

THE RED FLAG

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5 YEARS: REVOLUTION IN SPAIN.

Why has it been left to Spain, in some ways the most backward of Western European countries, to point the way to the more advanced industrial countries now groaning beneath the yoke of fascism? While in Germany through the inertia of the leaders the workers did not fight at all, and in Austria they fought too late a desperate rear-guard action, the Spanish workers were not passive before the growing forces of the reaction. They hit back in time against the capitalists in October 1934, and in consequence today stand next door to power. True the Asturian Soviet of 1934 was defeated, but in that defeat lies the germ of future victory. Just as the Petersburg Soviet of 1905 images as yet vaguely the future triumph of the Soviet Union, so may the Asturian Soviet foreshadow the day when "the other end" of Europe will pass too beneath the rule of working class.

In our epoch of decaying Imperialism it is precisely the most backward countries which exhibit most clearly the development of the proletarian revolution. In 1917 "backward" Russia taught the sophisticated Western Social Democracies a lesson from which they have not yet profited. To understand Russia in 1917 is, in effect, to understand Spain today. Till as late as 1931 political power still lay in Spain in the hands of the absolutist Hapsburg-Bourbon monarchy, the great feudal land owners, and the Church. The Spanish bourgeoisie was a weak and sickly infant of old age. Once before, in 1871, it had matched its strength with the monarchy, but its ill-fated Republic lasted barely a year. For centuries Spain's ruling class had lived on its capital, on the depredations of their colonial empire. In 1898 aggressive American Imperialism filched away the last remaining plums, the Phillipines and Cuba. Spain's once world-wide empire shrank to a few thousand square miles of African desert for which even she had to fight a long and bloody war between 1921 and 1926. In 1924 the Captain General of Catalonia, Primo de Rivera, set up a military dictatorship to bolster up the monarchy, now tottering under the blows of Moorish war. The alliance of the palace with the barracks was not a happy one. Alfonso bore with the dictator till 1930, when the growing pressure from underneath and the growing rivalries of the Court compelled the dictator's resignation. Primo was followed by Berenguer, another army man, who made a last effort to save the monarchy. Already revolt had flared up at Jaca, and the municipal elections in the spring of 1931 showed that the popular tide was sweeping leftward. Alfonso decided it was now time to join his foreign investments on safe soil, and to the strains of the *Marseillaise* the bloodless Spanish Revolution of 1931 celebrated its victory. The leadership of the revolution had been in the hands of an alliance of the Left Republicans (Zamora, Lerroux, Azana), with the Socialists (Besteiro, Prieto, Largo Caballero), with the direction largely in the hands of the former. With characteristic cynicism the Spanish demagogues proclaimed in one breath their progressive Republic of Workers and the sanctity of bourgeois property. The monarchy had gone, but Spain was to be safe for those honest proletarians, the bankers and the industrialists. The socialist leaders entered the coalition government. The new "model" constitution, acclaimed by British liberals as the last word in constitutional modes, would make easy the peaceful transition to socialism.

What was the situation of the Spanish working class in those eventful days of April, 1931? Out of a population of some 24 millions the working class, like that of Russia in 1917, numbered only a few millions. But since the days of 1848 the Spanish workers had time and time again shown their fortitude and resiliency in the class struggle. Spain's neutrality in the Great War had encouraged the development of new industries, but the boom period had ended and the impact of the economic crisis in 1929 on the already chronic agrarian crisis had enormously worsened an already low standard of living. Consequently the demands of the workers had played an important part in the chorus of discontents which had overthrown the monarchy. The time had come for the leaders of the working class to press those demands to their logical conclusion, the seizure of power by the working class. Unfortunately, the Spanish workers were divided in their allegiance, and in the absence of a resolute leadership the opportunity taken by the Bolsheviks of turning the bourgeois revolution into the proletarian revolution within a short space of time was lost.

As early as the 'fifties of last century anarchism had taken root among the Spanish masses. Bakunin and later Kropotkin became names to conjure with, and when their theories mated with "direct action" syndicalism the Spanish workers flocked to join the Anarcho-Syndicalist National Confederation of Labour (C.N.T.) the "One Big Union." The C.N.T. eschewed parliamentary action, preached libertarian communism without the necessity for state power, and waged a relentless war against the Socialist Party and Trade Unions (U.G.T.). These latter had steadily grown in influence and size since the pioneer days of Pablo Iglesias. Already during the military dictatorship its leaders had not been averse to collaboration with the Government in the best tradition of revisionist Marxism. Just after the revolution of 1931 the C.N.T. claimed 800,000 members, chiefly in Catalonia, where they had the virtual monopoly of the Barcelona proletariat, and in the South; while the U.G.T. had about half this number largely concentrated in Madrid, Asturias, and the Biscay provinces. Two tendencies were apparent in the C.N.T., the Treintistas, led by Angel Pestana, moving towards a rapprochement with the Socialists—in fact the "reformist" anarchists—and the Faistas, who hoped by the methods of gunplay, bombthrowing and the other accoutrements of terrorism to achieve their economic objectives. A similar division of opinion showed itself in the Socialist Party and Unions. Besteiro, an orthodox reformist, led (and still leads) the right wing, Prietox the centre, and Largo Caballero the left.

The antagonism between Anarcho-Syndicalists and Socialists does not exhaust the contending rivalries within the Spanish working class. The Communist Movement, like its counterpart in other countries, had broken into three sections, arising out of the struggle for policies and leadership in the Third International. In 1928 the Central Committee of the Spanish C.P. was arbitrarily deposed by Moscow, and a new C.C. appointed more amenable to the dictates of the Stalinist leaders in Russia. To the right took place a breakaway led by Joaquin Maurin, who largely sympathised with the Right Opposition (Brandler, Thalheimer, Lovestone), and differed from the official party

on the national question in Catalonia. Maurin set up the Workers' and Peasants' Bloc, claiming a few thousand adherents chiefly in Catalonia. Andres Nin led the section which accepted the programme of the Left Opposition (Trotsky). In 1930 Trotsky, foreseeing the imminence of the revolutionary tasks which the Spanish workers would have to face, proposed the re-union of the Communist forces to work out a common policy for the future of the Spanish Revolution. This offer remained unanswered. April, 1931, saw the official Communist Party in the heyday of the "Third Period" with "Social-Fascism" as the chief ornament to the menu. The C.P. boycotted the elections and isolated itself hopelessly from the masses. The Left Opposition was too weak to influence immediately the course of events, and it became obvious that the Spanish workers would have to postpone for some time their "October."

The elections of 1931 gave the majority to the Left Republicans and the Socialists. Azana, with Socialist support, to the eminence of the Premiership. Zamora became the President of the new Republic. The new government soon found itself in difficulties. The most pressing problem in Spain today is the carrying out of the agrarian revolution, the division of the great estates at present in the hands of absentee landlords, and the satisfaction of the land-hunger of the peasantry. As in Russia the late development of bourgeois revolution made this task impossible within the confines of the existing property relationships in whose name the Republic had been consecrated. General confiscation was essential, and, of course, unthinkable to the hybrid government of doctrinaire radicals and reformists, who contented themselves with the impounding of a few thousands of acres belonging to open counter-revolutionaries and exiles.

The agrarian problem was not the only thorn in the side of the Azana government. The regional question also demanded a solution. The Spanish monarchy had held in subjection Catalonians, Valencians, Basques and Galicians, all differing in language and customs from the dominant Castilian majority, in whose economic interests government had become unbearably centralised. In Catalonia in particular where the agrarian question had been largely solved and industrialisation had been most effective, the native bourgeoisie, led by Colonel Macia, were pressing for complete separation from Spain. The new government granted Catalonia partial autonomy, but the ambiguities of the Statute of Autonomy were a cause of chronic friction.

Another source of opposition was the attitude of the C.N.T. which led a series of important strikes, much to the embarrassment of the Socialist ministers. At the same time they complained that Largo Caballero was taking a partisan advantage of his position as Minister of Labour to strengthen the U.G.T. at the expense of the C.N.T. The crisis of the Government came to a head in 1933 when a rising by the syndicalists which included seizure of the land was brutally suppressed by government forces. Zamora dissolved Parliament, and the subsequent elections the forces of the left lost heavily. Alejandro Lerroux, a Liberal, at one-time syndicalist revolutionary, became Premier.

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FRANCE AT THE CROSSROADS.

In Lieu of an Introduction to the Second French Edition of "In Defence of Terrorism."

By LEON TROTSKY

The article published below is a section of L. Trotsky's introduction to the new French edition of "In Defence of Terrorism." We are unable, through lack of space, to publish the entire preface which, however, will shortly be available to English readers in book form together with other articles on France by the same author.

The sharpening of the class struggle, and especially the open emergence of the armed gangs of reaction, caused great ferment among the workers' organizations. The Socialist Party which had been peacefully performing the role of the spare wheel in the chariot of the Third Republic, found itself compelled to half-renounce its cartel tradition, and even to break with its own right wing (the Neos). Concurrently, the Communists completed their evolution in just the opposite direction, but on a scale infinitely more extensive. Over a period of several years these gentlemen had raved deliriously about barricades, conquering the streets, and so on (their delirium, to be sure, remained primarily literary in nature). Now after February 6th, 1934, realising that the situation had taken a serious turn, the specialists in barricades scurried to the right. The normal reflex action of the scared phrasemongers coincided most propitiously with the new international orientation of Soviet diplomacy.

STATUS QUO—THE POLICY.

Oppressed by the danger threatening from Hitler Germany, the policy of the Kremlin turned towards France. Status quo—in international relations! Status quo in the internal relations of the French regime! Hopes for the social revolution? Chimeras! The leading circles in the Kremlin refer as a rule only with contempt to French Communism. One must hang on to what exists, lest things get worse. Parliamentary democracy in France is inconceivable without the Radicals: they must be supported by the Socialists. It is necessary to order the Communists not to hinder the bloc between Blum and Herriot, and, if possible, the Communists, themselves, must join the bloc. No convulsions, no threats! Such is the course pursued by the Kremlin.

When Stalin renounces the world revolution, the bourgeois parties of France refuse to believe him. Needless caution! In politics, blind credulity is, of course, not a great virtue. But blind distrust is no better. One must know how to compare words with deeds and be able to recognise a general tendency of development over a period of years. The policy of Stalin, determined by the interests of the privileged Soviet bureaucracy, has become conservative through and through. The French bourgeoisie has ample reasons to place faith in Stalin. All the less reason for trust on the part of the French proletariat.

During the Trade Union Unity Congress at Toulouse, the "communist" Racamond gave a truly immortal formula of the policy of the People's Front: "How to overcome the timidity of the Radical Party?" How to overcome the bourgeoisie's fear of the proletariat? Very simply: the terrible revolutionists must fling away the knife clenched between their teeth, they must put pomade on their hair, and flch the smile of the most fascinating courtesan. The result will be Vaillant-Couturier—latest model. Under the onset of the pomaded "communists," who with all their strength pushed the leftward moving Socialists to the right, Blum had to change his course once again, fortunately, in the accustomed direction. Thus arose the People's Front—the society for insuring Radical bankrupts at the expense of the capital of the working class organisations.

Radicalism is inseparable from Freemasonry. When we say this, we have said everything. During the debate in the Chamber of Deputies on the Fascist leagues, Mr. Xavier Valla recalled that Trotsky had once "prohibited" French communists from participating in Masonic Lodges. Mr. Jammy Schmidt, who we believe is a high authority in this field, immediately explained this edict by the incompatibility between despotic Bolshevism and the "free spirit." We shall not dispute this point with the Radical deputy. But we still consider that a labour representative, who seeks inspiration or solace in the vapid Masonic cult of class-collaboration is undeserving of the slightest trust. It was not accidental that the cartel was supplemented by the extensive participation of the Socialists in the mummery of the lodges. Now the time has come for the repentant Communists, also, to don the aprons! Incidentally the newly converted pupils will be able to serve the old masters of the cartel more comfortably in aprons.

SAFETY VALVE FOR CAPITALISM.

But, we are told not without indignation, the People's Front is not a cartel at all, but a mass movement. There is, of course, no lack of pompous definitions, but they do not change the nature of things. The job of the cartel always consisted in putting a brake upon the mass movement, directing it into the channels of class collaboration. This is precisely the job of the People's Front as well. The difference between them—and not an unimportant one—is: that the traditional cartel was applied during the comparatively peaceful and stable epochs of the parliamentary regime. Now, however, when the masses are impatient and explosive, a more imposing brake is needed, with the participation of the "communists." Joint meetings, parade processions, oaths, mixing the ban-

ners of the Commune and of Versailles, noise, bedlam, demagoguery—all these serve a single aim: to curb and demoralize the mass movement.

While justifying himself in the Chamber before the Rights, Sarraut declared that his innocent concessions to the People's Front were nothing else than the safety valve of the regime. Such frankness may seem imprudent. But it was rewarded by violent applause from the benches of the extreme left. Ergo, there was no reason for Sarraut to be bashful. In any case, he succeeded, perhaps, not quite consciously, in providing a classic definition of the People's Front: a safety valve for the mass movement. M. Sarraut is generally lucky with his aphorisms!

FOREIGN POLICY OF PEOPLE'S FRONT.

Foreign policy is the continuation of home policy. Having entirely renounced the viewpoint of the proletariat, Blum, Cachin and Co. adopt, under the screen of "collective security" and "international law," the viewpoint of national imperialism. They are preparing precisely the same policy of bootlicking which they had conducted in the years 1914-1918, adding only the phrase "For the Defence of the U.S.S.R." Yet during the years 1918-1923, when Soviet diplomacy was also obliged to veer considerably and to conclude a good many agreements, not a single one of the sections of the Communist International so much as even dared to think of a bloc with its own bourgeoisie! Is not this alone ample proof of the sincerity of Stalin's renunciation of the world revolution?

The self-same motives which impelled the present leaders of the Comintern to suckle at the paps of "democracy" in its period of agony, led them to discover the glorious image of the League of Nations, when the death rattle was already emanating from it. Thus was created a common platform of foreign policy between the Radicals and the Soviet Union. The home programme of the People's Front is concocted of generalities which allow of as liberal an interpretation as does the Geneva covenant. The general meaning of the programme is to leave everything as of old. Meanwhile, the masses refuse to accept the old any longer: therein lies the gist of the political crisis.

Disarming the proletariat politically, the Blums, Paul Faures, Cachins and Thorezes are most concerned lest the workers arm themselves physically. The agitation of these gentlemen does not differ in any way from the preacher's sermons on the superiorities of the moral principles. Engels who taught that the problem of state power is the problem of armed detachments, and Marx who looked upon insurrection as an art, seem to be akin to medieval barbarians in the eyes of the present deputies, senators and mayors of the People's Front. For the one hundred and first time, *Populaire* prints a cartoon picturing a naked worker with the caption: "You will learn that our bare fists are more solid than all your black-jacks." What a splendid contempt for military technique! Even the Abyssinian Negus holds more progressive views on this subject. The

overtures in Italy, Germany and Austria apparently do not exist for these people. Will they cease singing paeans to "bare fists" when de la Rocque claps handcuffs upon them? Sometimes one feels sorry that such an experience cannot be afforded privately to the Messrs. Leaders, without involving the masses!

From the standpoint of the bourgeois regime as a whole, the People's Front represents an episode in the competition between Radicalism and Fascism for the attention and good graces of big capital. By their theatrical fraternisation with Socialists and Communists, the Radicals want to prove to the master that the situation of the regime is not as bad as the Rights assert: that the threat of the revolution is not at all so great; that even Vaillant-Couturier has swapped his knife for a dog collar; that through the medium of the domesticated "revolutionists" it is possible to discipline the working masses, and, consequently, to save the parliamentary system from shipwreck.

Not all the Radicals believe in this manoeuvre; the most solid and influential among them, headed by Herriot prefer to take a watchful position. But in the last analysis they have nothing else to propose themselves. The crisis of parliamentarianism is first of all the crisis of the confidence of the voters in Radicalism. Until some method for rejuvenating capitalism is discovered there is not and cannot be any recipe for the salvation of the Radical party. The latter has only the choice between two variants of political doom. Even the relative success it may score during the coming elections can neither avert nor even long postpone its shipwreck.

IS THIS A BLOC?

The leaders of the Socialist Party, the most carefree politicians in France, do not burden themselves with the study of the sociology of the People's Front. No one can learn anything from the endless monologues of Leon Blum. As for the Communists, the latter, extremely proud of their initiative in the cause of collaboration with the bourgeoisie, picture the People's Front as an alliance between the proletariat and the middle classes. What a parody on Marxism! The Radical party is not at all the party of the petty bourgeoisie. Nor is it a "bloc between the middle and the petty bourgeoisie," in accordance with the idiotic definition of the Moscow *Pravda*. The middle bourgeoisie exploits the petty bourgeoisie not only economically but also politically, and it itself is the agency of finance capital. To give the hierarchic political relations, based upon exploitation, the neutral name of a "bloc" is to make mock of reality. A horseman is not a bloc between a man and a horse. If the party of Herriot-Daladier extends its roots deeply into the petty bourgeoisie, and in part even into the working masses, it does so only in order to lull and dupe them in the interests of the capitalist order. The Radicals are the democratic party of French imperialism—any other definition is a lie.

The crisis of the capitalist system disarms the Radicals, depriving them of their traditional implements for lulling the petty bourgeoisie.

"The middle classes" are beginning to sense if not to understand that it is impossible to save the situation through paltry reforms, that it is necessary to scrap audaciously the existing system. But Radicalism and audacity are as incompatible as fire and water. Fascism is fed above all by the growing lack of confidence of the petty bourgeoisie in Radicalism. One can say without fear of exaggeration that the political fate of France in the period immediately ahead will largely take shape depending upon the manner in which Radicalism will be liquidated, and who will fall heir to its legacy, i.e., the influence upon the petty bourgeois: Fascism or the party of the proletariat.

AN AXIOM OF MARXISM.

The elementary axiom of Marxist strategy reads that the alliance between the proletariat and the little men of the city and country can be realized only in the irreconcilable struggle against the traditional parliamentary representation of the petty bourgeoisie. In order to attract the peasant to the side of the worker, it is necessary to tear the peasant away from the Radical politician, who subjects the peasant to finance capital. In contradistinction to this, the People's Front, the conspiracy between the labour bureaucracy and the worst political exploiters of the middle classes, is capable only of killing the faith of the masses in the revolutionary road and of driving them into the arms of the Fascist counter-revolution.

Unbelievable as it may seem, some cynics attempt to justify the policy of the People's Front by quoting Lenin, who, if you please, proved that there is no getting along without "compromises" and, in particular, without making agreements with other parties. It has become an established rule among the leaders of the present Comintern to make mock of Lenin: they trample underfoot all the teachings of the builder of the Bolshevik party, and then they take a trip to Moscow to kneel before his Mausoleum.

THE TRADITION OF LENIN.

Lenin began his activities in Czarist Russia, where not only the proletariat, the peasantry, and the intelligentsia but also wide circles of the bourgeoisie stood in opposition to the old regime. If the policy of the People's Front has any justification at all, one should imagine that it could be justified first of all in a country that has yet to achieve its bourgeois revolution. The Messrs. Falsifiers, however, would not do badly at all if they were to point out at what stage and under what conditions the Bolshevik party ever built even a semblance of the People's Front in Russia? Let them strain their imagination and rummage among the historical documents!

The Bolsheviks did conclude practical agreements with the revolutionary petty bourgeois organisations, for example, for joint illegal transport of revolutionary literature; sometimes for joint arrangements of a street demonstration; sometimes to repulse the Black Hundred gangs. During elections to the state Duma they did, under certain conditions, enter into electoral blocs with the Mensheviks or the Social Revolutionaries, on the second ballot. That is all.

No common "programmes," no common and permanent institutions, no renunciation of the criticism of temporary allies. Such episodic agreements and compromises, confined strictly to practical aims—and Lenin never spoke of any other kind—have absolutely nothing in common with the People's Front which represents a conglomeration of heterogeneous organizations, a long term alliance between different classes, that are bound for an entire period—and what a period!—by a common programme and a common policy, the policy of parades, declamations, and of throwing up smokescreens. The People's Front will fall to pieces at the first serious test, and deep fissures will open up in all of its component sections. The policy of the People's Front is the policy of betrayal.

The rule of Bolshevism on the question of blocs reads: **march separately, strike together!** The rule of the leaders of the present Comintern is: **march together in order to be smashed separately.** Let these gentlemen hold on to Stalin and Dimitrov, but leave Lenin in peace!

IS FRANCE SAVED FROM FASCISM?

It is impossible to read without indignation the declarations of the bragging leaders who allege that the People's Front has "saved" France from Fascism. In point of fact, they mean only to say that the mutual encouragement "saved" the scared heroes from their exaggerated fears. For how long? Between Hitler's first uprising and his coming to power, a decade elapsed, which was marked by frequent ebbs and flows. At that time, the German Blums and Cachins also used to proclaim more than once their "victory" over national socialism. We refused to believe them, and we were not mistaken. This experience, however, has taught the French cousins of Wels and Thaelmann nothing. In Germany, to be sure, the Communists did not participate in the People's Front, which united the social democracy with the bourgeois left, and the Catholic Centre (the alliance between the proletariat and the middle classes!) During that period the Comintern rejected even fighting agreements between working class organizations against Fascism. The results are quite well known. The warmest sympathy to Thaelmann as the captive of executioners cannot deter us from saying that his policy, i.e., the policy of Stalin, did more for Hitler's victory than the policy of Hitler himself. Having turned itself inside out, the Comintern now applies in France the quite familiar policy of the German Social Democracy. Is it really so difficult to foresee the results?

The coming parliamentary elections, no matter what their outcome, will not in themselves bring any serious changes into the situation: the voters, in the final analysis, are confronted with the choice between an arbiter of the type of Laval and an arbiter of the type, Herriot-Daladier. But inasmuch as Herriot has peacefully collaborated with Laval, and Daladier has supported them both, the difference between them is entirely insignificant, if measured by the scale of the tasks set by history.

To pretend that Herriot-Daladier are capable of proclaiming war

against the "200 families" that rule France is to dupe the people shamelessly. The 200 families do not hang suspended in mid-air but are the crown of the system of finance-capital. To cope with the 200 families it is necessary to overthrow the economic and political regime, in the maintenance of which Herriot and Daladier are just as interested as Flandin and de la Rocque. The issue here is not a struggle of the "nation" against a handful of magnate as *l'Humanité* pictures it but the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. It is a question of the class struggle which can be resolved only by revolution. The strikebreaking conspiracy of the People's Front has become the chief obstacle on this road.

It is impossible to say in advance how much longer the semi-parliamentary, semi-Bonapartist ministries will continue to succeed one another in France and in general through what concrete stages the country will pass in the next period. This depends upon the world and national economic conjuncture, upon the degree of strategy of Italian and German fascism, upon the course of events in Spain, and last—but not least in importance—upon the awareness and the activity of the advanced elements of the French proletariat. The *denouement* can be brought closer by the convulsions of the franc. A closer collaboration between France and England can postpone it. In any case the death-throes of "democracy" may drag out for a much longer period than the duration in Germany of the pre-fascist period of Bruener-Papen-Schleicher; but this does not stop it from being the death-throes. Democracy will be swept away. The only question is: by whom?

The struggle against the "200 families," against fascism and war, for peace, bread and liberty, and other beautiful things is either a lie, or the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism. The toilers of France are faced with the problem of the revolutionary conquest of power not as at a distant goal but as the task of the unfolding period. Meanwhile, the socialist and communist leaders not only renounce the revolutionary mobilisation of the proletariat, but resist it with all their strength. Fraternising with the bourgeoisie, they hound and expel the Bolsheviks. So greatly do they hate the revolution and dread it! Under these conditions, the worst roll is played by those pseudo-revolutionists of the type of Marceau Pivert who promise to overthrow the bourgeoisie, but only with the permission of Leon Blum! The entire course of the French labour movement for the last twelve years has placed the task of creating a new revolutionary party on the order of the day.

The question whether events will allow "sufficient" time for its formation is to engage in the most fruitless of all occupations. History has absolutely inexhaustible resources in the domain of different variants, historical forms, stages, accelerations and retardations. Under the influence of economic difficulties fascism may venture prematurely and suffer a defeat. This would imply a long respite. Contrariwise, it may occupy a temporary position too long and thereby

increase the chances in favour of the revolutionary organizations. The People's Front may go to smash against its own contradictions before fascism is able to engage in a general battle; this would signify a period of regroupments and splits in the parties of the working class, and a rapid fusion of the revolutionary vanguard. Spontaneous mass movements as in Toulon and Brest may attain a wide sweep and create a reliable fulcrum for the revolutionary lever. Finally, even the victory of fascism in France, which is theoretically not excluded does not mean that it will reign for 1,000 years as Hitler prophesies, or that it is even assured to endure as long as Mussolini has been able to maintain himself. Beginning with Italy or Germany, the twilight of fascism would quickly spread into France as well. To build a revolutionary party in this, the least favourable variant, is to bring nearer the hour of vengeance. The wise-aces who shy away from the unpostponable task with the words, "the conditions are not mature" merely reveal that they themselves have not matured for the conditions.

THE INEVITABLE REGROUPMENT.

The Fourth International rises on the shoulders of its three predecessors. It is subjected to blows from the front, the sides and the rear. Careerists, Cowards, philistines have nothing to seek in our ranks. The percentage of sectarian and adventurist, inevitable at the beginning is winnowed away as the movement grows. Let pedants and sceptics shrug their shoulders about "small" organizations that issue "small" papers and fling a challenge to the entire world. Serious revolutionists will pass contemptuously by the pedants and sceptics. The October Revolution also once began with its swaddling clothes . . .

The mighty Russian parties of Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks who made up the "People's Front" with the Cadets, crumbled into dust, in the course of a few months, under the blows of a "handful of fanatics" of Bolshevism. Subsequently the German social democracy, the German Communist party and the Austrian social democracy died an ignoble death under the blows of fascism. The epoch which is drawing close for the European peoples will sweep out of the working class without leaving a trace all that is equivocal and rotten. All the Jouhaux's, Citrines, Blums, Cachins, Vanderveldes and Caballeros are only phantoms. The sections of the 2nd and 3rd Internationals will ingloriously leave the stage one after another. A new regroupment in the workers' ranks is inevitable. Young revolutionary cadres will gain flesh and blood. Victory is conceivable only on the basis of the methods of Bolshevism, to the defence of which this volume is dedicated.

March 26th, 1936.

The Pioneer Press of America are publishing shortly:

'The Third International After Lenin.'

By LEON TROTSKY.

Orders can be sent to the "Red Flag."

Some Notes on the History of Bolshevism.

The Internationalism of Lenin—and the Provincialism of the "Old Guard."

Lenin is emphatically represented by Fox as being occupied—immediately on the assumption of power by the Bolsheviks—with two tasks: ending the war and commencing to build a self-sufficing socialist society. Fox depicts Lenin as mounting the platform in the Congress of Soviets as the cruiser *Aurora* opened fire on the Winter Palace and announcing "We are starting on the construction of Socialism." "Perhaps," continues Fox, "the peasant soldier heard for the first time . . . the realisation of the secret hope of an oppressed being." Such a picture—though perfectly synchronising with the present-day Soviet literature, both by its single misquotation, and by ignoring the entire purport of the speech (as Fox could know by turning to Vol. 22 of the Russian Edition of Lenin's works)—imperfectly characterises the ideas and the goal of Lenin.

The position of Lenin throughout the preparation, accomplishment and consolidation of the October Revolution was that of a profound internationalist. Lenin's letters to the Central Committee, and the resolution introduced by Lenin in the Central Committee on October 23rd, placing the uprising on the order of the day, each had as their premise: "the international situation is such that we must take the initiative."

This internationalist criterion of Lenin's was never so sharply and clearly expressed as it was throughout the struggle on the question of peace.

Fox's book magnifies the differences which separated Lenin and Trotsky during the critical days of Brest Litovsk: he gives a picture of Lenin which reduces him to the level of a peasant soldier sighing for the end of the war. But, in fact, the problem of ending the war was, for Lenin, not a national but an international problem.

"Here," said Lenin, "is the greatest difficulty of the Russian Revolution, its greatest historical problem, the necessity of solving the international problem, the necessity of bringing about the international revolution, and passing from our revolution which is purely national to the world revolution."

Not a separate peace, but a general non-annexationist peace without indemnities and an effort to draw the allied powers into the peace negotiations. Not secret diplomacy but an attempt through the negotiations with the central Powers at Brest Litovsk—to reach the international proletariat with an appeal to them to end the war. And for this purpose, to prolong the negotiations, to procrastinate until such time as Germany delivered an ultimatum.

That was the policy of Lenin. In applying it, he clashed with his "supporters" in the Central Committee: Stalin and Zinoviev. Stalin, speaking in the Central Committee on January 24th, 1918, said: "There is not a revolutionary movement in the West, it is not a fact, only a potentiality; and potentialities we cannot consider."

Lenin, in reply, indicated that he was not in agreement on several points with his supporters, Stalin and Zinoviev. On one side, of course, there was a mass movement, but revolution had not yet begun. However, if on the strength of this we changed our tactics, then we should be the betrayers of international socialism.

Lenin—firmly fighting the left communists and the slogan of Revolutionary War; demanding from the Central Committee a firm declaration that they agreed to peace, and to hold on until the manifestation of the general socialist revolution—decisively separated himself from the provincialism of what Fox terms, "The Old Guard Lenin's most prominent supporters."

HARRY WICKS.

SPACE

is limited. A glance over this number of "The Red Flag" will show how pressed we are for room to deal with the problems requiring attention.

WE NEED HELP

if we are to publish regularly, and to increase our space. We have been forced to leave over an article on the British situation "Towards National Coalition"; book reviews and Leon Trotsky's article on the new Soviet Constitution.

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5 Years: Revolution in Spain.

The year 1933 shows the ripening of the forces of the counter-revolution in Spain, a necessary consequence of the failure of the workers to carry through their struggle to the final overthrow of Spanish capitalism. Already the young Republic had been faced in the summer 1932 with an open monarchist rising led by General Sanjurjo, which had been defeated by the Seville workers. Now the reaction was to assume a subtler form. The union of right catholic parties, led by Gil Robles, was now the strongest parliamentary party, and Lerroux depended more and more on its support as he journeyed to the right. Little by little the gains of the workers were filched away and the employers counter-attacked savagely. Fascism began to rear its head, either on the Nazi model (Spanish Falang led by young de Rivera) or that of Dollfuss (Gil Robles' C.E.D.A.). In October, 1934, a series of cabinet reshuffles brought two of Gil Robles' followers into the Government. The workers reacted swiftly. A general strike was declared. In Barcelona Companys, the president proclaimed a short-lived Federal Republic. Only in Asturias did the strike lead to the setting up of Soviets and the armed insurrection, but here the struggle was protracted and only the importation of Moorish troops (the "Foreign Legion") finally crushed the revolt in an orgy of torture and bloodshed.

October, 1934, was both a defeat

and a victory for the Spanish workers. A defeat—because the objectives of the rising were unclear, the leadership divided (the C.N.T. remained on the whole aloof and the C.P. came in only on the eve of the rising). A victory—because the bourgeois offensive was thrown back in confusion, and the Workers' Alliance, a fighting united front first comprising the Left Opposition, Maurin's party, and certain trade unions, had caught the imagination of the Spanish working class.

During last year Lerroux-Gil Robles struggled desperately to hold the workers in check. A series of financial scandals shook the government and in conditions of sharpening class-war, a moderate liberal Portela formed a new cabinet, in a vain attempt to mediate between left and right. The new government was obviously a stop-gap measure. Portela tried to form a centre party which might intercept the inevitable swing to the left, and Zamora unconstitutionally dissolved Parliament for the third time. The result of the election is known to all.

It might have been expected that the Spanish Socialist Party would learn something from the experience of 1931-33. Not so. In company with the C.P. they formed a Popular Front with Azana once more, so refurbishing the faded lustre of that demagogue. The Socialists say they will not enter the government, but it is inevitable that they must share in its discredit. Much has been written of the

Continued from page 1.

agrarian policy of the new government. It must be pointed out that all the government has done is to legalise up to a point the seizure of land by the peasants themselves. Already the Civil Guard has reverted to its accustomed butchery and it may well be that the events of Yeste, where they murdered thirty peasants, may severely test Azana and his colleagues.

Fascism is not dead in Spain, and will not die until the Soviet Power is established there securely. For five years now the Spanish revolution has swayed now this way now that. For the moment the workers are on the offensive, but that offensive may once again turn into a retreat unless the lessons of the past few years are learned. In Spain today, as in Russia in 1917, all the objective factors exist for a victory of the proletariat. But Spain lacks a Bolshevik party. If the Spanish workers can create out of their existing organisations that party within a short space of time then the Revolution will triumph in Spain. A victory in Spain will be no provincial success, but vitally influence the course of world revolution.

Here, in Britain, we should watch closely the unfolding of events in Spain. British capital is heavily involved there at many points. It may be that we shall have to offer the Spanish workers something more than our sympathy in the not so distant future.

JACK GLASGOW.

WILLIAM GALLACHER: Notes for Autobiography.

It is a most unfortunate thing for those who want to read and study Communism that so much of the literature turned out so quickly. A book or a pamphlet comes off the press with a great boost from the party reviewers and writers, giving the party line and all that therein is, and then—flop, something happens and another remarkable exposition of Communist policy goes by the board.

We have an instance of what a little time will do to an official party pamphlet in the case of William Gallacher's illuminating *Pensioners of Capitalism* which claimed to be an exposure of Trotsky and the Social Democrats. Anyone who cares to take up this rather violent defence of the Comintern, Stalin and the C.P.G.B., and read it in the light of recent events will be mildly amused and surprised.

But don't be too surprised, just be amused, and remember that Gallacher long ago said he would go to Parliament—and Colny Hatch. He has got to Parliament—there is still time for the other part of his journey.

Let us turn to some parts of his pamphlet. For example his reference to this paper, *The Red Flag*. He quoted a passage wherein at that time the question was asked: Should we support the Labour Party? It was explained that some of the comrades were of the opinion that they should and the paragraph then went on to ask the readers to send in their points of view.

Gallacher snapped this quotation up and poured scorn on the idea of a paper asking its readers for their opinions on political questions of this character with the jibe: "Now they are waiting for their readers to tell them what to do. The poor feeble-minded misfits." No doubt at the time the readers of Gallacher's pamphlet thought he was quite clear himself about what he should do in regard to the Labour Party, but both they and Gallacher have had to alter their notions since that was written and the author most of all, so much so in fact that he looks a "poor feeble-minded misfit" himself these days.

One of his strong cards in his onslaught upon the writings of Leon Trotsky was the question of the United Front tactics in Germany prior to the coming to power of Hitler. Perhaps we ought rather to say Gallacher's onslaught on Gallacher's

interpretation of what Gallacher thought Trotsky said, because that is Gallacher's method—all very much removed from Trotsky's real position. However, from among much rigmarole we will lift this passage: ". . . the bourgeois Liberal Trotsky puts forward the apparently simple, but totally un-Marxian, solution of a united front with social-democracy on a basis agreeable to social-democracy, with the main object of keeping out the fascists." But, says Gallacher, that was all wrong, and then goes on to instruct the reader in formal logic, and how history presents questions in terms of dialectics. After a little more thunder we get to the main point: "Trotsky's proposal is for the voluntary surrender of the revolutionary struggle in order to maintain bourgeois democracy and actually represents the grossest betrayal of the revolutionary movement. If the party had made a voluntary surrender of the revolutionary struggle and united with social-democracy 'to save bourgeois democracy', the proletarian movement would have been destroyed." We have already warned the reader against accepting Gallacher's interpretation of what Trotsky actually did argue. But taking the above as true, what conclusions are we to draw. That the proletarian movement in Germany has not been destroyed? What absurd rubbish. And note here too the protest about "bourgeois democracy." Thou dost protest too much, with a vengeance!

In December 1935 the *Daily Worker* had a sub-heading: Organ of the Communist Party of Great Britain (Section of the Communist International); in January of this year that was changed to a demand for Unity for Peace, Democratic Liberties, Defence of Human Rights, and the new sub-heading ran for nearly a month, not without objections from some of the readers though. Presumably the readers helped those behind the paper to make an improvement—feeble minded misfits?—but not even the readers have been able to alter the sub-title so as to assume once more its identification with the Communist International—but that's all to the good. It depends upon which way you take it.

Defending "bourgeois democracy" which so annoyed Gallacher at the time of his writing his pamphlet has now become Communist Party policy, not only in this country either. So if

Gallacher had waited but a little while he could have saved himself all the not indignation occasioned in his masterpiece. Most of his argument has been cancelled out owing to the change of the party line, what remains is merely amusing.

Take the opening passages of his pamphlet as a typical example of how very funny Gallacher can be, and, of course, all the more amusing because the humour is unintentional.

"A well known writer who has had considerable association with the revolutionary movement asked me if there was any possibility of a reconciliation between Trotsky and Stalin." Ho-ho my hearties "a well-known writer," that ought to get you guessing. Of course "a little known writer" would look as though Gallacher were wasting his time, wouldn't it? "Considerable association with the revolutionary movement." Goodness, can it be the C.P.? Anyway, no matter who or what the writer was the poor feeble minded misfit couldn't think the question out for himself, so he asked The Gallacher. And what did The Gallacher reply? "Ask me," he said, "if there is any chance of Trotsky and Hitler coming together, and I'll think your question worth considering." And lo and behold the "well known writer etc., etc."—"He was horrified and showed it," says The Gallacher.

Which takes our mind back a few years to an article written by Wm. Gallacher entitled "Babbling Romantics and Russian Reality." Trotsky must have fascinated him, for even in the long ago he was smitten with the itch to write of "the outstanding figure in the Army," as he termed him.

"Comrade Trotsky" said Gallacher "is deservedly popular in Russia. He has given great service to the revolution. But the last thing on God's earth that he (Trotsky) would suggest . . . would be Trotsky as a successor to Lenin." Then Gallacher wound up with the remark that "in this stage of the transition period, the head of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics must be a Russian."

So Trotsky who is not a Russian is to join forces with Hitler! No wonder the "well known writer" was "horrified and showed it!"

HENRY SARA.

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Who Leads the Fight for Workers' Power in Spain?

"Readers may ask: Will not this sort of thing—the running of factories—break the unity of the struggle against Fascism? Will it not scare those who are members of the People's Front, but not Socialists . . .

"All these questions can be answered very definitely.

"Railways, road transport, munition factories are taken over by any Government in time of war. We can scarcely say the Spanish Government is "going too red" when they do, in their own way, what the British Government did in the Great War."

In these words, the *Daily Worker* of September 22nd, attempted to explain to its readers the real situation in Barcelona, leading city of the Spanish Revolution.

In Catalonia the workers defeated the Fascist uprising immediately. Here, too, workers' control of industry was soonest and most effectively secured.

The real government power is the Central Committee representing the various workers' organisations. It is no coincidence that, in those districts where the workers have secured the greatest measure of control, the Communist Party no longer counts as a political force.

The rising political force in Catalonia is the Workers' Party of Marxist Unity. From being a comparatively small organisation, it is growing to a mass party. Its militia—the first to be formed—is foremost in the fight. Its slogans receive greater and greater support among the unions. Upon the rapid evolution of P.O.U.M. into a Bolshevik Party depends the fate of the Spanish Revolution.

We quote below from a recent resolution of the P.O.U.M. Central Committee which shows its present political standpoint:—

"The necessity of bringing the war to an end by the total extermination of the Fascists, and of guiding the economy of the country towards Socialism (which alone is capable of rebuilding the economy destroyed by the civil war) and of radically changing the political and social structure of the Republic—all these measures require the formation of a Workers' Government. This government should immediately proceed to call a constituent Cortes, elected by committees of workers, peasants and combatants, which would establish the constitution of the new regime that has arisen out of the Revolution. Any attempt to limit the present magnificent revolution within the narrow bounds of the Democratic Republic must be pitilessly rejected as counter-revolutionary.

"The Central Committee considers that the Largo Caballero Government recently formed in Madrid, as much by its composition and programme as by its systematic sabotage of Catalonia, acts as a brake on the progressive development of the revolution and, therefore, of the war against Fascism.

"Thanks to our party, which has always remained true to revolution-

ary Marxist principles, and thanks to the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. which, in spite of their confused ideology and tactical errors, represent a powerful revolutionary impulse of the working masses, the policy of the Popular Front has not caused the same damage in Catalonia as in the rest of Spain, where the Socialist and Communist Parties have become appendages of the bourgeois Republicans and endeavour to obstruct the advance of the proletarian revolution. In Catalonia, thanks to the circumstances mentioned above, even the petty bourgeoisie has been carried away by the tempestuous, revolutionary current as far as taking up positions which are more advanced as regards the direction and objectives of the movement than those of the Socialists and Stalinists.

"From the very first, the revolution took on a proletarian character in Catalonia and the working classes made themselves absolute masters of the situation. The governmental bodies continued and still continue their normal existence, but the appearance of other parallel bodies, such as the Central Militia Committee and the Economic Council, turned them into a fictitious power. This state of affairs, understandable in the early days of the revolution, no longer corresponds to the situation. The constitution of a strong power is imperative, a power capable of creating a new revolutionary legality based on the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, and the laying of the foundations of a Socialist economy. This task can only be carried out by a Workers' Government. Therefore, the Central Committee believes now, as always, that this Government must be exclusively composed of representatives of the workers' parties and Trades Union organisations. But if this point of view is not shared by the other workers' organisations, we are willing to leave the question open, the more especially as the Left Republican movement is of a profoundly popular nature—which distinguishes it radically from the Spanish Left Republican movement—and the peasant masses and workers' sections on which it is based are moving definitely towards the revolution, influenced by the proletarian parties and organisations. The important thing is the programme, and the hegemony of the proletariat which must be guaranteed.

"On one point there can be no doubt: the new government must make a declaration of unquestionable principles, affirming its intention of turning the impulse of the masses into a revolutionary legality and directing it in the sense of the Socialist revolution. As for the proletarian hegemony, the absolute majority of workers' representatives will make it fully certain.

"A government of this kind would give a great impulse to the revolution throughout the Peninsula. The example of Catalonia would be an inspiration to the workers of the whole country, and this example would be followed with enthusiasm

in spite of all efforts on the part of the traditional parties of the Spanish working class to hold back the revolution.

"The Central Committee therefore considers that the party should offer every assistance in the formation of this government, and itself should enter and form part of the same.

"The only circumstances in which collaboration should be refused are those in which all parties and organisations of the working class, and particularly the F.A.I. and C.N.T., might not be included in the government. If in order to accomplish this collaboration the name "government" must be set aside, our Party would see no objection to this measure. Whether called government, junta or council, the essential is the immediate formation of this body which circumstances so urgently demand."

(From the *Bulletin of the P.O.U.M.*, September 22nd, 1936).

A Trade Unionist writes to us on the T.U.C.

Hypocritically professing itself "profoundly moved by the struggle of the Spanish workers," and pledging "its utmost support to the Spanish people," the General Council of the T.U.C. proceeded to move the resolution proposing non-intervention, support for the Foreign Office of the National Government, and, consequently, for the reactionary, pro-Fascist policy of international Capitalism. Their "realistic" decision was highly commended by the *Tory* press. The lines of class were entirely obscured during the Congress debate; deliberately by the General Council, whose natural bent is class collaboration, and unwittingly by the 'Left' delegates who follow the policy of the C.P., which, by posing the question as one of Fascism versus Capitalist Democracy, leads only to confusion. Unfortunately, the policy of neutrality has been strengthened by the weak attitude of the Soviet Government which, according to the *Daily Worker*, has been obliged to follow the lead of the other Governments on this question.

There can be no doubt that an effective demonstration of international solidarity on the part of the workers' state occupying one-sixth of the earth's surface, would encourage the Spanish workers and raise the proletariat of this and other countries to more active support of the fight.

The discussion of C.P. affiliation to the Labour Party was marked by Citrine's virulent attack upon the policy of the C.P. and upon the C.I. "Reviewing" the position in France, Citrine was impressed by the fact that the extreme Right had consolidated itself at the Polls almost to the same extent as the Left. Judging from the tenor of his remarks, one would say that he was pleased that the people of France had not been "converted from the ideas of the extreme Right." The development of events will demonstrate in concrete fashion that this Knight of the Labour Movement will much prefer unity with the extreme Right than effective unity with the working class movement. In common with the ruling class of this country whose sentiments they echo, the leaders of the T.U. movement still rear the Communist Party in spite of the fact that it has adopted a policy that even liberals can endorse, and one that can only lead to support for war and reaction.

At a time when bold action is more than ever of decisive importance, the General Council of the T.U.C. is unwilling to make any effort to achieve unity in face of the growing dangers to the working class movement. Citrine's colleague Bevan was even more audacious. He let it be seen that they were prepared to assist in the realization of the Government armaments programme. Unity with anyone but members of their own class. It is vitally necessary for Trade Unionists to resolve at their branches and at the Trades Councils that they will, under no circumstances, collaborate in the Government's Defence Plans. Nor must they be persuaded by anyone that their co-operation in the "defence" of this country is necessary for the salvation of Democracy.

The Congress resolutions on working conditions were also pitifully inadequate. The resolution on the 40-hour week pledged them to do nothing, as the Congress contented itself with such phrases as "continue to press by such methods as they may

BOOKS.

[The Third International after Lenin: Leon Trotsky Pioneer Publishers, New York. 1936. 357 pages. 82.50.]

This is the first volume of *The Selected Works of Trotsky*. Five further volumes are scheduled to be published before the end of the year.

Under the general Editorship of Max Schachtman, who contributes an invaluable simple introduction on the differences to-day between revolutionary Marxism and the opportunistic policies of the Comintern, of Stalinism, this book is an essential weapon in the arsenal of anyone who lays claim to being a revolutionary Socialist. There is a well-documented appendix of explanatory notes.

The book contains the full version of "The Draft Programme of the Communist International—a Criticism of Fundamentals," by Comrade Trotsky. It is a criticism of the Programme of the Comintern which was adopted at its Sixth Congress in 1928. Written during Trotsky's exile in Alma-Ata, it was "distributed" to only a select few of the delegates attending the Congress and such copies as were distributed were "bawledriven," cut, badly translated, with whole sections deliberately deleted. The major bulk of the material in this book has never appeared before in the English language and none of it was ever published in Russian.

To win workers over to a revolutionary standpoint it is essential that they be convinced that the line which we pose in opposition to Social-Democratic or Stalinist policies is in their own experience the correct one. It is only in the last three or four years that our strength has grown to such an extent that the working class is beginning to feel the impact of our ideas. It is precisely in our powers to analyse a situation correctly and in our ability successfully to predict the turn events will take that wins us mass support. In these everyday tasks of ours this book of Trotsky's is of the greatest value.

It is written with remarkable penetration; Trotsky's ability to rip the curtain of empty revolutionary phraseology from Reformist aims, to lay bare the real reasons and expose the shame of Stalinist counter-revolution, is in the great traditions of Marx, Engels and Lenin. This book deserves to rank with "The Critique of the Gorha Programme." It is equally a manual of action in the class struggle.

It predicts the decay of the Comintern, its openly class-collaborationist policies, its deliberate turn to social-patriotism. It draws the lessons from Germany, 1923, the betrayal of the Chinese Revolution and, generally, takes stock of the situation. A complete section devoted to the "Imperialist epoch" analyses and deals fully with the tactics and strategy which the working class must follow in our age of "wars and revolutions."

BILL COMMONER.

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deem expedient. . . Trade Unionists will readily recognise this form of evasion, which obstructs any forward movement of Trade Unionism.

Condemnation of the Unemployment Assistance Board was general. However, the remedy, according to Citrine, was not in industrial action which might "challenge the decisions of the National Government" (2), but in putting the case before the Court of Public Opinion. In this way Hayday considered they could get their "rights." This, in the face of unemployment, which has extended in some areas over more than a decade!

The Congress generally registered a defeat for the active Trade Unionist who desires to see a progressive movement and a continued improvement of social conditions. The supporters of Unity were defeated, to some extent owing to their own confusion on the issue, and partly to the long series of errors and the false policy of the C.P. The decision on Spain must fill every class-conscious worker with shame for this ignoble betrayal of a gallant struggle. The need for rank and file opposition organisation is clearly shown by the results of Congress deliberations.

The Creation of the Red Army.

At the time of the negotiations for the Brest Litovsk Peace, there was no front: the army was demoralised and disintegrating. So pronounced was that that the Party, despite the agitation of the "Left" Communists for a revolutionary war, unanimously decided to demobilise the old army. In the decisions of the 7th Congress (March, 1918) the party declared the necessity of taking as its task the most energetic and merciless measures to raise the self-discipline of the Party and of the workers and peasants of Russia. On the order of the day was placed the need systematically to train the entire adult population regardless of sex—in the art of military action and military science. The decree of the Councils of Peoples' Commissars on February 3rd, 1918, announced the formation of the Red Army: at first on a voluntary basis. A serious danger of famine in the towns resulted from the breakdown of the transport system. To surmount this new difficulty, armed workers detachments were mobilised in the industrial centres and sent to the provinces to requisition supplies.

Basing themselves on the village poor, these armed emissaries of the Soviet power helped to organise the poor peasants' committees in the villages, divided the landlord estates, raised the grain reserves of the Kulaks and so secured the provisions vitally necessary to the towns and the developing army. From this situation there rapidly developed the so-called partisan methods of warfare. In the districts which were occupied by foreign troops, these partisan peasant detachments, receiving the support of the populace as a whole, were able to act with tremendous effect. Their organisation, working behind the lines of the white armies, disorganised the rear of the white generals and prepared the way for the advances of the Red Army.

In his history of the White Armies, George Stewart describes the damaging effects of the work of these partisan detachments: tells how their guerrilla warfare made mobilisation difficult, rendered necessary long detours to avoid the provinces and districts in which the "partisans" were active. The value, however, of these guerrilla methods was essentially transitory. As the civil war developed, the population was divided into two hostile camps. Armed detachments of both sides were active amongst the population: one section supporting the Sovietism, the other mortally opposing them. The white armies were technically equipped by Imperialists: the struggle against them needed a strong centralised army. On the task of creating such an arm Trotsky concentrated all his energies.

A Military Machine.

The revolt of the Czecho-Slovaks, in June, 1918—cutting off the Bolsheviks from Siberian bread—raised with unprecedented sharpness the need to break with the old methods. Partisan detachments with their loose discipline, their local autonomy—a law unto themselves—now became a hindrance. Survivals of the Red Army of the earlier method had to be fought. A centralised military machine with battalions, divisions, officers and commanders were necessary. To create this machine, experts and specialists were drawn into the military work. On the initiative of Trotsky, political departments were created: both to look after the factor of morale and to supervise and to check up the work of the military specialists.

S. Gussev—who is cited by Fox as an authority—was with Trotsky on the train which proceeded towards Kazan. In an article on the Siagiensk Days, 1918, he emphasised the decisive change brought about in the army by the inclusion of the new disciplined forces, saying:

"The general condition of the Siagiensk group of soldiers (later transformed into the 6th Army) in the beginning of August may be briefly characterised as follows: no belief in its own strength, absence of initiative, passivity in all its work and an absence of discipline from top to bottom. The arrival of Comrade Trotsky produced a decisive change in the situation."

With severe and strict measures the discipline was strengthened, morale raised, the army transformed. From retreat it passed to offensive. At the end of August Kazan was taken.

Fox passes over the root causes of the bad conditions on the fronts of 1918: political expediency relieves Fox from objectivity. So, instead, Fox writes as follows of Trotsky's work in creating the Red Army:

"When a defeat occurred, his head full of memories of the French revolutionary wars mingled with a dislike for the Bolshevik military commanders who insisted on methods of warfare which his

THE RED ARMY

'TROTSKY WAS NO GENERAL'

[Additional interest is given to this fourth section of Harry Wicks' examination of Ralph Fox's book "Lenin." This section deals with Trotsky's part in the struggles of the Soviet Red Army about which Mr. Fox has been writing recently in the "Daily Worker."]

own specialists rejected, he would send a telegram ordering a dozen old and tried Bolshevik workmen at the front to be shot as an example."

That during the Civil War there were Communists shot by military tribunal is without doubt. Revolution makes greater demands on Communists than on others. Any blunder, cowardice or disloyalty of a member of the Communist Party under fire is a hundred times more menacing than when such acts are committed by non-party workers. On the conduct of a Communist during battle, all eyes are focussed. The masses look to Communists for exemplary behaviour and action: the revolutionary cherishes their trust. When this trust is broken, should the Party shield its members from the penalties which the simple soldier pays for similar acts? There can be but one answer in a revolutionary party. In putting forward, in this contemptibly lying way, the shooting of Communists, Fox demagogically plays upon the pacifist prejudices of the intelligentsia who surround the party to-day. In reply to Fox, here is a quotation from S. Gussev—whom Fox uses as a military authority—on the very question of the military executions:—

"On the occasion of the military executions on August 29th, 1918, on the banks of the Volga (amongst the persons executed were three Communists, one of them an old party member). At the time when these military executions were carried out, it is absolutely correct and necessary. These executions drew a red and bloodstained line under the previous, chaotic partisan period of the life of the Red Army and were the last stage in the transition to regular discipline."

The White Guards used the fact of this restoration of the supreme penalty in the Red Army in order to slander Trotsky in a leaflet they circulated amongst the Red troops. Lest there are any who require further evidence on the question of Trotsky and the death penalty, against the calumnies of Fox and the White Guards, it seems well to quote a speech of Lenin's in 1920. He said:—

"An English writer wrote that the armies throughout the world are demobilised. If there is one country where the army is stronger, that is Soviet Russia. They attempt to slander Comrade Trotsky and say that this is because the Russian Army is held in an iron discipline which uses merciless measures and also a wide agitation. We have never denied this. War is War. She demands an iron discipline. Perhaps you, Mr. Capitalist, don't employ such means?"

Clearly Lenin's view of the matter is not the same as Fox's: at this point we leave it to the reader to make his choice between them.

To the Eastern Front—by decision of the Central Committee.

On the eve of the opening of the 8th Congress (March 18th, 1919) there developed a substantial westward advance of the White Army, under Admiral Kolchak. This advance was sufficiently significant to change the attitude of the Allied Powers who had been temporising on the question of extending official recognition to him. With his advance, the Allies announced their intention to support him on condition that he undertook—if victorious over the Bolsheviks—to call a Constituent Assembly and to recognise the independence of Finland and Poland. Kolchak's reply was acceptable to the Allies, who rushed money and supplies to his assistance. The hopes of Counter Revolution were focussed on the Eastern Front.

Lenin, at this time, received the following telegram which evidenced the critical condition of the Red Army:—

To Lenin, Krenlin, Moscow.

"Ufa has fallen. Renson, weariness of Red Army in battles from Kazan to Ufa. Having no reinforcements. In spite of orders to the Eastern Front—all the winter the army has been without respite, without boots, up to the knees in snow, thrown in the offensive against the Ural Mountains—result of this, defeat. In our opinion it will not help to send some commission for establishing those responsible for the defeat. A commission can only hinder business. Better to send conscious and trained reinforcements and the enemy will be defeated." Kurov, Head of the Political Department of the 5th Army.

It was in such circumstances that Trotsky, leader of the Revolutionary Military Council, was compelled to hasten to the Eastern Front and be absent from the 8th Congress. Fox finds even this action of value in building up his case against Trotsky's military reputation: it is of this event that he writes, "Trotsky found it better to be absent from the Congress."

Fortunately, a long letter sent by Trotsky to the Congress is available. In it he elaborated his views on the questions on the Congress agenda and reviewed the work done since the 7th Congress. The following précis of the letter enables the reader to judge whether Trotsky's absence from the Congress justifies Fox's comment:—

Précis of Trotsky's letter to the 8th Congress

—For full letter see "How the Revolution Armed," L. Trotsky's Works, Vol. 2, Page 46:—

"The two outstanding questions before the Congress are the organisational and the military. Sufficiently wide circles of the Party evidence dissatisfaction with the doubt concerning the work the Party's central apparatus. These doubts and criticisms declare themselves rooted in: The absence of systematic leadership at the centre—The absence of a correct distribution of Party forces. The main part of this approach to criticism is far too wide. Our party and the working class are compelled to answer questions of world significance: to pick out the most dangerous enemy at any given moment (both internally and in foreign policy); and to concentrate all attention, all strength first on the one, then on the other. Personally, I think that the leadership has maintained party policy and led the party through tremendous difficulties with honour. But the gigantic dimensions of events (creating to an extraordinary degree ever new combinations, groupings and, political conditions) made difficult correct systematic work, correct assessment of party forces and correct allocation to the different branches of work. When, last summer (1918) our war situation much worsened and the Party, on E.C. initiative, gave many thousands of our best workers to the Fronts, the changes could not be made with full valuation of the individual qualities and capacities of each worker.

"Our Soviet Republic, in its first seventeen months, expanded then contracted, then expanded: unforeseen processes requiring firm organisational decisions; first, spontaneous distribution of party forces over expanding territory; later, concentration of party forces at boundaries of Great Russia; in the last period, distribution undoubtedly more planful.

"Finally, on organisation, the point provincial comrades tend to ignore: the first period of the Soviet regime evidenced a spontaneous growth of separatism. Local Party executives and organisations engaged in pressing new local problems almost broke with centre, troubled little to link with us, inclined to resent every centre, party of War Department intervention as hindrance. Great energy expended to maintain even elementary centre-periphery connections, and to build efficient centralised organisation. Since that crisis, reverse tendency manifests itself: localities too frequently become too dependant on centre for help and leadership.

"The other acute issue is the military question. Regret my absence from discussion, but with the Central Committee's agreement, I again leave for the front. But am free from disquiet as to Congress decisions on this point. Circumstances compelled concentration of main forces (most party workers and material resources) for War Department. Compulsion of circumstances and intense work of army buildings has given great experience. Some comrades thought, at first, it would be necessary to build the army by the merging of the partisan detachments. That view was widespread after the Brest peace. Its defenders contended that to build a centralised army we had neither time, material resources, nor Staff. But the work went differently. Partisans were used as a provisional screen behind which centralised army was built up. The party, after months of exertion and failure succeeded, thanks to great

concentration on it, in breathing life into this work. Opposition to drawing in military specialists was very strong and, to a degree, justified at first by the specialists deserting in the period of our external failures. The Party C.C. considered these events of transitional character and put military specialists to work with reliable Communists at their sides as political commissars. Results have proved us right. At the fronts we have created an army with a centralised apparatus, administration and command: from retreat we have passed to offensive; from failures to great successes. Many of the most serious and responsible party workers who left for the front as decisive opponents of our military system—particularly opposed to the attracting of cadres of officers to responsible posts—became, after several months work—convinced supporters of this system. I do not know of one single exception."

Such a letter does not permit even Fox to conclude that its writer is evading a Congress discussion of his policy.

The Military Disagreements at the 8th Congress.

"At the 8th Congress," writes Fox, "the discontent with the work of the Revolutionary Military Council and Trotsky's methods of work, came to a head. . . . The dispute between the old Bolsheviks and their new recruit took on a very sharp form. Almost unanimously the delegates from the front declared that there was no army in the real sense of the word in existence, that the work of the Revolutionary Military Council left everything to be desired. Especially was there a criticism of the Military specialists and their work. . . ."

This sweeping attack on Trotsky's military leadership indicates two points in substantiation: the absence of reinforcements from the centre and the use of military specialists. Fortunately, for Fox, the report of this discussion remains to this day unpublished. But, unfortunately for his reputation, sufficient evidence of an authoritative character is available to make clear both the questions in dispute and the decisions concerning them. Trotsky's position is clearly outlined in the letter of which a précis has been given. The questions at issue were: the use of military specialists in the centralised army: partisan and guerrilla forms of fighting as against positional warfare; and the reaction from separatism expressed in the excessive demands upon the military and party centres for assistance. Discussions following the previous—the 7th Party Congress assist understanding of the issues and persons involved. After that Congress, Bukharin's Left Communist Group published a thesis in their organ, *The Communist*, vigorously attacking Trotsky's military policy. It says:—

"In the field of military policy we must note the practice observed, to deviate towards the restoration of general military service (declaration of Trotsky and Podvoisky); with the creation of army cadres, for which training and leadership officers are necessary, neglecting the task of creating a proletarian officers corps for the way of broad planned organisation; corresponding schools and corps, and in practice, restoring the old officers, corps and commanding power of the old Tsarist Generals."

This stand against the creation of a centralised army apparatus and the use of the old military specialists was accompanied by an equally definite stand in favour of partisan warfare. Radek, then a member of the Bukharin group, wrote on this issue:—

"Trotsky's organising genius and boldness of thought are even more clearly expressed in his courageous determination to utilise the war specialists for creating the army. . . . Lenin defended this proposition with the utmost decision in his April speech on the tasks of Soviet Power. . . . But the idea that we could create an instrument for the defence of the Republic, an army, with the aid of Tsarist officers—encountered obstinate resistance. Who could think of rearming the White officers who had just been disarmed? Thus many comrades questioned. I remember a discussion on this question amongst the editors of *The Communist*. . . . in which the question of the employment of staff officers nearly led to a split."

(to be concluded)

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