

To the PC: [Following is a letter from Peter Camejo to a leader of the Workers Tendency (TO). The TO was expelled last January from the IC (Communist League), one of the two sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International in Spain, and shortly afterwards the expelled TO comrades joined the ICR, the other Spanish sympathizing organization. The LSR is the organization led by supporters of Moreno in Spain.]

TRANSLATION

New York, April 26, 1977

Dear Mercedes,

Thank you for your letter with your document on the elections and the positions of the LCR. I think your document handled several important points quite well.

Raul has sent me all the documents of the Third Congress of the LC. At last I am reading them along with the major document of the Congress of the LCR-ETA VI. This last document I received from the British (IMG) comrades. In this letter I only want to take up the question of the slogan of the republic. To help think through this question, I am enclosing two articles you may find of interest.

They are: An article by Pierre Frank written in 1946 (see the last three pages), and an article by Trotsky entitled "Problems of the Italian Revolution" written May 14, 1930.

Neither of these articles is an indepth exposition on the question of the slogan for a republic although both refer to it. In Trotsky's writings in 1931 on Spain there are three passages which I think has been misinterpreted by some comrades. I enclose those three pages which include the following quotes, "The republic is now the official slogan of the struggle." "The slogan of the republic, of course, is also the workers' slogan." "The more quickly their best elements (proletariat - PC) join us, the sooner the democratic republic will be identified in the mind of the masses with the workers' republic."

I do not believe that from these three phrases one can conclude that Trotsky's position was in favor of our using the slogan republic. In my opinion, he says three simple things; republic was the official slogan of a mass struggle, the workers also raised this slogan and that we should seek to change the masses to support a "workers' republic." There is obviously a substantial difference between saying that the workers raised the slogan and saying that the slogan is part of our program which we should raise. I agree that the exact phrases in both Spanish and English are imprecise to determine Trotsky's meaning.

There may be other articles by Trotsky that take up the slogan of a republic, but the 1930 article and the 1931 passages are the only two I know of.

Only the last three pages of the article by Pierre Frank refer to the question of a republic. But I believe you will find the entire article very interesting on questions dealing with the adjustments made in the forms of bourgeois rule, after fascist governments were ousted in various countries in Europe at the end of the Second World War. Of course, Pierre Frank might express himself somewhat differently today,

but I think his point on the importance of bonapartist regimes for the bourgeoisie is quite relevant. Likewise Trotsky's letter to the Italians raises some general considerations about the meaning of bourgeois democratic interludes that can come about after the collapse of fascism. He sees such a period as possible only if the socialist revolution is not carried through. The proletarian character of the struggle in Spain today confirms the point Trotsky is making. So I think you will find those two articles of interest.

In this letter I would like to outline to you how I see the question of the slogan republic. Our starting point should be that the slogan republic can have two rather different implications.

The call for a republic can express an elementary democratic sentiment--against a monarchy, for example. It can be interpreted to mean nothing more than the idea that the people should choose the government; this is the strict dictionary definition of the word. On the other hand, the call for a republic can express a basic political objective: the idea that a bourgeois democratic regime is the objective to strive for.

We support any mass struggle for democratic rights regardless of how confused its expression may be; but we oppose the idea that the objective should be a bourgeois government. Thus the entire point hinges around how the slogan is interpreted in the concrete circumstances.

The reformist parties, of course, identify the struggle for bourgeois democratic rights with support to bourgeois democratic governments, and seek at all times to confuse and confine the struggle for democratic rights to adjustments within the framework of a bourgeois regime. Sometimes they raise the slogan of a republic precisely in order to express this objective. Our goal and task is exactly the opposite--to try and make clear the difference between democratic rights and a bourgeois regime.

One of the central axis of anti-Communist propaganda on a world scale is that of trying to equate democratic rights with capitalism. Although this varies from country to country the idea that capitalism means liberty, while socialism means totalitarianism is the underlying theme in most anti-communist propaganda. They are much aided in this propaganda by the experience of the Stalinist regimes. This propaganda has an impact on the masses; many people believe that the struggle for more freedom, more democratic rights, is interlocked with support for certain forms of bourgeois parliamentary rule.

In seeking to make our position clear we must avoid sectarianism. The key to this is to recognize the content and dynamic of any mass struggle for democratic rights, whatever the slogans that are popularized and foremost at the moment. We are not neutral in the struggle to improve the rights (and therefore the fighting position) of the proletariat under capitalism. For example, we favor governmental posts to be elected not appointed, or that parliament be elected with proportional representation, or that a parliament should have only one

house not two. All three of these examples are strictly within the context of a bourgeois regime. But this in no way implies any concession in our political opposition to all forms of a bourgeois regime. As a matter of principle we never call for a bourgeois government or support bourgeois candidates.

We raise our slogans with the goal of seeking to help the workers gain a clear understanding of their own class interests. Thus in dealing with the situation in Spain today, we have to try and separate out the sentiment to struggle for democratic rights, which we support, from the objective of a bourgeois government, which we oppose. We try to link the struggle for democratic rights with our objective of a workers government. To do this we raise a coordinated series of slogans to express our position, even if at one moment or another we concentrate agitationaly on a specific democratic slogan.

In order to achieve clarity it is often important to complement one slogan with another in our propaganda, for instance, the call for a constituent assembly with the call for a workers government or a workers and peasants government (the latter is probably best in Spain today). These two demands are complementary. A constituent assembly offers the opportunity for the highest expression of democratic rights within the context of bourgeois society. The "free" election of delegates to an assembly to decide what kind of government should be established. Such a call for a constituent assembly by itself does not specify what government should exist, and does not in any way imply support for a bourgeois government. But our call for a constituent assembly should be combined in our propaganda, with our answer to the question of who should govern, the working class, expressed as a workers and peasants government, and further concretized, depending on the specific situation in the class struggle, in the call for a CP-SP government or some other concrete formula.

What does the slogan of the republic express in Spain today? If it is understood by the masses as simply a generic demand that the people should decide on all questions of government rather than accepting the decisions of a monarchy, then the slogan is not in itself in conflict with our class principles. It is then a tactical question of whether and how we might utilize this slogan. I believe this has been the position in essence that the T.O. has held.

But if the slogan is understood to mean that the objective is to return to the second Spanish republic or to set up some other sort of bourgeois democratic regime, then the slogan cuts across our class principles, as Pierre Frank explains in his article of 1946.

It seems to me that the basic limitation in using the slogan of a republic is that it is very difficult to separate these two aspects-- democratic rights (down with the monarchy) and a bourgeois republic (Spain 1931-1939). And at least the slogan leads itself to promoting this confusion. That is why it seems best to explain our position by centering our propaganda around the following axis: down with the monarchy and all institutions of Francoism, for full democratic rights, for a constituent assembly, for a workers and peasants government.

The republic slogan can also help lend itself to promoting confusion in the direction of the concept of revolution by stages: that first we must fight for a democratic stage under bourgeois rule, and only later for socialism. This is the case today in Spain where there is enormous pressure transmitted and promoted by the reformist workers parties that we are now fighting for a democratic stage. With this totally false differentiation between the struggle for democratic rights and the socialist revolution, the reformists are able in the name of "democracy" to oppose the class demands of the workers which are rising objectively out of the living class struggle. This ties in logically with their support for a social pact and their opposition to proletarian methods of struggle in favor of class collaboration, agreements, negotiations, etc.

This brings me to another problem I see. It is possible to bend towards the "democratic" stage posture if the slogan republic becomes, in effect, our governmental slogan. I think this danger is expressed in the LSR document, "After the Referendum," in which these comrades propose an electoral bloc under the slogan for the Third Republic as the most important point and no mention whatever is made of our own governmental slogan. The T.O. (Workers Tendency) is correct in insisting that we should raise our class governmental slogan in the elections. I see that in the proposed program for an electoral bloc, the LCR, like the LSR, leaves out any governmental slogan. This is done at the very time when everyone in Spain is discussing who should rule, what kind of government should exist. We must take a clear position on this. It is the question of questions to clarify in this election. We are for a workers and peasant government, for a workers republic.

To say this in no way contradicts the correct effort by the LCR to seek out and concentrate on specific democratic demands, and seek as wide a bloc in action on those specific slogans. This is what the LCR did recently regarding the call "to legalize all working class political parties." But as the T.O. explains, an election poses the question of who should govern. Our tactics in an electoral campaign cannot be treated in the same way as our united front tactics for action over specific issues in the class struggle. In an election campaign, we must aim to present our overall political position particularly as concerns the question of who should govern. This question separates us from the popular frontist positions of the centrists and Maoists as well as the CP and SP. But if we fail to present our class governmental slogan in the elections, we cannot effectively differentiate ourselves from these currents.

For the bourgeoisie the maintenance of the monarchy is quite important to insure a slow and stable transition from Francoism to a government with a more popular base of support. Thus today the SP and CP are backing the efforts of the bourgeoisie to maintain a bonapartist regime based on the monarchy, and oppose raising the slogan for a republic. But with the stormy rise of the class struggle and the potential for a rapid disenchantment with the monarchy, the slogan of a republic could come to the fore. This cannot be ruled out and would require tactical shifts in how we present our propaganda as well as direct intervention into any mass movement.

I do not see any problem in our propoganda explaining, "we are opposed to the monarchy, let the people decide what government they want through a constituent assembly. We favor a workers and peasants government. We say: down with the monarchy, for a republic, a workers republic that will end capitalism and establish socialism."

In thinking through this question, we must keep in mind how the slogan republic is understood, at what stage the mass movement is at and how best to explain our program and to help mobilize the masses in struggle. It must be crystal clear whenever we say republic we mean a workers republic (i.e., a workers and peasants government), and can in no way be interpreted as a bourgeois republic. For us, that is a question of principle.

Peter

P.S. I am also sending you under a separate cover an Education for Socialist Bulletin entitled: "The Workers and Farmers Government" by Joseph Hansen. This bulletin includes a series of articles on the meaning and correct usage of the slogan workers and farmers government including the original discussion at the Fourth World Congress of the Third International. I especially recommend that you read the article on page 49 by Michel Pablo published in 1947, which I think you will find very useful.

CC: LC, LCR

to leave it behind when they enter the Labour Party.
 The alternative resolution demanded the maintenance of the ILP as an independent organisation and as an alternative to the Labour Party.

The debate around these two resolutions produced impassioned appeals from Paddy, Broekway and the supporters of the first resolution. Broekway spoke of the personal crisis through which he was passing and threatened to resign from the editorship of the NEW LEADER. McGovern and (Garnham) predicted the doom of the ILP should it continue to function independently.

The vocal support given to the anti-abdication resolution was a melange of pacifist and sectarian confusion. Many of the ideas expressed were from the recipe book of "third period" Stalinism against which the right wing solemnly warned.

Despite the efforts of the pro-abdication right wing, the second resolution was carried by 75 votes to 60.

The decision of the ILP to remain outside the mass Labour Party is virtually its death warrant. Lacking a revolutionary programme, discipline and leadership, it can never become an alternative to the Labour Party. The workers cannot distinguish its policy from that of the mass Labour Party and consequently are unable to understand the reason for its separate existence.

The ILP is now completely split. The pitiful, sentimental character of the party is underlined in an article by John McNair in the NEW LEADER of May 4th. The General Secretary endeavours to prevent a split by a rear-guard appeal to the right wing who are deserting to the Labour Party in defiance of the majority decision of the Conference. He writes:

"This decision (to stay outside the ILP) was arrived at in accordance with the genuine democratic procedure which governs the ILP and it will be implemented, not only in the letter but in the spirit, by our National Council and by our Party Officers."

"I think many of us heaved a sigh of relief when the final decision was

reached. We have been divided on this issue for many months. The full intensity of our flow of work for International Socialism has been retarded by this difference of tactical approach. The NAC as well as the membership was divided (2). We have never sought and never accepted the dull acquiescence of totalitarian subservience. Such divisions as this are of the essence of democracy and we are prepared to pay the price even though it be high. In this case the price is high as some of our comrades may be leaving us. It is hard, terribly hard, to lose comrades with whom one has worked for many happy years in loyal and fruitful collaboration.

But our comrades have not yet gone. From the depths of my socialist conscience I make this appeal to them:— "Must you go? Can't you stay? There has been no bothing nor bawling of doors. There was a perfectly reasonable difference of opinion on a tactical problem. The Party has decided. The doors of the Party are wide open to all who are prepared loyally and sincerely to implement Conference decisions. Remember what the Party has meant to you. Will you find such joy in socialist service elsewhere? Is there not an imperious need for an independent Socialist Party? I am sure there is and I am certain that the ILP is such a Party. Therefore, comrades, we want you to stay with us. We don't want you to go."

But this sentimental claptrap has fallen on deaf ears. Those Party Officers whom McNair promises will implement the Conference decision "not only in the letter but in the spirit" are already on their way out! Fenner Brockway is resigning from the political secretaryship and editorship of the NEW LEADER. Two of the Parliamentary Group, McGovern and Campbell Stephen, together with most of the Glasgow Councilors, are preparing to go over to the Labour Party. This is all the respect they have for Conference decisions "arrived at in accordance with the genuine democratic procedure which governs the

ILP' and all that the General Secretary can say is "must you go?" Some of the rank and file ILP comrades at the Conference had illusions that the passing of the anti-affiliation resolution would have a sobering effect on the right wing and would put them back on the rails. Subsequent events will have dispelled their illusions. They are to be left in the remnants of the independent "alternative" to the Labour Party without a programme, without a perspective, without hope for the future.

The plight of the rump of Common-wealth, which has suffered an identical fate to that of the ILP (Millington, its lone MP, has already gone into the Labour Party) may provide the basis for hision. C. A. Smith, (Commonwealth Chairman, has had such an idea in mind for some time and has been making approaches to the ILP behind the scenes. It will solve nothing if it does take place. It will not halt the decay of either organisation. These two lame dogs will prove incapable of helping each other over the stile.

The Conference showed that the possibilities of the ILP playing any great role in the future are growing ever more dim. Its literature circulation, its general activity, its active membership do not compare with those of the RCP. Such industrial influence as it exerts is at the official level. Its trade union leaders, Bob Edwards, Tom Stephenson and Will Ballantine, lacking a firm policy, do not assist the Party's industrial development but transmit the pressure of the Labour and trade union bureaucracy into the ILP. This was shown by the unchal-

lenged report of the Industrial Committee which declared that "it would be comparatively easy for a number of employers . . . to deliberately provoke industrial disputes with the object of embarrassing the Labour Government. This situation calls for discrimination in our relationship to strikes and we should be careful that we are not used as tools of the employers in any such attempts." This is only one step away from the war-time position of the Stalinists which branded all strikes as provocations of the employers and called upon the workers not to yield to such provocations, not to strike.

The main capital of the ILP during the past years has consisted of its Parliamentary Group and its tradition in the Labour movement. Without the M.P.'s it will be nothing. The development, more precisely the degeneration, of the ILP has verified the prediction of the last RCP Congress. We said:

"At a current separate and apart from the reformists and the revolutionaries, the ILP will not be able to maintain itself. Like its brother parties on the continent of Europe it will disappear ignominiously from the scene."

The Conference revealed that there are very few elements remaining in the ILP who are not so steeped in its centrist atmosphere as to be capable of absorbing the revolutionary ideas of Trotskyism. Those who have such capacities will be propelled in our direction. The coming struggles will demonstrate the viability of Trotskyist, revolutionary Communism.

DEMOCRACY OR BONAPARTISM IN EUROPE? BY PIERRE FRANK

The following article is presented for international discussion by a leading member of the Parti Communiste Internationaliste, French Section of the

Fourth International. It does not represent the view of the W.I.N. A reply will be published in our next issue.

The problems of the proletarian revolution are posed today in Europe under the most varied aspects. It is not surprising therefore that differ-

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pressed several questions concerning democratic demands and the possibilities of democratic regimes in Europe. If for some it was only a question of putting the emphasis on democratic demands while for others one of putting it on the slogans of soviets and the Socialist United States of Europe, this difference would very likely be resolved in the daily activities of the parties, provided both tendencies knew how to connect dialectically the democratic slogans and the specific slogans of the proletarian revolution. On the other hand a question which must be treated with the greatest precision and which cannot be settled by daily activity is that of the nature of the present regimes in Europe. It is a theoretical problem of the first importance to know whether or not we have democratic regimes in Europe, for differences on this point must finally result which is not necessarily the case with democratic slogans—in different politics, as happened on the question of the nature of the Soviet State which has so often been brought forward during the years of Stalinist degeneration and reaction.

Do Democratic Regimes Exist in

"Liberated" Europe?

This reply to this question obviously does not depend on the criteria required by the Foreign Office and the State Department for the diplomatic recognition of a government any more than on those defined by Stalinist propaganda. Bourgeois democracy is a political form the analysis of which has been made by the most eminent Marxists and it is their analysis which serves completely to guide us on this matter.

The principal problem of Europe is Germany. Unfortunately, under present conditions, the political forms and formations there are still only in an embryonic state: the military occupation governments stifle all political life capable of disturbing their own aims. Consequently, Germany scarcely affords us criteria concerning the political forms of the state in Europe. Throughout that part of Europe occupied by the Red Army great overtures are taking place; but the Stalin-

ist manoeuvres completely distort the simplest bits of information. In any event we are not confronted with democratic governments far or near. These are governments based on capitalist property, under the control of the Moscow bureaucracy, and with a greater or lesser base in the worker and poor peasant masses. Only the presence of the Red Army assures their continuance.

But after all, the discussion among the American comrades has died, and moreover rightly so, with the countries of Western Europe, those which are in the "zone of influence" of American and British democratic imperialism.

Unquestionably, the most characteristic example in this zone is that of France, which once again constitutes the most appropriate subject for a Marxist study of specific political questions. Let us say in the beginning that everything that is true for France is not necessarily true at present for Italy, the Scandinavian countries, Belgium, etc., but it is certainly in France that the political tendencies manifest themselves with the greatest clarity and distinctness.

Do we have a democratic regime in France? Comrade Morrow, in an article aimed at summarizing the positions of his tendency in the discussion, replies in the affirmative in the following terms:

"The struggle of the masses is limited by the fact that it still accepts the leadership of the reformist parties. The objective resultant is bourgeois democracy.

Another factor working for bourgeois democracy is the resistance of a section of the French capitalist class, led by de Gaulle, to U.S. domination. There was much indignation at the plenum, notably from Comrade Cannon, when I defined the Gaullists as a bourgeois-democratic tendency. The majority could not understand this quite simple phenomenon, that a section of the French capitalist class, first to resist German imperialism and then to resist U.S. domination, was for a period basing itself on the masses through the mediation of the reformist

parties." (Fourth International, May 1945).

We shall endeavour to show by an analysis of the class relations that this reasoning is faulty on a number of points. As one knows, it is always profitable not to examine a question solely by its appearance at a given moment, but to see it in its historical development over a longer period. This is very easy for us to do since the Fourth International has taken very clear positions on France over a period of many years.

In February 1934 a violent reactionary attack dealt a mortal blow to the democratic Third Republic. The new regime was defined by Trotsky as follows: "a preventive Bonapartist regime cloaking itself with the worn-out formulae of the parliamentary state and manoeuvring between the insufficiently strong camp of the fascist regime and the insufficiently class-conscious camp of the proletarian state." (August 1934).

The violent reactionary attack awakened the labouring masses. A strong surge to the left took place, which forced a leftward shift of the Bonapartist governments, at the same time that the Popular Front was created to check and mislead the revolutionary movement of the masses. The year 1936 saw the triumph of the Popular Front thanks to the exploitation of strong democratic illusions; but it also saw a strong surge of the workers (June 1936). The division of France into mortally hostile camps deepened. The regime of the Popular Front was not a democratic regime; it contained within itself numerous elements of Bonapartism as we shall see further on.

With Munich and the liquidation of the Popular Front, the governments of Deladier and Reynaud, resembling those of Doumergue and Flandin, prepared the Bordeaux transaction of June 1940 which served to install the Petain regime. Despite the support it received from German imperialism (it held power only with German support and went under as soon as the German Army had to quit French territory), this regime was not considered by us as fascist but rather as

Bonapartist. In the notes he dictated for an article shortly before his assassination, which he did not have the time to write, Trotsky expressed himself as follows:

"In France there is no fascism in the real sense of the term. The regime of the senile Marshal Petain represents a senile form of Bonapartism of the epoch of imperialist decline. . . . Precisely because Petain's regime is senile Bonapartism it contains no element of stability and can be overthrown by a revolutionary mass uprising much sooner than a fascist regime." (Fourth International, October 1940).

Several months later a manifesto of the International Secretariat entitled "France Under Hitler and Petain" declares:

"The swift invasion of the German troops has shattered the administrative system. The only group representing a certain relative solidarity were the top ranks of the Army. Around them rallied some Anglo-phone politicians. This combination was crowned by the octogenarian Petain. The new Bonaparte did not even use cannon against parliament, which decided on its own hook to disappear.

The struggle for democracy under the flag of England and the United States will not lead to a noticeably different situation. General de Gaulle struggles against 'slavery' at the head of colonial governors, that is to say, of slave masters. In his appeals the 'leader' uses, just like Petain, the fatal 'we'. The defence of democracy is in good hands! If England should install de Gaulle in France tomorrow, his regime would not in the least be distinguished from that of the Bonapartist government of Petain." (November 1940).

Thus our most responsible international body had predicted that a simple substitution of gangs following a victory of the Allies would not signify a change in the nature of the political direction or not? We find ourselves in the presence of an evaluation on the historical scale based on positions which were defended for many years by

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the Fourth International against all other theories and cheap labels spread by the other tendencies and formations of the labour movement. If an error was committed it would truly be a considerable one and we would be urgently obliged to seek the reasons for it and correct it. As for ourselves, we don't believe that our organisation was in error on this point. We sought to define the regime of de Gaulle in 1944 at the moment when he had censured being the leader of a military legion at London and had become the head of the government installed in Algiers as the step before becoming the head of the government at Paris. We gave only a personal evaluation which does not have the authority of the citations given above but one may well excuse us for reprinting it here, for it applies in large measure to the present regime in France.

The significance of the sentence pronounced by the Algiers tribunal goes far beyond the personality of Pucheu and of his judges. The sentence reveals the 'common nature' of the Petain regime in France and the de Gaulle regime now established in North Africa which lays claim to the future government of France. At the same time, the sentence may serve to lay open some of the differences between the two regimes.

The Petain regime is the dictatorship of the army and the police in the service of big capital. This is Bonapartism, not fascism. It is Bonapartism propped up by the Gestapo and the German occupation troops.

The de Gaulle regime—especially since its establishment at Algiers—contains an ever increasing number of men from the army and the police who have deserted Vichy. This too is Bonapartism. It is Bonapartism propped up by the Allied troops and the crumbs of Lese-Lend.

The differences between these two Bonapartist regimes are in no way exhausted by the fact that some of these French patriots have a marked preference for the Basic English as opposed to the jargon of the 'Vöel-her' Beobachter.

In France, independent working

class organizations are driven to illegality by Petain; in Algeria, where reaction still reigned supreme at the time of the proletarian offensive of 1936, the de Gaulle regime cannot help tolerating the open expression of trade unions and working class parties and must even seek their collaboration.

In France, Petain is constantly being spurred on by the agitation of the fascist organizations, in particular by Dorel's PPF. In Algeria, these same fascist organizations have been reduced to illegality and there actually appears to be no fascist movement in existence at Algiers. (Obviously, one of these bonapartist regimes leans essentially on fascist reaction, whereas the other leans more towards the exploited masses. This is nowise to the credit of one or other of the leading cliques, it is simply the resultant of the class forces in operation; but it is a fact of great importance for the future development of the class struggle. (Fourth International, June 1944)."

We don't see that the 'liberation' of France has brought fundamental changes in the above-mentioned characteristics of the de Gaulle regime. Unquestionably the weight of the worker masses is markedly heavier in France than in Algeria and the stronger democratic traditions are factors which contribute to weakening the regime and force it to drape itself in enough shapeless camouflage to hide its Bonapartist traits; but it doesn't change its nature.

Bonapartism

After having shown the continuity of our political analysis for more than ten years of French history and before proceeding to a more penetrating study of the de Gaulle regime, we believe it worthwhile to review some generalizations on Bonapartism at the cost of a new series of citations.

In "Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State" Engels explains how a Bonapartist form of state appears under certain circumstances:

"At certain periods it occurs that the struggling classes balance each other so nearly that the public power

gains a certain degree of independence by posing as the mediator between them. The absolute monarchy of the 17th and 18th century was in such a position balancing the nobles and the burghers against one another. So was the Bonapartism of the first, and still more of the Second Empire, playing the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and vice versa. The latest performance of this kind, in which rulers and ruled appear equally ridiculous, is the German Empire of Bismarckian make, in which capitalists and labourers are balanced against one another and equally cheated for the benefit of the degenerate Prussian cabbage junkers."

Limiting ourselves in this article to the Bonapartism of the capitalist regime we merely call to mind the definition of Bonapartism applied and explained on many occasions by Trotsky in reference to the Stalinist dictatorship. But Trotsky was very insistent in attributing this conception of Bonapartism to the von Papen and von Schleicher governments in the months preceding Hitler's coming to power; he did this in two pamphlets one of which, "The Only Road", devotes itself mainly to this very question. He showed the same insistence concerning the Doumergue and Flaminio ministries in France which had resulted from the violently reactionary attack of February 6, 1934. He showed the differences in the class relations between a democratic regime and a Bonapartist regime:

"The passing over of the bourgeoisie from the parliamentary to the bonapartist regime does not finally exclude Social-Democracy from that legal combination of forces upon which capitalist government bases itself. Schlicher, as is well known, sought in his time the aid of the trade unions. Through his friend Marquet, Doumergue has without doubt relations with Jouxhaux and Co. . . . The essence of the democratic state consists, as is well known in the fact that everyone has the right to say and write what he pleases but that the big capitalists retain the power of deciding all im-

portant questions. This result is obtained by means of a complicated system of partial concessions, or forms becomes exhausted. Social-Democracy ceases to be the main political support of the bourgeoisie. This signifies: capital can no longer rely upon a tamed public opinion; it needs a state apparatus which is independent of the masses—i.e. bonapartist.

In the one case, society turns almost in a circle about the big bourgeoisie as a pivot; the latter find in the petty bourgeoisie and in a section of the working class a stable foundation; consequently the government and the state apparatus rest on these strata by means of a parliamentary majority. In the other case the big bourgeoisie does not find sufficient support in the masses which are polarised towards the camp of the revolution and the camp of the counter-revolution; under these conditions in order to save the social order the state apparatus, with the forces of repression in the forefront, tends to raise itself above society. The state machine no longer rests on a mass base but maintains itself in unstable equilibrium between two camps; these fears of social gymnastics come to a lamentable end the moment one of the camps takes the initiative in a decisive struggle.

The examples mentioned above for Germany of 1932 and France of 1934 are those of a weak bonapartism in the period of capitalist decline; the qualification of bonapartism in their case was not contested in our ranks probably because, as Trotsky wrote, it is still easy to recognize in an old man the characteristics which he possessed in his youth.

But the bonapartism of declining capitalism can cloak itself in other costumes. In certain cases it is fairly difficult to recognize it, for example in the case of governments of the left, even very much to the left, notably of the Popular Front type. There bonapartism is so outrageously varnished with a democratic sheen that many allow themselves to be taken in by it. The existence of bonapartist elements in the Kerensky regime was the subject of a chapter of "The History of

the Russian Revolution" by Trotsky who characterized Kerenky as "the mathematical centre of Russian bonapartism." This theoretical evaluation was in agreement with that of Lenin who, on September 23, 1917, wrote to the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party: "We must give . . . a correct and clear slogan: to drive out the Bonapartist gang of Kerenky with its fake pre-parliament." There was no question there of an agitational formula. In "State and Revolution" the greatest Marxist classic on the question of the state, Lenin, after having recalled the terms of Engels cited above with the same examples, adds the following phrase: "Such, we add, is the present Kerenky government in Republican Russia since it began to persecute the revolutionary proletariat, at a moment when, thanks to the leadership of the petty bourgeois democrats, the soviets had already become important while the bourgeoisie was not yet strong enough openly to disperse them."

Certain individuals may be surprised to see an idea applied to regimes so widely separated from one another and will doubt its usefulness. Many other ideas familiar to Marxists are applied to extremely wide fields and yet are no less correct and useful. For example centrism. Also, for example, the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is applied to the Paris Commune under its leadership of Proudhonists and Blanquists, as well as to Soviet Russia under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky. The term "bonapartism" does not completely exhaust the characterization of a regime, but it is indispensable to employ it in present day Europe. If one wishes to go forward with the least chance of error. Let us add finally that Marxism is not alone in the possession of such important general ideas; all the sciences do likewise. Thus, chemists call bodies carbides which differ more widely from one another than the bonapartism of Schlicher and that of Kerenky. And chemistry doesn't get along so badly either on that account. The contrary is true.

Let us note that the greatest theoreticians of Marxism did not at all

define the political nature of a bourgeois regime by the positions which the latter held in the field of foreign policy but solely and simply by the position it occupied in relation to the classes composing the nation. Let us likewise observe that the limitations of the struggle of the masses because of the treacherous leaderships (according to the expression of Comrade Morroy) or, what amounts to the same, the paralysis or impotence of the mass organizations (to employ the terms of Lenin or Trotsky) does not give as "objective" results as a bourgeois democracy, in the conditions of present day France, but rather a bonapartism which possesses an apparent strength.

The de Gaulle Government

The conditions which dictate a bonapartist regime to the bourgeoisie equally dictate a foreign policy which is in no way a policy of "resistance." The social crisis of France acquires a particular acute character precisely because of the change of its world position. But to see French capitalism or part of it "resisting" American or German imperialism and becoming democratic by virtue of this is to fall into error.

France's crisis owes its extreme acuteness to the fact that a great power of the 19th century must accommodate itself to a second-rate position in the capitalist world of the twentieth century, because of the weakness of its economic base which has remained stagnant in the face of the development of new and younger powers. A retrogression of this type (like that occurring in Great Britain after its "victory" in the Second World War) does not only signify securing a camp stool in place of an armchair in the international conference, but above all a considerable lowering of the national revenue, and therefore a considerable reduction in the standard of life, particularly for the working masses. The first luxury article that capitalism tries to eliminate under such circumstances is democracy. Well before 1930 big capital in France understood that it could no longer claim a seat of great power as in the past. It had to find a protector for a future

full of threats.蔦ertia had more or less kept it trailing behind British imperialism, but it was easy to see that the latter was also in serious straits although it had more reserves to hold out longer. To resist the revolutionary movement it was necessary to look elsewhere than London and its allies. Besides, French heavy industry had some special business reasons for orienting French capital towards German imperialism, which, with the coming to power of the Nazis moved forward with seven-league boots.

But if French capitalism turned its eye towards German imperialism and was guilty of counter-revolutionary defeats in 1940 in the interests of its domestic politics, it now, the less sought to prevent those few cards which remained in its hand from being completely taken away, knowing that German imperialism was still far from having consolidated its position and that it had not been able to secure any better ally than Italy. On the other hand an important section of French capitalism (finished goods, industries, luxury articles, tourist trade) could not because of its special interests neglect the American continent where it had its principal customers. As a result, French imperialism, pulled from opposite sides, endeavored to play an intermediary role between Germany and the United States immediately after the debacle of June 1940, hoping to be able to earn a small commission for this work. It hasn't been forgotten that certain elements of American capitalism lent themselves for a time to this (Lenly mission). But when it became clear that the United States was intrajacent toward German imperialism and the latter had no further chance of victory, this role of go-between was abandoned and the Bank of France and the Comité des Forges themselves became "resistant," in their own fashion, of course. Billions were transferred to Algeria in the months preceding the occupation of North Africa by the Americans; the top French administration made contact with de Gaulle.

For a little more than a year, de Gaulle, as head of the government,

while endorourring from time to time to retile his wooden sabre a bit, tried to re-establish this courtier's policy, adopting it to the new principal powers that is to say, the U.S. and the USSR, and ignoring England. De Gaulle quickly signed a treaty of alliance soon the U.S.S.R. but this document soon proved to be worthless, for Stalin, having nothing to get from de Gaulle, let him down in all the international conferences which have been held since then. In his recent visit to Washington de Gaulle obtained some loans for French economy (in which sufficiently important American business interests are involved) but he returned empty-handed from the political point of view. It took him less than a year to learn that it is in one thing to play the role of arbiter between two weaker states and another thing for a small state to wish to manoeuvre between two great powers. General de Gaulle would have been able to learn something about this without having to experience it if he had addressed himself to certain ancient Polish colonels. Finally, de Gaulle who was openly attacked by a section of the French bourgeoisie for his policy of isolation has taken a small step towards England and the countries of Western Europe by proposing to create an association resembling one for the blind and the paralymed.

Any way one may examine it this foreign policy of French capitalism is in no way "resistant" and, besides, there is nothing in it which predisposes the "Gaullists" to democracy.

If one studies the class relations in France, the bonapartist character of the de Gaulle government appears in the greatest clarity, since the day of "liberation" up to the elections of October 31, 1945 and to the conditions created by them.

The liberation of Paris was accomplished under the leadership of the Comité National de la Résistance (CNR), whose mass base was constituted by the workers' organizations (General Confederation of Labour, Communist Party, Socialist Party) and the militias composed in great part of worker members of these organizations. The CNR and more particularly the

workers' organizations, would have been able at this time to establish themselves in power, supporting themselves on the militias and the local committees of resistance. (These last represented in a bureaucratic fashion, and not democratically, the proletariat and the exploited masses in general.) In this period de Gaulle personally had very few real forces and would not have been able to oppose the CNR. As for the reaction and the old capitalist forces they were completely demoralized and disorganized and were hiding themselves. To save the capitalist regime this left stripped bare, it was necessary from the very beginning to find something to cover it again and to encourage it for the eyes of the masses. For this desired effect the uniform of a resisting general was used and they raised him as the representative of the nation, above classes, parties and groupings. In many respects this operation resembled that which occurred in February 1917 when the commanders of the Petrograd soviet yielded the power, surrendering without firing a shot, to a provisional government without any real base.

It goes without saying that the bonapartism thus created has not at all the intention of leading too precarious an existence. It seeks to create a base for itself while securing the complicity of the leadership of the political formations and others who, in the given period, canalize the class forces between which it tries to maintain itself.

Traitorous Working Class Leaders

From the very first de Gaulle had to obtain the collaboration of the leaders of the parties which included the working class in order to accomplish the dissolution of the militias, the submission of the local committees of resistance to the organizations of the old bourgeois states as well as a unification of all the armed forces under the control of the government artificially created by the leaders themselves. Despite the support of the traitorous leaders, this operation took several months to achieve.

Every bonapartist government in France has tried to create a base for itself in the peasantry; the army hav-

ing been for a very long time a sort of protector of the middle peasantry (see "The Eighteenth Brumaire" in particular where Marx wrote "The uniform was the holiday costume of the peasant." In the new circumstances de Gaulle has remained faithful to the bonapartist tradition. Shortly after the Second World War when the countryside suffered from the manpower shortage and it was necessary to resort to the employment of prisoners of war for the tasks of trained workers, especially in the mines, de Gaulle attempted to maintain an army of one million men, that is, a standing army superior to those which France had preceding the years of re-armament and direct preparation for the war. Promises have been made to the peasantry, higher prices have been allowed for their products, etc., without much being accomplished, however, in the way of results, since the peasants need manpower, materials, livestock, seeds, manufactured products; since there is a shortage of all these things; and since the profits they can make on the black market cannot be used to obtain these things.

The elections which have just taken place provide one of the most striking proofs of the bonapartist character of the regime. Elections, a constituent, a parliament, a government responsible to an elected assembly, are so many disagreeable things for the general. He couldn't throw all this into the garbage can. What he was interested in above all was to wield stable power which would not be at the mercy of an assembly. Look, he said, at the history of the Third Republic with its cascades of falling ministers. Thus he decided that simultaneously with democratic elections to elect an assembly on the bases of programme and parties, there should be held a referendum in the nature of a plebiscite designed to deprive the elected assembly of the greater part of its rights and to preserve, on the other hand, the greater part of the power in his own hands.

Upon the announcement of this referendum a number of the democratic politicians of France shouted "bonapartism." Surely it was not a knowledge of Marxist literature on this

question but very simply an elementary knowledge of the history of their country which led them to such declarations.

For a long time the French bourgeoisie has sought to resolve a problem that the years have made as insoluble as squaring the circle. It wanted "a strong state," in part to insure the defence of its frontiers, but mainly to hold in check the domestic enemy, the working class; but all the same, it did not wish this state to become too strong, far each time that it has permitted the state to entrench itself too strongly, it quickly found its own position in contact with the military boots. To assure themselves that the state would not be further disturbed by political conflicts, the generals evinced an intention to transform the whole country into a barracks and to deprive everyone, including the bourgeoisie themselves, of political rights. This is the essential reason why even the most reactionary and personally arbitrary democratic politicians of the Third Republic, notably Clemenceau and Poincaré, opposed and fought vigorously against the interference of the generals in politics. But that is already ancient history.

In the October 21 elections the end of the democratic regime was inconceivably demonstrated by the inglorious fondering of the principal formations of the Third Republic, the Radical party, which had dominated and been maintained in every possible and imaginable way by that Republic. In "Whither France" Trotsky showed among other things that the policy of the Popular Front, the alliance of workers' organizations with the Radical party, was going in a direction directly contrary to the development of the situation, that is to say, to the decomposition of bourgeois democracy and of its principal party, that of the Radicals.

But the voting has created a situation in which bonapartism is literally under one's nose. The double role of October 21—the democratic elections and the plebiscite—has resulted in the most desirable situation for a general of the coup d'état.

5

Votes Almost Equally Divided

In the elections for the Constituent Assembly, the votes were pretty nearly equally divided between three parties: the Stalinist Party followed by a majority of the proletariat and by an important layer of the petty bourgeoisie of the towns and countryside; the Socialist Party, with a minority of the proletariat (without however losing its working class base in northern France) and a very great number of petty bourgeois votes. Finally the Mouvement Republicain Populaire (MRP), organized by Catholic politicians, who before the war flirted with the Popular Front and during the war were always solid pillars of the capitalist regime. In return, they received on October 21 all the votes of the reactionaries who have realized that they had no chance at all under their old colours.

The plebiscite is such a model stragem that you can say without fear of deception it could only have been conceived beneath the kepi of a general. A direct question for or against de Gaulle would never have given the desired results, for the present day bonapartism is too weak to intimidate the voters. Therefore guide was necessary. It was decided to pose two questions instead of one. (They even dreamt for a moment of posing three to do the job better.) To the first question there was no doubt that, save for a tiny minority of greybeards, everyone was going to reply Yes: the Third Republic is dead. To say Yes to the first question was to influence many voters to say Yes to the second question; besides it is easier to say Yes than No even in a referendum. It sufficed to wrap the second question in fine-spun language to finish the sowing of confusion. The result was a majority of about 60 percent of the votes for de Gaulle, who on the strength of this will receive from the head of the government from the new assembly.

What is going to happen? De Gaulle, feeling strong with 13,000,000 votes behind him, does not have to share counsel with anyone. Before him is an assembly with three parties of

practically equal numbers, and a perspective of new elections in nine months. They will all manoeuvre with each other. The Assembly and also the ministry in which the representatives will find each other again, will have to submit to the arbitration and will of General de Gaulle. All that resembles parliamentarism and democracy is going to be discarded in quarrels and in impotence; but there will always be a general to restore order!

At least for the most immediate future, the French government will be composed of representatives of the three parties. The Socialist party which cannot play the role of bonapartism is in the most difficult position. It evidently does not wish to form a government with the Stalinists alone (the latter strongly indicated this possibility the day after the elections, because they were sure that the socialists would not take it into consideration) and Stalinists kept insisting strongly and Socialists party can no more, under the present conditions form a ministry with the MRP, leaving the Stalinists "in the opposition."

As for de Gaulle, it is evidently all to his advantage to make the ministry a nest of intrigues and disputes by introducing into it members of the three parties, which will contribute to discredit them and to reinforce his personal position. It is quite possible, as the Stalinists do not wish to conduct too revolutionary a policy and the MRP not being able to adopt too soon an openly reactionary attitude, that the crisis will not open in the very first days. But it is not the desire of the politicians—in or out of uniform—which regulates the development of events. The class conflicts will not fail at an early date to place the political problems on a razor's edge.

The importance of a correct definition of the European governments goes beyond the domain of theory. What Trotsky wrote in 1932 on the subject of bonapartism in Germany preserves all its value mutatis mutandis for the bonapartism of 1945:

"If we have insistently demanded that a distinction be made between Fascism and Bonapartism, it has

been in no wise out of theoretical potency. Names are used to distinguish between concepts, concepts, in politics, in turn serve to distinguish among real forces. The smearing of Fascism would leave no room for Bonapartism, and, it is to be hoped, would mean the direct introduction to the social revolution.

Only—the proletariats is not armed for the revolution. The reciprocal relations between Social Democracy and the Bonapartist government on the one hand, and between Bonapartism and Fascism on the other—while they do not decide the fundamental questions—distinguish by what roads and in what tempo the struggle between the proletariat and the fascist counter-revolution will be prepared."

One must no more confuse the bonapartism "of the right" with fascism than the bonapartism "of the left" with democracy. We have seen that bonapartism takes very different forms according to the conditions in which the two mortally opposed camps find themselves; we maintain also that the existence of democratic liberties, even of very great democratic liberties, does not suffice to make a regime democratic. The bonapartists à la Kerensky, Popular Front . . . are even notorious for their flood of democratic liberty up to the point where capitalist society thereby even risks its balance and is in danger of capsizing. Democratic liberties do not proceed, as in a regime which one can correctly define as democratic, from the existence of a margin for reforms within capitalism, but on the contrary, from a situation of acute crisis, the result of the absence of all margin for reforms.

Precisely because we do not generally have in Europe at the present time democratic regimes, because there is literally no place for them and because the extension of democratic liberties can only undermine the bonapartist regimes, we put forward the most extreme democratic demands, in connection of course with the transitional demands which prepare the clarity of power.

The resolution of the recent national conference of the English section of the Fourth International ignores, alas, in

a general fashion bonapartism for Europe, and employs the expression, devoid of content, "democratic counter-revolution" for the European government. The resolution contains on the other hand a fairly good example for the future development of events in Europe, namely that of Spain in the period which extends from the fall of Prime de Rivera up to the civil war against the fascists of Franco. In all this period of the Spanish Republic there was no democratic regime properly speaking.

Bonapartism, as will probably be the case in all Europe, expressed itself through a series of epileptic convulsions, of great shifts to the right and to the left. The same phenomenon likewise occurred in France after 1934: 1934, violent reactionary attack; 1936, general strike and occupation of the factories; 1940, coup d'état of Bordeaux; 1944, uprising against the Petain regime. These great leaps follow one another, accompanied by deepening divisions of the nation along with a political clarifications on both sides in regard to the decisive struggle.

The use of democratic slogans—combined with transitional slogans—is justified more precisely because the possibilities of a democratic regime are non-existent, because present-day bonapartism is completely unstable and the struggle for the most extreme democratic demands can only end in its existence. But again it is necessary for us to understand one another on the democratic slogans which we adopt and not to define slogans as democratic when they are not.

"Since we here speak of the resolution of our English comrades let us note that it defines the new Labour government as 'Kerenskyism'. The Bonapartism, that they ignored, has found the means to insinuate itself into their document under a very special name. But we do not think that the present Atlee government is bonapartist à la Kerensky. Without questioning the coming to power of this government, that is to say, of a formation which rests on the working class but wishes to leave intact The City and British capitalism, at the moment when the latter has only gained a victory at the price of its very substance, will accelerate the downfall of British imperialism. The oldest of democracies has, as a result of the last elections, reached a dead end. But the term 'Kerenskyism' is not appropriate, for it already presupposes the accomplishment of the passage from democracy to this form of Bonapartism. On the contrary, it is in the future, probably very soon, that this passage will occur and the English workers and their organisations will then have to face an important crisis. In England one can only observe features of bonapartism. For example the Labour government under the pressure of capital and encouraged by the administrative apparatus, of which it hasn't harmed a hair, is inclined to play a role of reformer above the parties, while a section of the Labour parliamentary group endeavours to continue representing in a reformist and parliamentary fashion the worker masses who have elected them.

Let us merely recall in passing that the partisans of the "Three Theeses" seriously propose to make a struggle for the freedom of religion—a democratic slogan, unquestionably—one of the most essential points in the struggle against fascism. For anyone who has not completely lost the use of his faculties in the course of these terrible years of reaction through which we have passed, it is clear that such a democratic slogan has nothing in common with us. It is on the contrary more and more evident that this slogan is today the property of a whole section of reaction which does not dare to show its true face.

But a great error, even a very dangerous error, has been committed in qualifying as democratic and in proposing to our organization the slogan of "the Republic" (cf. the article of Comrade Logan on Italy). We are completely in favour of the slogan "Down with the monarchy" in Italy, in Greece, and for all the countries where this institution inherited from feudalism exists. We are no less in favour of the slogan of the Assembly of a single chamber which is against the Senate, the House of Lords, etc. . . . But between these slogans and the "Republic" there is a deep moat which we cannot cross. In one case we endeavour to direct the masses against institutions of a profoundly reactionary character, which limit, even under the capitalist regime, the possibility of democratic expression of the masses, and which, in moments of crisis become quasi-automatically the rallying point for the forces of the counter-revolution.

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tion. In the other case, we would attribute the slogan which, if we made the mistake of adopting it, would make us the promoters of a completely vague state form. "The Republic"? This slogan does not concern a partial objective but puts to the fore the very question of the state. What republic can we recommend in the current epoch? The Republic of Workers and Peasants Soviets alone, and not a bourgeois republic. The slogan of "the Republic" is absolutely silent on this point and can only, by its confusion, favour the class enemy.

It is evident that, despite our rejection of this slogan, we will not be neutral in the plebiscites which may be held in Europe on the question of the monarchy. We shall call the workers and peasants to vote against the monarchy, but clearly specifying that we do not have the choice as to the other term of the alternative, that we are voting against the monarchy but not in favour of the bourgeois republic.

It is almost twenty years ago that the Italian Social Democrats in one of their fits of theoretical audacity inscribed in their programme of the struggle against fascism the slogan of "the democratic republic of the toilers" and, for a certain period, the Italian Communist Party, in one of its zig-zags to the right, had an equivocal position towards this slogan. When in 1930 a section of the leadership of the Italian CP broke with Stalinism, formed the New Italian Opposition and turned toward the Left Opposition, this slogan was the object of a clarification in the exchange of views which took place at that time. The old position, that of the Bordighists, had an absolutely negative attitude on democratic slogans; it was especially necessary that the new Italian comrades should not take for their part a position which could be exploited by the Bordighists and which would have been fatal in the struggle against fascism. In a letter to the comrades in the NOI Trotsky expressed himself as follows on the slogan of the Italian Social Democrats:

"While advancing one or another set of democratic slogans we must irreconcilably fight against all forms

of democratic charlatanism. Such low-grade charlatanism is represented by the slogan of the Italian Social Democracy: 'The Democratic Republic of the Toilers'. The Toilers' republic can be only the class state of the proletariat. The 'Democratic Republic' is only a masked rule of the bourgeoisie. The combination of the two is a naive petty bourgeois illustration of the Social Democratic rank and file (workers, peasants) and deliberate treachery on the part of the Social Democratic leaders (all these Turatis, Modiglianis and their ilk). Let me once again remark in passing that I was and remain opposed to the formula of a 'National Assembly on the basis of workers-peasant committees', precisely because this formula approaches the Social Democratic slogan of the 'Democratic Toilers Republic' and, consequently, can render extremely difficult for us the struggle against the Social Democrats." May 14, 1930.

The slogan of "the Republic" as such is also as erroneous and pernicious as that of "The Democratic Republic of the Toilers" although, we are persuaded, few comrades in our international organization would have at present an inclination to mix in the above fashion the forms of bourgeois power with the forms of proletarian power. But it is not the thoughts and intentions of this or that comrade which are under discussion but the slogan of "the Republic" itself. This is not a democratic slogan but, to employ the strong expression of Trotsky, democratic charlatanism.

The theoretical principles and positions which are a part of the accumulated capital of the Bolshevik-Leninists gained in the course of their years of struggle against Stalinism, reformism and all the varieties of centrism in this workers' movement, and which we have called to mind in this article, obviously far from exhaust the questions which arise on the European situation. But it is indispensable to take them as a point of departure to permit our militants and our sections to orient themselves correctly despite the enormous confusion which rages and which, unhappily, will not fail to rage for the

duration of a complete period, up to the point when the events and our selves, in assisting events by a correct

THE JEWISH QUESTION

By LEON TROTSKY

The public herewith finds statements by Trotsky during the last years of his life expressing his views on the Jewish question. The first is in the form of an interview given to correspondents of the Jewish press upon his arrival in Mexico. The second is an excerpt from an article in "Thermidor and Anti-Semitism", written in 1937. The third is a letter which Trotsky addressed to the Jews massacred by the mounting wave of antisemitism and fascism in the United States, calling upon them to support the revolutionary struggle of the Fourth International as the only road to their salvation. The fourth statement is from the archives of Leon Trotsky.

I.

Before trying to answer your questions I ought to warn you that unfortunately I have not had the opportunity to learn the Jewish language, which moreover has been developed only since I became an adult. I have not had, and I do not have the possibility of following the Jewish press, which prevents me from giving a precise opinion on the different aspects of so important and tragic a problem. I cannot therefore claim any special authority in replying to your questions. Nevertheless I am going to try and say what I think about it.

During my youth I rather leaned toward the prognosis that the Jews of different countries would be assimilated and that the Jewish question would thus disappear in a quasi-automatic fashion. The historical development of the last quarter of a century has not confirmed this perspective. Decaying capitalism has everywhere swung over to an exacerbated nationalism, one part of which is anti-semitism. The Jewish question has loomed largest in the most highly developed capitalist country of Europe, in Germany.

On the other hand the Jews in differ-

ent countries have created their press and developed the Yiddish language as an instrument adapted to modern culture. One must therefore reckon with the fact that the Jewish nation will maintain itself for an entire epoch to come. Now the nation cannot normally exist without a common territory. Zionism springs from this very idea. But the facts of every passing day demonstrate to us that Zionism is incapable of resolving the Jewish question. The conflict between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine acquires a more and more tragic and more and more menacing character. I do not at all believe that the Jewish question can be resolved within the framework of forcing capitalism and under the control of British imperialism.

And how, you ask me, can socialism solve this question? On this point I can but offer hypotheses. (One socialism has become master of our planet or at least of its most important sections, it will have unimaginable reasons in all domains. Human history has witnessed the epoch of great migrations on the basis of barbarism. Socialism will open the possibility of great migrations on the basis of the most developed technique and culture. It goes without saying that what is here involved is not compulsory displacements, that is, the creation of new ghettos for certain nationalities, but displacements freely consented to, or rather demanded by certain nationalities. The dispersed Jews who would want to be reassimilated in the same community will find a sufficiently extensive and rich spot under the sun. The same possibility will be opened for the Arabs, as for all other scattered nations. National topography will beCOME a part of the planned economy. This is the grand historical perspective that I envisage. To work for international socialism means also to work

PROBLEMS OF THE ITALIAN REVOLUTION¹⁸⁸

May 14, 1930

Dear Comrades:

I have received your letter of May 5. Thanks very much for this study of Italian communism in general and of the various tendencies within it in particular. It filled a great need for me and was most welcome. It would be regrettable if your work were to be left in the form of an ordinary letter. With a few changes or abridgments, the letter could very well find a place in the pages of *La Lutte de classes*.

If you do not mind, I will begin with a general political conclusion: I regard our mutual collaboration in the future as perfectly possible and even extremely desirable. None of us possesses or can possess preestablished political formulas that can serve for all the eventualities of life. But I believe that the *method* with which you seek to determine the necessary political formulas is the right one.

You ask for my opinion concerning a whole series of grave problems. But before attempting a reply on some of them, I should formulate a very important reservation. I have never been closely acquainted with Italian political life, for I have spent only a very short time in Italy, I read Italian very poorly, and during my time in the Communist International I did not have the opportunity to dig deeper into an examination of Italian affairs.

You should know this fairly well yourselves, for how explain otherwise the fact that you undertook so detailed a work to bring me up to date on the pending questions?

It follows from the foregoing that my answers, in most cases, ought to have only an entirely *hypothetical* value. In no case can I consider the reflections that follow as definitive. It is quite possible and even probable that in examining this or that other problem I lose sight of certain highly important concrete circumstances of time and place. I will therefore await your objections and supplementary and corrective information. Inasmuch as our method, as I hope, is common, it is in this way that we shall best arrive at the right solution.

1. You remind me that I once criticized the slogan "Republican Assembly on the Basis of Workers' and Peasants' Committees," a slogan formerly put forward by the Italian Communist Party. You tell me that this slogan had an entirely episodic value and that at present it has been abandoned. I would like nevertheless to tell you why I consider it to be erroneous or at least ambiguous as a political slogan. "Republican Assembly" constitutes quite obviously an institution of the bourgeois state. What, however, are the "Workers' and Peasants' Committees"? It is obvious that they are some sort of equivalent of the workers' and peasants' soviets. Then that's what should be said. For, class organs of the workers and poor peasants, whether you give them the name of soviets or committees, always constitute organizations of struggle against the bourgeois state, then become organs of insurrection, to be transformed finally, after the victory, into organs of the proletarian dictatorship. How, under these conditions, can a Republican Assembly—supreme organ of the bourgeois state—have as its "basis" organs of the proletarian state?

I should like to recall to you that in 1917, before October, Zinoviev and Kamenev, when they came out against an insurrection, advocated waiting for the Constituent Assembly to meet in order to create a "combined state" by means of a fusion between the Constituent Assembly and the workers' and peasants' soviets. In 1919 we saw Hilferding propose to inscribe the soviets in the Weimar constitution.¹⁸⁶ Like Zinoviev and Kamenev, Hilferding called this the "combined state." As a new type of petty bourgeois, he wanted, at the very point of the most abrupt historical turn, to "combine" a third type of state by wedding the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie to the proletarian dictatorship under the sign of the constitution.

The Italian slogan expounded above seems to me to be a variant of this petty-bourgeois tendency. Unless I have understood it in a wrong sense. But in that case it already has the incontestable defect of lending itself to dangerous misunderstandings. I profit by it to correct here a truly unpardonable error committed by the epigones in 1924: they had found in Lenin a passage saying that we might be led to wed the Constituent Assembly with the Soviets. A passage saying the same thing may likewise be discovered in my writings. But what exactly was involved? We were posing the question of an insurrection that would transmit the power to the proletariat in the form of soviets. To the question of what, in that case, we would do with the Constituent Assembly, we replied:

"We shall see; perhaps we shall combine it with the Soviets." We understood by that the case where the Constituent Assembly convoked under the Soviet regime, would have a Soviet majority. As this was not the case, the Soviets dispersed the Constituent Assembly. In other words: the question was posed of whether it was possible to transform the Constituent Assembly and the Soviets into organs of one and the same class, and not at all of "combining" a bourgeois Constituent Assembly with the proletarian Soviets. In one case (with Lenin), it was a question of the formation of a proletarian state, of its structure, of its technique. In the other (with Zinoviev, Kamenev, Hilferding), it was a question of a constitutional combination of two states of enemy classes with a view to averting a proletarian insurrection that would have taken power.

2. The question we have just examined (the Republican Assembly) is intimately connected with another which you analyze in your letter, namely, what social character will the antifascist revolution acquire? You deny the possibility of a bourgeois revolution in Italy. You are perfectly right. History cannot turn back a considerable number of pages, each of which is equivalent to half a decade. The Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party already tried once to duck the question by proclaiming that the revolution would be neither bourgeois nor proletarian, but "popular." It is a simple repetition of what the Russian Populists said at the beginning of this century when they were asked what character the revolution against czarism would acquire. And it is still this same answer that the Communist International gives today with respect to China and India. It is quite simply a pseudorevolutionary variant of the social democratic theory of Otto Bauer¹⁵⁷ and others, according to which the state can raise itself above the classes, that is, be neither bourgeois nor proletarian. This theory is as pernicious for the proletariat as for the revolution. In China it transformed the proletariat into cannon fodder of the bourgeois counterrevolution.

Every great revolution proves to be *popular* in the sense that it draws into its wake the entire people. Both the Great French Revolution and the October Revolution were wholly popular. Nevertheless, the first was bourgeois because it instituted individual property, whereas the second was proletarian because it abolished individual property. Only a few hopelessly belated petty-bourgeois revolutionists can still dream of a revolution that would be neither bourgeois nor proletarian, but "popular" (that is, petty-bourgeois).

Now, in the imperialist period, the petty bourgeoisie is incapable not only of leading a revolution, but even of playing an independent role in it. In this way the formula of a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" henceforth constitutes a simple screen for a petty-bourgeois conception of a *transitional* revolution and a *transitional* state that is, of a revolution and a state that cannot take place in Italy or even in backward India. A revolutionist who has not taken a clear, point-blank position on the question of a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry is doomed to fall into error after error. As to the problem of the antifascist revolution, the Italian question, more than any other, is intimately linked to the fundamental problems of world communism, that is, of the so-called theory of permanent revolution.¹⁹⁸

3. Following from what has been said comes the question of the "transitional" period in Italy. At the very outset it is necessary to establish very clearly: transition from what to what? A period of transition from the bourgeois (or "popular") revolution to the proletarian revolution—that is one thing. A period of transition from the fascist dictatorship to the proletarian dictatorship—that is something else. If the first conception is envisaged, the question of the bourgeois revolution is posed in the first place, and it is then a question of establishing the role of the proletariat in it. Only after that will the question of the transitional period toward a proletarian revolution be posed. If the second conception is envisaged, the question is then posed of a series of battles, disturbances, changing situations, abrupt turns, constituting in their entirety the different stages of the proletarian revolution. These stages may be many. But in no case can they contain within them a bourgeois revolution or its mysterious hybrid, the "popular" revolution.

Does this mean that Italy cannot, for a certain time, again become a parliamentary state or become a "democratic republic"? I consider—in perfect agreement with you, I think—that this eventuality is not excluded. But then it will not be the fruit of a bourgeois revolution, but the abortion of an insufficiently matured and premature proletarian revolution. In the event of a profound revolutionary crisis and mass battles in the course of which the proletarian vanguard will not have been in a position to take power, it may be that the bourgeoisie will restore its rule on "democratic" bases. Can it be said, for example, that the present German republic is a conquest of the

bourgeois revolution? Such an assertion would be absurd. What took place in Germany in 1918-19 was a proletarian revolution, which for lack of leadership was deceived, betrayed, and crushed. But the bourgeois counterrevolution nevertheless was forced to adapt itself to the circumstances resulting from this crushing of the proletarian revolution and to assume the form of a parliamentary "democratic" republic. Is the same—or about the same—eventuality excluded for Italy? No, it is not excluded. The enthronement of fascism resulted from the fact that the 1920 proletarian revolution was not carried through to its completion. Only a new proletarian revolution can overturn fascism. If it should not be fated to triumph this time either (owing to the weakness of the Communist Party, maneuvers and betrayals of the social democrats, the Freemasons, the Catholics), the "transitional" state that the bourgeois counterrevolution would then be compelled to set up on the ruins of the fascist form of its rule could be nothing else than a parliamentary and democratic state.

What in the long run is the aim of the Antifascist Concentration? Foreseeing the fall of the fascist state by an uprising of the proletariat and in general of all the oppressed masses, the Concentration is preparing to arrest this movement, to paralyze it, and to thwart it *in order to pass off the victory of the renovated counterrevolution as a supposed victory of a democratic bourgeois revolution*. If this dialectic of the living social forces is lost sight of for a single moment, the risk is run of getting inextricably entangled and of swerving off the right road. I believe there cannot be the slightest misunderstanding between us on this score.

4. But does this mean that we communists reject in advance all democratic slogans, all transitional or preparatory slogans, limiting ourselves strictly to the *proletarian dictatorship*? That would be a display of sterile, doctrinaire sectarianism. We do not believe for one moment that a single revolutionary leap suffices to cross what separates the fascist regime from the proletarian dictatorship. In no way do we deny a transitional period with its transitional demands, including democratic demands. But it is precisely with the aid of these transitional slogans, which are always the starting point on the road to the proletarian dictatorship, that the communist vanguard will have to win the whole working class and that the latter will have to unite around itself all the oppressed masses of the nation. And I do not even exclude the possibility of a constituent assembly which, in certain circumstances, could be im-

posed by the course of events or, more precisely, by the process of the revolutionary awakening of the oppressed masses. To be sure, on the broad historical scale, that is, from the perspective of a whole number of years, the fate of Italy is undoubtedly reduced to the following alternative: *fascism* or *communism*. But to claim that this alternative has already penetrated the consciousness of the oppressed classes of the nation is to engage in wishful thinking and to consider as solved the colossal task that still fully confronts the weak Communist Party. If the revolutionary crisis were to break out, for example, in the course of the next months (under the influence of the economic crisis, on the one hand, and under the revolutionary influence coming from Spain, ¹⁹⁹ on the other), the masses of toilers, workers as well as peasants, would certainly follow up their economic demands with democratic slogans (such as freedom of assembly, of press, of trade-union organization, democratic representation in parliament and in the municipalities). Does this mean that the Communist Party should reject these demands? On the contrary. It will have to invest them with the most audacious and resolute character possible. For the proletarian dictatorship cannot be imposed upon the popular masses. It can be realized only by carrying on a battle—a battle in full—for all the transitional demands, requirements, and needs of the masses, and at the head of the masses.

It should be recalled here that Bolshevism by no means came to power under the abstract slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat. We fought for the Constituent Assembly much more boldly than all the other parties. We said to the peasants: "You demand equal distribution of the land? Our agrarian program goes much further. But no one except us will assist you in achieving equal use of the land. For this you must support the workers." In regard to the war we said to the popular masses: "Our communist task is to war against all oppressors. But you are not ready to go so far. You are striving to escape from the imperialist war. No one but the Bolsheviks will help you achieve this." I am not dealing with the question of what exactly the central slogans of the transitional period in Italy should be right now, in the year 1930. To outline them, and to effect correct and timely changes, it is necessary to be far better acquainted with Italy's internal life and in much closer contact with its toiling masses than it is possible for me to be. For, in addition to a correct method, it is also necessary to listen to the masses. I want simply to indicate the general

place of transitional demands in the struggle of communism against fascism and, in general, against bourgeois society.

5. However, while advancing this or that democratic slogan, we must fight irreconcilably against all forms of democratic charlatanism. The "Democratic Republic of the Workers," slogan of the Italian social democracy, is an example of this petty charlatanism. A republic of the workers can only be a proletarian class state. The democratic republic is only a masked form of the bourgeois state. The combination of the two is only a petty-bourgeois illusion of the social democratic rank and file (workers, peasants) and an impudent falsehood of the social democratic leaders (all the Turatts, Modiglianis,²⁰⁰ and their ilk). Let me once again remark in passing that I was and remain opposed to the slogan of a "Republican Assembly on the Basis of Workers' and Peasants' Committees" precisely because this formula approaches the social democratic slogan of the "Democratic Republic of the Workers" and, consequently, can make the struggle against the social democracy extremely difficult.

6. The assertion made by the official leadership [of the Communist Party] that the social democracy allegedly no longer exists politically in Italy is nothing but a consoling theory of bureaucratic optimists who wish to see ready-made solutions where there are still great tasks ahead. *Fascism has not liquidated the social democracy but has, on the contrary, preserved it.* In the eyes of the masses, the social democrats do not bear the responsibility for the regime, whose victims they are in part. This wins them new sympathy and strengthens the old. And a moment will come when the social democracy will coin political currency from the blood of Matteotti!²⁰¹ Just as ancient Rome did from the blood of Christ. It is therefore not excluded that in the initial period of the revolutionary crisis, the leadership may be concentrated chiefly in the hands of the social democracy. If large numbers of the masses are immediately drawn into the movement and if the Communist Party conducts a correct policy, it may well be that in a short period of time the social democracy will be reduced to zero. But that would be a task to accomplish, not yet an accomplishment. It is impossible to leap over this problem; it must be solved.

Let me recall at this point that Zinoviev, and later the Manuilskys and Kuusinen, announced on two or three occasions that the German social democracy also essentially no longer existed. In 1925 the Comintern, in its declaration to the French party written by the light hand of Lozovsky,

likewise decreed that the French Socialist Party had definitely left the scene. The Left Opposition always spoke up energetically against this flighty judgment. Only outright fools or traitors would want to instill the idea in the proletarian vanguard of Italy that the Italian social democracy can no longer play the role that the German social democracy did in the revolution of 1918.

It may be objected that the social democracy cannot succeed again in betraying the Italian proletariat as it did back in 1920. This is an illusion and a self-deception! The proletariat has been deceived too many times in the course of its history, first by liberalism and then by the social democracy.

What is more, we cannot forget that since 1920 ten full years have elapsed, and since the advent of fascism eight years. The children who were ten and twelve years old in 1920-22, and who have witnessed the activities of the fascists, today comprise the new generation of workers and peasants who will fight heroically against fascism, but who lack political experience. The communists will come into contact with the full mass movement only during the revolution itself and, under the most favorable circumstances, will require months before they can expose and demolish the social democracy which, I repeat, fascism has not liquidated but on the contrary has preserved.

To conclude, a few words on an important question of fact, about which there cannot be two different opinions in our circle. Should or can Left Oppositionists deliberately resign from the party? There cannot be any question about this. Except for rare exceptions, and they were mistakes, none of us ever did that. But I do not have a clear idea of what is required of an Italian comrade to hold on to this or that post inside the party in the present circumstances. I cannot say anything concrete on this point, except that not one of us can allow a comrade to accommodate to a false or equivocal political position before the party or the masses in order to avoid expulsion.

I shake your hand.

Yours,

Leon Trotsky

(The Spanish Revolution (1931-39), L. Trotsky
Pathfinder Press, New York, 1973.)

Part I: From Monarchy to Republic

sure the convocation of a democratic constituent Cortes; and so that this Cortes can give the land to the peasants, and do many other things, workers', soldiers', and peasants' soviets must be created to fortify the positions of the toiling masses.

6 THE REVOLUTION IN SPAIN

January 24, 1931

1. *Old Spain*

The capitalist chain is again threatening to break at its weakest link; Spain is next in order. The revolutionary movement is developing in that country with such vigor that world reaction is deprived in advance of the hope for a speedy restoration of order on the Iberian Peninsula.

Spain is unmistakably among the most backward countries of Europe. But its backwardness has a singular character, invested by the great historic past of the country. While the Russia of the czars always lagged far behind its western neighbors and advanced slowly under their pressure, Spain knew periods of great bloom, of superiority over the rest of Europe and of domination over South America. The mighty development of domestic and world commerce increasingly overcame the effect of the feudal dismemberment of the provinces and the particularism of the national regions of the country. The growth of the power and importance of the Spanish monarchy in those centuries was inextricably bound up with the centralizing role of mercantile capital and with the gradual formation of the "Spanish nation."

The discovery of America, which at first enriched and strengthened Spain, subsequently worked against it. The great routes of commerce were diverted from the Iberian Peninsula. Holland, which had grown rich, broke away from Spain. Following Holland, England rose to great heights over Europe for a long time. By the beginning of the second half

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of the sixteenth century, Spain had already begun to decline. This decline assumed an official character, so to speak, with the destruction of the Great Armada (1588). The condition that Marx called "inglorious and slow decay" settled down upon feudal-bourgeois Spain.

The old and new ruling classes—the landed nobility and the Catholic clergy with their monarchy, the bourgeois classes with their intelligentsia—stubbornly attempted to preserve the old pretensions but, alas, without the old resources. In 1820, the South American colonies finally broke away. With the loss of Cuba in 1898, Spain was almost completely deprived of colonial possessions. The adventures in Morocco only ruined the country, adding fuel to the already deep dissatisfaction of the people.¹³

Spain's retarded economic development inevitably weakened the centralist tendencies inherent in capitalism. The decline of the commercial and industrial life in the cities and of the economic ties between them inevitably led to the lessening of the dependence of individual provinces upon each other. This is the chief reason why bourgeois Spain has not succeeded to this day in eliminating the centrifugal tendencies of its historic provinces. The meagerness of the national resources and the feeling of restlessness all over the country could not help but foster separatist tendencies. Particularism appears in Spain with unusual force, especially compared with neighboring France, where the Great Revolution finally established the bourgeois nation, united and indivisible, over the old feudal provinces.

While not permitting the formation of a new bourgeois society, the economic stagnation also corroded the old ruling classes. The proud noblemen often cloaked their haughtiness in rags. The church plundered the peasantry, but from time to time it was plundered by the monarchy, who, as Marx said, had more in common with Asiatic despotism than with European absolutism.

How could this be? The comparison between czarism and Asiatic despotism, which has been made more than once, seems much more natural geographically and historically. But with regard to Spain, this comparison retains all its force as well. The difference is only that czarism was formed on the basis of the *extremely slow development* of the nobility and of the

primitive urban centers, whereas the Spanish monarchy took shape under the conditions of the *decline* of the country and the *decay* of the ruling classes. If European absolutism generally could rise only thanks to a struggle by the strengthened cities against the old privileged estates, then the Spanish monarchy, like Russian czarism, drew its relative strength from the impotence of the old estates and the cities. This accounts for its obvious resemblance to Asiatic despotism.

The predominance of the centrifugal tendencies over the centripetal ones in the economy as well as in politics undermined the foundation of Spanish parliamentarism. The government's pressure on the electorate was decisive: throughout the last century, elections unfailingly gave the government a majority. Because the Cortes found itself dependent upon the successive ministries, the ministries themselves naturally sank into dependence upon the monarchy. Madrid held the elections but the king held the power.

The monarchy was doubly necessary to the disunited and decentralized ruling classes, which were incapable of governing the country in their own name. And this monarchy, reflecting the weakness of the whole state, was—between two upheavals—strong enough to impose its will on the country. In short, the state system in Spain can be called "degenerated absolutism, limited by periodic military coups." The figure of Alfonso XIII expresses the system very well, from the points of view of its degeneracy and absolutist tendencies and of its fear of coups. The king's maneuvering, his betrayals, his treason, and his victory over the temporary combinations hostile to him are not at all rooted in the character of Alfonso XIII himself but in the character of the whole governmental system; under new circumstances, Alfonso XIII only repeats the inglorious history of his great-grandfather, Ferdinand VII.

Alongside the monarchy, and in alliance with it, the clergy represents another centralized force. Catholicism, to this day, remains a state religion; the clergy plays a big role in the life of the country, being the firmest axis of reaction. The state spends many tens of millions of pesetas annually to support the church.¹⁴

The religious orders are extremely numerous; they possess great wealth and still greater influence. The number of monks and nuns is close to 70,000, equalling the number of high

school students and more than twice the number of college students. It is no wonder that under these conditions 45 percent of the population can neither read nor write. Most of the illiterates, of course, are concentrated in the countryside.

If the peasantry in the epoch of Charles V (Carlos I) gained little from the might of the Spanish empire, it subsequently suffered the heaviest burden of the empire's decline.¹⁵ For centuries it led a miserable, and in many provinces a famished, existence. Even today more than 70 percent of the population, the peasantry bears on its back the main burden of the state structure. Limited access to land and water, high rents and taxes, antiquated implements, primitive soil-filling techniques, the requisitions of the church, high prices of industrial products, a surplus rural population, a great number of tramps, paupers, friars—that is the picture of the Spanish village. The condition of the peasantry has for a long time made this group a participant in the numerous uprisings. But these bloody outbursts were not national but local phenomena, dyed in the most varied revolutions as a whole were small revolutions, so the peasant uprisings assumed the form of small wars. Spain is the classic country of guerrilla warfare.

2. *The Spanish army in politics*

Following the war with Napoleon,¹⁶ a new political force was born in Spain—army officers, the younger generation of the ruling classes, inheritors of the ruins of the once-great empire, and in large measure declassed.

In this country of particularism and separatism, the army necessarily assumed great significance as a centralizing force. It became not only a prop of the monarchy, but also a vehicle for the discontent of all sections of the ruling classes. Like the bureaucracy, the officers are recruited from those elements, extremely numerous in Spain, that demand of the state, first of all, their means of livelihood. And as the appetites of the different groups of "cultured" society greatly exceed the state, parliamentary, and other positions available, the dissatisfaction of those left over nurtures the republican camp, which is just as unstable as all the other groupings in Spain. But insofar as a genuine and sharp social indignation is often concealed

under this instability, the republican movement from time to time produces resolute and courageous revolutionary groups to whom the republic appears as a magic slogan of salvation.

The total size of the Spanish army is nearly 170,000 men, of whom over 13,000 are officers. Fifteen thousand marines should be added to this. The weapon of the ruling classes of the country, the commanding staff also drags the ranks of the army into its plots. This creates the conditions for an independent movement of the soldiers. In the past, noncommissioned officers have burst into politics without their officers and against them. In an uprising in 1836, the noncommissioned officers of the Madrid garrison compelled the queen to grant a constitution. In 1866, the artillery sergeants, dissatisfied with the aristocratic orders in the army, rose in insurrection. Nevertheless, the leadership in the past has remained with the officers. The soldiers, who were politically helpless, followed their dissatisfied commanders even though their own dissatisfaction was fostered by other, deeper social forces.

The contradictions in the army usually correspond to the branch of service. The more advanced the type of arms, that is, the more intelligence required on the part of the soldiers and officers, the more susceptible they are, generally speaking, to revolutionary ideas. While the cavalry is usually inclined to the monarchy, the artillery furnishes a big percentage of the republicans. No wonder the air force, the newest branch, appeared on the side of the revolution and brought with it elements of the individualist adventurism of their profession. The final say remains with the infantry.

The history of Spain is the history of continual revolutionary convulsions. Military coups and palace revolutions follow on each other's heels. During the nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth, political regimes kept changing, and within each one of them ministries changed kaleidoscopically. Not finding sufficiently stable support in any of the properited classes—even though they all needed it—the Spanish monarchy more than once fell into dependence upon its own army. But the atomization of the provinces put its stamp on the character of the military plots. The petty rivalry of the juntas was only the outward expression of the Spanish revolutions' lack of a leading class. Precisely because of this, the monarchy triumphed over each new revolution. A short time

after the triumph of order, however, the chronic crisis once more broke through. Not one of the many regimes that supplanted each other sank deep enough roots into the soil. All of them quickly wore themselves out struggling with the difficulties growing out of the meagerness of the national income, which was inadequate to sustain the appetites and pretensions of the ruling classes. We saw in particular how shamefully the last military dictatorship ended its days. The stern Primo de Rivera fell even without a new military coup; he was simply deflated, like a tire that runs over a nail.

All the Spanish revolutions were the movements of a minority against another minority: the ruling and semiruling classes impatiently snatching the state pie out of each other's hands.

If by the term "permanent revolution" we are to understand a succession of social revolutions, transferring power into the hands of the most resolute class, which afterwards applies this power for the abolition of all classes, and subsequently the very possibility of new revolutions, we would then have to state that, in spite of the "uninterruptedness" of the Spanish revolutions, there is nothing in them that resembles the *permanent* revolution. They are rather the chronic convulsions expressing the intractable disease of a nation thrown backward.

It is true that the left wing of the bourgeoisie, particularly personified by the young intellectuals, long ago set itself the task of converting Spain into a republic. The Spanish students who, for the same general reasons as the officers, were recruited primarily from the dissatisfied youth, became accustomed to wielding an influence altogether out of proportion to their numbers. The domination of the Catholic reaction fed the flames of the opposition in the universities, investing it with an anticlerical character. Students, however, do not create a regime. In their highest echelons, the Spanish republicans are distinguished by an extremely conservative social program. They see their ideal in present-day reactionary France, calculating that along with the republic they will also acquire wealth. They are not at all disposed, or even able, to take the road of the French Jacobins;¹⁷ their fear of the masses is greater than their hostility to the monarchy.

If the cracks and gaps of bourgeois society are filled in Spain with declassed elements, of the ruling classes, the numerous seekers of positions and income, then at the bottom, in the

cracks of the foundation, are the numerous slum proletarians, declassed elements of the toiling classes. Idlers in finery as well as idlers in rags form the quicksands of society. They are all the more dangerous for the revolution the less it finds its genuine base of support and its political leadership.

Six years of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship leveled and compressed all the dissatisfaction and rebelliousness. But the dictatorship bore within it the incurable vice of the Spanish monarchy: strong towards each of the separate classes, it remained impotent in relation to the historic needs of the country. This impotence brought about the wreck of the dictatorship on the submarine reefs of financial and other difficulties before the first revolutionary wave had a chance to reach it. The fall of Primo de Rivera aroused every kind of dissatisfaction and hope. Thus General Berenguer has become the doorman for the revolution.

3. *The Spanish proletariat and the new revolution*

In this new revolution, we meet, at first glance, the same elements we found in a series of previous revolutions: the perfidious monarchy; the splinter factions of the conservatives and liberals who despise the king and crawl on their bellies before him; the right-wing republicans, always ready to betray, and the left-wing republicans, always ready for adventure; the conspiratorial officers, of whom some want a republic and others a promotion; the restless students, whose fathers view them with alarm; finally, the striking workers, scattered among the different organizations; and the peasants, reaching out for pitchforks and even for guns.

It would, however, be a grave error to assume that the present crisis is unfolding according to and in the image of all those that preceded it. The last decades, particularly the years of the world war, produced important changes in the economy and social structure of the country. Of course, Spain still remains at the tail end of Europe. But the country has experienced its own industrial development, in both extractive and light industry. During the war, coal mining, textiles, the construction of hydroelectric stations, etc., were greatly advanced. Industrial centers and regions sprang up all over the country. This created a new relationship of forces and opened up new perspectives.

The successes of industrialization did not at all mitigate the internal contradictions. On the contrary, the circumstance under which the industry of Spain, a neutral country, flourished under the golden rain of the war was transformed into a source of new difficulties at the end of the war when the increased foreign demand disappeared. Not only did the foreign markets disappear—Spain's share in world commerce is now even smaller than it was prior to the war (1.1 percent as against 1.2 percent)—but the dictatorship was compelled, with the aid of the highest tariff walls in Europe, to defend its domestic market from the influx of foreign commodities. The high tariff led to high prices, which diminished the already low purchasing power of the people. That is why industry after the war did not rise out of its lethargy, which is expressed by chronic unemployment on the one hand, and the sharp outbursts of the class struggle on the other.

Now even less than in the nineteenth century can the Spanish bourgeoisie lay claim to that historic role which the British and French bourgeoisies once played. Appearing too late, dependent on foreign capital, the big industrial bourgeoisie of Spain, which has dug like a leech into the body of the people, is incapable of coming forward as the leader of the "nation" against the old estates, even for a brief period. The magnates of Spanish industry face the people hostilely, forming a most reactionary bloc of bankers, industrialists, large landowners, the monarchy, and its generals and officials, all devouring each other in internal antagonisms. It is sufficient to state that the most important supporters of the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera were the Catalan manufacturers.

But industrial development raised the proletariat to its feet and strengthened it. Out of a population of twenty-three million—which would be considerably greater if not for emigration—there are nearly one and a half million industrial, commercial, and transportation workers. To them should be added about an equal number of agricultural workers. Social life in Spain was condemned to revolve in a vicious circle so long as there was no class capable of taking the solution of the revolutionary problem into its own hands. The appearance of the Spanish proletariat on the historic arena radically changes the situation and opens up new prospects. In order to grasp this properly, it must first be understood that the establishment

of the economic dominance of the big bourgeoisie and the growth of the proletariat's political significance definitely prevent the petty bourgeoisie from occupying a leading position in the political life of the country. The question of whether the present revolutionary convulsions can produce a genuine revolution, capable of reconstructing the very basis of national life, is consequently reduced to whether the Spanish proletariat is capable of taking the leadership of the national life into its hands. There is no other claimant to this role in the Spanish nation. Moreover, the historic experience of Russia succeeded in showing with sufficient clarity the specific gravity of the proletariat, united by big industry in a country with a backward agriculture and enmeshed in a net of semifeudal relations.

The Spanish workers, it is true, already took a militant part in the revolutions of the nineteenth century, but always on the leash of the bourgeoisie, always in the second line, as a subsidiary force. The independent revolutionary role of the workers was reinforced in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The 1909 uprising in Barcelona showed what power was pent up in the young proletariat of Catalonia.¹⁸ Numerous strikes that developed into direct uprisings broke out in other parts of the country too. In 1912, a strike of the railroad workers took place. The industrial regions became fields of valiant proletarian struggles. The Spanish workers revealed a complete freedom from routine, an ability to respond quickly to events and to mobilize their ranks boldly on the offensive.

The first postwar years, or more correctly, the first years after the Russian Revolution (1917-1920), were years of great battles for the Spanish proletariat. The year 1917 witnessed a revolutionary general strike. Its defeat, and the defeat of a number of subsequent movements, prepared the way for the Primo de Rivera dictatorship. When the collapse of the latter once more posed in all its magnitude the question of the further destiny of the Spanish people, when the cowardly search for old cliques and the impotent lamentations of the petty-bourgeois radicals showed clearly that salvation cannot be expected from this source, the workers, by a series of courageous strikes, cried out to the people: *We are here!*

The "left" European bourgeois journalists and, trailing after them, the Social Democrats, with their scientific pretensions,

love to philosophize on the theme that Spain is simply going to reproduce the Great French Revolution, after a delay of almost one hundred and fifty years. To expound revolution to these people is equivalent to arguing with a blind man about colors. With all its backwardness, Spain has passed far beyond France of the eighteenth century. Big industrial enterprises, 10,000 miles of railway, 30,000 miles of telegraph, represent a more important factor for the revolution than historical reminiscences.

Endeavoring to take a step forward, the well-known English weekly *The Economist* says with regard to the Spanish events: "We have the influence of Paris of 1848 and 1871 rather than the influence of Moscow of 1917." But Paris of 1871 is a step from 1848 toward 1917. The counterposition is an empty one.

The conclusion L. Targuin reached last year in *La Lutte de classes* was infinitely more serious and profound: "The proletariat (of Spain), supported by the peasant masses, is the only force capable of seizing power." This perspective is laid out as follows: "The revolution must bring about the dictatorship of the proletariat which would carry out the bourgeois revolution and would courageously open the road to socialist reconstruction." This is the way—the only way—the question can now be posed.

Quote
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4. *The program of the revolution*

The republic is now the official slogan of the struggle. The development of the revolution, however, will drive not only the conservatives and liberals but also the republican sections of the ruling classes to the banner of the monarchy.

During the revolutionary events of 1854, Cánovas del Castillo wrote: "We are striving for the preservation of the throne, but without a camarilla which will disgrace it." Now this great idea is developed by Señor Romanones and others.²⁰ As though a monarchy is even possible without camarillas, especially in Spain!

A combination of circumstances is possible, to be sure, in which the possessing classes are compelled to sacrifice the monarchy in order to save themselves (for example: Germany¹). It is quite likely, however, that the Madrid monarchy, even with two black eyes, will survive until the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Quote
#2

The slogan of the republic, of course, is also the workers' slogan. But for them establishing a republic is not merely a matter of replacing the king with a president, but also of thoroughly purging the feudal refuse from the whole of society. Here the first consideration is the agrarian question.

The relationships in the Spanish countryside present a picture of semifeudal exploitation. The poverty of the peasants, particularly in Andalusia and Castille, the oppression by the landowners, authorities, and village chiefs have already more than once driven the agricultural workers and the peasant poor to the road of open mutiny. Does this mean, however, that even during a revolution bourgeois relations can be purged of feudalism? No. It only means that under the current conditions in Spain, capitalism must use feudal means to exploit the peasantry. To aim the weapon of the revolution against the remnants of the Spanish Middle Ages means to aim it against the very roots of bourgeois rule.

In order to break the peasantry away from localism and reactionary influences, the proletariat needs a clear revolutionary democratic program. The yearning for land and water, the bondage caused by the high rents, acutely pose the question of *confiscation of privately owned land* for the benefit of the poor peasants. The burden of state finances, the unbearable government debt, bureaucratic pillage, and the African adventures pose the need for a *cheap government*, which can be achieved not by the owners of large estates, not by bankers and industrialists, not by the liberal nobility, but only by the toilers themselves.

The domination of the clergy and the wealth of the church put forward the democratic problem: *to separate church and state and to disarm the church, transferring its wealth to the people*. Even the most superstitious sections of the peasantry will support these decisive measures when they are convinced that the budgetary sums that have up to now gone to the church, as well as the wealth of the church itself, will, as a result of secularization, go not to the pockets of the freethinking liberals but to the cultivation of the exhausted peasant holdings.

The separatist tendencies present the revolution with the democratic task of *national self-determination*. These tendencies were accentuated, to all appearances, during the period of the dic-

tatorship. But while the "separatism" of the Catalan bourgeoisie is only a pawn in its play with the Madrid government against the Catalan and Spanish people, the separatism of the workers and peasants is only the shell of their social rebellion. One must distinguish very rigidly between these two forms of separatism. Precisely, however, in order to draw the line between the nationally oppressed workers and peasants and their bourgeoisie, the proletarian vanguard must take the boldest and most sincere position on the question of national self-determination. The workers will fully and completely defend the *right* of the Catalans and Basques to organize their state life independently in the event that the majority of these nationalities express themselves for complete separation. But this does not, of course, mean that the advanced workers will push the Catalans and Basques on the road of secession. On the contrary, the economic unity of the country with *extensive autonomy of national districts*, would represent great advantages for the workers and peasants from the viewpoint of economy and culture.

The monarchy's attempt to ward off the further development of the revolution with the aid of a new military dictatorship is not at all out of the question. But what is out of the question is the serious and long-term success of such an attempt. The lesson of Primo de Rivera is still too fresh. The chains of the new dictatorship would have to be wound over the sores that have not yet healed from the chains of the old one. According to the newspaper dispatches, the king would like to try; he looks about anxiously for a suitable candidate but finds no volunteers. One thing is clear: the breakdown of a new military dictatorship would be very costly to the monarchy and its distinguished representative, and the revolution would acquire a mighty impulsion. "Place your bets, gentlemen!" the workers can say to the ruling classes.

Can the Spanish revolution be expected to skip the parliamentary stage? Theoretically, this is not excluded. It is conceivable that the revolutionary movement will, in a comparatively short time, attain such strength that it will leave the ruling classes neither the time nor the place for parliamentarism. Nevertheless, such a perspective is rather improbable. The Spanish proletariat, in spite of its combativeness, still recognizes no revolutionary party as its own, and has no ex-

perience with soviet organization. And besides this, there is no unity among the sparse communist ranks. There is no clear program of action that everyone accepts. Nevertheless, the question of the Cortes is already on the order of the day. Under these conditions, it must be assumed that the revolution will have to pass through a parliamentary stage.

This does not at all exclude the tactic of a boycott of Berenguer's fictitious Cortes, just as the Russian workers successfully boycotted Bulygin's Duma in 1905 and brought about its collapse.²¹ The specific tactical question of the boycott has to be decided on the basis of the relation of forces at a given stage of the revolution.

But even while boycotting Berenguer's Cortes, the advanced workers would have to counterpose to it the slogan of a *revolutionary constituent Cortes*. We must relentlessly disclose the fraudulence of the slogan of the *constituent Cortes* in the mouth of the "left" bourgeoisie, which, in reality, wants a *conciliationist Cortes* by the good graces of the king and Berenguer, for the purpose of haggling with the old ruling and privileged cliques. A genuine constituent assembly can be convoked only by a revolutionary government, as a result of a victorious insurrection of the workers, soldiers, and peasants.

We can and must counterpose the revolutionary Cortes to the conciliationist Cortes; but, to our mind, it would be incorrect *at the present stage* to give up the slogan of the revolutionary Cortes. To counterpose the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat to the problems and slogans of revolutionary democracy (for a republic, for an agrarian revolution, for the separation of church and state, the confiscation of church properties, national self-determination, a revolutionary constituent assembly) would be the most sterile and miserable doctrinairism. Before the masses can seize power, they must unite around the leading proletarian party. The struggle for democratic representation in the Cortes, at one or another stage of the revolution, can immeasurably facilitate the solution of this problem.

The slogan of *arming the workers and peasants* (the creation of a workers' and peasants' militia) must inevitably acquire an ever greater importance in the struggle. But at the *present stage*, this slogan too must be closely tied to the questions of defending the workers' and peasants' organizations,

the agrarian revolution, the assuring of free elections, and the protection of the people from reactionary military coups.

A radical program of *social legislation*, particularly unemployment insurance; shifting the burden of taxation to the wealthy classes; free popular education — all these and similar measures, which in themselves do not exceed the framework of bourgeois society, must be inscribed on the banner of the proletarian party.

Alongside these, however, demands of a transitional character must be advanced even now: nationalization of the railroads, which are all privately owned in Spain; nationalization of mineral resources; nationalization of the banks; workers' control of industry; and, finally, state regulation of the economy. All these demands are bound up with the transition from a bourgeois to a proletarian regime; they prepare this transition so that, after the nationalization of the banks and industry, they can become part of a system of measures for a planned economy, preparing the way for the socialist society.

Only pedants can see contradictions in the combination of democratic slogans with transitional and purely socialist slogans. Such a combined program, reflecting the contradictory construction of historic society, flows inevitably from the diversity of problems inherited from the past. To reduce all the contradictions and all the tasks to one lowest common denominator — *the dictatorship of the proletariat* — is a necessary, but altogether insufficient, operation. Even if one should run ahead and assume that the proletarian vanguard has grasped the idea that only the dictatorship of the proletariat can save Spain from further decay, the preparatory problem would nevertheless remain in full force: to weld around the vanguard the heterogeneous sections of the working class and the still more heterogeneous masses of village toilers. To contrast the bare slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat to the historically determined tasks that are now impelling the masses towards the road of insurrection would be to replace the Marxist conception of social revolution with Bakunin's.²² This would be the surest way to ruin the revolution.

Needless to say, democratic slogans under no circumstances have as their object drawing the proletariat closer to the republican bourgeoisie. On the contrary, they create the basis for a victorious struggle against the leftist bourgeoisies, making

it possible to disclose its antidemocratic character at every step. The more courageously, resolutely, and implacably the proletarian vanguard fights for democratic slogans, the sooner it will win over the masses and undermine the support for the bourgeois republicans and Socialist reformists. The more quickly their best elements join us, the sooner the democratic republic will be identified in the mind of the masses with the workers' republic.

For the correctly understood theoretical formula to be transformed into a living historic fact, it must penetrate the consciousness of the masses on the basis of their experience and their needs. To do this, it is important to avoid getting bogged down in details, so as not to distract the attention of the masses; the program of the revolution must be expressed in several clear and simple slogans, which will vary in accordance with the dynamics of the struggle. This is precisely what revolutionary politics consists of.

5. *Communism, anarcho-syndicalism, Social Democracy*

As usual, the leadership of the Comintern started out by overlooking the Spanish events.²³ Mannulsky, the "leader" of the Latin countries, only recently declared that the Spanish events do not deserve attention. There you are! In 1928, these people declared France to be on the eve of the revolution. After having so long accompanied funerals with wedding music, they could not but greet a wedding with a funeral march. For them to act otherwise would mean to betray themselves. When it appeared, nevertheless, that the events in Spain, not foreseen in the calendar of the "third period,"²⁴ continued to develop, the leaders of the Comintern were simply silent. This, at any rate, shows far greater prudence. But the December events made further silence impossible.²⁵ Once more in rigid conformity with tradition, the leader of the Latin countries made a 180-degree turn: we have in mind his December 17 article in *Pravda*.

This article calls the dictatorship of Berenguer, like the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, a "fascist regime." Mussolini, Matteotti, Primo de Rivera, MacDonald, Chiang Kai-shek, Berenguer, Dan — all these are variations of fascism.²⁶ Once there is a ready epithet, why bother to think? To be thorough, only the "fascist" regime of the Abyssinian Negus remains to be in-

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cluded in this catalog. *Pravda* informs us that the Spanish proletariat not only is more and more "adopting the program and slogans of the Spanish Communist Party," but also has already "become conscious of its role of hegemony in the revolution." Simultaneously, the official dispatches from Paris speak of peasant soviets in Spain. It is known that under Stalinist leadership the soviet system is adopted and realized first of all by the peasants (China!). If the proletariat has already "become conscious of its role of hegemony," and the peasants have started to build soviets, all this under the leadership of the official Communist Party, then the victory of the Spanish revolution must be considered guaranteed—at any rate, till the time when the Madrid agents are accused by Stalin and Manuilsky of incorrectly applying the general line as general ignorance and light-mindedness. Corrupted to the very marrow by their own policy, these "leaders" are no longer capable of learning anything!

In reality, in spite of the mighty sweep of the struggle, the subjective factors of the revolution—the party, the mass organizations, the slogans—are extraordinarily behind the tasks of the movement, and it is this backwardness that constitutes the main danger today.

The semispontaneous spread of strikes, which have brought victims and defeats or have ended with no gains, is an absolutely unavoidable stage of the revolution, the stage of the awakening of the masses, their mobilization, and their entry into struggle. For it is not the cream of the workers who take part in the movement, but the masses as a whole. Not only do factory workers strike, but also artisans, chauffeurs, and bakers, construction, irrigation, and, finally, agricultural workers. The veterans stretch their limbs, the new recruits learn. Through the medium of these strikes, the class begins to feel itself a class.

However, the spontaneity—which at the present stage constitutes the strength of the movement—may in the future become the source of its weakness. To assume that the movement can continue to be left to itself without a clear program, without its own leadership, would mean to assume a perspective of hopelessness. For the question involved is nothing less than the seizure of power. Even the stormiest strikes do not solve

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this problem—not to speak of the ones that are broken. If the proletariat were not to feel in the process of the struggle during the coming months that its tasks and methods are becoming clearer to itself, that its ranks are becoming consolidated and strengthened, then a decomposition would set in within its own ranks. The broad layers aroused by the present movement for the first time would once more fall into passivity. In the vanguard, to the extent to which the ground slipped from under its feet, moods favoring partisan acts and adventurism in general would begin to revive. In such an eventuality, neither the peasantry nor the city poor would find authoritative leadership. The awakened hopes would very quickly be converted into disappointment and exasperation. A condition would be created in Spain reproducing, in a certain measure, the situation in Italy after the autumn of 1920.²⁷ The dictatorship of Primo de Rivera was not fascist but a typical Spanish dictatorship of a military clique supporting itself on certain parts of the wealthy classes; but with the conditions pointed out above—the passivity and the hesitancy of the revolutionary party, and the spontaneity of the mass movement—genuine fascism would find a base in Spain. The big bourgeoisie would conquer the unbalanced, disappointed, and despairing petty-bourgeois masses and would direct their restlessness against the proletariat. Of course, we are far from that point yet. But no time should be lost.

Even if we should assume for a moment that the revolutionary movement led by the left wing of the bourgeoisie—officers, students, republicans—leads to victory, then the fruitlessness of this victory would in the final analysis prove it equal to defeat. The base of support of the Spanish republicans, as we have already said, is completely on the present property relations. We can expect them neither to expropriate the big landowners, nor to liquidate the privileges of the Catholic church, nor to cleanse the Augean stables of the civil and military bureaucracy. The monarchist camarilla would simply be replaced by a republican camarilla, and we would have a new edition of the short-lived and fruitless republic of 1873-1874.²⁸

The fact that the Socialist leaders trail behind the republican leaders is quite in the nature of things. Yesterday, the Social Democracy clung with its right arm to the dictatorship of Primo

de Rivera. Today it clings with its left arm to the republicans. The principal aim of the Socialists, who do not and cannot have an independent policy, is participation in a solid bourgeois government. To this end, they would not refuse to make peace even with the monarchists, if it came to that.

But the right wing of the anarcho-syndicalists is in no way insured against the same fate; in this connection, the December events are a great lesson and a stern warning.

The National Confederation of Labor (CNT—Confederación Nacional del Trabajo) indisputably embraces the most militant elements of the proletariat. Here the selection has gone on for a number of years. To strengthen this confederation, to transform it into a genuine organization of the masses, is the obligation of every advanced worker and, above all, of the communists. This can also be assisted by work inside the reformist trade unions, tirelessly exposing the betrayals of their leaders and calling upon the workers to unite in a single trade union confederation. The conditions of revolution will be of extraordinary assistance to this work.

But at the same time we have no illusions about the fate of anarcho-syndicalism as a doctrine and a revolutionary method. Anarcho-syndicalism disarms the proletariat by its lack of a revolutionary program and its failure to understand the role of the party. The anarchists "deny" politics until it seizes them by the throat; then they prepare the ground for the politics of the enemy class. This is what happened in December! If the Socialist Party were to acquire a leading position over the proletariat during the revolution, it would be capable of only one thing: spilling the power conquered by the revolution into the republican sieve, from which the power would then automatically pass to its present possessors. The great conception would result in a miscarriage.

As far as the anarcho-syndicalists are concerned, they could head the revolution only by abandoning their anarchist prejudices. It is our duty to help them do this. In reality, it may be assumed that a part of the syndicalist leaders will go over to the Socialists or will be cast aside by the revolution; the real revolutionists will be with us. The masses will join the communists, and so will the majority of the Socialist workers.

The advantage of a revolutionary situation lies in the fact that the masses learn fast. The evolution of the masses will

inevitably produce differentiations and splits not only among the Socialists but also among the syndicalists. Practical agreements with *revolutionary* syndicalists are inevitable in the course of the revolution. These agreements we will loyally fulfill. But it would be truly fatal to introduce into these agreements elements of duplicity, concealment, and deceit. Even in those days and hours when the communist workers have to fight side by side with the syndicalist workers, there must be no destruction of the principled disagreements, no concealment of differences, nor any weakening of the criticism of the wrong principled position of the ally. Only under this condition will the progressive development of the revolution be secured.

6. *The revolutionary junta and the party*

The events of December 15, when the workers rose up simultaneously not only in the big cities, but also in the remote villages, demonstrate how much the workers themselves are striving for unity of action. They utilized the signal of the republicans because they didn't have a loud enough signalman of their own. The defeat of the movement apparently did not call forth a shadow of dismay. The masses viewed their own actions as experience, as a school, as preparation. This is an extremely characteristic feature of "revolutionary ascent."

In order to enter the broad road, the proletariat needs even now an organization rising over all the present political, national, provincial, and trade union divisions in their ranks and corresponding to the sweep of the present revolutionary struggle. Such an organization, democratically elected by the workers of the factories, mills, mines, commercial enterprises, railway and marine transport, by the proletarians of the city and village, can only be the soviet. The epigones²⁹ have done immeasurable damage to the revolutionary movement of the whole world, fixing in many minds the prejudice that soviets can only be created by the needs of an armed insurrection and only on the brink of this insurrection. In reality, the soviets are created when the revolutionary movement of the working masses, even though still far from an armed insurrection, creates the need for a broad, authoritative organization, capable of leading the economic and political struggles embracing simultaneously the different enterprises and the different trades. Only if the soviets are rooted in the working class during the

preparatory period of the revolution will they be able to play a leading role at the time of a direct struggle for power. It is true that the word "soviet" after thirteen years of existence of the Soviet regime has now acquired a somewhat different meaning than it had in 1905 or in the beginning of 1917, when the soviets appeared not as organs of power but only as the militant organizations of the working class. The word "junta," directly tied to all of Spain's revolutionary history, expresses this thought better than anything else. On the order of the day in Spain stands the creation of workers' juntas.

With the present state of the proletariat, the building of juntas presupposes the participation in them of the communists, anarcho-syndicalists, Social Democrats, and the nonparty leaders of the strike struggles. To what extent can we count on the participation of the anarcho-syndicalists and the Social Democrats in the soviets? This cannot be foretold from a distance. The sweep of the movement will undoubtedly compel many syndicalists, and perhaps some of the Socialists, to go further than they wish, provided that the communists are able to present the idea of the workers' juntas with the necessary energy. Under the pressure of the masses, the practical questions of the building of soviets, the ratio of representation, the time and method of elections and so forth, can and should become the object of *agreement* not only of all the communist factions among themselves but also with those syndicalists and Socialists who consent to the creation of juntas. The communists, of course, appear at all stages of the struggle with their banner unfurled.

In spite of the newest Stalinist theory, it is hardly likely that the peasant juntas, as elected organs, will appear in any considerable number, prior to the seizure of power by the proletariat. In the preparatory period in the village, different forms of organization will develop sooner, based not upon elections but upon individual selection: peasant unions, committees of the village poor, communist nuclei, a labor union of agricultural workers, and so forth. The propagation of the slogan of *peasant juntas*, based on a revolutionary agrarian program, can even now, however, be put on the agenda.

The correct posing of the question of "soldiers' juntas" is very important. Because of the very character of military organization, soldiers' soviets can appear only in the final period of

the revolutionary crisis, when the state power loses control over the army. In the preparatory period, it will be a matter of organizations of an intimate character, groups of revolutionary soldiers, party nuclei, and, in many cases, personal connections of workers with individual soldiers.

The republican uprising in December 1930 will undoubtedly go down into history as the transition between two epochs of revolutionary struggle. It is true that the left wing of the republicans established connections with the leaders of workers' organizations in order to bring about unity of action. The unarmed workers had to play the role of cheerleaders for the republicans, who were the chief performers. This act was performed fully enough to reveal once and for all the incompatibility of an officers' plot with a revolutionary strike. Against the military plot, which opposed one branch of the service to another, the government found sufficient forces within the army itself. And the strike, deprived of an independent aim and of its own leadership, was necessarily reduced to nothing as soon as the military uprising was crushed.

The revolutionary role of the army, not as an instrument of officers' experiments but as an armed part of the people, will be determined, in the last analysis, by the role of the worker and peasant masses in the course of the struggle. For the revolutionary strike to be victorious, it will have to bring about the confrontation of the workers with the army. No matter how important the purely military features of such a clash may be, politics outweighs them. The masses of soldiers can be won over only by clearly explaining the social tasks of the revolution. But it is precisely the social tasks that frighten the officers. It is natural that the proletarian revolutionists should direct their attention even now to the soldiers, creating nuclei of conscious and daring revolutionists in the regiments. The communist work in the army, politically subordinated to the work among the proletariat and the peasantry, can be developed only on the basis of a clear program. But when the decisive moment arrives, the workers, by the sheer weight of numbers and the force of their assault, must sweep a large part of the army to the side of the people or, at any rate, neutralize it. This broad revolutionary posing of the question does not exclude a military "plot" of the advanced soldiers and officers sympathizing with the proletarian revolution, in the period

directly preceding the general strike and insurrection. But such a "plot" has nothing in common with military coups: its task is of an auxiliary character and consists of insuring the victory of the proletarian uprising.

For a successful solution of all these tasks, three conditions are required: a party; once more a party; again a party!

How will the relations between the various existing communist organizations and groups be arranged, and what will be their fate in the future? It is difficult to judge from a distance. Experience will show. Great events unmistakably put to the test ideas, organizations, and people. Should the leadership of the Comintern appear incapable of offering anything to the Spanish workers except a wrong policy, apparatus commands, and splits, then the genuine Communist Party of Spain will be constituted and tempered outside the official framework of the Communist International. One way or another — a party has to be created. It must be united and centralized.

The working class can under no circumstances build its political organization on the basis of federations. A Communist Party is needed — not in the image of the future state order of Spain but as a steel lever for the demolition of the existing order. It can be organized only on the principle of democratic centralism.

The proletarian junta will become the broad arena in which every party and every group will be put to the test and scrutinized before the eyes of the broad masses. The communists will counterpose the slogan of the united front of the workers to the practice of coalitions of Socialists and a part of the syndicalists with the bourgeoisie. Only the united revolutionary front will enable the proletariat to inspire the necessary confidence among the oppressed masses of the village and city. The realization of the united front is conceivable only under the banner of communism. The junta requires a leading party. Without a firm leadership, it would remain an empty organizational form and would inevitably fall into dependence upon the bourgeoisie.

The Spanish communists have ahead of them glorious historic tasks. The advanced workers of the world will follow with rapt attention the course of the great revolutionary drama, which will sooner or later require not only their sympathy but also their cooperation. We will be ready!

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