

# IN DEFENSE OF BOLSHEVISM

## BEHIND THE BETRAYAL IN SPAIN

In the fiery crucible of the Spanish revolution has been tested virtually every existing current within the international proletariat. The analysis and checking of policies laid down by each political tendency in the workers' camp must be done against the background of historical experience of proletarian class-struggle in general and the concrete events in Spain in particular.

Unquestionably the primary driving force which has succeeded in winning an overwhelming influence among the Spanish workers is Stalinism. Its policies, supported by the Social Democracy and wisely accepted by the liberal bourgeoisie, have become the "guide" for the masses in their heroic struggle against Fascism. Represented by the "Comintern" a Leninist, the Stalinist line is in reality far apart from a genuine Bolshevist line. Stalinism has sabotaged and disrupted the proletarian revolution by chaining the Spanish masses to the bourgeoisie thus robbing them of independent class action. The infamous policy of the People's Front was worked out by Stalin's bureaucrats at the "Seventh Congress of the Comintern," and introduced into the working class of France, Spain and other capitalist countries.

The history of the recent years clearly indicates that in the main the world proletariat has been following the course carved out by Stalinism. This course has invariably brought to the masses one tragic defeat after another and has caused the unleashing of the blackest reaction. A close scrutiny of the mechanics of Stalinism leaves no doubt that Stalin's policies are not unforeseen mistakes or accidental deviations, but cold-blooded, premeditated betrayals.

The transformation of the Comintern from an instrument of Communist revolution into an engine of Stalinist counter-revolution began in 1923 with Stalin's intrigue to usurp leadership. Aided by objective conditions and Trotsky's wretched policy of adaptation to the Stalin regime, the Stalinist clique through the process of artificial selection built up a bureaucratic pyramid of support in the Soviet Union and the Comintern. This system of bureaucratic centralism of the workers' republic, waxing fat on the poverty of the toiling masses, could be upheld and strengthened only by forestalling the proletarian revolution abroad, and by false hopes fed to the Russian masses that the predatory bureaucracy has set out to build Socialism.

To accomplish its ends Stalinism contrived a political line superficially resembling Bolshevism but in reality running zigzag fashion now to the Right now to the Left of Bolshevism. The intrinsic content of the line from which the "Comintern" is never allowed to depart is the definite and deliberate aim of preventing the proletarian revolution in any capitalist country on earth. The Stalinist bureaucracy and the Usurper Stalin at its head thus succeeded in stopping the Chinese masses in 1927 (ultra-Right zigzag, unity with Chiang Kai-shek). It paralyzed the German proletariat in 1932 (ultra-Left zigzag known as the "Third Period," separation of advanced workers into "Red" unions, "united front from below only," "Social Democracy the main danger, etc.). In diverting the Spanish workers from overthrowing capitalism, the Stalinist gang employed both zigzags: first the "Third Period," ultra-Left zigzag with adventuristic attempts to capture government buildings in Barcelona, clashes with police and Anarchists in Madrid and Bilbao (Communist International, July 1, 1931, p. 327.), at the time when the Stalinist "party" numbered a scant thousand members throughout Spain; later the swinging over to the ultra-Right by giving birth to and becoming the backbone of the bourgeois People's Front government, in closest collaboration with Social Democracy.

A genuine Marxist-Leninist force must make a correct evaluation of every class, group and political tendency in the arena of struggle. Such a force has been lacking in Spain. Nearest to Leninism, although miles away from it, is the P.O.U.M. The P.O.U.M. has exhibited its inability to make a distinction between proletarian revolution which overthrows capitalism and "revolution" which does not affect the bourgeois foundations of society, when it declared during the rise of the reactionary wave in Loyalist Spain that "This is the first revolution to succeed since the Russian revolution." (The Spanish Revolution, February 17, 1937, p.1) On the question of the impermissibility for revolutionists to participate in bourgeois governments, a question correctly settled yet by the Second International long before August 1914 (condemnation of Millerandism), the P.O.U.M. took a glaringly anti-Marxist position:

"The capitalist state power includes the legislative, executive and judicial branches. To hold two or three cabinet seats does not destroy the capitalist power, and to think that it does would lead to catastrophic results. This does not mean to abandon these seats and governmental posts already held by the workers." (The Spanish Revolution, January 6, 1937, p. 4.)

To show the hopeless confusion of the P.O.U.M. in the field of revolutionary theory it is enough to cite its utter failure to draw a sharp line of demarcation between Marxism and Anarchism.

". . .two tendencies which were traditionally irreconcilable, the revolutionary Marxists (of the P.O.U.M.) and the Bakuninists (of the (F. A. I.) now hold similar ideas concerning the hopes and perspectives of the revolution." (The Spanish Revolution, April 21, 1937, p. 5)

"For the first time in the history of a great revolution Anarchism is playing a leading role." (Ibid.)

The P.O.U.M. was completely in the clouds of illusions and misconceptions with respect to Stalinism, Trotskyism and, to an extent, Social Democracy. Echoing the Trotskyites and some Left-Trotskyites (Field and Oehler groups) the P.O.U.M. labelled the Stalinist agency serving the interests of bureaucratic centralism of the Soviet State as "reformism," and bunched Stalinism together with Social Democracy (The Spanish Revolution, April 2, 1937). Unaware that Stalinism is the main danger within the proletarian camp: today, unclear as to the mainspring of Stalin's policies, the P.O.U.M. instead of enlightening and warning the workers, actually gave the crafty Usurper a coat of protective veneer. In the summer of 1936 they spoke of the possibility of uniting with both Stalinism and Social Democracy "if they are able to correct their errors." Later the P.O.U.M., blind to Stalin's duplicity, imagined that Stalin of a sudden had decided to help the Spanish workers:

"In spite of our criticism of the mistaken (?!? - L.L.) policy of the Third International, and the dangers of the theory of Socialism in one country for the cause of the international working class, we are the first to recognize the importance of the new decision taken by the Soviet Union to offer us its powerful aid against the criminal intentions of Germany, Italy and Portugal. . . henceforth we will fight with renewed courage and optimism, for help is at hand."  
(The Spanish Revolution, November 11, 1936)

The Fieldites, ardent advisers of the P.O.U.M., instead of pointing out that Stalin and his partners Social Democracy, the liberal bourgeoisie and Anarcho-Syndicalism could never allow a smashing blow against Fascism, for that would have raised the spectre of proletarian revolution over Spain and Europe, wrote: "If arms and military experts had been sent to Spain during the first week of the rebellion, the fascists would not have lasted a month." (Labor Front, November 1936)

What more harmful fantasies could be spread among the workers concerning the subtle scheme of Stalin to drag out the situation in Spain until the revolutionary vanguard is physically wiped out, the toiling masses strangled and their dearly-bought conquests brought to naught.

The P.O.U.M.'s conception of Trotskyism is drawn from pure imagination. Trotskyism, whatever its professed aims, has been screening and "correcting" Stalin from 1923 to 1934 and then "suddenly" discarded a basic principle of Leninism by the opportunist thesis that "The destiny of the proletariat depends, in large measure, in our epoch, upon the resolute manner with which the Social-democracy will succeed in the brief interval which is vouchsafed it by the march of development in breaking with the bourgeois state." (The New International, September-October 1934.) In accordance with this anti-Bolshevik "theory" Trotsky sent his followers into various sections of the putrid Second International. Trotskyism, therefore, is a peculiar opportunist tendency, a sort of crossbreed of Bolshevism and Left Menshevism with an anti-Stalinist slant. It is the chief target and scape-goat of the Stalinist reaction. Yet the P.O.U.M. which itself has borrowed a number of inaccuracies from Trotsky's ideological baggage (the "mistaken" policies of Stalin, etc.), views Trotskyism as something different from what it really is:

"We look upon Trotskyism as being simply a sectarian tendency of revolutionary Marxism." (The Spanish Revolution, May 19, 1937.)

The problem of winning the masses to the proletarian revolution in Spain is bound up with a correct orientation with respect to all tendencies, particularly the Stalinist, as the dominant one. The P.O.U.M., however, turned its attention in a different direction: "Whether or not the revolution is successfully achieved in Spain depends entirely upon the policy which our party pursues with respect to the C.N.T. - F.A.I." (The Spanish Revolution, April 21, 1937). This tragic outlook was presented to the workers a few days before the bourgeoisie with Stalinism as the chief hangman of the revolution fell upon the proletariat of Barcelona. And the Oehlerite "instructors" of the P.O.U.M., rejecting the tangible truth that in this period of history Stalinism is the most potent element of sabotage and betrayal within the proletariat, share the responsibility for the P.O.U.M.'s false orientation: "The betrayal of the Anarchists has been the key to the triumph of the bourgeoisie." (The Fourth International, January 1937).

A party such as the P.O.U.M. could never meet the requirements. Absolutely divorced from concrete objective factors, destitute of Marxist insight and Lenin's method of analysis, the P.O.U.M. could not but fail to prevent the development in the direction of paralyzation of the proletariat by the Stalinist monster that worked in common with its less influential partners Social Democracy and Anarchism. There followed the typical Moscow frame-up and physical annihilation of Left groups which in a very confused, abstract way advocated a workers republic. The well-meaning but inadequate and opportunist P.O.U.M. was isolated and bloodily crushed by the counter-revolutionary Stalinist-Socialist repressive arm of the bourgeois-democratic State.

A question arises, What prompted Lovestone and Wolfe to classify the eclectic, non-Bolshevik P.O.U.M. as "the only revolutionary communist organization in Spain" (Workers Age, December 1, 1937) and unblushingly assert that "Only the Workers Party of Marxist Unity (P.O.U.M.) remained true to Communist principles" (Workers Age, July 29, 1937)? Why do the Lovestoneites, instead of honestly inquiring into the underlying causes of the failure of the P.O.U.M., and presenting a correct prognosis, further tangle the minds of the workers by shifting the focus of attention from objective life to an unreal domain? The answer is: were the P.O.U.M. a real Leninist organization unreservedly adhering to the principles of Bolshevism, it would, without a shadow of a doubt, have been denounced by Lovestone-Wolfe, as well as by Trotsky, as an ultra-Leftist, muddle-headed, sectarian outfit. For if the P.O.U.M. had presented to the workers an undistorted picture of the origin and growth of Stalinism it would have disclosed Lovestone's role of an enthusiastic assistant to Stalin in the formative stages of the bureaucratic pyramid-building (1923-1929), his alacritous aid in the persecution of the Stalinist target, Trotsky (1923-37), his covering up of Stalin's crimes in China, Germany and other countries. It would have revealed his machinations with the adventurer John Pepper in 1923-1925, with J. P. Cannon in 1925 - the actual basic difference between this latter, and

Lovestone and Browder being that in the Russian intra-party developments Cannon speculated on Trotsky, Lovestone bet on Bukharin, while Browder chose the winner Stalin. If the P.O.U.M. were Bolshevik it would have told of Stalin's shady business of secretly organizing a private "Corridor Congress" during the officially-held Sixth "Congress" of the Comintern - a crime which was concealed from the rank-and-file by Lovestone until he was banished from the C.P. for insubordination. A scathing light would have been flashed upon Lovestone's general policy, after his expulsion, of covering up his own role in 1923-1929 by rendering an indirect protection to the Stalinist blight.

As to Trotsky, a clear-cut, all-around exposure of Stalinism would have shown Trotsky's miserable policy of disregarding Lenin's advice to fight for the removal of Stalin ("I am against removing Stalin" - L. Trotsky, My Life, p. 486), Trotsky's criminal defense of Stalin during Eastman's publication of Lenin's Testament ("Comrade Lenin has not left any 'will'. . . All talk with regard to a concealed or mutilated 'will' is nothing but a despicable lie..." Inprecorr, September 3, 1925, pp. 105-106), and his role of a consistent confuser of the proletariat at the time of the betrayal of the German workers by Stalinism and Social Democracy. ("All eyes to the Communist Party! . . . The about-face of the Stalinists is inevitable." What Next, pp. 182-183. "Communist International changes policy!" Militant, March 8, 1933)

A true, unbiased unearthing of all illuminating facts bearing upon the general deep-going opportunist degeneration of the entire leadership of the Soviet Union and the Comintern, and a comprehensive, accurate depiction of the situation within the Soviet Union and throughout the world, would make it imperative for the proletarian vanguard to build the Fourth International, sharply opposed to Stalinism, Social Democracy, Trotskyism and Lovestonism.

The only hope for the Spanish and all other workers is in the building of a section of the Fourth (Leninist) International in Spain and in every other country in the world, the Soviet Union included. Otherwise, pernicious Stalinism, assisted directly (during the ultra-Right zig-zag) or indirectly (ultra-Left) by the incurably counter-revolutionary Social Democracy, and aided in their own way by Lovestone and Trotsky who confuse the proletariat with respect to the true nature of Stalinism, Social Democracy and their own, will lead the workers in other countries into a Fascist hell as it did in Germany, Austria and Spain.

Is France Next? Stalinism in collaboration with Social Democracy has thoroughly disoriented the French workers from the revolutionary path. The Trotskyites, confusing the proletariat as to what Stalinism is, have spread deadly opium about the Left Socialists as exemplified by their deceptions regarding the Socialists of Spain: ". . . the fall of their teachers enabled the Spanish Socialists to make an extraordinary sharp break with their past. . ." Thus wrote the Trotskyite Morrow, adding a dab of whitewash, "In their partial struggle against the fascist menace, however, the Socialists acquitted themselves magnificently." (Felix Morrow, Civil War In Spain)

And Lovestone who has disseminated damaging illusions about the P.O.U.M. does his share of the work of spreading entrapping deceptions about

treacherous Stalinism and putrid Social Democracy in France:

"Clichy! Let it be an alarm, a ghastly warning, and a signal to change the course. Such a change the S.P. as well as the C.P. must make; then the militant united front of labor will be enhanced and a working class victory over Fascism in France will be insured." (Workers Age, editorial, March 27, 1937.)

Marxism has become the rarest and most precious substance since the collapse of the Comintern. The ghastly void created by the Stalinist reaction must be filled; otherwise the proletariat, shackled by the opportunists, can do little to hold the uninterrupted advance of reaction.

AGAINST ALL HARMFUL ILLUSIONS AND OUTRIGHT DECEPTIONS THAT SPELL BLOODY TRAGEDIES FOR THE TOILING MASSES!

AGAINST THE POLICY OF "CORRECTING" STALINIST REACTION, THE COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY SOCIAL DEMOCRACY, AND ALSO LOVESTONEISM AND TROTSKYISM WHICH ARE SEPARATED FROM LENINISM BY A NARROW BUT VERY DEEP GULF!

FOR THE REESTABLISHMENT OF THE  
BOLSHEVIK INTERNATIONAL

December 1937 -

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