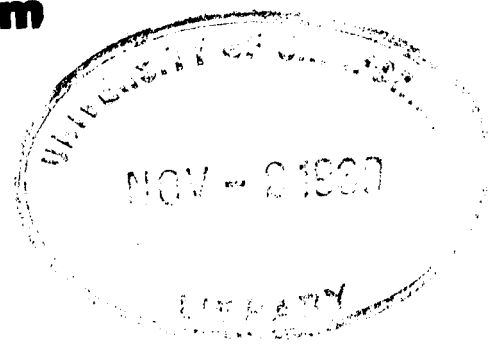


Lessons The of Spain

The Peoples Front Paves
The Way For Fascism

5 Cents



REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS LEAGUE
1904 Division Street
CHICAGO, ILL.

Although the Spanish Civil War has not yet terminated, the fall of Catalonia and the various "peace" negotiations are drawing the conflict to a close. But for the working class this only opens up a new stage and a different form of terror by the exploiters.

The conflict started on the basis of the internal decay of the Spanish economy, with the bourgeoisie seeing the need of the strongest measures to suppress the developing social revolution of the working class and peasants — a war of classes. But the imperialist powers intervened for their own interests at the very beginning. Gradually, the betrayals by the "labor leaders" and imperialist pressure elevated to the foreground the imperialist conflict, while, with the aid of Peoples Frontism, the class war of the workers was derailed into support of the "democratic" bourgeoisie and relegated to the background. It remained, nevertheless the underlying and determining factor in the Civil War.

On February 16, 1936, the Peoples Front coalition won an electoral victory — the majority of the Cortes (Parliament). The parliamentary gain was hailed by the reformists as a victory of the workers and a rout of the Fascists. Actually, however, it was a victory of the "democratic" capitalists OVER the workers. The Peoples Front lulled the masses to sleep, while the Fascists openly prepared their attack.

THE JULY UPRISING AGAINST THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION.

By July 19th the Fascists were ready to begin their offensive. It was an offensive against the THREATENING PROLETARIAN EVOLUTION. It was an attempt by the capitalists, through the Fascist movement to save Spanish Society from a Workers (Soviet) Government. It was an attempt of the Fascists to do what had been done in Italy and Germany. The Fascists, like the "leaders" of the working class, realized that bourgeois democracy had outlived its usefulness, and could no longer hold the workers in check. The revolutionists, on the other hand, understood that if society was to move forward the workers and peasants of Spain would have to establish their

own rule, and spread the struggle to France and the rest of Europe.

The workers fought back. Against the orders and wishes of the Peoples Front they armed themselves. Taking the means of struggle away from the helpless "democratic" capitalist the workers put up a heroic resistance against the Fascists and organized a counter-attack. Without this independent working class resistance the Fascists would have defeated the Peoples Front in a few weeks. The revolution had broken loose. It could not be stopped. The workers took over the industries and the peasants the land. They drove back the Fascists hundreds of miles from the centers of commerce and industry and the proletarian army — the various militias — grew in numbers and energy. The "democratic" bourgeoisie had to change the government. By August 1st a new Government of the Generality was placed in power. By September 4th the Peoples Front called in Caballero's Stalinist-Socialist Government. But to no avail. The workers had already moved to the left of these reformists, as they did in Russia in July 1917.

DEVELOPING DUAL POWER AND THE WORKERS OFFENSIVE.

On the basis of control of industry and land the workers and peasants established Soldiers Committees at the front. In the rear Anti-Fascist Committees (Soviets) were established especially in Catalonia; and instead of the police, Worker Patrols were keeping order. It was the first stage of dual power, of an embryo Workers State arising beside the bankrupt capitalist state, and beginning to take over the management of society and the war, against capitalism and its open dictatorship, Fascism.

In this period, the first three months after the July uprising the working class could and should have taken power and destroyed the remnants of the Capitalist State. But the "leaders" of the masses instead put forth the idea of first winning the war against Franco. Tied by the Peoples Front to the tail of the bourgeoisie

lacking the boldness and policy of a revolutionary Party, the POUM and anarchist leaders also found possible to lay down a line of independent working class that could have rallied the peasantry, Moroccan masses and the working class to a victory in the war and the social revolution both. Instead they tailended the betrayals of the Anarchists and Socialists, permitted the capitalist state to remain in power, and finally capitulated completely by entering the capitalist government and liquidating their own forces, thus enabling the exploiters gradually to regain their former power.

THE IMPERIALIST OFFENSIVE AND THE LIQUIDATION OF DUAL POWER.

The imperialists in Europe became alarmed by the workers and peasants victories not only against the Fascist capitalists, but also against the "democratic" capitalists. The Anglo-French imperialists and the "democratic" capitalists feared a Fascist victory, but they FEARED A PROLETARIAN VICTORY A THOUSAND TIMES MORE. So while continuing to fight for their own imperialist ends, they at the same time united against the workers and peasants Anti-Fascist Committees. To destroy the growing workers power the "democratic" capitalists refused to give concessions to the Fascists.

At the front the Fascists shot down the workers, and in the rear the "democratic" capitalists and their Stalinist and Socialist agents step by step destroyed the workers power. First they blocked shipments of war materials unless the Anti-Fascist Committees, independent organs of the workers, were liquidated. For this job Stalinism was the willing tool of Anglo-French imperialism. The Stalinist traitors demanded from the Peoples Front the liquidation of dual power before arms would be sent. Only AFTER this was accomplished was Russian aid given.

To hold the workers in check the "democratic" capitalists called into the Peoples Front Government the Anarchist and POUM leaders as their "left" aid. With the Stalinist - Socialist - Anarchist - POUM leaders in the capitalist government the slow

process of strangling the revolution continued. Under the banner of one unified command to do away with waste and confusion the Stalinist-Socialist leaders helped reestablish the capitalist army. Instead of taking over the Peoples Front army and putting it under the control of the Workers Militia the independent Workers Militias were given up and incorporated into the bourgeois army, under bourgeois generals and control. The liquidation of embryo dual power and the entry of the leaders into the government was an unforgivable crime and betrayal of the working class.

IMPERIALIST STALEMATE AND CAPITALIST CONSOLIDATION.

While in Spain the Peoples Front and its labor agents were strangling the revolution, Anglo-French imperialism was also busy internationally. The first steps toward the non-intervention committee were taken. The strategy and purpose of the Non-Intervention Committee was to see that no aid reached the proletarian revolution; to see that just enough aid reached the Loyalists to create a stalemate and prolong the struggle, thus bleeding the masses white and exhausting their energies; and to cost Germany and Italy as much as possible so at the end the British Pound could scoop up the victory over all.

The imperialist powers were united against the proletarian revolution but were unable to carry out their crime without suitable agents. In the past it was the leaders of the Second International. But now they used Stalinism and its control of the Soviet Union to perform this counter-revolutionary task, ably assisted by the Socialist traitors, with the POUM and Anarchist leaders forced by their false policies to go along.

With the State and army back in safe hands, the attack upon the workers and peasants in the factories and the field was carried on night and day, while the Fascists shot down the revolutionists in the front. Terror, armed clashes with revolutionary forces, mass arrests, persecution and murder behind the lines reflected the day to day conflict and class struggle of the "democratic" capitalists against the workers positions and interests — even though at the same time the workers bore

brunt of the struggle at the front against Fascism.

With the liquidation of dual power FASCISM TOOK THE OFFENSIVE and step by step made rapid gains. The Peoples Front in command could not successfully fight and defeat Fascism. They gave up city after city with little or no struggle in order to protect private property. Peoples Frontism can only give ground and capitulate to Fascism. Only the working class, unleashing social forces that will rally the rest of the oppressed to the struggle, can defeat Fascism by defeating all sections of Capitalism.

THE MAY UPRISING.

The Anglo-French imperialists and their Peoples Front agents were gaining against the workers in the rear, while the Fascists were gaining at the front. These clashes and the attempt to take away the gains of the workers too fast resulted in sporadic armed clashes all over Loyalist Spain between the workers and exploiters' representatives until a culmination was reached in the May 1937 uprising in Barcelona and Catalonia.

Again, as in July 1936 the conditions were favorable for the workers seizure of power, but again the leaders betrayed, again there was NO REVOLUTIONARY MARXIAN PARTY. In this struggle the Stalinists openly went over to the exploiters side of the barricades AGAINST THE WORKING CLASS OF BARCELONA.

Without a Revolutionary Party there can be no successful revolution. Thus were the workers betrayed and strangled on two fronts, murdered by the Fascists at the front where they were short of war needs, while behind the Loyalist lines there was plenty in the hands of the exploiters' representatives to keep the workers down and to smash their dual power.

THE PARTIES OF THE WORKING CLASS.

The Stalinist and Socialist parties were the outstanding parties of defeat. In essence there was no difference between the Prieto right wing and Caballero left wing of the Socialist Party. The guns and the treachery from the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union and the Spanish Stalinists played a major

role in smashing the workers power in Spain.

And the Anarchist leadership, what was its role in Spain? These people who are against ALL STATES, became part and parcel of the CAPITALIST STATE of the "democratic" bourgeoisie until they did their dirty role, like the POUM, and then were kicked out.

The POUM, "Workers Party of Marxian Unification," played a similar role. These centrists paraded under the flag of Marxism. For them the "workers government" was Company Generality. They helped liquidate dual power. They entered the capitalist state. They forgot to smash the state. They tail behind the Anarchist leaders, not behind the Anarchist workers.

A similar tragic role was played by the Trotskyites. Just before the revolution they had a large force in Spain and internationally. But Trotsky decided to liquidate his groups into the parties of the Second International. When the Civil War broke out they had no organization in Spain and no effective force in France or internationally. They were all hogtied by the Socialist Parties. Their international "Geneva" conference meeting as the struggle began, in true sectarian fashion gave no directives and ignored the struggle. Later a number of militant elements from European countries entered Spain, but they were doomed to failure by their centrist line. Three times they tried to enter the POUM, instead of carrying on independent work to build a revolutionary force and conducting fractional work. Most of them were decimated by the Civil War. The United States Trotskyites played the most treacherous role. As part of the Socialist Party they helped the North American Committee, which supported the Peoples Front. They called the POUM Marxist. **They sent recruits to the Stalinist-controlled International Brigade. Later, when the Socialists kicked them out they covered their support of the Peoples Front by calling for material aid (which is a form of political aid) and political criticism of the Peoples Front. Even after May 1937 the Trotskyites called for a left Peoples front government — a Cab Anarchist government!**

LESSONS OF THE STRUGGLE.

Bourgeois Democracy cannot defeat fascism. The Peoples Party and the Labor Party are instruments to subordinate the workers to the "democratic" capitalists. The support of Bourgeois Democracy paves the way for Fascism. Only independent working class action can defeat Fascism. Without workers control of production, without Soviets, without a Revolutionary Marxian Party the decisive defeat of Fascism is not possible.

When the class war reaches the stage of open armed conflict against Fascism it is correct in our line of march towards the Dictatorship of the Proletariat to use a two-fold strategy of marching separately (from the "democratic" capitalists) and striking together with them against the Fascists. But this must at all times be carried out within the framework of INDEPENDENT working class action. It is the opposite of subordinating the working class forces to the bourgeoisie, or what amounts to the same, giving material aid (with or without political criticism) to the bourgeoisie. It is a policy of no support to the "democratic" capitalists.

The working class to achieve power must **SMASH THE CAPITALIST STATE**. It is not enough to start towards workers power, anti-Fascist committees, etc. They must be developed and matured, and **REPLACE** the smashed capitalist state.

The workers must establish the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. This means **DEMOCRACY FOR THE WORKERS**, and a dictatorship against the former exploiters. This does not mean that a Party is the dictatorship. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat is carried out through the democratically elected Soviets, under the ideological leadership of the Revolutionary Marxian Party. Above all the workers in every factory, mine and mill **MUST BE ARMED**.

The developments in Spain, just as in Russia in 1917, called for a **SOCIAL REVOLUTION**. This is what Lenin's April

thesis pointed out. It is the road the Bolsheviks marched. It should have been the road for Spain. Those who pointed a different road: support of bourgeois democracy, for an agrarian revolution (which can only be a PHASE in the revolution) made defeat inevitable.

Without a revolutionary Marxian Party, a Communist Party, there can be no successful revolution. A Party, a program, a leadership is essential. The masses in Spain showed on innumerable occasions that they were ready to seize power, and the world workers have many times since 1917 — but the reformist and centrist leaders again and again betrayed them. Only a Marxian Party can guide this revolutionary action to success. THIS IS THE OUTSTANDING LESSON OF THE SPANISH REVOLUTION.

More lessons can and will be drawn. We have drawn on a few important ones.

For the Spanish workers there can be no ceasing of the conflict with Fascism or with the Peoples Front that paves the way for Fascism. Unconditional surrender, Negrin's "fight to the finish," or an "armistice" — all mean blood-baths for the workers. They must try to save what they can out of the defeat, reorganize their forces, build their illegal organizations, build a new Communist Party. The working class internationally must help the Spanish refugees, find new homes for those who escaped from Spain, and help those inside who escape the firing squads rebuild their forces to fight Fascism.

The workers in America must prepare now against the Fascist menace. Organize Workers Defense Corps. Drive the Fascists out of the workers areas. Smash Fascism. FIGHT FASCISM BY FIGHTING CAPITALISM.

FOR A NEW COMMUNIST (4th) INTERNATIONAL!
JOIN THE REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS LEAGUE!

TWO SUBS FOR \$ 1.00

Remember the "TWO FOR ONE" sub offer — a yearly sub to both the FIGHTING WORKER and THE MARXIST for the price of one — \$1.00. Get one for a friend. Don't fail to subscribe!
Name

Address

City

**Subscribe to the
Fighting Worker**

—○—
VOLUNTARY LABOR

—○—
MARCH 1, 1939