

serious consequences; the nationalist movement there was clerical-conservative in control and returned a bloc of the most reactionary deputies in the Constituent Cortes. Since the Basque and Catalonian provinces are also the chief industrial regions, this was a decisive question to the future of the labor movement: how free these workers and peasants from the control of alien classes?

The model for the solution was given by the Russian Bolsheviks, who inscribed in their program the slogan of national liberation, and carried it out after the October revolution. The broadest autonomy for the national regions is perfectly compatible with economic unity; the masses have nothing to fear from such a measure, which in a workers' republic will enable economy and culture to flourish freely.

Any other position than support of national liberation becomes, directly or indirectly, support for the maximum bureaucratic centralisation of Spain demanded by the ruling class, and will be recognized as such by the oppressed nationalities.

Catalonian nationalism had grown under the oppression of the Rivera dictatorship. Hence, a day before the republic was proclaimed in Madrid, the Catalans had already seized the government buildings and declared an independent Catalonian republic. A deputation of republican and socialist leaders rushed to Barcelona, and combined promises of an autonomy statute with dire threats of suppression; the final settlement provided a much-restricted autonomy which left the Catalan politicians with grievances they could display with profitable results in the way of maintaining their following among the workers and peasants. On the pretext that the Basque nationalist movement was reactionary, the republican-socialist coalition delayed a settlement of the question and thereby gave the Basque clericals, threatened by the proletarianization of the region, a new hold on the masses. In the name of getting away from regional prejudices, the socialists identified themselves with the outlook of Spanish bourgeois-imperialism.

Thus, in all fields, the bourgeois republic proved absolutely incapable of undertaking the "bourgeois-democratic" tasks of the Spanish revolution. That meant that the republic could have no stability; it could be only a transition stage, and a short one. Its place would be taken either by military, fascist or monarchichal reaction—or by a real social revolution which would give the workers power to build a socialist society. The struggle against reaction and for socialism was a single task, and on the order of the day.

III

THE COALITION GOVERNMENT AND THE RETURN
OF REACTION, 1931-1933

The revolution of 1931 was not a month old when bloody struggles between soldiers and workers took place.

The cardinal-primate's injunction to Catholics to vote "neither monarchist nor republican" led to mass burning of churches. A monarchist club meeting May 10th was hooted by workers, monarchists fired and wounded workers, and with the spread of the news through Madrid, groups of workers started a round-up of monarchists. The fight against Church and monarchists reached such proportions that the workers involved left the factories for some days to carry on the struggle. The socialists joined the republicans in appealing for calm and return to work; the revolutionists demanded extermination of the monarchist organizations and arrest of their leaders. Worse still, the socialists instructed their militia to help the police maintain law and order. In the ensuing struggles the Civil Guard shot ten workers. A delegation of their comrades demanded of the provisional government the dissolution of the Civil Guard. The government's reply was a declaration of martial law and the troops were called out in all the important cities. Alfonso's police and army, its officer caste still weeping for the banished King, solaced themselves with attacks on those who had caused Alfonso to flee. The workers got their first taste of the republic and of socialist participation in a bourgeois government.

In the work of drafting the new constitution, the socialists viewed the republican-socialist coalition as the permanent government of Spain. It was more important to give the Spanish government strong powers than to provide a free hand for anarchist and communist "irresponsibles" to incite the masses to disorder.

Was there any possible justification for the socialist position? The Spanish socialists argued their support of the government was justified because this was a bourgeois revolution, the completion of which could be achieved by a republican government, and that the "consolidation of the republic" was the most immediate task in warding off the return of reaction. In this argument

they echoed the German and Austrian Social-Democracy after the war. But they were flying in the face of the authentic tradition and practice of Marxism.

The revolutions of 1848 had failed, and had been followed by the return of reaction, because of the indecisive course of the petty-bourgeois republicans. Drawing the lessons of 1848, Marx came to the conclusion that the struggle against the return of reaction, as well as the securing of maximum rights for the workers under the new republic, required that in succeeding bourgeois revolutions the proletariat must fight in *organizational and political independence* from the petty-bourgeois republicans.*

Marx's conceptions of strategy were applied in the Russian Revolution of 1905, in which the proletariat created workers' councils (soviets) constituted by delegates elected from factory, shop and street, as the flexible instrument which unified workers of various tendencies in the struggle against Czarism. The Russian workers followed Marx's advice that no special alliance is necessary with even the most progressive sections of the bourgeoisie: both classes strike at the same enemy, but the proletarian organizations pursue their independent aims without the constriction and unnecessary compromise of an alliance—that is, a common program, which could only be the minimum and therefore a bourgeois program—with the bourgeoisie. In February 1917, the soviets were again created at a time when most Marxists thought the question was merely one of bourgeois revolution.

Thus, even for the "bourgeois" revolution, soviets were neces-

* "In the case where a struggle against a common enemy exists, a special kind of alliance is unnecessary. As soon as it becomes necessary to fight such an enemy directly, the interests of both parties fall together for the moment. . . . And then, as soon as victory has been decided, the petty-bourgeoisie will endeavor to annex it for themselves. They will call upon the workers to keep the peace and return to their work in order to avoid (so-called) excesses, and then proceed to cut the workers off from the fruits of victory. . . ."

"During the struggle and after the struggle, the workers at every opportunity must put up their own demands in contradistinction to the demands put forward by the bourgeois democrats. . . . They must check as far as possible all manifestations of intoxication for the victory and enthusiasm for the new state of affairs, and must explain candidly their lack of confidence in the new government in every way through a cold-blooded analysis of the new state of affairs. They must simultaneously erect their own revolutionary workers' government beside the new official government, whether it be in the form of executive committees, community councils, workers' clubs or workers' committees, so that the bourgeois democratic government will not only lose its immediate restraint over the workers but, on the contrary, must at once feel themselves watched over and threatened by an authority behind which stand the mass of the workers. In a word: from the first moment of the victory, and after it, the distrust of the workers must not be directed any more against the conquered reactionary party, but against the previous ally, the petty-bourgeois democrats, who desire to exploit the common victory only for themselves." (Marx, "Address to the Communist League" (1850), Appendix 3 to Engel's, "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany", London, 1933).

sary. And the German and Austrian revolutions taught very different lessons than those which the Spanish socialists chose to draw. For these revolutions, too, had created soviets; but, dominated by reformists, the soviets had been dissolved as soon as capitalism regained stability. The real lessons of the German and Austrian revolutions were that soviets require a revolutionary program; that as organs without political power they cannot continue to exist indefinitely; that one cannot support both the government and the soviets, as the German and Austrian reformists, like the Russian Mensheviks, tried to do; that soviets can begin as powerful strike committees but must end as organs of state power.

Thus have Marx's conclusions of eighty-six years ago been reinforced by every succeeding revolution.

Thus the course taken by the Spanish socialists from 1931 to 1933 was completely alien to Marxism. "Spain is a republic of workers of all classes." This silly phrase was adopted upon socialist initiative as the first article of the constitution.

The constitution limited voting to those over the age of 23, and set up a method of Cortes elections which favored coalition tickets and made representation of minority parties almost impossible. When this method later worked against them, the socialist leaders confessed it had been instituted on the assumption that the socialist coalition with the republicans would go on indefinitely!

Compulsory military service was made a constitutional provision, as under the monarchy. The President of the Republic was given power to choose the Premier and to dissolve the Cortes twice in a presidential term of six years, and could be removed during his term only by a three-fifths vote of the Cortes. Provision was also made for a Court of Constitutional Guarantees with powers of nullifying legislation equivalent to those of the United States Supreme Court, and for a difficult system of amending the constitution.

Like the Weimar constitution, the Spanish document contained a great deal of phraseology about social rights but with a "joker" (Article 42) providing for suspension of all constitutional rights; there was immediately adopted the "Law for the Defense of the Republic"—copied almost verbatim from the similar German law. It established as "acts of aggression against the republic": spreading of news likely to disturb the public order or credit; denigration of public institutions; illicit possession of arms; unreasonable refusal to work; lightning strikes. Furthermore, the Minister of the

Interior was empowered "in the interests of public order" at any time, to suspend public meetings; to close clubs, associations and unions; to investigate accounts of all associations or unions; to seize illicit arms.

There was also enacted a law continuing Rivera's mixed arbitration boards to settle strikes. "We shall introduce compulsory arbitration. Those workers' organizations which do not submit to it will be declared outside the law," said Minister of Labor Largo Caballero on July 23, 1931. It was made unlawful to strike for political demands, and unlawful to strike unless the workers had presented their demands in writing to the employer ten days before.

Such was the legal structure adopted by the republican-socialist coalition. Not a single deputy voted against it, and it was adopted, December 9, 1931, by 368 ayes and 102 abstentions.

The revolutionists replied by reminding the socialists of the Marxian theory of the state. The Spanish government, regardless of who sits in the cabinet, is a capitalist government. Its powers are powers in the hands of the capitalist class. To give this government the power of suspending constitutional guarantees, or intervening in labor disputes, etc., is an act of treachery against the proletariat. Inevitably these powers will be used against the proletariat.

To limit the voting age to 23 (and this in a southern country where boys of sixteen are active figures in the movement!) is to deprive the working class of a powerful means of drawing into political life the most revolutionary force in the country: the youth. The proletariat least of all need fear the most thorough-going democracy: the electoral scheme means that large sections of the workers and peasantry will not secure representation in the Cortes.

To democratise the bourgeois régime by centering governmental functions in the most representative body, the Cortes, is an elementary tenet of working class policy; to put powers in the hands of a Supreme Court, a president and a cabinet, is a crime against democracy. These smaller bodies are far more susceptible to reactionary influences.

Do we seek to democratise the state so that we shall support it? No! The working class rallies only to its own organizations, its own class organs. The limited possibilities of democratizing the bourgeois state apparatus are important only so far as they

enable us to build, side by side with it, the DUAL POWER of the soviets!

* * *

The bloody clashes of May were only the beginning. "Spreading news likely to disturb the public order or credit" was a description broad enough to cover most anarchist or Marxist criticism. It was not unusual for Azaña's men to confiscate five out of six successive issues of a communist paper. The prohibition of lightning strikes was a deadly blow to syndicalist methods of struggle. Strikes were driven from the field of battle to the debilitating channels of arbitration boards before the workers had a chance to force favorable settlements. Socialist organizers advised C.N.T. strikers they would get better settlements if they joined "the union of the government." The deepening agricultural crisis led landowners to sharper and sharper attacks on the living "standards" of sharecroppers and landworkers; arbitration agreements raising their pay were ignored and the workers were banned from striking while government agents went into interminable investigations and discussions with the landowners.

Unscathed by the meaningless church laws, the clergy raised their heads, and their demands found spokesmen high in the government. When, in August 1931, the Vicar General of Seville was seized illegally crossing the border with documents revealing sale and concealment of Jesuit and other church property, the Catholic Ministers in the provisional government, Maura and Zamora, were able to prevent publication of the documents. Maura retired from the government with the end of the provisional cabinet in December; but Zamora, who wished to retire on the principled ground that he was hostile to the constitutional clauses and the laws dealing with the Church, was persuaded to accept elevation to the Presidency of the Republic by socialist votes. From that exalted post Zamora, from the very first day, aided the clerical forces of reaction.

The socialist, Indalecio Prieto, entered the cabinet as Minister of Finance. At his first move to take control of the Bank of Spain, the government was shaken as by an earthquake. The final "compromise" provided a shifting of cabinet seats, giving the Finance Ministry to a capitalist who named suitable governors for the Bank.

On the last day of the year that ushered in the republic, the peasants of Castilblanco yielded up to the republic the first important group of political prisoners. Meeting with firm resistance an attack by the Civil Guard, the peasant leaders were sent to prison for long terms.

Thereafter, the drama moved to its inexorable ending in reaction. As it became utterly evident that the government's course left reaction not only untouched, but enabled it to grow stronger, the socialist leaders had to speak less of the government's achievements and more of their own organizations. Restive workers were soothed by pointing to the growing numbers in the U.G.T., and to the socialist militia. Revolutionists, however, pointed out that the U.G.T. could not be a bulwark against reaction so long as it supported the government. Struggle against capitalism and support of a bourgeois government are mutually incompatible. The government's prestige is bound up with a record of "maintaining order" so that Minister of Labor Caballero must prevent strikes with the aid of arbitration committees or throttle them if they break out against his will. So, too, the socialist militia: created with the consent of the government and used as an auxiliary to the police, it could be nothing but a display force for parades; a real proletarian militia cannot be pledged to support a bourgeois government nor be limited to the proletarian organizations pledged to loyalty to the régime; it must be a genuinely class weapon which fights for democratic rights without limiting itself to the bounds of bourgeois legality, and which is just as ready to assume the offensive as to fight on the defensive.

In crushing the C.N.T., the troops broadened the repression to the whole working class. Under cover of putting down an anarchist putsch in January 1933, the Civil Guard "mopped up" various groups of trouble-makers. An encounter with peasants at Casas Viejas, early in January 1933, became a *cause célèbre* which shook the government to its foundations and opened the road for reaction.

The counter-revolution had taken to arms (August 10, 1932) in Seville, when General Sanjurjo led troops and Civil Guards for restoration of the monarchy (the movement was smashed by the workers of Seville under revolutionary slogans which alarmed Azaña more than did Sanjurjo). Now the counter-revolution discovered that it could out-do the republicans and socialists in demagogic appeals to the masses. The monarchist and Catholic parties sent their own investigating committee to Casas Viejas; they unearthed a terrible story. Under direct orders from Minister of the Interior Quiroga to "take no prisoners," the Civil Guard had descended on the little village where, after two years of patient waiting for the Institute of Agrarian Reform to divide the neighboring Duke's estate, the peasants had moved in and begun to till the soil for themselves. The peasants scarcely could resist the Civil Guard; they were hunted through the fields like animals; twenty

were destroyed, others wounded. The survivors were warned by government officials to keep quiet unless they wished the same fate.

Azaña had refused to investigate, and delayed interpellations in the Cortes. Finally, the republican-socialist coalition had to face the music. The monarchist-Catholic deputies wept large tears for massacred peasants and shouted themselves hoarse at such a cruel government. When Azaña finally had to admit the truth about Casas Viejas, he sought to shift the blame to the Civil Guards; but they implicated Quiroga himself. Through it all, the socialist deputies sat silent, and voted a motion of confidence in Azaña-Quiroga. The reactionaries had a real field day: to Casas Viejas they added denunciation of the government for its oppression of the labor press and the large number of political prisoners, mostly workers, in the jails (9,000 was one communist estimate in June 1933). The reactionaries even submitted to the Cortes a bill providing amnesty for all political prisoners, to the enthusiastic vivas of the anarchists.

The workers and, above all, the peasantry were thoroughly bewildered by this bold and successful demagogy. Who were their friends? The republican-socialists had promised land but did not give it. "What did the republic give you to eat?" The republic had killed and jailed the brave peasants of Castilblanco and Casas Viejas. In vain did the socialists argue and plead—the peasants knew their own misery.

The end came quite quickly. In June 1933, Zamora tried to dismiss the coalition but was out-manuevered, while the socialists announced that any further attempt would be met by a general strike. It proved an empty threat. It is doubtful whether the bewildered and discouraged workers would have responded to a call; they had been held in leash too long! Three months later, Zamora struck again, dismissing the cabinet and simultaneously dissolving the Cortes. Lerroux was appointed Premier.

The elections were held in November; the victory of the coalition of reactionaries and rightists was decisive. The socialists offered many explanations: the embittered anarchists had effectively campaigned for a boycott of the elections; the communists had run separate tickets; the women were under clerical influence and voting the first time; the socialists—running independent tickets in most places, under the pressure of the rank and file—fell victim to their own stupid provisions for electoral machinery; the local bosses and landowners terrorized the villages and bought votes; the elections were fraudulent in many places, etc., etc. But this was a poor alibi and its details, indeed, were proof of the failure

of the republican-socialist coalition to win and inspire the masses or to crush the reaction in two and a half years of rule. The cold statistics are that, of 13 million eligibles, 8 million voted and more than half of them voted for the rightist coalition, the "anti-Marxist front," and another million voted for center parties. The petty-bourgeois republicans were wiped out, returning but seven deputies, most of them, like Azaña, owing their election to socialist votes.

As a witness for our analysis of the causes of the victory of reaction, we introduce Indalecio Prieto. In a mood of extreme honesty and frankness, on fleeing to Paris after the October 1934 revolt, Prieto told *Le Petit Journal*, in answer to the question, "How do you explain the discontent in Spain, and the success of Gil Robles in the last elections?":

"Precisely because of the right policy of the left régime," said Prieto. "This government born with the republic and created by the republic became the rampart of forces adverse to the republic. It is true that the left government of Spain carried out the policy of the right before Lerroux and Samper. In this period of perishing capitalism, the Spanish bourgeoisie could not carry through even the bourgeois-democratic revolution."

IV.

THE FIGHT AGAINST FASCISM:
NOVEMBER 1933 TO FEBRUARY 1936

Though governmental crises changed cabinet personnel six times during the next two years, Lerroux's Radicals remained ostensibly at the helm, with either Lerroux or his lieutenants—Samper, Martinez Barrios—as Premier. The Radicals gave a pledge to the left that no Gil Robles man would enter the cabinet. Actually, this arrangement was dictated by Gil Robles. He had studied the methods of Hitler and Mussolini, and felt he dared not openly take power until his fascist movement had acquired a mass base.

It was certainly fitting that this degenerate and reactionary régime should be led by the Radicals, to whose malodorous history we have already referred. A party of such grotesque buffoonery ("Every Nun a Mother!" had been a Lerroux slogan) could exist only so long as capitalist and proletarian camps did not lock in mortal combat; it was soon to dissolve, its finish occasioned, appropriately enough, by a series of scandalous revelations of financial peculations involving the whole party leadership. But for the "bienio negro," the two black years, its cynical satyrs served the austere clericals as Premiers and Ministers.

The legal structure provided by the republican-socialist coalition proved most useful to Lerroux-Gil Robles. Over a hundred issues of *El Socialista* were seized within a year. The Socialist International estimated in September 1934 a total of 12,000 imprisoned workers. The socialist militia was proscribed and its arms confiscated. Workers' meeting halls were closed and their union accounts scanned to discover use of funds for revolutionary purposes. Socialists and other workers elected in the municipal councils were removed. All the laws which the socialists had thought to use against "irresponsibles" were now used against them.

Gil Robles' main problem was to secure a mass base, a difficult task because Spain has an extremely small middle class. Outside of the small group of prosperous peasant-owners in the North—Basque and Navarra—where a force similar to the Austrian clerical-fascist militia was organized, Gil Robles would have much difficulty in recruiting from the lower classes. There were, how-