

Anglo-French Aid to Spanish Loyalists is a Fraud and Delusion

By Felix Morrow

The Anglo-French proposal that Italy enter negotiations for withdrawal of blackshirts troops from Spain has been answered—by sending a crack squadron of bombing planes including Bruno Mussolini among its aviators; by landing in Cadiz and Algeciras more "volunteers"; by dispatch of reinforcements to the Libyan garrison adjoining British Egypt; and by the Italian note of October 9, declined discussions.

Democratic Myths

Can one doubt that Downing Street and the Quai d'Orsay knew in advance that this would be the answer? Yet their note was the occasion for hints, nudges and winks to the press, to the effect that they were firmly moving to put an end to Italy's role in Spain. The American press, swinging into line behind Roosevelt's new international policy, joined the Anglo-French press in playing up the Anglo-French note, thus bulwarking the myth of democratic indignation against Fascist intervention. Loudest hosannas of praise came from Stalin's press in Russia and elsewhere. Who can believe that the Stalinists are such fools as to have hoped for action at this point by Anglo-French imperialism? But they needed this pap for their following, in order to justify Stalin's subordination of all considerations to securing Anglo-French collaboration in the next war. The Negrin Government of Spain, likewise committed to fawning upon Eden and Delbos, joined in passing off the Anglo-French note as real currency.

In all likelihood Mussolini's refusal to withdraw his troops will not be countered by decisive aid to loyalist Spain from England and France. The French People's Front Government, now moving sharply to the right in its internal policies, may try to soothe the masses by accompanying its conservative trend with a gesture to Spain, such as formally opening the border. Even this gesture may never come to pass, unless a new strike wave dislodges the reluctance of the reins of the Anglo-French bloc—that must never be forgotten; that hold on the reins has been especially strong since Stalin's purge of the Red Army leadership lost French confidence (such as it was) in the Franco-Soviet pact.

Little Aid in Sight

Even if the border were formally opened, it would provide little more aid to Spain. Foodstuffs and non-military materials are and have been passing through, on the ill-equipped and constantly bombed railroad to Catalonia. A slight trickle of war materials has also been getting through with government consent, but much smaller in amount than the illegal war-supplies which have been coming through Southern France against the resistance of the government. Let us recall that this underground stream—including arsenal workers raiding stores of machine guns and light artillery, mechanics and aviators boldly stealing off with planes from military airports—reached its highest point in December, when the French government was most firmly set on the non-intervention course. The strangling of the

French revolution, after the revolutionary strike wave of last year, by the class collaboration policies of the Communist and Socialists, has also weakened this source of aid to the loyalists. It is unfortunately certain that the formal gesture of opening up the border to ordinary commerce will not be followed by shipments of armaments sufficient to defeat Franco.

Why? Because the Spanish question is but one factor in the conflict of interests between the imperialist powers and will not be "settled", if the imperialists of both camps have their way, until they come to the point of a general settlement of all questions, i.e., the imperialist war.

Break-up of Status Quo

Italo-German imperialism embarked on aid to Franco as but one of many moves designed to break up the European status quo in which Italian and German capitalism were strangling. German capitalism (handicapped in the world market by the chains of Versailles) and Italian capitalism (weakly industrialized, a poor relation at the carving up of the world at Versailles) had temporarily "solved" their problems by fascist destruction of wage levels and social services. Fascism, however, had done little more than enable them to prepare the armed forces required to make inroads on the broad economic domains of Anglo-French imperialism. Eventually their inroads must lead to war and all its dangers of defeat and revolution. But the only other alternative is an even more certain one: internal collapse and revolution. Germany marched to the Rhine, sought penetration in Austria, Hungary, the Balkans, Czechoslovakia. Italy sought expansion in Ethiopia and the Near East, spheres of influence in the Balkans. The Spanish civil war provided another area of penetration through support of Franco. Formal recognition of the Burgos regime irrevocably tied Italy and Germany to the fate of Franco.

Why should Italy retreat from Spain under Anglo-French diplomatic pressure, any more than Mussolini desisted in Ethiopia even when economic sanctions were decreed against him? (Had sanctions been effective, i.e., had they threatened Italy with economic collapse, Italy would have gone to war to break the economic blockade. Sanctions are "peaceful" only when ineffective.) If Anglo-French imperialism were to grant Mussolini big economic concessions—loans, colonies, markets, special access to raw materials—it is theoretically conceivable that in exchange Italy would withdraw support from Franco. But Anglo-French imperialism—look at the franc!—is in no position to buy off Mussolini, despite the spoils of Versailles, for capitalism as a

whole is declining. Without tangible rewards and the prestige accruing from them, Mussolini could not withdraw from Spain without dealing a fatal blow to the illusion of omnipotence he has built up at home, and on which his regime rests. Mussolini will not, cannot withdraw, except after a crushing military defeat, i.e., war. If through England, France or Stalin, the loyalists increase their armament, Mussolini will increase Franco's armament to save him from defeat. Such increase to either side, until the point where outside aid is thus qualitatively transformed into active, large-scale participation may, in fact, be the way the world war will start.

Struggle Inevitable

For the present, Anglo-French imperialists hold back from the war, although they must eventually fight to hold what they have. Until that moment, they avoid decisive showdowns, in Spain as elsewhere. They have permitted a trickle of aid to the loyalists from the Soviet Union because they do not want a victory for Franco, at least as long as he does not double-cross his allies.

Equally, however, they do not want a victory for the loyalists. First, because victory for the anti-fascists any time before the crushing of the Catalonian proletariat in May would have resulted in the victorious workers going on to the social revolution. As a matter of fact, even now, five months after the May defeat of the workers, after five months of Negrin's systematic curbing of the workers, important sections of the Anglo-French ruling class still doubt that a loyalist victory would not be followed by social revolution in spite of all the bourgeois-Stalinist bloc have done. Second, an imminent loyalist victory would be such a blow to Mussolini's prestige that he would plunge into war by sending really complete expeditionary forces into Spain and bottling up the Mediterranean with his air and navy forces.

The only time the Anglo-French bloc made a serious move in the Spanish situation was to safeguard the "life-line of empire" through the Mediterranean, by the Nyon pact; but that was only fortuitously part of the Spanish situation. Short of an open invasion of Spain on an imperialist scale of warfare, or a systematic blockade of the Mediterranean, Anglo-French imperialism will not stop Mussolini's aid to Franco.

Britain in Bilbao

Meanwhile, British interests have arranged with Burgos for exploiting the British-owned Bilbao region (their chief investment in Spain). The sudden collapse of the Basque defenses came after British banks had extended to Burgos, via Dutch connections, a credit of nearly ninety million pounds, to be secured by products from the Bilbao region. This fact was revealed by the authoritative Frederick T. Birchall in the New York Times of August 16.

Fifteen months of the war have conclusively proven what we said

Ratification Meet Starts N. Y. Mayoralty Drive of Left Socialists for Cannon

Circumstances beyond our control forced us to start our campaign late, yet the revolutionary socialist campaign is rapidly gaining momentum. Our campaign got off to a good start at the ratification meeting held on October 10. Our campaign platform and pamphlet will soon be out. Section campaign meetings are being planned to cover the neighborhoods. Special leaflets appealing to unemployed and trade union workers will soon be out. The final wind-up rally of the campaign will be held on October 31.

When the Workers Alliance decided to demonstrate on October 16th against WPA lay-offs and relief cuts, at the Central Relief Office instead of at City Hall, the Stalinist leadership explained that the former place had been chosen so as not to "embarrass" the Mayor whom the WAA has endorsed. The Progressive Group in the WAA, however, raised hell on the question and forced a change in the scene of the demonstration to City Hall. Won't the Mayor be embarrassed!

And speaking of embarrassment—those anti-Fascists who are supporting LaGuardia are at a loss to explain their candidate's insistence upon getting all pro-LaGuardia forces, behind George U. Harvey, Boro President of Queens and New York anti-Fascists' public enemy number one. The Fusion Party balked at supporting Harvey and put up its own candidate, Ambrose V. Acker, against him. But LaGuardia put on the screws and Acker withdrew at the last moment, bitterly denouncing LaGuardia for pushing Harvey. The ALP also refused to support Harvey, but strangely enough, put up no candidate against him. That leaves the field clear for "Hitler Harvey".

When the National Executive Committee of the S. P. endorsed Altman's line on LaGuardia, it tried to placate the Clarityites by a further ruling that, with the exception of LaGuardia, Local NY was not to support in any way candidates who run on capitalist party tickets. Now Altman has violated even this decision by having the SP candidate for Boro President of the Bronx withdraw and endorsing the ALP candidate, Nagler, who is also running on the ticket of Fusion Party, the most capitalist of capitalist parties in New York.

Last week Tammany Hall put the Mayor on the spot by having the Board of Aldermen override the Mayor's veto of the cut in the water tax. Fiorello almost threw a fit and shouted that he refused to make up the difference in the budget by cutting relief. That's what he says now. But just wait

at the outset: the "great democracies" will give no decisive aid to the anti-fascist struggle. The man-power and resources of the Spanish people will be added to from the outside only by independent aid from the international working class. But the Second and Third Internationals bend all their energies only to getting "their" capitalist governments to aid. If the energies of the Spanish masses last that long, the "great democracies" will utilize them as a "little Belgium" when the imperialist war finally breaks out.

till after Election Day. Of course the Mayor could easily solve the problem by taxing the swollen profits of the utility corporations—but maybe his Wall Street backers wouldn't like it.

The CP is also having its troubles. The Democrats pulled a fast one by manufacturing an Anti-Communist Party which filed as an independent party for Mahoney. The CP protested vigorously. And why not? When it comes to anti-Communism, the CP wants no amateurs in the field.

In a radio speech under ALP auspices, LaGuardia said, "I refuse to take any orders from any political bosses." Now when the ALP, after Election Day, comes to City Hall and pleads, "Please, Fiorello, tell the police to stop beating up our pickets," LaGuardia will be able to pass out cards with the above quotation on it.

Norman Thomas was quoted in the press last week as urging the defeat of Tammany Hall. Will some bright Clarityite please tell the class what Thomas said last year about the CP's slogan, "Defeat Landon"?

The Stalinist-controlled WPA Teachers' Union held a "symposium" on the campaign last week. There were four speakers—all for LaGuardia! The SP speaker, S. John Block, came out openly for LaGuardia. In response to a question from the floor he revealed that he didn't know that a split had taken place in the SP!

The "peepul" of NY should be getting ready for a big sell-out after Election Day. Neither major party has thus far said a word about transit unification although it is one of the most important municipal issues. According to the attorney for the Manhattan EL, both parties are agreed upon a modification of the now infamous Seabury-Berle plan which was rejected some time ago and which provided that the City buy the BMT and IRT lines at such a monstrous price as to necessitate an increase in the fare. Incidentally, both Seabury and Berle are 100 per cent behind LaGuardia.

Friday—Oct. 15th at 9 P. M.
"Stalinized Russia:
 will be discussed by
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