

OFF THE RECORD

By Dwight Macdonald

Calling in an Expert

The Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration is not to be confused with the Harvard Graduate School of Public Administration.

Footnote on the Late Dr. Coster

I present for what it is worth an odd item in last week's financial pages, an item whose precise social significance I confess I am unable to determine.

The Customer is Never Right

Sheets are as scarce in the Third Reich as everything else except guns. The story is told of a housewife who managed to persuade a shopkeeper to sell her a single sheet.

Non-Sectarian Stalinism

Last week I received in the mail a moving appeal for funds from a Mrs. J. C. Guggenheimer, who is treasurer of the Non-Sectarian Committee for Political Refugees.

Hitler's executioner. The extradition of 1500 men and women, German and Austrian refugees, who before Munich had found asylum in Czechoslovakia, is being demanded daily by Gestapo agents in Prague.

All this is familiar enough. What gives Mrs. Guggenheimer's letter a certain new value is that her "Non-Sectarian Committee for Political Refugees" has for its chairman the Hon. Vito Marcantonio, and bears as its subtitle, in smaller letters: "International Labor Defense."

The Penalties of Wealth

These are uneasy, dangerous times, when anything may happen. The unemployed worry about how they will feed themselves if W.P.A. is cut again. The employed worry about the rising tide of anti-unionism and the dubious political future of the Wagner Act.

THE ONLY WAY TO FIGHT AGAINST FASCISM IS TO ORGANIZE WORKERS' DEFENSE GUARDS

The Daily Worker's Cries About "Provocation" and "Trotskyite-Fascists" Will Not Go Over With Those Members of the C. P. Who Joined in the Demonstration and Realized How Fascism Must Be Fought

Even the New Republic felt impelled to publish James T. Farrell's letter to LaGuardia, testifying as an eyewitness to the police brutality. The Nation, consistently hostile to the Trotskyist movement, nevertheless declared editorially: "But the sinister aspect of the Bund affair is that the city police not only protected the Nazis in their right of free speech; they interfered with the rights of the demonstrators outside and inside to voice their opposition to the Nazi doctrine."

THE POLICE ALWAYS AGAINST THE WORKERS Jerome and the Communist party leadership know that everywhere—in Italy, Germany, Spain, France—the police, no matter who is at the head of the capitalist government, always concentrate their fight on the workers instead of the fascists.

Let the C.P. Members Discuss the Demonstration! The cry of "Trotskyite-fascists" will certainly not go far with the thousands of Communist party members and sympathizers who, defying their party's orders, joined us in the Feb. 20 demonstration, and side by side with us stood up against the cops and the Nazis.

MEN AND WOMEN OF LABOR

Out of the Past

BY EMANUEL GARRET

THE COMMUNARDS (March 18, 1871 - May 28, 1871)

They "stormed heaven." They charged the gates of boss-class security. They proved the strength and the solidarity of the oppressed. They lived for ten weeks as conquering, self-disciplined proletarians, organizers of their own society.

Who were they? Bakers, cobblers, teachers—radical intellectuals, and proletarians of all trades. A few of them are known by name: the clerk Jourde, who carefully guarded the finances of the Commune; the German Marxist Leo Franckel who as head of the Commission of Labor and Exchange was responsible for the propagation of socialist ideas; Delescluze, who was Civil Delegate for War; Louise Michel who organized and led the revolutionary women.

Raise the Red Flag of the Commune

For months they had withstood the Prussian siege of Paris. (The Franco-Prussian War of 1870 was drawing to a close.) Lacking faith in the capitalist ministers who were preparing capitulation to Bismarck, they had placed the defense of Paris in their own citizens' army, the National Guard.

All they hated was epitomized in the head of the capitalist republic that had been proclaimed some few months before: Thiers, "that monstrous gnome... the most consummate intellectual expression of their (the bourgeoisie's) class corruption" (in the words of Karl Marx).

Begin the Work of Socialism

The Communards were improperly organized. They had no group of leaders with a clear program of what to do, no party. They committed mistake after mistake: they allowed the Bank of France to continue un molested; they did not expropriate the property of the financiers and industrialists; they failed above all to make a clean sweep of the state machinery.

But they did prove the ability of the working class to take the reins of society, an ability which was again to be proved by the Russian workers, and which will some day soon be again tested in France. Crime, murder virtually disappeared; the motives of inequality and injustice gone, crime ceased. Provisions and food were parcelled out to all.

Towards the end of May, the Versailles, the army of the capitalist state officials, began a concerted attack on Paris. For seven days, from May 21 to May 28, the fiercest fighting raged. The resistance of the Commune finally cracked. The Versailles swooped down on Paris and massacred the defeated Communards. Some thirty thousand were shot down in cold blood.

Harbinger of a New Society

In their mistakes and failures as well as in their victories the great teachers of socialism, Marx, Engels, Lenin, saw lessons to be learned—how the working class must organize in a revolutionary party, how the proletariat can only succeed if guided by a consistent socialist program, how the workers must completely destroy the state machinery of the bosses, and substitute their own.

Madrid Workers Fight Repression

(Continued from Page 1)

derstood where Negrin is going. Maja's Main Purpose If further proof of this were needed, the Stalinist press treatment of Azana's maneuvers in Paris gives the show away. The Stalinists covered Azana up until the day of his formal resignation.

Bolt out of Blue That expulsion was a bolt out of the blue to the Communist party. It was riding higher than ever. Negrin had just abolished the existing army and navy commands and was turning them over to generals adhering to the Communist party.

Peace Was Sought Apparently the Communist party, between Sunday night and Monday afternoon when its leadership fled, had attempted to make its peace with the new Junta. An early Monday United Press dispatch actually listed the Communist party as among the organizations tendering their allegiance to the Junta!

Francisco's Move Next With the Communist party not only eliminated from the government, but also condemned in the most violent terms by every sector of the Popular Front, Franco can now, if he so desires, conclude an "officers' club" peace without loss of face.

Whether Franco will actually do so, however, is another matter. If Franco now smashed the Loyalist army by force, it will not be the first time that would-be-capitalist

ulators ended up before firing squads. This cynical and treacherous maneuver of the Popular Front Junta found the Communist party defenseless.

But the Communist party could not possibly make that fight. It was politically defenseless against its expulsion from the Popular Front. For to actively resist this expulsion would mean to present the world with a picture of the Communist party alone (alone among the organizations, that is, though undoubtedly backed by a great section of the masses, in spite of all its previous crimes) fighting a combination of all its allies of yesterday.

Putting these two clues together the answer is obvious: the Stalinists, despite all their servility to the "democratic" capitalists, their strangling of the French revolution, their yoking of the French workers to Daladier's war machine, etc., are still considered "Reds"—i.e., the agents of Moscow. The Popular Front therefore served these reds up as a sacrificial offering to Franco, hoping thereby to mollify him sufficiently to secure amnesty for the non-Communist Popular Front leaders.

Among the Barcelona workers—the same who had smashed the fascists on July 19, 1936—were being shot down by the police and troops on May 3-7, 1937; when scores and hundreds of the flower of the working class were assassinated or formally executed, and tens of thousands of others were being imprisoned during the last two years—the U.G.T., C.N.T., and Socialist leadership whined: "It is not our fault. It's the work of the Communists and their G.P.U."

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But now the Stalinists are gone. What alibi now for the corrupt labor bureaucrats who are sanctioning Maja's slaughtering of the workers? It is now clear

that the "Socialist" and "anarchist" leaders were not passive partners in crime of the Stalinists!

Cover Up Butchers

One would think that the counter-revolutionary course of the C.N.T., U.G.T. and S.P. leadership would now be the object of bitter denunciation by the Communist party. On the contrary, however, the Stalinists have set themselves the fantastic task of denying that these organizations are supporting the Popular Front Junta!

Having created the necessary hateful atmosphere, the Popular Front Junta could be ruthless. Nineteen "Communists" were shot on Thursday in Valencia in cold blood, not to speak of the hundreds already killed in the fighting. More than 2500 "Communists" have been arrested at Cartagena and Valencia, and great numbers of others are being held at Madrid, Alicante, Murcia and other points. Maja, the "savior of Madrid," is saving Franco some of his work.

No Alibi Now

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Honor Their Memory!

And while the Stalinists play this insane and impotent politics, the best militants of the civil war against fascism are falling under the artillery, warplanes, tanks and machine guns of the Popular Front. Honor their memory! Above all, the only kind of honor that counts: to learn from their defeats, to avenge them, against Franco, against the Popular Front, against the Stalinists who led them to the slaughter.