

IN DEFENSE OF BOLSHEVISM

FOR THE FOURTH (LENINIST) INTERNATIONAL

SPAIN

STALINISM SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AND THE BETRAYAL
OF THE SPANISH MASSES

TROTSKYISM AND THE BETRAYAL OF THE SPANISH MASSES

THE POUM, LOVESTONE AND THE SPANISH BETRAYAL



LENINIST LEAGUE U S A
Box 67 Station D
New York



STALINISM AND THE BETRAYAL OF THE SPANISH MASSES

* * * * *

Victory was possible for the Spanish workers and peasants before and even after Franco launched the Fascist rebellion. The system of semi-feudal imperialism has been long obsolete, rotten-ripe for overthrow. The workers of Spain have developed a high degree of class-consciousness. They have been and are eager to abolish the outworn social and economic fabric of the exploiters and establish collectivized production under the revolutionary rule of the toilers themselves. The peasantry, too, in recent years has been ready to unite with the proletariat in the struggle against the capitalists and the landlords. But despite their overwhelming numbers, their strategic position in Spanish society, their sturdy revolutionary spirit of self-sacrifice, heroic deeds and unshakable faith in their cause, the toilers of Spain have met with the bloodiest fate in the history of the working class.

Why? What has been fatal in the situation that has sealed the fate of the Spanish revolution?

Every honest worker who is devoted to the cause of his class is duty-bound to make a searching inquiry into the underlying reasons for the appalling catastrophe. He must examine in detail the policies that have been laid down for the Spanish workers and peasants by the organization he supports. Next, he must examine dispassionately, with an open mind, the policies other organizations have introduced or advocated for Spain. He who sincerely wants to get to the bottom of the great tragedy will not accept flimsy explanations or half-truths but will seek to make plain to himself and to other workers the basic reasons that have made the victory of Fascism possible. Every worker must ask himself "Has the policy of my organization been correct for the workingclass?"

What can serve the workers as a guiding light in their attempt to find the precise answer to this all-important question?

The most eminent leaders and teachers of the proletariat, Marx, Engels and Lenin, through long and careful study of the experience of the proletariat in its struggle against its enemies hammered out their minute analysis into a scientifically correct policy which alone can insure victory for the toilers. Along with laying down the strategy and tactics for the workingclass, these great revolutionists found it necessary to warn the workers against certain possible dangers, errors and snares. A false policy throws the advantage in the struggle to the bourgeoisie, inviting disaster; and a well-disguised trap definitely dooms the revolutionary vanguard to physical destruction and sets back the forces that struggle for the abolition of capitalism.

When in April 1931 upon the flight of Alfonso XIII Spain became a bourgeois-parliamentary republic every worker sufficiently versed in politics knew that such a republic could not endure in the presence of an advanced workingclass. The fire that the Bolsheviks kindled in October 1917 in the East of Europe would now flare up in the West. A second Workers State was about to issue out of the womb of the dying capitalist society.

Oddly enough, those at the head of the first Workers State, instead of greeting this glorious perspective with an outburst of inspiring enthusiasm that would echo throughout the entire world, showed evidence of coolness and even discomfort as mirrored in the Soviet press:

"The first Soviet comment on the events in Spain appears in the leading editorial in the newspaper PRAVDA today, but the or-

Diverting the eyes of the masses from the Fascist danger, the leadership of the Comintern laid down the line of directing the main blow against Social democracy, "Social Fascism":

"Therefore, to beat the enemy, the bourgeoisie, we must direct the main blow against its chief social bulwark, against the chief enemy of Communism in the working class, against Social Democracy against Social Fascism." (T. Gussev, The Communist International, No. 19, October 15, 1932, p.674. Our emphasis.)

And the official organ of the Comintern recorded the order of the Executive of the Comintern to the effect that the Communists must throw all the resources of the party into the struggle against Social Democracy:

"All the resources of the party must be thrown into the fight against Social Democracy." (The Communist International, July 1931, No. 25-26, p. 1154. Our emphasis.)

The revolutionary situation was dragging on, growing more acute. The landlords and capitalists were ever less disposed to yield up their power and privileges. The government was introducing reactionary measures, suppressing strikes and jailing workers. In October the masses rose in insurrection, which was crushed with rare ferocity by General Franco and the professional cutthroats of the Foreign Legion. The workers failed primarily because of the vacillation and opportunism of their leaders, Socialists and Anarcho-Syndicalists, and confusion caused by the Communist Party's policy of directing the main blow against Social Democracy.

Spanish Fascism, however, had not yet consolidated its strength to establish its dictatorship, while the workers had not suffered a decisive defeat. Crucial struggles were in the offing.

THE PEOPLE'S FRONT GOVERNMENT AND THE FINAL PREPARATIONS OF THE FASCISTS

Some time after the rise of Fascism in Germany the leaders of the Comintern changed their line. The German Communist Party had pursued an ultra-Leftist line of putschism and "Social Fascism" - "we ought to direct our main offensive against Social democracy" (Kuusinen, Prepare for Power, p. 105), and diverted the attention of the German workers from the danger of Fascism: "It may seem that in Germany, at the present time, for example, the chief social bulwark of the bourgeoisie is Fascism, and that, therefore, we should deal the chief blows against Fascism. This is not correct." (T. Gussev, The Communist International, No. 19, October 15, 1932, p. 674. Our emphasis), The Comintern, at the Seventh Congress, officially inaugurated the ultra-Rightist line, since the workers showed bitter disappointment, even resentment, over the line that brought Hitler. The policy during the ultra-Leftist swang was, No united front with the Social Democratic leaders and exposure of the Socialist leaders as betrayers of the revolution: "The Socialist Party and the trade union led by it faithfully serve the bourgeoisie and betray the revolution." (J. Dornier, "The Revolutionary Wave in Spain," INPFCORR, January 12, 1933, pp. 29-30). Now the leaders of the Comintern were out for a united front with the "Social Fascists" and warned the Communist Party members against any attempt to unmask the treacherous petty-bourgeois Social Democracy: "... We must reject sharply all attempts in our ranks to treat the united front as a formal arrangement, as a recruiting device for the Communist Party, as an opportunity to unmask the Social-Democratic lead-

ers." (W. Pieck, DAILY WORKER, January 7, 1936. Our emphasis.)

Borrowing from the Mensheviks and Social Democrats the opportunist policy of participation in a coalition government with the liberal bourgeoisie, the Seventh Congress of the Comintern laid down the line of People's Front. The Communist Party of Spain, now a considerable force, sponsored the formation of the People's Front which won the election in February 1936 and established the People's Front Government.

The supposed bulwark against reaction, the People's Front Government, maintained the entire reactionary apparatus of the preceding Republican government. It maintained the old army with its landlord, monarchist and Fascist generals, including the butcher of the Asturian miners, General Francisco Franco. It went so far in its anti-workingclass policy as to maintain the band of hired murderers, the Spanish Foreign Legion.

The peasants and the workers, although under the corroding influence of its opportunist leaders, soon began to feel that in so far as the problem of agrarian revolution, of socialization of property, or independence of Morocco, this new Republican government basically was no different than its predecessors. It brought no escape from drabness, destitution and capitalist exploitation. The only distinction, it seemed, was that the People's Front Government received the unreserved support of virtually all the parties of the Left, especially of the Communist Party. This party now with a membership of over a hundred thousand, and with influence, owing to the fact that it was backed by the leadership of the Soviet Union, far outweighing its numerical strength, had cast overboard its putchism, "Social Fascism" together with the correct slogan of Soviets and proletarian revolution. It became the main driving force of People's Frontism and the champion of bourgeois democracy.

Before the introduction of the ultra-Rightist People's Frontism the leaders of the Comintern to a marked degree exposed the fraud of bourgeois democracy. Earl Browder, although interspersing his work with ultra-Leftist phrases about "Social Fascism", wrote quite correctly that bourgeois democracy is not the destroyer but the mother of Fascism:

"What are the ideas, the misconceptions, with which the social-fascists confuse and disarm the workers? First, is the idea that fascism is the opposite of capitalist democracy, and this democracy is therefore the means of combating and defeating fascism. This false idea serves a double purpose. By means of counterposing 'democracy against dictatorship' it tries to hide the fact that the capitalist 'democracy' is only a form of the capitalist dictatorship; it tries to identify in the worker's mind the fascist dictatorship with the proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union, and thus cause the worker to reject the road of revolution. At the same time, this slogan is used to hide the fact that capitalist democracy is not the enemy, but the mother of fascism; that it is not the destroyer, but the creator of fascism. It uses the truth that fascism destroys democracy, to propagate the falsehood that democracy will also destroy fascism." (Earl Browder, Report to the Eighth Convention, Communism in the United States, p. 28. Our emphasis.)

While the surging tide of the toiling masses continued in the direction of seizure of bourgeois property, the People's Front Government served the Fascists as a convenient screen behind which they were feverishly making their final preparations. The well-known publication of the Comintern, the International

Press Correspondence, had this to report two weeks before the Fascist uprising:

"The big landlords, the industrialists, the desperadoes of the Phalanx and the 'japistic' gangs of Gil Robles would not be so bold, perhaps, did they not sense the continued existence of the monarchistic forces behind the power and order of the Republic.

"...During the two years rule of Lerroux and Gil Robles a fascist bureaucracy was built up - and it is not dead yet. The Director of the Treasury is none other than Primo de Rivera....the President of the Committee for Culture is still the man who proposed a vote of congratulation to the Civil Guard, after October, upon their 'heroism' in Asturias. The Republican Ministers are surrounded by their old officialdom, which paralyzes their efforts. Within the offices of the administration lurk countless enemies.....

"And the question of the Army: almost every officer is either a fascist or (more often) a monarchist." ("Secrets of Spain," Inprecorr, July 4, 1936, p. 831.)

The People's Front Government, throwing every advantage to reaction, allowed the Fascists to use churches as arsenals. It removed the liberal governor of Oviedo for criticising the Fascists. It was informed that Franco in the War Ministry conducted selective recruiting of Fascist elements into the army. It was aware of the immense and heightened activity of the Fascists throughout the country, in Madrid, in the Guadarama Mountains. "Thanks to previously constructed fortifications and entrenchments, the Fascists have been able to retain strategic points in the Guadarrama Mountains." (Harry Gannes, Daily Worker, August 4, 1936). "Before launching his rebellion, Franco and his fellow-officers took care to remove military medical stocks from Madrid on the pretext of maneuvers in the north..." (Pierre Van Paassen, Daily Worker, October 7, 1936).

The leader of the Spanish Communist Party, Diaz, admitted that preparations had been completed before the People's Front parliamentary victory, and were reinforced and intensified after the elections:

"Then came the putsch of July 18th which surprised no one. Preparations had already been completed before the elections, particularly during the time that Gil Robles was Minister of War. They were reinforced and intensified after the elections." (Le Populaire, September 8, 1936. Our emphasis.)

When Franco had concluded his preparations he struck for power.

Fearing the proletariat more than they feared Fascism, the government leaders in this hour of great emergency hesitated to take steps for the suppression of the Fascist rebellion. It was the workers, in the face of the sabotage of President Azana and other People's Front government leaders, who broke into arsenals, seized arms and dashed upon the Fascists:

"The key to an understanding of events in Spain is the fact that, in the four great cities of Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia and Malaga, where the rebellion was suppressed, the suppression was accomplished not by government troops or by the Civil Guards, but by armed workers." (Walter Duranty, The New York Times, Sept. 17, 1936.)

The workers captured San Sabastian from the Fascists and occupied Toledo, laying siege to its fortress Alcazar. Cordoba, Saragossa, Oviedo and other towns, held by the Fascists, were besieged. "Incredibly" enough in the face of

the supreme importance of vigorous and sustained action against the Fascists, thousands of Asturian miners, armed with dynamite, were held back for some time from attacking the Fascist stronghold in Oviedo (New York Times, August 17, 1937). It was the People's Front Government, through its dilatory tactics and sheer sabotage, that saved the Fascists and made the situation run progressively worse. Azana stubbornly resisted the arming of the workers and peasants who acted independently and were in no mood to compromise with capitalism. "He is known to have been strongly opposed to the arming of the populace" (The New York Times, September 26, 1936).

The government air force was immense compared with Franco's, outnumbering it twelve to one. The People's Front government would not send the air fleet to attack the Fascists under the pretext that it could not trust its aviators:

"MADRID SAID TO DISTRUST MEN IN THE AIR FORCE
FEAR OF DESERTIONS LIMITS ATTACKS BY PLANE

"Were it not for this lack of confidence, military tacticians point out, whole squadrons of planes could be thrown against enemy strongholds to end the revolt. 'At present,' one flier at Barajas airport, here, was quoted, 'there are three planes for every flier who would be completely trustworthy.'

"Many Russians, Polish and Mexican fliers have offered their services, it was said, but the government professes reluctance to employ them because international complications might result." (The New York Times, August 18, 1936.)

An outstanding Socialist leader, Indalicio Prieto, an ardent backer of the People's Front, approved Premier Giral's refusal to order the bombardment of the Alcazar. Prieto admitted that after the rebellion had broken out the People's Front Government did not employ its forces to the full extent:

"The government forces,' he continued, 'have not been used up to now to their full efficiency, as would have been done in case of a foreign invasion. I take as a typical example that of Toledo, where a group of rebel officers is entrenched. It would have been very easy for one of our bombing planes to blow up the Alcazar, but our enemies are Spaniards, as we are, and this palace is one of our most precious art treasures.'" (The New York Times, August 4, 1936. Our emphasis.)

"Our enemies are Spaniards, as we are." This is how the Socialist Prieto regarded the most rabid enemies of the workers, the bloodthirsty butcher Franco, the Fascist cutthroats and bandits! Prieto at that time was Minister of Air in Largo Caballero's Cabinet. What would Lenin and the Bolsheviks have done with a "Commissar" who had the chance but refused to strike a death blow at the White Guards and proclaimed that the savage enemies of the workers and peasants "are Russians, as we are"? Without a shadow of a doubt such a treacherous agent of Russian imperialism would have been severely dealt with by the Red Tribunal. The Socialist, Indalicio Prieto, having revealed his true sentiment was put in charge of conducting the war against Fascism. That in part accounts for the grave consequences.

Prior to Franco's rebellion the People's Front Government had performed one half of its service to Fascism. Now it was performing the other half. Being caught between two fires, the People's Front Government sought to stifle the one it dreaded most, the fire from the Left. It checked the incredible independent energy of the workers, at the same time adopting a feeble and flabby

attitude towards Fascism. This saved Franco.

Utilizing the golden opportunity, Franco rushed up reinforcements from Morocco, while a steadily swelling stream of war supplies was pouring into his camp from Mussolini and Hitler. Thanks to the sabotage of the People's Front Government, Franco's rebellion gained a gigantic momentum.

In France, the head of the People's Front Government, Socialist Blum, together with the representatives of British imperialism, organized a "Non-Intervention Committee", in reality a transparent smoke screen behind which Mussolini and Hitler could rush still more effective assistance to Franco. Stalin's representatives, instead of exposing this "non-intervention" smoke screen, joined in, and gave moral sanction to an official embargo upon shipments of arms to Loyalist Spain:

"SOVIET BANS ARMS FOR SPAIN"

"The Commissariat of Foreign Trade issued tonight an order prohibiting the shipment of munitions to Spain. The decree forbade the export, re-export or transit to Spain of all kinds of arms, munitions, war materials, airplanes and warships. It was effective as of last Friday." (The New York Times, August 31, 1936.)

In practice it meant that henceforth war supplies shipped to the Spanish "democracy," being bootleg goods, commanded a higher price; the Republican Government being prevented from securing loans and credits abroad, was compelled, therefore, to part with its immense gold reserve.

Franco's Foreign Legionnaires and Moors advanced rapidly and soon approached the gates of Madrid. The People's Front Government, seeing death threatening from the fire from the Right hastened to organize the defense.

It is this two-faced treacherous policy of the liberals, and Socialist and "Communist" opportunists who were torn between the desire of stopping Fascism and the dread of vanquishing Fascism that made the ultimate victory of reaction a certainty. There followed brief partial victories over Franco alternating with catastrophic defeats of the Loyalists, with Franco conquering one province of Spain after another.

The military defense of "democracy" and, presumably of the interests of the workers and peasants, was entrusted to bourgeois officers.

How "loyal" to the Republic and to the workers were the Republican officers, monarchists and Fascists most of them, and everyone an enemy of the proletariat? "The government's most secret military plans reach the rebels almost as soon as they are issued." (New York World Telegram, October 29, 1936.) The Daily Worker admitted that the fall of Malaga was due to the sell-out by the Republican command. When Franco detailed a large section of his army north, to the Basque and Asturian fronts, one would expect logically, that the Loyalist armies in the East would launch a furious attack to relieve the pressure. The Loyalist army was kept inactive. Only when Franco was in a position to transfer his troops from the North, the Loyalist command, to allay the growing suspicions of the workers, ordered an offensive. The Loyalist generals were always too late. Even in the last months of the war the sabotage went on. The dams near Lerida, key to Barcelona, were dynamited when the Fascists had already taken necessary precautions

"Had the dams been dynamited forty-eight hours earlier the result might have been more costly to the rebels." (World Telegram, March 31, 1938.)

The Comintern's "strange" policy was becoming "stranger". Lenin's warning against support of bourgeois democracy was completely "forgotten". Only two or three years earlier the workers were told, and quite correctly, that "the defense of bourgeois democracy is advanced for the purpose of maintaining the capitalist dictatorship as against the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat" (THE COMMUNIST, April 1933), that "democracy" under the capitalist system "is a set of forms to mask the dictatorship of the capitalist class..." (Wm. Z. Foster, THE WORKERS MONTHLY, Nov. 1924, p. 9). Now the government of Wall Street imperialism, the workers were told, is committed to democracy. "The United States government is committed to democracy. Let it show that in its stand on Spain." (Daily Worker, August 18, 1936.)

Plainly, the leaders of the Comintern laid down a line for preserving capitalist dictatorship in Spain. To forestall the rise of Soviets and make certain that proletarian revolution is frustrated, the leaders raised the slogan of single authority - the bourgeoisie:

"The Communist slogan of a single authority - the government - has been put into practice by strict loyalty first to the bourgeois democratic cabinet and now to the Largo Caballero government....." (S. Marion, Daily Worker, December 10, 1936.)

All those who spoke of the need of establishing Soviets and proletarian power as the only means of defeating fascism, expressing the very things advocated by the Stalinists for Spain only two years before, were rabidly denounced and attacked as aiding Franco:

"The people of Spain are not fighting to establish Soviets; or the proletarian dictatorship. Only downright scoundrels, or misguided self-styled 'Lefts' declare that they are - and both combine to help the aim of the fascist rebels. The struggle in Spain is for the maintenance of democracy and free constitution...." (Harry Pollitt, Inprecorr, August 8, 1936. p. 959.)

And yet only a brief time ago an outstanding leader of the Comintern made the following incontrovertible statement:

"The Communist workers who struggle against the bourgeois republic and bourgeois democracy for proletarian democracy are doing more to bar the path to fascism than all the social-democratic party with its daily declamations about 'democracy'." (D. Z. Manuilsky, Social Democracy - Stepping Stone to Fascism, p. 46.)

And the leaders of the Comintern showed that the one who does not decide for proletarian power in Spain is consciously promoting the cause of Franco:

"Mr. Vandervelde thereby admits that the choice is between the dictatorship of the proletariat or fascist reaction. It follows, therefore that he who does not decide in favor of the dictatorship of the proletariat consciously promotes the cause of fascism.

"It is hardly necessary to say that the whole of Vandervelde's article is devoted to defending the Spanish social democracy, this most bitter enemy of the dictatorship of the proletariat, this stirrup-holder of fascist reaction." (Inprecorr, December 15th, 1933, p. 1242.)

The cold and tragic fact is that the present leaders of the Soviet Union and the Comintern are deliberately knifing the international proletarian revo-

lution. The reasons for this are to be sought in the post-Leninist developments in the Soviet Union: A conspiracy on the part of Stalin, Zinoviev, Kamenev and other leaders to secure personal power; elimination of Workers' Democracy and the transformation of Stalin the revolutionist into a formidable personal dictator whose power is based upon a huge bureaucratic pyramid; the need of protecting the vital independent interests of the bureaucracy by means of stifling every attempt on the part of the masses in capitalist countries to free themselves and establish genuine proletarian democracy which would cause the Russian workers to remove from their backs the renegade Stalin and his bureaucracy. (See STALIN, TROTSKY or LENIN by George Marlen.)

Luxuriously covering their well-calculated betrayals with Communist-sounding phrases, the Stalinists with deadly accuracy strangled the German revolution in 1932, the Chinese revolution a few years earlier. In Spain, where the Stalinists have been working in close cooperation with Social Democracy, their ghastly game has culminated in purest horror for the toiling masses.

It is through their political line that the Stalinists deprive the workers of the opportunity to smash the bourgeoisie. The Stalinist bureaucrats cannot plead ignorance, mistakes. They are consciously betraying the toiling masses, since they know precisely what the workers must do to forestall Fascism:

"To be victorious, the revolution in all its forms, must be under the leadership of the proletariat." (Harry Gannes, SOVIETS IN SPAIN, p. 27.)

"Today the proletariat knows from its own experience that only under the flag of the Soviets can it conquer." (Ibid., p. 46.)

"It is impossible to fight Fascism without fighting against all forms of bourgeois dictatorship, against all its reactionary measures which pave the way to the Fascist dictatorship. All this means firstly that the fight against Fascism calls for the systematic exposure of the deception of Social-democracy which conceals the counter-revolutionary character of the bourgeois dictatorship with phrases about 'democracy'" (D. Z. Manuilsky, INPRECORR, June 10, 1931, pp. 548-549.)

"The only final guarantee against Fascism, the only final wiping out of the cause of Fascism, is the victory of the proletarian dictatorship." (R. Palme Dutt, FASCISM AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION, p. X.)

Executing their carefully-conceived plan with machine-like precision, these treacherous renegades and Judases blocked every avenue through which independent workers' action might burst forth. For example. The Stalinist bureaucrats realized that the Italian workers, many of whom were sent by Mussolini to fight in Franco's ranks, might assert themselves and attempt to resist both Spanish and Italian Fascism. To disarm the Italian workers ideologically, Stalin's crafty agents poured pernicious pro-Fascist poison into the minds of the Italian masses:

"Let us reach our hands to each other, children of the Italian nation, Fascists and Communists, Catholics and Socialists, people of all opinions, and let us march side by side to enforce the right of existence of the citizens of a civilized country, as ours is. We have the same ambition - to make Italy strong, free and happy." (Reconciliation of the Italian People for the Salvation of Italy," (INPRECORR, August 22, 1936, p. 1026.)

The Stalinist bureaucrats have been in the forefront among the betrayers of the Spanish masses. They were leading the campaign of persecution and assassination of revolutionary workers. The P.O.U.M., which, though in words was for proletarian revolution, in action was hardly a menace to capitalism, was viciously set upon by the Stalinists who imprisoned and murdered its members.

To cover up their dastardly betrayal the Stalinist bureaucrats explain that the defeat of the Spanish masses is due to the assistance Hitler and Mussolini have given to Franco. Nothing is more fraudulent than this explanation. The criminal policy the Stalinists pursued made the defeat of the Spanish masses a foregone conclusion even in the event Franco had not received a single cartridge from Hitler and Mussolini. It must be borne in mind that the victory of the poorly equipped, ragged and hungry Red Army in Russia, despite the fact that the entire imperialist world, frantic in the face of the Bolshevik danger, sent truly enormous stocks of war materials to the White armies of Kolchak, Yudenich, Denikin and Wrangel, was secured primarily because the Red soldiers carried on their bayonets the revolutionary program of Leninism. It was this program of freedom of oppressed nationalities, land to the peasantry, factories to the workers that disintegrated the peasant armies of the White generals, causing their soldiers almost en masse to go over to the Reds, that produced mutinies among the British, French, American and other intervention troops and smashed the tightest blockade in all modern history.

The Spanish workers and peasants were within the reach of their historical goal. They fought as valiantly as had the Russian masses. But unlike the Russian masses who battled against capitalist dictatorship in all its forms, the misled Spanish toilers fundamentally fought to maintain over their heads capitalist dictatorship disguised by their betrayers with mendacious phrases about democracy; and for this "cause" they were forced to sacrifice over a million of their best fighters.

The Russian workers and peasants attacking the evil at its roots, were led by Lenin who in the most ruthless fashion exposed "the hypocrisy of bourgeois democracy," stressing the profound truth that "the more democracy is developed, the more do the bourgeois parliaments fall under the control of the Stock Exchange and the bankers" (KAUTSKY THE RENEGADE, p. 25). Lenin saved the Russian toilers from the "democratic" trap which the Mensheviks and the West European Socialists set up for the international proletariat. He and those who then stood with him on the same platform - Trotsky, Stalin and others, revolutionists at that time but opportunists and misleaders of the proletariat since Lenin was removed by illness and death - instilled in the Russian masses a fiery determination to destroy Kerensky's bourgeois-democratic republic and the White Armies and the intervention of "great democracies," all representing the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and establish the Russian Soviet Republic, the first Workers' State.

Unlike the Russian masses, the Spanish toilers were "led" (betrayed) by nefarious, contemptibly shabby, wavering liberals, Socialists and Anarcho-syndicalists, the Azanas and Caballeros, also perhaps by a few naive and hopelessly confused petty-bourgeois idealists, but primarily by the Diazes and Hernandezes, by the corrupt, treacherous, degenerate agents of renegade Stalin, the worst enemies in the camp of the workingclass.

Had there arisen in time - prior to or even in the early months of the Fascist rebellion - a Leninist Party, the veil that shrouds the mainspring of the Stalinist policy of ultra-Left "Social Fascism", putchism and ultra-Right People's Frontism and "organic unity", would have been torn off. With the

simultaneous exposure of Social Democracy and other opportunist currents, the toiling millions, indomitable in their revolutionary zeal and enthusiasm, would have organized workers', peasants' and soldiers' Soviets, would have crushed the Fascist reptile in its infancy together with the hypocritical imperialist "republic of the workers of all classes" and would have established the Spanish Soviet Republic.

The rise of a second proletarian State would have been a harbinger of new hope to the exploited workers and peasants in all capitalist countries, a brightening horizon to the groaning Jews trampled upon by the military boot of the vile Nazis and of other bandits to the oppressed Negroes, to the entire downtrodden world of exploitation and misery. The Russian workers, revitalized, would have shaken off their backs the Stalinist bureaucratic vampire and would have established a Workers' Democracy as was Lenin's program (The Communist Party Program adopted in 1919, and the resolution on Workers' Democracy of the Tenth Party Congress, Spring 1921). The flames of the Spanish proletarian revolution would have ignited France, perhaps Germany where a workers' revolution is perilously overdue, and possibly Italy. History would have sounded the long-delayed death-knell of the capitalist society.

* * * * *

II

TROTSKYISM AND THE BETRAYAL OF THE SPANISH MASSES

At the time of the inauguration of the Republic the Trotskyite forces were greater than the Stalinist and, as is admitted even by so staunch a Stalinist as Harry Gannes in his SPAIN IN REVOLT, p. 214, Trotsky's influence in Spain for some time exceeded that of the Comintern's.

What did Trotsky do with his forces and his influence in Spain? What course did he pursue? Did he follow the Leninist policy of uncompromising struggle against all opportunism? Did he expose Stalinism in all its murderous treachery and warn the Spanish workers to break with it on peril of disaster? Did he constitute his own group as the nucleus for a new Communist Party?

Trotsky's policies were rooted in his anti-Leninist position he had taken with regards to Stalinism when Lenin was struggling with death ("I am against removing Stalin" etc. Leon Trotsky, MY LIFE) Instead of calling for a clear break with the Stalinist bureaucrats Trotsky adopted a perfectly utopian line of "correcting" the usurper Stalin and his flunkys, assigning to his followers the function of "Marxist" tutors of the Comintern. With a naivete which is almost incredible, ten days after the overthrow of Alfonso, Trotsky wrote a letter to Stalin and the clique of bureaucrats in Moscow, urging them to make an "honest attempt" to form a united front - when the truth of the matter was that crooked Stalin could not act honestly, and what more, united front or no united front, Stalin had to betray the Spanish revolution to safeguard his bureaucratic regime in the Soviet Union. Trotsky wrote in part:

"The profound differences on a series of questions pertaining to the U.S.S.R. and the world labor movement, should not stand in the way of making an honest attempt at a united front in the arena of the Spanish revolution. It is not yet too late! The policy of artificial splits must be stopped immediately in Spain." (L. Trotsky, The Spanish Revolution in Danger, p. 39.)

This letter furnishes a perfect illustration of Trotsky's hopeless delusion concerning Stalinism. He completely failed to grasp that Stalin had a planned purpose in the systematic purging of the Party, tightening more and more his control over it. Making appeals to Stalin to take the initiative in bringing about "Communist unity" Trotsky helped Stalin's puppets to gain confidence among the workers. Overloaded with self-deception, Trotsky tirelessly continued spreading fatal illusions. Instead of warning the proletariat against the shrewd, gifted and astute agents of Stalin he depicted them as stupid, some of them controlled by no one. "The American Stalinists excel all the others. It is difficult to imagine the Herculean pillars of vulgarity and stupidity which officials, who get paid for it and whom nobody controls, are capable of talking themselves into." (Ibid., p. 6.)

Stalin's criminal machinations, Trotsky informed the workers, were "mistakes," from which Stalin's capable and intelligent bureaucrats were "incapable of learning." "The leaders of the Comintern have learned nothing from their own mistakes." (Ibid., p. 6)

His followers imbibed his confusion and adjudged Stalin's cunning ultra-Leftist line as stupidity. "The official Spanish Communist Party is always ready to commit stupidities without taking into account the situation....The Party leadership issues empty slogans 'for the immediate insurrection,' without a party, without Soviets, without a workingclass prepared for the struggle." (Militant, July 4, 1931, p. 2.)

Absorbed in a daydream, Trotsky stuffed the head of the outstanding leader of the Spanish Trotskyites, Andres Nin, with childish notions regarding the Stalinists. The Comintern and therefore its Spanish section was to be won over to Trotsky's side:

"....We have not renounced the idea of winning to our side, the Comintern, and consequently each of its sections. It has always appeared to me that many comrades have underestimated the possibility of the development of the official Communist party in Spain." (L. Trotsky, Militant, November 14, 1931.)

An independent revolutionary party fighting to unmask and drive out the Stalinist impostors was out of the question with Trotsky. The "correct" line was "to avoid the danger of a second party." He suggested to Nin the following method of working in the direction of achieving unity with Stalinism:

"A local organization of the Opposition numbering 20 members can assemble about it 2 to 30 sympathizers. In this circle of sympathizers, it will be necessary to clear up the difference between Leninism and Centrism. After the circle has reached a certain level under our direction, it can invite representatives of the official party to present its views before it. On this basis a discussion will arise between our followers and the Stalinists. Only this will bring about a serious reconciliation between the Left Opposition and the party." (Leon Trotsky, Militant, November 14, 1931.)

But all the strenuous efforts to "correct" Stalinism, to induce it to listen to "reason," proved futile. Max Schachtman to his chagrin had to admit in the Militant, Feb. 13, 1932, that "the official party obdurately refuses to adopt the slogan and tactic advocated by the Left Opposition."

On the other hand, many class-conscious workers of Spain, repelled by the

ultra-Leftist antics of the Stalinists, tended in the direction of Trotsky's Left Opposition. In a letter from Madrid, a Trotskyist, Lecroix, wrote:

"Today the Communist Left Opposition is the organization toward which the most conscious proletariat of Spain turns its eyes. A large current of working class opinion is making its way toward us, putting its faith in the Communist Left Opposition of Spain. The responsibility of our organization in this historical moment is the responsibility of the real Communist party of Spain, of the genuine vanguard of the Spanish proletariat." (Militant, April 16, 1932.)

But Trotsky's authoritative finger pointed inexorably in the direction of Stalin's machine of counter-revolution as the only engine which, set upon the Marxist rails by the Trotskyites, would bring the Spanish proletarian masses to power.

There came the consummation of the Stalinist-Socialist betrayal of the German proletariat in January 1933. When tested by reality, Trotsky's line in Germany, identical with that in Spain, proved completely and glaringly bankrupt. Trotsky beat a retreat. He covered up his political bankruptcy with flimsy explanations which bore a strong resemblance to Stalinist tricks: "We never promised anybody that we would cure the Comintern" (The Soviet Union and the Fourth International, p. 8).

But Trotsky arrived at the conclusion for the Fourth International in a half-hearted fashion. He still clung to the Comintern, except for Germany:

"If other sections of the Comintern will learn the German lesson, they may rightfully deserve leniency of history. Otherwise they are doomed. In this way, the march of history gives to the other sections still some additional time to reconsider. We, the Left Opposition, are only the historic interpreter of the march of development. That is why we do not break with the Third International." (The Militant, May 6, 1933.)

But this absurd position of having one foot marching toward independence and the other limping behind Stalin's Comintern could not continue. The contradiction had to be dissolved. Trotsky dropped the policy of uniting with Stalin and came out for the Fourth International.

Stalinism was shelving its ultra-Left line and was zigzagging toward the ultra-Right -- the purpose being one and the same, to prevent proletarian revolution. "Social fascism" was taken out of circulation, the fake of "organic unity" with Social Democracy was introduced. The thought of "organic unity" with the putrid and treacherous Social Democracy which had been selling out the workers for two decades was repugnant to many a Communist worker. The need for white-washing Social Democracy was keen but Stalinism was not brazen enough to do so in an abrupt fashion. There suddenly came assistance to Stalin from a quarter one could least expect -- from Trotsky.

Trotsky's position on Social Democracy was correct when he dropped his Left Centrist vacillations and accepted Lenin's full position. On numerous occasions Trotsky and his followers made it plain that "Both Fascism and the social democracy are tools in the hands of the bourgeoisie" (L. Trotsky, WHAT NEXT, p. 59). In the appeal for the Fourth International printed in the Militant, March 31, 1934, the Trotskyites spoke clear Leninist words on Social Democracy:

"Is it possible to reform or renew the Second International, pervaded by crimes and treacheries? The war and all post-war events answer: 'No!'...Social Democracy is devoted in body and soul to the bourgeois regime." And six-and-a-half months earlier Max Shachtman, in the Militant, September 9, 1933, declared: "The day of miracles having passed, it is futile to look toward the Second International for a genuine progressive movement."

Suddenly, with one stroke of his pen Trotsky in a most shameful manner revised Lenin's teachings on Social Democracy. He introduced the following new thesis:

"The destiny of the proletariat depends, in large measure, in our epoch, upon the resolute manner with which the social democracy will succeed in the brief interval which is vouchsafed it by the march of development, in breaking with the bourgeois state, in transforming itself and in preparing itself for the decisive struggle against Fascism." (The New International, September-October, 1934. Our emphasis.)

This aided the Stalinists to cover up their People's Frontism and their fraudulent twaddle about "organic unity" with Social Democracy. In Spain, where Trotskyite literature was widespread, this pro-Socialist poison of the Trotskyites attained a far-reaching application. It helped to draw the workers towards the Social Democracy upon whom the destiny of the proletariat now depended "in large measure." The Trotskyites went a step further in their brazen adulteration of Bolshevism and made the impudent assertion that the "Second International," "reformism," are abstractions, dividing Social democracy into two sections: one section serving the bourgeoisie and the other participating in the revolution against the bourgeoisie:

"To satisfy oneself with abstractions - 'reformism', 'second international' - is to ignore or blur the difference between a social democracy which constitutes the power of the bourgeoisie, and a social democracy which participates in a revolution against the bourgeoisie." (Resolution on the French Turn, approved by the October Enlarged Plenum of the L.C.I. (B.L.)).

The abandonment of Lenin's thesis on Social Democracy was not a minor error that would soon pass. Having substituted subjectivism for an objective analysis, Trotsky bade his followers to join the Second International. Many of them refused and broke with him, including Andres Nin. Those who accepted his grossly misleading confusion and distortion about Social Democracy began to dish out the most revolting fakery which played directly into the hands of Stalin, of his liberal and Socialist allies and Spanish capitalism. The Trotskyites said: "If with us in Spain, the unification which is being achieved predominantly around the socialist party, has a progressive value, this is due to the present attitude of the S.P., which is inspiring increasing confidence." (The New International, November 1934.) Thus the day of miracles is here again. Social democracy is furnishing the proletariat with progressive values. And a Trotskyist "expert" on Spain, Felix Morrow, wrote the following

"Precisely because they had been so ideologically dependent on the Kautskys and Bauers, the fall of their teachers enabled the Spanish socialists to make an extraordinary sharp break with their past.. With the Socialist Party ready to struggle, the fight against fascism was enormously facilitated, indeed it is not too much to say that only the leftward turn of the Socialist Party made possible, under the existing conditions, the victory over fascism...In their

partial struggle against the fascist menace however, the Socialists acquitted themselves magnificently." (Felix Morrow, *The Civil War in Spain*, pp. 28, 29, 30. Our emphasis.)

This soothing opium was given the workers at the time when the Fascists were sweeping towards Madrid. That is how the Trotskyites covered up the treacherous Socialist betrayers who fought against the formation of Soviets and against the struggle for the overthrow of Spanish capitalism - the only possible means of destroying Fascism.

Lenin constantly emphasized that Left Socialists are fundamentally not different from their brothers on the Right. What unites these pseudo-Marxists is their common rejection of the Marxian conception of the State and of Marx's thesis expounded in his Critique of the Gotha Program that "Between Capitalist and Communist society there lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the former into the latter. To this also corresponds a political transition period, in which the state can be no other than the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat." In a sense the Left Socialists are even more dangerous to the workers, Lenin pointed out, because they cover their support to the bourgeois State with "revolutionary" phrases. Trotsky and his followers at one time fully shared this Marxist view. Having distorted the true image of Social Democracy, the Trotskyites engage in the filthy work of supplying a "revolutionary" cloak to the Left Socialists. Felix Morrow, adjusting reality to Trotsky's adulterated "Leninism," denounced the former Trotskyist group in the P.O.U.M.:

"In order to justify its refusal to enter the Socialist Party, as Trotsky proposed, and thereby throw its forces - numbering only a few thousand even according to its own estimates - on the side of the left wing, it refused to see the profound significance of the development of the left wing. In fact, in La Batalla of May 22nd, it denied that there was any real difference between the left and right wings." (Felix Morrow, *The Civil War in Spain*, p. 46.)

But if Trotsky slid to an opportunist position on the question of Social Democracy, it would be an error to assume that he broke with his glaring misconceptions regarding Stalinism. True, he abandoned his thesis "The Opposition needs no other soil than that of the Communist International. No one will succeed in tearing us away from it" (*The Strategy of the World Revolution*, p. 86). But he and his followers cannot expose Stalinism without exposing Trotsky's role as a direct participant in the demolition of Lenin's Party and in building up the Stalinist bureaucratic regime (See *In Defense of Bolshevism* #3). Trotsky's entire course of conscious (1922-1926) and unconscious support of Stalinism must be carefully hushed up. The costly lesson of Germany where Stalin with Trotsky's objective support ("all eyes to the Communist Party of Germany" etc.) accomplished his ulterior aim must not be taught to the workers.

Trotsky does not explain the true meaning of Stalin's ultra-Left and ultra-Right zigzags, which in reality form one line of policy and are directed to a definite end, that of preventing revolution. To Trotsky the zigzags are

He still, here and there, pictures Stalin as wishing victory for the workers: "In his bureaucratic limitedness he imagined that the 'commissars' by themselves could guarantee victory." (L. Trotsky, *Socialist Appeal*, January 15, 1938.)

Stalin's Comintern broke with Leninism as far back as 1923. It gradually became a highly efficient instrument in the hands of Stalinism - the system of bureaucratic centralism of the workers' State - which employs it within the proletariat for the one and only purpose of preventing the rise of another workers' State. Stalinism must not be confused with Menshevism which is a Russian section of the Second International. Stalin gives "support" to bourgeois democracy only outside the Soviet Union in order to divert the workers from the path of proletarian revolution. But he does that only during his present ultra-Rightist zigzag. The Trotskyites see the whole thing upside down. "...The Seventh Congress which threw Leninism overboard and adopted Menshevism as its guiding philosophy." (Socialist Appeal, October 30, 1937.)

They can even picture Stalin considering the question of liquidating the well-organized force which very efficiently operates within the international proletariat to sustain him in power in the Soviet Union: "There were two main items on the agenda for discussion - or rather, for instruction from the Kremlin.... 2. The possible liquidation of the Comintern, and the necessity of finding a substitute" (Ibid.), thus obscuring the real purpose for the existence of Stalin's Comintern, making it amply clear that the Trotskyites' line stems from imagination and pure wishmaking rather than from a Leninist estimation of concrete reality.

Do. violence to the basic principles of Bolshevism, the Trotskyites have spread fantastic confusion and sheer deception among the Spanish workers and intellectuals. The true nature of every political current within the proletariat, including their own, has been distorted. Trotsky's works packed with ponderous illusions about "correcting" the Stalinist bureaucrats, his two pamphlets on Spain advocating the policy of unity with degenerated Stalinism, one containing his ridiculous message to Stalin entitled "For Communist Unity in Spain. A letter to the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)" were circulated among the masses without a single word of repudiation of the pernicious contents. As a matter of fact, and this is important, Trotsky's flunkies in glowing terms recommended this pro-Stalinist poison to the masses: "Trotsky himself wrote two great pamphlets...No one can understand the dynamics of the Spanish revolution without reading Trotsky's prophetic analysis. On every basic question events have vindicated his writings." (Felix Morrow, The Civil War in Spain. Emphasis ours.) The Trotskyites spread Trotsky's other works containing the most bewildering contradictions; his pamphlets on Germany, in which Trotsky paints Stalin's henchmen not as betrayers and counter-revolutionists, but as mislead revolutionists:

"The social democratic leaders represent the agencies of the class enemy within the proletariat. The Communist leaders, though confused, poor, and incapable, are revolutionists or semi-revolutionists that have been led from the right track. That is not one and the same thing. The Social democracy must be destroyed. The Communist Party must be corrected." (Leon Trotsky, What Next, p.113.)

The mutually negating appraisals of Social Democracy, simultaneously dispelling and instilling confidence, were enough to daze the workers that hopefully turned to Trotskyism for advice and guidance.

While the Anarchists confused Stalinism with Bolshevism, the Trotskyites declared that the Anarchists understood who the Stalinists are: "I can adduce page and chapter to demonstrate that they understood who their Stalinist confederates were." (Felix Morrow, The New International. January, 1938.)

Of one fact one can be sure. The unholy opportunist alliance in Spain led by Stalinism could only draw comfort from the daily parade of such irresponsible drivel.

Stalin's policies in Spain brought victory to him and strengthened his dictatorial regime in the Soviet Union. The liberals and the Socialist bureaucrats, both the Left and the Right suffered a defeat in that their master, Spanish Imperialism, gave them the boot and installed in their place its other tool of power, Fascism. But Trotsky, in the New York Times, December 7, 1937, explained that both the Socialist leaders and Stalin suffered defeat. "The results are evident. Franco did not gain a victory, but Stalin-Negrin suffered a defeat." Which assertion does not carry the stamp of reality.

The agents of Stalin in Spain, having popped into prominence, very skillfully and methodically carried out his policy of disrupting the proletarian revolution. But the Trotskyites, clinging to their silly air of patronizing superiority towards the Stalinists, portray Stalin's carefully selected agents as political milksops who do not know what they are about. Writes the "expert" on Spanish affairs, Morrow:

"But far from becoming more realistic, about this question, this key to the Spanish situation, the Stalinists have lost their heads completely. The false policy pursued by the Stalinists these four months has left them and the Spanish masses more isolated than ever. But the Stalinists behave like men gone mad with desperation and seize at non-existing straws." (Socialist Appeal, December 1936. Our emphasis.)

To camouflage their trap the Stalinist spellbinders, aided by other People's Fronters, raised the demagogic cry "Help Spanish Democracy!" Without this cloak the treachery of the Stalinist policy would have been in full view. Stalinism played safe. With the double-dealing People's Front in the saddle no amount of material help could have saved the Spanish masses whose fate has been sealed by Stalin and by his opportunist allies and world imperialism. It is the political line that is decisive. Although the correct line is by no means a guarantee of victory - it only presents the possibility of victory - an opportunist line makes defeat an absolute certainty.

Bolsheviks hold to the elementary Marxist axiom that the working class must not support a capitalist government. They may form a united front against Fascism with the petty bourgeoisie that supports the bourgeois-democratic government (Lenin's policy during the Kornilov uprising), but they will invariably, while marching together with other classes, preserve intact the independent revolutionary class line of the proletariat. It is incumbent upon revolutionists to expose the hypocrisy of the slogan of material aid as they generally do regarding the hypocrisy of bourgeois charities, Red Cross, societies for prevention of cruelties to children, and other "humane" masks of capitalist slavery.

Instead of exposing the fakery, the Trotskyites worked for Stalinism, putting the workers on a false scent by lending support to the slogan of material aid. They did this, to be sure, with "political criticism." That this "political criticism" was nothing less than another piece of anti-Leninist vandalism can be seen from their new position that in this era of decay of capitalism, bourgeois democracy, buttressed by two powerful pillars of reaction within the workingclass, Stalinism and Social democracy, can conduct a struggle of a socially progressive character:

"...The Government, though carrying out its liquidation of workers' power and its reconsolidation of bourgeois power behind

the lines, was conducting a military struggle of a socially progressive character against the Fascist armies of Franco." (Socialist Appeal, August 14, 1937, p. 3.)

The above citation must be taken apart to show that the Trotskyites from time to time peddle the deceptions and poison about progressiveness of bourgeois democracy that Stalinism during its ultra-Rightist zigzag and Social Democracy at all times employ to divert the workers from the path of struggle against capitalism. Lenin stressed the long-established fact that war is but the continuation of policies pursued during peace but with different means. The People's Front Government reshaped its reactionary policy to fit the changed circumstances. Mindful of the danger to bourgeois and landlord property from the "Red beast," the People's Front Government conducted the "struggle" against the Fascist armies by systematically yielding ground to them, paralyzing the workers' resistance from the first day of the war. Advancing the slogan "First win the war then make the revolution," the treacherous Stalinists and their partners in treason realized that an effective struggle against Franco entailed the danger of mutinies in his camp on the part of Italians, Moors and Spanish peasants, the danger of an internal collapse of Fascism. To attempt to strangle the workers' revolution after Franco had faced a workers' firing squad would have been sheepest madness. The potentiality of the slogan was a running nightmare to the Republican generals, Azana, his host of officials and to the bureaucrats in the trade unions and political parties supporting the bourgeois Republic. The Republican Government, which, above all, was vitally concerned with saving Spanish capitalism, pursued the only logical policy. In the midst of an unabating revolutionary situation, the People's Front Government organized a slaughter of the most courageous, most self-sacrificing workers and idealists, including the foreign volunteers. Such was the "Socially progressive" struggle the Government conducted "against" Fascism while "carrying out its liquidation of workers' power and its reconsolidation of bourgeois power behind the lines."

Is it an accident, is it a wonder that the Trotskyites gave support to bourgeois democracy against the interests of Leninism? In their internal bulletin for October, 1937, on "The Spanish Question," Trotsky wrote: "In the Spanish Civil War the question involves democracy or fascism."

Trotsky cast overboard Lenin's fundamental thesis that the present period is that of imperialist war and proletarian revolution. By shifting the historical perspective from the question of class struggle - proletarian revolution against capitalism - to the question of the fight among the Spanish capitalists regarding the form of the bourgeois State, Trotsky once again has given aid and comfort to the Stalinist bureaucracy since the thesis "democracy versus Fascism" is the very core of the ultra-Rightist line of the Seventh Congress of Stalin's Comintern. To the extent of their influence the Trotskyites insured an almost unrestricted play of the Stalinist-Socialist-Azanist forces.

It is difficult to imagine a greater and more hopeless politico-ideological tangle than the one presented by the suicidal chaos which is post-Leninist Trotskyism.

Tied to Stalinism with a thousand historical threads, and since 1934 also to Social Democracy, the Trotskyite "Fourth Internationalists" have played a reactionary part in the Spanish situation. Disorienting the workers, clogging up their minds with lustrous "revolutionary" phrases and engagingly written half-truths and falsifications, the Trotskyites have rendered an exceedingly valuable service both to Stalinism and to capitalism, and therefore bear a heavy share of responsibility for the far-reaching, appalling betrayal of the toiling masses of Spain.

III

THE P.O.U.M., LOVESTONEISM AND THE SPANISH BETRAYAL

Because of Trotsky's about-face on Social Democracy the majority of his followers in Spain, having refused to carry out his instruction to join the Spanish Socialist Party, broke with him. Shortly after, these former Trotskyites, led by Andres Nin, fused with the Maurin group which had been some time before expelled from the Stalinist party for "right deviations," and formed the Workers Party of Marxist Unification (POUM). Though it professed to embrace Leninism, the POUM at every turn violated Leninist principles. It joined the bourgeois-Stalinist-Socialist People's Front, later withdrew from it, but continued giving it objective support. At the very moment when the Loyalist Government was taking concrete steps to curb the masses, the POUM, ignoring the Marxist principle of the impermissibility for revolutionists to participate in capitalist governments, entered the bourgeois coalition cabinet of Catalonia. Clothing its arguments in typical social democratic diction, the POUM intensified the petty-bourgeois delusion that the workers could utilize certain posts of the bourgeois State machinery in the interests of the toilers:

"The capitalist state power includes the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. To hold two or three cabinet seats does not destroy the capitalist power, and to think that it does would lead to catastrophic results. This does not mean to abandon these seats and governmental posts already held by the workers." (The Spanish Revolution, January 6, 1937, p. 4.)

It can be stated with justice that politically the POUM was a variegated Left mosaic composed of small pieces of Marxism-Leninism, considerable chunks of Trotskyism, fragments of Anarcho-Syndicalism, crumbs of Stalinism and other political shades within the proletariat.

Viewing history and class struggle through a multicolorous prism, the POUM exhibited its inability to draw a sharp distinction between a successful proletarian overthrow of the bourgeois State with its economic foundation, private ownership of land and industry, (Russia, 1917) and the beheading of the proletarian revolution by both bourgeois democracy and Fascism (Spain 1931 - 1938). Seven months after the launching of Franco's rebellion, when two thirds of Spain had already passed under the bloody domination of Fascism, and when the People's Front Government was strangling the independent class activity of the proletariat, the POUM, without a grain of Marxian judgment, declared foolishly: "This is the first revolution to succeed since the Russian revolution." (The Spanish Revolution, February 17, 1937.)

Destitute of the faculty of Marxist discernment, the POUM acclaimed the Anarchists, people who are irreconcilable enemies of Bolshevism and the program of proletarian revolution, implying that they became converts to Marxism. "...two tendencies which were traditionally irreconcilable, the revolutionary Marxists (of the POUM) and the Bakuninists (of the FAI) now hold similar ideas concerning the hopes and perspectives of the revolution." (The Spanish Revolution, March 31, 1937, p. 5.) In sharp contrast with everything Marx, Engels and Lenin wrote concerning the pro-capitalist role Anarchism performs in modern revolution, the POUM told the workers that in the Spanish revolution Anarchism played a leading part. "For the first time in the history of a great revolution Anarchism is playing a leading role." (Ibid.)

Significant was the POUM's absurd conception of the relation of the army

to the ruling class. A revolutionary army can be created only by the revolutionary class, the proletariat, in power, following a thoroughgoing social and political transformation of the country. The POUM in all seriousness believed it possible to build a revolutionary army within the confines of the counter-revolutionary State. Accordingly, the POUM advanced this utopian idea: "The POUM are confident that in this fight to impose a Regular Revolutionary Army they will not be alone. At their side will be the other clearly revolutionary organizations, that is to say, the CNT, the FAI and the Anarchist Youth." (Spanish Revolution #5, March 17, 1937). Having imbibed Trotsky's pompous assumption that the Stalinists are a narrow-minded lot, that Stalin's policies are "mistakes" caused by "bureaucratic stupidity" and "ignorance," and forced to the conclusion that Stalinism is conscious of its destructive aims, the leaders of the POUM combined both conceptions into a frightful mess. They discounted the thought that Stalin's restraining hand to prevent workers' revolution was put forth with cold-blooded deliberation, describing Stalinist moves as mistakes, and at the same time they said that his basic desire is to prevent revolution. "The whole of the political MISTAKES of the Comintern can be found in its basic DESIRE to maintain the status quo, that is, in Spain, the bourgeois democratic role of the capitalist class, and to hold back the mighty upsurge of the masses moving toward a new social order." (Spanish Revolution #4, p. 3, November 11, 1936).* The POUM of course was vastly in error both regarding the nature and the prime motive of Stalin's policy. Not merely to preserve the status quo but to enhance Stalin's personal power in the Soviet Union was the hidden reason behind the counter-revolutionary line of Stalin. Living in clouds, the leading minds of the POUM failed to grasp Stalin's profoundly realistic and uncommonly shrewd strategy. By periodical "illegal" shipments of supplies to the Loyalist side, sufficient for the prolongation of resistance but nowhere near enough to overwhelm and wipe out Franco, Stalin and his Spanish partners in the People's Front Government were dragging out the war. Stalin, the principal planner of the betrayal, and the Second International, his partner in this infernal business, acted thus to prevent a swift victory of Fascism. Had Fascism triumphed in a few weeks, the workers in the capitalist countries and in the Soviet Union would have been seized with the panicky impulse to free themselves from the Stalinist-Socialist paralyzing grip. Stalin's ingenious pattern of events to come was to punctuate Franco's continued progress with occasional victories for the Loyalist side with the object of riveting the confidence of the masses to their opportunist leadership.

But to the naive POUM the maneuver was incomprehensible. Its leaders were led to interpret the cat-and-mouse tactic of Stalin as a sudden awakening of "Russia," a decisive change of policy, an expression of revolutionary faith. They were among the first to pay a glowing tribute to the Soviet Usurper, their future assassin, who was now crowning the horror of his German betrayal with the bloody nightmare in Spain. Here is a bundle of their tragically pitiful confusion:

"A fascist victory in Spain would mean a fascist future for Europe. Hitler and Mussolini realized this long ago; they realized it in time to foment the military risin before the 19th of July. It has taken Stalin three months to understand this simple fact and Leon Blum has not yet grasped it. In Spite of our criticism of the mistaken policy of the Third International, and the dangers of the theory of socialism in one country for the cause of the international working class, we are the first to recognize the importance of the new decision taken by the Soviet Union to offer us its powerful aid against the criminal intentions of Germany, Italy and Portugal. Russia has realized that the neutrality pact consisted in practice

* Our capitals.

of allowing the intervention of fascist countries. A fascist Europe would menace the existence of the Soviet Union. Russia cannot stand passively aside when her own fate is bound up in the fate of the Spanish proletariat. Henceforth we will fight with renewed courage and optimism, for help is at hand." (Spanish Revolution, #4, November 11, 1936. Our emphasis.)

Criticising Stalinism with the left hand and supporting it with the right, hanging on to the skirts of the Anarcho-Syndicalist bureaucracy, capitulating to the bourgeoisie, the POUM in the same breath talked grandiously of its "Marxist-Leninist" line: "The phenomenal growth of the P.O.U.M. on the other hand can be traced to the fact that they, unlike the Stalinists are carrying out a line of Marxism-Leninism for the attainment of workers power and socialism." (Ibid. p. 3). Indeed it is not too much to say that the wretched POUM, susceptible to the immoral influence of virtually every opportunist tendency within the workingclass, finding its hope in mirages only to lose it in the desert sands of reality, did tremendous damage to the cause of Marxism-Leninism.

* * * * *

The Lovestoneites profess to be Bolsheviks but give their "Bolshevism" so enormous a cruising range that it takes in such a miserable negation of Leninism as the unfortunate POUM. They declared the POUM to be "the only revolutionary Communist organization in Spain," only after the opportunist aspects of the POUM became clearly discernible, and when, according to all signs, the fundamental Bolshevik principles were consistently and quite thoroughly disregarded by that organization.

For some time their traditional policy of instilling in the workers' minds the false belief that the grim renegade Stalin with his host of prostituting bureaucrats and blood-bespattered assassins could be induced to revert to Bolshevism, was applied by the Lovestoneites in Spain. Stalin's ultra-Rightist contrivance for ensnaring the masses, as some years ago his ultra-Leftist one, the Lovestoneites labeled an "error"! - "The policy of the People's Front is a disastrous error on the part of the C.I." (Workers Age, February 8, 1936.)

The Lovestoneites' opportunist policy of "Bolshevizing" opportunism bore a strong resemblance to that of the Trotskyites. Compelled by their political craft to give a concrete line on the task of organizing a revolutionary party in Spain, the Lovestoneites, whose program excluded the advocacy of a Fourth (Leninist) International, solved the problem by extending their "Bolshevizing" effort to Socialists, Anarchists and Syndicalists. The Stalinist organization for stifling the proletarian revolution, led by Diaz, Hernandez and other Spanish Browders and Stachels, being the nuclear point of the Lovestoneites' endeavors, was advised to abandon the People's Front "illusion"!

"The C.P. and the left wing of the S.P. must rid themselves of the People's Front illusion.... The formation of a united Communist mass party composed of the present Communist Party, the left Social-Democracy as well as of those anarchists and Syndicalists who are ready to throw overboard their self-reformist, opportunist and anarcho-syndicalist ideas and to pursue correct Communist tactics, is absolutely essential." (Workers Age, March 28, 1936. Our emphasis.)

This expertly handled policy of spreading with a certain degree of reg-

ularity the fraud that the treacherous "present Communist Party" together with the organizations and tendencies of classical opportunism could be induced to absorb Marxism and pursue genuine Leninist tactics, was grave in its consequences. Having gained wide credence among militant workers in Spain the fraud deterred them from the path of the formation, out of the most advanced, honest elements, of an independent Leninist Party. Meanwhile Stalinism broadened the range of its activities. Becoming more securely entrenched within the masses, skilfully avoiding the mistake of applying at any moment a Leninist policy, Stalinism has very effectively sidetracked the workers from their class road of the establishment of a proletarian State.

The Lovestoneites' "criticism" of Stalinism has been in reality a web of confusion and a cover for Stalin and his home bureaucracy. On occasion the Lovestoneites make a half admission that in fact Stalin's iron supervision extends to every inch of the Comintern in matters of policy. Yet they have sought to deepen the illusion among many workers that the policy of Stalin's French puppets who together with the Fascists supported Blum in the Chamber of Deputies on the question of banning volunteers to Spain (590 votes to 00, conflicted with the policy of Stalin and his clique in the Kremlin ("Soviets")):

"French C.P. Votes Ban on Volunteers for Spain
Soviets expose treachery of Blum's Action while
French Communist Party gives him unanimous support to strangle Spain." (Workers Age, January 23, 1937)

Lovestone and his collaborators lived in political discomfort because Stalinism, Anarchism, Syndicalism and Social Democracy failed to appreciate Lovestone's "Bolshevizing" efforts and have remained what they were before. Suddenly his competent "Leninist" eye spotted the full-grown POUM.

Ah, here was a party! a political hodge-podge par excellence. The POUM was just the thing the Lovestoneites had in mind. Completely ignorant of the genesis of Stalinism, tending in every, the POUM did not pry into Lovestone's secret of having been a direct builder of Stalinism (see In Defense of Bolshevism Vol. 1, #4), and therefore constituted no danger to the former "Marxist Trunk" of the Workers (Communist) Party of America (sweet and lingering memories!). At last the Lovestoneites found their ideal and clasped it to their "Red" bosom:

"Here is the POUM, the best revolutionary party that the Spanish working class has produced - nay more, the best mass revolutionary party in the entire capitalist world...Only the Workers Party of Marxist Unification (POUM) remained true to communist principles and clearly placed the problem of proletarian power and program" (B. D. Wolfe, Civil War in Spain, pp. 71, 46.)

The Lovestoneites, "staunch champions" of the Marxist-Leninist principle against participation in coalition governments with the bourgeoisie, were pained by the action of the Spanish Stalinites who welcomed bourgeois groups into the People's Front Government but excluded the POUM. Lovestone wrote:

"A painfully crude expression of what the People's Front line leads to is to be found in the maneuvers of the Comintern section in Catalonia to exclude the P.O.U.M. from the government in order to insure the continuation of bourgeois democracy and capitalism throughout Spain. The all-inclusive or expansive policy of the People's Front which has room for bourgeois groups of every political tint, at the same time finds it necessary, under the direction

of the Comintern, to exclude a revolutionary group in Catalonia such as the P.O.U.M." (J. Lovestone, The People's Front Illusion, p. 56. Our emphasis.)

But the Lovestone-Wolfe-Herberg political perfidy and duplicity never omitted their traditional policy. The dominant key-note of their line, after all, has been the "curing" of the Comintern. And so, to make matters more confusing, the Lovestoneites told the POUM and other workers that under the callous tyranny of the brutal renegade Stalin the bureaucratically oppressed Russian masses were constructing Socialism and therefore Stalin's "international" engine of counter-revolution could be "restored" to Bolshevik principles:

"For the very reason that the CPSU, which is a Communist Party building socialism, completely dominates the Comintern, it would be wrong to deny the possibility of restoring the Communist International to revolutionary principles.." (Workers Age, May 15, 1937.)

These lying words, designed to fix pernicious illusions among workers concerning the worst and most treacherous enemy in their midst, were published at the time when the counter-revolutionary agents of Stalin were slashing the throats of the best workers in Spain and making ready to assassinate Nin and other POUM leaders. Lovestone's pro-Stalinist paralysis of analytical thinking helped traitor Stalin to spread reaction in Catalonia and the west of Spain and drive the toilers to slaughter for the cause of the Stalinist bureaucracy and international capitalism.

* * * * *

The future of the Marxist cause is at stake. The frightful lesson of the betrayal of the Spanish toilers must be burned deep into the consciousness of the workers as with a blood-red flame of fire. Illusions, if persisted in, lead to tragic ends. It is sheer fantasy to think that the leaders of Stalinism, Social Democracy, Trotskyism, Lovestoneism and of other pseudo-Marxist currents will or can abandon their opportunism. People who participated in the blackest treason unprecedented in the annals of history stand neither on Marxist principles nor on intellectual honesty. Opportunism is ingrained in their brains. It is necessary to accomplish a decisive transformation by wresting the advanced workers from the paralyzing jaws of the opportunists. Else the last chapter of the Stalinist scourge and its objective assistants will be written in the Fascist terror blanketing the entire globe, the Stalin-ridden Soviet Union included. Only by means of ruthless unmasking and struggle against all opportunism can the workers build a Bolshevik International. The new revolutionary world party, armed with Leninist principles which stood the test of history - principles like steel - will arouse the masses to overthrow both "democratic" and Fascist imperialism, to eliminate the Stalinist bureaucracy from the soil of the first Workers' State, and establish an international republic of the toilers founded upon the Leninist program of Workers Democracy.

FOR A MERCILESS EXPOSURE OF ALL CHARLATANS AND TRAITORS WITHIN THE WORK-INT CLASS!

AGAINST THE OPPORTUNIST POLICY OF "CURING" THE OPPORTUNISTS, AND FOR THE FORMATION OF THE LENINIST FOURTH INTERNATIONAL!

HELP TO EXPOSE AND DEFEAT OPPORTUNISM!

JOIN THE LENINIST LEAGUE OF THE U.S.A.

SUBSCRIBE TO

IN DEFENSE OF BOLSHIEVISM

SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LENINIST LEAGUE, U.S.A.

P. O. Box 67, Sta. D,
New York City

READ!

STALIN, TROTSKY or LENIN

By George Marlen

A LENINIST EXPOSURE OF STALINISM

AN EVALUATION

OF TROTSKY'S ERRORS AND ILLUSIONS

493 pages
Cloth \$1.50
Paper \$1.00

Order from Author
Box 67 - Station D
New York City

ERRATA: Page 16, fourth line from bottom, full sentence should read:

To Trotsky the zig-zags are helter-skelter moves born of ignorance.