

Truth About Barcelona's May Days

A Sensational Document on the Stalinist-Separatist Plot to Crush Labor

The CNT statement of facts behind the Barcelona May events after being written, censored in the Barcelona Press, names of prominent Catalans mentioned as conspiring being eliminated. It appeared in toto in "CNT" of Madrid June 14, as follows:

One fine day, May 4, there appeared at the telephone building of Barcelona guards and policemen, large number of them, under the command of Rodriguez Salas, Commissioner of Public Order. Why? Simply because the PSUC (Stalinist Party) and Estat Catala, who as parties had no share in control of the telephone system, needed it for their conspiratorial ends. And the CNT would not permit it, knowing what was being planned. In the telephone system, there functioned, since the beginning of the movement, (July 19) the control committee of the CNT-UGT. Furthermore there was a delegate of the Generalitat, representing the government. The attitude of Rodriguez Salas and Ayguade, ordering the guards, was illegal, as was demonstrated by the fact that the Council of the Generalitat recognized that the Commissioner and Councillor of the Interior had gone beyond their authority. At the same time as this was going on at the telephone building, there appeared barricades and guns at the headquarters of the PSUC and Estat Catala, then guns in the streets, and in view of these warlike demonstrations our comrades took the defense, supposing, and rightly, that the PSUC and Estat Catala were trying to take the telephone building, which was part one of their plot.

Plot Preceded May Events

But this explains nothing. The roots of these things must be dug up, in certain antecedents. There is a long-growing process of battle against our movement in Catalonia. The Communists, Estat Catala, and infiltrated elements had been working for some time to take away our prestige here and outside of our country. What everybody doesn't know are the strange coincidences that fit in with the May events.

Not everybody knows, for example, that already in January Casanovas (president of the Catalan parliament) Lluhi Vallesca, Xicotá Sancho, Polo and Ventura Gassols (prominent Esquerra members), were in France, working for "Catalan independence." It was a process of preparation similar to the one that went on during the Dictatorship. But with a difference: that then, Italian fascism intervened as an agent provocateur through Garibaldi, and this time, Mussolini operated through Dencas (former head of Estat Catala) the separatist agent provocateur of October in Catalonia.

Already in December there was a plot, which produced the execution of Reberter, Commissioner of Public Order, and the flight of Casanovas, president of par-

from the united front! Organize Committees of Workers, Peasants and Combatants in all enterprises, barracks and districts on the land and at the front.

"Down with the bourgeois government! Long live the revolutionary committee constituted by the delegates of the workers, peasants and soldiers!"

Such is our immediate program. The POUM, however, continues to minimize its differences with the CNT—and gets nothing for its pains. X.

We publish below an important document which has not yet appeared in English. The sensational charges made by the National Committee of the anarcho-syndicalist union, CNT, are all the more noteworthy since the anarcho-reformist leaders have to this day not broken with the People's Front, whose governments they are still begging to enter again.

On November 27, 1936, the chief organ of the CNT, *Solidaridad Obrera*, uncovered a plot to assassinate the working-class leaders of Catalonia, seize the power, declare an independent Catalonia and make peace with Franco on the basis of recognizing his rule over the rest of Spain. President Companys and the Stalinists at first ridiculed the charges; but forced to investigate the CNT charges were proven to the hilt. The Commissioner of Public Order, Rebert a member of the reactionary Catalanian Party, Estat Catala, was found guilty and executed by a firing squad. The Secretary General of Estat Catala and over a hundred of its leading members were arrested; some were convicted, others are still awaiting trial. Estat Catala, a split-off from the Esquerra—its leader, Dencas, and the Esquerra chief, Com-

liament, because his complicity in the frustrated coup d'etat was proven.

The separatists bourgeois, after all, could not swallow the fact that the proletariat had won a victory over the fascist insurrection which would deprive them of their wealth. And in search of a restoration, they began to negotiate with Italy, to provoke struggle which would give openings to foreign intervention, and facilitate the recognition, by some powers, of Catalan independence, at the same time as the anti-fascist front was weakened. To this plan everybody who wanted things to remain as they were on the 18th of July, could subscribe.

Intelligence Agent Murdered

In France, a conspiracy to bring about a truce was going on. Certain important people were involved. An intelligence agent, who was in the service of Spanish anti-fascism, had discovered a few of these combinations. He was given a commission to continue his investigations until he had irrefutable proofs, and this agent, when he was just about to complete his documentation, was murdered in Barcelona. By whom? He worked for the Government of the Republic. Therefore he was murdered by those who were conspiring, but who some how knew about his work. Let us recall that Ayguade was Councillor of Security and that he is a member of Estat Catala, and that he was already under founded suspicion of having been involved in the December plot.

On the 20th of April, Comodoro, leader of the PSUC in Catalonia, was in Paris. Among other people, he saw the secretary of Ventura Gassols, and a certain Castanero. Who is Castanero? "Police agent of the Generalitat"; in contact with a certain Vintro, secretary of Octavio Salto, journalist in the service of the fascists. He has also been seen with three prominent fascists who live in Biarritz and St. Jean de Luz, and he also maintains close relations with members of Estat Catala, and especially with Dencas and Casanovas. The former visits Castanero in his house and the latter is visited by

panys, had blamed each other for capitulating to the fascist regime of Gil Robles in October, 1934—was being directed in the plot by Dencas, from his refuge in Italy. It had found this quite compatible with taking part in the great parade celebrating the Russian Revolution!

But not only Estat Catala was implicated. Juan Casanovas, President of the Catalan Parliament and right-hand man of Companys, had, according to the government's declaration, "first toyed with the plot, but finally rejected it". Casanovas was permitted to flee to France, together with Ventura Gassols and other Esquerra members.

The CNT did not carry through its exposure of the plotters. "For the sake of harmony"—it was in the coalition government,—it let the matter die. With what result? That those whom the CNT should have completely destroyed in November 1936, machine-gunned the workers on May 8, 1937. Such is the inevitable consequence of class collaboration.

Now the CNT cries out against the bourgeois and Stalinist executioners of the Barcelona workers. But in those very May days of struggle, it was the CNT itself, and the POUM at its tail, that prevented the workers from

him. Polo, the other police-agent of the Generalitat, who was a confidential man for Badia, (late leader of Estat Catala) works in France under the orders of Vizaino, agent of the fascist counter-espionage that operates under Beltran y Musitu....

What do these mixtures of separatist and fascist elements mean? Can we not find the root of various provocations there? We are sure of it. And anybody who looks at the facts objectively will be sure, too. Let us add to these antecedents that the fascists, at the end of April, were preparing a landing operation that stretched from Almeria to Rosas. It was an operation on a big scale. It didn't come off because the necessary material could not be gotten. It was postponed to the middle of May. And if it has not been tried it is because of a certain incident that occurred and put all these plans in the hands of the police of a neutral country.

Moreover at the end of April, Estat Catala concentrated on the frontiers all the armed men it had in France. And another thing: on April 13, the official Gazette of the Republic published a list of the officers and subalterns, sergeants and privates of the National Republican Guard that were to be dismissed from the Guard, whose further punishment for treason would be determined by the results of an investigation. Nevertheless a captain, 4 ensigns, 14 lieutenants, 18 sergeants, 19 brigadiers, 23 corporals and 58 guards of those on the list were not discharged through the influence of Artemio Ayguade, the then Councillor of Security, and in the May events these men appeared at the head of the Ayguade forces.

Guards Under G.P. Orders

At about the same time great numbers of these guards were sent to the frontiers, and the chief of one important unit, instead of reporting to the Municipal Council at Figueras, went directly to the PSUC headquarters thus demonstrating that this was an armed force at the orders of the CP.

All these details tell us clearly enough that the Barcelona events were nothing more than the pre-

putting an end to their persecutions. "For the sake of harmony", the CNT called the workers off the street, told them to give up their arms. With what result? Thousands of the best CNT militants are in jail, many have been assassinated, and the last vestiges of their conquests of July 19, 1936 are in immediate danger.

Anarchism got its first great test in action in the Spanish revolution. It has revealed itself as hopelessly disoriented movement. Without a theory of workers' state power, it has become a bourgeois-ministerial party. Its glorification of trade unions as the basic institutions of social life has led it to deny the necessity of uniting the whole toiling population in the workers' and peasants' councils (Soviets). But the ideological bankruptcy of anarchism has not saved the CNT from the murderous onslaught of the Stalinists, who cannot permit any organization of the proletariat to exist under independent leadership.

The following document is a startling revelation of how the degenerate roots of Stalinism tangle in the dark with the sources of the counter-revolutionary peacemakers with Franco.

Ed.

pared spark to produce the clash. And that spark and clash were not generated by the CNT... From the first moment of the struggle the CNT intervened to try to cut it short. We found a solution that was accepted by everybody except the Communists, who played the game of constantly postponing all agreement and all action, so that the Valencia Government would have to send forces and take over the Administration of Public Order, as occurred. And when on Thursday morning, the CNT and UGT had ordered the return to work and the city seemed calm again, the battle began all over again, because the Separatists and Communists were stopping our comrades, searching them, tearing up their union books attacking CNT headquarters making defense necessary all over again. And when the first street-car of the Garcia line was going down toward the Plaza Catalunya, it was shot at by the guards and by Estat Catala, behind barricades on Paris and Diagonal streets, so that transportation services had to remain suspended. And the cars that went out to repair the broken street-car tracks were shot at, too.

Finally when on Friday morning the firing stopped at the hour agreed upon, shooting continued from the Communist and Catalanist centers, in order to provoke another battle. And Friday night, from the Commissariat on Paris street, Estat Catala and the guards shot at the car in which the secretary of the CNT National Committee was going to Valencia, notwithstanding the fact that it was an official government car he was traveling in. Our National Committee sent delegates to all our regional and local headquarters at once, to prevent a repetition of the Barcelona events, and also a delegation to the Aragon front, to prevent the soldiers from marching back from the trenches, which was accomplished....

CP-Catala Continue Repressions

Weeks after the movement, the barricades remained in front of the Communist and Separatist headquarters whereas ours were dismantled on Friday. A wave of terror, of blood, has swept

over the towns of Catalonia. Unpunished murder is on the order of the day. Our libertarian movement has been silent, not through cowardice, but through discipline and sense of responsibility while it lost the lives of its best militants. It has suffered with incomparable stoicism, the assault on the collectives, on the constructive labor of the proletariat.... Yet those guilty of so many crimes, shamelessly blame them on the CNT, and even, with all that barbarism, all that treason, still threaten to "punish" the CNT....

We have said enough to allow every man to judge for himself. Let it be noted precisely, that there is in Catalonia an amalgam of interests which coincide against us, Estat Catala, the Communists, and Esquerra, whose objectives are not yet identical but whose common interest it is to exterminate the CNT. This coincides also with Mussolini's interests, who therefore, through Dencas, gives them indirect support. And let it be stated exactly, that we do not concur in the stupid error of confusing Communists with Fascists. We say categorically that we do not believe the CP has the slightest contact with the fascists. But that is not the case with Estat Catala, and when they act together on the streets—who is doing the directing?

We realize with full responsibility the weight of what we are saying, but no one dares deny it, because the burden of proof at our disposal is so very great. Ayguade, Dencas, Mussolini, Casanovas, Ventura Gassols, Sancho, Xicotá, Polo, Castanero—there is the guilt for the bloody Barcelona events!....

The Nat. Com. of the CNT.

Dwyer Slated For Expulsion in Massachusetts

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. — Following on the heels of the charges made against left wingers in New York, which have already resulted in the expulsion of more than 50 comrades, the right wing in the Socialist Party of Massachusetts, headed by Alfred Baker Lewis, has broken loose with a series of charges that aim at splitting the party in the Bay State. Charges have now been filed against comrade John Dwyer, leading left winger who has been active for years in Massachusetts and as party organizer in up-State New York. The charges are the first of a series to be filed against all the left wing members of the State Executive Committee of the Party. The charge is that Dwyer's name appeared as signing the anti-gag rule resolution of Local San Francisco. Lewis claims that his basis for charges is the fact that the statement says "we reject the decision of the NEC"—although this very same statement has already been accepted by the National Office of the Party as the basis for a membership referendum, a call for which has been printed in the Socialist Call. Comrade Dwyer was apparently selected as the first to bring charges against because he is a member-at-large. The SEC has original jurisdiction over members-at-large. Lewis has filed notice that he would bring charges against the other members of the SEC in their own branches. Since their branches, which support the left wing, will not expel them, it appears that the Lewis-controlled SEC will proceed to lift the carter's of the branches involved.