

versal rule that under conditions of acute political crisis, all such talk is a mere smoke screen. The real roots lie much deeper. No one is going to try to smash an organization to pieces because of a dispute over "tone" and "method", or a legalistic argument about disciplinary procedure. Not in the least. In such cases, it is always a question of basic political opposition.

In general, as we have already stated, the division in the Party can be traced back to the conflict between the ideas and practices of revolutionary Marxism on the one side, and non-revolutionary (reformist, Stalinist, centrist ideas and practices on the other. The conflict thus involves in the last analysis every key political question, from the road to power to the nature of work in the

unions. The present crisis, however, arises not over systems of ideas and methods taken in general and in the abstract, but concretely over certain specific issues which arise out of the real circumstances of the present moment. Among these, four can properly be singled out as of major significance:

No one can avoid the issue of Spain. The white heat of civil war cuts through every organizational or verbal barrier. Least of all will the revolutionists in the Party avoid it or allow it to be avoided. We stand with the revolutionary Spanish workers fighting to defeat the armies of Franco through the triumph of their revolution. And we stand irrevocably against the Popular Front's betrayal of their revolution. There is no restriction which can or will silence the expression of our solidarity.

facts and the practical consequences which flow from them can even pretend to be adequate.

Stalinism is the enemy of the revolution and the revolutionary tendency. It is not, therefore, surprising, to discover that the Right wing of the Party includes prominently both open and disguised political agents of Stalinism. There is Paul Porter, whose contribution to the pre-convention discussion was an elaborate pamphlet of Stalinist propaganda, subsidized through a block sale to the Workers' Bookshops—and still for sale both within and outside the Party. There is the group of members from the Wisconsin organization, whose letter setting forth the full Stalinist position on the Trials was featured in the *Daily Worker*, and distributed in Mexico during the hearings of the Sub-Commission of Enquiry into the charges against Trotsky. There is the Connecticut Committee of Correspondence which spends its energies demanding the expulsion from the Party and labor movement of all "counter-revolutionary Trotskyites". There are the other stooges in New York, Denver, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, busily doing their chores for the Kremlin assassins. All of these are the staunch and unwavering supporters of the Right wing.

On a subtler and more vicious plane, there is the Altman group proper, the basic character of which is strikingly revealed by its attitude toward the Trials. From the beginning, the Altman administration in Local New York has consistently sabotaged the work of the American Committee for the Defense of Trotsky, and has prevented the Party from undertaking the great political tasks imposed by the Trials. It has brought members up on charges for speaking on the question of the Trials, and has forbidden public meetings of branches to be held with the Trial as a subject. Immediately following the Chicago Convention, simultaneous with the culminating drive of the Communist Party to smash the American Committee, the Altman group undertook its own campaign, ending with the proposal to the Philadelphia N. E. C. meeting to have the Party withdraw its support from the American Committee. It is the Trials which today pose in its most naked form the whole question of Stalinism. And on the question of the Trials we find that the Right wing includes as an integral part of its forces those who flatly defend and support from the American Committee, who defend them in practice, with whatever verbal modifications.

The revolutionary Left wing does not permit itself illusions. It understands Stalinism and its agents and influences for what they are; it says so, and acts accordingly. Nor will the Left wing be silent. We will brand the destroyers of October, the executioners of the Russian Revolution and the generation which made it, the banner-bearers of social-patriotism and the betrayers of the world proletariat, for what they are. To be silent in the face of betrayal is to share in that betrayal. We speak plainly to the Right wing, to the Party and the entire Party membership. Our voice will be heard.

(3) The Fourth International.

The Spanish events, the Soviet persecutions, the approach of the new war, all place in the immediate foreground the international question. This is perhaps clearest of all in the case of the Spanish events. Just as the causes for the Spanish Civil War are to be found in world economy, so, even more obviously, does its solution depend upon internat-

2. - The Political Basis of the Crisis

(1) Spain

In the Spanish Civil War, the international class struggle reaches the point of highest intensity since the Chinese events of 1927. No one will doubt the crucial importance of what is happening in Spain. The success of the Spanish proletarian revolution would have the most powerful and immediate effect on the entire course of the history of continental Europe (and thus of the world), providing an impetus which would send the international working class surging victoriously forward. The defeat of the Spanish revolution would be a most terrible blow to the European and international proletariat.

The form of the Spanish Civil War, however, has not been that of a direct class struggle for power between the working class and its allies, on the one side, and the bourgeoisie on the other. The treacherous policies of the working class parties had, long before the Civil War broke out, subordinated the working class to the bourgeois coalition government of the Popular Front. In July of last year, Franco, believing in the necessity for a fascist as against a democratic form of capitalism for Spain, struck against the Popular Front régime. The reply of the workers to Franco was the immediate and direct mobilization of their own forces for military combat, and the establishment of their own councils and committees to direct and control the army, the factories, and the land in their own interest. The extension and consolidation of the power of the workers' committees would have involved the transfer of State power to them, the establishment of a workers' State on the basis of the committees which State alone could conduct to victory a revolutionary war against Franco in the interest of the Spanish masses and the socialist revolution.

The May Events in Barcelona

Such an outcome would not merely have defeated Franco, but would have meant the death of Popular Frontism and the Popular Front régime, which, as a bourgeois government, was irrevocably bound to the capitalist order. The Government, therefore, after the first heroic days, was compelled to carry out systematically the liquidation of the power of the workers' committees and of all organizations and individuals holding the perspective of the proletarian revolution, and thus to re-consolidate a firm bourgeois power on the basis of its own régime. In this betrayal of the Spanish revolution, the Government had the full assistance and participation of the Socialist and Communist Parties of Spain, tied also to the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois order through their Popular Frontist policy of class collaboration.

Nevertheless, the exact meaning of Popular Frontism in Spain was, until May, obscured by the fact that the Government, though carrying out its liquidation of workers' power and its re-consolidation of bourgeois power behind the lines, was conducting a military struggle of a socially progressive character against the Fascist armies of Franco. Revolutionary Marxists pointed out

that the necessity for full united action and material support of the Government in its military struggle against Franco—a necessity accepted and urged by all Marxists—was not in the least incompatible with, was in fact inseparable from, relentless political criticism of the policies of the Government and positive steps to protect and extend the basis of workers' power and the socialist revolution.

Until May, the point of view of the Marxists, and their predictions, seemed to many to be abstract and academic, swallowed up in the apparently sole immediate need for a united military struggle. Popular Frontism, it was felt, could not be quite what the Marxists stated, for was it not fighting stalwartly against Franco? They forgot that it was the workers who had begun the military struggle not along with but against the intentions of the Popular Front régime; and above all they forgot that the Government was fighting for and not against capitalism. Theories were even invented to justify political support of the Popular Front government in the eyes of Left wingers—such as the fantastic theory that it was a "provisional revolutionary government", a hybrid with no class nature.

In the first week of May, the blow fell that smashed through the masks. The revolutionary workers of Barcelona, in the ranks of the POUM and of the Anarchists, reaching the limit of their endurance of the provocations of the Government, rose to defend their right to bear arms, to publish their own press, and to struggle for socialism. The reply of Popular Frontism was unambiguous. The Catalan Government, reinforced after three days by the troops of the Valencia Government, and assisted by the past compromises, the timidity, and the outright betrayals of the leaders of the workers' own organizations, massacred the workers in cold blood.

The question of Popular Frontism thus tumbled completely down from any academic shelf. No longer could an answer be evaded by grandiose phrases on "united support of the struggle against Franco". No one disagreed about a united struggle against Franco, but it was now clear that this problem also was inseparable from the answer to another question that could not be avoided. The political attitude toward the Popular Front was now put in just this brutal way: On which side of the Barcelona barricades do you stand?

Spain and the Party Crisis

In our own Party there could be no doubt of the attitude of the answer to this question given by the answer of the Right wing, overwhelming bulk of the active members: they stand in unbreakable solidarity with the revolutionary workers of Barcelona, and against their assassins. But there is no doubt, either, of the answer of the Right wing, compelled by the Barcelona events at last to disclose itself: the Right wing stands on the other side of the barricades, along with the assassins of the Catalan workers. And the pitiful leadership of the N. E. C. and of Clarity tries, again, to shut its eyes; tries to straddle the bar-

ricades by deploring in one breath "all uprisings against the Government" and in the next "all suppression of the workers".

There is a close and interlocking connection between the Spanish events and the crisis in our own Party. In Spain, the Stalinists, Socialists and other brands of Popular Frontists, together with their allies of the "democratic" bourgeoisie, utilize their control of the Government in an attempt to betray the revolution and to destroy the revolutionary workers. At a less grandiose stage of the class struggle, their defenders and political bed fellows in our Party utilize their hold on the apparatus of the Party in an attempt to suppress and expel the adherents of the revolutionary tendency. The parallel is neither abstract nor accidental; it is exact and necessary. It is the Right wing in the Socialist Party which defends and support the assassins of the Spanish workers; and, on its own ground, carries on precisely the same type of policy in its campaign against the Left.

The parallel goes even further into details. In our Party, the leaders of the Clarity group have tried to maintain a balance between the revolutionary tendency and the Right wing. They beg for a "truce" in the Party, by which they mean in actuality the cutting off of all political discussion and criticism from the Left, and a free hand for the Right wing. They are sorry and upset by the "factional atmosphere". Now, if we turn to the position of Clarity on Spain, we discover that Clarity is the defender of Caballero, whose government they defined as "provisional revolutionary". It was, it should be remembered, under Caballero's regime that the Barcelona events occurred. But, it is argued, Caballero himself was against the suppression of the workers and their organizations, and against their massacre in Barcelona. Quite possible, if we are speaking of his personal wishes and preferences. But it was Caballero's policy from the beginning that entailed the liquidation of the conquests of the workers, prevented the extension of the revolution, involved the oppressive and provocative acts against the revolutionary workers and their organizations, and culminated in the Barcelona events. By "postponing" the problems of the revolution, by not fighting against the Popular Frontists and concretely for the workers' revolution, Caballero in reality turned the direction of events over to the Stalinists and outright reformists, and through them the bourgeoisie. He therefore shares fully in the responsibility for the assassinations of the workers. And his reward for having acted as a "left front" while the counter-revolution gathered headway, is, of course—to be thrust aside in favor of the more outright Negrin when he had served his purpose. And in just the same way, Clarity, by trying to "postpone" the conflict within the Party, by not fighting against the Right wing concretely for and alongside of the revolutionary tendency, turns over control to the Right wing. And their reward will be, like Caballero's, to be thrust aside when they have served their purpose.

(2) The Soviet Persecutions

The last year, and especially the last months, have witnessed a growing change in the problem of the Soviet Union. There is a certain analogy between this change and that involved in the problem of the Spanish events. Until a year ago, a wide range of opinion could be concealed under the general formula, "Defend the Soviet Union", just as a wide range hid under the slogan "Defend the Spanish workers against Fascism". Even where "Defense of the Soviet Union" was accompanied by certain criticisms of the Soviet bureaucracy, there was no guarantee of unanimity of opinion. Even Stalin was capable of criticizing Stalinism, and the most ardent "Friends of the Soviet Union" were eager to insist that they recognized certain "defects".

But with the Trials of last August and this January, and with the unexampled series of persecutions during the past few months, the question deepens profoundly. The Trials and persecutions pose a question of the same kind as the Barcelona events. It is no longer possible to skate around it on neat phrases. Stalin is either the legitimate heir of the October Revolution; either this, or he is the destroyer of the October Revolution. The middle ground has sunk away.

The truth is that, with the internal Soviet difficulties, the failures in the Five Year Plans, the smoldering discontent, and the approach of the new war, Stalin has been forced to disclose his hand quite openly. In an attempt to consolidate his own reactionary position against actual and potential threats, he has been compelled to undertake, within the Soviet Union and indeed on a world scale, the liquidation of the revolutionists. Within the Soviet Union he is annihilating physically the entire generation of those who made the October Revolution. Wherever, as in Spain, Stalinism influences the State power, the same process goes on—the physical annihilation of the revolutionists; elsewhere, as in this country, Stalinism must for the time being be content with the campaign to drive the revolutionists out of the labor movement. Stalinism is forced to take these measures against the revolutionists because of the nature and policies of Stalinism; because, within the Soviet Union, Stalinism is engaged in uprooting the last remnants of the October Revolution itself; because, on a world scale, Stalinism is no longer in any sense whatever a progressive force, but is now a major bulwark of capitalism.

Stalinism is not an Ally

The task of defending the October Revolution, the task of building the revolutionary party capable of leading the proletariat to the conquest of power, these are inseparable from the constant, intransigent and unrelenting struggle against Stalinism. Stalinism is not an ally seeking a common goal; but an enemy blocking the road. These are the simple facts, made brutally clear by the events of the past year. No program failing to base itself upon an understanding of these