

THE FIGHTING WORKER

WORKERS OF THE WORLD
UNITE!



Organ of the Revolutionary Workers League of the U. S.

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Spanish People's Front Government Moves Toward Open Dictatorship

Negrin Gov't Establishes "Normality" New Struggles Looming

After a reshuffling of the cabinet, engineered with the aid of the Stalinists, the Caballero government was replaced by the Negrin government in Valencia. Negrin is a right wing socialist; Caballero, a Left wing socialist. The cabinet change marks a change also in the relationship of class forces in Spain at the present time. The Spanish boss class felt that it no longer needed a "left" regime like Caballero's to keep the workers in check. It decided to rule more openly. It was ready for decisive action to take back the gains still held by the Spanish masses.

The Spanish boss class was able more or less easily to dislodge the workers from their positions in Madrid, where they were under the control of the Stalinists and Socialists. But in Barcelona the workers were stronger and held strategic posts. In this industrial heart of the Iberian peninsula, the Workers Patrols still held police power over the streets of the city. Guerrilla attempts to replace these with the regular cops, the Civil and Assault Guards of the exploiters, resulted in the imprisonment and routing of the boss police.

The new Negrin government and the Catalanian Generality decided to make a head first offensive on the workers front.

Of decisive importance was the telephone exchange in Barcelona, which was being run by the CNT. The exploiters cannot tolerate even the partial control by the workers of a position of such strategic importance. In the early days of the civil war, the boss class of Iberia "legalized" the seizure of the factories and the telephone building by the workers. The boss class was forced to do this, or see the workers set up their own laws and take over everything in a proletarian revolution.

By May, however, having sufficiently reestablished their repressive apparatus, the Spanish boss class sent its police to recapture the telephone building from the CNT workers. In so doing they broke their own "legality."

Workers Revolt

But the Barcelona proletariat replied with arms in hand, on the barricades, to this offensive of the bosses. The navy, the soldiers, and even many of the Civil and Assault Guards came over to the side of the workers. The boss troops were hemmed in, in the middle of the city. Victory was in the grasp of the proletariat.

Instead of leading the workers onward, the leadership of the

CNT and POUM sabotaged the struggle. The POUM called for a solution within the framework of the Generality—against a revolution. The CNT called upon the workers to go back to work! Capitulation and treachery from the top broke the back of the insurrection. The government called in troops from the front, and on the heels of the suppression of the revolt, the exploiters revenge followed.

"Internal Order"

A wave of repression followed. The regular police were re-established. Militant and oppositionist workers arrested. The regime moved toward establishing "internal order." But this will mean in the end open dictatorship. The bourgeoisie has grown measurably bolder. Soon the Socialists and Stalinists will be given the same treatment they give today to the POUM and the anarchists workers and militants. Negrin will be replaced by an even more open bourgeois tool.

Armistice

As the Loyalist government succeeds in crushing the proletariat, the move toward compromise between the two factions of the Spanish capitalist class will gain in scope. The struggle between the two cliques is not just a sham battle, but neither one can as present set up, do without the other.

The monarchist-reactionary-fascist Franco movement is mainly under the dominance of German and Italian imperialism, with U. S. Imperialism in the background.

The Loyalist government plays the game of British and French Imperialism, and their Stalinist tail. The British and French exploiters are not yet ready to accept the challenge of their rivals and make the Spanish civil war the beginning of a world war. They want a compromise on the best possible terms. That is the meaning of the International Control Commission. Such a compromise can take place only when the strength of the workers is exhausted. The imperialist powers and their puppets in Spain are ganging up on the Spanish workers. The navies blockade the Iberian peninsula to cut off aid to the rebellious workers.

New Party Needed

The reaction of the workers is reflected in the leftward movements in the CNT and the POUM. The "Friends of Durruti" are a militant group coming away from Anarchism and learning rapidly the nature of the state, the need for armed insurrection, soviet federation, and proletarian dictatorship. The Left wing of the POUM is an uncrystallized movement, not yet Marxist, but out of its ferment a revolutionary force can grow.

The continual right shift of the Government will rouse the desperate resistance of the workers. The workers have not yet been decisively defeated. They will put up heroic struggles. On the success of the building of the revolutionary party depends the triumph of the proletariat. It is never too late.

BOB SMILLIE MURDERED!

BARCELONA, JUNE 25.

Early in June comrade Bob Smillie, member of the British Independent Labor Party Guild of Youth, and British representative on the centrist Barcelona Bureau for a new youth International, was arrested on his way back to England. Smillie, 18 years old, had been at the front as a member of the ILP contingent of the Lenin Division (POUM), and participated in organizing a militiamen's soviet on the Aragon front, in defiance of the POUM military chiefs.

A protest movement was launched in Spain and abroad, and the ILP sent a special representative to investigate the case. On June 14 this representative who had been in Valencia for several days trying to see Smillie, was notified officially that the comrade had died of appendicitis four days previously, and had already been buried!

This murder of a revolutionary young worker by the People's Front government must not be allowed to pass unnoticed. A protest movement must be launched as part of a world campaign to rally the workers to the defence of democratic rights for the Spanish working class. The facts must be publicized and denounced to the world!

Wholesale Persecution Drive

Oehler Arrested as Franco Spy

United Front Protest Campaign Launched

Wholesale arrests, persecution of Left workers are taking place thruout Loyalist Spain. Nin, Andrade, Gorkin, numerous other leaders of the POUM; Jaime Balius, leader of the Anarchist Left "Friends of Durruti"; members and leaders of the CNT; militants of these groups, have been thrown into the jails of the People's Front in Valencia and Barcelona.

Hugo Oehler, national secretary of the Revolutionary Workers League, was arrested June 22 at Puigcerda on the French border, returning to the United States after a five months stay in Spain, where he sought to aid the Spanish workers forge a revolutionary Party to smash fascism by proletarian revolution.

Wolf Kupinsky, member of the American Socialist Party, William Krehm of the Canadian League for a Revolutionary Workers Party; Shaban of the Albanian Communist group; Vitte of the Greek Archio-Marxist Party; these were taken with countless others in widespread raids conducted by the People's Front regime and its Stalinist-Socialist henchmen.

Up to now no formal charges have been presented. They are held for "investigation in connection with espionage activities for the Franco forces."

The charge of "spy" has been levelled against revolutionary workers in every country where capitalism was threatened with proletarian revolution. Keresky accused Lenin of being a German spy! Today the bosses People's Front government, just as violently opposed to the proletarian revolution, resorts to the same lie.

Stalinists Scream for Execution

Faithfully discharging their task as agents of capitalism, the Stalinists in the June 30th Daily Worker carry a stoolpigeon article and an editorial calling for the blood of Oehler and Kupinsky, for the execution of all oppositionists to the Loyalist regime. The Daily Worker says it "has proof of the spy activities of Oehler and Kupinsky." Stalinism in the May 3rd insurrection in Barcelona was on the BOSSES side of the barricades and shot down workers. Like the White Guardist and Socialist sheets it cries today for the hounding of revolutionists, Bolsheviks. We challenge them to produce their "evidence"!

Those arrested are not a "nest" (Continued on page 2)

Troops Open Struck Plants: Steel Strikers Resist

CIO Leadership Throttles Militancy

For the first time since the seven-state strike in the steel industry began, a truce has been reached with one of the companies, Inland Steel, for its twelve thousand workers at Indiana Harbor. Meanwhile, Republic Steel, Youngstown Sheet and Tube, and Bethlehem remain adamant in their refusal to sign any agreement with the CIO.

The truce with Inland is verbal rather than written. It provides that all men will return to work without discrimination, that the SWOC will be recognized as a bargaining agency for its members only, and that all disputes are to be carried to the Indiana Labor Commissioner as mediator. In other words, the strike-breaking Townsend government is set up as the final arbiter in all disputes.

This great "victory," is nothing more than the terms the Company was willing to grant before the strike at Inland was called. It is reminiscent of the Chrysler strike

in Detroit where after a month of militant battle and the holding of all Chrysler plants by the workers who "sat in," John L. Lewis reached a "victory" agreement with Chrysler, granting the union bargaining rights for its members only—a concession Chrysler publicly offered to make before the strike.

While this victory is being touted, thousands of workers are going back to work in the struck plants.

In Ohio and Pennsylvania, Governors Davey and Earle—two New Dealers who were hailed by Murray and Van Bittner as real "friends"—sent troops into the strike areas ostensibly for the purpose of "maintaining order," and keeping the plants shut. Only a few days after the troops were sent in, however, they were used in a concerted effort to break the strike and reopen the plants.

The "united front" of Governors, troops, and the Steel companies has taken a heavy toll. Sixteen workers have been murdered, and thousands victimized and tortured. On May 30, Chicago police shot and murdered thirteen workers.

Contract Only Demand

The strike started off on the wrong leg when it put forth only one major demand—a signed agreement. The CIO did not call for higher wages or shorter hours or any other immediate demand. To do so would force an eventual or immediate struggle with the U.S. Steel Corporation which is paying approximately the same wages as Republic and the others are willing to pay now. Such a struggle would embarrass Roosevelt and force him to openly play a strike-breaking role. The CIO, which is merely carrying out the labor policy of Roosevelt—marshalling the working class on a class collaboration program behind the capitalists (especially the Rockefeller group represented by Roosevelt), and for the next world war, could not risk such a possibility.

Fear Militancy

The CIO leadership has shown that it is more fearful of the militancy of the workers than it is of the corporations. It called off a march of 40,000 miners to Johnstown when Governor Earle sent troops into town, on the (Continued on page 2)

A Letter to Thomas

(We publish below a letter sent by the Revolutionary Workers League to Norman Thomas. We have, as yet, received no answer. Editor).

July 9, 1937

Norman Thomas,
Chairman,
National Executive Committee,
Socialist Party, U. S. of A.
Dear Norman Thomas,

As an organization of workers vitally interested in the extermination of Fascism in Spain, whose National Secretary, Hugo Oehler, has been under arrest in Barcelona for three weeks without formal charges, we would like your assistance in clarifying a number of points in connection with events in that country.

In the July 10th issue of the Socialist Call you wrote that you "are deeply concerned to preserve to the full the right of political criticism and political organization within that territory which must of necessity be dear to all those who know that the hope of peace and well-being in the world demands the defeat of Fascism."

In the same issue, Sam Barron and Liston Oak present factual material proving the counter-revolutionary character of the Spanish Popular Front government, and the murderous role of the Stalinist party in that country.

In the July 3rd issue, Barron and Oak urged that workingclass organizations send delegations to the Spanish Consulates to protest against the persecution of left workingclass opponents of the regime in Loyalist Spain. Before this appeared in the Socialist Call, a representative of the Revolutionary Workers League visited the Consulate in New York on June 25th. He was refused any information on the basis of the leaflet which appeared in the Daily Worker on June 30th.

American Youth Congress

The Fourth Congress of the American Youth Congress just concluded in Milwaukee, bore out completely the prediction that sooner or later the Congress would become an adjunct to the Roosevelt New Deal set-up, tying the youth to the bosses war machine. The Young Communist League and the Young Peoples Socialist League were completely in the background, with the YPSL tail-ending the YCL, and the YCL tail-ending the bourgeois youth organizations.

Patriotic fervor ran high. Speaker after speaker showered praises upon Roosevelt. The Congress gave full support to Lewis and the policies of class peace of the CIO.

The problems dealt with by the Congress were handled in typical liberal fashion. An artificial age division was made, in order to obscure the fundamental class division and the need for youth to participate actively in working class struggle. For the congress there existed no classes, no class struggle. It made an appeal for "unity of all youth."

Against such reformist outfits as the Congress the Young Workers League calls on the working class youth to join with it and take the road of class war, of proletarian revolution, to a workers government.

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On June 25th the League appealed to ten organizations including the local Socialist Party for a united protest movement. On June 28th your secretary informed our representative over the phone that you could not take it on yourself to invite a representative from our organization to attend the informal meeting in your house on that date which had been convened to discuss the question of the persecutions in Loyalist Spain. On the same date the Socialist Party replied formally and ignored our request for united action. On July 6th you told our spokesman over the phone that you were opposed to formal united action at this time because you thought more could be done by the informal cooperation already established between leading socialists and interested individuals.

We are told later on that day at the informal meeting held in your home, you expressed yourself against united action with the Revolutionary Workers League.

Today, two days later, we learn from the Socialist Call that you will be the main speaker on July 19th in Madison Square Garden at a "solidarity demonstration" on the "first anniversary of the struggle against Fascism." The other "main speakers" are to be De Los Rios, the Ambassador of the government which is arresting, framing, torturing and assassinating workers in Spain, and Earl Browder, who defends that government and demands the execution of Hugo Oehler.

We would like to know whether the report of your opposition to united action with the League is correct; what your reasons are; and whether you intend to make this decision and your reasons for it public? We would also like to know whether you intend to raise the question of the persecutions by De Los Rios govern-

National Tea Strike

The strike of 600 warehouse workers of the National Tea company in Chicago is entering its eleventh week. The men, organized into the United Grocery Workers Union by Walter G. Kliss, and affiliated to the CIO, have seen their strike systematically choked and undermined by the policies of the local CIO Regional office, ably carried out by Charles Kroll, CIO organizer and member of the Socialist Party. Kroll and the CIO refused to sanction the extension of the strike or the use of mass picketing to prevent scabbing at the plant.

The bureaucracy and scurrilous red-baiting by Kroll against the militants in the Union was finally "rewarded" by the expulsion of Kliss. One worker who supported the expulsion said on the membership floor, "We don't want Kliss in the union; he's communist. We fly the American flag over strike headquarters." Kroll had taught this worker well.

Three Join Y.W.L.

As a result of the activity of the Young Workers League in the strike, and its constant advocacy of democratic and militant policies against the sabotage and sellout line of the CIO, three of the more militant and class conscious strikers have joined the League.

And if so, whether you at the Madison Square Garden intend to take up the stool-pigeon attack of the Daily Worker on Oehler.

We intend to make this letter public because we think that the entire working class movement and its sympathizers should be clarified on the policy of the Socialist Party on the burning question of the persecutions in Spain and the defense of the arrested and tortured workers.

We think that your reply should also be made public. We will await it impatiently.

Very truly yours,

French Bosses Open New Drive

DEVALUATION IS WAGE CUT

The financial structure of the French boss-class is once again in a critical state. The vast armaments program, the bond issue and the debt which it has created, the difficulties of French imperialism in obtaining markets and spheres of influence, has put the French boss-class on the spot. Their plan is to solve the problem at the expense of the workers. That is the meaning of the devaluation of the franc.

The People's Front Government of the Socialist Leon Blum was prepared to faithfully carry out this plan of the French bourgeoisie. The Blum cabinet made the proposal that the government be given full power to deal with the financial problem by decree.

But the French bosses decided to get another efficiency expert more to their taste. In a cowardly fashion Blum resigned as premier and the "Radical Socialist" M. Chautemps took over the post. The emergency decree powers denied by the French Senate to Blum was given to the new premier, who immediately made use of them to devalue the franc once again.

Devaluation and inflation are very unpopular with the French masses, both proletariat and petty bourgeoisie. The inflation of 1926 wiped out the bank accounts and insurance policies of the petty bourgeoisie. When Blum became premier, he talked the proletariat into upholding the crumbling capitalist structure of France by urging them to buy government bonds—the returns from which mainly went to the war budget. (Some went to putting down strikes and national movements in Syria, Morocco, etc.). To succeed in this he promised on his

honor that no devaluation of the franc would take place. The devaluation which followed shortly was the payment of the grateful bourgeoisie. The workers were short-changed by the French People's Front government. Blum and Auriol were faithful.

Blum loyally served the interests of French imperialism by supporting its "non-intervention" policies in Spain, by disorientating the French workers, and by preventing them from giving aid to the Spanish working class in their struggle against capitalism.

The workers and the petty bourgeoisie will become aroused at the increasing oppression. So, shrewdly the French bosses have not completely shelved their flunkys. Blum and Auriol are retained in the new cabinet, Blum as vice-premier. Their task is to hold back the workers, to restrain them from militant action. In case of necessity they will be called back again and even the Stalinist may be called in to prop up a crumbling social structure.

French capitalism is cracking. The workers must prepare themselves for the coming struggles. For this a new communist party must be built in France.

Chicago Protest Meeting

Protest the arrest of revolutionary workers and Bolsheviks and the abrogation of democratic rights by the capitalist Peoples Front Government.

SPEAKERS

Walter Kliss—Revolutionary Workers League.
Albert Goldman—Socialist Party
Albert Weisbord—Communist League of Struggle.
J. Fernandez—United Libertarian Organizations.
FRIDAY, JULY 16th, 8:30 PM.
Capitol Building

Need United Front

(Continued from page 1)

of Franco spies" but a group of class struggle prisoners. Their arrest is the result of the steady entrenchment of the power of the capitalist class through the People's Front Government, following the suppression of the May uprising in Barcelona.

Smash Workers Organizations

The POUM has been driven underground, the CNT-FAI rank and file are subjected to a ruthless persecution. In spite of this the anarcho-sindicalist leadership continues to cling to its precious swivel chairs in the Government; the CNT paper, La Noche, cries: "Now more than ever, long live the People's Front Republic!"

On June 14 the Lenin Barracks of the POUM in Barcelona were taken by the bourgeois forces, surrendered without resistance. Next day the Barcelona radio station of the POUM CNT-FAI, PSUC (Socialist-Stalinist Party), and Esquerra Party were "nationalized" by the government. The inclusion of the PSUC and Esquerra means nothing as they find expression thru the official capitalist broadcasts they control.

The POUM leadership, after the suppression of their daily central organ, La Battalla, on May 28, voluntarily suspended all broadcasts so as not to disturb the government. The POUM made no attempt to convert one of its weeklies into a daily, or to issue an illegal paper!

On June 16th, POUM offices and several private homes were raided by the police. Members of the Stalinist-Socialist Party accompanied the police on most of these raids, vied with each other in tearing down slogans and red flags, replacing them with banners of the Spanish Republic.

On the 19th, four Anarchist papers were confiscated in Barcelona. The Left Anarchists, the Friends of Durruti, were declared illegal—the first organization in Spain to be outlawed.

Workers Resist

In some localities the bourgeois forces met with armed resistance. The workers refused to give up their weapons to the counter-revolutionary Republic.

Protest Movement

The Spanish and world working class must arouse to open struggle against this suppression of workers' rights, the hounding and murder of revolutionary workers. We must smash the frame-up concocted by the reactionary People's

STEEL STRIKE

(Continued from page 1)

grounds that the "troops would protect our interests." But no sooner were the troops sent in than Earle turned around and used them to reopen the plants.

No Sit Downs

Another great shortcoming of the strike has been the refusal of the CIO leadership to sanction sit-down strikes in the steel plants—again out of fear of the militancy of the workers and the upsetting of Roosevelt's "recovery" program.

The present strike must be steered into militant channels, into a policy of no faith in the bourgeois government, into militant demonstrations for civil liberties and picketing rights in the strike areas, and fighting opposition to all vigilantes and strike breaking forces, including the National Guard.

The demands of the strikers too must be extended to demands for a 35 hour week and a wage level at least as high as that being received by the auto workers.

Lined up behind the CIO are the usual reformists and centrists, the Socialists and their Trotsky tail, and the Stalinists and Lovestonites. No independent force has yet arisen or made itself heard in the ranks of the steel workers.

The building of a class struggle force must be aided by the revolutionaries. A progressive group is already functioning in the United Auto Workers. Such a group must be extended to the steel workers.

Front Government.

Immediately on learning of these events, the Revolutionary Workers League took steps toward formation of a national protest movement. At the same time an intensive campaign by the League started. Mass meetings indoors and out have been held nationally. In New York the Spanish consulate is being picketed. Telegrams demanding the freedom of the imprisoned workers have been sent to Barcelona and Valencia, and to Washington. A campaign for defense funds is on. To date over \$250 has been received.

The League is trying to found a united front protest movement against the persecutions and the violation of democratic rights; for the rights of workers organizations to assemble, publish their views, and organize; for the safety and release of all workers arrested for opposition to the Loyalist regime.

Class Struggle Basis

Such a united front movement should not be conducted as a personal defense of Oehler, Kupinsky, or any other comrade; but on a broad class struggle basis for the rights of our class exposing the dictatorship of capitalism. On this ground telegrams, resolutions, protests of prominent individuals, unions and parties must be secured.

Socialist Party Stalls

In New York an appeal was sent June 26 to some working class organizations for a united front. A few signified willingness to undertake joint action. The S.P. replied on June 30th through Jack Altman, Executive Secretary, informing us of what the Socialists were doing, but said nothing of the appeal for united action.

Further communications were sent July 3 to the NY SP and on July 9 to the NEC SP thru Norman Thomas (published in this issue). No answer has been received yet.

Only One Meeting

In Chicago the Socialist Party was pressed by its membership into a united front with the Communist League of Struggle, United Libertarian Organizations, and the Revolutionary Workers League, for a mass meeting. The Socialist Party delegates (Trotskyites) to the united front conference stated they were instructed to participate in only one protest meeting!

This is criminal stalling! If the S.P. refuses to participate in the formation of a broad united front, then all its fine phrases about workers democracy are so much hypocrisy. The rank and file of the S.P. must insist that their leaders enter into united front action at once.

Trotskyists Desert Kupinsky

A despicable role is played by Trotskyism in the S.P. Wolf Kupinsky is a Trotskyist member of the SP, who went to Spain with the Debs Column. Rather than clash with the S.P. machine, the Trotskyist "leaders" are prepared to desert their own comrade, who may face a firing squad! No wonder their followers are in ferment of discontent against such leaders; disloyal to the working class, disloyal to revolutionary Marxism.

A united front must be built. Every effort must be made to bring the S.P. into the united front. One meeting is insufficient. The rally in Chicago can, must be a starting point of a huge mass campaign to rally the workers of the United States and internationally to the support of workers' democratic rights in Spain, against the steady drive to open capitalist dictatorship in Spain.

OEHLER-KUPINSKY DEFENSE FUND

Money is sorely needed to carry on the struggle for the democratic rights of the Spanish workers and for the release of those arrested by the capitalist Peoples Front Government. We invite all workers and workers organizations to send funds immediately to the Oehler-Kupinsky Defense Fund 2159 W. Division St., Chicago, Ill.