

Trotsky Writes on the Lesson Left Of the Civil War in Spain

(Continued from page 5)

THE DENOUEMENT

The dictatorship of the Stalinists over the republican camp is in its essence not long-lived. If the defeats conditioned by the politics of the People's Front will once more launch the Spanish proletariat into a revolutionary assault, this time successfully, the Stalinist clique will be swept aside with an iron broom. If, as is, unfortunately, more probable, Stalin will succeed in bringing the work of a grave-digger of the revolution to its conclusion, he will not even in this case earn thanks. The Spanish bourgeoisie needed him as an executioner but he is not at all necessary to it as a patron and a tutor. London and Paris on the one hand and Berlin and Rome on the other are in its eyes considerably more stable firms than Moscow. It is possible that Stalin himself wants to cover his traces in Spain before the final catastrophe; he thrust hopes to put the responsibility for the defeat on his closest allies. After this Litvinov will plead with Franco for the re-establishment of diplomatic relations. At this we have seen more than once.

However, even a full military victory of the so-called republican camp over general Franco would not signify the triumph of "democracy." The workers and peasants twice placed the bourgeois republicans and their left agents in power: in April 1931 and in February 1936. Both times the heroes of the People's Front ceded the victory of the people to the more reactionary and more serious representatives of the bourgeoisie. The third victory, gained by the generals of the People's Front, will signify their inevitable agreement with the fascist bourgeoisie on the backs of the workers and peasants. Such a regime will be but a different form of a military dictatorship, perhaps without monarchy and without an openly dominating Catholic Church.

Finally, it is possible that the partial victories of the republicans will be utilized by the "disinterested" Anglo-French intermediaries in order to reconcile the fighting camps. It is not difficult to understand that in the case of this variant the final remnants of the democracy will prove to be stifled in the fraternal embrace of the generals Miaja (Communist!) and Franco (fascist!). Once again: victory will go either to the socialist revolution, or to fascism.

It is not excluded, incidentally, that tragedy will yet at the last moment give place to farce. When the heroes

of the People's Front have to desert their last capital they will, before embarking on steamers and airplanes, perhaps announce a series of "socialist" reforms in order to leave a "good memory" with the people. Nothing, will help them. The workers of the whole world will remember with hatred and scorn the parties that ruined the heroic revolution.

The tragic experience of Spain is a threatening—perhaps the last warning before still greater events—addressed to all the advanced workers of the world. "Revolutions," according to the words of Marx, "are the locomotives of history." They move faster than the thought of half-revolutionary or quarter-revolutionary parties. Whoever lingers falls under the wheels of the locomotive, whereby—and this is the chief danger—the locomotive itself is also not infrequently wrecked. It is necessary to think out the problem of the revolution to the end, to its final concrete conclusions. It is necessary to adapt policy to the basic laws of the revolution, i.e., to the movement of the classes in conflict and not the prejudices and fears of the superficial petty-bourgeois groups who call themselves "people's" and all kinds of other fronts. The line of least resistance proves in a revolution to be the line of greatest disaster. The fear of "isolation" from the bourgeoisie means isolation from the masses. Adaptation to the conservative prejudices of the workers' aristocracy signifies the betrayal of the workers and the revolution. A superfluity of "cautiousness" is the most baneful rashness. Such is the chief lesson of the destruction of the most honest political organization in Spain, that is, the centrist POUM. The parties and groups of the London Bureau evidently do not wish or are not capable of drawing the necessary conclusions from the last warning of history. By this token they doom themselves to catastrophe.

But then a new generation of revolutionists is now being educated by the lessons of the defeats. It has in action verified the base reputation of the Second International. It has learned how to judge the Anarchists not by their words but by their actions. It is a great inestimable school, paid for with the blood of innumerable fighters! The revolutionary cadres now gather under the banner of the Fourth International. Born amid great defeats, it will lead the toilers to victory.

December 17, 1937.

Coyoacan, Mexico.

National Unity.

"War for the defense of American Imperialism" should be the slogan of the new "People's Front" formed by Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of State under Coolidge, Clarence Hathaway, editor of the Daily Worker under Stalin, and William Green, President of the A. F. of L. A manifesto calling on the "peace loving nations" to take "aggressive action" against "aggressor" nations was signed not only by the above mentioned "notables" but by more than one thousand others, the Daily Worker assures us. The name of the organization is the Committee for Concerted Peace Efforts.

"Yellow or Red"?

One of the delegates to the Chicago convention of the Socialist Workers Party recalled the St. Louis S. P. convention of 1917. "Are you Yellow or Red? Against the war or for it?" was the first question asked him. At that time, in Montana, his home state, it wasn't known that a man could call himself a Socialist and support capitalist War. "It wasn't long before we saw anyone who opposed the War being denounced as a German spy. Today its Japanese-Fascist spies and the Spargoos of 1937 call themselves Communists."

The "Robinson-Rubens"-Mystery

"The best laid plans of mice and men oft go astray," wrote Bobbie Burns. That this saying applies not only to mice but to rats as well is the lesson which the GPU and its stooges on 13th Street are learning from the Robinson-Rubens case. All clues, all trails, lead to the Stalinist lair. Their whole proposed frame-up apparently horribly mis-carried and now all that is left is to have the Lubianka firing squads and their counter parts abroad "correct" the mistakes in the usual Stalinist manner.

Believe it or not

The following lines appeared in a message of greeting from the Executive Committee of the Communist International to Joseph Stalin. Proof of this fact almost unbelievable, can be found in the December issue of the Communist International, page 882. "In- finitely beloved leader, friend and teacher, dear to the hearts of millions of working people... Together with Lenin you led the masses of the people twenty years ago to the storming of capitalism... Wherever the Soviet Republic was menaced by danger there it was that Lenin sent you and the people called for you Comrade Stalin. Obedient to the summons of the Party and the call of the people, you went to the defense of Tsaritsin and together with the unforgettable Kirov you did in truth defend it... you went forth to crush Denikin and Wrangel, and you did... Against the White-Guard Poles who had burst into Kiev... you drove them out... You crushed the enemy on all fronts... you organized the victory... Long live the leader of the working people throughout the world, comrade Stalin."

Austrian Militants Bitter at Stalin's "Asylum"

(W. H.)—Some six hundred members of the Austrian social democratic Schutzbund (defense organization) journeyed to the U. S. S. R. after the February 1934 street fighting in Vienna. Their trip to Moscow was organized as a triumphal march and they were feted as heroes wherever they went.

The Swedish newspaper *Sozialdemokraten* has only recently come into possession of information on how the heroic defenders of the Karl Marx apartments have fared since that time. Several of these Austrians have returned from the Soviet Union and have found refuge, for the time being, in Stockholm. They report that they had to put up a stiff fight for permits to leave the country. Some 130 requests for such permits remain undecided as yet in the hands of the Austrian consulate in Moscow. A number of the refugees was even forced to resort to the protection of the Austrian consulate against the G.P.U. One of the refugees, recently arrived in Stockholm, told the *Sozialdemokraten* reporter: "I would much rather go to jail in Austria than return to the U.S.S.R."

Another reports that upon his arrival in the U.S.S.R. he had

received a work and residence permit for one year. After the expiration of the year, the permit was renewed for only three months and finally, for only three days. Thereupon, the G.P.U. got what it wanted: he decided to leave the country.

A refugee coming from Khar-kov reports that ten members of the Schutzbund have been jailed there, among them one of the most famous of the Schutzbund leaders, *Erjautz*.

The Austrian February fighters were only an item in the propaganda apparatus for Stalin, nothing more. After they had been used up for propaganda purposes, they were subjected, just as other immigrants and the Russian workers themselves, to the arbitrary will of the G.P.U.

After the February struggles, a number of famous European and American writers appealed for aid to the Austrian workers and refugees. Mr. Ilya Ehrenburg, above all, praised the heroes of the Karl Marx Apartments in innumerable articles. Mr. Ehrenburg is at present busy vilifying Spanish revolutionists and French writers, possessed of more honesty and more of a social conscience than he, from his rooms in a pent-house hotel in

Barcelona.

Will these gentlemen, who took up the defense of the Viennese workers against the Heimwehr, look on quietly while these same workers are being destroyed in the jails of the G.P.U.? Did these gentlemen really rise to defend a cause at that time or were they merely in the pay of Stalinist propaganda?

If their present silence is to be taken as an indication, then the latter assumption is justified and the world will know how to evaluate protests and appeals from these sources in the future. We however, will not leave the Viennese February fighters to the mercy of Stalinist despotism!

The entire non-Stalinist labor movement must demand from Stalin the immediate release from his jails of all political refugees.

Modesty

"For my part I should like to assure you, comrades, that you may confidently rely upon Comrade Stalin. You may count upon it that Comrade Stalin will be able to fulfil his duty to the people, to the working class, to the peasantry, to the intelligentsia." The above remarks, inter-

persed with applause, were delivered by none other than Stalin himself and reported in the *Daily Worker* of December, 13.

Lenin, Liebknecht, Luxemburg Memorial Meeting

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(Nat'l. Org. Y.P.S.L.)

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