

## WORLD OF LABOR

## Lessons of the Spanish Revolution

The massacres of workers continue.

After the massacres and the Vienna days, the massacres and the Spanish days. This is a new defeat in the struggle of the workers against reaction in Europe, but a defeat whose revolutionary power strikes fear into the forces of the world counter-revolution.

Yes. On either side of the Atlantic, from the heroic Asturian miners to the thousands of fighters in Amsterdam and America the bourgeois counter-revolution has to reckon with the armed and tenacious resistance of the awakened masses. The blotting out of socialism which the bourgeoisie hopes to bring about by savage repression is everywhere shown to be a dream. The revolutionary workers' movement, extending over the entire world may perhaps be retarded here and there by bloody repressions but it can never be wiped out. But to overcome the defeats the revolutionary proletarian vanguard must be keenly alive to the epoch we are now living through, and especially to conditions in Europe.

Under the pressure of internal and international difficulties, the bourgeoisie in every country finds itself constrained to place itself on a subversive and reactionary soil, that is to say, it is forced to abandon the soil of so-called democracy and legality. It is the bourgeoisie, as a whole, which causes civil war by arming fascism whose only issue on the international arena is a new slaughter of the people.

More than ever, the cannibalism of the ruling class on the one hand and the bloody sacrifices of the toilers on the other, should convince the people that there is only one method to avenge, to simplify, to reduce the deadly suffering caused by capitalist decay: revolutionary struggle. Struggle or death; revolutionary struggle or annihilation; in this manner the bourgeoisie, which is determined to destroy everything to save its doomed regime, irrevocably poses the question.

Tollers, the example of Spain after that of Vienna, demonstrates again that the splendid heroism of the combatants does not suffice to assure victory over the enemy; undoubtedly physical force can only be defeated by physical force. With all our heart we are with our defeated brothers whatever their tendency. But precisely in order to avenge the victims and to liberate the prisoners it is necessary to prepare the new struggle, and this preparation, in the first place, should consist of open implacable criticism of the mistakes and the weaknesses of the workers' organizations themselves. After so many lies the proletariat needs the cure of truth.

The Spanish events should help the proletariat of other countries and particularly the French proletariat to learn in the fire of their experience. The processes which are hatching in France have long ago taken a mature form in Spain.

The Socialist party, carried to power by the spontaneous revolution, made every effort to arrest it and to save the bourgeois regime. New revolutionary attempts were crushed. This policy of parliamentary socialism contributed in stabilizing and strengthening anarchism and syndicalism, two tendencies which are fatal for the revolution. The Socialists, on their part, with their policy of social-fascism did everything to repel the workers into anarchism or to keep them in the parliamentary party.

It is this fatal triangle: social democracy, Stalinism, anarchism, which has ruined the masses by dooming to defeat a series of heroic attempts and by giving the reaction time to prepare and to arm itself. The Socialist party finally understood the mortal danger. It made serious preparations for struggle—but in a few months it was not able to efface the fruits of its past policy. The anarcho-syndicalists however, remained hostile to the socialist initiative and could not find anything better to do than to empty their rancor on the head of the revolution. The reaction had thus gained the opportunity of free movement on the chess board by occupying one position after another.

But it would be futile to expect a new revolution now; it would be equally false to class Lerroux, Gil Robles and the fascist groups in the same category. It is a matter of different classes and different political tendencies. Not the revolution is on the order of the day, but an internal conflict in the camp of those who have defeated the Spanish October. The party of the proletariat should carefully follow the internal relations in this camp, which is ten times more heterogeneous than Hitler's camp and does not possess one one-hundredth of the discipline of the Nazis. It is superfluous to say that a sharp, even an armed conflict (which is hardly excluded), can again change the situation in favor of the proletariat.

Miserable philistines declare that military technique has emerged victorious from the revolution of the masses. They draw the conclusion that the armed struggle of the proletariat is condemned in advance. Our conclusion is the direct opposite. Armed struggle which is the inevitable outcome of the class struggle of our epoch can only be victorious on the basis of a revolutionary policy which tests the cadres and wins the masses by giving them a clear analysis of the real situation.

The army of the revolution is not improvised at the minute that struggle is forced on it by the enemy. The working class must be prepared systematically for unrelenting struggle, it must create the workers' militias. That is the lesson that should be drawn from the Spanish events.

Civil war, like all war, requires methodical preparation, a firm and capable leadership. We know that only a revolutionary proletarian party can assure this leadership. But we do not draw the false conclusion from the fact that the existing parties of the two Internationals, socialist and communist, have once again demonstrated their bankruptcy, and hence the necessity of new proletarian parties, that it is necessary first to build the new party in order to struggle against fascism. The proletarian vanguard has begun to build this party in struggle; and it is in this struggle that it will grow in every country.

If the two Internationals were capable of energetic initiative they long ago would have appealed to the working masses for the boycott against the butchers of the Spanish toilers. The negotiations in Brussels on the contrary, have demonstrated the complete bankruptcy of the two Internationals, which still occupy the posts of leadership in the workers' movement. While the workers in Spain battle arms in hand the delegates of the two bureaucracies from Moscow and Zurich hold "fruitless and impotent negotiations" in Brussels.

Workers, the road to victory still remains open to you. There is no time to lose. Unity of action is a step forward in barring the road to fascism. But in order that this unity of action be effective and efficacious it must not be limited to agreements between the tops, on the parliamentary sphere, it must involve and organize all the working people over the entire country; every barrier between the workers must be broken down; every worker no matter what his political opinion, can find himself in fraternal contact with his class brothers. The workers' alliance in Spain would have been able to oppose and certainly would have been able to offer a much more stubborn and more effective resistance to the attacks of the troops of Gil Robles-Lerroux, if in advance

## NEW YORK TRADE UNIONISTS QUIT C. P. JOIN MOVEMENT FOR NEW PARTY IN U. S.

Comrades Taylor and Terry, signatories to this statement were the organizers and leaders of the progressive opposition group which conducted a fight in the big electrical workers local number 3 against the corrupt administration of the local and of the International Brotherhood. This remarkable fight, which attracted nationwide attention and claimed the life of one of the opposition members, resulted in the resignation of the International president, Broach. When renewed later, due to continued gangster methods employed by the local administration in shooting and wounding several of the opposition members. Taylor and Terry were the main organizers and leaders in a broad rank and file movement of many A. F. of L. building trades unions. The gangster officials were removed and convicted, much of the trade union racketeering was effectively exposed and several of the progressive measures sponsored by the opposition were accepted by the electrical workers local union.

Comrade Taylor is a member of the C.P. since 1926 and comrade Terry since 1930. Both are as active as ever in their leading capacities within the progressive trade union movement.—Ed.

The present period demands the greatest decisiveness and unity of action by the working class. The mistakes of the party both on the trade union and political field has resulted not only in retarding working class unity against capitalist reaction but has also served to strengthen the A. F. of L. bureaucrats and the social reformists.

The realization of the mistakes of the party, long ago transformed into tendencies alien to revolutionary Marxism, has finally forced upon me the conviction that my place is no longer in the ranks of the official Communist party. The impossibility of a free and frank discussion and a possible correction of mistakes has strengthened that conviction.

For the past eight years I have been engaged in trade union work. The major portion of my activity has been confined to the A. F. of L. Building Trades Opposition. I will therefore confine my statement to this aspect of party work.

"Independent Action" The party some few years ago issued the slogan of "Independent action over and above the heads of the bureaucrats." The party fractions everywhere were instructed to conduct "independent strike action." Assuming for a moment that the slogan of "Independent action" is correct, it is therefore logical to conclude from the content of the slogan itself, that the opposition forces within the trade unions are properly organized to conduct "independent action over and above the heads of the bureaucrats."

The use of this slogan in the course of the actual struggle, however, soon convinced us that the party fractions within the trade unions were not only conducting "independent struggles over and above the A. F. of L. bureaucrats" but that those "struggles" were also carried on over and above the heads of the rank and file workers themselves.

Indifference to the organizational strength of the Opposition in the practical use of the slogan "independent action" soon resulted in liquidation not only of weakly organized opposition groups and party fractions, but of entire local unions.

Local 499 Painters A glaring example of the results of independent "strike action" will be found in reviewing the recent activities of the party fraction in Local 499 of the Painters, Decorators and Paper Hangers of America.

In the recent painters strike called by the officials of District Council No. 9, Local 499, under the influence of the party fraction, led the movement for independent "strike action" . . . organized its own picket lines, pulled jobs and conducted strike action "over and above the heads of the bureaucrats" . . .

Naturally much confusion resulted. It had organized the toiling population into fighting formations in every factory and every workers' district.

Unity of action! But that should signify: preparation of the masses for the inevitable struggle. Form the workers' militia. No more proletarian massacres, but the organization of a victorious struggle.

Meetings, resolutions are useful for the Spanish proletariat in grips with frenzied reaction on the condition that this sympathy becomes active and energetic.—Petitions and meetings leave the Spanish bourgeoisie as well as those of other countries indifferent. In face of the cannibalism of the counter-revolution let us organize our united front of struggle: let us create our workers' militia. Long live the armed struggle of the Spanish workers! Long live the proletarian power! Long live the 14th International, organizing the proletarian vanguard of all countries for the victory of world socialism!

—The International Secretariat, International Communist League

ed. The strike conducted by the District Council and the "Independent strike" movement led by local 499 created hesitancy in both camps. This condition was further and more seriously aggravated by the complete isolation of left wing influence and militancy from the strike movement conducted by the District Council.

"Independent strike action" was smashed squarely on the head by Philip Zausner and his District Council No. 9. Local 499 had its charter revoked and its members instructed to enter other locals. The Painters Protective Association (rank and file opposition) will not so very quickly recover from this blow.

Already rumblings of dissatisfaction with the party leadership issue from below! Many party members in soft tones and among themselves complain that Weinstein's articles in the Daily Worker and the Rank and File Federationist proclaiming victorious achievements after each defeat do not by any chance turn defeat into victory but lay the groundwork for future defeats. Weinstein believes in doing "big things in a big way. . . ." He does not sit down with rank and file workers and together with them formulate policy and tactics. No, Weinstein is a "leader of the masses"—even though he leads those very same masses completely out of the painters' union and into a state of demoralization.

Local 2717 Carpenters For years the party boasted about the "good work" of the party fraction within local 2717 of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners. The party fraction completely dominated local 2717. The members of the local paraded in the party's line of march on May Day, supported the party's campaigns and sent delegates to the "Hunger Marchers". . . . All went well until the party considered the tempo of activation too slow and insisted upon "independent action" for local 2717. From then on it was "independent action" for local 2717 both against and over the heads of the District Council in New York and the Executive Council of the Brotherhood.

In the conflict with the District Council the party instructed its fraction in local 2717 to prevent the local from paying per capita tax to the General Office of the Brotherhood. But the General Office simply liquidated the local.

Local 2717—as a single local—one out of more than 25 locals in New York City and vicinity, was forced into "independent action". Had the party fraction within local 2717 coupled the fight with a program, on an inter-local basis, dealing with such demands as (1) lower dues, (2) protection of the union standing of the unemployed, (3) free speech and democracy, (4) reduction of the salaries of officials, both the party fraction and local 2717 would today be on firm ground! Such a program if properly applied on the basis of mobilizing all locals, should have resulted in the creation of a broad rank and file inter-local movement capable of effectively dealing with the corrupt officials of the New York District Council and of transforming the local unions into fighting instruments of the workers.

What is the result of this kind of "independent action"? In both instances those of the carpenters local 2717 and painters local 499, the left wing had obtained a strong basis. Two local unions under its influence thus provided a good beginning for a serious fight against the reactionaries. It could have been extended by careful building of left wing groups in the other locals, cementing them all together and fighting on the basis of remaining within the A. F. of L. But the party followed the policy of capture and split with the result that it captured nothing, stands discredited as a splitter and its fractions are now almost completely divorced from the rank and file. They are a negligible factor in the life of the unions.

The position of the corrupt A. F. of L. officials has been strengthened at the expense of the rank and file into whose ranks temporary demoralization has set in as a result of the series of defeats prepared by the "advance guard" of the working class.

Rival Unions The creation of rival unions has been the party policy during the last several years and it is a sore spot which spreads its poison throughout the A. F. of L. Building Trades Opposition. By rival unions I mean the artificial creation of new unions where the A. F. of L. already has a mass basis. The Independent Alteration Painters Union (T.U.U.L.) was organized some few years ago, with a wage scale and working conditions below that of the Brotherhood (A. F. of L.) The Independent Alteration Painters Union grew rapidly in the first stages of its existence.

In the course of time there developed vicious warfare between the Brotherhood and Independent Union for the control of Alteration paintshops. In the course of these struggles the membership of the Independent union gave a good ac-

count of themselves. The rank and file proved themselves militant fighters against Zausner's paid gangsters.

Zausner and his District Council No. 9 lost no time in denouncing the Communists within the Brotherhood locals as "dual unionists" whose intention it was to split the Brotherhood. . . . Zausner attempted to convince the rank and file that while their families were denied the necessities of life due to unemployment, the Communists had organized a dual union with a wage scale and working conditions below that of the Brotherhood, thus further deepening their own misery.

In the attempts to "blacken" the Communists with the material supplied to him by the Party leadership, Zausner was partly successful. Thus the prestige of the party members among the rank and file was lowered.

In the latter part of 1933 Zausner created his famous organizing campaign. Many hundreds of workers joined the Brotherhood. Had the original and correct policy of the party "into the A. F. of L." not been renounced and had the party members in the Brotherhood locals themselves developed a broad rank and file movement for the organization of the unorganized, the entire membership of the Independent union could have had the possibility of joining the Brotherhood locals and thus greatly strengthened the left wing.

Some four or five weeks ago, at a meeting of the leading building trades faction, of which at the time they were members, comrades Taylor and Terry quoted William Z. Foster's pamphlet "Organize the Unorganized", which was printed in 1926.

These comrades pointed out their agreement with the major portion of the section in Foster's pamphlet dealing with the danger of dual unions. In answer to the assertions of the comrades, the secretary of the A. F. of L. Building Trades Opposition, stated that Foster's pamphlet was written in 1926 and therefore cannot apply today! A real left winger would answer that this position was correct then and is correct now. But comrades Taylor and Terry were accused of having adopted Lovestone's position on dual unions which of course did not clear up the matter at all.

The artificial creation of rival unions has been a party policy for years. It has been the Comintern policy under the Stalin regime. Its disastrous results have been division and splits in the ranks of the organized workers, isolating the militants from the mass movement, discrediting them and strengthening the hands of the reactionary A. F. of L. officials. At this moment when the masses are actually going to the A. F. of L. unions the party is up a blind alley with its trade union policy. It is proceeding to liquidate its T.U.U.L. unions, not by an orderly retreat attempting to again entrench the militants in the mass unions, but by a route which will make the left wing elements impotent for a long time to come. Thus the failure to correct a false policy in time leads to new serious mistakes.

Bureaucracy Some few weeks ago a member of the A. F. of L. Committee appeared at the meeting of the electrical workers opposition ostensibly to get support for a dance arranged by the committee. He immediately informed the chairman that his topic for discussion was to be "Affiliation of the Electrical Workers Group to the A. F. of L. Committee."

This raised a storm of protest from the chairman and other leading members of the opposition. The question of the electrical workers' affiliation to the A. F. of L. Committee was never brought to the attention of the electrical workers' fraction. Nor was it first submitted to the executive committee of for consideration. The leaders of the A. F. of L. Committee tried to "catch the workers by surprise", as it were.

Comrade S. is a member of the N. Y. District Bureau of the C.P. and a member of the painters' fraction.

THE INTERNATIONAL WORKERS SCHOOL announces a series of 12 lecture classes by

MAX SHACHTMAN on The History of the Communist League (Trotskyists) Every Wednesday, beginning Nov. 14, at 8 P.M. at 144 Second Ave. The fee for entire course is \$1.50; or 20 cents for a single lecture.

Although the following courses of the school are already in session, it is still possible to register for them:

1. A.B.C. of Marxism—Carl Cowl. Every Friday at 8 P.M.  
2. State & Revolution—J. Weber. Every Monday at 8 P.M.  
3. American History—F. Morrow. Every Wednesday at 8 P.M.

The fee for these courses is \$1.50 for the entire course or 20 cents for any single session. Registrations are taken daily at the office, 144 Second Avenue, New York City.

Not desiring to repeat what has already been said in the above statement of Comrade Jack Taylor, I take this opportunity of stating that I withdraw from the ranks of the official C.P.U.S.A. for the reasons stated in the above document. The above statement coincides with my personal experiences as party member and in particular my experiences along trade-union lines.

—JACK TAYLOR.

STATMENT OF COMRADE ALFRED TERRY

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—ALFRED TERRY.

## QUESTION BOX

A. S., CHICAGO—

Question: What is the Marxist basis of the theory of the inevitability of the social revolution? Is this theory fatalistic and, being sure of ultimate victory, does it pacify the working class in its struggle against capitalism?

Answer: There is no inevitability, in Marxist theory, in the sense that the working class whether they struggle or not MUST be victorious. It is not only not theoretically excluded, but even a probability for the present historical epoch, that the failure of the proletariat to build revolutionary parties and seize power in time may result in the victory of reaction on a world-wide scale (fascism, destruction of the world's productive forces (imperialist wars, restriction of production to a minimum inside national boundaries, etc.) that humanity may be set back for many years. It is of course difficult to imagine that the working class will not eventually destroy the capitalist system since all the laws of motion of present day society tend in this direction. Only in this HISTORICAL sense can the social revolution be conceived as inevitable. There are no guarantees, however, as to when or under what circumstances it will take place.

As to any idea that Marxist theory "pacifies" the workers. Marx stated his concept as follows: "What I did was to prove the following: (1) That the existence of classes is connected only with certain historical struggles which are characteristic of the development of production. (2) That class war indisputably leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat. . . ." (Quotation by Lenin in "State and Revolution")

How can this perspective be considered as fatalistic? What is it that leads to the proletarian dictatorship? Class War! If the proletarians were to sit at home then they would not be participating in the class struggle and the failure to achieve emancipation would be assured.

Even though "he does not make it out of the whole cloth, man makes his own history. . . ."

Question: Does Social Democracy accept the theory of inevitability?

Answer: This is a rather peculiar question since the Social Democracy is not revolutionary but reformist. Since it rejects the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, it certainly cannot be accused of saying that this is inevitable. However, it tells the workers that if they make proper use of the ballot box and elect to power Socialist candidates, the latter can and will then legislate the social revolution into being. One can with justice, therefore, say that the Social Democracy claims a Socialist Society to be inevitable provided that the workers don't forget to vote Socialist on election day.

B. Y., HARVARD—

Question: Shouldn't the question of "Self-Determination of the Black Belt" be left to be settled by the Negro workers themselves after the Revolution?

Answer: If the slogan of "Self-Determination" is rejected, i.e., if one accepts the position that the Negro problem in the U.S. is NOT that of a suppressed NATIONAL minority, your question, of course, becomes meaningless.

If the reverse position is adopted, however, the slogan would have to be advanced now since (1) our program is merely the formulation of the historic needs of society in every stage of its development; (2) acceptance of the slogan would imply our recognition that the Negroes have National aspirations of a progressive nature; and (3) even though the present reactionary position of capitalism makes the solution of the unfinished problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution the task of the proletarian revolution, (e.g. National Independence) it is precisely because of this fact that the struggle for these unfinished tasks becomes a lever toward the winning of proletarian power.

It must again be repeated that a direct answer to the question depends upon the attitude which one has to the slogan, and we do not wish to anticipate our national conference which will very shortly take a definite position on it.

ADAM B., CHICAGO—

Question: What part did the civil servants and the Federation des Fonctionnaires play in the French general strike of February?

Answer: We are informed by a comrade who was in Paris at the time that the civil servants were not called out, and because of the nature of the strike (a one day demonstration), there was no way of getting their attitude to it in action. Subsequent to that time, however, they have been taking a very active role in demonstrations etc. since the government's economy program is being carried out chiefly at their expense. (Pardon the delay in answering. A search through the files of both the radical and the capitalist press failed to disclose the information)

S. H., BRONX—

Question: What is meant by Bonapartism?

Answer: By this we usually mean a form of capitalist state power, without mass support, which bases itself upon the military, the police, and the bureaucracy and is able to do so because the hostile classes in society are balanced against each other, neither camp being able nor willing to upset the equilibrium which would result in a civil war, unless, as was done in Germany by the leadership of the S.P. and C.P., the opposing camp capitulates without a fight. It is usually a precondition, if a Bonapartist regime is to last for any length of time, that the classes shall have mutually exhausted each other in struggle. It is apparent from this general description of this historical phenomenon that the variety of forms which it can take are many and that it represents an unstable form of power comparable to a ball balanced on the top of a pyramid. (P.S. Haven't you read Trotsky's pamphlets?)

Acknowledgment:—Your editor wishes to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of a letter from Comrade H. Sorz, of London, England, in which he submits to us, from another source, ("Communist International" No. 1, p. 18, published by C.P.G.B.) the same quotation from Lenin's "The Third International and Its Place in History" that was sent in by Comrade J. MacDonald and published in the "Question Box" of Nov. 3rd.

Correction: An unfortunate typographical error appeared in the "Question Box" of last week. A statement which was printed as "ships of all capitalist countries including the U.S.S.R. . . ." should have read "including the U.S.A. . . ."

## November New International Out

The November issue of the New Internationalist is just off the press! Get your copy early. The October issue was completely sold out. Among the contents in this issue are letters from Marx, Trotsky and Rakovsky on Russia, a letter from Spain, an article on the Negro question, book reviews, archive material etc., etc., etc. 15c per copy; \$1.50 a year; \$1 for seven issues.