

THE RED FLAG

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CATALAN WORKERS TAKE OVER

The many attacks on the Workers' Party of Marxist Unity (The P.O.U.M.) which have appeared in the Communist and Capitalist Press have been made because the P.O.U.M. has stood for Working Class and Peasants' Power in Spain, as opposed to the Capitalist Democracy advocated by the Liberals and the Communists. The impression has been deliberately created that this view is held only by a small minority of the Spanish workers.

That this is not so is shown by the report we publish below of actual conditions in Catalonia, conditions not yet made known by the "Daily Worker." This report was written by a Trade Unionist recently returned from Barcelona and the Aragon Front. Certain parts of his report, particularly on the policy of the Communist International and of the Soviet Government to the Spanish workers' struggle have been held over for more detailed examination in a future number of this paper.

Support is needed for the Spanish workers in their struggle. Let every worker play his or her part in helping to compel the British and world Labour movement to come to the aid of the Spanish workers' magnificent struggle against International Fascism and for a Workers' and Peasants' Spain.

Catalonia occupies geographically approximately one eighth of Spain and has a population of about four and a half millions. Barcelona is the capital with a population of approximately two millions, a figure since depleted by the civil war. Tarragona ranks next with 60,000, then Lerida, Gerona and Figueras each with approximate populations of 30,000. By far the strongest party in Catalonia is the C.N.T.—F.A.I. comprising the various Anarchists and Syndicalist Trade Unions, its membership in Catalonia in July, 1936, was 1,200,000. To-day it is the major influence in Catalonian affairs. The other trade unions, comprising the U.G.T. (General Confederation of Labour) are also powerful but only in the rest of loyalist Spain and not in Catalonia where their numbers are far below that of the C.N.T.—F.A.I. The political parties in Catalonia are the P.O.U.M., the P.S.U.C. and the Esquerra. None of these are mass parties, but the P.O.U.M. work very closely in harmony with the C.N.T.—F.A.I., whose slogan is for the defeat of Fascism and the victory of the social revolution with workers' power and control of all industry and economic life. The P.S.U.C. works with the U.G.T. who stand for the defeat of Fascism, the saving of the bourgeoisie democratic state and the restoration of the constitutional parliament.

With the publicity that has been given to the political struggle over these slogans and their implications and the civil war generally, the extent to which there is workers' control in Catalonia has neither been fully published nor fully realised.

The whole transport system in Catalonia is under the complete control of the C.N.T.—F.A.I. The workers in the various branches having in July and August, 1936, seized all the means of transport, elected their own committees to run and co-ordinate these various branches. I found that not only were the trains run by the workers' committees, but the tram system and the underground railway system (the Metro) were similarly controlled. All vestige of control by the bourgeois state had been completely swept away. All the transport workers are paid a minimum of 12 pesetas a day by

their controlling committees, who have revised the tariffs of fares on the whole transport system.

I should at this stage point out that private ownership of property has not been officially abolished but the various steps taken by the workers unions which I am describing will indicate that they are well on the way to taking this vital step in the social revolution.

The transport workers have, however, decreed the abolition of private ownership of automobiles and all those in Catalonia were seized by the workers and the militias very early in the struggle. In this step the lead was given by the C.N.T.—F.A.I. and the P.O.U.M. and the other bodies soon followed suit. Today

Resolution carried by a meeting of 7,000 workers in the New York Hippodrome on February 9th, 1937:

HUMAN PROGRESS BEING INDIVISIBLY ONE WITH THE TRUTH WE, 7,000 NEW YORK WORKERS AND FRIENDS OF CIVIL LIBERTIES ASSEMBLED IN THE HIPPODROME ON THE CALL OF THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENCE OF LEON TROTSKY, ENDORSE THE PROPOSAL TO CREATE AN IMPARTIAL COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY INTO THE TRUTH OF THE CHARGES MADE AGAINST LEON TROTSKY AT THE MOSCOW TRIALS. WE APPEAL TO ENLIGHTENED PUBLIC OPINION IN THE UNITED STATES AND ABROAD TO ADD ITS VOICE TO OURS AND WE CALL ESPECIALLY ON THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT TO TAKE THE IMMEDIATE INITIATIVE TOWARDS THE CREATION OF SUCH A COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY, ON WHOSE DECISIONS TROTSKY HAS STAKED HIS HONOUR AND HIS LIFE.

most of the automobiles are at the disposal of the C.N.T.—F.A.I. committees and are a very necessary means of transport of food from the villages to Barcelona and of militias to the front. Similarly all petrol is controlled by the same union and can only be purchased if one holds a permit from this union.

In industry the control of workers has spread rapidly to an extent that has to be seen to be believed. When the struggle broke out in July, 1936, the workers in some factories had no option but to run them themselves as some of the owners either ran away or tried to close down the factories. Today nearly all the large factories in Catalonia are controlled by the workers. They have elected committees to see to the general organisation and in all cases have laid down a minimum wage of 10 pesetas per day. This is considered a tremendous advance as before July, 1936, many of the factory workers were in receipt of wages varying from as little as 5 to 7 pesetas per day.

The Espana Industria, one of the largest textile factories in Barcelona, is completely controlled by the workers there, who belong to the C.N.T.—F.A.I., and although many technicians deserted in July and August, 1936, they have the whole factory now organised on a sound basis and work full hours. The Seda da Barcelona, an artificial silk factory employing 1200 workers, was similarly deserted by many

of its technicians. Today it is run to full capacity by the workers who have elected a committee consisting of six technicians and eight manual workers to act as their representative controlling body. Their minimum wage is also 10 pesetas per day.

In Barcelona all the large hotels, restaurants, cafes and businesses had been taken over by the employees and run on a syndicalist basis. Each body of workers has elected a small committee to run its particular concern and this committee after paying the wages from the takings (the scale of wages is the same as in the factories) then buys whatever replacements are necessary and turns over to its particular union or syndicate the balance. Most of the large hotels and buildings in Barcelona are controlled by the C.N.T.—F.A.I. construction Syndicate, who have several months ago in Barcelona started demolishing some of the terrible tenement blocks in which the workers lived and erecting in their place modern blocks of flats for these workers.

Rents everywhere in Barcelona are paid not to private owners of buildings who have been dispossessed, but to the particular union or syndicate controlling the block or building and these rents have been reduced to a very great extent and placed on a level commensurate with the general minimum standard of wage laid down.

The department stores and other businesses are also controlled by the workers' syndicates who took control out of the hands of their private owners and companies very early in August.

This control has been legalised by the Catalonian Government, the *Generalitat*, who have decreed that, in all businesses and concerns where there are more than 50 employees, such employees would be entitled to run these businesses themselves. These decrees, however, were passed months after the workers had taken complete control. In many businesses and stores with less than 50 employees the workers have also taken control through their own committees. The decrees also provided that where a shop or a business was run by a man and his family or relatives, this should not be taken away from him, and this decree has been respected by the workers' syndicates. In all these concerns all highly paid positions and posts have been abolished.

But workers' control has gone yet further. To-day there are over 50,000 men on the Aragon front opposing the advance of Franco and those militants who have elected their own officers and committees to command them. In Barcelona and the other larger cities in particular, order is kept where necessary, not by the police but by the workers' patrols elected by the workers themselves and run by their own committees. In Barcelona there are nearly 30,000 workers in these patrols, and they exercise a ceaseless vigilance both day and night. Side by side with them there exists the *Generalitat* police, a body built up by the Catalonian Government, but power is exercised by the workers' patrols who have full powers of arrest, etc. The *Generalitat* recently decreed the dissolution of these patrols, but this has been met with a blank refusal by the workers who still patrol the streets of Barcelona and other large towns.

In the villages and countryside collectivisation is the watchword, and in numerous villages all land has been placed under collectivisation

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The Moscow "Confessions"

An article written by Leon Trotsky secretly in Norway during his internment

Despite all obstacles, truth hews out a way. The whole trial rests on confessions surprising in their coarseness and teeming with psychological contradictions. In order to understand the value of these standardised "confessions" by the clients of the G.P.U. one must begin by examining the standardised political capitulations of which the "confessions" are the sequel and the immediate development. The history of the capitulations extends over the last thirteen years, and would, with its "human" documents, furnish matter for many dozens of volumes.

The content of the confessions in no way corresponds with the characteristics of a "crime," whether carried out or not; rather it corresponds with the divers necessities of the Government. That is why the public confessions have a purely ritualistic, standardised character. Their sole political significance is to teach everyone to think, or at least to express himself uniformly. But precisely for this reason no one among the persons in question has taken these "repentances" seriously. These confessions are not real confessions but a contract signed with the bureaucracy. The proof of this is that even I. N. Smirnov, one of the most sincere and honourable of men, drew up in 1929 during the space of a few weeks several different texts of confessions which were in flagrant contradiction with one another. These texts were published at the time in the *Bulletin de l'Opposition*. I must add that nearly all the confessions (tens of thousands of them) belonging to the thermidorian period had but one single object, namely, to attack me personally. In order to be received back into the bosom of the great family of the bureaucracy, or to assure himself at least the right to a morsel of bread, each oppositionist, semi-oppositionist, or even mere citizen, was compelled on all occasions to denounce Trotskyism and to condemn Trotsky. The more startling the manner of these denunciations the more success they had. Confessions and renunciations have become for them very like the ritual rites of the church. Thus political confessions have paved the way for judicial confessions which are their inevitable consequence.

I repeat these lines are being written in the claws of the Norwegian "Socialist" Government. I am forced to confine myself to the most important facts. We must throw into relief particularly the following points:

1. It is false that "all 16 accused" have admitted their crime. There were not 16 accused who had participated in a crime of the same nature or who were even suspected of a like crime. In actual fact the sixteen men in the dock had been meticulously chosen from among many hundreds, many thousands of "candidates." Only those who had proved their aptitude for publicly fulfilling the role which had been assigned to them were in the first instance made to appear before the

tribunal. (On this subject see the *Livre Rouge*).

2. Did the G.P.U. use medical or chemical methods of compulsion? I do not know. But such a hypothesis is not necessary. It is enough to know the facts, the persons, the circumstances in order to understand how the accused could have been forced to put the rope around their own necks. Among the accused there was not a single oppositionist or Trotskyist. They were all capitulators, persons who had confessed on many occasions, accusing themselves in their confessions of the most shameful actions and the lowest instincts; persons who had renounced all political conceptions, all reason for living, all personal dignity. (Of course I am not speaking of real *provocateurs*, lost in the clutches of the G.P.U.) For years these ex-revolutionaries, demoralised and morally broken, had flitted hither and yon between life and death. Were narcotics still necessary? The very idea (which Rosenmark takes responsibility for) that these people had been spurred on by a thirst for power is absurd. They had renounced it long since. The idea that these people, who had renounced their programme, their flag, their personal dignity, who had many a time publicly covered themselves with mortification and calumny, could hope to attain power by political assassinations would seem an idiotic political conception.

"G.P.U. has Revolvers"

No, at the trial the accused gave themselves the lie as they had done before in their innumerable confessions. The G.P.U. took plenty of time to extort from its victims increasingly complete "confessions." Today "A" admitted a little "fact." If "B" does not admit the same thing it implies that all his past confessions and humiliations were "lies" (Stalin's favourite word, Stalin the champion of "sincerity.") "B" hastens to admit what "A" has admitted, and even a little more. And now it's "C's" turn again. To avoid any too crude contradictions, they are given the opportunity, if they wish, to elaborate their theme in common. If "D" refuses to associate himself with this he risks losing all hope of saving himself. So he surpasses the others in order to prove his good will (re-read the stammering and hysterical confessions of Reingold). And now all the others must align their lies with those of "E" . . . The infernal game continues. The accused are under lock and key. The G.P.U. is in no hurry. The G.P.U. has Mauser revolvers. Jules Romain shows (in his *Les Creatures*) how it is possible without having any "idea" or "theme" to write a truly poetical work by taking as a point of departure a play on words. The G.P.U. works thus. These gentlemen, having at their disposal neither facts nor a completed plan, construct their amalgam by a play on "confessions." If one or another of the confessions appears inconvenient in

the end, it is quite simply omitted as an unnecessary hypothesis. These "creatures" are free of all ties.

From time to time they give their victims a provisional liberty in order to allow the rebirth of vague hopes. At the first opportunity those who have been freed are arrested once more. Thus ceaselessly tossed between hope and despair these men become little by little the shadow of themselves.

Nervous Collapse

But still this is not the end. For each one of them there comes a moment when they cease to resist. No, he cannot go to such lengths in denial of himself. At this point the G.P.U. shoots the most obstinate.

Meanwhile the press unanimously continues to yell against the "traitors," the "counter-revolutionaries," the "agents of imperialism," and so forth. The prisoners have no other press at their disposal than that of Stalin. Physical torture? I think not. The torture of calumny, of uncertainty and of terror destroys the nervous system of the accused just as surely as physical torture. And one must add the fact of the incessant allusion to the dangers of war. Are you for the fatherland (that is for Stalin), or against the fatherland? *Pravda* even calls André Gide's book an "anti-Soviet witness." A foreigner of less renown would have been treated long since as an agent of Hitler. What is one to call soviet oppositionists? Gide shows how they extorted from him a telegram of praise for Stalin and how the celebrated author was reduced to impotence and . . . to capitulation. What shall we say then of the methods of the G.P.U.? Are you for the U.S.S.R. (that is for Stalin), or against the U.S.S.R.? You have repented of course long ago, you are not dangerous to us as you yourself know; we don't wish you ill. But Trotsky continues his notorious work abroad. He continues his sapping exploits against the U.S.S.R. (that is against the omnipotence of the bureaucracy). His influence is growing. Trotsky must be discredited once for all. Thus your question resolves itself. If you are for the U.S.S.R. you will help us. If not, all your repentance was a lie. In view of the approaching war we shall be forced to consider you as agents of Trotsky, as foreign enemies of the country. You must admit that Trotsky has pushed you on to the path of terror. But no one will believe it—Oh! we will undertake this aspect of the question. We have our Duclos and our Thorez, our Pritts and our Rosenmarks. Has Trotsky pushed you on to the path of terror, yes or no? He who replied "Yes" is ready to allow himself to be used further.

By repeating the questions endlessly, the replies can be made increasingly concrete. Smirnov and Goltzman tried to stop themselves in mid-road, between "terror in general" and the assassination of Kirov.

Others (but not all) went further. He who resisted was liquidated in the course of the "technical" preparation of the trial. The man against whom violence was successful was led on the scene to be presented to the eyes of Pritt in his capacity of an impartial expert.

Is it possible to talk to any honourable man of these "confessions" and neglect the fact that for

years the G.P.U. has prepared and "questioned" the accused, with the help of periodic capitulations, humiliations, self-degradation, calumnies, and also by means of reprisals? Only complete fools can shut their eyes to these facts.*

The statement that the accused admitted the facts which incriminated them independently of one another is a triple lie. There is no material proof of the confessions. The accused threw themselves in the path of self-accusations and summary denunciations. They were utterly terrified that these accusations should be made more precise. It is not by chance that each time one of the accused, in order to support the logic of his own confessions, tried to make the times and places definite, the G.P.U. fell into contradictions that were only too crying. As far as the concrete elements of their own confessions is concerned, the accused contradicted themselves and each other. Only a fraction of these contradictions is brought to light in the *Livre Rouge*, about which Pritt and Rosenmark grit their teeth.

Sedov's Meeting

Must we return again to Goltzman's confessions? Among the accused of the older generation Goltzman alone "had seen me personally," and was said to have received from me "terroristic" instructions. My son, Leon Sedov, is said to have been the intermediary and organiser of the meeting. This meeting with Goltzman is alleged to have taken place at the Hotel Bristol. This is the chief point in the confession.

Alas! My son has never been to Copenhagen. The fact that he did not go there in 1932 can be incontrovertibly proved by means of visas, telegrams and statements coming from more than thirty persons of different nationalities and different political tendencies. The Hotel Bristol, where the meeting is supposed to have taken place, has not been in existence since 1917. What then does Goltzman's confession mean?

The declarations of Berman-Yurin, Fritz David and Olberg are full of similar absurdities and nonsense. Nevertheless, on the basis of these confessions, the defenders of the Rights of Man (and of the interests of the G.P.U.) consider me worthy of the death penalty. How far can human baseness go?

But however scandalous the confessions of Goltzman and others may

*Dr. Ciliga, a Yugoslav revolutionary, who as an oppositionist spent several years in the G.P.U.'s prisons and places of deportation, testifies: "I have seen a sailor who, on many occasions, was told, on being taken out of his cell in the evening, that he would be shot. He was led into the court, and then brought back to his cell. 'Since you are a worker we don't want to shoot you like some White Guard. As a worker, you must confess sincerely . . .'" The sailor confessed nothing, but after these tortures he became half mad. Then at last they left him in peace. But they still ask him for confessions on the subject of his conspiracy against Stalin."

The story of this unfortunate sailor is but a tiny episode taken from the book of the confessions of the accused—and of their accusers and their judges. From being the instrument of the revolution, the G.P.U. has become the instrument of the soviet aristocracy, the personal instrument of Stalin, about whom Lenin warned in 1921: "This cook will prepare only peppery dishes."

be, their contradictions and their crude inventions seem to be merely decorations designed to adorn the walls of this strange monument of lies and errors.

The whole indictment and all the confessions centre round the assassination of Kirov. The organisation of this murder, however, was a chain in the struggle against the opposition. The plot against Kirov was organised by the G.P.U. for the purpose of striking a blow at the Leningrad organisation of Zinovievists. Stalin, Yagoda, Kirov himself, were in close touch with the conspiracy. This fact is proved beyond any shadow of doubt by the trial of Medved, the former chief of the Leningrad G.P.U. The plot against Kirov was to have had a fictitious character; it was essentially directed against the opposition.

Stalin did not wish to kill Kirov; Kirov himself did not wish to be killed; but Nikolaiev, although surrounded on all sides by *agents provocateurs*, himself took his role too seriously. He escaped from their control and fled before the G.P.U. had succeeded in finishing its amalgam (see my pamphlet, *The Stalinist Bureaucracy and the Assassination of Kirov*, 1934). What is there written about the preparation of the Moscow trial (both the first and those which have followed) is the result of logical deduction. I have unveiled the plans of the G.P.U. month by month, year by year, stage by stage, especially since the beginning of 1929. The indelible traces of the methodical preparation of the crimes can be brought clearly to light by means of articles in the Soviet press, by the interviews of Stalin and Molotov, by various "anti-terrorist" declarations of Litvinov at Geneva (apropos of the assassination of King Alexander and Barthou), and by a whole series of other documents, declarations and suggestions which at the time seemed incomprehensible but which, at the present moment, clearly reveal their criminal meaning.

Turns Without Tears!

In summing up one may say: the trials of the terrorists have been arranged, not because Kirov was murdered, but the assassination of Kirov took place "by accident" during the feverish preparation of the trials against the terrorists.

Syncophants, *a la* Pritt and Rosenmark, consider it out of the question that Stalin's infallible G.P.U. could organise trials which were merely criminal *mises en scène* in which the roles had been fixed in advance. On the other hand they find it quite natural that the opposition, which is a Communist tendency with a long tradition, with experienced cadres, with an elaborated programme and an abundant political literature, should suddenly make a *volte face*, quite unexpectedly, toward individual terrorism which it has always condemned as adventurism without results. This tendency, which comprises many thousands of sympathisers, accomplishes this incredible *volte face* in complete silence, without any previous discussion, without any declaration, without any criticism, without any internal struggle, without any terrorist propaganda, without any literature.

But even this is not enough. This tendency, which has shown itself capable of the greatest sacrifices in struggle for its programme, enters

into relations with the Gestapo! And moved to this by the "thirst for power"! As if the power in the U.S.S.R. could be obtained with the aid of Gestapo! And how can one attribute this "thirst for power" to tens of thousands of rank and file oppositionists, workers, members of young Communist organisations who experience unheard of repressions and privations. Only a narrow and over-fed bourgeois who knows nothing of revolutionary struggle, and who, at the same time, is always ready to lick the boots of any government in power, could believe so vile a lie.

Let us, however, admit the impossible. Let us admit precisely that the Trotskyists, in contradiction to their doctrine, their programme, their present writings and their private correspondence (which is at the disposal of any honest commission of enquiry), have become terrorists—without internal struggles or splits, without the inevitable defections and denunciations. Let us admit that terrorism was necessary for them to restore capitalism; why was this new programme accepted in silence by everyone, without reprobation, without criticism, without opposition? Let us admit further—a few absurdities more or less are of no importance—that in order to ensure the restoration of capitalism and the victory of fascism (yes, yes even fascism) the Trotskyists signed a pact with the Gestapo, and that they have been pursuing their terrorist activity at least from 1931 to the middle of 1936. Where? How? But this matters little. It all took place in the fourth dimension. They were continually trying to assassinate all the "leaders," to disorganise the economy, to prepare victory for Hitler and the Mikado.

Can we take all these base absurdities for legal tender? But what do we see in the end? In the middle of 1936, the leaders of this strange tendency, accused of having taken part in these crimes, suddenly repent, all at the same time, and admit to the crimes they had committed (that is, had not committed). Each one rushes to cover himself with as much mud as he can, and each tries to drown the voice of the others in singing the praises of Stalin whom yesterday he wanted to kill. How can we explain this miracle of Saint Yagoda? Counter-revolutionaries, terrorists, mad fascists transformed into hysterical flagellants. Let the Pritts and Rosenmarks explain this mystery.

Finally let us suppose that the idea of terrorism was in fact accepted at some time by this group of capitulators and by others, and that in their confessions before the tribunal an echo of the truth was heard (alleged plots of the type: "To hell with Stalin!") But why bring the Trotskyists and Trotsky himself on to the scene? These do not conceal their aim: to bring to an end the absolutism of the Stalinist clique, not by individual terrorist adventures, but by the methods of the revolutionary class struggle. In these circumstances, would it not be natural for an "objective" jurist to ask himself: did not the government promise these dishonest capitulators that it would soften their fate if they would consent somehow to implicate Trotsky, Enemy No. 1 of the Stalinist clique?

(continued on page 4)

FOR THE VICTORY OF THE SPANISH REVOLUTION

By LEON TROTSKY

We give below Trotsky's declarations to the Mexican representative of the Havas News Agency, on the Spanish Revolution. This declaration made at the end of February, has so far been published only in a garbled form.

"Have I or have I not given instructions to assist the Republican Front with volunteers? I have given instructions to no one.

"Generally, moreover, I do not give instructions but express my opinions in articles.

"Only cowards and traitorous agents of Fascism could give up helping the Republican armies. The elementary duty of every revolutionary is to struggle against the bands of Franco, of Mussolini and of Hitler."

ABOUT P.O.U.M.

"The left flank of the governmental coalition is half in the opposition. The P.O.U.M. is not "Trotskyist" and I have moreover many times criticised its policy in spite of the warm sympathy which it shows me, and the heroism of its members, especially those of the youth who are fighting at the front.

"The P.O.U.M. has committed the error of participating in the electoral combination known as the "Popular Front," under cover of which Franco for many months prepared with impunity the insurrection which to-day ravages Spain

"A revolutionary party has not the right to assume, directly or indirectly, responsibility for a policy of blindness and culpable tolerance. It must call upon the masses to be vigilant.

"The leadership of the P.O.U.M. committed a second error in entering the Catalan coalition government. In order to fight at the front hand in hand with the other parties, it is not necessary to place oneself in a false position by participating in the governmental policy of these parties.

"Without weakening the military front it is necessary to know how to assemble the masses in a practical manner under the revolutionary banner. In a civil war infinitely more than in an ordinary war, policy dominates strategy. Lee was certainly a more talented army chief than Grant, but the abolition of slavery programme upon which Grant was based assured him the victory.

"In our three years of civil war, the superiority of military art and technique were often on the side of the adversary, but, in the final analysis, it was the Bolshevik programme which conquered. The worker well knew for what he was fighting; the peasant hesitated for a long time, but, comparing the two regimes from experience, he supported the Bolsheviks.

THE STALINIST POLICY

"In Spain the Stalinists, who gave the orders from above, have advanced a formula to which Senor Cabellero also adheres: first military victory, then social reform.

"I consider that formula to be fatal to the Spanish Revolution. Not seeing in reality the radical difference of the two programmes, the worker masses, especially the peasants, fall into absolute indifference.

"In these conditions, the Fascists will inevitably conquer, for the purely military advantage is on their side. Bold social reforms are the most powerful arms in the civil war and the fundamental condition for a victory over Fascism.

"The policy of Stalin in Spain is not so much a renewal of that of Kerensky's in 1917 as that of Ebert and Scheidemann in the German revolution of 1918, the punishment for which was Hitler's victory. Germany awaited that punishment for 15 years: Spain can reach it before 15 months.

"Will not the social and political victory of the workers and peasants bring a European war in its train?

"Such prophecies dictated by reactionary cowardice are radically false. If Fascism conquers in Spain, France will find herself in a vice from which she will not be able to escape. The dictatorship of Franco signifies the inevitable precipitation of a European war under conditions the most difficult for France.

"It is useless to say that a new European war would threaten to bleed white, and lead to the decline of, the French race, and thus would strike a blow at entire human culture.

CONDITION OF PEACE

"The victory of the workers and peasants of Spain, on the contrary, would inevitably shake the regimes of Hitler and Mussolini. Thanks to their totalitarian hermetic character, the Fascist regimes give the impression of an unshakable firmness but, in reality, at the first serious test they will be victims of internal explosions.

"The victorious Russian Revolution undermined the Hohenzollern regime. The victorious Spanish Revolution will undermine the Hitler and Mussolini regimes.

"Not only in that way would the victory of the workers and peasants show itself to be a powerful factor for peace. The task of the true Spanish revolutionaries is, in strengthening the military front, to break the political leading-strings of the Soviet bureaucracy, to give to the masses a bold social programme, to uncover the inexhaustible enthusiasm of which the masses are capable, to assure the victory of the revolution, and, precisely in that way, to assist the cause of peace.

"The well-being of Europe is at stake."

BEHIND THE POPULAR FRONT By HENRY SARA

Mr. Stephen Spender in his book *Forward from Liberalism*—it was a monthly Left Book Club choice—is not above saying that the G.P.U. in Soviet Russia is over-zealous. "Unfortunately, the secret police are bloody as well as farcical. The savage reprisals which followed the murder of Kirov, in which, after summary military trials, over a hundred people were shot, show the system at its worst. For it is impossible to believe that if there were a genuine conspiracy against the state, it would not have been

more exemplary to give these men an open trial." Later on he says, "If criticism in Russia is not to become a pernicious disease, it must be legalised." Since he wrote that, he has made application for membership of the Communist Party of Great Britain and been accepted!

It serves to show what the Popular Front can do.

The Popular Front is the beginning of Socialism—at least Mr. Stephen Spender seems to think so—for in the same book he speaks of "... the extension of the Inter-

national Popular Front in Russia, France and Spain, as a beginning of International Socialism." This is somewhat difficult to understand because a little later on he says: "We are fortunate in having the example of a classless society in Russia." How it is possible to have a Popular Front in Russia, in a classless society baffles analysis.

But then the Popular Front seems to mean all sorts of things to all sorts of people. In the March number of the "journal for political controversy published monthly by the Communist Party at King Street," called *Discussion*, in a review of a book on *The Paris Commune of 1871*, the working class uprising is described as "the Commune, a 'people's front' of resistance against aggression." A strange description when it is recalled that Frederick Engels put on record that famous saying: "Of late the Social-Democratic philistine has once more been filled with wholesome terror at the words: Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Well and good gentlemen, do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."

The Social Democratic philistine is still in our midst but he is sailing under another name apparently.

Just where will the Popular Front stop? It is now working fast in China of all places. Students of Communist literature, or to speak more exactly, Stalinist literature, will have been puzzled for the last few years about Red China where the revolution was going on ceaselessly. Soviets were set up in vast regions, Labour Laws were enacted, everything was going according to the methods advocated by Stalin. Under his leadership, and the leadership of the Communist Party of China, the emancipation of the Chinese masses was close at hand. And now in 1937 Communism shakes hands with General Chiang Kai shek, forms a Popular Front, and throws overboard every vestige of class struggle. But can it be wondered at when the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China issues a manifesto: "We swear that our party is loyal to the nation. Since all of you (all of you! including Chiang Kai-shek of course! H.S.) are honestly striving for China's welfare we have no doubt you will accept our proposal in order to establish a United National Front for resistance against aggression and for the National salvation of our country. We are all children of the great Chinese nation. In the face of this national crisis it is imperative that all of us should cast aside our differences, co-operate in harmony and join together in struggle for the great cause of the final liberation of the Chinese people. . . . We remain, with best wishes for the National Revolution."

To carry that out they are prepared to undertake "To discontinue the confiscation of lands belonging to landlords." Perhaps these children of the great Chinese nation will fight better for a land which isn't theirs. What a reckoning this will involve. So the price of Stalinism is to be paid for!

WHOSE BOOK CLUB?

The Left Book Club is a thriving institution devoted, we are given to understand, to work of an educational and propagandist character. Its membership is open to all and the views of the Club are not the views of any particular section of the Left.

The Club, however, carries on propaganda for very definite and specific purposes: for example it is in favour of the Popular Front. It has also published an article by Ivor Montague, in the *Left News* for October, on the Moscow Trial. This article was a defence of the prosecution and an attack upon Trotsky and upon the men who, as a result of that trial, was shot. In other words, the article was one which represented the point of view of the C.P.G.B. and of very few other people.

Prominent working class leaders have expressed their doubts as to the validity of that Trial and the charges against Trotsky. The I.L.P., the Socialist League, the Scottish Socialist Party, the Independent Socialist Party—none of these organisations nor the great bulk of their members share the opinions of the C.P.G.B. on the Trials. It is extremely doubtful if more than one per cent. of the organised workers' movement shares the point of view of the Communist Party on the Russian Trials.

Yet though an article representing the point of view of the C.P.G.B. has been published, no reply has been allowed; nor have the readers of the *Left News* been allowed to know of the letters of protest which have been sent in to Victor Gollanz.

A reply to the article by Ivor Montague was written by P. Burns and forwarded to Victor Gollanz. It was sent in November—it was returned on January 15th with apologies for the delay but with no explanation for the refusal to publish.

Let us speak plainly on this matter: is the Left Book Club opinion to be that of the C.P.G.B.? Is the Left Book Club a medium through which pro-Stalin, anti-Trotsky views are circulated and through which the campaign for the Popular Front and other Communist Party campaigns are to be carried on?

We urge all members of that body to raise as strongly as possible this matter in their local groups with a view to securing freedom of opinion inside the Left Book Club and in the pages of the *Left News*.

WE HOPE SO TOO!

DEAR COMRADE,

Thanks for the "Red Flag" I'm returning same! Not interested!

I'm a Militant Socialist (I hope). The fact that the U.S.S.R. has been run successfully on Socialist lines since 1919 is sufficient evidence that an individual Socialist country can succeed despite its imperialist neighbours.

I have sufficient work to do in endeavouring to found Socialism here without indulging in a cat-and-dog fight over theories.

Onward to Socialism!

Yours fraternally,

C. MORRIS.

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CATALAN WORKERS TAKE OVER (Continued from Page 1)

by the peasants themselves. All lands previously owned by the church and absentee landlords have been seized by the peasants and in many of the villages one can see the posters and pamphlets of the C.N.T. and the P.O.U.M. with the slogan "Peasants, the Land is Yours; Fight for It."

In the large town previously mentioned the workers have taken over control similarly as in Barcelona. One village, Membrilla, with a population of 8,000 inhabitants, is worthy of special mention. Here they have proclaimed the town to be libertarian Communist town and abolished all private ownership of property. Here the C.N.T. have complete control, and in place of the various small businesses and shops, which they closed down, four large distribution stores were opened at certain vantage points in the village, and every inhabitant in the village has been enrolled as a member of the libertarian syndicate.

Special provisions have been passed in regard to the welfare of women and children, and in regard to marriage, divorce, abortion pregnancy, etc. No rent whatsoever is paid and a special sub-committee has been appointed to see that all the dwellings are kept clean and habitable and in a proper state of repair, and to see that everyone has a place to sleep and live. Every person receives 50 centimos per day, in the form of coupons, and this has been found sufficient for the needs of the inhabitants, as medical services, schooling, etc., are free.

Every person in the village is required to do a minimum amount of labour according to his ability and once or twice a week all the village produce, vegetables, fruit,

etc., is taken by a specially appointed sub committee of local experts to the nearest city to be sold and with the funds purchase whatever stock is necessary to replenish the four stores.

Difficulties have been few because of the terrible poverty which previously existed and the comparative wealth (communal) which now exists. Where most of the earnings of the workers and the peasants went previously in rent to the landlords, in taxes to church and state, to the councils and the police and army, the village now pays only a small tax to the Catalonian Government. Of the organisation of this village the Catalonian workers and peasants are extremely proud and justly so, for in one sweep they have replaced misery, starvation and unemployment by happiness and plenty.

The workers of Catalonia have now had workers' control for over seven months and as time progresses they are consolidating and strengthening their power. It will be clearly understood how ferociously and bravely they will, if need be, give their lives to defeat Fascism, and how strongly they will oppose any attempt made to deprive them of the power they have achieved at such great cost. One can understand their fight for the social revolution and appreciate the powerful mass feeling which exists against the restoration of bourgeois democracy in place of workers' control. The youth are today being brought up with the ideal of the social revolution and workers' control in all economic life as their purpose. To defeat Fascism in Spain; to give the lead to the rest of the workers to rid themselves of capitalism and all its attendant evils is their aim.

THE MOSCOW "CONFESSIONS" (Continued from Page 3)

What more natural than the hypothesis that the confessions may contain a morsel of the truth? But no, you see, our jurists consider it impossible that the accused hoped to be reprieved. They asked for death themselves, then. They "freely" renounced counsel for the defence. What sinister hypocrisy! What shame!

These wretched men, humiliated and broken, asked death for themselves so that they might better fulfil their odious role, and thus attempt to save their life. It was prearranged in the contract. At any price the government required the illusion of men wretched and foundering.

The correspondent of the *Daily Herald*, the organ of the very party to which Pritt belongs, wrote after the verdict: "The report is widely current that a decree, published only five days before, which gave them the right to appeal, had been specially designed to spare their lives." (Retranslated from the French.)

I do not know to what decree it is referring. It may be that they did nothing more than spread rumours of such a decree. In any case Stalin did everything to deceive the accused.

18th December, 1936.