolour as the "emblem of French revolutionary traditions." The red flag of the Paris Commune is hidden away. The Commune was drowned in blood by the bourgeoisie, marching behind the tricolour. This is where the Stalinists march to-day. They are prepared to crush any attempt at revolution, at independent class action (as they are doing in Spain

at the present moment) and yet they prate of 'unity.' We know what this unity is. No! The united front and the policy of the Comintern are exact opposites. Every worker must get that inside his head, else the guns of imperialist war will blow it from his shoulders.

Another unprincipled and hollow attempt at unity has just been brought to a sorrowful end. This was to be the greatest united front of all times. It was to regenerate the working class movement, to oppose the bureaucracy of the Labour Party, to harness the mighty upsurge of the masses and lead them to conquests on the economic, social and political field. The Labour Party would be democratised and a great mass party including all shades of political thought would stride forward to Socialism. This was the Unity Bloc of the I.L.P., C.P. and Socialist League. They got 40,000 signatures on nicely printed paper, a hundred local unity committees were set up, and now it is dead. The Marxists told them it was still-

MAKE A NOTE OF THIS NOW

THE premises of the Marxist Group are now open every day from 2.30 p.m. until 9 p.m. in the evening. Members of the Group, sympathisers, and workers who want to know more about our aims and work, can now get into personal touch at any time with responsible comrades of the Marxist Group.

Marxist literature, journals, pamphlets, books, can be consulted there, and supplies are available for sale. We are also establishing a lending library for the use of Group members and non-member workers. Readers of FIGHT are requested to look through their own books and donate to the library any they can spare. Also statistical material, back files of Socialist journals and other material suitable for students' reference will be welcome.

THE PREMISES ARE THERE; THEY ARE YOURS. Support them by using them, buying your books and literature there, and by donations in cash and kind. Make the premises a living centre of serious Marxist activity.

And now make a note of the address:
97, KINGS CROSS ROAD, W.C.1.

born from the start. We were called 'sectarian,' 'disrupters,' etc. We do not swell up with pride because our warning has proved correct, we merely hope that our comrades, particularly in the I.L.P., will have learned their lesson, that they will now study what a real united front of action is, and analyse those phrase-mongering leaders of theirs, who pose as a revolutionary leadership, but are just as muddle-headed and irresponsible as the other reformists whom they denounce. However, Centrist leaders usually have very thick heads, so we may expect some further unprincipled 'united front' campaigns in the near future. If we understand the falsity of the late, but not

lamented, 'Unity Bloc,' we shall be prepared for other deceptions on the same lines.

We did not have here an agreement on the specific issues that were vital to the workers, but a whole programme of social, economic and political demands. In fact they stole the programme of the Labour Party and gave it the colour of the united front of action. As far as action was concerned, there was none. To the I.L.P., C.P. and S.L. the intensification of the class struggle consisted in arranging mass meetings for Maxton, Pollit, Cripps and Co., and allowing the workers to sign pledge cards. The C.P. was chary of participating at the start. They wanted a united front with the Liberals, the Church, the progressive Conservatives, the Boy Scouts and Uncle Tom Cobby as well. The tactic in France was to establish unity first between the workers parties, and from that point to progress towards the 'National front of all good Frenchmen.' In this country they are doubtful of such a tactic succeeding. The I.L.P. talks about class struggle, Socialism, etc., and this no doubt upsets the Duchess of Atholl and the Carlton Club. They want a National front of all good Englishmen, so maybe it would be simpler to ignore the other working class parties and concentrate entirely on these new found friends of the Soviet Union. The I.L.P. in their moments of revolutionary upsurge, thought in terms of opposing the C.P. attitude to the class struggle. They participated in this fraudulent programmatic bloc and only succeeded in exposing themselves. The Socialist League wanted to get back inside the Labour Party, but when the L.P. bureaucrats dissolved

the League, they forgot about the united front and came to heel behind Major Atlee and Morrison.

What is the attitude of the Marxists, of the thinking workers to such alliances? Is it critical support, or do we remain outside and condemn them? Critical support of a reformist programme is a tactic with the objective of leading the class struggle forward, of exposing the illusion that reformism can solve the contradiction of capitalist society, of developing the revolutionary consciousness of the masses. There could be absolutely no question of critical support of the Unity Bloc. It could not lead the class struggle forward, but simply lead the workers into an alliance with their own bourgeoisie for imperialist war. However, what do we mean by condemning? The revolutionary condemns Parliament, but he will enter Parliament in order to expose it, to get a better platform for the presentation of his revolutionary programme. He never cooperates of course, in legislating for capitalism. Where possible, therefore, we can enter the local committees of such 'unity blocs' in order to expose them. In order to present before the assembled workers our proposals for a principled united front of action. This is the attitude we must adopt. In many instances we will be thrown out, be accused of 'sectarianism,' 'disrupting' etc., but that does not dishearten us. The Bolsheviks were accused of the very same thing, but they won through in the end. The workers are demanding unity for action. They will soon sweep the reformists and Stalinists from their path. When once a fighting unity is achieved, Capitalism will not have long to live.

THE CRISIS IN FRANCE

BLUM has been deposed as leader of the Popular Front Government. M. Chautemps, radical-socialist (liberal), has been set up as the new tool of the French bourgeoisie. There is little change in the chief departments of the Administration. The personnel is much the same, but the policy of the Chamber will now be more strictly controlled by representatives of finance capitalism in the Senate.

Just over a year ago the Popular Front won its election victory. The Stalinists hailed this as a victory of democracy, of freedom, of social advance. Fascism was defeated. Peace was assured. In the factories and on the streets the workers fought their enemies. They won small concessions, despite the sabotage of the Popular Front and the Stalinists. The Blum Government legalised the concessions already won by the workers; it issued decrees against the Fascists which they promptly ignored. That was the sum total of the great "victory."

Reaction passes through various phases. Openly to oppose the revolutionary upsurge at such a time would have been to invite extermination, but after a few months Blum declared a pause in "Social advance." Capitalism, chiefly by increasing prices, had already nullified the small gains of the workers. Industrial reconstruction and the huge armaments programme demanded a cessation of the class struggle. The propaganda machine of the radicals, the reformists and the Stalinists broadcast these lies. The police and mobile guards of the Blum Government shot down its working class supporters during the Clichy riots.

"The national unity of France" was restored for the time being.

The flight of the franc abroad, the huge budget deficit, the enormous expenditure on war preparations, called for measures to ensure financial stability. Blum asked for emergency powers to control investments, to repatriate capital, to impose new forms of taxation. The French financiers had no objection to further attacking working class standards of living through the proposed taxation on basic commodities, but it would not tolerate interference in the sphere of high finance. They regarded Blum's proposals as an impertinence, so they dismissed him and called for another lackey. While M. Zyromski, prominent reformist leader, declared that it would be fatal for the Socialists to support a Chautemps cabinet, and thus "yield to the Senate, the instrument of the oligarchy," the Stalinists chanted in chorus that "the Popular Front was stronger than ever."

Blum had failed to build up and defend the Franco-Soviet pact. Liberals, like Daladier and Herriot, are favourably inclined to the pact, so Stalinist foreign policy demands a shift to the right. The Popular Front will be "strengthened"; tomorrow it will be the National Front of all patriotic Frenchmen, including even the "progressive Fascists."

This is the story behind the recent crisis. It was assisted by the military manoeuvres of the Soviet bureaucracy who would lead the working class of France to destruction. To look for logic in such a policy—unless there be logic in treachery itself—is to look for the impossible. When class contradictions can no longer be reconciled through the "democratic" State machine, either the proletarian or the Fascist dictatorship must smash that machine.

A CLASSIC BETRAYAL

IN THE June issue of "Fight" we attempted to give an analysis of the forces operating behind the London Bus strike. Our conclusions have been amply justified by subsequent events. The strike from its inception, provides an excellent illustration of the rôle and methods of the employing class, and the working class movement. It is because of the vital need for the workers to understand these tendencies and to draw the correct conclusions that we again discuss this dispute. It concerns not only London, but has an important meaning for the struggles throughout the country. The developing class conflicts in mining, engineering, railways, etc., have revealed the growing wave of struggle and the efforts of the Trade Union leaders either to stifle the militancy or to divert it into safe channels. It has been possible in these industries to keep the workers from developing their organs of struggle, i.e., the Factory Committees, to crush strikes by declarations of "unofficial," and for the bureaucrats to maintain firm control of the Trade Unions. Yet the whole industrial field is simmering with unrest, each month sees new indications of militancy, and there is a steady ferment inside the Trade Union Movement against crippling class collaboration machinery, bureaucracy, for more adequate methods of struggle, wage increases and better conditions. Will this lead to success on the immediate issues and a strengthening of the working class forces in preparation for the future decisive and revolutionary struggles? Or will it lead to defeat, with the consequent inevitability of the crushing of the British working class by capitalist reaction at the moment of crisis, as has been the lot of our continental comrades? The answer to this question rests with the ability of the revolutionaries and militants to learn the lessons of past defeats, understand the forces at work in the struggles and to provide the correct leadership and organisational forms as each successive phase develops. The revolutionary, however, cannot limit his actions to giving the best lead on the immediate issues, but must continually relate the specific problem to the general task of the proletariat to emancipate themselves from capitalism. It is to assist this work and to build up the cadres for the British Revolutionary Party, which alone can effectively lead the British workers to victory that this article is written.

The "Sell-out"

On the 26th May the 30,000 striking London busmen were informed through the medium of the broadcast that the T.G.W.U. Executive had terminated the strike. The settlement was made on the London Passenger Transport Board's previous offer,—a few minor concessions and a joint enquiry with the Union on the other matters in dispute, preparatory to drawing up a new agreement. The E.C. effected this settlement in the teeth of overwhelming opposition from the men, by using their powers to take control of the dispute out of the hands of the Central Bus Committee. The situation that confronted the men when they received the instruction to return to work left them with no option but to accept. The trams, tubes, and trolley buses had been running throughout the strike, carrying enormous overloads of traffic. The

Union leaders (Bevin & Co.) consistently refused to call them out, and in effect, forced them into a strikebreaking role. The strike was in its fourth week, and the rank and file in the garages were considering ways and means of direct appeals to the other transport workers. Yet there was not the organisational co-ordination necessary to make such attempts successful, neither was their any real leadership given by the Central Bus Committee. Faced with the swift manoeuvre and ultimatum by the E.C. the men accepted defeat and made an orderly retreat. Despite the return to work indignation against the E.C. was intense; for some days a section of the "fleet" carried on a "work to rule" tactic. However, it is a good reflection on the busmen as a body of militants that the reaction to the betrayal has been one of preparation for the future fight with the L.P.T.B. and Mr. Bevin, who typifies the bureaucracy.

Since the termination of the dispute the C.B.C. has been suspended, its members also suspended from their activities (apart from Branch functions) and an enquiry is to be made into their actions during the strike. The L.P.T.B. joins in this drive against the militants by curtailing the leave formally granted for union activity. It would appear that Bevin & Co. are determined to carry out their original intention to smash the Rank and File Movement and to break down the independence and strength of the men. This persecution of the militants will become sharper, as Union leaderships are to-day fighting on behalf of their masters (the capitalists) to maintain the Unions as instruments of class collaboration. Without any submission to and vote by the busmen, the T.G.W.U. E.C. has signed "their" new agreement with the Transport Board. This flagrant abuse of the workers' democratic rights should strengthen their determination to end the rule of bureaucracy. The agreement itself represents, as far as can be gathered from the facts published, a compromise on minor issues with a useful lever placed in the hands of the Board for the future. Certain easements will be made in working conditions, although of course the 7½ hour day is not mentioned. The proposal to prolong the period of graduation to senior pay rank for all future employees, is interesting. We can expect a drive to weed out the existing militants on the grounds of "not fit." The Board's Union and "independent" doctors will be a convenient and "fair" method of achieving this. The new employees will come under the new graduation, and a few more coppers will be made for the stockholders. It will be noted that the original demand for a 7½ hour day has faded into the background. The struggle now becomes that of the busmen defending themselves against an alliance of the Board and their own Union Executive.

This comes to the substance of our previous article, when we took the view that the real issue was not merely that of workers striking for better conditions (although the men had this intention) but appeared to savour of a conspiracy to trap the busmen into taking sectional and precipitate action with the consequent inevitable defeat, in order to lay the basis for the breaking down of their

comparatively privileged position. The L.P.T.B. desires to develop its powerful monopoly of London Transport without hindrance from "irresponsible" but highly organised workers. Its need for profit on a gigantic scale demands the sharpening of exploitation. This in its turn provokes resistance from the workers, who must become "reasonable partners in industry" or be crushed. The T.G.W.U. leadership has the task of ensuring the former or assisting in the latter, if this fails. Furthermore, the Labour leaders, for example Mr. Bevin, have the responsibility of maintaining "peace in industry" and of ensuring working class collaboration in war preparations and Imperialist war. In this they serve the interests of the ruling class in general. Particularly in the developing war situation it is important for them to liquidate the militant groupings in the Unions and cripple the effectiveness of the shop and factory committees. Thus they can attempt to stifle the class struggle now and guard against any revolutionary actions in the future. It is necessary to make clear that it is not because of any personal viciousness that the Bevins, Citrines, Smiths, behave in this way. They merely typify the logical outcome of the policy and methods of reformism as its bureaucratic expression. Reformism (the political expression of Trade Unionism) is limited to gaining concessions. Thus it becomes bound up with the capitalist system and identifies itself with the preservation of that system. The reformist leaders inevitably, being in the working class ranks, become the strongest props of reaction in moments of crisis, and oppose any development of the class struggle, the successful conduct of which inevitably leads to the overthrow of reformist ideology.

Therefore, when militant workers discuss the question of the Trade Union leadership, it is not enough to say that they are a gang of betrayers etc., but it is essential that we understand why they are of that tendency, and plan on the basis of this understanding to convert the Trade Unions with the necessary adaptations into instruments of class struggle. This is the only effective way the bureaucracy can be overthrown. The mere substitution of, say, Bevin by Papworth would achieve nothing.

The London Garages have already met in unofficial conferences, after the suspension of the Central Bus Committee. However, we are without information as to whether any concrete plans were formulated to deal with the situation. The men appear to be very strong in their condemnation of Bevin and Co., and threats of extreme action have been made. We would point out here that action to be decisive must aim at a specific objective, be adequately organised (avoid sporadic stunts), and understood in relation to the further steps that must follow it. The immediate post-strike "go slow" tactics, while expressing an excellent spirit of militancy, could be at that juncture, of no real value. Only nine garages organised this demonstration, and although it inconvenienced the L.P.T.B. it was bound to "fade out."

If the lessons of this "classical betrayal" of a highly organised and militant body of men by their leaders can be learned by the working class, and our counter plans laid, the class struggle can be raised to greater heights, and the over three weeks strike will not have been in vain. We therefore advance certain general conclusions in order to assist the formulation of these plans:

1) The attitude and methods of the L.P.T.B. and the Union bureaucrats occasions no surprise. Their conduct is in line with their respective historic roles. To express amazement at Bevin's actions and to think in terms of excusing him, is to leave the hard reality of 1937 capitalism. Further, to the Marxist, the failure of the Rank and File Movement is not surprising or accidental. Throughout its history its value, on occasions, has been merely incidental. As a loose left wing fraction working to save the London Transport workers from betrayal by the T.G.W.U. leadership, it had all the knowledge, theoretical and practical, of the revolutionary movement of the last decade; yet, being chained to the then Dual Unionism and ultra left policy (1928-1935), now to the Peoples' Front, social patriotic unity behind the Labour leaders policy of the Communist International, through the Communist Party of Great Britain, it never had any such intention. Many fine militants are members of this body, who work hard and fight courageously for their class. Despite this however, the control is in the hands of the C.P.G.B. There can be no objection to the organising by a revolutionary party of trade unionists for class struggle purposes. The C.P.G.B. is, however, now reformist, and has abandoned the class struggle. The events of the strike illustrate this process. It is apparent that no adequate preparatory work was done by the Rank and File Movement to develop strong contact with the other London Transport sections. Its propaganda during the strike was limited to humanitarian appeals re the hard lot of the men, etc. The Central Bus Committee (R. & F.) stated at the commencement that they did not want the trams out. Later, when the position became obvious and the rank and file busmen began to consider direct steps to contact the tram, tube, and trolley bus workers, the C.B.C., faced with their previous statement, could only make half-hearted appeals to the Executive to call them out. Yet the Rank and File Movement has contacts among the other sections of London Transport, and no concrete steps were taken to organise strike movements among them. The main line of the C.P.G.B. itself was to defend the "right of the busmen to live a little longer" and to link the strike to the "Unity" campaign. This has as its objective a united working class within the Labour Movement behind the reactionary Labour Party leadership. In order not to prejudice the chance of Labour Party acceptance of C.P.G.B. affiliation, the now Reformist "Communists" will take every precaution to avoid antagonising the Labour and Trade Union bureaucrats. Thus they are preparing to oppose unofficial strikes as "disruptive" and surrender to the T.U. leaders on every decisive class question. Bevin's attack on the left and the Communists, in reality so little deserved by the latter, at the National Conference of the T.G.W.U. power workers, received its reply in the surrender tactics, covered with "left" phrases as usual, of the Communists in the London busmen's strike.

They will go further to the right in the future struggles. Their policy of the Peoples Front, defence of democracy and peace, a united Labour movement, means in reality a surrender of the class struggle in favour of bringing pressure to bear on the Labour leaders for a Labour Capitalist Government for "peace and democracy." The industrial field is certain to see further sell-outs and

betrayals carried out with the aid of these "left" allies of our treacherous Labour leaders.

The London Busmen's Rank and File Movement can be made into a driving force for achieving a unification of the fighting strength of London Transport workers, but it must break clear from the stranglehold of the now reactionary C.P.G.B.

2) The London Passenger Transport Board has been proudly acclaimed by Mr. Herbert Morrison as an example of Labour Party Socialism. The busmen are closely linked with this Party through their national affiliation. The struggle with the Board should bring concretely to the workers the capitalist nature of the so-called Socialism of the Reformists. By ignoring the necessity for the overthrow of the ruling class and the institution of *Workers' Power*, in effect all they achieve is to provide the shareholders with more secure stocks in State capitalist enterprises. The exploitation of the workers proceeds on an increasing scale, all in the name of public service and Socialism. The busmen should raise throughout the Labour Movement, via their affiliations, the whole question of the Labour Party's fraudulent Socialism.

3) The success with which, in certain localities, the strikers co-operated with the local Trades Councils in drawing in the forces of the Labour Movement to assist in the dispute, should demonstrate the importance of building up these bodies as co-ordinating centres for the more effective mobilisation of the working class for the class struggle. The busmen can play a leading role in the localities in this task. Here they can also make contact with the local tram, tube and trolley bus workers.

4) Certain immediate tasks arise out of the dispute itself, which can be itemised as follows:

(a) The new agreement reveals the intentions of the L.P.T.B. and its office boys (the Union E.C.). They hope to split the men, satisfy some with the small concessions given, and proceed to the liquidation of the militants via the medical and disciplinary machinery. The most important thing about the agreement is the period of its duration, terms of revocation, whether any negotiating machinery to prevent strikes is suggested, and finally, the intentions of the bodies operating it. The busmen themselves must prepare their plans for the defeat of this agreement, and the substitution for it of a joint agreement for all London Transport workers, which maintains conditions, but leaves freedom for industrial action.

(b) Preparations should be made for the constitution of one T.O.T.U. organisation for all L.P.T.B. employees. Careful plans must be made for the institution of a similar authority to the Central Bus Committee representing all sections.

(c) The question of the carrying out on strategic occasions of other methods of struggle beyond that of the normal strike, i.e. stay-in, go slow, etc., requires examination.

(d) The organising of a campaign for democratisation of the Union, by rules revision and the election of militants to leading positions. The defeat of Bevin at the forthcoming Biennial Conference and the rejection of his policy and methods must be carefully prepared. However, the mere getting rid of Bevin will only signify a

defeat of the bureaucracy. By itself this slogan leads to the illusion that the busmen's troubles are due to the tricks of one man. With his departure matters will adjust themselves. This article attempts to prove the contrary.

In the struggle for democracy within the T.G.W.U. contact must be made with the provincial transport workers, particularly the Scottish and Home Counties busmen. A strong combined stand of the militants in an organised manner can, if conducted on class lines, defeat at least temporarily the bureaucrats.

Strong opposition must be raised to any suggestion of break-aways at this juncture. Such action would merely isolate the most advanced London Transport workers and would lead to their defeat. Such a policy would be of great service to Mr. Bevin in his purge against the militants.

The London busmen have a duty to the whole working class in this conflict. If they can overcome their own weaknesses and defeat the unholy alliance of employers and Trade Union and Labour leaders, the whole movement will receive a strong impetus. On the other hand, the British workers must also learn the lessons of the London busmen's defeat and apply them to their own struggles. The general tendencies are common to the conflicts over the whole industrial field. It is the task and responsibility of the revolutionaries to carry the struggle forward against the treachery of the reformists and Stalinists towards the ultimate objective of the establishment of workers' power and Socialism.

Marx taught that the emancipation of the working class must be achieved by the workers themselves. In local and sectional struggles as well as in the general struggle, we must bear this important principle in mind. Nor the choice of Bevin or Papworth for the London busmen, but the development of conscious and collective action, in this instance, to make the Union the instrument of industrial struggle and the Executive the servants of the members—for democratic control and collective responsibility.

A DRIVE TO THE NORTH

In August a member of the Central Committee of the Marxist Group will tour the North of England and, if possible, Glasgow and Edinburgh. Will all sympathetic readers of FIGHT who are willing to co-operate in this organisational drive, or to meet and exchange views, please write at once to: The Secretary, The Marxist Group, 97 Kings Cross Road, London, W.C.1.

**Have You Seen Page Nine?
"FIGHT" NEEDS YOUR HELP!**

POUM, THE I.L.P. & SPAIN

LAST month we gave detailed criticism of the mistakes of the POUM leadership in their attitude to dual power, the agrarian question, the "unified command," etc. We stated that only if the revolutionary section of this Centrist party won the leadership, could it become the vanguard of the Spanish workers. Since then the revolt against the leadership has strengthened. The Central Committee and the Editorial of *La Batalla* has become more reactionary. The rank and file membership is more and more analysing and attacking the mistakes of the leaders. From the Lerida POUM, which was previously loyal to the reformist Gorkin, comes a bitter denunciation of the party policy which led to loss of workers' power in Catalonia. "In the course of our revolution we have made grave mistakes. Two of them stand out above all for their extraordinary gravity. First, the representatives of the working class became Ministers in Madrid, or Counsellors in Barcelona, but through lack of ideological capability were unable to create the organs of power of the working class. Secondly, they did not create financial machinery and control of the directing organisations. Because of this our revolution is reeling and seems to be wounded to death." (*Adelante*, 3/4/37).

From Barcelona they are even more bitter. "Equal confusion exists over all the burning problems of our revolution. Clarity is distinguished by its absence. One day we were in favour of 'A Constituent Assembly of Councils of Workers, Peasants and Fighters,' the next day we talk about 'Committees,' and afterwards, without consulting any militants of the rank and file, without any explanatory article, the former position with regard to the future organs of power in Spain is completely abandoned in favour of convoking a 'Constituent Assembly based on Delegates from Workers and Peasants Syndicates (Unions).' And this is only one example of a thing we mention with shame, and which we are tired of pointing out again and again, demonstrating the complete lack of political understanding and responsibility in the present leadership of the Party, a thing that is all too evident to those who watch our own press. . . . It is obviously a time when we must do away with every contradiction. It is the time indeed to speak with all clarity, and to demand the responsibility for a whole series of collapses in our party." (District 5. 21/4/37).

The hopelessness of Nin is quite clearly demonstrated. "The dictatorship of the proletariat means the exercise of authority by the working class. We can affirm that in Catalonia the dictatorship of the proletariat is now in existence." (Review of a speech by Nin, *La Batalla*, 3/9/36). A few weeks from then, the same comrade Nin, representing our Party, entered the Council of the Generality of Catalonia, which constituted, according to *La Batalla*, 27/9/36, "the Government of the revolution." (ibid.)

While Brockway claims POUM as the revolutionary party and regards as slanderers anyone who dares to offer a constructive criticism, the rank and file of POUM have no such illusions. "While the revolution is in danger

there is no glimpse of a happy outcome. It is obvious that the party of the revolution is non-existent. The POUM should be this party, but its political and organisational activities show a complete disorientation among the leadership, and has injured the heritage which Maurin left us." (Barcelona Local.)

Brockway will attempt to deceive our comrades of the I.L.P. by discovering "Trotskyism" in such statements. He supports the leadership of POUM at all costs. We believe that the rank and file of the I.L.P. are with us in thinking that the interests of the Spanish revolution and its repercussions on the world revolution are much more important than the reputation of leaders.

When a party fails to take advantage of an opportunity that history presents it seldom gets another chance to rectify its error. POUM has been fortunate in this respect, the power that was thrown away in Catalonia in July could have been won back in May. POUM could have regained its prestige as a revolutionary force, but the leaders again betrayed the struggle. Brockway tells us that the situation was not a revolutionary one. We will not recount the whole of the details, as they should be fairly well known by now. However, the view of a member of POUM who took an active part in the Barcelona rising will give the lie to Brockway. "Tuesday, the armed workers dominated the greatest part of Barcelona. Montjuich, which commands the port and the city with its cannon, was held by the anarchists. Tibidaba, the port and all the suburbs were in their control, and the Government forces, except for a few isolated barricades, were completely outnumbered and were concentrated in the centre of the city, where they could be closed in on from all sides, as the rebel forces were in July 1936. . . . The POUM leaders did not see that the moment was a revolutionary one and that the workers, arms in hand, were prepared for drastic action against the State. Had the POUM given out the slogan "Disarm the police, attack the arsenals and barracks," and had it *carried into practice* its slogan of "Committees for the Defence of the Revolution," the workers would have smashed the State on their own initiative. Every Government building was a little arsenal and would have been taken. With Defence Committees in every building, the foundations of workers' power could have been laid. The events of last week can only be analysed as a defeat and a lesson to the workers of Barcelona. *The absence of any kind of revolutionary leadership* killed a revolutionary movement in the bud."

Apart from the cowardly invention that "the situation was not a revolutionary one," the POUM leaders offer other reasons as to why they did not seize power (why they thought of seizing power when "the situation was not revolutionary" suggests insane opportunism). They were afraid of helping Franco and afraid that Government troops from Valencia would annihilate the Catalan revolutionaries. They were not afraid of foreign intervention, as they had faith in the world proletariat. Why they should be afraid of the Spanish Government being

Comrades! "Fight" Needs Your Help!

EVERY proletarian revolutionary movement has been built up by the sacrifices of the most class-conscious section of the workers. The Marxist Group, like the whole international Marxist movement known as 'Trotskyism,' depends for its work and publications upon the pennies and shillings of its members and working class sympathisers. That is a statement of fact and a challenge to the Stalinist slanderers.

In the present world situation, when Imperialist war threatens to destroy millions of our class, when Fascism threatens to crush for decades every working class struggle for emancipation, when the 2nd and 3rd Internationals have betrayed the Revolution already in a number of countries, the task facing revolutionary Marxists is that of building up, in the shortest possible time, the theoretically trained and organisationally prepared cadres of revolution. This is the task which Marxist Group has set itself the task, rather, that history has set it.

FIGHT, the organ of the Marxist Group, is the means of making our voice heard by thousands of workers. FIGHT is our most important weapon for the ideological preparatory work which is essential in the present stage. FIGHT is also our best organiser. A relatively small number of comrades are now carrying the burden, not only of the preparation and distribution of FIGHT, but also its *financial responsibilities*.

We intend, at whatever cost and sacrifice to our members, to keep it going. But that is not enough. Its circulation must be extended tenfold this year. Time is short. The forces of reaction and the forces of betrayal are developing at an ever-increasing rate.

If your reading of FIGHT means anything more to you than a mere interest in 'what is going on,' if you are a class-conscious worker, a serious, honest supporter of the struggle of the working class for Socialism, **YOU MUST AT ONCE MAKE SOME SACRIFICE FOR FIGHT!** This is a serious demand made *on you* by a group of Revolutionary Marxists who, already, are sacrificing everything, risking everything, in their determination to help the workers of Britain successfully to overthrow Capitalist Imperialism. There are some readers who, if they are sincere in their expressed desire to see Socialism in Britain, could give pounds. There are a great many readers who could at least send us shillings. From those who are left we want something—sixpence—a stamp. If FIGHT means anything to *you*—that is, if the victory of the working class means anything to you and your children, **YOU MUST RALLY TO FIGHT NOW.** Send your donation, as much as you can afford, whether a stamp or a cheque, to **THE MARXIST GROUP, 97 Kings Cross Road, London, W.C.1.**

able to send troops against them, and not afraid of world Imperialism sending troops against them, shows a complete lack of faith in the Spanish workers. The moral force of the revolutionary idea would surely have had a greater response inside Spain than outside. However, this is just another of the conundrums that "Centrism" manufactures so readily. "But the troops actually did arrive from Valencia," someone may say. Yes, four days after the rising had started, when there should have been no

bourgeois State in existence to call them. The Government only dared to bring in troops when they were sure the workers would not fight. The POUM rank and file played the most prominent part in the rising, only with the greatest difficulty did the leaders restrain them from doing what they knew was correct.

Why did they restrain them? "The war and the revolution are indivisible." "Only workers' power can defeat Fascism." This is the revolutionary facade of

these miserable opportunists. They are just words and nothing more. They *act* upon other words, which show quite clearly their real policy. All the following quotations are from *The Truth About Barcelona* by Fenner Brockway.

"The POUM held that an insurrection would be wrong and inadvisable until *after the Fascists were defeated*, and there was a difference in its ranks as to whether *even then* an insurrection would be necessary." This is where the POUM leadership really stands. It will not tolerate an insurrection; the revolution and the war *are* divisible. In fact, after the defeat of Fascism, workers' power will probably fall from the sky, without any insurrection against the bourgeois state. How does POUM, and its mouth-piece, Brockway, propose that the dictatorship of the proletariat be established? "By creating a demand for the summoning of a Constituent Assembly representing the workers, peasants, and soldiers." In other words, the capitalist Government of Catalonia is asked to liquidate itself and call into being a Government of the working class that will represent the social revolution. This is the party that compares itself with the Bolsheviks, the party of Lenin. Poor Lenin, "what sins are committed in thy name."

In July 1936, the workers of Catalonia, almost unarmed, beat back the Fascist attack within two days, and ruled through their economic and military Councils. Brockway describes this as "an epic of working class history." Now, with the workers fully armed, with the possibility of the seizure of power almost without bloodshed, there are to be no more "epics of working class history." Capitalism in Catalonia will sentence itself to death by calling for a Constituent Assembly. If this is Brockway's Marxism, and Brockway is the only I.L.P. leader with the slightest knowledge of Marxism, how do we appraise the I.L.P. leadership as a whole?

The war and the revolution are indivisible. To curb the revolution is to curb the fight against Fascism. The question of an offensive on the Aragon front and the question of the seizure of power in Catalonia are inextricably bound together. The bourgeois government of the Generality would not supply arms to the POUM and Anarchist fighters on the Aragon front, because they were afraid that those arms would be used for revolutionary purposes. If the POUM leadership had not betrayed the revolution in the July days, the workers would have controlled Catalonia, controlled its armament factories, etc., and thereby been able to launch an offensive against Franco many months ago. The relief this would have afforded to the Madrid and Basque fronts can hardly be overestimated. If the opportunity had been seized in May, the same thing would have applied. The POUM leadership betrayed the workers' struggle for power on both occasions, consequently they also betrayed the struggle against Fascism.

POUM claims to be the vanguard of the Spanish workers. They say, "The rising had an undeniable character of spontaneity. . . . What our party did was to associate itself with the movement when it took place." How far did they associate themselves with the movement? To its logical conclusion? We will demonstrate that they did not. "On Wednesday the workers were on top. Leadership was definitely with the extremists. . . . The

Anarchist 'Friends of Durruti' published a leaflet. . . ." In effect this leaflet contains an appeal to the POUM to associate itself with the movement in its revolutionary phase, but Brockway carefully leaves this out. To compare the quotations given by Brockway with a translation of the actual leaflet is quite illuminating. Brockway's version runs: "Workers, form a Revolutionary Council; Shoot those responsible; disarm the armed forces; dissolve all political parties who have turned against the workers; don't leave the streets."

The full text of the leaflet was this:

"Workers, demand with us: a Revolutionary Council; *punishment* of those responsible; disarm those forces that took part in the aggression; the socialisation of economy; dissolve all political parties who have turned against the workers; don't yield the streets! The revolution before all! We salute our POUM comrades who have fraternised with us in the streets. Long live the social revolution! Down with the counter-revolution!"

Note that Brockway makes the Anarchists say "shoot" those responsible, when they actually say "punishment" for those responsible. This is done to make the Anarchists appear bloodthirsty and irresponsible. The important points are omitted because they are points that a revolutionary *must support*. The POUM does not want any more "fraternising in the streets." They do not want any more association with the movement. The movement has become revolutionary, and this is where Gorokin, Nin, Andrade and Co. get off. Their bluff has been called and on the next day POUM issues its call, "Back to work, but be on your guard." And so the counter-revolution marches on. The revolt inside POUM had been stifled. Loyalty to the Party triumphed, but it is loyalty to a Party which they now recognise requires drastic overhauling. If our POUM comrades are bold enough and capable enough, with the aid of the Bolshevik-Leninists, to make their Party what it should be, then there is still hope for the Spanish revolution.

Emotionalism, heroism, good intentions, etc., play a big part in revolutionary struggles, but these qualities alone never did, and never shall, guarantee the success of the struggle. It is not enough to content ourselves that POUM is vastly superior to the reformist and Stalinist counter-revolutionary parties. We must be ruthless in our criticism of those parties which approximate to the Marxist standard, since the future of toiling humanity throughout the world is bound up with the strategy and tactics of the political vanguard. The POUM leadership is bankrupt and must be liquidated. This is not demagoguery, but the statement of a necessity which the Spanish revolution has historically verified. It raises the whole question of the I.L.P., the London Bureau, its international perspective and its attitude to all political problems. If the membership of the I.L.P. is worth its salt it will not be satisfied with the diplomatic evasions of Brockway. Centrism has betrayed the struggle in Spain, it will betray it here. The I.L.P. has a duty to its Spanish comrades: it has a duty to itself. We salute the fighters of the POUM and hope that to-morrow they will be fighting *consciously* for the social revolution, under the banner of the 4th International.

REVOLUTIONARIES PERSECUTED IN SPAIN

The following letter has been delivered at the Spanish Embassy (London). It has also been sent to all sections of the British Press which have supported the Spanish Government in its struggle against Franco and his German and Italian allies.

97, Kings Cross Road,
London.
26th June, 1937.

His Excellency,
A. Ramos Oliveira,
The Spanish Embassy,
London.

Sir,

I am directed by the Central Committee of the Marxist Group to transmit to your Excellency the following Resolution:—

"The Central Committee of the Marxist Group condemns the action of the Spanish Government in arresting Comrade Andre Nin of the POUM (Workers Party of Marxist Unity) on a false charge of complicity in the Fascist counter revolution.

The Spanish Capitalist Government in alliance with the Soviet Government and its agents, the Stalinist Comintern, is preparing yet another bloody crime against the working class and peasants of Spain, through its political leadership.

The Spanish Government, which poses before the masses as a "Popular Front," but which in reality is a Government for the defence of private property, has imported the technique of the Moscow Murder Trials in order to strike a blow against those who would liberate the Spanish masses from the menace of Fascism, from the

oppression of capitalism, and who would go forward to the Socialist Revolution—to the proletarian dictatorship. The Spanish Government, supported by the so-called Communist Party of Spain, has deliberately concocted a false document and will seek by such treacherous means to implicate Comrade Nin and the workers of POUM in a plot with which they have no connection. Only human scum, masquerading as dispensers of justice, will accept such an obvious fraud as evidence against our revolutionary comrades.

The Spanish Government also accuses Nin of being a "Trotskyist." We regret that this is untrue. Had "Trotskyism" been understood and applied by the leaders of the POUM in the Spanish Revolution, Comrade Nin would not to day be on trial for his life. Nin would have been the accuser and not the accused. The red flag of International Socialism would have been flying over the whole of Spain.

The victory to-day is with the capitalist Spanish Government, but to-morrow the victorious Spanish working class will mete out their justice. We demand the immediate release of Comrade Nin and all other revolutionary fighters against capitalism—bourgeois-'democratic' or fascist. We warn the Spanish Government as we warn the Fascist murderer Franco; the working class will be avenged for every member of our class who suffers injury or death at their hands."

*For the Central Committee
of the Marxist Group.*

The Colonial Question.

SOCIALIST POLICY IN PALESTINE

By FELIX MORROW

AFTER 30 years work, and with the enormous material support of the whole Jewish world, the Zionists have only been able to establish in Palestine 2½% of the Jewish world population. This poor result is hardly proportionate to the really tremendous efforts which have been made. Still more decisive is the fact that these 375,000 Jews actually live in Palestine under the same rigours of capitalism as their brothers in the Dispersion. The economic crisis is felt in Palestine as everywhere else; hunger, unemployment, exploitation and insecurity are rife, and the Jew remains a foreigner, hated by the Arab majority and subjected to an epidemic of assassinations. For the third time since 1920 the "Jewish National Home" resembles a fortified garrison in enemy country, and the Palestine Jew is always on guard, protected by British bayonets.

There is nothing surprising in this result of the Zionist dream. The Socialist Jews have predicted it for the last 30 years, while fighting against the dissipation by

Zionism of the energies of the working class Jews, energies which would have been better employed in the class war. What was a "dogma" 30 years ago is now proved by fact. The attempt to construct a National Jewish state under the capitalist regime has been shown to be nothing but reactionary utopianism.

In what conditions could a Jewish national state be created under capitalism? That demands the following exceptionally favourable conditions: a large internal market to absorb its new industrial productions; rich natural resources to enable it to compete in the world market or, alternatively, the possession of industries of such a unique character that no other country had anything similar; and above all, an expanding world market where the young industries of Palestine could develop side by side with the fully grown industries of the great imperialist powers.

Not one of these exceptional conditions obtains. There is no large internal market, no new industries different from those of other countries, no rich natural resources.

Lastly, and most important, the present epoch is characterised by contracting world markets—a field in which the youthful industries of Palestine cannot compete.

Thus the most elementary Marxian analysis shows that in this epoch of declining capitalism Palestine cannot develop its agriculture and its industry. Its principal export—citrus fruits—cannot prevent in any way the growth of the unfavourable balance of trade, for it must continue to import manufactured goods cheaper than it can make itself, and its large imports of necessary raw materials shows that it is not able to provide its own necessities of life.

The statisticians of the Zionist organisations do not show how desperate is the situation in Palestine. The wage level of the workers in the Co-operatives, in farms and industry; the increase of unemployment;—all that is not mentioned in the voluminous periodicals and pamphlets. But one knows enough to say that the standard of living of the masses of workers has sunk to that of the Eastern, the Arab standard—hardly surprising to a Marxist who knows that wages tend to equality as a result of competition. The crisis expresses itself in the form of a more and more desperate competition between Jewish and Arab workers. The literature of the Zionist workers is full of the treachery of the Jewish farmers to the Jewish workers for employing Arab labour. The pressure of the Zionists on these farmers “does not create, even where successful, adequate conditions for Jewish workers, but at best, wages at famine level,” admits Berl Locker, a representative of Poale Zion. The Arab and Jew are, unfortunately, only alike in their poverty.

The favourite argument of the Zionist that Palestine will produce a “normal” Jewish proletariat rooted in agriculture and in heavy industry, has proved itself mythical. The world market is sufficiently supplied with agriculture and heavy industries to prevent a new State from developing on these bases. Only 12% of the Jewish population consists of paid agriculturists (proprietors and workers) and their dependants. The agrarian community is growing smaller and smaller in relation to the towns, there is a sharp trend from the country to the town. This economic tendency is enhanced by the flight of the Jews to the towns to protect themselves from the Arabs. Nevertheless, the Zionist pamphlets continue to present idealistic descriptions of agricultural Jews, as though that were the predominating mode of life there.

And of these 12% in the country, nearly half are in the so-called mechanised agriculture. Regardless of the most elementary Marxian principles the Poale Zion propagandists label these Co-operatives and colonies as ‘Socialist.’ Socialism presupposes the use of methods of socialist production on the basis of the technical advances taken over from capitalism, in other words it requires the overthrow of capitalism. Only those who are unaware how Marx fought Proudhon over this very question can term as Socialist these Co-operatives of producers, inferior to the capitalist farms, and competing with them only at the expense of the standard of life of the workers in the Co-operatives. The position of these Co-operatives can be judged by the fact that the statistician of the Histadrut, in explaining why the Co-operatives did not grow more rapidly, was forced to allude to “the great attraction

inevitably exerted by the higher salaries of the towns.” So much for the renaissance of Jewish agriculture.

Some 32% of the population are living on industry; of these over half are employed in the building industry. In other words, these workers are dependent on a continual influx of foreign capital imported by middle class immigrants. Another 23% live on trading and transport—about three-quarters of these are middlemen. 11% are in the liberal professions, while 22% of the total live on outside help and from unproductive revenue. From these figures we see just how “normal” the Jewish life in Palestine really is.

If world capitalism makes the construction of a Jewish economy in Palestine impossible, then Great Britain makes it doubly so. The weak spot in Zionism is the fact that Palestine is a British colony; the Zionists dislike being realistic about this fact. The Zionist policy, however, is to sell itself to Great Britain at the highest price in concessions, loans, etc. The “working class” Zionists are little better. “Those who do not collaborate with the mandated government, betray the cause of the construction of the country and of the nation,” says Ben-Gurion, leader of Histadrut (Jewish T.U.s). But can the Zionists oppose the efforts of the leaders of 20 million Arabs in Syria, Egypt, Irak and Palestine to obtain the favours of England?

Palestine is a fundamental part of the British Empire. The key to all her African colonies and the route to India is the Suez Canal; and Palestine guards the Canal. The pipe-lines from the rich petroleum fields of Irak also pass through Palestine. The English hegemony in the Near East has to have the collaboration of the large Arab land-owners, merchants and priests. England obviously plays a clever game, using Zionists and Arabs against each other—as she has done in India in fanning the flames between Mahommedans and Hindus—she divides to rule. But the millions of Arabs are fundamentally more important to England than the Zionists, and she certainly will not allow Zionism to build itself up sufficiently to dominate Palestine economics. The “arbitrary” measures of England against Jewish immigration, the recourse to tariffs against Jewish products, the arresting of Jews who deprive Arabs of their employment, etc., reveals the fundamental policy of England.

Besides, imperialist England does not allow the building in Palestine of industries competing with those of Great Britain: It is for military aims that she has encouraged electrification and the potassium industry, but that is all. Why should England allow in Palestine what she has vigorously discouraged in other colonies—the development of indigenous industries?

From all points of view it is clear that a Palestine economy cannot develop under capitalism.

To realise this truth is to realise the bankruptcy of Zionism which includes “Zionist Socialists.” The lip service of the “Zionist Socialists” to Socialism is no more than a fraud; moreover, they collaborate with capitalist Jews and take no part whatever in the class war; their energies are entirely devoted to the cause of Zionism. The best of them should realise now that the best way to work for the national liberation of the Jewish masses is to direct all their energies towards the class war in whatever country they may be.

The Arab-Jew fight against British Imperialism is a policy which will be resisted not only by the Zionists but also by the capitalist proprietors and the bourgeois Arabs. It would be difficult to find a dominant colonial class more venial and less capable of helping the Arab people to free themselves from the British yoke. The Arab Grand Council set up by Great Britain, The Supreme Mahommedan Council (this last disposes of an enormous revenue drawn from religious orders to which all Arabs contribute), the Effendis who, live in cosmopolitan luxury on the backs of the incredibly exploited agricultural workers and peasants, and the tradesmen and intelligentsia who serve the upper classes and the government—it is hardly likely that these gentry will join in a real fight against British Imperialism. Up to now they have prevented the nationalist movement from voicing the least anti-British slogans; they have canalised them in anti-Jewish struggles. It is true that they help the masses as a means of bringing pressure to bear on England in order to obtain concessions for the Arab ruling classes. The leader of the militant Arabs, Jamal el Hussein, is the present day type of Arab leader. This member of the powerful Hussein family, descended not only from the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, but also from King Ghazi of Irak and from Emir Abdullah of Transjordan, recently declared "probably the Arabs would submit with indifference to the English domination of Palestine, which we freely admit, has been a great benefit to the country. But, on the other hand, we are not going to remain passive while the Jews, protected by British bayonets, slowly but surely push us out." There in so many words is the reactionary program of the actual Arab leaders.

A false appreciation of the actual leadership of the national Arab movement is at the bottom of the reactionary policy of the Communists. They salute the pogroms against the Jews as "revolutionary risings," and see in every Arab politician a "serious adversary to British Imperialism." This reactionary orientation of the Communist parties, the actual policy of the Popular Front, goes back further still. It is identical with the policy pursued in 1925-1927 in China, with the policy of support of Chiang Kai Chek and of Wan Chin Wai. In Palestine, where every Jewish worker sees for himself the game of

the Arab leaders, the policy of the Communist Party has thrown many workers into the arms of the Zionists. In America and elsewhere, the identification by the Communists of pogroms with revolution, has not persuaded the Jewish workers to take the revolutionary path. The official Communist line is to seek an alliance with the Arab leaders and to use it for pressure on and bargaining with Britain. We, who defend the cause of the liberation of the Arab people from British domination, have nothing in common with the Stalinist diplomatic game.

One cannot predict the organisational forms which will characterise the unity of the Arab and Jewish masses. The need of a single T.U. movement is urgently felt, and if the Histadrut (which in many ways is not a T.U. organisation) is not sufficiently flexible, it will be necessary to create a new T.U. organisation. The solution of these questions, however, belongs to the future.

But what is absolutely necessary is to form immediately a revolutionary Socialist Party from among the Arab and Jewish advance guard. The so-called Socialist Zionist party, the Poale Zion - Zeire Zion has shown by its past history to be quite un-Marxist, and it cannot be transformed, since it is deeply rooted in Zionism. All the militant elements would be ready to leave it if only a truly Socialist flag were raised. The left Poale Zion, a small group, has evolved to the point where it is logically inexcusable for it to term itself Zionist, or to maintain a separate Jewish organisation. Its forces will find a place in the Socialist organisation which must be built; they have only to break with the organisational forms of their past. In addition, among the mass of Jewish workers in Palestine are many whose class-consciousness has been developed by the traditions of the European revolutionary movement, as well as the youth. Thus Palestine already possesses the necessary elements to achieve a colonial revolution. They will see a glorious prospect before them. Given a correct political line, this little country of Palestine can lead the masses of her Arabs and those of the Near East towards a revolt against the imperialism which menaces the whole world.

From *Socialist Monthly*, October, 1936. Retranslated from *Service d'Information et de Press*, March, 1937.

The following is a short extract from Leon Trotsky's speech to the Preliminary Commission of Enquiry which is investigating the Moscow Trials.

A 'PURELY JURIDICAL' EXAMINATION

THE agents of the Moscow Government are themselves well aware that the Moscow verdicts cannot stand without the support of some expert authorities. For this purpose the English attorney, Pritt, was secretly invited to the first trial, and another English attorney, Dudley Collard, to the second. In Paris, three attorneys—obscure, but quite devoted to the G.P.U.—tried to employ for the same objective the name of the International Juridical Association. By arrangement with the Soviet Embassy, the French attorney, Rosemark, personally unknown, contributed a very benevolent expert opinion—if a rather ignorant one—under the cover of the League of the

Rights of Man. In Mexico, the "Friends of the Soviet Union" have proposed, not accidentally, to the "Socialist Lawyers' Front" that they undertake a juridical investigation into the Moscow Trials. Similar steps are apparently being prepared at the moment in the United States.

The People's Commissariat of Justice in Moscow has published in foreign languages the "verbatim" report of the trial of the seventeen (Piatakov, Radek, etc.), the better to obtain from authoritative jurists certification that the victims of the inquisition have been shot entirely in accordance with the rules established by the inquisitors.

At bottom, a certification of a purely formal observance

of rules and the ritual of jurisprudence has an importance which is close to zero. The essence of the affair is in the material conditions of the preparation and the conduct of the trial. Of course, even if one disregards for the moment the decisive factors which are to be found outside the courtroom, one cannot help recognising that the Moscow Trials are a pure and simple mockery of justice. The investigation, in the twentieth year of the revolution, is carried on in absolute secrecy. The entire old generation of Bolsheviks is judged before a military tribunal, composed of three impersonal military functionaries. The whole trial is directed by a prosecutor who all his life has been, and remains, a political enemy of the accused. Defence is waived and the procedure is deprived of any character of controversy. The material proofs are not presented to the court; they are talked about but they do not exist. The witnesses mentioned by the prosecutor or by the defendants are not questioned. A whole series of accused who form a part of the judicial inquiry are absent from the defendants' bench for unknown reasons. Two of the principle accused, who happen to be abroad, are not even apprised of the trial and, like those witnesses who are outside Russia, are deprived of the possibility of undertaking any steps whatever in clearing up the truth. The judicial dialogue is entirely constructed on a game made up of question-and-answer. The prosecutor does not address a single concrete question to any of the accused which might cause them any difficulty and expose the material inconsistencies of their testimony. The president respectfully covers up the work of the prosecutor. It is precisely the "verbatim" character of the record which reveals the malevolent silence of the prosecutor and of the tribunal. To this it is necessary to add that the authenticity of the report inspires not the least confidence.

But, however important these conditions are in themselves, opening as they do generous grounds for juridical analysis, they have, in spite of everything, a secondary and tertiary character, since they concern the forms of the frame-ups and not their essence. Theoretically one can imagine that if Stalin, Vyshinsky and Ejoy are given the opportunity, over a period of five or ten years, of staging their trials with impunity, they will attain such a high technique that all the elements of jurisprudence will be found in formal accord with each other and with the existing laws. But such perfection in juridical technique of the falsifications will not bring it even one inch nearer truth.

In a political trial of such exceptional importance the jurist cannot cut himself off from the *political* conditions out of which the trial arises and under which the enquiry was conducted—to speak more concretely, the totalitarian oppression to which, in the last analysis, all are submitted: accused, witnesses, judges, defenders, and even the accusation itself. Here is the knotty aspect of the problem! Under an uncontrolled and despotic regime which concentrates in the same hands all the means of economic, political, physical and moral coercion, a juridical trial ceases to be a juridical trial. It is a juridical play with the roles written in advance. The accused appear on the scene only after a series of rehearsals which give to the director the advance assurance that they will not overstep the limits of their roles. In this sense, as in all others,

the judicial trials only represent a coagulation of the whole general political regime of the U.S.S.R. In all the meetings the orators say one and the same thing, they put themselves in step with the principal orator, in absolute disregard for what they themselves said the night before. In the newspapers all the articles expound one and the same directive, with the same expressions. Following the movement of the orchestra leader's baton, the historians, the economists, even the statisticians rearrange the past and the present without any regard for facts, documents, or the preceding editions of their own books. In the kindergartens and schools, all the children in one and the same words, glorify Vyshinsky and curse the accused. No one acts this way of his own volition, everyone violates his own will. The monolithic character of the judicial trial, in which the accused try to outdo each other in repeating the formulas of the prosecutor, is thus not an exception to the rule, but only the most repugnant expression of the totalitarian inquisitional regime. It is not a court we see in action but a drama in which the actors play their roles in front of a revolver barrel. The play can be performed well or badly; but this is a question of the inquisitional technique and not of justice. *The "purely juridical" examination of the Moscow Trials reduces itself at bottom to the question of whether the frame-ups were well or badly carried out.* Such a manner of posing the question already represents in itself a form of assistance to the falsifiers.

To clarify the question more vigorously, to the degree that it needs clarification, let us take a fresh example from the domain of constitutional law. After Hitler took power he declared, contrary to all expectations, that he had no intention of changing the fundamental laws of the State. Most people have evidently forgotten that even to-day in Germany the Weimar Constitution remains intact: into its juridical shell Hitler has introduced only the content of totalitarian dictatorship. Let us imagine an expert who, adjusting his scholarly glasses and arming himself with official documents, sets out to study the structure of the German state from "a purely juridical point of view." After several hours of intellectual effort, he will discover that Hitler's Germany is a crystal clear democratic republic (universal suffrage, parliament which gives full power to the Führer, independent judicial authorities, etc., etc.). Every sane man, however, will cry out that a judicial "appraisal" of this nature is, in the best case, a manifestation of "juridical cretinism."

Democracy is based on the unconfined struggle of classes, of parties, of programs and ideas. If one stifles this struggle, there then remains only a dead shell, well suited for cloaking a Fascist dictatorship. Contemporary jurisprudence is based on the struggle between the accusation and the defence, a struggle which is conducted in certain juridical forms. Where the competition between parties is stifled by the aid of extra-judicial forces, the judicial forms, whatever they may be, are only a cover for the inquisition. A genuine investigation of the Moscow trials cannot avoid embracing all their aspects. It will, of course, utilise the "verbatim" reports; not, however, as things in themselves, but as a constituent part of a grandiose historical drama, whose determining factors remain behind the scenes of the judicial play.

THE A.E.U. NATIONAL COMMITTEE

READING the press reports of the A.E.U. National Committee Conference at Scarborough (a full analysis of which will be given when the verbatim report is in the hands of the members), it would appear that Little stands in relation to his National Committee much as Hitler does to the Reichstag—and he seems to have as much regard for the needs of his “people.” In describing the blunt refusal of the Employers to meet the Aircraft Workers’ demands, he pointed out that if all the demands were to be granted, it would mean an increase of 40/- to some workers and 36/- to others. Considering that the demands were for 2d. an hour increase, with a minimum of 1/4d. for all adult workers, it seems a poor reflection on the present state in the industry. But Little did not draw this inference, instead he is reported as continuing, “This gives an indication of where we are drifting to, and shows what is likely to happen to National negotiations.” Unfortunately he and Bevin have already shown only too well what is likely to happen to National negotiations while they, and men like them, are allowed to dictate to their own members.

The decisions arrived at reflect the strong hold of the bureaucratic leadership and its reactionary character. The failure of the militants (and we must remember that the Stalinists control the left wing) is glaringly shown in these voting results at the Conference:

Class collaborationist York Memorandum retained 23-14.

Militant demands defeated 21-14.

Aircraft Strike Ballot defeated 28-12.

Aircraft Co-ordinating Committee set up (23-12) to put an end to the “unofficial” Aircraft Shop Stewards National Council.

This last step will not mean the taking over by the Committee of a policy of militant struggle in the factories, but rather a drive against the “left” and the use of propaganda to encourage loyalty to the Executive among aircraft workers.

Apart from one decision to call a conference of those working in Government shops (against advice from the Executive), the Conference seems to have been as good an instance of bureaucratic dictatorship as any to be found in our democratic British Empire—not, perhaps, including India.

PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION DESPITE STALIN

THE internal antagonisms within the Soviet Union have again within the last few weeks been brought sharply to the notice of the working class. The execution of General Staff army leaders, dozens of leading Party and Soviet officials and hundreds of lesser executives, all point to the terrible chaos which the Stalinist bureaucracy, and particularly Stalin himself, have brought into the economic and political life of the first Workers’ State.

The “trials” have been held in secret, which means that Stalin’s imperative need for the quick despatch of every person who could act as a focussing point for the discontent of the masses did not allow him to give the G.P.U. time to extract their usual “confessions.”

The Stalinist betrayal of the Russian Revolution is rapidly throwing the working class of other countries back

into the hands of the reformists, and is strengthening the demagogic appeal of the Fascists. It is the duty of all Marxists to combat with all their force the “disillusionment,” despair and eventual apathy of the working class engendered by a betrayal which is rapidly becoming obvious to the most uncritical worker.

We have to prove to the working class that the betrayal of the Stalinists in Russia, and the alliance of the Stalinists abroad with the most reactionary elements in the Labour movement, the liberals, the parsons, and the “progressive” capitalists, does not mean the failure of Socialism. Despite all betrayals, the international proletarian movement lives. Under capitalism there is no hope for the working class and the only way out is the international proletarian revolution, and the establishment of Socialist economy on a world scale.

Leon Trotsky’s book, *The Revolution Betrayed*, must be read by every politically conscious worker. It gives a clear analysis of the mechanics of Stalinist betrayal and points the way forward. Next month’s FIGHT will carry a detailed review of this invaluable work. Meanwhile, and all the time, every revolutionary, every Marxist, must now more than ever before, stand boldly before the working class in defence of the full revolutionary programme of the Fourth International. To say what is, to realise that the truth is revolutionary, to wage a relentless fight against the anti working class trinity—the bourgeoisie, the Fascists and the Stalinists—that is the immediate task which, despite all the lies and delations of the enemy, every class conscious worker must face and carry out.

Read regularly the journals of our international sections:

LA LUTTE OUVRIERE (French Section)

LA LUTTE OUVRIERE (Belgian Section)

THE VANGUARD (Canadian Section)

Read also

THE SOCIALIST APPEAL (America)

The following booksellers and newsagents also stock FIGHT and other Trotskyist literature:

Bibliophile, Little Russell Street, W.C.1.

Burns and Berry, Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.

Colletts, Charing Cross Road, W.C.

Clapham Socialist Bookshop, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham North.

Johns, Torrington Place, W.C.

Librairie Internationale, 73 Russell Square, W.C.

Librairie Internationale, Percy Street, W.C.

Labr, Red Lion Street, W.C.

London Weekly Mail, New Bridge Street.

Parton Street Bookshop, Parton Street, W.C.

Preis, Little Russell Street, W.C.

Solosky, Charing Cross Road, W.C.

Strauberg, Coptic Street, W.C.

Socialist Bookshop, 35 St. Bride Street, E.C.4.

L.S.E. Bookshop, Aldwych, W.C.

THE LABOUR PARTY'S "IMMEDIATE BETRAYAL"

REFORMIST leaders are noted not only for their treachery but for their stupidity. The Labour Party's immediate programme, alleging, as it does, to revitalise the faith of the Labour Movement "to the power of the Socialist idea," is a combination of both crimes. It is treachery, because there is not a breath of Socialism in it, it ignores all the burning questions that confront the workers, all those questions that follow from the conditions of wage slavery and poverty, in effect it ignores the class struggle, and the struggle for emancipation of the colonial slaves. It separates imperialist war from Capitalism itself and demands an armed force capable of defending the Empire.

The term "immediate programme" is a lie in itself. It suggests that the Labour Party would go much further on the road to Socialism, given a longer term of office. We can say quite definitely that the Labour Party would not even introduce the few social reforms contained in the leaflet if it sat in office till Doomsday. It is not an immediate programme, but a long term programme, so long, in fact, that no one will ever live to see it.

The Labour Party leaders are the flunkeys of Capitalism, their agents within the workers' ranks. Their job is to deceive the workers, nothing more. If the workers believed that the Labour Party intended only to nationalise the banks, keep off the Gold Standard, amend the Companies Act, preserve the beauty of the countryside and speak vaguely about improving the distressed areas, they would abandon this mockery of a Socialist Party. The Labour Party, therefore, tries to convince the workers that these are only immediate issues, the Socialist programme will come at a later date.

The people who really control these traitors are the capitalists, who allow them to dress up like puppets in Court dress, who throw them "titles" for services rendered. They know what the Labour Party means. They have no fear of the Labour Party's "Socialism," in fact they sometimes encourage it at election times, just to see how well trained their "defenders" are. We have already had this Labour Party in office and a sample of its "immediate programme." In 1930, when the Indian masses revolted against British Imperialism, the Labour Party shot down the militants and jailed 60,000 of our Indian comrades. On top of this we had the Meerut Trial, when Indian and British workers, after four years without trial, were sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from 10 to 12 years. Some were sentenced to transportation for life. The crime these workers had committed was that of supporting strikes, attempting to build Trade Unions, advocating "depriving the King Emperor of his sovereignty in India."

At home we had the May Committee, whose report was responsible for the Means Test, the Anomalies Act, whereby thousands of workers are refused Unemployment Benefit, the refusal to give extra children's allowance to unemployed children, and the sabotage of the miners' struggle for a seven hour day. This was the Labour Party's "immediate programme" in those days. We know that they did not have "power." But power to

do what? To give us a bigger dose of this sort of "programme"? This is the treacherous aspect of the Labour Party's Immediate Programme.

The present demand for "unity" (usually false) has disturbed the leaders of the Labour Party. The Communist Party is growing in strength and influence, and the Labour Party, not knowing that Stalinism has long ceased to be a revolutionary force, imagine that they may be driven by it to take some action that would be beneficial to the workers. The October Revolution haunts them, and although Pollitt and Co. swear on their bended knees that never more will they advocate such terrible methods—only the "vile Trotskyists" believe in social revolution—nevertheless the "original sin" of October puts them beyond the pale.

Again and again the "unity advocates" are told that only inside the Labour Party, by accepting its programme and discipline, will the unity of the British workers be established. To strengthen this argument they have launched their latest campaign to increase the Party by half a million members, to popularise a Capitalist "Popular Front" type of programme, and so steal the thunder of Maxton, Cripps and Pollitt.

As was to be expected, the Liberal press has given the campaign its blessing, and wherever we find the Liberals, there we find the Stalinists. In the *International Press Correspondence* (Stalinist counter-revolutionary journal), we read, "No-one associated with the movement, least of all those connected with the Unity Campaign, will wish this campaign anything short of complete success. The militants of the Labour Movement can be relied on to do their utmost to ensure that success. It is obvious that the Labour Movement has the power, if it utilises the full all the resources at its command, to carry the campaign through to its triumphant conclusion."

This terrific blow aimed at the Stalinists by the Labour Party has had no effect. They cannot steal their thunder since they have none. The Labour Party's idea of an immediate programme and the Stalinist idea are exactly the same. Both are convinced that the workers must be led to war to defend the "democracy" of the Empire. When will Attlee learn that Pollitt is just a good a patriot as he?

Maybe the Labour Party will get its million members, maybe win "power" at the General Election, but there is no "maybe" about it introducing Socialist measures. It will not. The one thing the workers will get in abundance is disillusionment.

The quicker this happens the better. To be disillusioned with Labour Party reformism is the first step to revolutionary clarity. However, the revolutionary party must be ready to lead the workers when the Labour Party has exposed itself before the masses. We must win over the most advanced workers before then.

In a later issue we will analyse in detail the points in the "immediate programme." We hope to convince some of our Labour Party comrades in this way and interest them in revolutionary socialism. The more we can win the more certain is the success of the proletarian revolution.