

Trotskyist Leader Seized In Paris; May Be Spirited To Spain

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recalled, but also the cases of Navaahine, former official in the Soviet embassy in Paris, who was shot down in cold blood in the Bois de Boulogne, because he was too well-informed about Stalinist illegal activities in France; the case of Ignace Reiss, former G.P.U. official who broke with the Stalinists and joined the Fourth International, and was subsequently lured to his death by G.P.U. agents in Switzerland; and the more recent case of Leon Sedov, son of Leon Trotsky, who, it was established by Paris police, had his home under constant surveillance by G.P.U. emissaries, who tried to snare him in a trap laid in Strasbourg and who, it is generally believed, perpetrated foul play resulting in his strange death after an operation performed upon him.

Portfolio Missing

Further significance is attached to the fact that two weeks before his mysterious disappearance, Klement reported to his comrades the fact that his portfolio, containing important documents, had been stolen by unknown persons who, by the very nature of Klement's work, could have been none other than operatives of the Stalinist intelligence department.

The stealing of the portfolio indicates that the G.P.U. had been trailing Klement for some time and was aware of his residence and his movements.

Rudolph Klement joined the revolutionary movement while still very young and was one of the most devoted and ablest comrades in the Trotskyist movement, with which he was associated from the very beginning of his activity in Hamburg.

Was Long Active

While Leon Trotsky was in exile in Turkey, Klement served for some time as his private German secretary, and also as translator of many of Trotsky's writings. The young militant also began to develop an independent political and literary activity for which he became well-known in the movement of the Fourth International.

Unable to return to Germany after Hitler seized power, Klement settled in France as a political refugee after Trotsky left Turkey. He then turned his activity to work in the International Secretariat of the Fourth International, devoting all his time and energy to it.

It is not surprising that the G.P.U. turned its sinister attentions to him, knowing the post of importance he occupied in the movement which Stalin is determined to crush even if he must use the foulest methods to accomplish his aim.

Public Warned

Every effort is being made by Klement's comrades in France to ascertain his exact present whereabouts and to delve into the manner in which the kidnapers seized and made off with him.

Meanwhile, the labor public is being warned against the possibility of a frame-up against the Trotskyists, in Spain, amalgamated, as is Stalin's custom, with the familiar "fascist elements" and adorned with the usual "confessions." It is known that Stalin needs such a "demonstration trial," not only in Moscow, but right now in Spain, in order to explain away or to cover up the succession of military defeats that have been suffered by the Loyalists as a direct result of the Stalinist policies which now dominate the Valencia-Barcelona government. The numerous Fourth Internationalists, members and leaders of the POUM and of the anarchist movement who are now held in Loyalist dungeons are undoubtedly scheduled to serve as the victim of Stalin's frame-up.

The kidnapping of Rudolph Klement can be understood only in light of this despicable plan.

FRENCH LABOR PASSIVE ON BASTILLE DAY

Just how deadening the effect of the People's Front policy has been for the French laboring population is well illustrated by the character of this year's Bastille Day celebrations in Paris. Not only did the demonstrations on July 14 take place under the sign of the reactionary Anglo-French orientation, but the participation of the working masses, so marked in recent years under the Popular Front, was entirely lacking.

Whereas in previous years, the Tricolor waved side by side with red flags, this year it "seemed to have been dominated by the criss-cross pattern of the Union Jack," according to the Times correspondent. The coupling of the red flag with the Tricolor in the treacherous demonstrations of national unity arranged by the People's Front in the past has merely paved the way to the coupling of the flags of the two sated European imperialisms in their progress toward the new world slaughter. Thus, through the symbolism of the flags displayed is mirrored the whole periphery of the Stalinist-reformist "line" for the French working class.

Workers Dormant

Of greater importance, however, than the symbolic flag display is the fact that this year's celebrations indicated a complete lack of interest on the part of the Parisian proletarians.

"Two years ago," writes the same Times correspondent, "it (the celebration) was held in the first flush of the uplifted front victory at the polls with Leon Blum as Premier. There was a great display of clenched fists and political animosity even to the extent of some disturbances. Last year there was less Popular Front and a far bigger display of military strength with Camille Chautemps as Premier. This year amid this prodigality of Anglo-French decorations there was a restricted but effective representation of the most modern and also the most picturesque elements in the army and with Edouard Daladier as Premier no political activity at all."

Separate Labor Parades

"How deep the change is," continues the same writer, "was best shown at the labor parade in the East End of the city during the afternoon. Two years ago it numbered hundreds of thousands, all with red banners singing the 'Internationale.' This year it was only a skeleton of that immense display of popular feeling and here was the most curious thing of all: there were no political speeches at the Place de la Nation (the scene of the labor parade) for this reason, that the leaders of the various Popular Front groups could not agree as to what they were to say . . ."

There, in a nutshell, is summed up the whole result of the Stalinist and reformist policy of People's Front betrayals: apathy of the working class, paralysis of labor's power of action, increasing discord instead of growing unity, subjugation of the interests of the proletariat to the needs of imperialist policy, self-imposed speechlessness in the face of mounting losses to the workers and in the face of an ever-growing war danger in which not even the much cherished Franco-Soviet alliance—in whose name all these crimes were committed—is safe from disruption. The fake "realism" of the People's Front is heading the French working class toward disaster. The fate of the entire European working class, of the world as a whole, rests on a rapid change to revolutionary realism in France.

Two Years of Civil War In Spain

SUMMING UP THE BALANCE-SHEET OF THE PEOPLE'S FRONT GOVERNMENT IN ITS "STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY," AND THE RESULTS OF THE POLICIES FOLLOWED BY THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS, STALINISTS, ANARCHISTS AND THE P.O.U.M.

Two years have passed since the fascist rebellion opened up the civil war in Spain. The anniversary is an occasion for drawing up, soberly and objectively, a balance-sheet.

The unflagging heroism and tenacity of the workers, shaken to the depths by hatred for the fascists whose dominance they rightly fear, are a constant source of inspiration to all those throughout the world who have not grown tired in the struggle for proletarian emancipation, who have not lost faith in the resourcefulness and militancy of the oppressed.

How many would believe, two years ago, that the Spanish workers would hold out so long against such frightful odds? The entire capitalist world surrounded them like a strangling noose—the fascist powers aiding Franco's armies directly, the "democracies" indirectly; with even the Soviet Union giving its skintight aid at such an enormous price (in gold and in political tribute) as to assure a fatal exchange to Loyalist Spain in the long run.

Men, Munitions at Franco's Command

On the side of Franco have stood the trained, professional soldiers of Spain, Morocco, Italy and Germany. The two last named poured an endless stream of arms, ammunition, artillery and airplanes into the fascist armies. On the Loyalist side, the forces were composed of at least ninety per cent of workers and peasants, not only untrained, but unequipped, starved out by the Great Democracies whom they were taught to regard as their friends and saviors. And if they have fought with such amazing endurance, and held out so long against a technically superior foe, despite all the other handicaps under which they labored, it is because the masses understand that the victory of fascism means an end to their unions, to their own parties, to their cooperatives, to their most elementary rights, means they will be reduced to the same gagged and fettered serfs tormented under the heel of Hitler and Mussolini.

The fact that fascism, with all the material and technical advantages on its side, has been unable to crush the workingclass after two years of continuous assault, is living proof that, properly organized, the workers in Spain give the lie to the faint-hearts, dilettantes and do-nothings who poison the minds of the masses with the thought that fascism is destined to win anyhow. Militancy, courage, epic heroism, endurance, invincibility—all these the working class has, and is ready to display them in action once the reins of restraint with which its leadership checks it are released or broken.

Precisely there lies the fatal weakness of the struggle against the fascists. The leadership of the Spanish working class has been weighed and found wanting, and that regardless of the standard by which they are judged. A summary of the situation in the camp of the Loyalists demonstrates to all who are willing to see and to think that the Spanish workers would never have suffered defeat in one battle after another, and now be threatened with defeat in the war as a whole, were it not for the disastrous policies pursued by their own leaders. If the war should end in that horrible outcome which every worker even hates to think about, namely, the victory of fascism, it will have been due not so much and not even in the first place to the military superiority of Franco as to the course pursued by the traditional parties and groups of the labor movement.

People's Front Defends Capitalism

The struggle of the Loyalists has been conducted under the leadership and policies of the so-called People's Front, to which all the old parties and groups—social-democrats, Stalinists, anarchists, POUMists—have adhered to one degree or another.

In a word, the People's Front has operated on the theory that the fight against fascism can be conducted only on the basis of a preservation of capitalist democracy and private property, and by methods which correspond to them and to the principle of acquiring and maintaining the friendship of the capitalist democracies, France, England and the United States.

The revolutionary criticism of the People's Front, which we have advanced even before the civil war began, may be summed up just as briefly: the failure to pursue a proletarian policy, the policy of the militant class struggle, will not only not bring the working class closer to socialism and emancipation, but will result in not even preserving the traditional institutions and rights of bourgeois democracy. In other words, the People's Front policy will defeat its own avowed aims and facilitate the triumph of fascism.

Fruits of the People's Front

Let us now examine the fruits of the People's Front policy. It is a primary duty to do it thoroughly, for tomorrow the workers in other countries, the United States not excluded, will face substantially the same problems as the workers of Spain.

When the civil war broke out, the workers realized, some consciously and some instinctively, that it was not a struggle between the abstractions of "democracy" and "fascism," but a class war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Except for a handful of politicians, the latter was ranged entirely on the side of Franco. The workers thereupon proceeded spontaneously to establish a government of their own, an army of their own, a police of their own; in one center after another, above all in the industrial heart of Spain, Catalonia, they took over the industries and the land.

Did the People's Front government consolidate these gains or did it destroy them? The difference between the Bolshevik government in Russia after 1917, which was confronted with the same problem of crushing the counter-revolution in the course of a civil war, and the Loyalist government lies precisely in the fact that the former solidified the rule of the masses, while the latter exploded it.

Government Destroyed Militias

The popular and democratic anti-fascist militias, which offered the most effective resistance to Franco and Mola, which successfully defended Madrid, which kept the fascists in check and registered the smallest number of set-backs, has been destroyed completely by the Loyalist government. Its place has been taken by an army based upon the old capitalist style and commanded in the old way. The anti-fascist patrols

which preserved order at the rear, have met the same fate. Also demolished are the frontier police first set up by the masses.

The Central Council of anti-fascist militias, which, in centers like Barcelona, democratically expressed the will and enthusiasm of the masses and which was the embryonic government of the workers, has been crushed—not by fascists, but by the People's Front government, which restored the power to the bourgeois Generalidad whose power proved to be such a myth when the civil war broke out and for months thereafter. In this, the People's Front leaders carried through the same counter-revolutionary work that was accomplished by the German social-democrats after the November 1918 revolution, when they gradually smashed and dissolved the popular Workers' Councils and restored the power to the German bankers, industrialists and landlords.

Of workers' control of the factories, so widespread and promising in the early days of the civil war, there is scarcely a trace today. Where the People's Front could not get the workers to surrender their positions by means of chicanery and deception, it ousted them by means of armed force. The same holds true of the collective farming inaugurated by the radical elements among the peasants. In one large center, Aragon, the collective farms and the dominance of the militant peasants were shattered by as savage a punitive expedition—under command of the Stalinist, Lister—as might have been carried on by a fascist army of invasion.

Loyalists Suppress Democracy

If the socialist beginnings and aspirations of the masses have been rudely trampled under foot by the People's Front, what, at least, is the situation with reference to democracy? When the civil war broke out, Spain was the most democratic country in the world, with all sections of the toiling population enjoying the greatest freedom of action and expression. In the two years that have elapsed, the Loyalist leaders have steadily brought their political regime closer to that which the fascists have already established in their conquered territory and which they seek to extend throughout Spain.

The People's Front spokesmen declare that they are fighting for nothing more than democracy. But while they have suppressed the embryonic Soviets of the workers and peasants, they have at the same time reduced the old Cortes (Chamber of Deputies) to an empty shell, and are now ruling Loyalist Spain as a military dictatorship. In two years, there has not been a single opportunity for the masses to exercise their democratic right of suffrage—and a right which you are forbidden to exercise is no right at all. The argument that "we are in the midst of a civil war," is fraudulent from beginning to end. In the midst of an even more violent and extensive civil war in Russia, elections to the Soviets continued to take place wherever the country was free from reactionary domination; and the Soviets continued to meet for the purpose of freely discussing and deciding all the important questions of the day.

The rights of free speech, free press, free assembly and of organization are now honored in the breach rather than in the observance. It is significant that all the professional critics of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, who find "inacceptable" what the Bolsheviks did to limit or deny democratic rights to reactionaries in the interests of socialism, are among the most passionate apologists for the People's Front leaders in Spain, who have abolished the democratic rights of revolutionists in the interests of capitalism. What sort of monstrous hoax is all this blather about the "fight for democracy," when the POUM, a political party of the workers which rendered yeoman service in the fight to stem fascism, is outlawed as a party, when its leaders are flung into jail, confined without specific charges, and kept in prison for months on end without being brought to public trial? when the prisons of Loyalist Spain are filled with more working-class victims of despotism than are to be found in all the dungeons of Franco? when the anarchist and left-wing socialist periodicals are either suppressed outright, or else permitted to appear only with wide spaces carved out by the censor? when revolutionary militants, whose only crime is opposition to Stalinist-People's Front capitulation, are seized and imprisoned without the slightest pretense to legal procedure, kidnapped in the dark of the moon by extra-legal murder-bands who operate with the approval of the government, or assassinated by thugs who work with impunity in the knowledge that the "democratic" government will protect them?

British and French Interests Rule

The truth is that the People's Fronters have completely subordinated their own declared fight for "democracy" to the interests of the two countries without whose approval they dare not breathe or budge: Great Britain and France. The interests of the two "Great Democracies" are exclusively imperialist. They never were and are not now interested in any nonsense about "democracy" in Spain. The praise which they received from the People's Front as "our democratic friends and patrons" was grist to their mill for, with such a noble title, they found it all the easier to carry out their foul designs without fear of consequences from their own working class.

Among the greatest crimes of the social-democrats, Stalinists and anarchists in Spain has

been the perpetration of the great deception: the presentation of France and England—ruled by hoary, cynical handits—as Great Democracies upon whom the Spanish workers could depend. The "democracies" never helped in the struggle against fascism, for their fear of a German-Italian domination of the peninsula exceeded a hundred times by their fear of a successful proletarian revolution in Spain. If France and England allowed a paltry dribble of arms to seep into Loyalist Spain, it was only as part of their policy of upholding the lords of the People's Front just as long as it was required to crush the independent and revolutionary movement of Spanish labor—that greatest of all threats to British and French imperialism in Spain.

Now that this dirty job appears to have been accomplished by their People's Front agents, London and Paris come out more openly with their pre-determined plan to bring about "peace in Spain"—on the backs and bones of the Spanish workers and peasants. The hideous farce of "non-interventionism"—participated in and supported by Stalin-Litvinov and Co.—is drawing to a close. England's pact with Italy is a public bet on the victory of Franco, and France, that other Great Democracy, trails behind as usual.

Leaders Continue Fatal Policy

Do the leaders of the People's Front at least draw up a balance-sheet now of their policy of dependence upon the "democracies"? Not for a minute, for such an action would be fatal to them in their revelations. It is true that they no longer acclaim their Democratic bosses so loudly; they are no longer so pat in their assurances of the salvation that is to be expedited from Paris and London. But while their enthusiasm has now been ritualized into a whisper, they nevertheless continue to base their policies on the commands and concerns of British and French imperialism. They are not leaders of the Spanish people; they are humble footmen of The City and the Paris Bourse.

Spain has not been merely the scene of heroic struggle of workers and peasants against fascist barbarism. It has been, especially in the last two years, a vast testing ground of the parties, currents, tendencies, policies that exist in the labor movement. An appraisal of all of them is not only possible, but inescapable—for the workers in every country must make a choice among them by learning the rich lessons of the events.

The social-democrats, the party of the Second International, have done nothing but seek to add another tragedy to the long list in their record, from which they refuse to learn anything. The social-democracy is the agent of the bourgeoisie in every country and when, as in Spain, the bourgeoisie no longer requires its assistance and seeks to dispose of it, it seeks the service of capitalism elsewhere—in France and England. Its motto, like that of the Prince of Wales, is "Ich dien"—and "it serves" capitalism.

Second International Impotent

Just think of an "International" whose comrades are engaged in slitting each others' throats! Comrade Leon Blum, as prime minister of moderate France, did his level best to strangle comrades Largo Caballero and Juan Negrin, prime ministers of democratic Spain. Later, comrade Negrin proceeded to suppress the periodicals, imprison the supporters, and disrupt the trade unions of comrade Caballero. All three of these "socialist" statesmen are members and leaders of the same "International"! What then is the Second International for? It is an arena in which the Comrade-Ministers, acting in behalf of their respective capitalist classes, drive the most comradely knives into each other's backs. On May Day, they appear before the workers and declare: "Here are our wounds honorably won in battle. Long live the brotherhood of man!"

Caballero, who crushed the Barcelona workers in the 1937 May Days by sending a punitive expedition equipped with shiny Russian rifles supplied by Stalin; Negrin and Prieto, the willing tools of British and French imperialism; Leon Blum, and all the other gentlemen of the Second International—they have demonstrated that they are not only incapable and unwilling to lead the proletarian struggle for socialism, but are just as incapable of leading a fight for the democratic rights of the masses under capitalism. For the latter can be fought for only by socialist methods, by methods of the class struggle, and this whole crew has the same abhorrence for these methods that the pious Christian has for Beelzebub.

Stalinist Bloodhounds Active

About the role of the Stalinists, one can write only after overcoming a feeling of physical revulsion. They have found no course too abominable, no arguments too mendacious. In their capacity of servitors of the Russian anti-Soviet bureaucracy, which is in turn completely bound up in its policy of currying favor with the Democratic Imperialists, they have been in the forefront of the movement to exterminate the proletarian revolutionists and the socialist hopes of Spain. No capitalist could be more candid and zealous in his defense of the sanctity of private property than has been the "communist" party in Spain. With hysterical frequency, like people with a guilty conscience, the Stalinist leaders have proclaimed their determination to prevent the workers from going beyond the confines of

capitalism to a new social order.

Compared with them, Scheidemann and Noske, the blood-hounds of capitalism in the German revolution of 1919, were amateurs and dilettants. Under the latter's reign, they only protected the Junkers who murdered Luxemburg and Liebknecht. The Stalinists assassinated Berneri, Barbieri and Nin with their own hands. The prisons of the Loyalist Democracy were not large enough for them; they set up their own prisons, their own torture chambers, their own G.P.U. to ferret out revolutionists, to hound them, to slay them. Impatiently brushing aside the advocates of the gradualist method, they themselves sought to oust the workers from control of industry and plants—as in the Telephone building last year—by armed force; they sent their own troops to crush the democratic Aragon Council of peasant collectives in a manner that left little to be desired or added by Britain—or France. With might and main, they have prepared the soil of Spain for a totalitarian victory.

Anarchists Display Bankruptcy

The anarchists in Spain were so powerful a force that an enormous responsibility rested on their shoulders. In no other country could they be or were they put to the same test as in Spain.

The civil war swept them completely off their feet and lost them all their bearings. What good is a philosophy, a policy, which is cast to the winds the minute the first shot is fired? The anarchist leaders—more accurately, the bureaucracy—violent verbal opponents of "the state," who made a political living for years by denouncing social-democratic parliamentarism, proved to be not one whit better than the age-old objects of their scorn. They rushed pell-mell into a government (O horrors!), and into a bourgeois government at that, one consecrated to the perpetuation of private property. The "anarchist" ministers piled up a most disgraceful record during their incumbency. And when they were no longer needed by the reaction which thereupon kicked them out unceremoniously, they spent the rest of their time insisting upon the fitness and necessity of having their ministerial posts restored to them. Yes, the "anti-state" anarchists!

As if this was not disgraceful enough, the anarcho-syndicalist bureaucracy sought to brazen out its indefensible and corrupt course—as it does to this very day—by the time-worn device of reference to the truly glorious record of devotion, militancy, selflessness and revolutionary spirit of the anarchist ranks. In the same manner, the Stalinists covered up their betrayal of the Chinese revolution in 1927 by pointing to the deathless exploits of the Chinese masses who mistakenly followed them.

Events Teach Anarchists Nothing

And throughout the world, you must look with a microscope in the various anarchist periodicals, for a single strong line of protest against the perfidious Montsenys and Olivieras, for a single serious re-examination of the anarchist dogmas, to say nothing of the practical policy of the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. in Spain. Everywhere, the tiny anarchist groups bask in the reflected glory of the epic feats of the anarcho-syndicalist masses in Spain, and eagerly hope that nobody will notice the black, ineradicable mark of bankruptcy of anarchist policy. The hope is vain, for nothing can hide the fact that official anarchism in Spain proved to be nothing but a whimpering auxiliary of the bourgeois People's Front which inexorably smothered the proletarian revolution.

Centrism too was tested in Spain, on a larger scale than ever in recent years, in the form of the POUM. This substitute for revolutionary Marxism proved to be totally inadequate. Appealing to all possible considerations—geographic, biologic, national, temporal, spiritual—to emphasize the meaningless platitude that "Spain is not Russia"—the leaders of the POUM themselves helped to destroy the promising movement they had organized. Instead of organizing an intransigent struggle against People's Frontism—that is, the subordination of the independent working-class movement to the bourgeoisie and its rule—they clung pathetically to it. Like the anarchists, they developed a feverish ambition to become ministers in the bourgeois government, and lamented bitterly when their only Catalonian cabinet member was impolitely dismissed. Instead of combatting the anarcho-syndicalist prejudices among the masses, they confined themselves to negotiations and never-realized combinations with the anarchist bureaucracy at the top. All their revolutionary intentions were nullified by their incurable waverings between the policy of class struggle and class collaboration. The bankruptcy of centrism in Spain is no less profound and thorough-going than the collapse of the Stalinist, social-democratic and anarcho-reformist movements.

Class Action Only Road

Spain hammers home again the first lesson of our epoch which is to be read out of all the great events our generation has witnessed. For the working class, there is no substitute for the policy of militant and straightforward class struggle. This is the simplest and wisest and profoundest teaching of Marxism, confirmed a thousands times over in life. The working class that hands over the job of fulfilling its tasks to another class, to the bourgeoisie, is doomed to defeat from which not even the most miraculous feats of courage can redeem it.

Of all the currents in the labor movement, only the Fourth International, the Trotskyists, despised by all the bureaucrats who despise and fear the revolution no less, stand consistently and aggressively for the policy of class struggle. It is being tragically and negatively confirmed by the events of the past two years in Spain, just as it was magnificently and positively confirmed in Russia twenty years ago.

From its setbacks and defeats, as well as from its victories, the working class will learn. It absorbs the lesson slowly, with painful slowness at times, but all the more surely for that. And when that policy has triumphed in the ranks of the workers, their triumph over all enemies and obstacles will be a comparatively simple matter. We look forward to that time with confidence. Our every effort must be bent to bring it closer.

NOT GUILTY

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE CHARGES MADE AGAINST LEON TROTSKY IN THE MOSCOW TRIALS

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50 PICKETS INJURED IN NORTH CHICAGO POLICE ATTACK

As we go to press, the report comes of the brutal assault made upon 500 pickets of the C.I.O. on strike against the Chicago Hardware Foundry of North Chicago, by two hundred deputies armed with clubs and tear-gas.

How heavy the odds were against the peacefully picketing workers is indicated by the fact that at the end of a twenty-five minute attack by the police and deputies, more than 50 pickets, including six women, were overcome by the fumes from the tear-gas bombs; one woman was trampled in the scurrying of the

crowd; and only one deputy sheriff was slightly injured.

Seven of the pickets were jailed.

The striking hardware workers are all members of the Amalgamated Iron, Steel and Tin Workers of North America.

The police, at the service of the employers as usual, set up their lines along the full length of the company property, some two and a half blocks. They commanded the pickets to leave the grounds, but the workers, insisting on their rights, refused to comply with the orders of the

uniformed strike-breakers. The tear-gas attack followed.

Following on the heels of the Hague dictatorship in Jersey City, and the assaults on the C.I.O. in New Orleans, San Antonio, Newton (Iowa), and elsewhere, the bestial attack upon the North Chicago strikers gives added weight to the imperative necessity of labor everywhere uniting its militant strength in Labor Defense Guards, for the purpose of protecting its life and rights from the reactionary brutes of capitalism, in uniform or out.