OUR RESPONSIBILITY

The Committee cannot avoid the responsibility at this time of turning all its resources to the aid of the threatened Spanish revolution and the Spanish and international revolutionaries held in prison by the hundreds. Their defence is the duty of all workers and all honest liberals.

We feel that an essential part of this task is to keep the working class informed concerning the fate of the Spanish revolution and the prisoners. Since the foreign language press services from Barcelona have been practically all suspended by the wave of police repression against the revolutionaries in Catalonia, Paris becomes the most convenient center for gathering and distributing information about the Spanish revolution. Thus we are taking upon ourselves the responsibility of fulfilling this need and are attempting to supply regular bulletins in various languages, starting with this bulletin in English. Its regular appearance, as well as its publication in other languages will depend upon your response in the way of financial assistance. Pay for this copy and more, if you are able. Help the prisoners! Help bring the lessons of the struggle of the Spanish workers to the workers everywhere.

Send funds: (for Europe) to Compte-cheque Pastel, A. Bardin, 32, 3, 17th Street, New York, N.Y. (All funds should be earmarked for the committee.)

THE MURDER OF NIN?

Andreu Nin was a well known figure in the international working class movement. Before the war he was active in the left wing of the CNT as secretary of the Teachers Union. At the time of the Russian revolution he was one of the first to rally to communism. He was condemned to death in Spain in 1920, but fled to Russia where he worked in the Central Council of and the Secretariat of the Red Trade Union International. In 1927 he upheld the policy of the Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc regarding the economic policies of the Soviet Union and the problems of the Chinese revolution. He was therefore refused responsible work and excluded from the Russian party. For two years he tried to leave Russia but was unable to. In 1930 after the fall of Primo de Rivera he was finally deported, and returned to Spain. He was immediately arrested, but soon released. He began to work with the international left opposition. In 1936 the Communist Left joined with the Workers and Peasants Bloc to form the PCEM. Since the July revolution he had become the best known and liked of the PCEM leaders.

Nin was particularly ominous to the Stalinists because he was thoroughly informed regarding the internal situation until his expulsion. It is not surprising then that the international program of the Communist Party, of which the suppression of the PCEM was one of the first items, would include the elimination of its popular leader Nin. He was arrested Tuesday, June 15, and taken immediately to Valencia, and then, we believe, to Murcia province, a stronghold of the Stalinist CNT. He has never been seen nor heard of since.
Irujo, Spanish Minister of Justice, guaranteed a French Delegation of Inquiry, in a letter of which we have a copy, that all the PCUM leaders were alive and would be brought to Valencia. This he was unable to fulfill. There is some evidence that Negrín's body and two others were found in the streets of Madrid. Federico Montesquiou, the Anarchist leader, charged that he had been murdered, which the government has never denied. On August 3rd, the Minister of Justice announced that Negrín had "escaped" prison and could not be found. The probability is that he has been murdered by Stalin's agents in Spain.

The PCUM leaders, other than Negrín, were taken to Valencia soon after their arrest on June 16 and held there in prison - without charges - for a short time and then "released". The prison officials and records bear this out. They were kidnapped at the prison gates and taken to Madrid by Stalinist police. After a special search, forced by the protests of the international working class, the government has gotten hold of them again and returned them to the regular prisons in Valencia.

Charges of espionage and high treason have been brought against them and they are to be tried "regularly" behind closed doors in special espionage courts set up by decree of the Negrín government since their arrest. Up until now, in spite of tremendous working class pressure inside and outside of Spain, in spite of the International Delegations of Inquiry, no one has been able to see any of these prisoners.

About July 16th, 27 minor PCUM officials, largely associated with the right wing of the party, were released. However, hundreds upon hundreds still remain in prison and the campaign of arresting revolutionaries throughout Spain continues unabated. A new Moscow trial is being prepared; they would crush the Spanish workers' revolution by terrorism.

FACTS BEHIND THE COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY PERSECUTIONS IN SPAIN

1. Since the autumn of 1936 the Communist Party of Spain has waged a consistent campaign to end the situation of dual power (especially sharp in Catalonia). It wished to consolidate all political power in the hands of the capitalist class of which it has become the most aggressive agent. One of their principal concerns has been the complete elimination of revolutionary working class organizations from the political scene. For this reason they have violently attacked the PCUM and demanded its dissolution.

2. The Negrín International and Anarchist working class organizations, while they may have disapproved of the Stalinist methods or silenced against the PCUM and the "protections" have never undertaken an offensive to stop the forward march of the bourgeoisie or to defend the democratic rights of any workers' party. They stand equally guilty of the crimes being committed in Spain today.

3. The May Days in Catalonia were the climax of the long struggle to liquidate dual power, as expressed by the co-existence of armed bodies of workers' police and of bourgeois General staff. The armed workers' without leaders, were on the defensive before, during and after the May Days.

4. The PCUM, through its faulty evaluation of the role of the state in the fight for working class power, failed to realize the seriousness of the latest defeat of the working class and the shifting balance of power. It was unprepared for its suppression and illegality and suffered the arrest of the majority of its leaders, and about 3000 of its members on June 16 and the following days.

5. The present political persecution is not limited to the PCUM. The Friends of Durruti were dissolved even before the PCUM. The persecution extends to all sections of the working class including the revolutionary elements of the Anarchists and the Socialist Party.
6. The liberation of the POUM prisoners and the other revolutionaries can only be obtained by the organised action of the Spanish working class against their bourgeoisie and its agent. Organised pressure of the workers of the world will secure a fair trial and bearable prison conditions for these political prisoners of the Spanish People's Front government and a return of their rights to continue their work for a better and juster society.

**IS BELONGING TO THE POUM A CRIME?**

The Stalinist Ortaga, as General Director of Public Order of the Valencia Government, furnished the press on July 5th with statistics of arrests made in Valencia since he had taken office a few weeks earlier. The figures were given out in this way: "The total reaches 1,227, distributed as follows: opponents of the government, fascists and rightists - 28; without documents - 356; quarrels and disturbing the peace - 21; members of the POUM - 18; for stealing automobiles - 9; thieves - 2; swindlers - 2; prostitutes - 15; etc."

**FREnte ROJO, the official Communist Party newspaper, carried this short list with a full page double headline entitled "AMONG THE FASCISTS AND TRAITORS ARRESTED RECENTLY FIGURE EIGHTER TROTSKISTS OF THE POUM". This was followed in the next day's issue by another article entitled "1,227 ARRESTED: FASCISTS, TROTSKISTS AND CRIMINALS - A Great Battle of Lieutenant Colonel Ortaga."

The sharp reaction of the workers of Spain and the world against such white terror seems to have had a certain effect. We learn that Ortaga has been dismissed. His successor, More, however, is another leader of the Spanish Communist Party and will carry out the party program just as thoroughly.

Gorkin, Aranda and the others are threatened with a secret trial and being punished them completely at the mercy of the class enemy - the bourgeoisie state. Their lives are in danger. Furthermore, hundreds of Spanish and scores of foreign comrades still lie in jail. We must expect the Spanish Socialist leaders to intervene for them of their own accord. Mass action and protests are the only means of freeing them.

Into action, comrades! Forward to freedom and working class rights for all workers in "republican" Spain.

**SINCE**

After the May days the power in Catalonia passed definitely from the hands of the workers to those of the bourgeoisie Valencia government, where the Communist Party was impotent with Interior Order. The first results of this were the dissolution of the Friends of Durruti, a left-wing anarchist organisation, and the suspension ofLa BATALLA, the POUM paper, soon after. Negligent processes were started against Gorkin.

Then suddenly, within 24 hours on June 16th, the police and detectives descended upon the POUM headquarters, press, Red Aid, hospitals, educational and charitable institutions, all its confiscated houses and apartments, as well as every hotel in the city, and all boarding houses where POUM foreigners had resided. At 2:30 in the morning they entered the POUM's Hotel Falcon and arrested the hundreds of occupants.

One of the reasons for the complete collapse of the large POUM organisation within 24 hours lay in the new direction of the police. The POUM, unaware of the full implications of the swing of power to the Stalinists, did not foresee the wonderful efficiency of the police action modeled on GPU lines. Never in Spain, where the police were always poorly organised, was a round-up so efficient. This is because it was planned and directed by Russian experts.
The story of two comrades who were in prison is typical: "Our apartment which belonged to the Red Aid of the PCOM was entered at 6:30 A.M., July 17th. It was searched for two hours by four Stalinist police agents and four guards, as it was formerly the residence of the German vice-consul. They were able to collect such things as Nazi song books, German government tax stamps and old monarchist colors. It was obvious that they had been instructed to look for all possible evidence for a frame-up trial. They had no warrants or charges against us."

The prisoners taken the first day were soon separated and put into different jails. The foreign comrades were taken first to 24 Avenue Dr. Pavlov, to the "Investigation Corps". The POUM leaders were immediately sent to Valencia and ten new "preventoriums" were created in Barcelona alone to hold the numerous POUM and CNT workers arrested. The Investigation Service where the foreign comrades were first held was being run by the Stalinist GPU. The documents found on the prisoners, they were informed, were being translated there to gather evidence for the trial. The POUM foreigners found many prisoners of the International Brigade there, French, Belgian, Irish, German, Czech and Austrian, who were presumably being repatriated but had landed at this station for a prolonged stay.

Russian experts labored the taking of five finger-printed documents of identification of each of the prisoners. Russians were always present as "translators" when any prisoner spoke with his consul.

A leaflet published illegally by the anarchist group, the Friends of Arruti, describes this prison as follows: "Installed in number 24 Dr. Pavlov Street there is a so-called 'Investigation Corps', a police corps of the CHEKA, which utilizes Russian methods very able to keep our foreign comrades under the strongest pressure and hold them in an inhuman situation, in spite of the fact that the majority of them have their papers complete in order. In questioning them, the police go so far as to declare that these comrades are suspected of being secret agents of the CNT, and they make use of all the Russian methods of the CHEKA to force these comrades to make confessions that they can never make just because they have been active militants of the anti-fascist movement of Germany, France and Italy for many years."

The leaflet closes with the statements, "Eight hundred comrades of the FAI have already been arrested in antifascist Spain! Four of our antifascist fighters have been condemned to death at Tarragona! Demand the dissolution of the foreign CHEKA! Free the antifascist fighters!"

Following the initial round-up of the POUM members, mass arrests have continued throughout Catalonia and all Spain. It is reliably estimated that more than 2000 POUM, CNT and left socialist workers have been imprisoned. Eyewitnesses report that trucks manned with civil guard patrol the streets of Barcelona and pick up any POUM or CNT militant who is known to the Communist Party agents in the truck. As late as August last a group of POUM members were arrested in a bathing beach. This is all organized by the Communist Party. The CNT, FAI and the Left Socialists have publicly denounced them as responsible for these arrests.

A white terror reigns in Barcelona. Searches are continually made in Anarchist Youth headquarters, in CNT trade union locals and in workers homes. Not only do the Stalinist agents confiscate all guns found, but in some cases they have taken money and other objects. We quote from ANARQUIA, the illegal FAI paper, (July 1), "What we cannot tolerate and will not consent to is that this uniformed attack, pillage and robbery should pertain to our cultural bodies and centers. Recently the Libertarian Youth Academy, "Con Venganza", was attacked and artistic objects, furniture, libraries, etc. destroyed. The money in the Secretariats was stolen as well as that of the Comrade Council and clothing, lace, etc. from various adjacent apartments."

A Bolshevist-Leonstalist comrade in Barcelona reports: "What is new, and in all probability an invention of the Russian police, is that the whole town is covered with a net-work of police, carefully hidden in abandoned stores, or rooms on the ground floor. The connecting lines are so straight that from one post (fifteen men are in each post) to another it is only three minutes on foot. They hope thus to be able to stifle any illegal movement from the first instant."
The terror sometimes takes the following form (quoted from an illegal pamphlet of the Anarchist Youth): "They have arrested comrades of the Military School (of the Generality) and offered them their freedom in return for entry into the PSUC. The PSUC is the Communist party in Spain. We are the enemies of those who call themselves democratic while they keep proved counter-revolutionaries in jail, 70 persons were set free on the 10th of this month (July) among whom were "proved fascists... (and others) of the PSUC of Catalonia who were imprisoned for dishonesty, abuse..." But this is not all of the scandalous story of what is happening in "antifascist" Spain.

Immediately following the arrest of the PSUC leaders on the 10th of June, two important decrees were published by the Valencia Public Order Department, which is controlled by the Communist Party. The first excluded the FAI from the Popular Tribunals on the grounds that it was not organized as a political party last February. The second decree set up special Tribunals for Espionage and High Treason, which are all-powerful. Mariano Ríosquez, Secretary of the National Committee of the CNT, says, in an address given in Valencia (CASTILLA LINCE, July 4), "With the repression of espionage and high treason we agree completely. Our Comrade, Garcia Oliver, had prepared a decree to take care of this. But in our decrees the trials were Garcia Oliver, had prepared a decree to take care of this. But in our decrees the trials were not to be held behind closed doors to exclude the public. Our decree also lacked the political qualifications of this decree, which says that anyone who is in opposition to the government, anyone who makes a statement against the government, anyone who speaks out against the government (our emphasis, ed.) comes within the jurisdiction of this decree." He added that he himself, according to the loose terms of the law, was liable to from six years imprisonment to death for his statement. It is under these Tribunals that the Stalinist police authorities will try the POUM leaders.

On the 26th of July the Valencian government made public the charges against the POUM leaders—the same which the Communist Party had prepared more than a month earlier. The Minister of Justice states to the press "The cases of the following prisoners have been placed before the Tribunal of Espionage and High Treason: Anaduella, Gonzalez, Buquet, Garcia, Daniel Recull, F. Gomez Palomar, J. Rodriguez Arrigo, Delfino Turgil-Mir, F. Cuellar Ruiz, V. Borrego Jimenez and J. Fernandez Guinin. The first two belong to the POUM and the other to the Phalangists.

"Forming part of the abundant documentary evidence found in the locality of the POUM are keys, telegraph codes, documents referring to traffic in arms, money and other valuable contraband, different magazines from various capitals, principally Barcelona, communications with foreign elements aiding to interviews held inside and outside of loyal Spain, and participation of foreign elements in the espionage previous to and the subversive movement of last May."

The Minister of Justice also states that, as always, the accused will receive all the guarantees of justice of the law of the republic which, therefore, will yield no pressure incompatible with the rights of the judge and courts of the state (which he has explained privately to mean that no foreign lawyers or observers will be admitted).

These facts can only lead us to the conclusion that the Communist Party's Cheka, a government within a government, has arranged another Moscow trial with the full support and approval of the Spanish bourgeoisie. Workers, denounce this treachery and bring immediate close pressure on all Spanish authorities to assure workers' class justice to our comrades and to call a halt to the reign of terror in "republican" Spain.

THE FRENCH PEOPLES FRONT, TOO

The French comrade, Recull, has just been condemned to ten months in prison for having fought in Spain in the International Lenin Column of the POUM in the Moscow front, when he should have been doing his military service. Crime in such cases is given super-sentence, but the French authorities could not forgive his having fought in the revolutionary workers' militia. From the clutches of the Spanish peoples front to those of its French counterpart.
We present a report of the conditions under which revolutionary Spanish workers are so illegally detained based upon the reports of foreign comrades who have been released and of the Delegation of inquiry which investigated the prison conditions.

According to the statement of the comrades who were released June 28th through consular intervention, "On the first day all the POUM prisoners, Spanish and foreign, were handed together in the custody of the Catalan government police department. The women and the members of the Executive and Central committees were thrown into dungeon cells in the cellar. There were a hundred men in a room with 35 beds. There were many members of the International Brigade there as well as common criminals and workers who had been arrested during the last days.

"On the night of June 27th all the foreigners were marched through the dark streets to the Investigative Service. Here eight of the men were placed together in a room adjoining the eight women. The remaining of the twenty-six were placed in tiny cells in the basement where the light and air were poor. Among these comrades were eight Germans, three Americans, three Frenchmen, two Dutchmen, two Italians, two Poles, one Austrian, one Swiss, one Lithuanian, one Albanian, and one Canadian. A chief of the International Brigade was being held there as well as a group of 14 French and Belgian volunteers.

"The morale was excellent upstairs. We passed the time singing revolutionary songs, which would spread through to the women, down to the militia and out to the guards; the whole prison together would sing the International, A Les Barricades, and Auf, Auf, zum Kampf, zum Kampf. We wrote the words in various languages all over the walls. We also organized political discussion groups in French and German.

"We were fed twice a day with a plate of soup and a piece of bread.

"The comrades below drew up these demands which they presented to the chief: 1) to be freed or accused; 2) to see their consul; 3) to call a lawyer; 4) better cell conditions; 5) more to eat. They got no response and four of them commenced a hunger strike. They were sent to the hospital two weeks later. Meanwhile we were released and the other foreign comrades were transferred to the Delegation of the Government of the Republic in Catalonia, on Consist street.

"The guards were changed daily in the first prison. There were usually from sixteen to twenty-four among whom were UGT, Communist Party and CNT members, none of whom were Catalans. They had been transferred directly from the Madrid front and directed to the policing of Catalonia. They were confused and easy about this.

From the report of one of the members of the French Delegation sent by the Committee for the Defense of the Spanish Revolution, we learn terrible details about the conditions in the Consist Street prison. The men are kept in the cellar of a garage which contains 150 prisoners, many of whom have been there as long as five months without ever seeing the light. They are all political prisoners or volunteers of the International Brigade. They were fed on the same slim fare, two plates of soup a day, and many were in a semi-starved condition. Repeated requests were made by the medical authorities to parade the men in a courtyard adjoining the prison, but the police from Valencia continued to refuse these requests. Are these masters of political persecution trying to physically annihilate their rivals, the revolutionary workers who come from all lands to help the Spanish workers?

The Delegation also reported that the women comrades were in a somewhat better position and that the Hotel Falcon has been transformed into a "preventorium" where many members of the International Brigade and other foreign military are held.

Soon after the arrival of the foreign POW comrades in the Consist Street another hunger strike was commenced on Monday, July 13 by 72 prisoners. Within twenty-four hours they met with partial success as they were promised that breads would be served daily on their food and that each would be given a bed.
From another of the 10 concentration prisons in Barcelona a manifest was smuggled out during the second week in July. "The repressive police methods of these people must be made known to the outside world kept in irons, insulted when we make a declaration, placed incommunicado for indefinite periods (there is one prisoner who has been 115 days incommunicado), fed food served at four in the afternoon and one in the morning, bad treatment in cold and dead. The sinister epoch of Anido y Arlegui has now been surpassed by the present repression under the leadership of the Communist Party and the PSUC... Comrades, antifascist citizens, this must last another day. More than 200 imprisoned comrades are now on hunger strike. Down with the repression which the CP and the PSUC are carrying through! Down with the Cheka massacre! Fight for our freedom" (signed) Government antifascist Prisoners.

Not only must we spread the news of this latest attack on the democratic rights of the workers and antifascist refugees but these prisoners are in urgent need of food, clothing, bedding, literature and medical supplies. We must have money to buy these things. Will you help us in our work of relief for these workers who have been imprisoned by the Stalinist controlled Spanish government for their attempts to help in the building of a socialist Spain.

DIVIDED COUNCILS

The following extracts from the official Spanish Communist Party press indicate that all is not smooth sailing inside the ranks of the Stalinist-bourgeois coalition. The FREnte ROJO of Valencia for July 3rd carries a prominent editorial entitled "HOW LONG WILL THE TROTSKIST PROVOCATORS BE TOLERATED?"

"The inefable city fathers (the Valencia city council) continue to treat the PCEists with the most exquisite cordiality, in spite of the abundant proof of the counter-revolutionary character of the PCE. The organizers of the Valencia Peoples Front not only chose to go arm in arm with the PCE against our party when we first pointed out our incompatibility with the counter-revolutionary Trotskyist band, but again today, after they have fully demonstrated their repugnant complicity with France and the government has jailed all the PCE leaders for their apparent part in a net-work of espionage, the Socialist, Anarchist, Republican and Valencian councillors still do not consider that the time has come to expel this counter-revolutionary organization from their midst."

The same paper, on July 10, protests editorially against the attitude of the Executive Commission of the UGT, "... some members of the Executive Commission... under the false slogan of 'antifascist front', uphold and permit a violent campaign against the peoples front. They wage an antigovernmental campaign of cowardly attacks on the authorities... they allow irresponsible and insane elements to speak and write articles such as the speech of Rubiés (Secretary of the Socialist Minority) at Alcoy, against unity and against the parties and organizations which have done most for unity...there are newspapers which carry on an insane campaign against unity and against the Communist Party, champion of unity...But these members of the Executive Commission, who have fortified themselves in the central organ of the UGT... by their decisions welcome and support the international campaign organised in favor of the PCE, the Trotskyist agent of fascism."

We find evidence of the same conflict in ADELANTE, the paper of the Socialist Federation of Valencia for July 10th. "We want to point out the reported pressurization of MENDO OBERO (Madrid OF paper) in a libel everyone who doesn't agree with its policies a Trotskyist... For MENDO OBERO all the troubles in Spain are due to Trotskyism, and Trotskyists are those who do not admit that there are no gods other than MENDO OBERO, which is - the same time the Prophet." These wisecracks are funny, but they will not save our comrades.

The workers of all countries should take advantage of the divided councils of the Spanish government and press by mass protests and action for the release of the revolutionary workers held in Spanish prisons."
ATTITUDE OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE CNT

Official statement for the National Committee of the CNT by Mariano Vasques, National Secretary (selected extracts).

... The elimination of the FOCM, begun in Catalonia in the month of December and continued systematically, did not commence with the charges against certain men... Since the events in May, the persecution has been accentuated and has become a matter of public concern. This persecution is not against certain men, but against the party.

Furthermore, we record the fact that, in Catalonia as in the rest of Spain, the persecution of the FOCM is not considered necessary by all parties and organizations... Only one party demands and imposes it, working for it with its characteristic tenacity and persistency. The others sit as spectators before this unequal and ignoble struggle, between a weak party and a stronger one which holds in loyalist Spain the moral strength afforded it by the support Russia has brought to our cause. This is following a course which we believe to be dangerous.

... The decree of the Minister of Justice setting up special courts, which envisage secret trials and a frightful display of new blood tribunals, seems to be one more concession to the need or the plans organized and carried out by the Communist Party in Spain and Russia, to eliminate the Party of so-called Marxist Unity, and we believe that Spanish liberal opinion cannot tolerate this.

Let the USSR settle its problems as it can or on the circumstances advice. It is not possible to transplant to Spain the same struggle, persecuting by blood and fire internationally, an opposition party or a sector dissenting from an ideology or a policy, persecuting it in the press and here by means of the law used as a weapon and by means of an underground moral blackmail.

If agents of Franco, spies and provocateurs are hidden in the FOCM, let them be arrested, let them be tried, with guarantees that it is not just a frame-up, and let them be shot. But let this be done only to agents, spies and provocateurs and not to the members of a party which someone wants to destroy.

As for us, we cannot be convinced that Nin, Andrada, Gorkin or David Rey are traitors, agents of fascism, spies, etc., etc., unless it is all proved to us. To believe that, we would need proof just as we would need proof to believe, for instance, that Gordon Orde or Abberon were in the service of fascism, or that General Mique was. And these proof must be demonstrated clearly and plainly, not behind closed doors which resemble too suspiciously methods imported from other countries.

The men of the FOCM whom we mentioned are old militants, none of them already arrested, others with orders of arrest issued to all the police: without doubt life-long revolutionaries might sell themselves out. But they cannot be dishonored and conveniently eliminated without any proof just because the police and judicial apparatus are in certain hands.

... Let the political persecution of the FOCM cease...

Valencia, June 28, 1937.

LONG LIVE THE SPANISH REVOLUTION!

During the last week of July MUNDO OBRERO complained that "during the last twenty four hours we have had in our hands more than half a dozen clandestine publications."
FRENCH POSTAL WORKERS DEMAND WORKERS DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN

The National Council of the Postal, Telephone and Telephone Employees Union of France, speaking for the tens of thousands of postal employees, has adopted the following resolution with only two dissenting votes:

"The National Council, deeply moved by the persecution of the members of the POUM and the CNT of Catalonia, who stood in the front ranks of the defenders of the revolution and the Spanish Republic at the time of the fascist rebellion;

"Without taking sides in the several tendencies of the Spanish workers movement, calls upon the Negrin government not to become entangled in police repression in settling the problems between the workers parties;

"Asks him, under all circumstances and to the fullest extent, to safeguard workers democracy, the only measure of success for the war and the revolution;

"Asks of him that guarantees of democratic justice be granted the accused (such as a public trial, freedom to choose their lawyers, publication of all documents, etc.);

"And, at the same time, proposes to the Negrin government that an International Working Class Commission of Inquiry should be set up, charged to look into the accusations made against the leaders of the POUM and the CNT."

THE MAY DAYS IN BARCELONA

We are presenting a translation of a section of the counter-thesis on the "May Days" by Cell. 72 of the Barcelona POUM. We feel that a study of these historic days is imperative for an understanding of the events leading up to, and the nature and aims of, the present counter-revolutionary wave of persecution in Spain today.

Behind the Events

Once dual power in Barcelona existed, that is to say, once the bodies born in July in opposition to the bourgeois state had been dissolved, the counter-revolution, now represented by the middle-class and reformist parties, successively attacked at first cautiously and then more aggressively, the revolutionary positions of the working class, mainly in Catalonia, which was the region where the revolution was farthest advanced.

The resistance of the working class to these attacks was largely neutralized on the one hand by the counter-revolutionary dictatorship of the UGT leaders in Catalonia... and on the other by the collaboration of the CNT (Anarchist-syndicalists) in the bourgeois governments of Valencia and Barcelona.

In spite of this handicap the working class refused to follow its reformist leaders in collaborating with the bourgeoisie and became convinced that only energetic action in the street could halt the advance of the counter-revolution. The armed clashes which broke out in various parts of Catalonia during the month of April were the prelude to the May events in Barcelona.

The lines between the revolution and the counter-revolution were drawn (and still are) in general, as follows, as far as Catalonia is concerned:
The revolutionary sectors, the CNT-FAI and the POUM, could count upon the greater part of the armed working class, but ever since July lacked concrete aims and effective tactics. In this way the revolution lost its impetus.

The counter-revolutionary sectors, the (Stalinist) PSUC and the (Republican) Esquerra, without such a broad base — with almost none in July — have held well defined objectives from the first and as a result have found the correct tactics. While the CNT, which was the decisive force numerically, was becoming ensnared in the labyrinth of bourgeois institutions, and while it was speaking of nobility, loyalty, etc., its enemies and collaborators were carefully preparing and progressively carrying through a plan of provocation and slander of which the first step was to eliminate the POUM from the Generality. In face of these attacks this party, like the leaders of the CNT, remained on the defensive, at first carefully and then openly. Thus they allowed the counter-revolution to take the offensive.

These were the conditions in which the May events occurred.

The Fighting

The fighting which broke out on May 3rd was provoked by the reactionary forces of the PSUC-Esquerra trying to seize the Telephone Building in Barcelona. The most revolutionary part of the working class answered the provocation by taking possession of the streets and fortifying them. The general strike was 100% effective.

In spite of being stillborn this movement cannot be called a "putsch". It can be said that practically all of the workers arms were on the barricades. The movement received the sympathy of the working class in general during the first days — as proved by the extent and unanimity of the strike — and evoked an attitude of suspended neutrality from the middle class, which was influenced by fear, of course. The workers brought all of their fighting spirit and enthusiasm into play, until they discovered the lack of coordination and of final objectives which characterized the movement, whereupon vacillation and demoralization set in in some sectors. Only on the basis of these psychological factors can it be understood why the workers failed to storm the Palace of the Generality against the orders of their leaders.

Upon the government side were found only a part of the police forces, the Stalinists, the Ex and the Esquerra, these latter especially combative. Several companies of the police declared themselves neutral, refusing to fight against the workers, and others were disarmed. The great majority of the Petrol Guards (workers police corps) were on the side of the workers.

The revolutionary organizations had no directing and coordinating center. The city was held by the workers from Tuesday morning on in such a way as to allow free communication between the various worker groups. Only a few of them were isolated. A concentrated attack upon the official centers would easily have put the city completely under the power of the workers. In general, both sides played a waiting game; the government forces because they lacked men; the workers forces because they lacked leadership and objectives.

The forces outside of the city which might have been brought into the struggle were the troops from the front, anxious to march on the capital (troops from the revolutionary sectors had already begun by cutting off the road for the Carl Marx Division (Stalinist)) and the troops which might be sent by the Valencian government, which could certainly not count on getting through. From Wednesday on, several French and British ships stood by at Barcelona, probably ready to intervene.

The workers forces held the streets four and a half days: from Monday afternoon until Friday. The CNT papers assign the movement only one day — Tuesday. The POUM papers give it
three days. That is, each makes the movement and with its own order to withdraw. In fact, the workers had to withdraw (although they did so only long after the orders) because there was an absolute lack of leadership capable of finding a progressive solution, and because of the betrayal of the Anarcho-Syndicalist leaders, some of whom pathetically implored over the radio to leave the streets, others of whom collaborated with Company who himself declared: "The government had little means of defense, very little, and that was not because it had not foreseen the need, but because it could not help it. Nevertheless it overcame the insurrection with these few forces, aided by the popular fervor and by the congressions undertaken in the Generalitat with various trade union delegations, and with the assistance of some representatives of Valencia; thus we brought back normality." (from the OFFICIAL NEWS, May 17)

In its general lines, that was the May insurrection.

*The CNT Leaders*

Spontaneously, instinctively, without strong leadership, without positive concrete aims, the working class rose in this moment for a decisive advance. The CNT-FAI, by not explaining clearly to the workers the significance of the April events, allowed the movement to be still born. Not all of the union leaders were against the movement in principle. The local committees of Barcelona not only supported it but tried to coordinate it from a military standpoint. This could not be done, however, without first having political objectives. The doubt and vacillation of these committees was reflected in practice by a series of ambiguous and contradictory instructions, half-way between the will of the base and the capitulation of the leaders committees. Only the National and Regional Committees, expressing a firm decision to withdraw. This withdrawal, ordered unconditionally, without obtaining control of Public Order, without the guarantee of workers Safety Battalions, without effective organization of a workers' front, and without a satisfactory explanation to the working class, lumping together all parties in the struggle - revolutionary and counter-revolutionary - this remains as one of the greatest capitulations to the bourgeoisie and as a betrayal of the workers movement. Both leaders and followers will not have to wait long to feel the serious consequences if the Revolutionary Workers' Front is not made a reality.

*The POUM Leaders*

Faithful to their line of conduct since the 15th of July, the leaders of the POUM, tried behind the event. As soon as the movement was underway our leaders supported it, although it had taken no part in bringing it about. It cannot be called a cause to have given out the slogans - late and poorly distributed - of Defense Committees, without mentioning a word concerning the role of those committees opposing the bourgeoisie government.

Practically speaking, all the merit for action belongs to the base of the party and the lower committees. The leaders did not even bring out a single statement nor a leaflet during the first days to guide the workers in arms. When our comrade leaders discovered, like those fighting in the barricades, that the movement had no objective, they gave them the order to withdraw. In view of the course of the events and the fact that no decision was made to use them, and in view of the capitulation of the CNT leaders, the order to withdraw at least avoided a massacre. In spite of the lack of vision of our leaders, the reaction pictures them as the directors and inspirers of the movement. It is doing them an honor which is quite unmerited in spite of their efforts to reject it, calling it a vile slander.

Coll 72, District V, Barcelona

**NOTE:** The anarchist press of August 9th reports that 9000 revolutionaries are now imprisoned in Spain. This is largely confirmed by a POUM comrade who just arrived from Barcelona and reports that at least 5000 anarchists and about 1000 POUM members are detained.