

Britain Takes Steps to 'Solve' Spanish Crisis By Recognizing Franco

By Felix Morrow

England took another long step last week in "solving" the Spanish question. Prime Minister Chamberlain announced establishment of formal relations with Franco. As small coin to "anti-fascist" sentiment, the diplomatic and consular officials were designated merely as "agents", but observers recalled the identical step was taken prior to British recognition of Soviet Russia. At the same time, Eden assured Parliament that a Franco victory

would not mean a regime hostile to Britain. Thus the masters of the Anglo-French bloc prepared themselves for a Franco victory, or a "compromise".

Britain's Policy

The fact is that the "democratic" imperialists never wanted a loyalist victory. They permitted a trickle of aid to the loyalists from the Soviet Union, because they did not want a victory for Franco while his Italo-German allies dominated his regime. British interests profitably employed the interim to arrange with Burgos for joint exploitation of the British-owned Bilbao region.

The main preoccupation of Anglo-French imperialists from the first was: how postpone the war, maintain the democratic myth, and yet begin to edge Hitler and Mussolini out of Spain? The answer was also obvious: a compromise between the loyalist and fascist camps. As early as December 17, 1936, the "unofficial" voice of the British Foreign Office, "August" stated that English agents were working for a local armistice in the North, while French agents were doing likewise in Catalonia. Even the social-patriot, Zyromski, stated in Blum's paper, *Populaire*, March 3, 1937 "Moves can be seen that are aiming at concluding a peace which would signify not only the end of the Spanish revolution, but also the total loss of the social victories already achieved."

All this is scarcely news. Even the official apology for Stalin's endorsement of the non-intervention committee, Harry Gannes' "How the Soviet Union Helps Spain," published in November 1936, admitted: "The Baldwin cabinet gauged its international action to retain the good will of the prospective fascist dictators of Spain [and] to prevent a victory by the People's Front. Sufficient has appeared to make positive the assertion that Britain has come to its own agreement with General Franco."

Joined Union of Bandits

But what mattered the fate of Spain, the future of the European revolution? All that weighed as nothing in Stalin's scales, as against the tenuous friendship of imperialist France. Said Gannes: "The Soviet could not come to an open clash with Blum on the non-intervention pact, because that would have played into the hands of Hitler and the pro-Nazi faction in the London Tory cabinet which was trying to provoke just such a state of affairs." Therefore? The Stalinists joined the bandits to prevent the clash!

Nor could Stalin join the London committee without white-washing it by pretending that it had its uses. Again we quote Gannes: "Rather than to allow collusion between Nazis and the Tory ministers to confront Spain, the Soviet Union strove to do all it could within the non-intervention committee to stop fascist arms from being shipped to Spain."

Likewise, we have no doubt, Stalin will strive to do all he can within the committee of compromise to get an "equitable" arrangement for the participation of the loyalists in the joint regime with the fascists. For that is England's next step: a compromise superintended by the imperialist powers.

That the loyalist government has already agreed to support a compromise with the fascists is attested to by a Stalinist source: Louis Fischer, in the *Nation* of September 4, 1937:

"A Spanish government representative who attended King George VI's coronation outlined, to Foreign Minister Eden, Valencia's plan for ending the civil war. A truce was to be declared. All foreign troops and volunteers serving on both sides would then be immediately withdrawn from Spain. During the truce no battle lines would be shifted. Non-Spaniards having been eliminated, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union were to devise a scheme, which the Spanish government pledged itself in advance to accept, whereby the will of the Spanish nation regarding its political and social future might be authoritatively ascertained."

Meaning of Plebiscite

At the best, such an arrangement would mean a plebiscite under the supervision of the European powers. With Franco in possession of territory including more than half the Spanish people, and with the Italo-German and Anglo-French blocs competing for Franco's friendship, one can easily foretell the outcome of the plebiscite: unity of the bourgeois elements in both Spanish camps in a Bonapartist regime, decked out at the beginning with formal democratic

rights, but actually ruling the masses through the armed might of Franco's armies. Such is the end of the road pointed out by the Anglo-French imperialists, and already accepted by the Negrin government. There are still objective difficulties in the way Franco hopes to win everything and is encouraged by Italy and Germany to fight on. But this much is clear. If not a complete Franco victory, then the best that can come from Anglo-French "aid" is a joint regime with the fascists.

Stalin will find this a bitter pill to swallow. However, a compromise with the fascists would be dressed up, it would nevertheless be a terrible blow to Stalinist prestige throughout the world. But rather than break with the main objective of Soviet policy today, the winning of an alliance with Anglo-French imperialism, Stalin will inevitably submit to a settlement dictated by them. He will "find a formula." The same arguments which were used to justify Soviet entry into the London committee, if accepted, would justify the final act of treachery against the Spanish people.

A New Alibi

Precisely in these last months, when the Anglo-French scheme was taking final shape, Stalin found a new alibi to supplement those provided by the Franco-Soviet pact and "collective security", with which to push the loyalists into still greater dependence on the Anglo-French bloc. Louis Fischer gave it crudely enough: "The Spanish war has assumed such large dimensions and is lasting so long that Russia alone, especially if it must help China also, cannot bear the burden. Some other nation or nations must contribute... If

New Struggles on Horizon As French Standards Fall

By Herman Stern

Since the glorious strike wave of May-June 1936, the French workers have experienced every conceivable attempt on the part of the People's Front government to rob them of their wage and hour victories.

Capitalism has two basic methods for intensifying the exploitation and oppression of the masses.

First, there is the more brutal and difficult system of Fascism. Fascism imposes a wage, hour and diet "standard" upon the workers and proceeds to enforce this with bullets and terror. The second is the more cleverly disguised, oftentimes equally as brutal, method practised by the bourgeois "democratic" and People's Front regimes.

Roosevelt and Blum "democracy", confronted with unmistakable manifestations of mass discontent, begin with the time-worn trick of deception, by championing the cause of higher wages and shorter hours. Then by skillfully constructed legislative measures, (inflation—the decrease of purchasing power) and by "peacefully" raising prices and increasing the cost of living, the living standard of the workers is systematically reduced. When the workers, understanding the true nature of bourgeois democracy, act to improve their condition the more naked form of boss-rule, fascism is introduced.

Let us recall that almost immediately following the gains wrested from the French bosses by the workers, inflation was an-

nounced by the Popular Front. By this the few dollars increase in wages gained through heroic strike sacrifice, and much more was quickly returned to the bosses. The Socialist and Communist Parties of France supported inflation as a means of saving French capitalism.

The communiqué of the French Government (Oct. 2), again wholeheartedly endorsed by the bourgeois-socialist Blum and by the Communists, spells a crushing blow at the living standard of the working class. Among other reactionary stipulations it provides that, "production will be accelerated—" (commonly known as the speed-up) and that the People's Front government will undertake "the alteration of the labor regime in the conditions foreseen by the law of June 21, 1936, on the forty-hour week." Then, as though in anticipation of how the French workers will welcome these new "laws" the People's Front forbids and illegalizes, "violation of collective contracts" (any strike can be designated illegal) and "occupations of the factories".

If French capitalism is not yet sufficiently secure, the People's Front will execute "the indispensable repression of all foreign agitators, whoever they may be". The militant French workers will never submit to this infamous sell-out without a fight. The next months will undoubtedly witness strong resistance on the part of the workers.

England would save Spain from Franco, Russia would perhaps be ready and able to save China from Japan." (*Nation*, October 16). Thus China becomes an alibi for not decisively aiding Spain, while Spain remains an alibi for not saving China! "If England would save Spain from Franco!"

The face of the Negrin government is turned not to the battle fronts but to London and Paris. After the fall of Gijon, Negrin broadcast. Not Gijon, but London, was what troubled him.

"Once more our foreign enemies are trying to take advantage of the ingenuous candor of European democracies by fine subtleties... Spain will accept any means of reducing the anguish of this country, but let the

democracies not be seduced by the Machiavellianism of their worst enemies and let them not again be the victim of a base decision."

Were not the consequences of this policy so tragic, one would roar with laughter at the picture of the "ingenuous candor" of perfidious Albion and the Quai d'Orsay. Fearing that he was to be abandoned altogether, Negrin was thus begging his imperialist mentors to remember that he "will accept any means of reducing the anguish of this country." Had he not already proved that, by his repressions of the workers?

Perfidious Albion calls the tune, and Stalin dances after him...

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