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THE REVOLUTION IN SPAIN

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The Revolution in Spain

1. Old Spain

THE CAPITALIST chain is again threatening to break at the weakest link: Spain is next in order. The revolutionary movement is developing in that country with such vigor that world reaction is deprived in advance of the possibility of believing in a speedy restoration of order on the Iberian peninsula.

Spain belongs unmistakably to the group of the most backward countries of Europe. But its backwardness has a singular character, weighed down by the great historic past of the country. While the Russia of the czars always remained far behind its western neighbors and advanced slowly under their pressure, Spain knew periods of great bloom, of superiority over the rest of Europe and of domination over South America. The mighty development of domestic and world commerce surmounted more and more the feudal dismemberment of the provinces and the particularism of the national parts of the country. The growth of the power and significance of the Spanish monarchy was inextricably bound up in those centuries with the centralizing rôle of mercantile capital, and with the gradual formation of the *Spanish nation.*

The discovery of America, which at first enriched and elevated Spain, was subsequently directed against it. The great routes of commerce were diverted from the Iberian

peninsula. Holland, which had grown rich, broke away from Spain. Following Holland, England rose to great heights over Europe, and for a long time. Beginning with the second half of the sixteenth century, Spain had already begun to decline. With the destruction of the Great Armada (1588), this decline assumed, so to speak, an official character. The condition which Marx called "inglorious and slow decay" settled down upon feudal-bourgeois Spain.

The old and new ruling classes—the landed nobility, the Catholic clergy with its monarchy, the bourgeois classes with their *intelligenzia* stubbornly attempted to preserve the old pretensions, but alas! without the old resources. In 1820, the South American colonies finally broke away. With the loss of Cuba in 1898, Spain was almost completely deprived of colonial possessions. The adventures in Morocco only ruined the country, adding fuel to the already deep dissatisfaction of the people.

The retardation of the economic development of Spain inevitably weakened the centralist tendencies inherent in capitalism. The decline of the commercial and industrial life in the cities and the economic ties between them, inevitably led to the decline in the dependence of individual provinces upon each other. This is the chief reason why bourgeois Spain has not succeeded to this day in eliminating the centrifugal tendencies of its historic provinces. The meagerness of the resources of national economy, and the feeling of indisposition in all parts of the country could only foster the separatist tendencies. Particularism appears in Spain with unusual force, especially alongside of neighboring France, where the Great Revolution finally established the bourgeois nation, united and inseparable, over the old feudal provinces.

Not permitting the formation of a new bourgeois soc-

iety, the economic stagnation also decomposed the old ruling classes. The proud noblemen often cloaked their haughtiness in rags. The church robbed the peasantry, but from time to time it was compelled to submit to robbery by the monarchy. The latter, in the words of Marx, had more features of resemblance to Asiatic despotism than to European absolutism. How is this thought to be construed? The comparison of czarism to Asiatic despotism, which has been made more than once, seems much more natural geographically and historically. But with regard to Spain, as well, this comparison retains all its force. The difference is only in the fact that czarism was constituted on the basis of an *extremely slow development* of the nobility and of the primitive urban centers. But the Spanish monarchy was constituted under the conditions of the *decline* of the country and the *decay* of the ruling classes. If European absolutism generally could rise only thanks to the struggle of the strengthened cities against the old privileged estates, then the Spanish monarchy, like Russian czarism, drew its relative strength from the impotence of the old estates and the cities. In this lies its indubitable proximity to Asiatic despotism.

The predominance of the centrifugal tendency over the centripetal in economy as well as in politics undermined the ground beneath Spanish parliamentarism. The pressure of the government upon the electorate had a decisive character: during the last century elections unfailingly gave the government a majority. Because the *Cortes* [the Spanish Assembly] found itself dependent upon the alternating ministries, the ministries themselves naturally fell into dependence upon the monarchy. Madrid made the elections but the power appeared in the hands of the king. The monarchy was doubly necessary to the disconnected and decentralized ruling classes, incapable of governing the

country in their own name. And this monarchy, reflecting the weakness of the whole state, was—between two overturns—strong enough to impose its will upon the country. In general the state system of Spain can be called *degenerated absolutism, limited by periodic pronunciamentos.** The figure of Alfonso XIII expresses the system very well: from the point of view of degeneracy and absolutist tendencies, and from the point of view of fear of *pronunciamentos*. The king's playing to windward, his betrayals, his treason, and his victory over the temporary combinations hostile to him are not at all rooted in the character of Alfonso XIII himself, but in the character of the whole governmental system: under new circumstances, Alfonso XIII repeats the inglorious history of his great-grandfather, Ferdinand VII.

Alongside of the monarchy, and in union with it, the clergy still represents a centralized force. Catholicism, to this day, continues to remain a state religion, the clergy plays a big rôle in the life of the country, being the firmest axis of reaction. The state spends many tens of millions of pesetas annually for the support of the clergy. The religious orders are extremely numerous, they possess great wealth and still greater influence. The number of monks and nuns is close to 70,000, equalling the number of high school students and exceeding double the number of college students. Is it a wonder that under these conditions forty-five percent of the population can neither read nor write? The main mass of illiterates is concentrated, it is understood, in the village.

If the peasantry in the epoch of Charles V (Carlos I) gained little from the might of the Spanish empire, it was subsequently burdened with the heaviest consequences of its decline. For centuries it led a miserable, and in many

* Military plots, military coups d'état.

provinces, a famished existence. Making up even now more than seventy percent of the population, the peasantry bears on its back the main burden of the state structure. The lack of land, the lack of water, high rents, antiquated implements, primitive tilling of the soil, high taxes, the requisitions of the church, high prices of industrial products, a surplus of rural population, a great number of tramps, paupers, friars—that is the picture of the Spanish village. The condition of the peasantry has for a long time made it a participant in the numerous uprisings. But these sanguinary outbursts proceeded not along national but along local radii, dyed in the most multi-colored, and most often reactionary colors. Just as the Spanish revolutions as a whole were small revolutions, so the peasant uprisings assumed the form of small wars. Spain is a classic country of "guerilla warfare".

2. The Spanish Army in Politics

Following the war with Napoleon, a new force was created in Spain—officers in politics, the younger generation of the ruling classes who inherited from their fathers the ruins of the once great empire and were in a considerable measure declassed. In the country of particularism and separatism, the army of necessity assumed great significance as a centralized force. It not only became a prop of the monarchy but also the vehicle of dissatisfaction of all the sections of the ruling classes, and primarily, of its own: like the bureaucracy, the officers are recruited from those elements, extremely numerous in Spain, which demand of the state first of all their means of livelihood. And as the appetites of the different groups of "cultured" society are far in excess of the state, parliamentary and other

positions available, the dissatisfaction of those remaining unattached nurtures the republican party, which is just as unstable as all the other groupings in Spain. But insofar as genuine and sharp revolt is often concealed under this instability, the republican movement from time to time produces resolute and courageous revolutionary groups to whom the republic appears as a magic slogan of salvation.

The total number of the Spanish army is nearly 170,000. Over 13,000 of them are officers. 15,000 marines should be added to this. Being the weapon of the ruling classes of the country, the commanding staff also drags the ranks of the army into its plots. This creates the conditions for the independent movement of the soldiers. Already in the past, non-commissioned officers burst into politics, without their officers and against them. In 1836, the non-commissioned officers of the Madrid garrison, in an uprising, compelled the queen to promulgate a constitution. In 1866, the artillery sergeants, dissatisfied with the aristocratic orders in the army, rose in insurrection. Nevertheless, the leading rôle in the past has remained with the officers. The soldiers followed their dissatisfied commanders even though the dissatisfaction of the soldiers, politically helpless, was fostered by other, deeper social forces.

The contradictions in the army usually correspond to the branch of service. The more advanced the type of arms, that is, the more intelligence it requires on the part of the soldiers and officers, the more susceptible they are, generally speaking, to revolutionary ideas. While the cavalry is usually inclined to the monarchy, the artillerists furnish a big percentage of the republicans. No wonder that the fliers, piloting the modern type of war machine, appeared on the side of the revolution and brought into it elements of the individualist adventurism of their profession. The decisive word remains with the infantry.

The history of Spain is the history of continuous revolutionary convulsions. *Pronunciamentos* and palace revolutions follow one another. During the nineteenth and the first third of the twentieth century a continuous change of political régime occurred and within each one of them—a kaleidoscopic change of ministries. Not finding sufficiently stable support in any one of the propertied classes—even though they were all in need of it—the Spanish monarchy more than once fell into dependence upon its own army. But the provincial dismemberment of Spain put its stamp on the character of the military plots. The petty rivalry of the *juntas* was only the external expression of the fact that the Spanish revolutions did not have a leading class. Precisely because of this the monarchy repeatedly triumphed over each new revolution. However, some time after the triumph of order, the chronic crisis once more broke through with an acute revolt. Not one of the régimes that supplanted each other sank deep enough into the soil. Every one of them wore off quickly in the struggle with the difficulties growing out of the meagerness of the national income, which is incommensurate with the appetites and pretensions of the ruling classes. We saw in particular how shamefully the last military dictatorship came to the end of its days. The stern Primo de Rivera fell even without a *new pronunciamento*: the air simply went out of him like out of a tire that runs over a nail.

All the Spanish revolutions were the movement of a minority against another minority: the ruling and semi-ruling classes impatiently snatching the state pie out of each other's hands.

If by the permanent revolution we are to understand the accumulation of social revolutions, transferring power into the hands of the most resolute class, which afterwards applies this power for the abolition of all classes, and sub-

sequently the very possibility of new revolutions, we would then have to state that in spite of the "uninterruptedness" of the Spanish revolutions there is nothing in them that resembles the *permanent* revolution: they are rather the chronic convulsions in which the senile disease of a nation thrown backward is expressed.

It is true that the Left wing of the bourgeoisie, particularly personified by the young intellectuals, has long ago set itself the task of converting Spain into a republic. The Spanish students who, for the same general reasons as the officers, were recruited primarily from the dissatisfied youth, became accustomed to playing a rôle in the country altogether out of proportion to their numbers. The domination of the Catholic reaction fed the flames of the opposition in the universities, investing it with an anticlerical character. However, students do not create a régime. In their leading summits, the Spanish republicans are distinguished by an extremely conservative social program: they see their ideal in present-day reactionary France, calculating that along with the republic they will also acquire wealth; they do not at all expect, and are not even able, to march the road of the French Jacobins: their fear of the masses is greater than their hostility to the monarchy. If the cracks and gaps of bourgeois society are filled in Spain with declassed elements of the ruling classes, the numerous seekers of positions and income, then at the bottom, in the cracks of the foundation, this place is occupied by the numerous slum proletarians, declassed elements of the toiling classes. Loafers with cravats as well as loafers in rags form the quicksands of society. They are all the more dangerous for the revolution the less it finds its genuine motive support and its political leadership.

Six years of the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera level-

led and compressed all the forms of dissatisfaction and rebellion. But the dictatorship bore within it the incurable vice of the Spanish monarchy: strong towards each of the separate classes, it remained impotent in relation to the historic needs of the country. This brought about the wreck of the dictatorship on the submarine reefs of financial and other difficulties before the first revolutionary wave had a chance to reach it. The fall of Primo de Rivera aroused all the forms of dissatisfaction and all hopes. Thus, General Berenguer has become the gateman of the revolution.

3. The Spanish Proletariat and the New Revolution

In this new revolution, we meet at first view, the same elements we found in a series of previous revolutions: the perfidious monarchy; the split-up factions of the conservatives and liberals who despise the king and crawl on their bellies before him; the Right republicans, always ready to betray, and the Left republicans, always ready for adventure; the plotting officers, some of whom want a republic and others of whom a promotion in position; the dissatisfied students, whom their fathers view with alarm; finally, the striking workers, scattered among the different organizations, and the peasants, stretching out their hands for pitchforks and even for guns.

It would, however, be a grave error to assume that the present crisis is unfolding according to and in the image of all those that preceded it. The last decades, particularly the years of the world war, produced important changes in the economy of the country and in the social structure of the nation. Of course, even today Spain remains at the tail end of Europe. Nevertheless, the country

has experienced the development of its own industry, on the one hand, extractive, on the other—light. During the war, coal mining, textile, the construction of hydro-electric stations, etc., were greatly developed. Industrial centers and regions sprouted all over the country. This creates a new relation of forces and opens up new perspectives.

The successes of industrialization did not at all mitigate the internal contradictions. On the contrary, the circumstance that the industry of Spain, as a neutral country, bloomed under the golden rain of the war, was transformed at the end of the war, when the increased foreign demand disappeared, into a source of new difficulties. Not only did the foreign markets disappear—the share of Spain in world commerce is now even smaller than it was prior to the war (1.1 percent as against 1.2 percent)—but the dictatorship was compelled, with the aid of the highest tariff walls in Europe, to defend its domestic market from the influx of foreign commodities. The high tariff led to high prices, which diminished the already low purchasing power of the people. That is why industry after the war does not rise out of its lethargy, which is expressed by chronic unemployment on the one hand, and the sharp outbursts of the class struggle on the other.

Now even less than in the nineteenth century, can the Spanish bourgeoisie lay claim to that historic rôle which the British or French bourgeoisie once played. Appearing too late, depending on foreign capital, the big industrial bourgeoisie of Spain, which has dug like a vampire into the body of the people, is incapable of coming forward as the leader of the "nation" against the old estates even for a brief period. The magnates of Spanish industry face the people hostilely, forming one of the most reactionary groups in the bloc of the bankers, the industrialists, the

large landowners, the monarchy, its generals and its officals, corroded by internal antagonisms. It is sufficient to refer to the fact that the most important supporters of the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera were the manufacturers of Catalonia.

But the industrial development raised to its feet and strengthened the proletariat. Out of a population of 23,000,000—it would be considerably greater were it not for emigration—there are nearly 1,500,000 industrial, commercial and transportation workers. To them should be added an approximately equal number of agricultural workers. Social life in Spain was condemned to revolve in a vicious circle so long as there was no class capable of taking the solution of the revolutionary problem into its own hands. The appearance of the Spanish proletariat on the historic arena radically changes the situation and opens up new perspectives. In order to grasp this properly it must first be understood that the establishment of the economic dominance of the big bourgeoisie, and the growth of the political significance of the proletariat, definitely deprive the petty bourgeoisie of the possibility of occupying a leading position in the political life of the country. The question of whether the present revolutionary convulsions can produce a genuine revolution, capable of reconstructing the very basis of national existence, is consequently reduced to whether the Spanish proletariat is capable of taking into its hands the leadership of the national life. There is no other claimant to this rôle in the composition of the Spanish nation. Moreover, the historic experience of Russia succeeded in showing with sufficient clarity the specific gravity of the proletariat, united by big industry in a country with a backward agriculture and enmeshed in a net of semi-feudal relations.

The Spanish workers, it is true, already took a mili-

tant part in the revolutions of the nineteenth century: but always on the leading string of the bourgeoisie, always in the second rank, as a subsidiary force. The independent revolutionary rôle of the workers was reinforced in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The uprising in Barcelona in 1909 showed what power was pent up in the young proletariat of Catalonia. Numerous strikes, turning themselves into direct uprisings, broke out in other parts of the country too. In 1912, a strike of the railroad workers took place. The industrial regions became fields of valiant proletarian struggles. The Spanish workers revealed a complete emancipation from routine, an ability to respond quickly to events and to mobilize their ranks, and courage in the offensive.

The first post-war years, or more correctly, the first years after the Russian revolution (1917-1920), were years of great battles for the Spanish proletariat. The year 1917 witnessed a general revolutionary strike. Its defeat, and the defeat of a number of subsequent movements, prepared the conditions for the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. When the collapse of the latter once more posed in all its magnitude the further destiny of the Spanish people; when the cowardly search for old cliques and the impotent lamentations of the petty bourgeois radicals showed clearly that salvation cannot be expected from this source, the workers, by a series of courageous strikes, cried out to the people: *We are here!*

The "Left" European bourgeois journalists with pretensions to learning, and following them, the social democrats, philosophize on the theme that Spain is simply about to reproduce the Great French Revolution, after a delay of almost 150 years. To expound revolution to these people is equivalent to arguing with a blind man about colors. With all its backwardness, Spain has passed far beyond

France of the eighteenth century. Big industrial enterprises, 10,000 miles of railway, 30,000 miles of telegraph, represent a more important factor of revolution than historical reminiscences.

Endeavoring to take a step forward, a certain English weekly, THE ECONOMIST, says with regard to the Spanish events: "We have here the influence of Paris of '48 and '71 rather than the influence of Moscow of 1917." [Retranslated from the Russian]. But Paris of '71 is a step from '48 towards 1917. The comparison is an empty one.

L. Tarquin wrote last year in LA LUTTE DE CLASSES infinitely more seriously and profoundly: "The proletariat [of Spain], supporting itself on the peasant masses, is the only force capable of seizing power." The perspective in connection with this is depicted as follows: "The revolution must bring about the dictatorship of the proletariat which would carry out the bourgeois revolution and would courageously open the road to socialist transformation." This is the way—the only way—the question can now be posed.

4. The Program of the Revolution

The republic is now the official slogan of the struggle. However, the development of the revolution will not only drive the conservatives and liberals, but also the republican sections of the ruling classes under the banner of the monarchy. During the revolutionary events of 1854, Canóvas del Castillo wrote: "We are striving for the preservation of the throne, but without a camarilla which will disgrace it." Now this great idea is developed by Señores Romanones and others. As though a monarchy is even possible without camarillas, especially in Spain! . . . A com-

bination of circumstances is possible, to be sure, in which the possessing classes are compelled to sacrifice the monarchy in order to save themselves (example: Germany!) However, it is quite likely that the Madrid monarchy, even though its eyes are blackened, will survive until the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The slogan of the republic is, it is understood, also the slogan of the proletariat. But for this, it is not merely a matter of replacing the king with a president, but of thoroughly purging the whole of society of feudal refuse. The first place here is occupied by the *agrarian question.*

The relationships in the Spanish village present a picture of semi-feudal exploitation. The poverty of the peasants, particularly in Andalusia and Castille, the oppression of the landowners, the authorities and the *caciques**, have already more than once driven the agricultural workers and the peasant poor to the road of open mutiny. Does this, however, mean that in Spain, even though through revolution, bourgeois relations can be purged of feudalism? No. This only means that, under the conditions of Spain, capitalism can exploit the peasantry in no other way than in the feudal form. To aim the weapon of the revolution against the remnants of the Spanish Middle Ages means to aim it against the very roots of bourgeois rule.

In order to break the peasantry away from localism and reactionary influences, the proletariat needs a clear revolutionary-democratic program. The lack of land and water, the cabal of landlords, pose acutely the question of the *confiscation of the privately owned land* for the peasant poor. The burden of state finances, the unbearable government debt, bureaucratic pillage, and the African adventures, pose the problem of *cheap government*, which can be

*The unofficial rulers of their respective regions

achieved not by the owners of large estates, not by bankers and industrialists, not by titled liberals, but by the toilers themselves.

The domination of the clergy and the wealth of the church put forward the democratic problem: *to separate the church from the state, and to disarm the former, transferring its wealth to the people.* Even the most superstitious sections of the peasantry will support these decisive measures, when they are convinced that the budgetary sums which have up to now gone to the church, as well as the wealth of the church itself, will, as a result of secularization, go—not to the pockets of the free-thinking liberals—but for the cultivization of the exhausted peasant holdings.

The separatist tendencies pose before the revolution the democratic task of *national self-determination.* These tendencies were accentuated, to all appearances, during the period of the dictatorship. While the "separatism" of the Catalonian bourgeoisie is only a weapon in its play with the Madrid government against the Catalonian and Spanish people, the separatism of the workers and peasants is only the shell of their social rebellion. One must distinguish very rigidly between these two forms of separatism. However, precisely in order to draw the line between the nationally-oppressed workers and peasants and their bourgeoisie, the proletarian vanguard must occupy the boldest and sincerest position in the question of national self-determination. The workers will fully and completely defend the *right* of the Catalonians and Basques to lead an independent state life, in the event that the majority of these nationalities have expressed themselves for complete separation. But this does not, of course, mean that the advanced workers will push the Catalonians and Basques on the road of secession. On the contrary, the economic unity of the country with an *extensive autonomy of national districts,* would represent

great advantages for the workers and peasants from the viewpoint of economy and culture.

The attempt of the monarchy to ward off the further development of the revolution with the aid of a new military dictatorship is not at all out of the question. But what is out of the question is the serious and durable success of such an attempt. The lesson of Primo de Rivera is still too fresh. The chains of the new dictatorship would have to be wound over the sores that have not yet healed from the old ones. Insofar as can be judged by the telegraphic news the king would like to try: he looks about nervously for a suitable candidate but finds nobody to volunteer. One thing is clear: the breakdown of a new military dictatorship would be very costly to the monarchy and its living bearer, and the revolution would acquire a mighty impulsion. "*Faites vos jeux, messieurs!*" the workers can say to the ruling classes.

Can it be expected that the Spanish revolution will skip the period of parliamentarism? Theoretically, this is not excluded. It is conceivable that the revolutionary movement will, in a comparatively short time, attain such strength that it will leave the ruling classes neither time nor place for parliamentarism. Nevertheless, such a perspective is rather improbable. The Spanish proletariat, in spite of its first class qualities for struggle, has as yet no recognized revolutionary party, nor is it accustomed to Soviet organization. And besides this, there is no unity in the not numerous Communist ranks. There is no clear program of action visible to everybody. Nevertheless, the question of the *Cortes* is already on the order of the day. Under these conditions, it must be assumed that the revolution will have to pass through the stage of parliamentarism.

This does not at all exclude the tactic of a boycott

of the fictitious *Cortes* of Berenguer, just as the Russian workers successfully boycotted Bulygin's Duma in 1905 and brought about its collapse. The specific tactical question of the boycott has to be decided on the basis of the relation of forces at the given stage of the revolution. But even while boycotting Berenguer's *Cortes*, the advanced workers would have to set up against it the slogan of the *revolutionary constituent Cortes*. We must relentlessly disclose the charlatan character of the slogan of the *constituent Cortes* in the mouths of the "Left" bourgeoisie, which in reality wants a *conciliationist Cortes* by the grace of the king and Berenguer, for a dicker with the old ruling and privileged cliques. A genuine constituent assembly can be convoked only by a revolutionary government, as a result of a victorious insurrection of the workers, soldiers and peasants. We can and must oppose the revolutionary *Cortes* to the conciliationist *Cortes;* but to our mind, it would be incorrect *at the given stage* to reject the slogan of the revolutionary *Cortes*. To oppose the course directed towards the dictatorship of the proletariat to the problems and slogans of revolutionary democracy (republic, agrarian overturn, the separation of church and state, the confiscation of church properties, national self-determination, *revolutionary* constituent assembly), would be the most sorry and lifeless doctrinarism. Before the masses can seize power, they must unite around the leading proletarian party. The struggle for democratic representation, as well as for participation in the *Cortes*, at one or another stage of the revolution, may do an irreplaceable service towards the solution of this problem.

The slogan of *arming the workers and peasants* (the creation of a workers' and peasants' militia) must inevitably acquire an ever greater importance in the struggle. But at the *given stage*, this slogan too must be closely con-

nected with the questions of defending the workers' and peasants' organizations, the agrarian revolution, the assuring of free elections, and the safeguarding of the people from reactionary *pronunciamentos*.

A radical program of *social legislation*, particularly unemployment insurance; the shifting of the burden of taxation to the wealthy classes; free popular education—all these and similar measures, which in themselves do not exceed the framework of bourgeois society, must be inscribed on the banner of the proletarian party.

Alongside of this, however, demands of a transitional character must be advanced even now: the nationalization of the railroads, which are completely private in Spain; the nationalization of mineral resources; the nationalization of banks; workers control of industry; and finally, state regulation of industry. All these demands are bound up with the transition from a bourgeois to a proletarian régime, they prepare this transition in order afterwards, following the nationalization of banks and industry, to be dissolved into a system of measures of planned economy, preparing the socialist society.

Only pedants can see contradictions in the combination of democratic slogans with transitional and purely socialist slogans. A program combined in this manner, reflecting the contradictory construction of historic society, flows inevitably from the heterogeneity of the problems inherited from the past. To reduce all the contradictions and tasks to one co-efficient—*the dictatorship of the proletariat*—is a necessary operation, but altogether insufficient. Even if one should run ahead and assume that the proletarian vanguard has grasped the idea that only the dictatorship of the proletariat can save Spain from further decay, the preparatory problem would nevertheless remain in full force: to weld around the vanguard the heterogene-

ous sections of the working class and the still more heterogeneous masses of the toilers of the village. To contrast the bare slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat to the historically conditioned tasks which are now impelling the masses towards the road of insurrection, would mean to replace the Marxian conception of social revolution by Bakunin's. This would be the surest method of ruining the revolution.

It is needless to say that the democratic slogans under no circumstances have as their task to draw the proletariat closer to the republican bourgeoisie. On the contrary, they create the basis for a victorious struggle against the bourgeoisie of the Left, making it possible at every step to disclose its anti-democratic character. The more courageously, resolutely and implacably the proletarian vanguard fights for the democratic slogans, the sooner it will conquer the masses and undermine the ground beneath the feet of the bourgeois republicans and socialist reformists. The more faithfully their best elements join us, the sooner the democratic republic will be identified in the mind of the masses with the *workers' republic.*

For the correctly understood theoretical formula to be transformed into a living historic fact, it must be conveyed to the minds of the masses on the basis of their experience, their needs, their requirements. For this it is necessary not to lose oneself in details, so as not to diffuse the attention of the masses; the program of the revolution must be changed in accordance with the dynamics of the struggle. This is precisely what revolutionary politics consists of.

5. Communism, Anarcho-Syndicalism, Social Democracy

As usual the leadership of the Comintern started out by overlooking the Spanish events. Manuilsky, "the leader" of the Latin countries, only recently declared that the Spanish events do not deserve attention. There you are! In 1928, these people proclaimed France on the eve of the revolution. After having so long accompanied funerals with wedding music, they could not but greet a wedding with a funeral march. For them to act otherwise would mean to betray themselves. When it appeared, nevertheless, that the events in Spain, not forseen in the calendar of the "third period", continued to develop, the leaders of the Comintern simply shut up: this, at any rate, shows far greater prudence. But the December events made further silence impossible. Once more in rigid conformity with tradition, the leader of the Latin countries described an arc of 180 degrees over his own head: we have in mind the article in Pravda of December 17.

The dictatorship of Berenguer, like the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, is proclaimed in this article a "fascist régime". Mussolini, Matteoti, Primo de Rivera, MacDonald, Chiang Kai-Shek, Berenguer, Dan—all these are variations of fascism. Once there is a ready word, why think? To be thorough, there only remains to include in this series also the "fascist" régime of the Abyssinian negus. As to the Spanish proletariat, Pravda informs us that it is not only "adopting the program and slogans of the Spanish Communist Party with increasing speed", but that it has already "become conscious of its rôle of hegemony in the revolution". Simultaneously, the official telegrams from Paris speak of peasant Soviets in Spain. It is known that under

the Stalinist leadership, the Soviet system is adopted and realized first of all by the peasants (China!). If the proletariat has already "become conscious of its rôle of hegemony", and the peasants have started to build Soviets, and all this is under the leadership of the official Communist party, then the victory of the Spanish revolution must be considered guaranteed—at any rate, till the time when the Madrid "executors" are accused by Stalin and Manuilsky of an incorrect application of the general line which, on the pages of PRAVDA, once more appears before us as general ignorance and general light-mindedness. Corrupted to the very marrow by their own policy, these "leaders" are no longer capable of learning anything!

In reality, in spite of the mighty sweep of the struggle, the subjective factors of the revolution—the party, the organization of the masses, slogans—are extraordinarily behind the tasks of the movement—and it is this backwardness that constitutes the main danger today.

The semi-spontaneous spread of strikes, which have brought victims and defeats or have ended with nothing, is an absolutely unavoidable stage of the revolution, the period of the awakening of the masses, their mobilization and their entry into struggle. For it is not the cream of the workers who take part in the movement, but the masses as a whole. Not only do factory workers strike, but also artisans, chauffeurs and bakers, construction, irrigation and finally agricultural workers. The veterans mold the limbs, the new recruits learn. Through the medium of these strikes, the class begins to feel itself as a class.

However, the spontaneity—which at the present stage constitutes the strength of the movement—may in the future become the source of its weakness. To assume that the movement also in the future will be left to itself without a clear program, without its own leadership, would mean

to assume a perspective of hopelessness. For the question involved is nothing less than the seizure of power. Even the most stormy strikes—all the more so the scattered ones —do not solve this problem. If the proletariat were not to feel in the process of the struggle of the coming months that its tasks and methods are becoming clearer to itself, that its ranks are becoming consolidated and strengthened, then a decomposition would set it in in its own ranks. The broad sections, aroused by the present movement for the first time, would once more fall into passivity. In the vanguard, to the extent to which the ground slipped out from under its feet, moods of partisan acts and adventurism in general would begin to revive. In such an eventuality, neither the peasantry nor the city poor would find authoritative leadership. The awakened hopes would very qiuckly be converted into disappointment and exasperation. A condition would be created in Spain reproducing in a certain measure the situation in Italy after the autumn of 1920. If the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera was not fascist but a typical Spanish dictatorship of a military clique supporting itself on certain parts of the wealthy classes, then with the conditions pointed out above—the passivity and the hesitancy of the revolutionary party and the spontaneity of the movement of the masses—genuine fascism would find a base in Spain. The big bourgeoisie would conquer the unbalanced, disappointed, and despairing petty bourgeois masses, and would direct their revolt against the proletariat. Of course, we are far from that point yet. But no time should be lost.

Even if we should assume for a moment that the revolutionary movement led by the Left wing of the bourgeoisie—officers, students, republicans—leads to victory, then the fruitlessness of this victory would in the final analysis become equal to defeat. The Spanish republicans, as

we have already said, stand completely on the basis of the present property relations. We need expect from them neither the expropriation of the big landowners, nor the liquidation of the privileged position of the Catholic church, nor the purging of Augean stables of the civil and military bureaucracy. The monarchist camarilla would simply be replaced by a republican camarilla, and we would have a new edition of the short-lived and fruitless republic of 1873-1874.

The fact that the socialist leaders drag at the tail end of the republican leaders—is quite in the nature of things. Yesterday, the social democracy dressed its right shoulder to the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. Today, it dresses its Left shoulder to the republicans. The principal task of the socialists, who have not and cannot have an independent policy, is participation in a solid bourgeois government. On this condition, they would not under the worst circumstances, refuse to make peace even with the monarchists.

But the Right wing of the anarcho-syndicalists is in no way insured against the same road: in this connection, the December events are a great lesson and a stern warning.

The National Confederation of Labor indisputably embraces the most militant elements of the proletariat. Here the selection has gone on for a number of years. To strengthen this Confederation, to transform it into a genuine organization of the masses is a direct obligation of every advanced worker, and above all, of the Communists. This can be assisted also by work inside the reformist trade unions, tirelessly exposing the betrayals of their leaders, and calling upon the workers to weld themselves into the framework of a single trade union Confederation. The conditions of revolution will be of extraordinary assistance

to this work.

But at the same time we must have no illusions about the fate of anarcho-syndicalism as a doctrine and a revolutionary method. By the lack of a revolutionary program and an incomprehension of the rôle of the party, anarcho-syndicalism disarms the proletariat. The anarchists "deny" politics until it seizes them by the throat: then they prepare the ground for the politics of the enemy class. This is what happened in December!

If the social democratic party were to acquire a leading position over the proletariat during the revolution, it would be capable of only one thing: to spill the power conquered by the revolution into the sieve of the republican wing, out of which the power would then automatically pass to its present possessors. The great conception would result in an abortion.

As far as the anarcho-syndicalists are concerned, they could head the revolution only by abandoning their anarchist prejudices. It is our duty to help them in this. In reality, it may be assumed that a part of the syndicalist leaders will go over to the socialists or will be cast aside by the revolution: the real revolutionists will be with us. The masses will join the Communists, and so will the majority of the socialist workers.

The advantage of a revolutionary situation lies in the fact that the masses learn fast. The evolution of the masses will inevitably produce a differentiation and splits not only among the socialists but also among the syndicalists. Practical agreements with *revolutionary* syndicalists are inevitable in the course of the revolution. These agreements we will loyally fulfill. But it would be truly fatal to introduce into these agreements elements of duplicity, of concealment, and deceit. Even in those days and hours when the Communist workers have to fight side by side with the

syndicalist workers, there must be no destruction of the division in principle, no concealment of differences, or any weakening of the criticism of the wrong principled position of the ally. Only under this conditon will the approaching development of the revolution be secured.

6. The Revolutionary *Junta* and the Party

The extent to which the proletariat itself is striving for unity of action is witnessed by the day of December 15, when the workers rose simultaneously not only in the big cities but also in the smaller towns. They utilized the signal of the republicans because they have not a sufficiently loud signalman of their own. The defeat of the movement did not, it appears, call forth a shadow of dismay. The masses conceived their own actions as experiences, as a school, as preparation. This is to the highest degree an expressive feature of *revolutionary ascent.*

In order to enter the broad road, the proletariat needs even now an organization rising over all the present political, national, provincial and trade union divisions in the ranks of the proletariat and corresponding to the sweep of the present revolutionary struggle. Such an organization, democratically elected by the workers of the factories, mills, mines, commercial enterprises, railway and marine transport, by the proletarians of the city and village, can only be the *Soviet.* The epigones have done immeasurable damage to the revolutionary movement of the whole world, fixing in the minds of many the prejudice that Soviets are created only for the needs of armed insurrection and not otherwise, except on its eve. In reality, the Soviets are created when the revolutionary movement of the working

masses, even though still far from an armed insurrection, creates the need for a broad, authoritative organization, capable of leading the economic and political struggles, embracing simultaneously the different enterprises and the different trades. Only under the condition that the Soviets are rooted in the working class during the preparatory period of the revolution, will they be able to play a leading rôle at the time of a direct struggle for power. It is true that the word "Soviet", after the thirteen years of existence of the Soviet régime, has now acquired a different meaning to a certain degree than it had in 1905 or in the beginning of 1917, when the Soviets appeared not as organs of power but only as the militant organizations of the working class. The word *junta*, closely connected with all of Spain's revolutionary history, expresses this thought better than anything else. On the order of the day in Spain stands the creation of workers' *juntas*.

With the present state of the proletariat, the building of *juntas* presupposes the participation in them of the Communists, anarcho-syndicalists, socialists, and the non-party leaders of the strike struggles. To what extent can we count on the participation of the anarcho-syndicalists and social democrats in the Soviets? This cannot be foretold from afar. The sweep of the movement will undoubtedly compel many syndicalists, and perhaps a part of the socialists, to go further than they wish, provided that the Communists are able to pose the problem of workers' *juntas* with the necessary energy. In view of the pressure of the masses, the practical questions of the building of Soviets, the ratio of representation, the time and method of elections, and so forth, can and should become the object of *agreement*, not only of all the Communist factions among themselves, but also with those syndicalists and socialists who consent to the creation of *juntas*. It is understood

that the Communists appear at all the stages of the struggle with their banner unfurled.

In spite of the newest theory of Stalinism, the peasant *juntas*, as elected organs, will hardly appear, at any rate, not in any considerable number, prior to the seizure of power by the proletariat. In the preparatory period in the village, different forms of organization will sooner develop, based not upon elections, but upon individual selection: peasant unions, committees of the village poor, Communist nuclei, a labor union of agricultural workers, and so forth. The propagation of the slogan of *peasant juntas*, based on a revolutionary agrarian program, can even now, however, be put on the order of the day.

The correct posing of the question of *soldier juntas* is very important. Because of the very character of military organization, Soviets of soldiers can appear only in the final period of the revolutionary crisis, when the state power loses control over the army. In the preparatory period, it will be a matter of organizations of an intimate character, groups of revolutionary soldiers, party nuclei, and in many cases, personal connections of workers with individual soldiers.

The republican uprising in December 1930 will undoubtedly go down into history as the Rubicon between two epochs of revolutionary struggle. It is true that the Left wing of the republicans established connections with leaders of workers' organizations in order to bring about unity of action. The unarmed workers had to play the rôle of a chorus under the Corypheus of the republicans. This aim was carried out—to an extent, in order to reveal once and for all the incompatibility of an officers' plot with a revolutionary strike. Against the military plot, which opposed one branch of the service to another, the government found sufficient force within the army itself. And the

strike, deprived of an independent aim and of its own leadership, was necessarily reduced to nothing as soon as the military uprising was crushed.

The revolutionary rôle of the army, not as an instrument of officers' experiments, but as an armed part of the people, will be determined in the last analysis by the rôle of the worker and peasant masses in the course of the struggle. For the revolutionary strike to be victorious, it will have to bring about the confrontation of the workers with the army. No matter how important the purely military elements of such a clash may be, politics outweigh them. The masses of soldiers can be won over only by clearly posing the social tasks of the revolution. But it is precisely the social tasks that frighten the officers. It is natural that the proletarian revolutionists should direct the center of attention even now to the soldiers, creating nuclei of conscious and daring revolutionists in the regiments. The Communist work in the army, politically subordinated to the work among the proletariat and the peasantry, can be developed only on the basis of a clear program. But when the decisive moment arrives, the workers, by the sheer weight of numbers and the force of their assault, will sweep a large part of the army to the side of the people, or, at any rate, neutralize it. This broad revolutionary posing of the question does not exclude a military "plot" of the advanced soldiers and officers sympathizing with the proletarian revolution, in the period directly preceding the general strike and insurrection. But such a "plot" has nothing in common with *pronunciamentos*: its task is of a serviceable character and consists of insuring the victory of the proletarian uprising.

For a successful solution of all these tasks, three conditions are required: a party; once more a party; again a party.

How will the relations between the various existing Communist organizations and groups be arranged, and what will be their fate in the future? It is difficult to judge from afar. Experience will show. Great events unmistakably put to the test ideas, oganizations and people. Should the leadership of the Comintern appear incapable of offering anything to the Spanish workers except a wrong policy, apparatus commands and splits, then the genuine Communist Party of Spain will be constituted and tempered outside of the official framework of the Communist International. One way or another—a party has to be created. It must be united and centralized.

The working class can under no circumstances build its political organization on the basis of federations. A Communist party is needed—not in the image of the future state order of Spain, but a steel lever for the demolition of the existing order. It can be organized only on the principle of democratic centralism. The proletarian *Junta* will become the broad arena in which every party and every group will be put to the test and scrutinized before the eyes of the broad masses. The Communists will set up the slogan of the united front of the workers against the practise of coalitions of socialists and a part of the syndicalists with the bourgeoisie. Only the united revolutionary front will enable the proletariat to inspire in itself the necessary confidence of the oppressed masses of the village and city. The realization of the united front is conceivable only under the banner of Communism. The *junta* requires a leading party. Without a firm leadership, it would remain an empty organizational form and would inevitably fall into dependence upon the bourgeoisie.

Upon the Spanish Communists lie glorious historic tasks. The advanced workers of the world will follow with impassioned attention the course of the great revolution-

ary drama, which will a day sooner or later require not only their sympathy but also their cooperation. We will be ready!

PRINKIPO, *January 24, 1931.*

Leon Trotsky

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