

IN THE WORLD OF LABOR

By Paul G. Stevens

Ukrainian Social Democrats Leave 2nd International for ... Nationalist Intrigues

Last September's crisis showed up the so-called Labor and Socialist International (Second International) as a pretty hollow shell. Shortly after Hitler's reorganization of Czechoslovakia, the Czech social democracy quickly crumbled away from even this shell. It is now becoming moth-eaten in addition to hollow. The latest recruits to post-Munich nationalism within its ranks are the Ukrainian social democrats.

Meeting in conference at Prague (significantly enough) on Nov. 5 last, the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party adopted a resolution withdrawing from the Second International. The L.S.I. Secretariat has just made this resolution public. Stating the view that the Ukraine has undergone "profound modifications" in the last twenty (!!) years which make the reorganization of a new party necessary, it declares that, in order to build such a party, they "must begin by avoiding all ideological obstacles" and therefore withdraw from the L.S.I.

Obviously, the "modifications" of the last twenty years boil down concretely to the revival of Ukrainian nationalism under the aegis of Hitler's Ostorientation (drive to the East). The Prague resolution is, therefore, merely an announcement of the unhampered participation of the Ukrainian social democrats in the newly-hatched national intrigues. The Second International pours grist to the mill of the Fascists in even more than an ideological sense.

French Party of Fourth International Forges Ahead

As reported here last week, a minority of the comrades in the French section of the Fourth International joined the Socialist Workers and Peasants Party (P.S.O.P.) in their desire to bring about a fusion of forces between this sizeable split from the French social democracy (which is recruiting adherents from other groups who have become disillusioned with the Popular Front) and the Fourth Internationalists. This minority took the drastic step it did because of its anxiety over the time element, regretting that the leadership of the P.S.O.P. had not reacted favorably to proposals for a formal unification put forward by the Internationalist Workers Party (P.O.I.), the official Fourth International party in France. The latter is proceeding with its campaign for such a formal joining of forces with even greater vigor than before.

Joint meetings between P.O.I. and P.S.O.P. groups for the purpose of carrying on united front actions are being held regularly in many parts of Paris, in the Citroen and Renault factories, and in many cities in the provinces. Among the latter, the activity of the P.O.I. comrades in Strasbourg is particularly noteworthy.

In Strasbourg, chief city of Alsace, our comrades have had a particularly hard task in combatting the Daladier policy of rapprochement with Hitler Germany. In Alsace, the German nationalists have been bringing tremendous pressure to bear in favor of the Daladier regime.

On the Line ... with Bill Morgan

This week we were all on the line like ducks in a flood. More than fifty thousand New York workers can't be wrong and the Nazis who shivered inside the Garden were right glad that more than 2,000 of La Guardia's cossacks were on hand to save them from the workers' wrath.

Riot guns, tear gas bombs, blackjacks and clubs were the instruments prepared to keep the workers from smashing that meeting and believe me, the weapons were certainly needed.

Eight thousand Nazis stayed away from the Garden. It is to be regretted that they paid in advance for their tickets. And those who did get in escorted by the brass buttons—sat on the edges of the seats and smoked cigarettes to steady their nerves. The mere "pop" of a photographer's flash bulb gave the tin horn soldiers the jitters.

No Concentration Camp For These Workers!

The boos of the picket line penetrated the Garden and the noise was very disturbing to the self-styled "defenders of democracy." This time they were saved by the police but we know they will think twice before trying to hold a meeting like that again.

On the line outside the Garden were young workers who have no intention of landing in a concentration camp. They were among the best fighters. They were determined to get around to the Nazi gangsters and it took the largest gathering of police in the city's history to hold that line.

We saw one young comrade, who was about four feet one and who weighed slightly more than a copy of the Communist Manifesto. He was defending himself from two huge plain-clothesmen with a piece of gas pipe which he had just picked up. The pipe was about two and a half feet long and every time he swung it he almost fell on his face—but the effort was worth the attempt. The dicks kept a safe distance from that little dynamo.

A sturdy red-head with a voice like a fog-horn and two stout elbows, pushed and jeered and jabbed at the cops who were only too anxious to steer clear of her. She was continually up front and ever ready to trade sock for sock. There must be something in the old saying about red-heads.

Another youth—a slight but determined Yipsel—wore a cap stuffed with paper. On the sidewalk he just happened to find a rolled-up newspaper which he used with skill and speed. Twice, during the rout of the police line on 51st Street, he turned to his comrades and said, "See, they are yellow. They are waiting for the mounted cops to help them."

One old worker, a member of the Social Democrats, rushed into the fray like a youngster. Later he remarked, "I'm an old man and my doctor shouldn't see me here but the kids are making me realize that I must fight. It would be better to have on my tombstone 'He died from hitting the fascists' than 'He died from the fascists hitting him!' I am old. I can give my life—the youth should be saved."

Another social democrat stood on the edge of the crowd and sneered. "Bah! What can you gain from this fighting? It only provokes trouble. . . ." The answer to that came from a girl in pigtail

Our comrades have carried on a highly successful campaign against it and for the revolutionary position of the Fourth International. A printed paper, Die Rote Fahne has appeared as the official organ of the group. 12,000 leaflets were issued by the group calling for the November general strike and same amount of leaflets were issued drawing the lessons of the strike's betrayal by Jouhaux, Blum and the Stalinists. Both the Rote Fahne and the leaflets got an excellent reception from the German-speaking working class of Alsace. As a result the group has grown rapidly, drawing behind its leadership the militants of the P.S.O.P. Needless to mention, the German nationalists and clericals are pouring out their daily wrath on our comrades and their valiant paper, calling for its suppression by the Daladier government.

Behind the "Appeasement Policy" of the Chamberlain Government

Some weeks ago we pointed to the opposition of British labor against the "National Register" as one important factor in explanation of what appears to be capitulation before Hitler on the part of British imperialism. Another phase of the background behind Chamberlain's "appeasement policy" is the situation in the British colonies, above all, in the largest of the colonies—India. Seething rebellion, cropping to the surface in powerful spasms, marks the scene there. Here is a brief review of only a select list of incidents:

Burma, separated from India against the will of the people in 1930: In the past three months a mass movement has swept the province against the new, oppressive constitution. It has just forced the resignation of the pro-British Ba Maw ministry. But not before 200 Burmese workers and peasants had lost their lives in street fighting with British troops.

Bengal, seat of the completely British-owned jute industry, the largest in the country: In 1937, jute workers around Calcutta and other cities along the Ganges river spent 10 million working days on strike! For three months they have conducted a general strike against the reactionary Huq ministry and its Jute Ordinance, fixing prices in the interests of mill-owners and native landlords and reducing wages beyond the endurance level. Now word comes that they have forced the withdrawal of this hated law. Strikes have been renewed wherever workers were locked out from company-owned homes.

Koera: Demonstrations of 20,000 peasants (Kisans) are an ordinary occurrence in this district of Bihar province. Recently such a demonstration brought about the release of an arrested leader, Sharma.

Ranpur State: A demonstration against the Rajah resulted in the shooting down of 2 demonstrators by a British officer. He was killed instantly. 5 months of the year are spent in forced labor in Ranpur!

Rajkot: Militant demonstrations have forced a signed agreement between the Takhore (local ruler) and his feudally oppressed workers. His British adviser has been driven out.

These are only a few samples of the Indian ferment. Is it any wonder Chamberlain is for "appeasement"?

and carrying school books under her arm. "I suppose you want more educational discussions on the nature and theory of the class-struggle. . . ."

One worker—a Negro—was arrested for "cruelty to animals. . . ." Nothing was said, however, about the officials of the city sending cops mounted on horses to ride down pickets and bystanders. And nothing was said about using horses to protect the Nazi scum. The worker was thrown in the jug and sapped by the bulls but, of course, this was not cruelty in the eyes of boss justice.

Newsreel pictures show mobs of police beating unarmed men and women and kids—but this is not considered "cruelty," either.

The Trotskyites Were On the Line

"We've got enough police to prevent a revolution," said Commissioner Valentine. Yeah? Well, he ain't seen nothing yet. Just wait until the workers are organized into Workers Defense Guards. Just wait until the comrades are trained for meeting attempts to smash peaceful picket lines. Just wait until the workers are prepared for a substantial discussion with the fat boys in Nazi uniforms. Then there won't be enough cops in the United States to save the fascist gangsters from their just desert at the hands of the working class.

The S.W.P. and the Y.P.S.L. have shown the way. The workers of New York know now who the real fighters against the fascists are. . . . Not the party of Norman Thomas. Not the party of the G.P.U. Not the party of Louis Waldman. Only the Trotskyists led the way. Only the Trotskyists called the workers to the struggle. Only the Trotskyists gave leadership to the workers who were ready and willing to fight for their class. Only the Trotskyists were on the line when action was needed. Boy! were they there! See you in court!

March New International

The March issue of the New International, which will be off the press this week, promises to be an exceptionally fast-selling number. The feature article is by Leon Trotsky. Writing in popular style, he relates anecdotes and reminiscences of some of the revolutionists and ex-revolutionists who have lived behind the walls of the Kremlin.

The complete table of contents is as follows: Behind the Walls of the Kremlin, by Leon Trotsky; The Minnesota Farmer Labor Convention, by Walter Krihl; The Political Situation in California, by Norman Mini; Defensive Wars and Aggressive Wars, by Gregory Zinoviev; On the Jewish Question, by Charles Crompton; The Great Test, Czechoslovakia, by Julius Jullik.

In addition to these articles the regular editorials, book reviews, and Dwight MacDonald's column will appear.

Advance orders should be rushed to the Business Manager of the New International at 116 University Place, New York City.

Spanish Militants Describe Escape

(Continued from Page 1)

"What can we do to help them?" the soldiers cried.

"Because," specified the corporal, "they are the real revolutionaries." And he added, after a pause, "Ah, if they had taken power during those days in May, we wouldn't have been smashed and defeated now."

Those simple words, spoken by that rank-and-file militiaman, are a deeply true summary, and an unanswerable accusation—an accusation that cuts both ways. It will be long engraven on the memory of those P.O.U.M. leaders; it deserves to be equally engraven on many another memory.

Learning that a truck was the immediate need, the soldiers rushed back to quarters and brought round the garrison truck. Again the strange load crept off to the north.

In the dark just before dawn, under a cold penetrating rain, the open truck reached its goal, the small town of Aguilana, 6 miles from the French frontier. Shortly after, the guards found the town jail, and duly locked their prisoners up.

This village contained, they discovered next morning, not only the Soviet embassy, but also the GPU headquarters, the Communist Party Military General Staff, and the temporary office of Premier Negrin.

"That was a pretty nerve-racking discovery," said Gorkin. "Had they had time to learn of our presence and identity, they'd certainly have sent their killers right over to wipe us out." But the various Stalinist organizations cleared out almost immediately, as Franco's bombers began to demolish the town.

A Friendly Prison Doctor Helps Liberate Them!

The evening of the 31st, as the bombardment got worse and worse, their jailer Vicente set doggedly out to obtain further instructions wherever he could find them. He left behind him in the jail office his brief-case, containing his official seal and blank forms of various sorts.

Aided by the sympathetic prison doctor, Gorkin got hold of this treasure, and with the light of a candle in his cell, with cold daring filled out and officially stamped liberation orders for himself and his 23 companions. The guards, presented with these documents, were puzzled but persuaded: the papers were certainly official. So at midnight, the 24 revolutionary leaders walked out of the jail and set off through the night for the French frontier.

The French Gardes Mobiles expelled them back over the border again, where by this time, Spanish Republican Guards had already started a man-hunt after them.

Hiding for days without food or shelter in the mountains, first from these and then from the even more dangerous man-hunters, they finally succeeded, in one group of ten and smaller knots of two or three, in getting secretly over the frontier into France.

A last meeting at Perpignan to settle methods of communication, and these two dozen men, over whom the Damoclean sword of Stalinist assassination (on Nin it had fallen already) had hung for 21 months of imprisonment, scattered to temporary hiding all over France.

Fourth Internationalists have grave political differences with the centrists of the P.O.U.M.; but when they are ruthlessly hunted by the bloodhounds of French imperialism at the very time it is making friends with the butcher Franco, it is not these political differences, but our class solidarity which is uppermost in our minds.

"Our plans?" echoed Gorkin as we separated. "Well, for one thing, we are determined not to be a futile emigre party. Only about one hundred of the most publicly recognizable have left Spain; and even they," he added, "only temporarily. Most deliberately chose to remain in Spain, invisible but present, working already on the long hard task of rebuilding a revolutionary party. Our day will come again. We must be readier next time."

Signs of Capitulation Break Mass Morale

The last stage of degeneration of morale essentially began with the publication of Negrin's famous 13 points which definitely pointed to capitulation to Franco. Like Negrin's latest terms for "peace," the 13 points asked only such empty formulas as "national independence," and no reprisals. Those who were among the troops report that these fell like a bomb-shell among the last illusions of the Loyalist soldiers. In helpless rage, they stormed furiously, "What the hell are we fighting for? For those damn 13 points? Why, they might as well have been written by Franco! What's the real difference between them and Franco's program? No! No! No! We've been tricked and betrayed!" On the one hand, mutinies broke out; on the other hand despair set in. And the censorship smothered all.

Main Cause of Defeat

So much for the story of their escape. Now for their description of the collapse of Catalonia's defenses.

Stalinist Russia had sent no arms whatsoever since April, 1938. But it was not overwhelming military supremacy that won for Franco.

"Though our inferiority in armament did not enable us to carry out a sustained offensive policy," a non-political technician on the Loyalist Army Staff admitted to this correspondent yesterday, "there were nevertheless plenty of arms for the defense of unlimited duration. No, it just suddenly fell apart." What actually caused the rout was the final collapse of morale under the pressure of hunger and counter-revolutionary repression.



LAST OF LOYALIST TROOPS CROSSING FRENCH FRONTIER

During the last year the food shipments from the Soviet Union had been cut down to a mere trickle consisting mostly of wretched canned milk and half-bad bully beef, paid for, like all Russian aid, not only in gold in advance but also in concessions to Stalin's demand that the Spanish revolution be ruthlessly crushed. Food from other quarters grew less and less.

"Liberals," Bureaucrats, Feasted While Masses Hungered

The masses might have borne this, as did Petrograd workers during the civil war in Russia, but recurrent and increasingly noisome food scandals, proving that the "liberal" bourgeoisie, the bureaucracy and military leaders were greedily banqueting while workers and women and children came closer and closer to the line dividing hunger from starvation, became a major factor in breaking down waning morale.

An even more important factor in breaking down morale was the steady, savage repression of all workers' organizations.

In the Stalinist concentration camps, to take one vivid and characteristic example, all revolutionary prisoners were divided into groups of five.

If one man out of such a group managed to escape, the Stalinists immediately executed the other four and the two groups nearest them: 14 murders to punish one escape. "That's to encourage the others to try it," was the coldly sneering explanation of Assault-Guard-Lieutenant-Colonel Astorga in one of these camps at Omells de Nagaya in Lerida Province.

Thousands upon thousands of revolutionary fighters, who asked only the chance to get back to the struggle against Franco, were thus immobilized, terrorized, and slaughtered, lest their fight for socialism should compromise the Loyalist government in its mad clamor for the support of Anglo-French imperialism, which is at this very hour, of course, completing its work of strangling Loyalist Spain for the benefit of its own investors and Franco fascism. Such is the end-product of the Stalinist policy of "realism."

Over 80% of these imprisoned workers had never even had a formal charge preferred against them. Four or five months passed before they could even get themselves brought before a judge for interrogation. And even when the judge and prosecutors had to admit that they didn't know why they were being held, they were kept imprisoned. How this could occur is now being revealed by the escaped comrades. GPU exercised against the examining magistrates, who knew it was tantamount to suicide to issue an order for the release of revolutionary anti-fascists. This was the "democracy" being defended against fascism.

Destruction of Workers' Gains

Nor has the terror ended. In Central Spain, thousands of revolutionary militants still languish in the prisons of Valencia and the concentration camps of Almeria province. In Valencia, for example, sentenced to 15 years, is Luis Portela, Secretary of the Valencia Province P.O.U.M. organization, the man who, with Andres Nin (murdered by the GPU), Juan Andrade, and Julian Gorkin, was one of the founders, in 1921, of the Communist Party of Spain. Also imprisoned in Valencia are approximately 450 agricultural workers, representing 46 out of the 47 committees that in the early days of the war collectivized orange growing and other large-scale farming in Valencia Province. Long before the war, grouped in the UGT union, the Federacion de Trabajadores de la Tierra, they had fought against the reactionary large-estate owners belonging to Lerroux's Partido Radical or the Derecha Regional Valenciana, affiliated with Gil Robles' CEDA. After the farmers' federation had collectivized the farms, the reactionary elements were rallied together again by the Stalinists to form a rival "union," the Federacion Campesina. Aided by their private army, the Stalinists gradually smashed collectivization, jailed the collectivizing committees, and re-established the

old bosses. The final destruction of all the gains made by the workers—the Stalinist-bourgeois return of property to even such self-avowed fascists as Portela Valladares—these facts filtering through to the front, finally sapped away the militancy and courage of the Republican Army. Hence although, as a matter of historic record, it was the inexplicable collapse of sections of the Stalinist Fifth Regiment which was responsible for the loss of Tarragona (involving such bad faith, not to use any harsher term, on the part of the Stalinist officers Lieutenant-Colonel Galan and Commandant Vega that they had to be removed), the real reason for the military defeat was not merely the fascists' overwhelming material superiority, but the total collapse of Loyalist morale. The bravest men, if they finally don't know for whom and what they're fighting, sink into fatalism, apathy, and defeat.

When the Franco military juggernaut started to roll, the bourgeois ministers called on the workers to defend every inch with their lives, shouted that the "very stones of Barcelona will rise to defend it"—and rented apartments in the chic quarters of Paris.

So fierce was the Stalinist terror in the army that it was worse feared than that of the fascists. This had sharp military effects. Voluntary enlistment fell to nothing. The severest military coercion was necessary to enforce conscription measures. Thousands of young workers, who were eager to enlist in the forbidden militia formations of the anarchist youth to fight against Franco for the revolution, simply hid from the draft into a republican army where shooting in the back seemed even more likely than in the front.

Revolt in International Brigade

Even in the Stalinist-dominated International Brigades, with their fierce discipline, a feeling of revolt mounted and mutinies broke out. The military observer mentioned above estimated that at least 50% of these internationals were in either secret or open revolt against the Stalinist-bourgeois policy of crushing the workers' revolution and supporting Spanish capitalism. Nearly 500 of them who had mutinied in favor of a workers' revolution were in a prison camp under his immediate jurisdiction at Castel del Fel, near Sitges. Hundreds of others were scattered in concentration camps and prisons elsewhere in Loyalist Spain: there were 250, for example, in the State Prison at Barcelona, with the P.O.U.M.ists.

It was a moving and vivid picture that comrades Casanova and Gorkin painted of the feelings of rage and indignation of these revolutionary fighters at the counter-revolutionary uses to which the Stalinists put them. They had come from all over the world to fight for the socialist revolution against fascism! In the light of these revelations, it is easier to understand Premier Negrin's "idealistic" haste to get these internationals out of Spain before they all began to wake up.

Retaliation Refused by Negrin

Revolutionaries demanded that Negrin take the only measure which even the fascists admit would have lessened the bombardments: retaliation on the bourgeois business and residential quarters of Salamanca, Burgos, and Sevilla. Bourgeois to the end, he refused; and the infernal rain poured down its steady death. Every bombing objective was known like the palm of a hand. For while the SIM (Stalinist-controlled intelligence service) was spending all its time and money on the persecution of the revolutionaries, the fascist espionage service flourished unchecked, even high in the government ministries, communicating with impunity with the enemy.

Having by its counter-revolutionary repressions imprisoned and murdered the most sincere and most intransigent fighters against fascism and drained the spirit of resistance from the rest, the government was finally reduced to summoning aid out of its own raving imagination. Comrade Casanova reports on the different wild rumors the government deliberately set afoot in the doomed city: "Three French divisions have just crossed the frontier." "The British Navy is steaming at forced draft to bombard Ceuta." "War between the democracies and the dictatorships is only a few days off." "100 French Air Force planes have just landed, will take the air again immediately upon refueling." "French tanks are at this moment rumbling through Figueras."

that the fascists were advancing 15 to 20 kilometers a day; that the fortifications, on which eight months' effort has been expended, at Balaguer, the Segre, Las Borgas Blancas, had fallen almost without a struggle. On the last Monday night the "Government of Victory" met. It called on the CNT militants whom for 19 months it had been murdering and imprisoning, to fight to the last drop of blood, established a "state of war", swore to stay in Barcelona to lead the resistance, and hastened home to pack valises and warm up automobiles. That night the governmental exodus began: high functionaries rolling north in their high-powered cars past the plodding thousands they had betrayed and led to disaster. On Tuesday, they did not even bother to get out the press; the radio grew spasmodic, broadcast more and more dance music and less and less news, dried up.

The doomed city, these eye-witnesses report, was curiously quiet, fatalistic, hopeless. As comrade Casanova grimly stated it, with a fierce, cold anger, "Barcelona, the city of barricades, died without a barricade being raised."

For the departing government had not overlooked this point: by its last orders, Assault Guards patrolled the streets to prevent the raising of barricades, to protect private property, and to see that anarchists did not destroy arms stocks or munition works. This task—a dastardly act of treachery to the Central Front—was carefully carried out: all Barcelona's arms and munitions works were perfectly protected by the Assault Guards till they could fall intact into Franco's hands.

"Frente Rojo," organ of the Stalinist P.S.U.C., shouted speciously for resistance, for barricades, while the Stalinists saw to it that there were none. Those of its own International Brigaders who wanted to make a stand like that at Madrid, mobilizing every quarter, cleaning out sniping fascists, and making every house a defensible fortress, were publicly treated as "Trotskyite irreconcilables" and "scum of the Fifth Column."

Tragic Scenes During Flight

"The roads, that night of the 28th," said one of the eyewitnesses, "were something I shall never forget. I have been through various kinds of hell in my time, but never have I seen such a tragic sight. The bourgeois press has characterized it to the best of the literary powers of its star correspondents, but no words can even approximate it. If I could only convey to you somehow—well, things like the look on the faces of the plodding civilian refugees caught in the ghastly half-dimmed headlights as, in response to an arrogant horn, they stumbled deeper into the ditch to let pass a Hispano-Suiza containing some fleeing functionaries of their government. But . . ." he raised his hands helplessly—"it's just beyond words."

It is equally impossible to convey in words the dismal, tragic, heart-rending spirit that pervades the whole area of the concentration camps, where, shattered and shelterless, the hundreds of thousands of refugee Loyalist soldiers lie coughing on the bare ground under the fine, cold, piercing rain, their teeth chattering in the icy winds that sweep down from the snow-clad Pyrenees, their hearts heavy with defeat, their thoughts grim with the probability that "democratic" France will shortly send them back to Franco's executioners. Towns like Perpignan and Bourgnon-Madame swarm with spies (both of the French police, of the Stalinists, and of Franco), and with a miserable half-world of harpies who batten on the misery of the internees, bartering for example a few hunks of bad meat for a treasured family gold watch. Here are infuriatingly and dramatically visible some of the final bitter fruits of the "Government of Victory," which proposed to beat Franco by smashing the Spanish workers who were leading the fight against fascism.

The Barcelona population listened in silence and distrust. True news, filtering through, told them