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The Spanish Revolution On the Order of the Day for the Left Opposition

The course of events today puts on the agenda an imposing question on the subject of which the Left Opposition can and must say its word. I speak of the Spanish revolution. It is not a question now of a criticism after the event; it is a question for the international Left Opposition of an active intervention in the events in order to prevent a catastrophe.

We have few forces. But the advantage of a revolutionary situation consists precisely of the fact that even a small group can become a great force in a brief space of time, providing that it gives a correct prognosis and that it issues correct slogans in time. I allude not only to our Spanish section, directly involved by the events, but also to all our sections, because the further the revolution advances, the more it will draw the attention of the workers throughout the world. The verification of the political lines will take place before the eyes of the world proletarian vanguard. If we are really the Left wing, if we are really strong through our correct revolutionary conception, we must show this strength in a particularly sharp manner during a revolutionary situation. If we are really internationalists, we must do this work on an international scale.

Two Basic Questions

Two fundamental questions must be put squarely by us: (1) the question of the general character of the Spanish revolution and the strategic line that flows from it, and (2) the question of the correct tactical utilization of democratic slogans and of parliamentary and revolutionary possibilities. I endeavored to say everything essential on these questions in my last work on Spain. Here I want only to express myself summarily on the totality of the questions on which we must pass over to the offensive along the whole line of the Communist International.

Ought we to look forward in Spain to an intermediate revolution between the accomplished republican revolution and the future proletarian revolution, a so-called "workers and peasants' revolution," with a "democratic dictatorship"? Yes or no? The whole strategic line is determined by the reply to this question. The official Spanish party is sunk up to its neck in an ideological confusion on this fundamental question; a confusion which was sown and is still being sown by the epigones and which finds its expression in the program of the C. I. We have here the possibility of unmasking from day to day before the proletarian vanguard, in the light of living facts, the whole emptiness, the whole absurdity and at the same time, the terrific danger represented by the fiction of a middle-of-the-road, intermediate revolution.

The leading comrades of all the sections must have in mind that it is precisely we, as the Left wing, who must place ourselves upon a solid scientific basis. Thoughtless dabbling with ideas, journalistic charlatanism in the style of Landau and Co., are contrary to the very essence of a proletarian revolutionary faction. The fundamental questions of the revolution must be studied in the same way that engineers study the resistance of matter or doctors study anatomy and pathology. The problem of the permanent revolution, thanks to the events in Spain, has now become the central problem of the International Left Opposition.

Democratic Slogans

The questions of democratic slogans, of the utilization of the elections and, later on of the Cortes, are questions of revolutionary tactics subordinated to the general question of strategy. But the most correct strategic formulae are worth nothing if one does not find a tactical solution to these formulae at every given moment. However, matters look very bad in Spain from this point of view. The French newspapers communicate the news according to which the leader of the Catalan Federation, Maurin, was to have said in his Madrid speech that his organization will not participate in the elections because it does not believe in their "sincerity". Is it possible that this be true? It would mean the Maurin is not approaching the problems of revolutionary tactics from the point of view of the mobilization of the forces of the proletariat, but from the point of view of morality and party bourgeois sentimentalism. Two weeks ago I would have believed that the bourgeois press is recounting stupidities; but after having acquainted myself with the platform of the Catalan Federation, I am obliged to acknowledge that this news monstrous as it may be, is nevertheless not impossible and must not be excluded in advance.

On this line, we must inaugurate a pitiless struggle in our own ranks. It is entirely absurd and unworthy to quarrel with various groups on the subject of the functions, the rights and the

prerogatives of the Secretariat at a time when we have no common basis in principles with these groups. I have in mind above all the "Prometeo" group which is in disagreement with the Bolshevik-Leninists on all the fundamental questions of strategy and tactics. Nobody must be allowed to stifle these profound divergences by noisy quarrels on organizational grounds and by unprincipled "blobs" which degenerate inevitably into intrigues behind the scene.

The Lessons of China

Following the Russian experience, the question of democratic slogans in the revolution was posed anew in the course of the struggle in China. However, all the European sections did not have the possibility of following all the stages of this struggle. Thanks to this fact, the discussion on these questions had a semi-academic character for certain comrades and for certain groups. But today, these questions are the very incarnation of the struggle of life. Can we permit ourselves to be bound hand and foot at so important a historical turning point? Just as during the Sino-Russian conflict which threatened to let loose a war we could not lose ourselves in discussions over whether it was necessary to support the Soviet Union or Chiang Kai-Shek so today, face to face with the Spanish events, we cannot even admit an indirect responsibility for the sectarian, semi-Bukuninist superstitions of certain groups.

My practical proposals are summed up in the following:

1. All the sections must place the problems of the Spanish revolution on the order of the day.
 2. The leaderships of our sections must form special commissions which should have as their tasks to gather material to go deeply into the questions, and above all to follow attentively the activity of the official parties and the manner in which they pose the problems of the Spanish revolution.
 3. All the important documents of Spanish Communism (of all its tendencies) must be communicated regularly, at least in the form of extracts, for the information of all our national sections.
 4. After a necessary preparation, each national section of the Opposition must open the attack against the policy of the Comintern in the Spanish revolution. This offensive can have different forms: articles in the paper, critical resolutions, open letters, intervention at meetings, individual work, and work by groups, etc. But all these forms must be rigorously coordinated.
 5. Following upon a certain preparatory work in the national sections, as well as in the International Secretariat it is indispensable to work out a Manifesto of the International Left on the Spanish revolution which should be done in the most concrete manner possible and in intimate collaboration with the Spanish section. This manifesto will have to be given the largest possible distribution.
- These are the concrete proposals. I beg you to discuss them and at the same time to send a copy to all the national sections so that the discussion will follow simultaneously in all of them.
- June 18, 1931

Relief and Defense for the Striking Miners

The coal operators and their government have acted concertedly against the miners who are conducting so heroic and militant a struggle. It is the task of every worker, throughout the country, to come to the immediate aid of the strikers, to give all they can to help bring about a victory.

In Harlan, Kentucky, 17 miners are being held on trumped-up charges of murder. Every worker knows what this means. No effort should be spared to defend them. Funds to assist them in fighting a legal assassination should be sent to the General Committee of the I. W. W., 555 West Lake St., Chicago, Ill.

In Pennsylvania, Tom Myerscough, organizer of the National Miners Union, faces trial soon for "manslaughter" following the killing by thugs of a strike sympathizer. Others are in prison already in Pennsylvania and Ohio. Funds should be sent to the International Labor Defense, 80 East 11th St., New York, N. Y.

Desperately needed relief—clothing and funds—should be sent to the Penn-Ohio Striking Miners Relief Committee locally or at 611 Penn Ave., Room 205, Pittsburgh, Pa. ACT NOW!

Rank and File Illinois Miners Ready for a New and Militant National Movement

Events are moving fast in the mining industry of the country at the present time. Miners fight with guns in Kentucky, Pennsylvania and Ohio miners courageously fight against some of the worst odds ever encountered. Thousands of West Virginia miners answer a strike call against starvation conditions and in support of the Pennsylvania and Ohio miners. Two thousands miners in Franklin county, Illinois, strike against starvation while working. Rumblings are heard from the Colorado coal fields. Rank and file miners in convention unofficially talk of the calling of a general strike in Illinois soon. The coal miners of America seethe with revolt against the tyranny and hunger that prevails within their midst. Is it an awakening to action that will finally set the miners of America into a powerful movement after 12 dreary years of suffering smashing defeats?

Important events are taking place in Illinois while this is being written. 33,000 miners are in session, attending a rank and file miners' convention. Called for the purpose of rehabilitating their union and cleaning out the fakers, the miners that have responded to this call are motivated by greater ideas than the selection of a new set of officers. The rotten starvation conditions that stalk throughout the country are not absent in Illinois. The rank and file miners' convention embodies the last frantic efforts of a group of miners, miners who have been organized solidly since 1897-98, to save their union and fight against the bosses and their agents who would completely reduce them to the level of the unorganized fields. Events in the Eastern states further bring hopes to the miners of Illinois.

The report of the credentials committee of the convention shows that 230

Acute Crisis Shakes Germany and Central European Lands

Whole Communist Movement of Europe Now Put to the Test

The latest reports arriving from Germany indicate that the adoption of the Hoover plan has not achieved the task it proclaimed for itself. The internal situation, instead of being relieved has become greatly aggravated. The delay brought about by the negotiations between the Americans and the French has called forth an unprecedented flight of capital from Germany, nearly \$500,000,000 leaving the country within the period of the last few weeks. The collapse of the Danat Bank, the financial institution most intimately bound up with the rise of German imperialism and the subsequent bank holiday have brought in their wake something resembling a little earthquake in central European finances. The mark is not being quoted at all on several exchanges. In Belgium, Hungary and other European countries, es-

pecially in Central Europe where national banks are also crashing, German currency is not accepted for payment. What the adoption of the Hoover plan did perhaps achieve, is the postponement of the formal and immediate downfall of the Young Plan which would have brought into sharp view a whole series of international entanglements of a catastrophic nature. As matters stand at present, the Brüning government, feeling that for the time being its external hardships are over, is preparing for an intensified campaign on the internal front. The relief brought about by the suspension of reparation payments, has been amply offset by the withdrawal of foreign private credits and by the continued export of capital. The situation in the Reich is even more serious than it was a month ago.

All hope of foreign aid is gone. The government is concentrating every effort towards the exploitation of internal "resources" by extending the already existing emergency decrees. Despite the promises made on the basis of the moratorium, the decree reducing the last crumbs of Unemployed Insurance stands and a whole string of even more outrageous anti-working class political measures are being contemplated, involving all round wage cuts, more indirect taxation and more reduction of social benefits. In view of all these planned steps, the Brüning government has already, within the last few days suspended all Communist publications, according to dispatches, and prohibited all open air meetings. The reactionary Hjalmar Schacht, the former president of the Reichsbank and an avowed representative of the Hugenberg-Hitler National Bloc is being mentioned for the post of extraordinary Finance Commissioner, to be especially created for him. That this means a decisive step toward a dictatorship cannot be disputed. Whether the United States capitalists would consent to the establishment of a German Fascist dictatorship, with all the neo-imperialist German ambitions that it involves and all the unrest that would inevitably follow it on the scale of the entire continent, is another question entirely.

In the meantime, the crisis is tearing on at a high pitch. All the political factions are re-arming feverishly in the contest for state power. While the government is steering to the Right, the population as a whole is moving toward the Left. The fascists are devoid of any stable mass basis, the social democracy, which has followed at the tail of the reactionary Brüning government for the past sixteen months, is regarded with suspicion by broad sections of the working class. The Communists who, according to the admissions of the capitalist press itself, are the only political group with a definite plan of action, are once again, as several times in the past,

facing the test: Can they make their program, the program of the proletarian dictatorship that means an end to all imperialist treaties and agreements, that institutes the socialized planning of industry and abolishes crises and unemployment—can they make this program the program of the oppressed and disinherited masses? —S. G.

I.L.D. Sabotages the Opposition Defense

How the present leaders of the International Labor Defense have privately sent out deliberately misleading information, to the point of downright lies, in connection with the case of the two Philadelphia Oppositionists, Morgenstern and Goodman, who have just been convicted in court of "sedition", is made clear from some letters which the Communist League of America (Opposition) now has in its possession.

The two militants were arrested and held a number of months ago in Philadelphia for distribution of a leaflet of our organization on the question of unemployment.

The leaflet was the evidence introduced by the prosecution which brought about the finding of guilty against them. From the beginning of the case, the two workers, persecuted under the same Flynn Anti-Sedition Act and for the same reasons as other Communist workers have been, appealed to the Philadelphia I. L. D. to take over the defense of the case, to organize public protest meetings, agitation, legal aid, and so forth. The I. L. D. refused to give the two militants any assistance. On the contrary, it forcibly ejected the two of them from a united front Scottsboro defense conference to which their organization had delegated them.

The solitary reason why the I. L. D. has sabotaged the defense from the very outset is that the two workers belong to the Left Opposition, that they have political views differing from those of the I. L. D.'s present officers and the Communist party leaders who control them. This scandalous violation of the statutes and the traditions of the I. L. D. naturally brought down upon the heads of its officials a protest from all sides. Unable to defend their sabotage, the I. L. D. officials instead lied about their position.

Engdahl's Falsehoods

On March 10, the following letter was sent by the I. L. D. to Roger Baldwin, director of the American Civil Liberties Union:

"Dear Comrade:
"In reply to your letter of March 9, addressed to George Maurer, will state that the International Labor Defense both in the Philadelphia District, and through our national bureau, has voted to defend Goodman and Morgenstern, in connection with the other cases it is defending under the sedition law.

"We are wondering whether the Civil Liberties Union has taken any steps with regard to this case. I intended to speak to you about this matter yesterday, but it slipped my mind.

"Very sincerely
"International Labor Defense
(Sgd.) "J. Louis Engdahl
"General Secretary."

On March 11, in reply to the protest of a Brooklyn worker, Benjamin Gross, the I. L. D. not only repeats the falsehood about its alleged willingness to handle the case, but asserts that it "has taken over" the defense. The letter in full reads:

"Dear Comrade:
"In reply to your letter of March 7, we can only say that you are very much in error regarding the defense of Morgenstern and Goodman. Our organization in the Philadelphia District, has taken over the defense of these two workers, giving them the same protection as all the other workers facing persecution under the Flynn Sedition Law in Pennsylvania.

"With comradely greetings,
"J. Louis Engdahl
"General Secretary."

Thus, on March 11, Engdahl announced that the I. L. D. had already "taken over the defense". Yet on March 25, the I. E. D. replied to a protest from a member of its National Committee, Gerry Allard, by writing:

"Dear Allard:
"We have your long letter concerning the case of the two Philadelphia workers, their arrest, and the attitude of the

Combine the Miners' Struggles into a United Front!

The Stalinists Are Pursuing a Sectarian Policy Which Keeps the Insurgent Movements Separated

In the July issue of the party's theoretical organ, *The Communist*, William Z. Foster writes about the Pennsylvania-Ohio coal strike in the following words: "It is too early to speak of the mistakes and shortcomings of the strike." With this sentence, Foster achieves an involuntary frankness which must be examined before it is "too late" to speak of the principal mistake which is being made by the leadership of the tens of thousands of miners who are fighting such a magnificent battle in the Eastern coal fields.

Is Foster looking forward, as has become the custom in the official Communist movement, to such a fatal outcome of the struggle as will require that type of "self-criticism" which a contented bureaucracy has made so odious—the type of "criticism" which repeats mechanically that "our line was correct" but it "was not applied correctly" by functionary A or committee B or rank and file C? Every recent action of the party, every struggle it has undertaken or led, has wound up with this sorry epitaph. Every important action, at whose commencement it was "too early to speak of the mistakes and shortcomings" found its tragic conclusion in the columns of the party press, filled with lamentations, with criticisms of what was wrong, with blustering apologies calculated to "place the blame" on anybody or anything, so long as the principle of the infallibility of the leadership of the day is preserved intact.

On the present occasion, far too much is at stake to allow such contemptible horse-play to pass for sagacity and leadership. The situation is rife with splendid opportunities for the militant labor movement. A combination of circumstances is at hand which has not been there for a long time past. Now more than ever is a correct course imperative. A mistake in policy is trebly and tenfold disastrous in such a big situation. That is why Foster's whole approach to the problem of the "possibly" wrong policies in the strike is so dangerously false. It is not too early. We must speak out now while there is still time to act.

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE COAL FIELDS?

To know what to do, we must first be clear about what is. Driven under the lash of a desperation induced by terrific suffering and accentuated by a series of wage cuts, tens of thousands of miners in Western Pennsylvania went out on strike, the working miners joined in intimate solidarity with those thrown out of work. Under the influence of their resistance, thousands of other miners from the coal fields of Eastern Ohio and Northern West Virginia have joined in the walkout. The strike is almost entirely under the leadership of the National Miners Union and the Rank and File Committee organized by it. The militancy and solidarity of the strikers

—men and women, Negro and white—are in the best tradition of the glorious struggles of the American miners in the past, and are excelled only by the murderous ferocity and abominations with which the coal operators and their armed forces have answered the resistance of the workers.

But the movement guided by the N. M. U. does not complete the picture of what is happening in the American coal fields. There are at least three other distinct, active movements in other parts of the country.

In Harlan Kentucky, thousands of miners have been out on strike for weeks. The N. M. U. and the Communists are not leading that strike and up to the present, at least, have virtually no influence upon it. The strike, as militant in every respect as the one in Pennsylvania, is led by the local organization of the United Mine Workers of America, and, from fairly reliable reports, the I. W. W. has an appreciable influence among the strikers.

In the mining section around Kanawha, West Virginia, some 23,000 miners went on strike last week in this field of bitterly fought battles and betrayals. Here too, the influence of the N. M. U. and the Communists is negligible. The strike is under the leadership of the Independent Miners' Union of West Virginia, which split away from the rotten hulk of the Lewis U. M. W. It is led by such former U. M. W. leaders as

Frank Keeney, Mooney and others, and is more or less intimately associated with the Muste movement, one of whose spokesmen, Tom Tippet, is in charge of the relief at Charlestown. The grievances of the long-suffering men are those of the Pennsylvania, the Ohio, the Kentucky miners, of the miners throughout the country.

In the Southern Illinois coal field the resentment and dissatisfaction of the miners continues to make itself heard with growing insistence. Unfortunately dominated by confusion and lack of certainty as to the way out of the morass into which the coal operators and their labor agents have dragged them, they are nevertheless groping for a solution. Deeply indicative of ferment among them are the various rank and file conferences which are held for discussion and action. Both the Lewis and the Fitchwick machines are so thoroughly discredited that they dare not put in appearance. For its blunders of the past and of today, the N. M. U. has little influence here as well. Worse yet, political sharpers, smooth demagogues, hungry aspirants to office, concealed henchmen of Lewis or Farrington—all rub shoulders at these conferences with the reformists of the Muste school, each seeking to capitalize upon the discontentment of the miners.

All these movements have a common root: the attempt of the coal barons to load the burdens of a sick industry upon the shoulders of the miners, and the

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