



SOVIETS IN SPAIN

**THE OCTOBER ARMED
UPRISING AGAINST FASCISM**

BY HARRY GANNES

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COMMUNISM VS. SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY



THE FEBRUARY STRUGGLE IN AUSTRIA *and* ITS LESSONS

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Against Fascism

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HARRY GANNES

WORKERS LIBRARY PUBLISHERS

WORKERS BOOK SHOP
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1981 GRAND RIVER NR. CASS

Published by
WORKERS LIBRARY PUBLISHERS
P. O. Box 148, Sta. D, New York City
January, 1935



SOVIETS IN SPAIN

The October Armed Uprising Against Fascism

By HARRY GANNES

I

THE SWORD OF REVOLUTION is drawn in Spain and the scabbard is thrown away.

For fifteen days during the October, 1934, armed uprising, all of capitalist-feudal Spain trembled with fear at the spectre of a successful proletarian revolution. No decisive defeat has marked the end of the offensive of the Spanish toiling masses. The "victory" gained by the Lerroux-Robles government was not the victory of Mussolini or Hitler. The armed battles of the Spanish workers, led by the united front, the Workers' Alliance, carried the fight against world fascism and for Soviet Power to a higher stage. Their aftermath, also, will lead to greater storming of the heavens of capitalism and speed the day of victory of the proletarian revolution.

Why was the October armed uprising not victorious in this tremendous assault of the working class? What were the mistakes made? What was the situation that developed after the fighting, between the classes, victor and vanquished? And what are the perspectives for the future of the revolutionary movement?

The October uprising swept through all of Spain. But in each center of the fighting it was influenced and marked by special characteristics of the class relationships and the particular type of leadership existing among the toiling, struggling masses. Throughout the October revolutionary events, we shall see, moreover, that the failure to carry out the correct Bolshevik tactics in the struggle for national autonomy in Catalonia at the most critical moment of battle turned the tide in favor of the forces of reaction.

The three most important centers of the revolutionary siege were: (1) the Province of Catalonia, where the revolution was marked by the fight for national independence, by the vacillation and treachery of the national bourgeoisie, and the shameful betrayals of the anarcho-syndicalist leaders; (2) Madrid, the capital of Spain, where the weaknesses of the Socialist leaders determined the untoward outcome of the battle there, and (3) the glorious Asturias Province, where the workers heroically seized power, Socialists and Communists firmly united, and established the rule of Soviet Power for 15 days, holding out long after their brothers in the rest of Spain had been forced to give up the fight.

For nearly a year the necessity had been maturing in the minds of the workers for combatting with force of arms the Republic which had promised to be one "of workers of all classes", established in April, 1931, after the flight of King Alfonso. Their hopes were destroyed by the constant rise in fascist attacks under the camouflage of the Republic of 1931. The fulsome promises made by the Socialists of the peaceful solution of the agrarian, national and other pressing questions were exposed by the realities of the brutal class battles.

After more than three and a half years of the Republic, the reactionary landlord-capitalist regime was massing its forces and consolidating its fascist base, chiefly in the powerful Catholic Church and among the rich peasants, financiers and industrialists, sufficiently to risk drastic measures against the rising revolutionary discontent.

What little the workers had gained in social legislation and wage increases in the early part of the Republic was rapidly being whittled away and their conditions reduced, in many instances, to a state worse than under the open reign of the big exploiters at the time of King Alfonso. The growing resistance of the working class and peasantry, indicating the rising tempo of revolutionary anger, is shown in the rapid increase of strike struggles before the armed uprising. In 1931, the official figures show 869,000 strikers, though actually there were more than 3,600,000; in 1933, it is officially recorded that 1,032,000 struck

(though it is estimated 6,000,000 were involved) against wage cuts, against worsening of conditions, and primarily against increased fascist assaults; and in the first quarter of 1934 alone, more than 1,900,000 workers had struck, the major number of strikes being political.

At least 1,500,000, in a country of 23,000,000, were unemployed at the beginning of 1934. The intensified impoverishment of the masses is shown by the fact that the wages of the agricultural laborers alone had been slashed by 30 per cent.

Revolutionary unrest among the peasants had broken through repeatedly since 1932, when 69 cases of violent land seizures were officially registered. In 1933 the number rose to 267, while in the first three months of 1934 there were 264 seizures of land by the peasants and 306 seizures of property.

The Republic, which had held out to the peasants the phantom of an easy, peaceful solution of the land question, had actually consolidated and strengthened the power of the feudal landlords. In Spain 60 per cent of the working population are either land or forest workers. The agrarian revolution is a central task in the victory over fascism. The largest landowner is the Catholic Church, which is the foundation-stone of the attempts to inaugurate a fascist structure on the basis of the most reactionary section of the Spanish banking and industrial class.

There are 3,000,000 landless agricultural workers in Spain. They earn from four to six pesetas (from 50 to 75 cents) a day. Two per cent of the Spanish landowners possess 67 per cent of the land; while 37 per cent own from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $17\frac{1}{2}$ acres each. In Andalusia and Extremadura, the land is divided into such small fractions that out of 800,000 peasants only 100,000 can produce sufficient on their own land to make a bare livelihood.

As a result of the land reforms of the Republic of 1931, only 10,000 peasants profited even in the slightest. By 1933, 100,000 acres of land had been distributed. It was estimated by one capitalist newspaper in Spain that it would require 5,000 years to "solve the agrarian question at this rate".

In speaking of the establishment of the "authoritarian" or

fascist State in Spain the leading fascist forces, particularly Gil Robles, spokesman of the Right concentration and the reactionary "Popular Action", always characterizes Spanish fascism by admitting that the Catholic Church will form its chief mass base.

To understand the scope of the Church it is necessary to point out that, besides being the largest landowner, it is itself one of the most powerful forces of capitalism. The Jesuits, for example, the largest and most militant section of the Church (whose political head is Gil Robles), control the Uguijo Bank in Madrid with a capital of 125,000,000 pesetas. This institution further controls four banks in the provinces with a capital of 85,000,000 pesetas.

Besides this, the Jesuits are interested in the Madrid tramways, in mining ventures, in the South American steamship line, "Transatlantica", and in many other enterprises.

The potential fascist mass base of the Church, together with the rich landowners and the finance capitalists, is shown by the ramifications of its institutions. The Catholic Church in Spain has 4,804 "cultural" institutes, with 601,950 students. There are, furthermore, 27,000 students in secondary schools, and 17,103 in professional institutions.

This whole feudal-capitalist structure was not only left intact by the 1931 "democratic" Republic, but was permitted to strengthen itself against mass assault to the point where it could boldly and cynically prepare for the bloody institution of its fascist regime.

To understand the course of the revolutionary battles of October, it is necessary to emphasize that there were three forces at the head of the proletariat. First, there was the Socialist Party, having the largest section of the organized proletariat behind it. Second, the anarcho-syndicalist leaders, strategically holding leadership in the storm center of Catalonia, where the crux of the revolutionary fighting was bound up with the national question and the proletarian revolution. The anarcho-syndicalists were entrenched in that part of Spain where over one-third of the whole proletariat is concentrated.

Previous to the armed battles, the Communist Party strove

with might and main to perfect the united front of the toiling masses. In Asturias, where the Socialists voted overwhelmingly to achieve the united front nearly one year before the armed uprisings, victory was gained and Soviets established. But in the rest of Spain it was not until September 13, after negotiations delayed by the Socialist Party leadership, that the Workers' Alliance was transformed by the Communist Party into the instrument of the united front in the fighting.

Long before the actual battles, the Communist Party of Spain presented the question of preparation for the revolution, and the tactics for assuring its success, clearly before the workers and peasant masses. It fought against the vacillation of the Socialist leaders, the counter-revolutionary plans of the anarchists, and the disruptions and anti-Communist free-lancing of the Trotskyite remnants.

"The hordes of revolution and counter-revolution stand facing each other, front to front", declared the Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Spain many months before the armed uprisings, "and decisive battles will take place shortly. This is the situation in Spain.

"In this situation the fundamental problem of securing the victory of the revolution is the organization and bringing together of the forces of revolution under a firm leadership conscious of its aims."

On October 5, 1934, after the pre-arranged resignation of the Samper cabinet, the signal for the inauguration of a drive towards an open fascist regime, a general strike was called throughout Spain by the Workers' Alliance. The general strike was followed quickly by the armed struggle against fascism, though the struggle was weighed down with fateful vacillations and wrong tactics of the Socialist leaders, and outright sabotage and treachery of the anarchists, assisted by the Trotskyites.

It will be seen, however, that the treachery and counter-revolutionary deeds of the anarchist leaders were the greatest single factor that robbed the working class of victory.

On the eve of the revolutionary battles, the Communist Party of Spain flung all of its forces into forging the united front for

the armed battles, for the dictatorship of the proletariat, for Soviet Power, for inspiring the victory of the revolution.

Where the Communist Party's program won out, there victory was gained. But since its program had not swept all of Spain, the treachery of the anarchists, the previous vacillation of the Socialist leaders, and their failure to draw in the peasants for the seizure of the land, isolated the Asturias proletariat, giving the advantage to the forces of fascism.

From Strike to Armed Struggle

The general strike of October 5 went over into the armed struggle against fascism with the greatest unevenness and with the greatest lack of centralized leadership and clear-cut objective. The anarchist leaders held back. They controlled organizations totalling over 1,000,000 members. This was fatal. One month later, early in November, the anarchist leadership in Saragossa called a general strike in protest against the execution of two revolutionists. But then it was too late. Had they called the strike simultaneously with the Workers' Alliance, the executed would more likely have been Gil Robles and Lerroux, butchers of the Spanish workers.

Fighting then broke out all over Spain. The proletariat went into action. Though there was no centralized leadership, the whole world was electrified by the stubbornness and the heroism of the Spanish workers. They had learned from events in Germany. They had learned from the Austrian fighting. The Russian Revolution was their guiding banner, though they did not have its masterly leadership.

In Asturias, the proletariat in this Northern industrial center of Spain had learned thoroughly every lesson of the revolutionary struggles of the proletariat of the Paris Commune and of the Russian Revolution. They seized power and held it. They organized their Red Army, set up a workers' and peasants' republic. They organized the civil war, food distribution, their apparatus of power, action, communication, and distribution of the means of life.

They communicated with the Communist Party of Spain in

Madrid. They promised to hold out until the last ditch, waiting for revolutionary reinforcements throughout Spain. They called on the workers, peasants, and soldiers of all of Spain to follow their example. But the failures, the treachery of the anarchists in Barcelona, sealed their fate.

While daily fighting was going on in Madrid, while the anarchists were betraying, and the Workers' Council in Catalonia was vacillating, waiting for the national bourgeoisie under the leadership of Companys to take the initiative, the Asturias proletariat issued as their first proclamation the following manifesto (See page 10 for reproduction of original):

"WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' REPUBLIC OF ASTURIAS

"Workers! Our glorious movement is spreading over the whole of Spain. In numerous places in Spain the movement has consolidated with the victory of the toiling masses, the workers, peasants and soldiers.

"As soon as our inner connections have been established and secured, you will be kept informed as to events in our republic and all over Spain. When our broadcasting stations are working, with ordinary and short waves, you will be kept informed.

"Indubitably we have reached the last effort for the consolidation of the victory of the revolution. The fascist enemy is about to surrender, as also the paid soldiery with their apparatus. Guns, munitions, and other arms which we cannot name, as the war material must not become known, have fallen into our hands.

"The forces of the army of the defeated republic of April 14 are in retreat, and our vanguards are being joined by the soldiers ranging themselves in our glorious movement.

"Forward, workers, women, peasants, soldiers, and revolutionary militia! Long live the social revolution!

"THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE."

This manifesto was signed by the Revolutionary Committee of Oviedo. Behind them were 20,000 armed Red Guards, and 100,000 striking workers.

Asturias blazed the way for the future of the Spanish revolution. Asturias was the handwriting on the wall of the fortress of Spanish fascism. No wonder Asturias, its glorious achievements, its revolutionary daring, is on the lips of the whole Spanish working class! No wonder it is the perpetual nightmare

República de Obreros y Campesinos de Asturias

TRABAJADORES:

El avance progresivo de nuestro glorioso movimiento se va extendiendo por toda España; son muchísimas las poblaciones españolas en donde el movimiento está consolidado con el triunfo de los trabajadores, campesinos obreros y soldados.

Establecidas y aseguradas nuestras comunicaciones interiores, se os tendrá al corriente de cuanto suceda en nuestra República y en el resto de España.

Instaladas nuestras Emisoras de radio, las cuales en onda corriente y en onda extra-corta, os pondrán al corriente de todo.

Es preciso el último esfuerzo para la consolidación del triunfo de la Revolución,

El enemigo fascista se va rindiendo así como se van entregando los componentes mercenarios con su aparato represivo, fusiles, ametralladoras, cartuchería, proyectiles varios (que no podemos señalar) para que no se conozca del material de combate de que disponemos, ha caído en nuestras manos.

Las fuerzas del ejército de la derrotada República del 14 de Abril se baten en retirada y en todas nuestras avanzadillas se van sumando los soldados para enrolarse a nuestro glorioso movimiento.

¡ADELANTE TRABAJADORES, MUJERES, CAMPESINOS SOLDADOS Y MILICIANOS REVOLUCIONARIOS!

¡VIVA LA REVOLUCION SOCIAL!

El Comité Revolucionario.

MANIFESTO ANNOUNCING ESTABLISHMENT OF ASTURIAS SOVIETS

of the bloody horde of the oppressors—the rich landlords, the myrmidons of the Church, the fascist scum, and the whole rotten class of capitalist landlords and agents of the foreign concessionaires!

II

In Madrid the general strike of October 5 was completely effective. But while the Asturias workers went over into the offensive through mass armed struggles, seizing power and setting up a workers' and peasants' republic, arousing the greatest initiative of the masses, inspiring them to the most self-sacrificing and heroic deeds, the Madrid fighting was largely sporadic. It was restricted mainly to picked shock bands. They struck with extreme rapidity and surprise, and retreated almost as quickly. But the great mass reserves of the proletariat were not led to storm the heavens of capitalism.

Even so, the fighting in Madrid far surpassed the strategy in Vienna, as the picked bands carried the attack into the strategic centers of the enemy.

The workers were on strike, prepared to fight. But the assault of the great mass of workers was directed mainly against strike-breakers, while the specially picked shock troops tried to harry the government forces, hoping to break their morale and increase the confusion and weakness of the precariously organized fascist regime.

The great masses, ready for action, were not drawn into the fighting to the fullest extent because of the basic failures and vacillations of the Socialist leaders. Largo Caballero and Prieto, Socialist leaders, from their secret headquarters, directed the fighting, but they had no clearly defined objective and had not previously prepared for mass struggles, for the establishment of Soviets, for arousing the peasants into simultaneous action which could have led to a victorious revolution.

Workers with machine guns and rifles made repeated sallies on such central buildings as the Cortes (parliament), the Bank of Spain, the central police headquarters, the Ministries of the Interior, War, and Communications.

"Wherever employers tried to replace striking leftists with strike-breakers, armed bands of rebels appeared. In almost all instances there were sharp brushes with government forces protecting the strike-breakers. It was almost as though the rebel strikers had taken up the gauge of battle flung down by the two-day old cabinet of Premier Alejandro Lerroux at an emergency meeting yesterday." (Frank Gervasi, *N. Y. American*, October 8.)

A description of the strategic attacks of the picked shock forces is given by the Associated Press cable from Madrid on October 7:

"Heavy firing broke out at the famous Puerta del Sol, where the Ministry of the Interior is situated. Assault forces poured into the plaza there from five arterial streets, a veritable army appearing to converge upon a strategic center down the spokes of a wheel. . . . In one district the revolutionaries captured a score of Civil Guards and held them as prisoners. . . . Troops began moving into Madrid, concentrating at strategic points from nearby barracks. They had full war-time equipment. Meanwhile, Madrid was virtually isolated from the provinces with communications severed and the only open channels being used for transportation of troops."

The government was slow to move troops against the workers, fearing mutiny. Special regiments had to be picked to go into action. Orders were immediately given for the Foreign Legion at Ceuta, Africa, to proceed to Spain for counter-revolutionary service. These troops were sent chiefly to Asturias.

In the workers' districts in Madrid, the fighting continued long after the central drives were beaten back, but lack of weapons further prevented a development of the battle to a greater offensive. The capital not falling into the hands of the restricted armed groups, the Catalanian debacle (which we will discuss later) giving heart to the bourgeoisie, the fighting in Madrid dwindled and died.

Madrid proved to the hilt the declaration of the Communist Party of Spain: "The revolution does not just occur, it is organized." Insurrection, as Lenin pointed out, is an art. The organization of revolution cannot be restricted to shock troops "prepared to do anything", but must bring into the offensive the

whole forces of the working class, and must arouse into action the great peasant masses. The workers did not know who, where, and under what forms of struggle the revolution was being led, and what organs of power should be set up.

The Socialist leaders resisted up to the eleventh hour the persistent proposals of the C.P. of Spain for a united front, saying that since the S.P. is relatively the larger party, it was not necessary for them to enter into united action. The higher stage, the offensive nature of the struggle, as compared to the February days in Austria, inevitably broke that resistance from on top. The Socialist leaders did not know and could not apply the lessons of insurrection taught by Marx and so brilliantly developed by Lenin and confirmed by the victorious Russian Revolution.

"To be successful", wrote Lenin in his article on "Marxism and Uprising", "the uprising must be based not on a conspiracy, not on a party, but on the advanced class. This is the first point. The uprising must be based on the revolutionary upsurge of the people. This is the second point. The uprising must be based on the *crucial point* in the history of the maturing revolution, when the activity of the vanguard of the people is at its height, when the *vacillations* in the ranks of the enemies, and in the ranks of the weak, half-hearted, undecided friends of the revolution are at their highest point. This is the third point. . . . But once these conditions exist, then to refuse to treat the uprising as an art means to betray Marxism and the revolution."

Waited for the Fascists

The Socialist leaders did not pick the *crucial point*, waiting for the fascists to take the initiative. When they did go into action, they did not base themselves on the mass struggles at their height, nor did they treat the uprising as an art; they failed to organize it for the victory which could have been achieved.

What happened in Catalonia turned the tide of events. For four hundred years, the central rulers of Spain have been trying to unify Catalonia with the rest of Spain. When the 1931 republic was established, the Catalonian people achieved a restricted measure of national independence which was increasingly curbed

as the "democratic" measures of the republic were whittled away by the Right, and later by the fascist developments.

The crisis in the Samper government, which led to the formation of the Lerroux-Robles fascist regime, and the armed uprising, was precipitated by the agrarian-national question in Catalonia. The Catalanian Generalidad (local government), some months before the clash, had passed an agrarian law, partially favoring the tenants and small landowners. The Supreme Court of Spain declared this law null and void, thereby wiping out the limited autonomy already won in Catalonia and the meager agrarian reform.

The Workers' Alliance, instead of taking the lead for the independence of Catalonia on the basis of the revolutionary struggles of the working class, waited for the Catalanian bourgeoisie to act under the leadership of Louis Companys.

On October 6, after pressure from the masses, Catalonia was declared independent. The anarchists fought against the independence of Catalonia, sabotaging the revolutionary struggles of the workers and acting as open strike-breakers and counter-revolutionists. This delayed the action of the working class, created further hesitation and disorganization, and permitted Companys to betray the movement.

Companys Maneuvered

Companys did not go over into the armed struggle, but maneuvered and treated with General Batet of the Catalonia garrison. He feared the unloosing of the mass armed struggle which would sweep over the head of the national bourgeoisie. He gave General Batet time to organize his troops for assault. On October 6, Companys invited Batet to join the independence movement. "The general," declared the *New York Times* cable of October 8, "asked for an hour to consider the proposition, but before the time was up he ordered his troops into the streets and began attacking buildings".

Batet's troops seized the central government headquarters and the radio station from which Companys was broadcasting his pompous appeals. By this time, the workers had gone into

action, but they had received a fatal blow from the anarchist leaders, and were defeated. This gave encouragement to the landlord-bourgeois fascist government at Madrid, and the tide of battle turned throughout Spain after this defeat.

In the suburbs of Barcelona, at Badelona, a city of 30,000 inhabitants, and Sabadell, with 40,000 people, the workers took control; but with the defeat in Barcelona, without supporting actions of the proletariat throughout Catalonia (due to the fatal and initial treachery of the anarchists), the battle was lost. Since the anarchists had monopolized the leadership of the workers in this most important industrial center of Spain, their counter-revolutionary tactics sealed the defeat of the workers.

Communist Party Held First Congress

In the early part of 1934, the Communist Party of Catalonia held its first congress, attended by more than 100 delegates from all parts of Catalonia. At that time, the problems of the revolution in Catalonia were clearly outlined by the C.P. Congress. The main thesis declared:

"The Communist Party of Catalonia, whilst proceeding to the carrying out of its historical task, the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie and of the big landowners, by mobilizing the broad masses for the national and social emancipation of the toiling population of Catalonia, for the struggle for the right of self-determination right up to separation, for the setting up of the Soviets of workers, toiling peasants, soldiers, and sailors, will conduct an irreconcilable struggle against Spanish imperialism, and the traitors of the cause of the emancipation of the Catalanian people: the Esquerra, the Generalidad and its agents."

The Communist Party of Spain in its resolution on the lessons of the armed uprising declared with regard to the national struggle:

"Another frightful error was the leaving of the issue of struggle in the hands of such vacillating persons as Companys. . . . If the revolution is to be victorious, it must remain in all its forms in the hands of the exploited. This has been once more demonstrated by our heroic comrades in Asturias and Biscay."

Faced by the withering criticism of the toiling masses, by the sharp movement away from the anarchists to the Communist Party, the anarchist leaders tried to win back their waning leadership by calling a general strike in Saragossa and other parts of Catalonia in protest against the execution of two workers. But this gesture, coming from a source itself tainted with the blood of the workers, received little supporting response.

The result of the fighting in Catalonia has sharpened the class lines in the national independence struggle. The bourgeoisie has been weakened (if not annihilated) as a force in the struggle for national emancipation. The anarchist chiefs, who were against national independence, are being exposed in the eyes of the revolutionary masses as counter-revolutionists. The workers who went into action have learned the lesson of taking the initiative which will not be lost in the next revolutionary upsurge.

Early in December, 1934, the workers in the anarcho-syndicalist trade unions gave a striking expression of their disgust with the betrayals of the anarchist leadership. At an underground meeting of the Castille division of the anarcho-syndicalist trade union (C.N.T.), it was decided to join in the united front of the Workers' Alliance along with the Socialist and Communist Parties.

All present agreed that it was necessary to condemn in the sharpest manner the sabotage and betrayal of the Central of Anarchists (F.A.I.), and it was resolved to break all relations with Garcia Oliver, anarchist leader of the F.A.I. Similar action was taken in Asturias, Galicia, Leon, Aragon, Catalonia and Andalusia.

It was further resolved, in breaking with the anarchist leaders and policies, to participate in the next municipal elections by supporting candidates of the Workers' Alliance, and, where such nominees are not put up, either the Socialist or Communist candidate.

III

In Asturias, where the united front of the Communists and Socialists of Spain had been established long before the October general strike and the armed battles, a workers' and peasants'

regime was set up. The heroism, the discipline, the achievements of the Asturias working class stand as an inspiration to the toiling masses of all Spain. To this day the spectre of the Asturias Commune terrorizes and frightens the bourgeoisie. When the battles were ended or betrayed by the anarchist leaders in the rest of Spain, the Asturias proletariat held out against the greatest odds, and fought with daring fury to entrench themselves in the fortress of the Asturias Commune, hoping and waiting for reinforcements from the rest of Spain.

They were finally defeated on October 18 only by the greatest mobilization of the most trusted sections of the Spanish army, by the terrific air bombardment of the entire Spanish air fleet, by the ferocious attacks of the cut-throat and well-equipped Spanish Foreign Legion and the Riff troops imported from Morocco, and above all by the treachery of the anarchist leaders in Catalonia, which permitted the Lerroux-Robles regime to concentrate the bulk of its armed forces against the Asturias Soviets. Oviedo, the capital of Asturias, was reduced to a mass of crumbling ruins. Men, women, and children were slaughtered by the bloodthirsty scum of the Spanish Foreign Legion. This band of hired butchers is universally known to comprise escaped convicts, murderers, mercenaries, the worst dregs of the underworld of every land; White Guard Russians, chased out of other capitalist countries because of their criminal deeds, Riffs, who were paid to kill their own people for Spanish imperialism in Morocco—all under the leadership of General Ochoa, the Spanish Gallifet, hangman of the proletariat. They were the shock troops used by the hypocritical Catholic fascist rulers to teach the Asturias proletariat a lesson in Christian ethics.

Held Power 15 Days

For 15 days the workers and peasants in Asturias held power. These were 15 days of endless fighting without respite for the Red Army. Yet, notwithstanding this, the Commune set up its governing apparatus, decreed all lands belonged to the peasants who tilled them; requisitioned food and supplies for the toiling masses and the Red Army; established its press; took over the

big industries and utilized them for the manufacture of arms for the revolutionary struggles, and seized the largest bank in Oviedo, confiscating 15,000,000 pesetas for food, clothing, and shelter for the unemployed, and for the necessities of waging war against the fascist regime.

On October 12, the Workers' and Peasants' Government of Asturias set up its wireless communication with the rest of Spain and sent a message to the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Madrid, declaring:

"All of this region is in our hands. We have proclaimed the Republic of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers. We have 100,000 workers under arms, and a shock brigade of 10,000 men. We have taken the factories producing war materials. On October 9 we occupied all of Oviedo, after besieging the city for five days. Then we proclaimed the power of the workers and peasants. A number of the Civil Guard and Storm Guard gave up to us.

"We declared the abolition of private property. Alcoholic drinks were prohibited. A company of machine gunners coming from Leon were destroyed by us at Campomanes after a hard battle. Since Monday, October 8, planes have bombarded us. We shot two down with machine guns. [Later they shot five more, though they did not have anti-aircraft equipment.] The columns of General Ochoa, which penetrated Aviles, opened a cannonade on the workers' homes; they killed women and children and the best known revolutionists. When General Ochoa penetrated Aviles he did not dare to enter the interior of the city.

"The women fight heroically in the front ranks. We have replaced the proletarian prisoners by capitalists whom we are guarding as hostages. . . . We possess resources and materials to resist for three months. By radio we know the situation of the rest of Spain.

"But nevertheless, even if you cannot impede the concentration of forces against Asturias, we will not declare ourselves vanquished."

The heroism of the Asturias proletariat, fighting against superior forces, striving by might and main to retain the Soviet power, feeding the hungry masses, attempting to establish its stern discipline and order in the face of the bombardment and sabotage of the fascist hordes, aroused the admiration and respect even of its enemies in Asturias, as we shall learn.

Ruled Against Odds

Every bit of food and supplies requisitioned was done so on the order and receipt of the Revolutionary Committee. The workers showed the greatest revolutionary initiative and ability to rule in the face of the greatest odds.

Instructions were issued by the Revolutionary Committee against all acts of pillage, with orders to arrest and shoot pillagers. All of the workers' parties and organizations were called to the central headquarters of the government to participate in the administration of the Commune and to arrange for the defense of the workers' and peasants' republic.

The documents and deeds of the Asturias Commune are now being studied by the whole proletariat of Spain as examples of what the workers are capable of when they fight for power. The Revolutionary Committee of Mieres (Asturias), when it achieved power, issued a proclamation declaring that "acting on the will of the people and watching over the interests of the revolution, it is resolved to take all measures with the necessary energy in order to direct the course of the movement".

Strict Discipline

These measures provided for the registration of all workers eligible to bear arms. Registration bureaus were set up. They provided that anyone caught looting would be shot. Everyone possessing arms was called on to report at the Committee's headquarters, so that only workers could retain arms, while their enemies were disarmed. All food and clothing were confiscated for the use of the people and for the Red Army. All members of trade unions and workers' political parties and youth organizations were called on to report with their cards so that they could be assigned responsible tasks in connection with the workers' government and the Red Army. In order to organize the fighting on the most effective basis, it was decreed: "It is strictly prohibited to fire shots at airplanes from rifles, pistols or hunting guns, without the express orders of this Committee".

The Red Army, though hastily assembled, was well organized

BANDO

HACEMOS SABER: Desde la aparición de este bando queda constituido el Ejército Rojo, pudiendo pertenecer a él todos los trabajadores que estén dispuestos a defender con su sangre los intereses de nuestra clase proletaria.

Este ejército quedará compuesto y se dirigirá en la forma siguiente:

1.º Todos los que haya cumplido los diez y ocho años hasta treinta y cinco pueden inscribirse al Ejército Rojo.

2.º Una vez ingresados en filas tendrán que observar una férrea disciplina.

3.º Las deserciones o desobediencias al mando serán castigadas con severidad.

4.º Quedan excluidos de pertenecer al Ejército Rojo aquellos que hayan pertenecido a la clase explotadora.

El aplastamiento de los contrarrevolucionarios, la conservación de nuestras posiciones exige tener un Ejército invencible aguerrido y valiente para edificar la sociedad Socialista.

Nota... Todos los días desde las ocho de la mañana queda abierta la oficina de inscripción en las dependencias del Ayuntamiento.

El Comité Revolucionario

PROCLAMATION

BE IT KNOWN: With the appearance of this proclamation there is constituted the Red Army to which all workers ready to defend with their blood the interests of the proletariat may belong.

This army will be composed of and concern itself with the following:

1. All those between the ages of 18 and 35 are eligible for service in the Red Army.
2. Once within its ranks they must comply with its iron discipline.
3. Deserters and those disobedient will be punished with the greatest severity.
4. All those belonging to the exploiting classes are excluded from the Red Army.

In order to crush the counter-revolution and to protect our advances the Army will carry on relentless warfare in order to build a Socialist society.

Note: The recruiting office will be open at the City Hall each day from eight in the morning until evening.

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE.

and disciplined, consisting chiefly of the Asturias miners, soldiers, munitions factory workers, peasants. Leaders sprang from the ranks. Special corps of miners were organized to dynamite the troops sent against them. With the greatest daring and skill they carried out their work. As one Spanish bourgeois correspondent put it: "They carried out their tasks with amazing efficiency and without the slightest regard for their own lives".

Another correspondent tells of the Workers' Red Army marching into Oviedo:

"I watched them march through. It was an indescribable spectacle. The first of the men carried baskets with self-manufactured hand-grenades. With the shout: 'Forward, comrades!' they charged into the withering fire of the Civil Guards, who were barricaded in the building of the telephone headquarters."

One doctor in Oviedo, who was impressed into the medical service of the Red Army of Asturias, writing in the reactionary Spanish newspaper, *Estampa*, of his experiences, tells of the undying heroism of the Asturias workers. The wounded began to pour into the hospitals. Workers badly injured were impatient at the delay of the doctors. They wanted to get back to the firing lines. The doctor tells of one fighter who was brought in.

"'Patch me up quickly', one wounded man demanded. 'Do me first, I want to get back. We must take Santa Clara Barracks. It is full of Civil Guards.'

"I looked at the man. He had a gaping wound on the side of his neck.

"'You must go to bed', the doctor ordered.

"The man refused to go to bed and went off without attention. The next day he was dead in the roadway.

"A wounded man arrived, supported by a thin youngster with the face of a woman. He carried a rifle slung over his shoulder and bandoliers of cartridges. Turning to me, probably because I was nearest, he declared: 'It's terrible'. 'What's terrible?' I asked. 'Comrade Belarme has been shot. When he saw that we were not making as much progress as he would have liked at the prefecture, he dashed forward, without cover, to bomb the place, and they shot him down with a volley.' 'Do you think', I asked, 'that your ideals are worth all that, all this slaughter?' 'We want nothing more than Communism', he answered. 'But don't forget, my friend'.

I pointed out, 'your attempt to establish Communism has collapsed everywhere else in Spain.' 'That was because the others didn't understand how to go about the business', he declared, unconvinced. 'We are not plunderers, or thieves or murderers. We are proletarians and our ideal is social equality. Only those who work shall be permitted to eat.'

When the Asturias proletariat was finally defeated, the fascist slaughter was frightful. Hundreds were massed against walls, men, women, and children, and mowed down with machine guns. The bodies of the dead and wounded were piled up and burned together.

The capitalist press in Spain and throughout the world began its usual campaign of slander against the heroic Asturias workers. They were accused of every atrocity in the long lying calendar of the history of counter-revolution.

At the very moment workers were being imprisoned, tortured, shot, burned, the world capitalist press spread stories of the revolutionaries' "atrocities". But no similar lies were so quickly destroyed. After a brief period of vituperation, the most rabid fascist papers in Spain halted their slanders for lack of even the slimmest shred of proof. The heroism, discipline, bravery of the Asturias workers overshadowed all else, and inflamed the Spanish workers with the greatest enthusiasm. Even Hitler's Nazi correspondent in Madrid was forced to deny the atrocity stories against the Asturias workers, comparing them with the Allied anti-German war atrocity fables. We have not space here to print the mass of complete and definite denials by the fascist forces themselves in and out of Spain.

Preparing for Greater Battles

The reign of terror in Asturias now is the worst in all Spain. But the proletariat, despite its frightful toll, estimated in Asturias alone between 2,500 and 3,500 dead, is manifesting no spirit of defeat; is even now preparing for greater battles, terrifying the butchers who rule over them with machine guns and cannon. So fearful are the Spanish landlord-capitalist rulers of the Asturias proletariat to this day, that the Asturias coal mines have not been

opened because they do not know what will happen if the workers get together again. A proposal was made in a Madrid paper that the mines be closed indefinitely and ultimately abandoned.

To what depths has the desperation of the Spanish bourgeoisie gone when it seriously proposes slicing off one of its own vital limbs in order to destroy or disperse the proletariat with it!

But meanwhile, the enraged capitalist dogs are wreaking their vengeance on Socialist and Communist prisoners. The jails are full to bursting. Every day workers are tortured or killed.

The Asturias workers look to the workers of the whole world for help and support. Only mass united front actions of Socialists and Communists, rallying thousands behind them, can save the lives of hundreds of these heroic fighters who so gladly were ready to die for the workers' cause.

The epic of Asturias will forever live in the hearts of the workers of the whole world, glorious inheritor of the Paris Commune and of the Russian Revolution, the beacon that will light the way to a rapid victory of the proletarian revolution throughout all of Spain.

IV

The full lessons of the Spanish armed uprising have not been drawn yet, the movement having been too vast, information too scattered and general, with the fascist censorship clamped down. But the main, decisive lessons, the chief causes for failure, those responsible for betrayal and treachery, and the outstanding shortcomings are clear.

Let us hear from a Socialist leader first, Andelicio Prieto, who, together with Largo Cabellero, partook in the leadership of the general strike and the armed struggles in Madrid. Cabellero was arrested and is now in prison. Prieto, after the failure of the fighting, was able to escape to Paris.

In Paris he was interviewed by *Le Petit Journal* on October 31: "To what do you attribute the check of the revolutionary movement, if it truly represents the opinion of the majority?"

he was asked. His answer was: "First, to the rapidity and violence of the repression. Second, to the weakness of the agrarian reinforcements, influenced by the defeat suffered during their general strike. Third, to the obstinacy of the syndicalist and anarchist elements."

While all of this is true, it is not the whole truth. No one can deny that the execrable treachery and betrayal of the anarchist leaders stabbed the armed uprising in the back.

Prieto's first reason for failure conceals not the weakness of the proletariat in the face of the ferocity of fascism, but the failure of the Socialist leaders to prepare sufficiently for the armed insurrection beforehand, their resistance to the united front until shortly before the armed uprising, their reliance on small bands instead of mass armed attacks, and chiefly their vacillations in putting the question of Soviets as organs of power before the masses.

In his second reason, Prieto also conceals much. Failure of the agrarian strike, which weakened the peasant forces in the struggle, was due to the bad leadership of the Socialists. Above all, they did not put forward the question of the seizure of the land by the peasants, a slogan which would have had the effect, not only of drawing the peasants into the general uprising, but also of influencing the army, composed mainly of the sons of the peasants.

Criticism Confirmed

We will quote Prieto again in answer to another question, because it is here that he enters into some self-criticism, and fully confirms the Communist criticism of the Socialist Party leaders since the establishment of the Republic in 1931. In the Republic the Socialists had played a leading role, filling the masses with democratic illusions on the solution of their problems by collaboration with the bourgeoisie.

"How do you explain," Prieto was asked, "the discontent in Spain, and the success of Gil Robles [leading fascist] in the last elections?"

Prieto answered: "Precisely because of the Right policy of

the Left regime. This government born with the republic and created by the republic became the rampart of forces adverse to the republic. It is true that the Left government of Spain carried out the policy of the Right before Lerroux and Samper. In this period of perishing capitalism, the Spanish bourgeoisie could not even carry through the bourgeois democratic revolution.

"It is this disillusionment of the masses with the republic they so much desired that explains the victory of Gil Robles."

The Left regime referred to, which carried out a Right policy, is, of course, the regime of the Socialist leaders with the Left Republicans.

Communist Analysis

Soon after the defeat of the revolutionary struggles in Spain the Communist Party analyzed the causes for the failure. We list the basic points of this analysis:

1. The political and organizational preparations for the revolution were insufficient. Its program was not made known to the whole of the working masses. The fact was ignored that the revolution is not made; it is organized.

2. The peasants were not drawn into the revolutionary struggles. This, too, is the reason why the army, consisting mainly of peasants, did not go over to the side of the revolution.

3. The problem of power, the fundamental question of every revolution, was not placed clearly before the workers and peasants. The masses were not acquainted with the organs of power, the Soviets, how they should function, how and where they should be organized.

4. In the very heart of the Socialist leadership, side by side with revolutionists, ready for any sacrifice, were elements who did not conceal their hostility to the revolution.

5. The general strike was not carried out *before* the Lerroux-Robles government was formed. This left the initiative in the hands of the enemy.

6. The struggle for national independence in Catalonia was left to the initiative of the vacillating and treacherous bour-

geoisie, such as Companys. To be victorious, the revolution, in all its forms, must be under the leadership of the proletariat.

7. The monstrous betrayal and treachery of the anarchist leaders was the worst blow of all and showed them, as Marxism has always described them, as enemies of the proletarian revolution, who in the struggles in Spain were found on the barricades on the side of fascism.

Anarchists Sabotaged Struggle

The deeds of the anarchists in Spain in the decisive struggles against fascism again proved up to the hilt the historical Marxian criticism of the whole theory and tactics of anarchism.

Not in all the history of anarchism have their leadership and basic ideas been so costly to the workers as in Spain. This flows, not out of the tactical mistakes of the Spanish anarchists in this particular situation, but out of the whole conception of anarchism in relation to the class struggle. In Spain the damage was so great because the anarchists had won leadership over 1,000,000 workers and the leaders carried out their counter-revolutionary conceptions **at a time when the workers were entering armed struggles against fascism.**

Nothing expresses the treacherous conceptions of the anarchist leaders more than their published comment when a number of Spanish Communists were sent to the African penal colonies. Borrowing their phrases from the Trotzkyites, the anarchists declared to the Communist prisoners: "Go, build Socialism now in one country!"

In their criticism of the capitalist State, the anarchists also criticized as bitterly and savagely the dictatorship of the proletariat, thereby diverting the workers from the only force and power which could defeat and destroy the rule of capitalist-landlord ruling power. In this they have a common ground with those who, like Kautsky, consider the fascist dictatorship as on the same plane and basically indistinguishable from the proletarian dictatorship.

Anarchism, basically, is the utopian, petty-bourgeois philosophy developed into a system by Proudhon and given organi-

zational expression by Bakunin, the bitterest enemy of Marx in the First International. It is based chiefly on the remnants of the petty bourgeoisie who in the early stages of capitalism are driven into the ranks of the proletariat, and carry on a violent struggle against capitalism for the abstract conception of "liberty" and "equality" which expresses the utopian desire of the enraged petty bourgeoisie to preserve their individual property and "liberty".

Because of the late development of capitalism, and hence of the proletariat, in Spain, the anarchists were able to get a foothold, and carry over their leadership into a period when the proletariat was maturing rapidly toward seizure of power and the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship.

The anarchist leaders' idea is that, since the proletarian dictatorship is no better than the capitalist dictatorship, when the one is threatened by the other, why take sides? Furthermore, not believing in proletarian struggles, they fight against strikes of a political nature, especially one leading to the armed insurrection for workers' power.

The victory of the workers in the Soviet Union has shown the correctness of the Marxian-Leninist goal of the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the most powerful weapon of the revolution in combating and destroying, not only the capitalist State, but the last vestiges of the capitalist class and capitalist relations which try to perpetuate themselves after the seizure of power by the working class. Every revolutionary struggle since 1871 has shown again and again that unless the working class is able to establish its dictatorship, it cannot hope to proceed with the development of the new society, Socialism. Especially at a time when the Spanish bourgeoisie were dropping all pretenses at democracy and bringing their class dictatorship out into the open, with its more brutal, chauvinist and repressive characteristics, the "impartiality" of the anarchists towards the "State" proved to be the most valuable counter-revolutionary service in the interest of fascism.

The anarchist leaders fought against the Soviet Union and the proletarian dictatorship more vigorously than against the

capitalist State, considered by them freer than proletarian rule, which they called "red imperialism".

Sabotaged General Strike

Hence, when it came to the decisive test, when fascism sought to establish its open, brutal dictatorship, the anarchists, true to their historical role, sabotaged the general strike, the armed uprising for Catalonian national independence, and the proletarian revolution and the establishment of Soviets throughout Spain.

Anarchism, in the person of the Spanish anarchist leaders, performed a service for Spanish capitalism which its mercenary, criminal Foreign Legion could never have performed alone, with its most modern means of mass murder.

The lessons of the Spanish revolution are of international significance, and will have international, immediate repercussions in the class struggle and the world battle against fascism and for Soviet Power.

In an article in *International Press Correspondence*, on "The Civil War in Spain and the International Proletariat", Comrade Ercoli writes:

"The recent events in Spain have once again provided a *convincing object lesson of the international validity of Leninism and Bolshevism*. The victory of the revolution demands revolutionary strategy and revolutionary tactics. There are no revolutionary tactics and strategy outside the practice and theory of Bolshevism. . . .

"The October struggles of the Spanish masses which revealed this incapacity of the Socialist leaders by an acid test, represent a decisive stage in the development of the Spanish revolution. The working masses of Spain will learn from their experience. . . .

"The Communist Party of Spain was not only the sole working class organization which had a correct policy toward all the fundamental problems of the revolution, but it was also at the head of the working masses in their struggles in the October days. The red flag of the Communist Party waved victoriously over the barricades in Asturias and it was carried into the struggle by the most determined of the proletarian fighters of the glorious Commune of Asturias. . . .

"The Spanish revolution is still proceeding. The Spanish bourgeoisie is well aware that the workers and peasants have not suffered a final defeat, and the fear of further mass struggles has already made a section of the bourgeoisie hesitant. . . . Our heroic Spanish Communist Party, which has now stood its test of fire gloriously, will succeed in placing itself at the head of the workers and peasants and in leading them to final victory.

"However, the Communists and the other revolutionary workers of Spain must receive practical assistance from us in their struggle. The international solidarity of the proletariat and the international struggle of the proletariat to support the Spanish revolution must contribute practically to clearing the way for further mass struggles in Spain and to assisting the Spanish workers and peasants in their difficult struggle. The international solidarity of the proletariat must and will contribute to the defeat of fascism in Spain and bring the day of the final victorious struggle of the proletariat nearer both in Spain and in the rest of Europe."

V

Two outstanding factors underlie all developments in Spain since the October armed uprising. On the one hand, the toiling population shows no expression of defeat. There is no pessimism. Its fighting spirit was not crushed. Spain seethes with growing discontent and new rapidly maturing battles. The great reserves of workers and peasants who were not drawn into the revolutionary struggles are restive. The workers' organizations not only were not destroyed but are growing. The masses are discussing with the greatest enthusiasm the course of the battles, the reason for failure, and especially the achievements of the Asturias Soviets. The anarchist leaders are losing their grip on the Catalanian workers, and the Communist Party is growing rapidly.

On the other hand, the fascist regime has the greatest difficulty in solidifying its rule and asserting its brutal dictatorship. Its mass base is weak, disorganized, conflicting, indecisive. The ruling landlords, industrial capitalists, financiers and the blood-sucking Church hierarchy have conflicting interests which sharpen as the crisis of Spanish capitalism grows worse.

In its hysteria, fear, and rage, the Spanish bourgeoisie slaugh-

ters and harasses the arrested toilers, but is split even on the question of the degree of its revenge. And it is here that the international action of the workers, the united front in support of the Spanish fighters, becomes of the greatest importance, of the most powerful immediate value to our Spanish comrades against their hangmen. While killing hundreds of workers in secret in Asturias, only several have been executed openly as a national example to the revolutionists. These butcheries were met with strike actions on a large scale.

No Spirit of Defeat

A correspondent of the *Daily Worker* in Madrid described the situation existing on November 1, nearly one month after the fighting:

"There is not the slightest spirit of defeat among the workers. The glorious Commune of Asturias is the main topic of discussion among them. Asturias has become the guiding light of the Spanish workers. They hail 'La Commune' of Spain. The workers are learning more and more of what happened; are discussing their mistakes, preparing to gain by them. This is heightening the despair of the bourgeoisie. . . .

"Fascism is having the most difficult time trying to institute its dictatorship over the workers. The type of fascism, based on the Church and religious trimmings, sought by Gil Robles, is finding the greatest difficulty as the workers are learning what fascism is. The briefest picturization of the situation in Spain today is that of an invading army which has managed to seize some of the important fortified points, but is awaiting with fear and trepidation the attack of a hostile population."

Failure and inability to consolidate the fascist regime in Spain led to a partial cabinet crisis on November 17. Foreign Minister Ricardo Samper Ibanez and War Minister Diego Hidalgo were forced to resign. The fascist leader Robles precipitated their resignation on the ground that Civil Guard forces should have been increased and greater counter-revolutionary measures taken against Socialists and Communists in Asturias before the armed uprising. Robles, unlike Hitler, repeatedly denies fascist intent and declares his love for the Republic.

Crisis Is Acute

The economic crisis, especially acute in Spain before the revolutionary struggles, now, with the "victory" of fascism, is plunging the following articles: "After the Glorious Revolutionary Days, greater masses of peasants. Unemployment almost doubled when work began after the general strike. The financial condition of the government, always increasingly bad, is now grave. The cost of the civil war was so great that the government gladly accepted donations from every monarchist and capitalist source to help pay for the slaughter of the workers. Ex-King Alfonso donated 50,000 pesetas. All of the big companies and landowners added their bit. Even the American Telephone & Telegraph Co., and other Wall Street corporations in Spain contributed thousands of pesetas to the fund for the armies which killed the workers.

The mutinies which occurred in the armed forces during the fighting hang over Spanish fascism like a heavy cloud. Besides the regiment at Gerona, and the sailors at Santander, who refused to go into action against the workers, there is the case of Lieutenant Colonel Lopez Bravo of the African troops who were ordered to Spain. Bravo was arrested and is now in prison because he declared: "They will not shoot down their brothers".

The discussion of the lessons of the revolutionary struggles, stirring the toiling and peasant population, is sweeping through the army.

"There is practically nothing left of the state and spirit of the republic of 1931," declared the monarchist Deputy Colva Sabila in the Cortes after the insurrection.

This meant that the process of the Right of destroying through "democratic" means all of the gains of the 1931 republic had been practically achieved. The agrarian reforms are now wiped out. The conditions of the workers are being made worse. The Socialist and Communist municipal representatives are being thrown out, and fascists appointed in their place. Church reforms are ended, and the Church has been strengthened as a fascist base. The autonomy measures granted to Catalonia and Biscay under the constitution are now completely annihilated.

The Communist Party of Spain has come out of the battles intact and strengthened. Prepared for illegal struggles by the previous period of long suppressions, by the world experience of fascist developments, by the leadership of the Communist International, the organizational structure of the Party was not injured by the terror. The Central Committee of the Party meets constantly in Spain and directs the increasing activity of the Party. Immediately after the battles, the first issue of the illegal organ of the Party, *Bandera Roja* (Red Flag) appeared containing the following articles: "After the Glorious Revolutionary Days, the Battle Is Not Ended"; "They Are the Savage Assassins"; "The Truth About Asturias"; "A New Ignominious Affront of the Second International"; "Prisoners of the Same Cause"; "Unity and Solidarity"; "Soldiers! Class Brothers: Our Place Is on the Side of the Revolution!"

Those Socialist members of the Cortes who were not arrested met to discuss the question of whether they should participate in the sessions of the Cortes. By a vote of 23 to 16 they decided to boycott the sessions until the arrested deputies were freed. The leader of the Right Wing, Besteiro, who fought against the armed struggles, did not vote, deciding to participate in the parliament of the fascist Lerroux-Robles government.

Anxious to suppress the truth of the present situation in Spain, the Lerroux-Robles regime not only enforces its censorship, but does everything possible to prevent delegations from other countries investigating conditions. The Paris lawyer, Oppman, of the International Juridical Association, and Rabate, representative of the United Confederation of Labor of France, who went to Madrid to aid the arrested workers and to learn of conditions in Spain, were both thrown into prison. The two British investigators, Miss Ellen C. Wilkinson, former Labor Member of Parliament, and the Earl of Listowel, author, were kidnapped in Oviedo on November 17, and driven for 17 hours to the border and then told to go or their lives would be in danger.

The French and Portuguese governments cooperate with the Lerroux-Robles fascist regime by deporting fleeing revolutionists, and turning them over to be imprisoned or killed.

The International Labor Defense of Spain, from official figures, and from its own reports, estimated the losses of the revolutionary struggles in Spain as follows: 3,000 dead, 5,000 wounded, 90,000 prisoners. With regard to prisoners, the official figures show that in Barcelona there are 6,000 in prison and 3,000 in Madrid. All jails are frightfully overcrowded; five or six prisoners being packed into cells meant for one.

The Spanish section of the International Labor Defense, addressing itself to the workers in all countries on their tasks in defense of the Spanish workers in the present situation, declared:

"Thousands of families and orphans are left completely destitute. Mass arrests are still being made all over Spain, and there are not enough prisons to hold the arrested so that they are being packed like cattle into improvised concentration camps. . . .

"The Spanish section of the I.L.D. took its fighting position from the first moment. We know it is our duty to bring help quickly to thousands of prisoners, thousands of families and children of dead revolutionaries. We are exerting our utmost efforts. We are calling on the toiling masses everywhere to aid us in the tremendous task, for without help we cannot carry it out.

"We need your help!

"In the name of the heroic Spanish workers and peasants who have given their lives in the struggle against fascism, we appeal to the toiling masses of the whole world to aid us in carrying out our task.

"In Spain the Socialists, Communists, anarchists, have fought side by side against their class enemies. Carry out your solidarity action on the same broad basis of the united front of all workers, and of all organizations of the toiling masses."

VI

In the very midst of the stirring heroic battles of the Spanish workers, the Communist International appealed to the Labor and Socialist International for immediate united front actions in support of the embattled Spanish proletariat. On the barricades, Socialists and Communists were shedding their blood to stem the rise of fascism. Where the united front had been solidly

achieved, as in Asturias province, the workers were able to show the world marvels of revolutionary accomplishment. At the very height of the widespread fighting in Spain, workers throughout the world felt that flesh of their flesh was in action, and ached to come to their aid. To give living expression to this urgent, overwhelming desire for united solidarity actions, the Communist International took the initiative.

On October 11, both the Communist International and Young Communist International addressed the Socialist world bodies very sharply, putting forward the need for immediate, joint action on an international scale.

"A victory for the fascist-monarchist reaction in Spain would", said the Communist International's wire to the Socialist International, "—after the seizure of power by fascism in Germany and Austria—mean not only immeasurable torture for the workers and peasants of Spain, but would signify a heavy blow for the international proletariat.

"Only the fighting unity of the working class of all countries can bring real help to the Spanish workers, and bar the road to Spanish and world reaction. At this decisive moment, when the bourgeoisie is endeavoring to shatter one of the fighting troops of the international working class, the Spanish proletariat, the Communist International calls upon its Sections to join the other labor organizations in the organization of mass meetings and demonstrations in solidarity with the Spanish working class."

In order not to permit this appeal, at this critical moment, to be treated as a communication to be answered in due course by the Socialist International, the C.I. declared it was delegating Comrades Marcel Cachin and Maurice Thorez, leaders of the Communist Party of France, to negotiate immediately with the leaders of the Labor and Socialist International.

Four days later, in response to this appeal, an historic meeting took place at Brussels between the two Communist delegates, and Emil Vandervelde (Belgium), and Friedrich Adler (Austria), for the Executive Committee of the L.S.I. The full text of the stenographic report of these conversations was published by the French Communist daily, *L'Humanite* (November 3, 1934).

Action Urged

At the outset Vandervelde stated that their two representatives were present only to listen and transmit their report. Cachin and Thorez declared immediate action was necessary internationally, for while they spoke, Socialists and Communists were being shot down by the Spanish fascists.

Cachin declared: "We pose the question as precisely that of immediate action in favor of our Spanish comrades." He outlined the following immediate program for joint action:

1. Organization of meetings and demonstrations jointly under the slogans: "Down with the Lerroux government! All for the defense of the workers and peasants of Spain in the fight against reaction!"

2. Joint plan in the trade unions to stop the transportation of troops or ammunition for the Lerroux government.

3. Joint action of the Socialist and Communist parliamentary fractions in all countries demanding the convocation of parliament to protest against the barbarous executions of the Spanish workers. Similar action in the municipalities.

4. Immediate material support to aid the victims of the Spanish repression to be collected jointly.

S.P. Leaders Stall

Adler and Vandervelde hemmed and hawed, suspected Communist "maneuvers", pleaded they had no mandate to accept immediate action, declared that the situation in the different parties of the L.S.I., made prompt response out of the question. Vandervelde concluded by saying he believed the outlook appeared favorable, but that the matter would have to be taken up at the L.S.I. Executive Committee meeting in Paris on November 13.

On the day the Communist representatives met with the Socialists, the Spanish workers, after five days' battle, marched into Oviedo, capital of Asturias province. When the Socialist International finally rendered its decision, on November 18, General

Ochoa marched into the ruined city of Oviedo and shot hundreds of workers.

The Communist Party in nearly all countries addressed appeals to those Socialist Parties which had not already entered the united front to join in actions for the support of the Spanish workers.

In the United States, besides letters to the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party, the *Daily Worker* addressed numerous appeals for united action—from the very first day of the fighting to the last day of the fighting, and repeatedly afterwards. There was no direct response.

Stormy discussions featured the L.S.I.'s Paris sessions. Great pressure was being exerted upon all Socialist Parties by the working masses for the united front, especially on the concrete question of support to the Spanish fighters.

There were three distinct groupings. On the one hand, there were the Parties who had already established the united front with the Communist Parties (France, Italy, Spain, the Saar) who were for joint international action. There were others, such as Belgium and Austria, who were for no international joint actions, but for an ending of the ban on national negotiations. Lastly, there were the Party officialdoms who were bitterly against any united action. These were primarily the Scandinavian Parties, Holland and the British Labor Party.

Of these latter Parties, particularly the Scandinavian and Dutch, the leaders berated the Spanish workers for having taken up arms against fascism altogether. These parties proposed, if joint international action could not be avoided, under the pressure of the masses, that it shackled with the counter-revolutionary proposals that the Soviet Union give up the proletarian dictatorship, and release the enemies of the workers' State.

The final decision provided that it was not "advisable" or "appropriate" to continue negotiations between the Internationals.

A Step Forward

The same letter, however, indicated a step forward. It declared on behalf of the Executive Committee of the L.S.I., that

the decision of March, 1933, forbidding unity of action with the Communist Parties, without approval of the International, had automatically expired with the new uprisings, and from now on "every section may carry on its negotiations in complete independence".

This opens up a new vista in the struggle for the united front against world fascism.

Class lines throughout the world are growing tighter, sharper, more bitter. The Spanish workers entered the battle against fascism bravely. Everywhere the fight must and will be taken up—encouraged, inspired and emboldened by the self-sacrificing *dar-ing* of the Spanish proletariat. They showed us the way to unity of action in its highest phases.

In the United States fascism is no longer an article of import. It is developing rapidly, even to the extent of the actual creation of the armed fascist hordes.

The united front against war and fascism has become the most burning question before the American working class. The growing response of the S.P. rank and file to the persistent united front proposals of the Communist Party has forced recognition from all sections of the Socialist Party leadership. It is attested to, particularly, by the vehement resistance to it by the Right wing, reactionary leadership of the Socialist Party.

In its Boston meeting, in the latter part of November, 1934, the majority of the "Left" National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party, anxious to block the realization of the united front against war and fascism, did not even take the trouble to reply on the specific issue of united action in support of the Spanish proletariat, many of whom were at the very moment facing death, torture, or long imprisonment.

Despite this failure, united actions in support of our Spanish brothers, Socialists, Communists and anarchists must be carried out.

The Spanish prisons are full to overflowing. Each day sees the development of new battles, new strike struggles, intensified resistance, and at the same time, more barbarous assaults on

the workers by the Spanish landlord-bourgeoisie in its efforts to bolster up its fascist regime.

In every city, in every locality, efforts must be made for united actions in behalf of the Spanish workers with a view to (1) Arranging mass demonstrations and meetings as an expression of solidarity with the Workers' Alliance in Spain, and the heroic, fighting working class; (2) Demonstrations at the Spanish consulates and embassy against the execution and imprisonment of Socialist, Communist and anarchist prisoners; (3) for the collection of funds, food, clothing and other material aid and defense for the prisoners of fascism in Spain.

The united front on behalf of the Spanish workers is not only an international necessity in the present phase of the struggle in Spain, the defensive fight against fascist terror, for the lives and freedom of the arrested Socialists, Communists and syndicalists, but is a prime requisite for speeding the future offensive battles. It will strengthen, furthermore, the international solidarity of the workers everywhere in their fight against fascism.

To the extent that we can most rapidly and the most effectively establish the united front for the defense of the Spanish workers against fascist terror shall we be doing our utmost in helping to speed the day when the toiling masses of Spain will be able to carry their glorious revolutionary battles of October to a victorious conclusion.

APPENDIX

Appeal of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Spain

The following appeal of the C.C. of the C.P. of Spain was published in October after the revolutionary fights. It contains a criticism of the tactics of the united front organs, the "Workers' Alliances", which in some localities, in addition to Communists and Socialists, also comprised anarchists.

TO ALL WORKERS AND PEASANTS OF SPAIN, CATALONIA,
THE BASQUE PROVINCES AND GALICIA:

The provocation of the exploiting class of Spain, which set up the Vatican-fascist government, called forth an outburst of popular indignation which has shaken the regime of the bourgeoisie and landowners to its very foundations.

Tired of suffering hunger, exploitation and terror, the workers rose in order to take up the fight for bread, land and freedom. In very many places, especially in Asturias and Biscay, the red flag of revolution and Soviet Power fluttered in the breeze as a symbol of a new Spain, freed from misery. The heroism of the workers in the fight reached its highest point in the glorious epoch of red Asturias, where the socialist republic of the workers and peasants was proclaimed, which is still being maintained to-day, defended with the breasts and weapons of the slaves of the pits, in the midst of a hell of blood and machine-gun fire let loose by the fascist dictatorship government of Lerroux-Gil Robles, who sent their brutes of the Foreign Legion and the colonial troops to murder the brave mine-workers, to massacre their wives and children with artillery, to burn down their dwellings and to violate the proletarian women.

Long live the courageous proletariat of Asturias!

Long live the heroic proletariat of Asturias!

Workers!

The battle which has been fought is not the decisive battle. The executioners of the working people should not exult too early at their victory. *We have returned to work, but we are ready to gather our forces again, to take up the fight again at a more favorable moment, and with greater confidence in victory than ever before.* Let us learn from events and make use of the experience. That will strengthen us on the sure way to victory.

The Communist Party, which flung itself into the fight with all its forces although it did not agree altogether with the tactics and methods of organization of the fight, which did not spare itself any effort nor shrink from sacrifices in order to place itself at the head of the fighting masses, now invites all workers to draw the lessons from this fight not only in order to solve the doubts and questions which today confront thousands of proletarians, but in order to arm them with the theory and correct tactics which will lead us to victory in the coming fights.

Why did we not win the victory?

Among all the exploited there was no lack of will and courage, determination and firmness, devotion and sacrifice. Why, then, did we not win the victory? *Because, as our Party has repeatedly declared, there was not sufficient political and organizational preparation for the revolution, because its program was not brought to the knowledge of the whole of the working masses, because the advantages which the revolution will bring to the workers, the peasants, the soldiers and all the exploited had not been popularized.*

The fact that the revolution cannot be simply made but must be organized, that the organization of the revolution cannot be confined to groups of volunteers who are "ready for everything", but that *all the forces of the working class and the immediate allies of the revolution, the peasants, must be drawn into the fight—all this was ignored.*

The resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, published in the *Mundo Obrero* (World of Labor) of September 17, stated: "*The Workers' Alliances, as their name*

implies, *arise as the organ* of one of the main driving forces of the revolution, namely, the proletariat, which is a guiding forces—but they fail to recognize the second main driving force, represented by the peasantry, without the alliance with which there can be no guarantee of the socialist revolution.” This is the reason why the army, except in a few isolated cases, did not also join in the fight on the side of the workers.

The overwhelming majority of the soldiers are peasants, and they will only go over to the side of the revolution if it satisfies their requirements. *As they did not know what the revolution would give them, the tremendous forces of the village, for the far greater part, did not join the fight.*

The problem of power, the main question of every revolution, was not presented plainly and clearly to the proletariat and the masses of the peasantry. The greater majority of them therefore did not know into whose hands and into what organs they had to place power, and what power meant for them. There was lacking a program—this force which, when it becomes embodied in the masses, causes them to defy death in order that the program shall be realized in life.

In the above-mentioned resolution of the C.C. of the C.P. it is stated:

“The fight to smash the regime of the bourgeoisie and land-owners and for the power of the workers and peasants presupposes the political and organizational preparation of the masses for the achievement of this aim. Therefore, the propaganda of the program of the workers’ and peasants’ government, setting forth that which the victorious revolution will give to the working people, must be intensified among the working masses in town and country.”

The facts have confirmed the correctness of this estimate. In order to throw the whole mass of the toiling people into the fight, it is necessary that they be previously permeated with the program, which must become the flag of the advance-guard, summoning them to the fight. As this was not the case, the enormous forces represented by the proletariat in every factory,

in every mine and every field, were untapped. For this reason neither factory committees nor committees of peasants nor the Alliances were set up in every place where exploitation took place—in which workers, peasants and soldiers should be directly represented—that is to say, organs for preparation of the armed revolt, embryonic organs of power of the victorious revolution (Soviets).

The fact that all this was lacking is not due to chance. It was in accordance with an unclear view of tactics. There was lacking both the theory and practice of the revolution. *There was lacking the unity and iron discipline which must characterize the party of the revolution.* Within the Socialist Party there are to be found devoted revolutionaries together with elements which do not conceal their hostility to any revolutionary action. This fact was bound to be reflected in a number of vacillations in regard to directions and some confused and contradictory instructions.

This was the reason for the terrible mistake that the general strike was not carried out before the formation of the hangmen's government of Lerroux. This meant that the initiative was left in the hands of the enemy.

Another terrible mistake was to entrust the issue of the fight to such vacillating persons as Companys and his like, who out of fear of the development of the people's revolution capitulated to the forces of the enemy, or to the Republican army commanders, instead of the united masses of the workers. In order to ensure the victory of the revolution it is necessary that the leadership of the revolution shall remain in all its forms in the hands of the exploited. That is the only guarantee of victory. Our heroic comrades in Asturias and the Basque province have proved this. "The emancipation of the working class can only be the work of the workers themselves" (Marx). This fact was not realized in its whole significance.

Comrades anarchists, take note!

The Communist Party endeavored in good time to correct these errors, and persisted in its endeavors in the course of the fight. *Nevertheless, in spite of the seriousness of the errors, the*

situation would not have developed in favor of the monarchist-fascist canaille if, above all, the anarchist leaders of Barcelona and Saragossa had not committed their shameful act of betrayal of the revolution at the very moment when all the exploited of Spain were fighting like lions with weapons in hand.

It is not merely the civil guards and storm guards, not only the monarchist and fascist officers, not merely the machine guns which for the moment decided the battle in favor of the blackest reaction.

To the everlasting shame of the anarchist leaders, it was their appeals, which they issued from the general headquarters of the fascist Batet in Barcelona. The leaders of the Anarchist Federation prevented the victory of the revolution. They sold their own anarchist comrades who, in Asturias, Madrid and other places, realized their duty to their class and fought bravely together with their Communist and Socialist brothers.

It is these anarchist leaders who are chiefly responsible for the present situation. Do not forget this, comrades anarchists!

From what has already been said it is evident why the peasants did not seize possession of and defend the land, uniting with the proletariat in the fight, and why the great majority of the soldiers did not fraternize with the workers and go over to the revolution. Therefore the counter-revolutionary pack was able to tear down the red flag of the revolution and hoist *the black flag of the death penalty*, suppress all the democratic liberties of the working people, pounce like jackals onto the defeated districts in Catalonia and in the Basque province, entrust power into the hands of the fascist monarchists and return to the monarchist-militarist-jesuit past.

Everything that is reactionary and backward in society, the whole combined forces of counter-revolution, are hastening to celebrate their triumph. *But they are in too much of a hurry.* They can shoot, imprison, increase the misery and hunger among the working people still more, but the hungry will not become satisfied by fasts, the pains and tears of the mothers and women of the people will not be stopped by the whips and blows of the civil and storm guards. It is impossible to satisfy the people

with blows of the butts of rifles and bayonet stabs, nor to hold back with the voice of command of the arrogant generals the disaster to industry and agriculture which the Lerroux regime has brought.

The workers want bread and work; the peasants want land; the whole people want freedom. In the heart of every worker and every peasant there lives the will to fight and take revenge. The class hatred against this regime of hunger, misery and terror is spreading—below the surface—and sullen hatred is germinating in the depths of the working masses, which will break out—and this not before long. Taught by these events, these masses are being better steeled for the fight, better organized to march forward to victory under the leadership of their class advance-guard.

The fight is not yet at an end.

This is proved by the fact that the band of clerical-fascist hangmen are far from having mastered the situation. *In Asturias the proletarian legions are continuing their heroic fight. The same can be said of the mining district of Biscay.* Today the proletarian forces are retreating, but at the same time are preparing to employ new fighting tactics based on a new organization.

The great battle for bread, land, and freedom has not yet been fought. The Workers' and Peasants' Alliances are being formed in the working-class centers. We shall convert every factory into a stronghold of the revolution. *We have fought unitedly and we shall advance unitedly more firmly than ever.* We shall discuss in a brotherly manner the experiences, the positive sides and the mistakes of the past fight, *but nothing can destroy the unity of action of the Communist and Socialist workers.* And we shall continue in our endeavors to draw to our side the anarchist workers who have so clearly perceived the shameful attitude of their leaders in this movement.

We shall continue unitedly to defend tooth and nail the heroes of red Asturias and the Basque provinces, to prevent reprisals by the fascist employers. *We shall continue united in the fight against the government, against the death penalty and against the monarchist-clerical-fascist reaction; united in order to support*

the prisoners, to fight for land for the peasants, for freedom of the press, of meeting and the trade unions, for the freedom for the people of Catalonia and all suppressed nations, for the disarming of the fascist hordes and for the arming of the workers and peasants; united to form a single anti-fascist bloc and for the power of the workers, peasants and soldiers.

Socialist and anarchist workers!

The facts have shown the correctness of our political line, of our tactics and our revolutionary fighting tactics. They have proved once again that there can be only one party of the revolution, and that *this party is the party which bases its activity on the tremendous experiences of two glorious and victorious revolutions*, of Russia and Soviet China. Everywhere where our forces predominate, as in Asturias and the Basque provinces, the form of organization and tactics made possible glorious achievements which today are the pride of all revolutionaries of Spain. Our Party, in spite of the reactionary storm which is raging around it, remains at the head of the fight of the oppressed masses. More than ever their firm hands are grasping the flag of socialist revolution against the cowardly calumniators and against the lackeys of capital. And thus, as in the past, they are holding aloft this flag on which is inscribed the battle cry for land, bread and freedom, the battle cry of the Soviets, for the triumph of Socialism.

For the first time in the history of the Spanish revolution the flag of the Soviets has been raised and defended in the revolutionary fight against the bourgeois-landlord regime. *In Asturias the Socialist Republic lived and still lives on the basis of the Soviets.*

A new chapter has commenced in the history of the proletariat and of the peasant masses of Spain. Today the proletariat knows from its own experience that only under the flag of the Soviets can it conquer. The future fights will be waged under this sign, and we shall be victorious.

Comrades all, keep a stout heart! Today let us more than ever maintain faith in victory! Let us close our ranks firmly, courageously and calmly, collect our forces, maintain discipline.

Let us extend our battalions! *Strengthen the advance-guard of the fight, come into the Communist Party!* Workers, peasants, soldiers, gather round our flag and let us march in firm ranks to victory!

Long live the workers' and peasants' government!

Long live the Soviets!

Long live the proletariat united in the Alliance of the workers and peasants!

Long live the world revolution and its general staff, the Communist International!

Long live the Communist Party of Spain!

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