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THE TRUTH ABOUT BARCELONA

By Fenner Brockway



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TRUTH ABOUT BARCELONA

By Fenner Brockway

Worker's Organisations in Spain

The C.N.T.	Syndicalist Trade Union under Anarchist direction.
The F.A.I.	Anarchist Organisation.
The U.G.T.	Socialist Trade Union.
The P.S.U.C.	Socialist-Communist Party (affiliated to Third International).
The P.O.U.M.	Workers' Party of Marxist Unity (I.L.P. of Spain).

ON July 19th, 1936, the Fascists began their revolt in Spain. Within two days they had been defeated in Barcelona, the largest industrial centre and the capital of Catalonia. The defeat was due entirely to the action of the workers and particularly to the Syndicalists of the C.N.T., which included 70 per cent. of the Trades Unionists in its ranks.

This is not the place to tell the story of how the victory was won, though it is an epic in working class history. Almost unarmed the workers marched on the barracks, until the soldiers paused in their firing, listened to the workers' cries of solidarity, understood that they had been misled by their officers, turned and arrested their own generals and joined with the workers to celebrate the crushing of the Fascist revolt.

But the workers were not satisfied to defeat Fascism. By their action they had saved Barcelona. In future they would rule Barcelona.

THE REVOLUTION

They took possession of their factories and workshops, of the railways and trams, of the telephone service and the broadcasting station, of the hotels, the hospitals, the cinemas and the theatres. Everywhere Workers' Committees were formed. The red flags of the C.N.T., the U.G.T. (the Socialist Trade Union), and the P.O.U.M. (the Workers' Party of Marxist Unity) were raised on all the buildings as a symbol of possession. Even on the windows of the cafés the letters "C.N.T." appeared. If the proprietors were

ready to enter into co-operative ownership with the waiters, they remained; if they were not ready, the waiters took possession.

Most of the employers and directors of the larger concerns fled across the frontier. Where they did not do so, they were invited to continue as workers in such technical jobs as they could perform. If they were not capable of a technical job, they were put on an unskilled job and paid for such.

The workers' parties and Trade Unions took over the big hotels as their headquarters. They took over the capitalist printing establishments for the production of workers' papers, books and pamphlets. Some of their printing was a model of craftsmanship. No publication printed during 1936, for example, was a finer piece of work than the album of coloured reproductions of Sim's revolutionary pictures issued from the C.N.T. Press.

The workers had to face one obstacle. The fate of their revolution was bound up with the attitude of foreign capitalist governments. They realised that they must not provoke intervention. Some of the industrial concerns had foreign capital. There were a number of foreign banks. In these cases the capital was safeguarded and the higher management of the banks was not interrupted, though the staffs joined the less extreme U.G.T. (consisting largely of clerical workers) and secured a considerable measure of workers' control.

WORKERS AND THE GOVERNMENT

The same problem arose in regard to the Government. There was a Popular Front Government of Liberal Nationalists, supported by Socialists and Communists. It was of a moderate character, not forfeiting the confidence of other democratic capitalist governments. But of what use was this Government when the workers controlled everything?

The working class organisations had set up their own Economic Council to control industry. They had set up their Military Council to conduct the war against the Fascists. These two Councils made all decisions, but it was agreed that, in order to reassure foreign governments, the formal Government should remain in being. The Council issued their decrees, sent them across to the Government by messenger, the Government stamp was affixed to them and they had the force of law.

At the time the danger of this course to the workers' revolution was not seen. The Government was regarded as a mere stamping machine. Only later did the inevitable conflict between the State machine and the workers' organisations develop.

Each of the workers' organisations enrolled their members in their own militia. What arms were available were distributed to them. Each organisation contributed to the Workers' Police. The army and police of the old régime were put in the background. The workers had never trusted the officers and hated their auto-

cratic military discipline. They knew that to defend their revolution they must have their own militia and police.

In time the overlapping between the Workers' Councils and the Government created difficulties. Despite its formal character the Government necessarily fulfilled important functions. At Madrid a Popular Front Government with dominant Socialist control assumed office. Its contact with Barcelona was through the Catalonian Government, and communications with the representatives of foreign governments were through the Government. Such public services as education and the administration of justice were also in the hands of the Government. The retention of two duplicating authorities became impossible.

NEW GOVERNMENT FORMED

This problem was solved by a reconstruction of the Government so that it included representatives of the workers' organisations. The C.N.T., the U.G.T., the P.O.U.M., and the P.S.U.C. (the United Socialist-Communist Party) were all in.

This Government represented a remarkable departure in two respects. The C.N.T., under the influence of its Anarchist philosophy, had always been anti-Parliamentarian. When it decided to enter the Government a big breach was made with its past.

The entrance of the P.O.U.M. into the Government also reflected a considerable departure in its policy. It was opposed to the Popular Front, because it based its policy on the Marxist theory of the class struggle and consequently was against an alliance with capitalist parties or participation in a Coalition Government which included capitalist parties. It secured, however, an undertaking that a programme for the socialisation of industry would be applied and on this condition its leader, Andres Nin, became Minister of Justice. Before long the Economic and Military Councils were abolished and the Government took over their duties.

This was a second stage in the restoration of the power of the capitalist State machine.

At the time the danger was not fully recognised, though Marxist principles should have provided a warning. Marx taught that the workers' revolution will require new instruments of administration and that these instruments must be based, not on the structure of the Capitalist State, but on the organisations of the working class. What has subsequently happened in Barcelona proves how accurate was the analysis of the founder of scientific Socialist theory.

For a time it appeared as though the new Government would maintain the workers' revolution. The Central Government at Madrid, under the influence of the official Socialist and Communist parties, was limiting the object of the anti-Fascist struggle to the restoration of parliamentary democracy, but in Barcelona the workers' revolution remained. Andres Nin, as Minister of

Justice, established People's Courts and introduced a new code of law which expressed Socialist regard for workers' rights and human well-being and which was contemptuous of the past privileges of wealth and birth and of the rights of property.

COUNTER-REVOLUTION BEGINS

But the conflict between the two conceptions of the struggle—the Liberal and Socialist-Communist conception, on the one hand, that the Fascists should be opposed by the aim of a return to a Democratic Capitalist Republic and the P.O.U.M. and Syndicalist conception, on the other hand, that the aim should be a Workers' State and the Social Revolution—this conflict grew and led to a compromising policy by the Government. Steadily the authority of the bourgeois State began to replace the authority of the workers' organisations. The counter-revolution was beginning.

During all this time the P.O.U.M. did everything in its power to resist encroachments on the workers' revolution and to maintain a revolutionary spirit. Its slogan was that the war and the revolution were indivisible. It enrolled thousands of its members to fight against the Fascists, and its militia won a reputation for courage both in the fighting at Madrid and on other fronts. At the same time, through its daily paper, "La Batalla," and by the organised action of its members within the workshops and Trade Unions (both C.N.T. and U.G.T.), it kept alive the zeal for workers' power and the new workers' society.

Because the P.O.U.M. was the main instrument in resisting the counter-revolutionary tendencies of the Government it was fiercely attacked by the Communist International, which feared that Britain, France and the "democratic" capitalist countries might be estranged from Russia by a Socialist revolution. The Communists went to astounding lengths of calumny against the P.O.U.M. They charged it with being engaged in conspiracies to assassinate Largo Caballero, the Premier, and other Spanish leaders. They asserted that the P.O.U.M. was General Franco's "Fifth Column," serving as Fascist spies and planning to sabotage the anti-Fascist Forces. They actually made the charge that the P.O.U.M. militia had deliberately refused to advance at the Front at critical moments in order to enable the Fascists to win victories!

The Communists have never produced one jot or tittle of evidence in support of these outrageous statements. When challenged they have been unable to substantiate a single charge.

RUSSIA INTERVENES

Then came the decision of Soviet Russia to send arms to the Spanish Government. At long last Russia had become impatient with the policy of so-called "non-intervention" under which Mussolini and Hitler poured in arms for the Fascists, whilst Soviet Russia, Popular Front France, and "democratic" Britain and other

non-Fascist nations declined to allow the Spanish Government to buy arms.

In the case of Catalonia, however, the Russian Government was in a difficulty. Its foreign policy aimed at securing an alliance with France, Britain and the "democratic" capitalist countries. These countries would never enter such an alliance if Russia encouraged revolutions. It was therefore a matter of importance to Russia that its arms should be used in Spain only for parliamentary democracy.

Russia got over this problem by attaching conditions to its supply of arms to Catalonia. These conditions were made clear by the Catalonian Spanish Communist Party, which demanded:

- (1) The exclusion of the P.O.U.M. from the Government and from all administrative offices.
- (2) Military control, instead of workers' control, of the armed forces.
- (3) The separation of the war from the revolution.

The C.N.T. and P.O.U.M. members of the Government resisted these demands and the existence of the Popular Front Government was threatened. Finally, the Communists agreed to the postponement of points 2 and 3 if the first point was accepted. They took the view that if they could get the P.O.U.M. out of the Government the concession of the other demands would follow—before long they would be able to abolish the Workers' Militia and to moderate the tempo of the revolution. The Syndicalists reluctantly accepted this compromise, though they insisted upon the right of P.O.U.M. members to remain in administrative positions. (As a matter of fact a leading P.O.U.M. member, Dr. Tusso, has continued as head of the Government's Health Commission ever since.)

From this point onwards the Government began to assume an openly counter-revolutionary character.

The demand for the abolition of the Workers' Militia and for the incorporation of all troops within the Government forces under the control of military officers of the old school and the old régime was pressed. It was made in the form of a proposal for a unified military command, and as such was difficult to resist, for obviously it was desirable that there should be a common co-ordinated strategy for all the Forces.

FIGHT AGAINST FASCISTS SACRIFICED

The C.N.T. and the P.O.U.M. did not challenge the principle of a unified command, but asked that the military chiefs should be responsible to some authority answerable to the working class organisations and that the Workers' Militia should retain their local officers. The Government would not accept this, and when the C.N.T. and the P.O.U.M. held out, arms were not sent to the Aragon Front, occupied by their militias.

Although an advance on this Front would have relieved Madrid

and hindered the Fascist offensive against Bilbao, arms were deliberately withheld. This was done both to force the C.N.T. and the P.O.U.M. into submission and to enable the Government to contrast the success on other fronts with the stalemate on the Aragon Front. Only when the C.N.T. and the P.O.U.M. under compulsion accepted the "unified military command" (though keeping their own militia officers) were arms supplied.

The Government proceeded very effectively with the third objective—to separate the war from the revolution—by applying measures to liquidate the revolution!

It was not only in Barcelona that the workers had gained control. In a number of towns and villages the administration was in the hands of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Councils. The Government insisted upon the abolition of these Councils.

Its next step was to demand the abolition of the Workers' Committees and the Workers' Police, and to issue a decree for the surrender of all arms held by the workers. These measures met with considerable resistance, but gradually the psychology of the revolution was destroyed. Everywhere the Republican flag of Catalonia was substituted for the Red flag of Socialism.

WHY COMMUNISTS GREW

A considerable influence in changing the psychology was the spectacular reception given to the ships which brought materials from Russia and to the recruits of the International Brigade, controlled by the Communist Party, as they marched through Barcelona. Emphasis was always laid on the purpose of this help—to save democracy and not the Revolution. The Liberal objective of the fight against Fascism began to replace the Socialist objective. The Russian and Communist star was in the ascendant. Whilst other countries (except Mexico) were refusing to help, Russian arms of the most modern type were pouring in. Inevitably there was gratitude and enthusiasm.

In this favourable situation, the Socialist-Communist Party (which had become affiliated to the Communist International) made considerable progress. It made special progress among the middle classes and the landowning peasants because (Mr. H. N. Brailsford has pointed out) they were "impressed by the zeal of the Communists in the defence of small property." Mr. Brailsford has remarked on the wisdom of the Communist Party in winning the support of the small bourgeoisie in this way, but one cannot help commenting that recruitment on the ground of defence of property is a curious basis for building up a Party which still has the tradition of being revolutionary.

By April the tension in Barcelona had become acute. Although the C.N.T. was still represented in the Government, its membership bitterly resented the orders to surrender control of workshops and factories and to surrender arms. Instinctively they understood

that workers' workshop control and the retention of arms were the essential guarantees of the maintenance of the revolution.

In this situation of tension Fascist agents-provocateurs got to work. First one of the leaders of the Socialist-Communist Party, Roldan Cortada, was assassinated. Then an Anarchist leader, Martin, was assassinated. There is no evidence that either of these assassinations was the crime of a worker belonging to the opposing section. The likelihood is that Fascist agents deliberately provoked a conflict between the two sides in this manner.

THE RISING BEGINS

The rapid development of events which followed has been summarised by two members of the I.L.P. in Barcelona, John McNair and Jon Kimche, as follows:

1. The crisis became acute during the latter days of April.
2. Roldan Cortada was assassinated in Molins de Llobregat, a suburb of Barcelona, on April 25.
3. The reply of P.S.U.C. was a demonstration of its force at the funeral on April 27. For three and a half hours the procession of the P.S.U.C., U.G.T., and Government army marched through Barcelona. Sections of the Anarchists viewed this demonstration as a challenge.
4. During the nights of April 28 and 29 Anarchists and P.S.U.C. adherents were forcibly disarming each other. In the old city some barricades were erected. The C.N.T. leaders were attempting to find a peaceful solution, but conflict was already breaking out in the Provinces, especially in Pingerda which had hitherto been in the hands of the Anarchists.
5. A punitive expedition was despatched to Molins de Llobregat, where the P.S.U.C. leader was assassinated.
6. This was the atmosphere on May 1st. All May Day demonstrations and meetings in Barcelona were banned for fear of serious disturbance.
7. **On Monday, May 3rd, at 3 p.m., three lorry loads of Government Assault Guards drove up to the Telefonica, the main telephone exchange in the heart of the city. Under the command of Sala, the P.S.U.C. Minister for Public Order, they proceeded to occupy the lower floors. The Government complaint was that the C.N.T. was tapping Government calls.** (Note: This building had been in the hands of the C.N.T. since July 19th and great sentimental value was attached to it by the Anarchists. It had always flown the Anarchist red and black flag from its tower.)
8. The manner of the occupation was an undoubted provocation. Anarchists in the upper storeys were armed and defended themselves; at about 4 p.m. firing commenced.
9. Shooting commenced in various parts of the city. A spontaneous movement swept through the working class districts. Work ceased almost everywhere. In the centre of the city barricades were erected and all political and Trade Union buildings were placed in a state of defence (sandbags, machine-guns, etc.).
10. The suburbs were entirely controlled by the workers. The barricades were manned by the C.N.T.-F.A.I., with whom were associated the members of the P.O.U.M.
11. The official quarter of the city was held by Government Forces and the P.S.U.C. and Republican Parties.

12. The keynote of the fighting was that it was defensive on both sides.
13. Once the fighting started, the Regional leadership of the C.N.T.-F.A.I. met and instructed its membership to follow only its slogans. But it failed to give any political lead and issued only the slogan "Peace, Brothers." The lead passed to the extreme Anarchists and the Anarchist Youth, the *Juventudes Libertarias*.
14. The P.O.U.M. leadership issued general slogans, such as "The reawakening of the spirit of July 19th," "The Revolutionary Workers' Front," "The Formation of Committees of Defence."
15. On Tuesday, May 4th, firing was general. A number of the local headquarters of the P.S.U.C. and of the *Esquerra* (Liberal-Nationalists) and strategic positions were occupied by the workers. The Anarchists arrested hundreds of Government Assault Guards.
16. During the night of Tuesday and Wednesday the negotiations between the Valencia Government, the U.G.T. and the C.N.T. resulted in a joint appeal, "Cease fire."
17. But on Wednesday firing was fiercer than ever. The workers were on top.
18. The C.N.T. daily issued a manifesto, "Back to Work."
19. Leadership definitely with the extremists. The Anarchist "Friends of Durrutti" (consisting largely of Anarchists who refuse to fight in the Popular Front army) published a leaflet with phrases like these: "Workers form a Revolutionary Council. Shoot those responsible. Disarm the armed forces. Dissolve all political parties who have turned against the workers. Don't leave the streets."
20. On the same day the leadership of the C.N.T.-F.A.I. disowned this leaflet and the "Friends of Durrutti."
21. On Thursday morning it was quiet. The P.O.U.M. issued the call, "Back to work, but be on your guard."
22. As a result of the attempt to disarm the workers, barricades were again occupied and shooting recommenced. P.O.U.M. and the "Friends of Durrutti" now demanded: "Withdraw the police. Retain the arms in the hands of the workers."
23. On Friday shops opened again. Bread was available. Five thousand Guards from Valencia arrived.
24. On May 14th the Government issued a proclamation ordering the surrender of all arms, other than those held by the Popular Front army, within 72 hours. The Guards searched passers-by in the street.

That is a skeleton record of events. It is necessary to clothe it in some respects.

LIBERAL AND COMMUNIST CHARGES

The charge has been made in the Liberal "News Chronicle" and the Communist "Daily Worker" that the P.O.U.M. was responsible for the rising. This is quite untrue.

The P.O.U.M. took the view that an insurrection would be a mistake in view of the forces at the disposal of the Catalonian Government, with the Valencia Government in the background. It concentrated on creating a demand for the summoning of a Constituent Assembly representing the workers, peasants and soldiers. It believed that the workers would in time protest against the counter-revolution which the Government was carrying through

and that the demand for such a Constituent Assembly would become so strong that the Government would be compelled to submit. It held that an insurrection would be wrong and inadvisable until after the Fascists were defeated, and there was a difference of opinion in its ranks whether even then an insurrection would be necessary.

The official statement of P.O.U.M., published on May 11th, is as follows:

"If we had given the order to begin the movement on May 3 we should not conceal it. We have always made our words consistent with our deeds. But the movement of May 3 resulted, as those who accuse us know, not from any lead given by us but as a consequence of the occupation of the Telephone Service. The order was not given by any Party or any responsible organisation. It had an undeniable character of spontaneity.

"What our Party did—we have said this already a number of times, and to-day we simply repeat it—was to associate ourselves with the movement when it took place.

"The workers were on the streets and our Party had to be on the side of the workers.

"It is the obligation of each of us to fulfil his duty and his responsibility as he conceives them. We understand our duty and responsibility thus: We are a class Party, of the working class, and our place is by its side."

This attitude of P.O.U.M. was, of course, according to the historical line of Marxist Socialists ever since the Paris Commune. Marx thought the Paris rising a mistake, but once it had taken place he backed it completely.

A speech delivered by Julien Gorkin, one of the P.O.U.M. leaders, at a meeting of the Barcelona Committee of the International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity on May 14th, makes quite clear the spontaneity of the revolt. He said:

"The first point to be borne in mind is that the workers' action on May 3 surprised everyone, though we realised that, owing to the counter-revolutionary activities of the Stalinists and Reformists, provocation was certain to occur.

The events of the week commenced in an atmosphere of persecution against the revolutionary elements, especially the P.O.U.M. and the advanced sections of the C.N.T.-F.A.I. During the past six months the revolutionary conquests of the workers have been attacked one by one by the Government. On May 3 the workers, seeing the assault made on the telephone buildings held by the C.N.T., instinctively resisted and showed that they were prepared to fight for what was left of their conquests.

"The workers of Catalonia, having smashed Fascism and taken control of the economic functions of the Province, transport and communications, lived in the illusion that they had established workers' power. They had not realised that, not having political power, all their conquests could be taken from them and destroyed.

"It is quite easy to prove the spontaneity of the action of the workers. Since July 19 there have been created in Catalonia many Defence Committees organised by the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. The activity of these Committees was not normally very great, but they remained ready for action. It was these Committees which mobilised the workers on May 3. They were the dynamic centres of the movement.

"No order for a general strike was given by the Central Committee, either of the C.N.T. or of the U.G.T., but the workers, realising the gravity of

the situation, declared a general strike themselves. This is not a matter of surprise as the workers of Catalonia are quite accustomed to such situations and are able to occupy immediately the strategic positions of the city, namely, the depôts of the trams and buses, electric power stations, etc., the stoppage of which brings the entire economic life of the city to a standstill."

Once the rising occurred the P.O.U.M. sought to give it direction. It immediately got into touch with the C.N.T. Committee, but the C.N.T. was divided. It had representation in the Government and thus had a foot in both camps. For two days the workers were on top. Bold and united action by the C.N.T. leadership could have overthrown the Government.

REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT NOW STRONGER

The Government won, but at the end of the struggle the revolutionary zeal of the workers was stronger than ever, and the status and influence of the P.O.U.M. among them was stronger.

It is very significant that although certain members of the P.O.U.M. were arrested and imprisoned, the Government did not dare to suppress the P.O.U.M. itself. The Socialist-Communists demanded its suppression, but the C.N.T. would not have it. For a day or two "La Batalla," the daily paper of the P.O.U.M., was suppressed, but the C.N.T. demanded that the printing press should be returned to the P.O.U.M. and, although sometimes censored, "La Batalla" reappeared and enjoyed a larger circulation than ever. There is no doubt that the masses of the workers in Barcelona were behind the revolt and they respected the courage and the leadership which the P.O.U.M. gave.

The P.O.U.M. is now carrying on its campaign for the strengthening of the Revolutionary Defence Committees and the formation of a Revolutionary Front by all the revolutionary sections of the working class.

Though apparently defeated, it is the P.O.U.M. which is on the offensive. Though apparently victorious, it is the P.S.U.C. which is on the defence. It has every reason for being so. In a revolutionary crisis the Spanish Communists were on the wrong side of the barricades.

WHY CABALLERO WENT

The events in Barcelona cannot be separated from the significant happenings in Valencia which immediately followed. The Communists successfully carried through a plan to compel Largo Caballero, the Prime Minister, to resign. The Valencia Government, nominally supreme throughout Spain, became a Government of the Right elements opposed to Fascism. Both the mass Trade Union organisations—the U.G.T. as well as the C.N.T.—withdrew from it. Only the Right Wing of the Socialists, the Communists, and the Liberals remained.

The C.N.T., in its first truthful anger, denounced the change of Government as counter-revolutionary, though subsequently both the C.N.T. and the U.G.T. promised support—as they were bound to do in the circumstances—in the fight against Fascism.

There was, of course, much greater significance in Caballero's resignation than his desire to remain War Minister as well as Prime Minister. In informed circles in Spain there are reports that Caballero resigned because he resisted proposals for mediation put forward by Britain, with the backing of France and Russia.

Whether this report is true or not, it is undoubtedly true that Caballero threatened to constitute a Government representing the C.N.T. and the U.G.T., without the Liberals and the Communists. This is why the Right Socialists, the Liberals and the Communists joined to drive him out.

WORKERS' ORGANISATIONS HAVE LIBERTY AGAIN

Following these events, the position in Spain is more hopeful, not less hopeful, from the point of view of the Social Revolution. The mass working class organisations—the C.N.T. and the U.G.T.—are freed from the compromises of membership of the Central Government. In Catalonia the workers have recovered their revolutionary spirit and, despite the continued representation of the C.N.T. in the Government, its membership has recovered its self-reliance, whilst the clear revolutionary lead of the P.O.U.M. has a greater opportunity than ever.

THE CHARGE OF "TROTSKYISM"

There are two final matters to which reference must be made: first, the Communist charge that the P.O.U.M. is a Trotskyist party serving as an instrument of the Fascists; and, second, the rôle of the Communist Party itself.

The P.O.U.M. is not a Trotskyist party. In its own official statement, published on May 11th, it said: "We do not hold a point of view in common with Trotsky." There is a Trotskyist group in the P.O.U.M., as there is in other sections of the working class, but it is small and has no representatives on the Executive Committee. Andres Nin and a section of the Party used to belong to a Trotskyist organisation, but when Trotsky issued orders that they should join the Socialist Party, they refused and joined with the Workers' and Peasants' Bloc, led by Joaquim Maurin and Julien Gorkin, to form the P.O.U.M. Since then there has been a complete break with Trotsky and "La Batalla" has quite recently carried a series of articles attacking Trotskyism.

It is the custom now of the Communist Party to denounce any Socialists who maintain a revolutionary attitude as Trotskyists. This is only a cloak to hide the departure of the Communist Party itself from a revolutionary policy.

WHY COMMUNISTS ARE AGAINST REVOLUTION

The policy of the Communist Party in Spain will only surprise those who do not understand the meaning of the change in the Communist International during recent years.

The main function of the International is to serve as an instrument of the foreign policy of Soviet Russia, and that foreign policy aims at an alliance of the so-called "democratic" Capitalist nations against Germany. The first objective is to win Britain as an ally, but Britain will not become an ally if Russia or the Communist International encourages a social revolution in any country where British capital is invested. Revolutions must accordingly be postponed until the danger of war from Germany is over.

In Spain British capital is heavily invested. Soviet Russia and the Communist International must therefore make clear that their interest in Spain is only to establish a Democratic Republic. In such a Republic British capital will be as secure as it was before the Fascist revolt began.

The degree of the responsibility of the Communists for the provocation in Barcelona which led to the workers' rising and for the expulsion of Largo Caballero, the Socialist Left, the C.N.T. and the U.G.T., from the Madrid Government has yet to be determined. It is significant that these events followed immediately on a conference of Communist Parties in Paris.

AN HISTORICAL PARALLEL

History makes curious changes. In July, 1917, there was an armed demonstration in Moscow, not dissimilar from the armed demonstration in Barcelona in May, 1937. In Russia the Kerensky Government, a model Popular Front Government including the Cadets (Liberals), the Mensheviks (the Social-Democrats), the Social Revolutionaries (mainly Peasants) and a number of smaller groups, had been applying a policy of counter-revolution, including an attempt to disarm the Red Guard—just as the Popular Front Government has been doing in Barcelona. The workers resisted, and the Bolsheviks (that is the Communists) participated in the revolt when it began. This is what John Reed wrote in his "Ten Days Which Shook the World":

"... In July, it was the spontaneous rising of the unorganised proletariat to demand that the Soviets take over the Government. The Bolsheviks, then a small political sect, put themselves at the head of the movement. As a result of the failure of the rising, public opinion turned against them. ... Then followed a savage hunt of the Bolsheviks; hundreds were imprisoned, among them Trotsky, Madame Kollontai and Kamenev; Lenin and Zinovieff went into hiding; the Bolshevik papers were suppressed, provocateurs and reactionaries raised the cry that the Bolsheviks were German agents. ..."

In Barcelona in 1937 the P.O.U.M. fulfilled the historic rôle which

the Bolsheviks fulfilled in Moscow in 1917. The Communists took the part of the Mensheviks. Just as the Bolsheviks were charged with being German agents, so the P.O.U.M. is now charged, ironically enough by the Communists with being Fascist agents! H. N. Brailsford stated the position accurately in the "New Statesman and Nation" (May 21st) when he wrote: "P.O.U.M. represented the older and now heretical Communist position," adding, "The Communist Party is no longer primarily a party of the industrial workers or even a Marxist Party."

THE NEW LEADERSHIP

In every country sincere revolutionary workers are turning not only from the reformist policy of the Social-Democrats and Labourists, but also and as emphatically from the opportunist policy of the Communists—turning from it to a leadership which bases itself on the class struggle and refuses to be satisfied with the illusions of political capitalist democracy.

In Britain that leadership is being given by the I.L.P., which salutes in Socialist solidarity its brother party in Spain, the P.O.U.M., and looks forward with confidence to the triumph of the Spanish workers—a triumph which will not only shatter Fascism, but lay the foundations of the new Workers' State of Socialism. It is our duty to speed the coming of that day.

To learn more of the I.L.P.

I should like to receive a specimen copy of the I.L.P. paper, the "New Leader," and particulars of its publications.

Name

Address

Fill in this form and post to the I.L.P., 35, St. Bride Street,
London, E.C.4.

To join the I.L.P.

I should like to have full particulars of the I.L.P. with a view to joining the Party.