

Readings on the Popular Front

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4/ THE POPULAR FRONT

The turn toward the "Popular Front" came toward the end of 1933 as the Stalinized Communist International made a quick about-face from its ultra-left "Third Period" policies. With the triumph of Hitler and the renewed threat of imperialist attack the panic-stricken Soviet bureaucracy set about lining up allies for defense of the Soviet fatherland. Russia entered the League of Nations and signed a Franco-Soviet military assistance pact. Throughout this period the Comintern sought to ingratiate itself with the bourgeoisies of the democratic imperialist powers through calculated containment of revolutionary proletarian movements in Europe. The method: class-collaborationist alliances with and participation in the governments of the bourgeoisie. The cover: the struggle against fascism.

The popular front found theoretical expression in the report of Georgi Dimitrov to the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in August 1935. According to Dimitrov the main danger now threatening the workers was fascism. But fascism threatened not only the working class, but also the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie in general and even sections of the bourgeoisie. In consequence, the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism are removed from the agenda during the present period:

"Now the toiling masses in a number of capitalist countries are faced with the necessity of making a definite choice, and of making it today, not between proletarian dictatorship and bourgeois democracy, but between bourgeois democracy and fascism."



WIDE WORLD

Stalin concludes Franco-Soviet pact with Laval, 1934. During "Third Period," Stalin described France as "the most aggressive and militarist country of all aggressive and militarist countries of the world."

To defend bourgeois democracy, the proletariat must aim to ally with all other social groups threatened by fascism, including the "anti-fascist" sections of the bourgeoisie in a vast "People's Front":

"Under certain conditions, we can and must bend our efforts to the task of drawing these parties and organizations or certain sections of them to the side of the anti-fascist people's front, despite their bourgeois

leadership. Such, for instance, is today the situation in France with the Radical Party...."

—G. Dimitrov, "Report to the Seventh Comintern Congress," 1935

During the Third Period the Communists refused to bloc with the German Social Democrats in a united front against Hitler, dubbing them "social-fascists." Now the Communists are not only willing to make ongoing alliances with the social democracy, but to form a government with the anti-fascist sectors of the bourgeoisie itself! Subsequently, in Italy during the late 1930's this "broad alliance" was still further broadened to include appeals to "honest" fascists!

The popular front is nothing more than an expression of the theories and practices of class collaboration—a bloc of organizations and parties representing various classes on the basis of a common program, the defense of bourgeois democracy. Though the name was new, the content was not. The German Social Democrats formed "left bloc" coalition governments with the democratic bourgeoisie (in the form of the Center Party) throughout the 1920's. The only difference was that the Communists occasionally made a pretense of being revolutionary, while the Social Democrats were more open about their reformism.

The Stalinists try to claim that the popular front is simply the logical extension of the united front to a higher plane. Nothing could be further from the truth. The "working-class united front" was formed under the banner of "class against class" and was raised precisely in order to break the Social Democrats away from their perennial class-collaborationist alliances with the "democratic" bourgeoisie:

"The tactic of the United Front is the call for the united struggle of Communists and of all other workers, either belonging to other parties and groups, or belonging to no party whatever, for the defense of the elementary and vital interests of the working class against the bourgeoisie."

—Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI), "Theses on the United Front," 1922

The united front served both to join the forces of the various workers organizations in action and also to expose the reformists who would participate in struggles for working-class interests only when forced to do so by pressure from their base, and who would desert at the earliest possible moment. Since the Bolshevik party *alone* represented the true historical interests of the working class, it was crucial that there be no common program with the reformists, since this could only mean the abandonment of the Leninist program. Nor could there be any restrictions on the right to criticize the other parties to the front. Hence the second main slogan of the united front, "freedom of criticism, unity in action" or, as Trotsky put it, "march separately, strike together."

In the popular front, however, the proletarian parties renounce their class independence and give up their working-class program. Earl Browder summed this up succinctly in his report to the Central Commit-

tee of the CPUSA on 4 December 1936:

"We can organize and rouse them [the majority of "the people"] provided we do not demand of them that they agree with our socialist program, but unite with them on the basis of their program which we also make our own." [!]

The popular front conformed with the Menshevik theory of the "two-stage revolution." First the struggle for bourgeois democracy, then the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism. The Stalinists proceeded from the absolutely false conception that a basic social conflict existed between bourgeois democracy and fascism. Fascism appeared in Europe following World War I as a necessary development of bourgeois rule in a period of severe economic decline. It is a last resort of the capitalists to preserve their system when it is no longer possible through normal parliamentary measures. The Stalinists at one point even tried to justify their two-stage schema by claiming that fascism actually had its roots in feudalism, not capitalism!

In point of fact, the popular front was simply another bourgeois solution to the conditions which led to fascism. The Communists or Social Democrats are invited to participate in a capitalist government under conditions in which no existing bourgeois parliamentary combination can effectively rule over a restive mass of workers and peasants. The price of the coalition is Communist support to strikebreaking and similar measures by the governments in which they participate.

During the 1930's popular-front governments were realized during pre-revolutionary periods in France and Spain. There the coalition with the "democratic" bourgeoisie was able to head off powerful mass upsurges by diverting the general strikes and even insurrections into the dead-end of defending bourgeois democracy. In colonial countries, such as Vietnam, the popular-front policies led to dropping the demand for independence! To the Stalinists' class collaboration, the Trotskyists counterposed a working-class united front to smash the fascists. Instead of depending on the republican generals and the police, they called for the formation of workers militias based on the trade unions. Weak in numbers and subject to vicious slander campaigns by the Comintern, the Trotskyists were unable to gain sufficient influence to break through the reformist stranglehold on the workers movement. Time and again the positions of the Bolshevik-Leninists were proved correct, but in a negative way, by the ignominious defeat of promising revolutionary situations. Stalin certainly earned the nickname Trotsky had given him—the Great Organizer of Defeats.

France 1934-1936

In France fascist agitation made more headway than in any other of the "great democracies." Fascist leagues appeared in open imitation of the Italian and German fascist organizations. After years of ignoring or downplaying the fascist danger the Communist (PCF) and Socialist (SFIO) leaders panicked after the February 1934 attack on parliament by the Croix de Feu (Cross of Fire) band. Under tremendous pressure from the ranks, the Socialist- and Communist-led

trade-union federations held a massive joint demonstration on 12 February whose very size served effectively to throw back the fascists for months. Trotsky's struggle of the past four years for a workers united front against fascism had been vindicated against the sectarian-defeatist idiocies of the Third Period.

In June 1934 PCF leader Maurice Thorez proposed a united front with the SFIO. The united front did not adopt the Leninist slogan of "march separately, strike together," but instead took the form of a "non-aggression pact." Both parties renounced their programmatic independence and ceased to criticize each other. Trotsky criticized the united front for limiting its actions to parliamentary maneuvers and electoral alliances and refusing to seek to arouse the workers in extra-parliamentary struggle against fascism, a struggle which might have opened up the prospect for proletarian revolution.



Radical Daladier (left) and Communist Thorez (center). During 1936 French general strike, Thorez declared, "one must know how to end a strike." The CP opposed arming workers as provocative, saw popular front with "democratic" capitalists as answer to fascists.

In the midst of acute social crisis, mass strike waves and readiness to fight of the workers, the PCF refused to struggle for power on the basis that the situation was "not revolutionary." Instead, the PCF put forth a program of "immediate economic demands" which served to disorient and disorganize the proletariat and speed the growth of fascism since the capitalists felt increasing threat from the working class. The PCF renounced the struggle for nationalization, opposed the call for workers militias as provocative and refused arms to the workers, while trying to preserve a fig-leaf of revolutionism by absurdly calling for "soviets everywhere," the immediate precondition for an armed insurrection.

In July 1935 the French Stalinists expanded the coalition to include the bourgeois Radical Socialists. The Radical Socialists, based on the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, advocated progressive social changes but were firmly committed to private enterprise and private ownership. In order to save unity with the Radicals the PCF insisted that the popular-front program be restricted to defense of the republic against fascism, measures against the depression and labor

reforms. The popular front swept the March 1936 elections. The SFIO became the leading party in the Chamber of Deputies, and their chief, Leon Blum, became premier of a coalition cabinet of Socialists and Radical Socialists. The Communists refused to enter the government in order to avoid scaring the bourgeoisie but supported it in parliament.

As frequently occurs at the beginning of a popular-front government, the masses saw the elections as a victory for the working class and unleashed a tremendous wave of militancy culminating in the May-June general strike. While the initial demands were mainly defensive, centering on a 15 percent wage increase, the strikes almost all involved the militant sit-down tactic. The bourgeoisie panicked, demanding that the Blum government take office immediately in order to contain the strike. Blum and the CGT labor bureaucrats negotiated an initial settlement which provided some gains, but on the condition of the immediate evacuation of the factories. The pact was solidly voted down by Parisian metal workers.

Fearing that, as Trotsky wrote, "the French Revolution has begun," the PCF ordered its militants to support the agreements. Thorez declared, "There can be no question of taking power at this time" and "one must know how to end a strike." The Socialist-Radical government did its part by seizing the issue of the Trotskyist newspaper (*Lutte Ouvrière*) which called for extending the strike. By the middle of June the combined efforts of the reformists had succeeded in scuttling the resistance.

This was the high point of the popular front, for it was in breaking the 1936 general strike that the Blum government accomplished the basic task set for it by the bourgeoisie—stopping the drift toward revolution.

The few significant social reforms, such as the 40-hour week, were soon reversed. In 1937, after a year in office and having lost the confidence of the working masses, the Blum government was toppled by the Senate. In mid-1938 the Radical Socialists formed a conservative ministry under Edouard Daladier. Daladier's announcement that fall of a return to the 48-hour week provoked a new mass strike wave. The response of the PCF: a call for a one-day protest strike! Daladier declared martial law and sent troops to the factories. The labor movement collapsed, millions of workers tore up their union cards in disgust. By January the PCF had been banned, and all Communist-led unions were banned from the UGT labor federation. In June 1940 the bourgeois parties, as well as some SFIO delegates, voted to create the Vichy regime. Thus, far from stopping fascism, the popular front proved to be just one more "peaceful road" to barbarism.

The Popular Front in Spain, 1936-1939

The consequences of the Stalin-Dimitrov popular-front policies were equally counterrevolutionary in Spain. The overthrow of the monarchy in 1931 had led to the establishment of a bourgeois republic, but the social policies of the Radical/Socialist coalition government were hardly more liberal than those of the military dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera during the late 1920's (also supported by the Socialists). In October 1934 an insurrection broke out in the mining region of Asturias in reaction to the rightist policies of the government. Despite bloody repression (thousands of miners were machine-gunned by the

PATHFINDER PRESS



Armed Spanish workers were ready to fight for socialism, but Stalin strangled revolution to appease Imperialist bourgeoisie.

military), the heroic uprising awakened the Spanish working masses and led to the widespread formation of united-front workers committees (*alianzas obreras*).

In response, the leaders of the major workers parties moved to set up a popular front similar to that in France, including the Socialists (right and left wings), the Communists and also the POUM (the Workers Party of Marxist Unification). The POUM had been formed by the fusion of a right split-off from the CP (Maurin's "Workers and Peasants Bloc" which Trotsky had referred to as the "Spanish Kuo-mintang," i.e., a two-class party) and the former Communist Left headed by Nin. As a result of forming an unprincipled bloc with Maurin and signing the popular-front agreement, the ties between Nin and the Trotskyist movement were broken.

The alternative was a proletarian revolution which was possible at any moment. In Catalonia transport and industry were almost entirely in the hands of the CNT (Anarchist) workers committees, while in much of the northeast (Catalonia and Aragon) the peasant associations and agricultural workers unions had set up collective farms. The old municipal governments disappeared, replaced by committees giving representation to all anti-fascist parties and unions. The most important was the Central Committee of Anti-Fascist Militias of Catalonia which, although it had bourgeois members, was thoroughly dominated by the workers organizations. Yet on top of this sat the "shallow of the bourgeoisie," a popular-front government of Catalonia headed by another bourgeois lawyer, Companys. As in Russia from February to October 1917 there was a situation of dual power, but with the workers



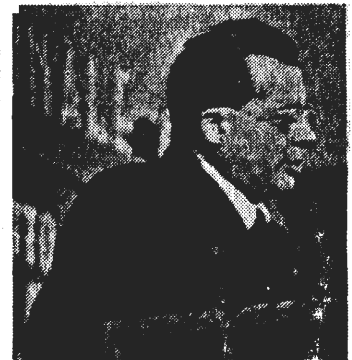
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LIFE



TIME



BOLETIN INTERNACIONAL

Stalinist henchmen in Spain: Ovseenko, Ulbricht, Tito and Togliatti (left to right). For the Maoists, Stalin's "heroes" later were to become "renegades," "revisionists" and "state bourgeoisie."

The popular-front agreement signed in January 1936 was a classic document of the abandonment of working-class politics. It pledged:

"The republicans do not accept the principle of the nationalization of the land and its free reversion to the peasants... The republican parties do not accept measures for nationalization of the banks... [and] workers control claimed by the delegation of the Socialist Party."

The republican/worker alliance won a plurality in the February 1936 elections, however, and formed a government under the bourgeois lawyer Azaña. As in France, the masses interpreted this as a victory and began a wave of land and factory occupations which the government was unable to contain. In consequence, on 17 July General Franco and a group of leading military officers issued a proclamation for an authoritarian Catholic state and went into rebellion. The response of the Azaña government was to attempt to negotiate with the insurgent generals, meanwhile refusing to arm the masses!

This temporizing might have succeeded if the masses of workers had not taken matters into their own hands. In Barcelona, a stronghold of the Anarchists and the POUM, workers took over numerous factories and stormed the army barracks with pistols. In less than a day they had complete control of the city. This sparked similar revolts elsewhere, and the republican government was forced to reverse itself, arm the masses and attempt a half-hearted struggle against Franco.

still giving tacit support to the shaky bourgeois government.

In this situation, Lenin and the Bolsheviks had demanded, "Down with the Provisional Government, All Power to the Soviets"! The Spanish workers parties, however, from the Stalinists to the POUM and even the Anarchists (who supposedly opposed even a workers government!) joined the bourgeois government in September 1936. The Stalinists assured their bourgeois friends that they had no intention of leading the workers to power. In August 1936 the PCF newspaper *L'Humanité* stated:

"The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Spain requests us to inform the public... that the Spanish people are not striving for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but know only one aim: the defense of the republican order while respecting private property."

With support of the Stalinists and Socialists guaranteed, Azaña and Companys began moving to re-establish bourgeois law and order. The first step was censorship of the workers press. The Catalan government followed this up with a decree dissolving the revolutionary committees which had arisen in July, and in late October it ordered the disarming of the workers in the rear. The POUM and CNT leaders were subsequently expelled from the cabinet, even though they had gone along with all these anti-worker measures. A secret police was organized, under the control of the Stalinist and GPU agents from the Soviet Union.

But this was not enough to break the back of the

workers' resistance. A provocation was required. This came on 3 May 1937 when the Stalinists attacked the Barcelona telephone exchange held by CNT workers. Within hours barricades were erected throughout the city and the workers were once again in a position to take power. Instead the POUM and Anarchist leaders capitulated to the central government, trusting in Azaña's pledge of no reprisals. Two days later the Assault Guards arrived and occupied the exchange, killing hundreds and jailing tens of thousands. Within a month the POUM was outlawed, at the demand of the Stalinists, and its leaders arrested and eventually shot. In short order the CP led the Assault Guards in dissolving the collective farms and workers militias. Although the war dragged on for another year and one-half, the result was already decided—since the workers and peasants no longer had anything to fight for, they became rapidly demoralized and the superior armaments of the fascists carried the day.

In all this the Spanish CP had acted as the guarantor of bourgeois order, leading the offensive against the Anarchists and the POUM, the collective farms and the workers militias. In his desperate desire to achieve an alliance with the "democratic" imperialist powers, Stalin was absolutely opposed to revolution in Spain—even if this meant that fascist victory was the alternative. The Great Organizer of Defeats was also the Butcher of the Spanish Revolution.

But the responsibility for the debacle does not stop here. Nin and the other leaders of the Communist Left had once fought for the class independence of the proletariat. At one time they were a larger party than the Spanish CP itself. But by capitulating to the popular front, these centrists were as responsible for the defeat of the Spanish revolution as Stalin. Had they known how to swim against the stream in moments when the popular front had mass support they could have earned the leadership of the workers movement when the masses later came to see that they had been betrayed. As it was the POUM went along with the betrayals, protesting only when it was too late.

The Popular Front in World War II

It is remarkable that in Davidson's attack on Trotskyism, in addition to virtually ignoring the October 1917 Russian Revolution and the ignominious defeat of Stalin's policies in Germany, he does not mention Stalin's policies in Spain and France at all. And with good reason! But as a good Stalinist he must defend the popular front somehow, preferably with a more popular example. He chose World War II. According to the Stalinists, this was a war against fascism and in defense of the Soviet fatherland. Their political conclusion was a broad popular front "including even the temporary and wavering allies to be found in the camp of the bourgeois-democratic capitalist governments" (*Guardian*, 9 May 1973).

Davidson gives a somewhat accurate account of the Trotskyist position on the war, presuming that nobody could have opposed the great anti-fascist crusade except counterrevolutionary Trotskyists. But while the Stalinist policy was certainly more popular at the time, it will not wash so easily with a new generation of worker-militants who have far less illusions about the "democratic" character of U.S. imperialism. The Trotskyist position on the war was

revolutionary defeatism in the capitalist countries in this *inter-imperialist* war. At the same time they gave unconditional support to the military defense of the Soviet Union. This was no academic question, for Trotsky fought a sharp battle against the Shachtman group (in the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party) which was opposed to defense of the USSR, and eventually left the SWP taking 40 percent of the membership with it.

During the war the numerically weak Trotskyist cadre by and large carried out an internationalist line, despite social-patriotic bulges in some of the sections. The French section, for instance, organized a Trotskyist cell in the German navy. In the process, however, many of the leaders of the Fourth International were executed either by the Nazis or, like Nin in Spain, at the hands of the Stalinists. In the U.S. the SWP concentrated its work on fighting the no-strike agreement supported by the CIO leadership and the CP.

The Stalinists had the opposite policy. According to CPUSA leader Earl Browder:

"In the United States we have to win the war under the capitalist system... Therefore, we have to find out how to make the capitalist system work... We have to help the capitalists to learn how to run their system."



When Nazis attacked USSR, American CP wrapped itself in Stars and Stripes, jingoistically goading Roosevelt to prosecute the imperialist "peoples' war."

The *Daily Worker* of 25 December 1941 implemented this policy by hailing the CIO no-strike pledge as a "definite contribution to national unity." What this meant in practice was strike-breaking. During the 1943 mine workers' strike, CP labor leader William Z. Foster traveled the Pennsylvania mining districts trying to organize scabs and a "back-to-work" movement. On the West Coast, CP-sympathizer Bridges of the ILWU called for speed-up.

Thus throughout the 1930's and 1940's the popular-front policy led to the identical practical result: strike-breaking and counterrevolution. The strangulation of the Spanish revolution, the defeat of the French general strike, scabbing in the U.S. miners' strike—these were the fruits of class collaboration. Drawing the logical conclusion, Stalin made another concession to his bourgeois friends by dissolving the Communist International in 1943 because it hindered a united effort to win the war!

Leon Trotsky

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**THE LESSONS OF SPAIN:
THE LAST WARNING**

December 17, 1937

Menshevism and Bolshevism in Spain

All general staffs are studying closely the military operations in Ethiopia, in Spain, in the Far East, in preparation for the great future war. The battles of the Spanish proletariat, heat lightning flashes of the coming world revolution, should be no less attentively studied by the revolutionary staffs. Under this condition and this condition alone will the coming events not take us unawares.

Three ideologies fought—with unequal forces—in the so-called republican camp, namely, Menshevism, Bolshevism, and anarchism. As regards the bourgeois republican parties, they were without either independent ideas or independent political significance and were able to maintain themselves only by climbing on the backs of the reformists and Anarchists. Moreover, it is no exaggeration to say that the leaders of Spanish anarcho-syndicalism did everything to repudiate their doctrine

From *Socialist Appeal*, January 8 and 15, 1938, in a translation from the Russian by John G. Wright.

and virtually reduce its significance to zero. Actually two doctrines in the so-called republican camp fought—Menshevism and Bolshevism.

According to the Socialists and Stalinists, i.e., the Mensheviks of the first and second instances, the Spanish revolution was called upon to solve only its "democratic" tasks, for which a united front with the "democratic" bourgeoisie was indispensable. From this point of view, any and all attempts of the proletariat to go beyond the limits of bourgeois democracy are not only premature but also fatal. Furthermore, on the agenda stands not the revolution but the struggle against the insurgent Franco.

Fascism, however, is not feudal but bourgeois reaction. A successful fight against bourgeois reaction can be waged only with the forces and methods of the proletarian revolution. Menshevism, itself a branch of bourgeois thought, does not have and cannot have any inkling of these facts.

The Bolshevik point of view, clearly expressed only by the young section of the Fourth International, takes the theory of permanent revolution as its starting point, namely, that even purely democratic problems, like the liquidation of semi-feudal land ownership, cannot be solved without the conquest of power by the proletariat; but this in turn places the socialist revolution on the agenda. Moreover, during the very first stages of the revolution, the Spanish workers themselves posed in practice not merely democratic problems but also purely socialist ones. The demand not to transgress the bounds of bourgeois democracy signifies in practice not a defense of the democratic revolution but a repudiation of it. Only through an overturn in agrarian relations could the peasantry, the great mass of the population, have been transformed into a powerful bulwark against fascism. But the landowners are intimately bound up with the commercial, industrial, and banking bourgeoisie, and the bourgeois intelligentsia that depends on them. The party of the proletariat was thus faced with a choice between going with the peasant masses or with the liberal bourgeoisie. There could only be one reason to include the peasantry and the liberal bourgeoisie in the same coalition at the same time: to help the bourgeoisie deceive the peasantry and thus isolate the workers. The agrarian revolution could have been accomplished only *against* the bourgeoisie, and therefore

only through measures of the dictatorship of the proletariat. There is no third, intermediate regime.

From the standpoint of theory, the most astonishing thing about Stalin's Spanish policy is the utter disregard for the ABC of Leninism. After a delay of several decades—and what decades!—the Comintern has fully rehabilitated the doctrine of Menshevism. More than that, the Comintern has contrived to render this doctrine more "consistent" and by that token more absurd. In czarist Russia, on the threshold of 1905, the formula of "purely democratic revolution" had behind it, in any case, immeasurably more arguments than in 1937 in Spain. It is hardly astonishing that in modern Spain "the liberal labor policy" of Menshevism has been converted into the reactionary anti-labor policy of Stalinism. At the same time the doctrine of the Mensheviks, this caricature of Marxism, has been converted into a caricature of itself.

"Theory" of the Popular Front

It would be naive, however, to think that the politics of the Comintern in Spain stem from a theoretical "mistake." Stalinism is not guided by Marxist theory, or for that matter by any theory at all, but by the empirical interests of the Soviet bureaucracy. In their intimate circles, the Soviet cynics mock Dimitrov's "philosophy" of the Popular Front.³² But they have at their disposal for deceiving the masses large cadres of propagators of this holy formula, sincere ones and cheats, simpletons and charlatans. Louis Fischer, with his ignorance and smugness, with his provincial rationalism and congenital deafness to revolution, is the most repulsive representative of this unattractive brotherhood.³³ "The union of progressive forces!" "The triumph of the idea of the Popular Front!" "The assault of the Trotskyists on the unity of the antifascist ranks!" . . . Who will believe that the *Communist Manifesto* was written ninety years ago?

The theoreticians of the Popular Front do not essentially go beyond the first rule of arithmetic, that is, addition: "Communists" plus Socialists plus Anarchists plus liberals add up to a total which is greater than their respective isolated numbers. Such is all their wisdom. However, arithmetic alone does not suffice here. One needs as well at least mechanics. The law of the parallelogram of forces applies to politics as well.

In such a parallelogram, we know that the resultant is shorter, the more the component forces diverge from each other. When political allies tend to pull in opposite directions, the resultant may prove equal to zero.

A bloc of divergent political groups of the working class is sometimes completely indispensable for the solution of common practical problems. In certain historical circumstances, such a bloc is capable of attracting the oppressed petty-bourgeois masses whose interests are close to the interests of the proletariat. The joint force of such a bloc can prove far stronger than the sum of the forces of each of its component parts. On the contrary, the political alliance between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, whose interests on basic questions in the present epoch diverge at an angle of 180 degrees, as a general rule is capable only of paralyzing the revolutionary force of the proletariat.

Civil war, in which the force of naked coercion is hardly effective, demands of its participants the spirit of supreme self-abnegation. The workers and peasants can assure victory only if they wage a struggle for their own emancipation. Under these conditions, to subordinate the proletariat to the leadership of the bourgeoisie means beforehand to assure defeat in the civil war.

These simple truths are least of all the products of pure theoretical analysis. On the contrary, they represent the unassailable deduction from the entire experience of history, beginning at least with 1848. The modern history of bourgeois society is filled with all sorts of Popular Fronts, i. e., the most diverse political combinations for the deception of the toilers. The Spanish experience is only a new and tragic link in this chain of crimes and betrayals.

Alliance with the bourgeoisie's shadow

Politically most striking is the fact that the Spanish Popular Front lacked in reality even a parallelogram of forces. The bourgeoisie's place was occupied by its shadow. Through the medium of the Stalinists, Socialists, and Anarchists, the Spanish bourgeoisie subordinated the proletariat to itself without even bothering to participate in the Popular Front. The overwhelming majority of the exploiters of all political shades openly went over to the camp of Franco. Without any theory of "per-

manent revolution," the Spanish bourgeoisie understood from the outset that the revolutionary mass movement, no matter how it starts, is directed against private ownership of land and the means of production, and that it is utterly impossible to cope with this movement by democratic measures.

That is why only insignificant debris from the possessing classes remained in the republican camp: Messrs. Azaña, Companys, and the like—political attorneys of the bourgeoisie but not the bourgeoisie itself. Having staked everything on a military dictatorship, the possessing classes were able, at the same time, to make use of their political representatives of *yesterday* in order to paralyze, disorganize, and afterward strangle the socialist movement of the masses in "republican" territory.

Without in the slightest degree representing the Spanish bourgeoisie, the left republicans still less represented the workers and peasants. They represented no one but themselves. Thanks, however, to their allies—the Socialists, Stalinists, and Anarchists—these political phantoms played the decisive role in the revolution. How? Very simply. By incarnating the principles of the "democratic revolution," that is, the inviolability of private property.

The Stalinists in the Popular Front

The reasons for the rise of the Spanish Popular Front and its inner mechanics are perfectly clear. The task of the retired leaders of the left bourgeoisie consisted in checking the revolution of the masses and thus in regaining for themselves the lost confidence of the exploiters: "Why do you need Franco if we, the republicans, can do the same thing?" The interests of Azaña and Companys fully coincided at this central point with the interests of Stalin, who needed to gain the confidence of the French and British bourgeoisie by proving to them in action his ability to preserve "order" against "anarchy." Stalin needed Azaña and Companys as a cover before the workers: Stalin himself, of course, is for socialism, but one must take care not to repel the republican bourgeoisie! Azaña and Companys needed Stalin as an experienced executioner, with the authority of a revolutionist. Without him, so insignificant a crew never could nor would have dared to attack the workers.

The classic reformists of the Second International, long ago derailed by the course of the class struggle, began to feel a new tide of confidence, thanks to the support of Moscow. This support, incidentally, was not given to all reformists but only to those most reactionary. Caballero represented that face of the Socialist Party that was turned toward the workers' aristocracy. Negrin and Prieto always looked towards the bourgeoisie. Negrin won over Caballero with the help of Moscow. The left Socialists and Anarchists, the captives of the Popular Front, tried, it is true, to save whatever could be saved of democracy. But inasmuch as they did not dare to mobilize the masses against the gendarmes of the Popular Front, their efforts at the end were reduced to plaints and wails. The Stalinists were thus in alliance with the extreme right, avowedly bourgeois wing of the Socialist Party. They directed their repressions against the left—the POUM, the Anarchists, the "left" Socialists—in other words, against the centrist groupings who reflected, even in a most remote degree, the pressure of the revolutionary masses.

This political fact, very significant in itself, provides at the same time a measure of the degeneration of the Comintern in the last few years. I once defined Stalinism as *bureaucratic centrism*, and events brought a series of corroborations of the correctness of this definition. But it is obviously obsolete today. The interests of the Bonapartist bureaucracy can no longer be reconciled with centrist hesitation and vacillation. In search of reconciliation with the bourgeoisie, the Stalinist clique is capable of entering into alliance only with the most conservative groupings among the international labor aristocracy. This has acted to fix definitively the counterrevolutionary character of Stalinism on the international arena.

Counterrevolutionary superiorities of Stalinism

This brings us right up to the solution of the enigma of how and why the Communist Party of Spain, so insignificant numerically and with a leadership so poor in caliber, proved capable of gathering into its hands all reins of power, in the face of the incomparably more powerful organizations of the Socialists and Anarchists. The usual explanation that the Stalinists simply bartered Soviet weapons for power is far too superficial. In return for munitions, Moscow received Spanish gold.

According to the laws of the capitalist market, this covers everything. How then did Stalin contrive to get power in the bargain?

The customary answer is that the Soviet government, having raised its authority in the eyes of the masses by furnishing military supplies, demanded as a condition of its "collaboration" drastic measures against revolutionists and thus removed dangerous opponents from its path. All this is quite indisputable but it is only one aspect of the matter, and the least important at that.

Despite the "authority" created by Soviet shipments, the Spanish Communist Party remained a small minority and met with ever-growing hatred on the part of the workers. On the other hand, it was not enough for Moscow to set conditions; Valencia had to accede to them. This is the heart of the matter. Not only Zamora, Companys, and Negrin, but also Caballero, during his incumbency as premier, were all more or less ready to accede to the demands of Moscow. Why? Because these gentlemen themselves wished to keep the revolution within bourgeois limits. Neither the Socialists nor the Anarchists seriously opposed the Stalinist program. They feared a break with the bourgeoisie. They were deathly afraid of every revolutionary onslaught of the workers.

Stalin with his munitions and with his counterrevolutionary ultimatum was a savior for all these groups. He guaranteed them, so they hoped, military victory over Franco, and at the same time, he freed them from all responsibility for the course of the revolution. They hastened to put their Socialist and Anarchist masks into the closet in the hope of making use of them again after Moscow reestablished bourgeois democracy for them. As the finishing touch to their comfort, these gentlemen could henceforth justify their betrayal to the workers by the necessity of a military agreement with Stalin. Stalin on his part justified his counterrevolutionary politics by the necessity of maintaining an alliance with the republican bourgeoisie.

Only from this broader point of view can we get a clear picture of the angelic toleration which such champions of justice and freedom as Azaña, Negrin, Companys, Caballero, Garcia Oliver, and others showed towards the crimes of the GPU.³⁴ If they had no other choice, as they affirm, it was not at all because they had no means of paying for airplanes

and tanks other than with the heads of the revolutionists and the rights of the workers, but because their own "purely democratic," that is, antisocialist, program could be realized by no other measures save terror. When the workers and peasants enter on the path of *their* revolution—when they seize factories and estates, drive out the old owners, conquer power in the provinces—then the bourgeois counterrevolution—democratic, Stalinist, or fascist alike—has no other means of checking this movement except through bloody coercion, supplemented by lies and deceit. The superiority of the Stalinist clique on this road consisted in its ability to apply instantly measures that were beyond the capacity of Azaña, Companys, Negrin, and their left allies.

Stalin confirms in his own way the correctness of the theory of permanent revolution

Two irreconcilable programs thus confronted each other on the territory of republican Spain. On the one hand, the program of saving *at any cost* private property from the proletariat, and saving *as far as possible* democracy from Franco; on the other hand, the program of abolishing private property through the conquest of power by the proletariat. The first program expressed the interests of capitalism through the medium of the labor aristocracy, the top petty-bourgeois circles, and especially the Soviet bureaucracy. The second program translated into the language of Marxism the tendencies of the revolutionary mass movement, not fully conscious but powerful. Unfortunately for the revolution, between the handful of Bolsheviks and the revolutionary proletariat stood the counterrevolutionary wall of the Popular Front.

The policy of the Popular Front was, in its turn, not at all determined by the blackmail of Stalin as a supplier of arms. There was, of course, no lack of blackmail. But the reason for the success of this blackmail was inherent in the inner conditions of the revolution itself. For six years, its social setting was the growing onslaught of the masses against the regime of semifeudal and bourgeois property. The need of defending this property by the most extreme measures threw the bourgeoisie into Franco's arms. The republican government had promised the bourgeoisie to defend property by "democratic" measures, but revealed, especially in July 1936, its complete bankruptcy. When the situation on the property front

became even more threatening than on the military front, the democrats of all colors, including the Anarchists, bowed before Stalin; and he found no other methods in his own arsenal than the methods of Franco.

The hounding of "Trotskyists," POUMists, revolutionary Anarchists and left Socialists; the filthy slander; the false documents; the tortures in Stalinist prisons; the murders from ambush—without all this the bourgeois regime under the republican flag could not have lasted even two months. The GPU proved to be the master of the situation only because it defended the interests of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat more consistently than the others, i. e., with the greatest baseness and bloodthirstiness.

In the struggle against the socialist revolution, the "democrat" Kerensky at first sought support in the military dictatorship of Kornilov and later tried to enter Petrograd in the baggage train of the monarchist general Krasnov. On the other hand, the Bolsheviks were compelled, in order to carry the democratic revolution through to the end, to overthrow the government of "democratic" charlatans and babblers. In the process they put an end thereby to every kind of attempt at military (or "fascist") dictatorship.

The Spanish revolution once again demonstrates that it is impossible to defend democracy against the revolutionary masses otherwise than through the methods of fascist reaction. And conversely, it is impossible to conduct a genuine struggle against fascism otherwise than through the methods of the proletarian revolution. Stalin waged war against "Trotskyism" (proletarian revolution), destroying democracy by the Bonapartist measures of the GPU. This refutes once again and once and for all the old Menshevik theory, adopted by the Comintern, in accordance with which the democratic and socialist revolutions are transformed into two independent historic chapters, separated from each other in point of time. The work of the Moscow executioners confirms in its own way the correctness of the theory of permanent revolution.

Role of the Anarchists

The Anarchists had no independent position of any kind in the Spanish revolution. All they did was waver between Bolshevism and Menshevism. More precisely, the Anarchist workers instinctively yearned to enter the Bolshevik road (July

19, 1936, and May days of 1937) while their leaders, on the contrary, with all their might drove the masses into the camp of the Popular Front, i. e., of the bourgeois regime.

The Anarchists revealed a fatal lack of understanding of the laws of the revolution and its tasks by seeking to limit themselves to their own trade unions, that is, to organizations permeated with the routine of peaceful times, and by ignoring what went on outside the framework of the trade unions, among the masses, among the political parties, and in the government apparatus. Had the Anarchists been revolutionists, they would first of all have called for the creation of soviets, which unite the representatives of all the toilers of city and country, including the most oppressed strata, who never joined the trade unions. The revolutionary workers would have naturally occupied the dominant position in these soviets. The Stalinists would have remained an insignificant minority. The proletariat would have convinced itself of its own invincible strength. The apparatus of the bourgeois state would have hung suspended in the air. One strong blow would have sufficed to pulverize this apparatus. The socialist revolution would have received a powerful impetus. The French proletariat would not for long have permitted Léon Blum to blockade the proletarian revolution beyond the Pyrenees. Neither could the Moscow bureaucracy have permitted itself such a luxury. The most difficult questions would have been solved as they arose.

Instead of this, the anarcho-syndicalists, seeking to hide from "politics" in the trade unions, turned out to be, to the great surprise of the whole world and themselves, a fifth wheel in the cart of bourgeois democracy. But not for long; a fifth wheel is superfluous. After García Oliver and his cohorts helped Stalin and his henchmen to take power away from the workers, the Anarchists themselves were driven out of the government of the Popular Front. Even then they found nothing better to do than jump on the victor's bandwagon and assure him of their devotion. The fear of the petty bourgeois before the big bourgeois, of the petty bureaucrat before the big bureaucrat, they covered up with lachrymose speeches about the sanctity of the united front (between a victim and the executioners) and about the inadmissibility of every kind of dictatorship, including their own. "After all, we could have taken power in July 1936. . . ." "After all, we could have taken power in May 1937. . . ." The Anarchists begged Stalin-Negrín to rec-

ognize and reward their treachery to the revolution. A revolting picture!

In and of itself, this self-justification that "we did not seize power not because we were unable but because we did not wish to, because we were against every kind of dictatorship," and the like, contains an irrevocable condemnation of anarchism as an utterly antirevolutionary doctrine. To renounce the conquest of power is voluntarily to leave the power with those who wield it, the exploiters. The essence of every revolution consisted and consists in putting a new class in power, thus enabling it to realize its own program in life. It is impossible to wage war and to reject victory. It is impossible to lead the masses towards insurrection without preparing for the conquest of power.

No one could have prevented the Anarchists after the conquest of power from establishing the sort of regime they deem necessary, assuming, of course, that their program is realizable. But the Anarchist leaders themselves lost faith in it. They hid from power not because they are against "every kind of dictatorship"—in actuality, grumbling and whining, they supported and still support the dictatorship of Stalin-Negrin—but because they completely lost their principles and courage, if they ever had any. They were afraid of everything: "isolation," "involvement," "fascism." They were afraid of Stalin. They were afraid of Negrin. They were afraid of France and England. More than anything these phrasemongers feared the revolutionary masses.

The renunciation of conquest of power inevitably throws every workers' organization into the swamp of reformism and turns it into a toy of the bourgeoisie; it cannot be otherwise in view of the class structure of society. In opposing the *goal*, the conquest of power, the Anarchists could not in the end fail to oppose the *means*, the revolution. The leaders of the CNT and FAI not only helped the bourgeoisie hold on to the shadow of power in July 1936; they also helped it to reestablish bit by bit what it had lost at one stroke. In May 1937, they sabotaged the uprising of the workers and thereby saved the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Thus anarchism, which wished merely to be antipolitical, proved in reality to be antirevolutionary, and in the more critical moments—counterrevolutionary.

The Anarchist theoreticians, who after the great test of 1931-37 continue to repeat the old reactionary nonsense about Kronstadt,³⁵ and who affirm that "Stalinism is the inevitable result of Marxism and Bolshevism," simply demonstrate by this they are forever dead for the revolution.

You say that Marxism is in itself depraved and Stalinism is its legitimate progeny? But why are we revolutionary Marxists engaged in mortal combat with Stalinism throughout the world? Why does the Stalinist gang see in Trotskyism its chief enemy? Why does every approach to our views or our methods of action (Durruti, Andrés Nin, Landau, and others)³⁶ compel the Stalinist gangsters to resort to bloody reprisals? Why, on the other hand, did the leaders of Spanish anarchism serve, during the time of the Moscow and Madrid crimes of the GPU, as ministers under Caballero-Negrin, that is, as servants of the bourgeoisie and Stalin? Why even now, under the pretext of fighting fascism, do the Anarchists remain voluntary captives of Stalin-Negrin, the executioners of the revolution, who have demonstrated their incapacity to fight fascism?

By hiding behind Kronstadt and Makhno, the attorneys of anarchism will deceive nobody.³⁷ In the Kronstadt episode and in the struggle with Makhno, we defended the proletarian revolution from the peasant counterrevolution. The Spanish Anarchists defended and continue to defend bourgeois counterrevolution from the proletarian revolution. No sophistry will delete from the annals of history the fact that anarchism and Stalinism in the Spanish revolution were on one side of the barricades while the working masses with the revolutionary Marxists were on the other. Such is the truth which will forever remain in the consciousness of the proletariat!

Role of the POUM

The record of the POUM is not much better. In point of theory, it tried, to be sure, to base itself on the formula of the permanent revolution (that is why the Stalinists called the POUMists Trotskyists). But the revolution is not satisfied with theoretical avowals. Instead of mobilizing the masses against the reformist leaders, including the Anarchists, the POUM tried to convince these gentlemen of the superiorities of socialism over capitalism. This tuning fork gave the pitch to all the articles and speeches of the POUM leaders. In order not to

quarrel with the Anarchist leaders, they did not form their own nuclei inside the CNT, and in general did not conduct any kind of work there. To avoid sharp conflicts, they did not carry on revolutionary work in the republican army. They built instead "their own" trade unions and "their own" militia, which guarded "their own" institutions or occupied "their own" section of the front.

By isolating the revolutionary vanguard from the class, the POUM rendered the vanguard impotent and left the class without leadership. Politically the POUM remained throughout far closer to the Popular Front, for whose left wing it provided the cover, than to Bolshevism. That the POUM nevertheless fell victim to bloody and base repressions was due to the failure of the Popular Front to fulfill its mission, namely to stifle the socialist revolution—except by cutting off, piece by piece, its own left flank.

Contrary to its own intentions, the POUM proved to be, in the final analysis, the chief obstacle on the road to the creation of a revolutionary party. The platonic or diplomatic partisans of the Fourth International like Sneevliet, the leader of the Dutch Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party, who demonstratively supported the POUM in its halfway measures, its indecisiveness and evasiveness, in short, in its centrism, took upon themselves the greatest responsibility. Revolution abhors centrism. Revolution exposes and annihilates centrism. In passing, the revolution discredits the friends and attorneys of centrism. That is one of the most important lessons of the Spanish revolution.

The problem of arming

The Socialists and Anarchists who seek to justify their capitulation to Stalin by the necessity of paying for Moscow's weapons with principles and conscience simply lie and lie unskillfully. Of course, many of them would have preferred to disentangle themselves without murders and frame-ups. But every goal demands corresponding means. Beginning with April 1931, that is, long before the military intervention of Moscow, the Socialists and Anarchists did everything in their power to check the proletarian revolution. Stalin taught them how to carry this work to its conclusion. They became Stalin's criminal accomplices only because they were his political co-thinkers.

Had the Anarchist leaders in the least resembled revolution-

ists, they would have answered the first piece of blackmail from Moscow not only by continuing the socialist offensive but also by exposing Stalin's counterrevolutionary conditions before the world working class. They would have thus forced the Moscow bureaucracy to choose openly between the socialist revolution and the Franco dictatorship. The Thermidorean bureaucracy fears and hates revolution. But it also fears being strangled in a fascist ring. Besides, it depends on the workers. All indications are that Moscow would have been forced to supply arms, and possibly at more reasonable prices.

But the world does not revolve around Stalinist Moscow. During a year and a half of civil war, the Spanish war industry could and should have been strengthened and developed by converting a number of civilian plants to war production. This work was not carried out only because Stalin and his Spanish allies equally feared the initiative of the workers' organizations. A strong war industry would have become a powerful instrument in the hands of the workers. The leaders of the Popular Front preferred to depend on Moscow.

It is precisely on this question that the perfidious role of the Popular Front was very strikingly revealed. It thrust upon the workers' organizations the responsibility for the treacherous deals of the bourgeoisie with Stalin. Insofar as the Anarchists remained in the minority, they could not, of course, immediately hinder the ruling bloc from assuming whatever obligations they pleased toward Moscow and the masters of Moscow: London and Paris. But without ceasing to be the best fighters on the front, they could and should have openly dissociated themselves from the betrayals and betrayers; they could and should have explained the real situation to the masses, mobilized them against the bourgeois government, and augmented their own forces from day to day in order in the end to conquer power and with it the Moscow arms.

And what if Moscow, in the absence of a Popular Front, should have refused to give arms altogether? And what, we answer to this, if the Soviet Union did not exist altogether? Revolutions have been victorious up to this time not at all thanks to high and mighty foreign patrons who supplied them with arms. As a rule, counterrevolution enjoyed foreign patronage. Must we recall the experience of the intervention of French, English, American, Japanese, and other armies against the Soviets? The proletariat of Russia conquered domestic reac-

tion and foreign interventionists without military support from the outside. Revolutions succeed, in the first place, with the help of a bold social program, which gives the masses the possibility of seizing weapons that are on their territory and disorganizing the army of the enemy. The Red Army seized French, English, and American military supplies and drove the foreign expeditionary corps into the sea. Has this really been already forgotten?

If at the head of the armed workers and peasants, that is, at the head of so-called republican Spain, were revolutionists and not cowardly agents of the bourgeoisie, the problem of arming would never have been paramount. The army of Franco, including the colonial Riffians and the soldiers of Mussolini, was not at all immune to revolutionary contagion.³⁸ Surrounded by the conflagration of the socialist uprising, the soldiers of fascism would have proved to be an insignificant quantity. Arms and military "geniuses" were not lacking in Madrid and Barcelona; what was lacking was a revolutionary party!

Conditions for victory

The conditions for victory of the masses in a civil war against the army of exploiters are very simple in their essence.

1. The fighters of a revolutionary army must be clearly aware of the fact that they are fighting for their full social liberation and not for the reestablishment of the old ("democratic") forms of exploitation.

2. The workers and peasants in the rear of the revolutionary army as well as in the rear of the enemy must know and understand the same thing.

3. The propaganda on their own front as well as on the enemy front and in both rears must be completely permeated with the spirit of social revolution. The slogan "First victory, then reforms," is the slogan of all oppressors and exploiters from the Biblical kings down to Stalin.

4. Politics are determined by those classes and strata that participate in the struggle. The revolutionary masses must have a state apparatus that directly and immediately expresses their will. Only the soviets of workers', soldiers', and peasants' deputies can act as such an apparatus.

5. The revolutionary army must not only proclaim but also immediately realize in life the more pressing measures of social

revolution in the provinces won by them: the expropriation of provisions, manufactured articles, and other stores on hand and the transfer of these to the needy; the redivision of shelter and housing in the interests of the toilers and especially of the families of the fighters; the expropriation of the land and agricultural inventory in the interests of the peasants; the establishment of workers' control and soviet power in place of the former bureaucracy.

6. Enemies of the socialist revolution, that is, exploiting elements and their agents, even if masquerading as "democrats," "republicans," "Socialists," and "Anarchists," must be mercilessly driven out of the army.

7. At the head of each military unit must be placed commissars possessing irreproachable authority as revolutionists and soldiers.

8. In every military unit there must be a firmly welded nucleus of the most self-sacrificing fighters, recommended by the workers' organizations. The members of this nucleus have but one privilege: to be the first under fire.

9. The commanding corps necessarily includes at first many alien and unreliable elements among the personnel. Their testing, retesting, and sifting must be carried through on the basis of combat experience, recommendations of commissars, and testimonials of rank-and-file fighters. Coincident with this must proceed an intense training of commanders drawn from the ranks of revolutionary workers.

10. The strategy of civil war must combine the rules of military art with the tasks of the social revolution. Not only in propaganda but also in military operations it is necessary to take into account the social composition of the various military units of the enemy (bourgeois volunteers, mobilized peasants, or as in Franco's case, colonial slaves); and in choosing lines of operation, it is necessary to rigorously take into consideration the social structure of the corresponding territories (industrial regions, peasant regions, revolutionary or reactionary, regions of oppressed nationalities, etc.). In brief, revolutionary policy dominates strategy.

11. Both the revolutionary government and the executive committee of the workers and peasants must know how to win the complete confidence of the army and of the toiling population.

12. Foreign policy must have as its main objective the awak-

ening of the revolutionary consciousness of the workers, the exploited peasants, and oppressed nationalities of the whole world.

Stalin guaranteed the conditions of defeat

The conditions for victory, as we see, are perfectly plain. In their aggregate they bear the name of the socialist revolution. Not a single one of these conditions existed in Spain. The basic reason is—the absence of a revolutionary party. Stalin tried, it is true, to transfer to the soil of Spain, the outward practices of Bolshevism: the Politburo, commissars, cells, the GPU, etc. But he emptied these forms of their social content. He renounced the Bolshevik program and with it the soviets as the necessary form for the revolutionary initiative of the masses. He placed the technique of Bolshevism at the service of bourgeois property. In his bureaucratic narrow-mindedness, he imagined that "commissars" by themselves could guarantee victory. But the commissars of private property proved capable only of guaranteeing defeat.

The Spanish proletariat displayed first-rate military qualities. In its specific gravity in the country's economic life, in its political and cultural level, the Spanish proletariat stood on the first day of the revolution not below but above the Russian proletariat at the beginning of 1917. On the road to its victory, its own organizations stood as the chief obstacles. The commanding clique of Stalinists, in accordance with their counter-revolutionary function, consisted of hirelings, careerists, de-classed elements, and in general, all types of social refuse. The representatives of other labor organizations—incurable reformists, Anarchist phrasemongers, helpless centrists of the POUM—grumbled, groaned, wavered, maneuvered, but in the end adapted themselves to the Stalinists. As a result of their joint activity, the camp of social revolution—workers and peasants—proved to be subordinated to the bourgeoisie, or more correctly, to its shadow. It was bled white and its character was destroyed.

There was no lack of heroism on the part of the masses or courage on the part of individual revolutionists. But the masses were left to their own resources while the revolutionists remained disunited, without a program, without a plan of action. The "republican" military commanders were more concerned with crushing the social revolution than with scoring military victories. The soldiers lost confidence in their commanders, the

masses in the government; the peasants stepped aside; the workers became exhausted; defeat followed defeat; demoralization grew apace. All this was not difficult to foresee from the beginning of the civil war. By setting itself the task of rescuing the capitalist regime, the Popular Front doomed itself to military defeat. By turning Bolshevism on its head, Stalin succeeded completely in fulfilling the role of gravedigger of the revolution.

It ought to be added that the Spanish experience once again demonstrates that Stalin failed completely to understand either the October Revolution or the Russian civil war. His slow-moving provincial mind lagged hopelessly behind the tempestuous march of events in 1917-21. In those of his speeches and articles in 1917 where he expressed his own ideas, his later Thermidorean "doctrine" is fully implanted. In this sense, Stalin in Spain in 1937 is the continuator of Stalin of the March 1917 conference of the Bolsheviks. But in 1917 he merely feared the revolutionary workers; in 1937 he strangled them. The opportunist had become the executioner.

"Civil war in the rear"

But, after all, victory over the governments of Caballero and Negrín would have necessitated a civil war in the rear of the republican army!—the democratic philistine exclaims with horror. As if apart from this, in republican Spain no civil war has ever existed, and at that the basest and most perfidious one—the war of the proprietors and exploiters against the workers and peasants. This uninterrupted war finds expression in the arrests and murders of revolutionists, the crushing of the mass movement, the disarming of the workers, the arming of bourgeois police, the abandoning of workers' detachments without arms and without help on the front, and finally, the artificial restriction of the development of war industry.

Each of these acts is a cruel blow to the front, direct military treason, dictated by the class interests of the bourgeoisie. But "democratic" philistines—including Stalinists, Socialists, and Anarchists—regard the civil war of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat, even in areas most closely adjoining the front, as a natural and inescapable war, having as its task the safeguarding of the "unity of the Popular Front." On the other hand, the civil war of the proletariat against the "republican" counterrevolution is, in the eyes of the same philistines, a criminal, "fascist," Trotskyist war, disrupting . . . "the unity of the

antifascist forces." Scores of Norman Thomases, Major Attlees, Otto Bauers, Zyromskys, Malrauxes, and such petty peddlers of lies as Duranty and Louis Fischer spread this slavish wisdom throughout our planet.³⁹ Meanwhile the government of the Popular Front moves from Madrid to Valencia, from Valencia to Barcelona.

If, as facts attest, only the socialist revolution is capable of crushing fascism, then on the other hand a successful uprising of the proletariat is conceivable only when the ruling classes are caught in the vise of the greatest difficulties. However, the democratic philistines invoke precisely these difficulties as proof of the impermissibility of the proletarian uprising. Were the proletariat to wait for the democratic philistines to tell them the hour of their liberation, they would remain slaves forever. To teach the workers to recognize reactionary philistines under all their masks and to despise them regardless of the mask is the first and paramount duty of a revolutionist!

The outcome

The dictatorship of the Stalinists over the republican camp is not long-lived in its essence. Should the defeats stemming from the politics of the Popular Front once more impel the Spanish proletariat to a revolutionary assault, this time successfully, the Stalinist clique will be swept away with an iron broom. But should Stalin—as is unfortunately the likelihood—succeed in bringing the work of gravedigger of the revolution to its conclusion, he will not even in this case earn thanks. The Spanish bourgeoisie needed him as executioner, but it has no need for him at all as patron or tutor. London and Paris on the one hand, and Berlin and Rome on the other, are in its eyes considerably more solvent firms than Moscow. It is possible that Stalin himself wants to cover his traces in Spain before the final catastrophe; he thus hopes to unload the responsibility for the defeat on his closest allies. After this Litvinov will solicit Franco for the reestablishment of diplomatic relations.⁴⁰ All this we have seen more than once.

Even a complete military victory of the so-called republican army over General Franco, however, would not signify the triumph of "democracy." The workers and peasants have twice placed bourgeois republicans and their left agents in power: in April 1931 and in February 1936. Both times the heroes

of the Popular Front surrendered the victory of the people to the most reactionary and the most serious representatives of the bourgeoisie. A third victory, gained by the generals of the Popular Front, would signify their inevitable agreement with the fascist bourgeoisie on the backs of the workers and peasants. Such a regime will be nothing but a different form of military dictatorship, perhaps without a monarchy and without the open domination of the Catholic church.

Finally, it is possible that the partial victories of the republicans will be utilized by the "disinterested" Anglo-French intermediaries in order to reconcile the fighting camps. It is not difficult to understand that in the event of such a variant the final remnants of the "democracy" will be stifled in the fraternal embrace of the generals Miaja (communist!) and Franco (fascist!). Let me repeat once again: victory will go either to the socialist revolution or to fascism.

It is not excluded, by the way, that tragedy might at the last moment make way for farce. When the heroes of the Popular Front have to flee their last capital, they might, before embarking on steamers and airplanes, perhaps proclaim a series of "socialist" reforms in order to leave a "good memory" with the people. But nothing will avail. The workers of the world will remember with hatred and contempt the parties that ruined the heroic revolution.

The tragic experience of Spain is a terrible—perhaps final—warning before still greater events, a warning addressed to all the advanced workers of the world. "Revolutions," Marx said, "are the locomotives of history." They move faster than the thought of semirevolutionary or quarter-revolutionary parties. Whoever lags behind falls under the wheels of the locomotive, and consequently—and this is the chief danger—the locomotive itself is also not infrequently wrecked.

It is necessary to think out the problem of the revolution to the end, to its ultimate concrete conclusions. It is necessary to adjust policy to the basic laws of the revolution, i. e., to the movement of the embattled classes and not the prejudices or fears of the superficial petty-bourgeois groups who call themselves "Popular" Fronts and every other kind of front. During revolution the line of least resistance is the line of greatest disaster. To fear "isolation" from the bourgeoisie is to incur isolation from the masses. Adaptation to the conserva-

tive prejudices of the labor aristocracy is betrayal of the workers and the revolution. An excess of "caution" is the most baneful lack of caution. This is the chief lesson of the destruction of the most honest political organization in Spain, namely, the centrist POUM. The parties and groups of the London Bureau obviously either do not wish to draw the necessary conclusions from the last warning of history or are unable to do so. By this token they doom themselves.

By way of compensation, a new generation of revolutionists is now being educated by the lessons of the defeats. This generation has verified in action the ignominious reputation of the Second International. It has plumbed the depths of the Third International's downfall. It has learned how to judge the Anarchists not by their words but by their deeds. It is a great inestimable school, paid for with the blood of countless fighters! The revolutionary cadres are now gathering only under the banner of the Fourth International. Born amid the roar of defeats, the Fourth International will lead the toilers to victory.

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THE COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY ROLE
OF THE KREMLIN

July 1, 1939

It is difficult to conceive of a sillier invention than the references of Hitler and Mussolini to the Spanish events as proof of the revolutionary intervention of the Soviet Union. The Spanish revolution, which exploded without Moscow and unexpected by it, soon revealed a tendency to take a socialist character. Moscow feared above all that the disturbance of private property in the Iberian Peninsula would bring London and Paris nearer to Berlin against the USSR. After some hesitations, the Kremlin intervened in the events in order to restrict the revolution within the limits of the bourgeois regime.

All the actions of the Moscow agents in Spain were directed toward paralyzing any independent movement of the workers and peasants and reconciling the bourgeoisie with a moderate republic. The Spanish Communist Party stood in the right wing of the Popular Front. On December 21, 1936, Stalin, Molotov, and Voroshilov,⁴³ in a confidential letter to Largo Caballero, insistently recommended to the Spanish premier at that time that there be no infringement of private property, that guarantees be given to foreign capital against violation of freedom of commerce and for maintaining the parliamentary system without tolerating the development of soviets. This letter, recently communicated by Largo Caballero to the press through the former Spanish ambassador in Paris, L. Araquistain (*New York Times*, June 4, 1939),⁴⁴ summed up in the best manner the Soviet government's conservative position in the face of the socialist revolution.

We must, moreover, do justice to the Kremlin—the policy did not stay in the domain of words. The GPU in Spain carried out ruthless repression against the revolutionary wing ("Trotskyists," POUMists, left Socialists, left Anarchists). Now, after the defeat, the cruelties and frame-ups of the GPU in Spain are voluntarily revealed by the moderate politicians, who largely utilized the Moscow police apparatus in order to crush their revolutionary opponents.

An excerpt from "The Kremlin in World Politics," in *The New International*, October 1942. Full text is in *Writings of Leon Trotsky* (1939-40).

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NO GREATER CRIME

July 15, 1939

Pivert strives to defend the personal memory of Andrés Nin against base calumnies and this is of course excellent. But when he depicts Nin's politics as a revolutionary model then it is impermissible to call this anything but a crime against the proletariat. In the heat of revolutionary war between the classes Nin entered a *bourgeois* government whose goal it was to destroy the workers' committees, the foundation of *proletarian* government. When this goal was reached, Nin was driven out of the bourgeois government. Instead of recognizing after this the colossal error committed, Nin's party demanded the re-establishment of the coalition with the bourgeoisie. Does Pivert dare deny this? It is not words that decide but facts. The politics of the POUM were determined by capitulation before the bourgeoisie at all critical times, and not by this or that quotation from a speech or article by Nin. *There can be no greater crime than coalition with the bourgeoisie in a period of socialist revolution.*

Instead of mercilessly exposing this fatal policy Pivert reprints in its justification all the old articles of Kurt Landau. Like Nin, Landau fell victim to the GPU. But the most ardent sympathy for the victims of Stalin's executioners does not free one from the obligation of telling the workers the truth. Landau, like Nin, represented one of the varieties of left Menshevism, was a disciple of Martov and not of Lenin. By supporting Nin's mistakes, and not our criticism of these mistakes, Landau, like Victor Serge, like Sneevliet, like Pivert himself, played a regrettable role in the Spanish revolution. Within the POUM a left opposition is now beginning to raise its head (José Rebull and his friends). The duty of Marxists is to help them draw the final conclusions from their criticisms. Yet Pivert supports the worst conservatives of the Gorkin type in the POUM. No, Pivert has not drawn the conclusions of his break with Blum!

An excerpt from "'Trotskyism' and the PSOP" in the October 1939 *New International*. The full text of this article is in *Writings of Leon Trotsky* (1939-40).

32. *Georgi Dimitrov* (1882-1949), a Bulgarian communist who had moved to Germany, attracted world attention in 1933 when the Nazis imprisoned and tried him and others on charges of having set the Reichstag on fire. He defended himself courageously at the trial and was acquitted. He became a Soviet citizen and served as executive secretary of the Comintern from 1934 to 1943. He is credited with being the chief author of the Comintern's Popular Front policy adopted at its Seventh Congress in 1935.

33. *Louis Fischer* (1896-1970) was a European correspondent for the *Nation* whom Trotsky accused of sympathies with Stalinism during the Moscow trials.

34. *José García Oliver* (1901-) was a right-wing Spanish Anarchist leader who collaborated with the Stalinists to crush the revolutionary wing of the loyalists. He was minister of justice in the central government from 1936 until the end of the civil war.

35. An uprising of sailors against the Bolshevik regime at the *Kronstadt* naval base near Leningrad in 1921 demanded free elections to the soviets and opposed many of the stern measures the Bolsheviks had taken during the civil war to safeguard the revolution. It was suppressed by the Bolsheviks, but it led to the concessions of the New Economic Policy.

36. *Buenaventura Durruti* (1896-1936) was the leader of the left wing of the FAI and an organizer of the militias; he directed the defense of Madrid, and died in that battle.

37. *Nestor Makhno* (1884-1934) was the leader of small partisan bands of peasants who fought against Ukrainian reactionaries and German occupation forces during the Russian civil war. He refused to integrate his forces into the Red Army and ultimately came into conflict with it. His forces were finally dispersed by the Soviet government.

38. *The Riffians* were Berber tribes in the hilly coastal areas of Morocco.

39. *Norman Thomas* (1884-1968) was the reformist leader of the American Socialist Party and was six times its candidate for president.

Clement Attlee (1883-1967) was the leader of the British Labour Party after MacDonald and prime minister of Labour governments from 1945 to 1950.

Jean Zyromsky (1890-) was a left-wing member of the French Socialist Party, a party functionary with pro-Stalinist leanings. An

advocate of "organic unity" in the thirties, he joined the Communist Party after World War II.

Walter Duranty (1884-1957) was a New York Times correspondent in Moscow for many years, and supported the Stalinists against the Oppositionists.

40. *Maxim Litvinov* (1876-1951), an Old Bolshevik, was people's commissar for foreign affairs, 1930-39, ambassador to the United States, 1941-43, and deputy commissar for foreign affairs, 1943-46. Stalin used him to personify "collective security" when he sought alliances with the democratic imperialists and shelved him during the Stalin-Hitler pact and the cold war.

41. *The Amsterdam International* was the popular name of the Social Democratic-dominated International Federation of Trade Unions, revived in July 1919, with headquarters in Amsterdam.

42. *Barcelona trials of the POUMists*. In October 1938, the POUM leaders who had been arrested in mid-1937 were brought to trial. They were acquitted on charges of treason and espionage, but were sentenced to prison for their role in the May 1937 uprising.

43. *Kliment Voroshilov* (1881-1969) was an early supporter of Stalin, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1926, president of the revolutionary military council, and people's commissar of defense, 1925-40. He was president of the USSR, 1953-60.

44. *Luis Araquistain Quevedo* (1886-1959) had been editor of the Socialist Party's paper *Claridad* before he was appointed ambassador to France in September 1936, when Largo Caballero became prime minister.

45. *Spain Betrayed* was reprinted in *Cahiers de la quatrième Internationale*, no. 1, February 1971, ("La Guerre d'Espagne: témoignage d'un combattant trotskyste dans les brigades internationales"), under the title "L'Espagne livrée: comment le Front Populaire a ouvert les portes à Franco." *M. Casanova* was the pseudonym of a Polish Trotskyist.

Smash the Reactionary Junta— For Workers Revolution in Chile!

SEPTEMBER 12—Yesterday's rightist coup in Chile put a bloody end to the three-year-old Popular Unity government headed by President Salvador Allende. This seizure of power by the military is a serious defeat for the international working class, leading to a naked assault against the workers' organizations and to the massacre of possibly thousands of proletarian militants. It is not yet clear to what extent the Chilean workers and peasants will forcibly resist the putschists; their heroic will to defend their organizations is not in doubt, but the Allende government consistently refused to arm the workers. It is the duty of all U.S. working-class organizations, both trade unions and parties, to launch an immediate, united-front protest against the counterrevolutionary coup. Smash the reactionary junta—For workers revolution in Chile!

The events of the last two days tragically confirm the Spartacist League's warnings that the Chilean working people would pay in blood for the treachery of their leaders. The triumph of bourgeois reaction after three years of the Allende government was no accident! It was prepared by the very nature of the *Unidad Popular* (UP—Popular Unity) coalition.

As the Spartacist League insisted in a leaflet issued on September 4:

"The government of the *Unidad Popular* is not a workers government. It is a coalition of workers and capitalist parties. The presence of the 'radical' bourgeoisie and the 'democratic' generals is a guarantee that the Allende government will not step beyond the bounds of capitalism. Their presence is a guarantee that the workers and peasants will be left disarmed and atomized in the face of the impending rightist coup. Rather than pressuring Allende... we must instead call on the workers to break sharply with the bourgeois popular front and the government parties, to fight for a workers and peasants government based on a revolutionary program of expropriation of the agrarian and industrial bourgeoisie."

The seductive claims of the dominant workers parties that socialism could be won through elections and parliamentary action and in collaboration with "progressive" sections of the bourgeoisie have again proven to be simply the formula for defeat. The so-called "Chilean road to socialism" was lauded the world over by pro-Moscow Communist Parties as the model of revolution through peaceful coexistence; and the Chilean capitalists—touted as the most "democratic" bourgeoisie of Latin America, with the most "non-political" military—were supposed to passively acquiesce to the transition to socialism!

But only the independent class mobilization of the proletariat to seize state power in its own name can open the road to socialism. A popular front is by its very nature—its alliance with a section of the ruling class—confined within the bounds of capitalism. It can never prepare the way for workers power. It can succeed only in frightening the forces of bourgeois reaction to the point that they undertake a concerted and brutal assault on the workers, in alienating and driving into the arms of the reaction sections of the petty bourgeoisie which would have split if faced with a clear proletarian pole, and in disorienting the workers through class-collaborationist illusions so that they cannot mobilize an organized and united self-defense against the rightist reaction. The lesson of Chile today is the lesson of the Spanish Civil War of the 1930's: If the workers do not leap in time that popular fronts, parliamentarism and peaceful coexistence lead to defeat, they will pay with their lives.

What Was the Popular Unity?

The Popular Unity coalition was made up of the dominant workers parties, the reformist Communists and Socialists together with the Radical

Party and left Christian Democrats. Since the 1970 elections both the Radicals and left Christian Democrats have had splits, with pro-UP sections moving leftward and even claiming to support socialism. But the essence of the Popular Unity as a bloc with a section of the bourgeoisie was not changed. The UP government from the beginning rested on a tacit agreement with the dominant bourgeois party, the Christian Democrats, without whose votes Allende could not get a single one of his reforms passed by Congress. More recently as the rightist attack on the government sharpened, the role of chief guarantor of the interests of the bourgeoisie within the government was taken over by the military ministers.

The government adopted a policy of appeasing the rightists and increasing repression of the workers. Thus after the "bosses' work stoppage" by the truck owners and shopkeepers during November 1972, Allende invited the military leaders into the government and promulgated a law which permits unannounced raids by the military in search of arms. This law, though ostensibly directed against both right- and left-wing extremists, has in fact been used exclusively against the unions, the occupied factories and the workers parties, while fascist groups such as *Patria y Libertad* built up sizeable arms stockpiles. Then during May and June the government provoked a copper miners' strike at the El Teniente mine by attempting to do away with the sliding scale of wages (cost-of-living escalator), and turned machine guns on the workers during the course of the strike (see *WV* No. 23, 22 June 1973).

Popular Front and Parliamentary Cretinism

Although the reformists have constantly attempted to portray Chile as the most radical popular-front govern-

ment in history (compared to Spain 1936-39, France 1934-36 or Chile at different times from 1936 to 1948), the myth is far from reality. Thus in Spain the industrial centers were entirely in the hands of workers militias for much of the period after July 1936 and most of the factories were operated under workers control. In Chile, Allende signed an agreement in 1970 not to permit the formation of workers militias nor to promote officers from outside the graduates of the military academies, thus guaranteeing that the army would remain firmly under the control of the professional military elite. The Spanish workers were armed; for the most part, Chilean workers are not.

But a popular front is a popular front. The Spanish workers were defeated by Franco because they did not have a revolutionary leadership which struggled to overthrow capitalism. Instead the workers and peasants were constrained by the Stalinist Communist Party and the Assault Guards to remain within the bounds of bourgeois democracy. In their more honest moments the Stalinists would justify this in terms of not "scaring the bourgeoisie," but they also had a theory to justify it. While Lenin had made the slogan "All Power to the Soviets" world-famous as the call for a workers revolution, Stalin "discovered" in 1924 that before the stage of soviets there had to come an intermediate "democratic" stage. In essence this was identical to the position of the reformist social democrats, who called for winning power through parliamentary elections as a "step" in the gradual transformation of capitalism. Now in the 1970's this theory was resurrected by Allende's UP:

"Since the National Congress is based on the people's vote, there is nothing in its nature which prevents it from changing itself in order to become, in fact, the Parliament of the People. The Chilean Armed Forces and the Carabineros, faithful to their duty and to their tradition of non-intervention in the political process, will support a social organization which corresponds to the will of the people...."

—S. Allende, "First Message to Congress," December 1970

Historical experience again disproved this reformist fairy tale yesterday for the nth time!

The Chilean CP has throughout lived up to its Stalinist mission of reformist betrayal. Thus, in line with the Stalinists' call to broaden the Popular Unity to include the Christian Democrats, they also opposed an extensive program of nationalizations. In order to "regularize the economy" CP minister Or-

lando Millas introduced legislation which would restrict nationalizations to certain specific sectors and return factories occupied by the workers to their "legal" owners!

The CP not only opposed the formation of workers militias, but Luis Corvalán, secretary-general of the party, rejected any form of arming the workers since such proposals "are equivalent to showing distrust in the army." (This is, of course, true. And the Stalinists, of course, never show distrust in the bourgeois army. Thus even after yesterday's coup, the *Daily World* [12 September] claimed only "a section" of the armed forces were involved, particularly the "traditionally upper middle-class Air Force." The army no doubt appreciated this "trust," which facilitated the generals' reactionary coup.)

Shortly before the coup, French CP leader Bernard Fajon returning from Chile held a press conference in order to denounce:

"...certain economic theories which put the accent on the destruction of the old structures...."

"The occupation of the factories by the workers...transformed in certain cases into taking possession of companies not included in the program of nationalizations...."

"...irresponsible and adventurist positions, such as the leftist slogan of calling on the soldiers to disobey [orders], which facilitates the efforts of officers favorable to a coup d'etat; such as the leftist slogan of exclusive workers control in all factories, tending to line up the engineers and professionals against the working class...."

"The Communist Party of Chile has led and leads the most consistent struggle against these absolutely crazy views...."

—*Le Monde*, 3 September

Meanwhile, as the CP was clamoring to unite with the Christian Democrats and disarm the "ultra-leftists," calling on the workers to give up the factories to their legal owners, the Soviet Union gave practically nothing in the way of economic aid to Chile. The utter cynicism which lies behind the Stalinists' calls for "unity of all democratic forces" (i.e., including the Christian Democrats in Chile who just helped prepare a counterrevolutionary coup, and such liberal U.S. Democrats as Lyndon Johnson) can be seen in Angela Davis' foolish remark at a pro-Allende rally following the coup: "I don't think it's a defeat, it's a setback of course" (*New York Times*, 12 September). With setbacks like this, what would a real defeat look like?

But the class-collaborationist logic of Stalinism is not limited to the direct followers of Brezhnev and Kosygin. The erstwhile guerrilla warrior Fidel Cas-

tro made his support for the bourgeois UP government clear in all of its glory during his visit November 1971 when he called on copper workers at the Chuquicamata mine to moderate their wage demands and work harder. A few months later he again expressed his "anti-imperialist" solidarity by inviting Chilean generals to visit Cuba.

Preparation of the Coup

In order to excuse their own betrayals in Chile the Stalinists are now claiming that the coup is the work of fascists and extreme reactionaries in league with the CIA. There is no doubt that the ultra-right provided leadership of the coup and was in contact with the U.S. government. ITT's offer of \$1 million in 1970 to dump Allende is certainly not unrelated to the "accidental" presence of American navy ships in Chilean waters on the day of the coup.

But to hold only the "ultras" and the CIA responsible for the coup is to ignore the bulk of the Chilean bourgeoisie. The CP wants us to believe that only American capitalists will protect their property! In reality, the Chilean capitalists saw the handwriting on the wall as workers committees took over hundreds of factories following the abortive coup on June 29; they were joined by the military general staff after the discovery of leftist cells in the navy in early August. The September 11 coup is their answer. This coup was no fascist plot or the work of a few military "ultras." It represents the decision by *the key sectors of the bourgeoisie* to smash the increasingly militant workers movement. Every important section of the Chilean capitalist class, including the "moderate" Christian Democrats and the "constitutional" officers, is involved in one way or another.

That its real aim is to smash the workers movement was amply proven on the first day of military rule. The fall of the government itself was quickly, almost surgically, accomplished by a classic *pronunciamento* by the heads of the armed forces and a short bombardment of the presidential palace. The presidential guard surrendered, while Allende either committed suicide or was shot. But during the first day of military rule, more than 1,000 people were killed and more than 100 leaders of workers parties and unions arrested. The generals threatened to blow up any factory which resisted.

Their particular concern was the mushrooming workers committees (the "cordones industriales") in the industrial belts around Santiago. The *New*

York Times (12 September) reported: "In the proclamation by the junta that seized power today, the factory groups were cited as a reason for the revolt." The day before, an air force commando had attempted to raid the important Sumar textile factory, looking for arms. The workers, who have occupied the factory, successfully repulsed the soldiers with gunfire and the commando was eventually forced to retreat as reinforcements from surrounding plants arrived (*Le Monde*, 11 September). The air force had carried out similar raids twice during August, apparently trying to provoke a shootout with the workers. This time they lost—and that was perhaps the last straw; it was high time to get rid of Allende. Brought to power in order to control the labor movement, he lost his usefulness as he increasingly proved unable to discipline the workers. And with a flick of its finger, the bourgeoisie toppled him.

That the coup was not simply the work of the fascists and ultra-reactionaries is shown by several facts: In addition to Admiral José Toribio Merino, a sympathizer of *Patria y Libertad*, the junta also includes Army Commander General Augusto Pinochet, a leading "constitutionalist." Moreover, the whole recent chain of events was triggered by the resignation of General Carlos Prats on August 23. General Prats, the leading "constitutionalist" and Minister of Defense, stepped down in order, as he put it, "to preserve the unity of the institution" (the military). He was followed by two other military ministers. These resignations represented a vote of no confidence in the government by all wings of the general staff of the armed forces. From that time on, the coup was simply a question of timing and personnel.

Nor was it simply a military matter. The atmosphere for the military takeover was provided by the economic chaos resulting from the truck owners', shopkeepers' and professionals' work stoppage which had continued for more than a month and a half. This was a clearly political effort designed to bring down the government, as was the similar work stoppage last year. The truck owners' confederation is closely tied to the National Party, while most of the other professional associations are linked to the Christian Democrats. Both in November and August of this year the CDP directly called on its professional associations to join the counterrevolutionary action. Thus while its leaders in parliament talked soothingly of waiting until the 1976 elections, the Christian Democratic

Party was preparing the coup along with every other sector of the bourgeoisie.

The "Revolutionary" Left

As the masses of Chilean workers and peasants have become progressively disillusioned with the reformist CP and SP they have begun searching for an alternative leadership. Many have joined the *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionario* [MIR—Revolutionary Left Movement], the most important group to the left of the UP. The MIR is a New Left-Castroite group which until 1970 concentrated largely on organizing peasants for land takeovers and guerrilla warfare. After taking an ultra-left line by abstaining from the 1970 election on principle, the MIR suddenly flip-flopped and issued a statement immediately after the election giving Allende critical support. It continued to call for support to the UP in one form or another until the very end: "The Revolutionary Left Movement maintains that although we do not agree with every step of the Popular Unity, that although we have differences with aspects of its policies, this does not signify that we come to a definitive break with the Popular Unity" (*Punto Final*, 9 November 1971). But it precisely is a "definitive break" that is called for. Here we have a government tied to a section of the bourgeoisie, whose main task is to hold the workers back from revolution—and the MIR gives it critical support! By this act of class betrayal it must take a major responsibility for the coup.

Furthermore, the MIR failed to raise as a key demand throughout this period the arming of the workers and the formation of workers militias based on the unions (and *cordones industriales*). Instead MIR documents speak only in the most general terms of the limits of peaceful reforms and of the need to "accumulate power to crush any seditious attempt or the civil war which the exploiters will attempt" (*El Rebelde*, 23-30 May). The main activity of the organization has been land and factory takeovers which, however militant they may be, failed to take on the question of the Allende government.

Chile and the American Left

Thus among the major socialist organizations in Chile there is none that called for the replacement of the popular-front regime with a workers government, i.e., called for the working class to break from the bourgeoisie; they instead capitulated to the UP government's (initial) tremendous popu-

larity among the working masses. In the U.S., of all the ostensibly Trotskyist organizations the only one to take a clear stand against the popular-front UP government from the beginning was the Spartacist League. Immediately after the 1970 elections we wrote:

"It is the most elementary duty for revolutionary Marxists to irreconcilably oppose the Popular Front in the election and to place absolutely no confidence in it in power. Any 'critical support' to the Allende coalition is class treason, paving the way for a bloody defeat for the Chilean working people when domestic reaction, abetted by international imperialism, is ready."

—*Spartacist*, November-December 1970

By way of contrast, the opportunist Workers League wrote that "the workers must hold Allende to his promises..." (*Bulletin*, 21 September 1970) while the ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party's initial evaluation of the Allende election (*Intercontinental Press*, 5 October 1970) amounted to de facto critical support: "...failing to recognize the positive elements in it, condemning it in toto out of some sectarian dogmatism, would mean suicidal isolation." It would certainly have meant isolation in the early months of the Popular Unity government. But the principled Trotskyist position of unswerving opposition to the popular front was in fact the only alternative to suicide. It was support for Allende that led to the present counterrevolutionary coup.

A slogan cannot be applied mechanically in all situations. Thus at the time of the June 29 coup and during late August the SL called for "a united front of all workers organizations to smash the rightist-militarist offensive in Chile, while continuing to struggle for the overthrow of the popular front government of 'socialists' and generals by proletarian revolution" ("Showdown in Chile," 4 September). Today, Marxists must struggle to smash the junta by a workers' uprising. To call for support to the UP is to reaffirm a policy whose suicidal nature is being demonstrated at this very moment! In a similar situation, when faced with the attempt in August 1917 by General Kornilov to overthrow the Kerensky government and crush the revolutionary workers of Petrograd, the Bolsheviks called for a united front of all workers organizations to smash the counterrevolutionary conspirator and even fought alongside the troops of the bourgeois Kerensky government. "Even now we must not support Kerensky's government," wrote Lenin:

"We shall fight, we are fighting against Kornilov, just as Kerensky's troops do, but we do not support Kerensky. On the contrary we expose his weakness. There is the difference. It is rather a subtle difference, but it is highly essential and must not be forgotten."

— "To the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.," 30 August 1917

But of course in the Chilean situation it would be manifestly absurd to call for even military support to the U. S. government, which has already been smashed.

Similarly to call on all "democrats" to defend civil liberties is to fail to understand the nature of the present coup. The junta will undoubtedly suppress civil liberties, even for the bourgeois parties, for a certain time. But its fundamental job is to crush the workers movement and it, in turn, can only be destroyed by a proletarian offensive.

Never have the lines between revolutionary Marxism and opportunism been clearer. They are drawn in blood, the coin in which betrayals are paid.