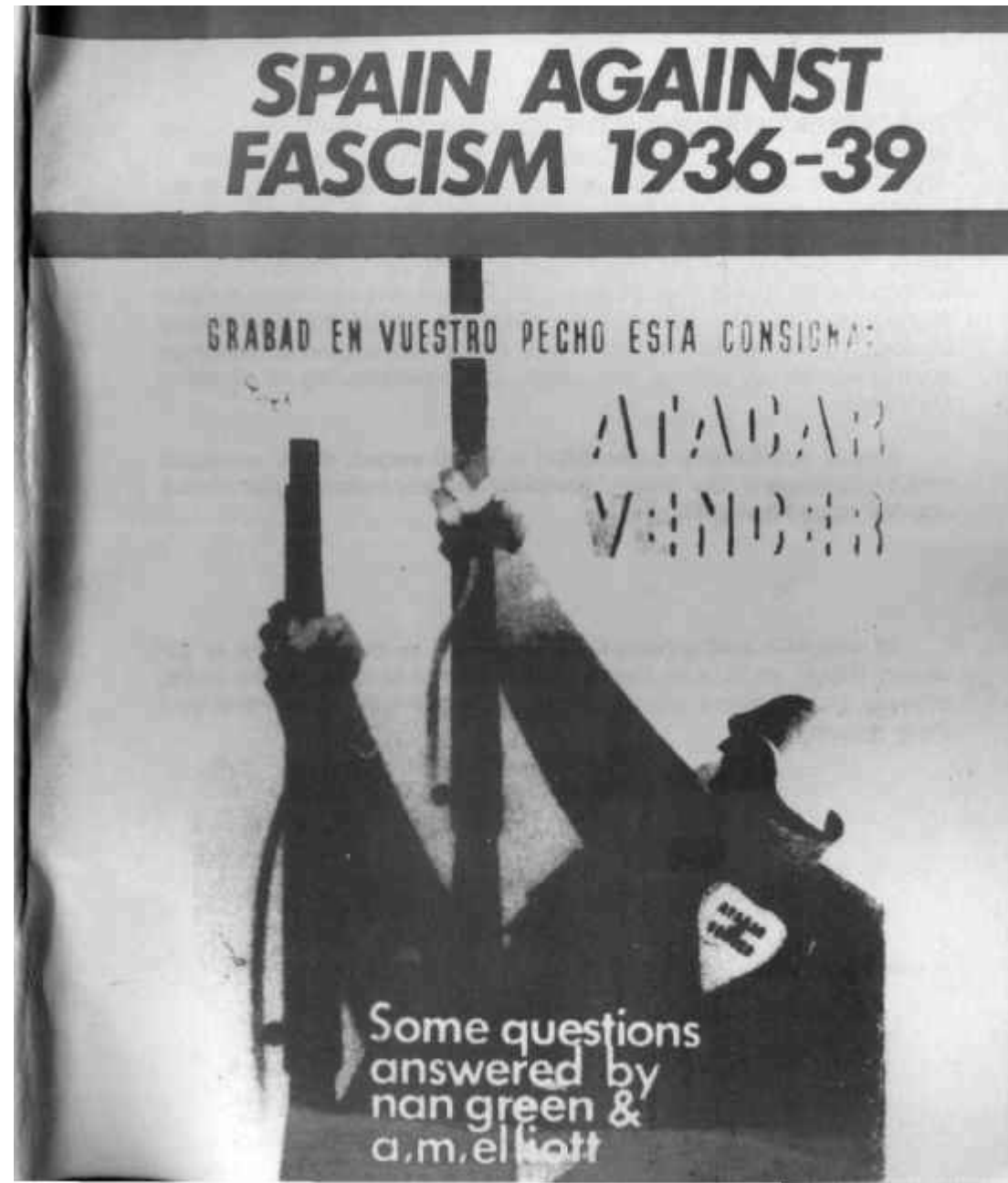


# OUR HISTORY

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**THE HISTORY GROUP OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY**, one of the specialist groups set up by the Communist Party in the late 1940's (and in continuous existence since then) seeks to develop discussion of the Marxist approach to history and to foster a critical and informed understanding of the past among all those active in the labour and democratic movements. While membership of the group itself is confined to members of the Communist Party and Young Communist League, it does publish suitable monographs as *'Our History'* pamphlets and articles for *'Our History Journal'* by non-members. The History Group thus makes an important contribution to the political knowledge and understanding of all active comrades.

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The cover reproduces two propaganda postcards issued by the Junta delegado de defensa de Madrid in 1956

**SPAIN AGAINST FASCISM 1936-9**  
**Some Questions Answered**

**NAN GREEN and A M ELLIOTT**

**INTRODUCTION**

The authors of these studies believe that today - some 40 years after - the lessons of the war waged by the Spanish people from 1936 to 1939 are even more topical in many spheres than they were, say, in 1940. One of the greatest of those lessons - that it is possible to stand up and fight fascism and reaction even against the most desperate odds - was, of course, supremely important in 1940, but others, equally vital in the long run, seemed less relevant at that time than they do today.

The significance of the revolutionary war of the Spanish people against the combined forces of international fascism, internal reaction in Spain and the infamous policy of "non-intervention" (really intervention on behalf of fascism) pursued by Britain, France and the United States, has been understood clearly enough by reactionaries in the English-speaking world, as is shown in our libraries by row after row of volumes, the primary purpose of which is to misrepresent and besmirch one of the most glorious and inspiring episodes in the long struggle of the peoples of Europe (and not only of Europe) against tyranny and for progress.

We cannot claim that in the pages which follow we have dealt with all the aspects, or even all the main aspects, of the Spanish people's struggle in that period - a period which was, in a very real sense, the first act of World War II. We have not dealt in any detail with the development of the Spanish Popular Front, for instance, although its experience is of great interest now, when very broad alliances of the progressive forces are being built in Spain and in other West European countries. Nor have we dealt with the nationalities question in Spain, although it has considerable topicality in Britain now that the demand, of the Scottish and Welsh peoples for full recognition of their national identity and for freedom to exercise their national rights are rapidly gathering strength.

What we have done is to take certain aspects of the war, from among those regarding which misrepresentation has been most vicious, and to try to present them in proper perspective. The problems on which we have touched are: the general historical background to the Spanish War; German and Italian intervention; the policy of "Non-Intervention"; Soviet aid to the Spanish Republic, and some problems of the Republic (the religious question, anarchism and Trotskyism).

We claim no "definitive" status for the studies which follow - studies which are, in fact, rather in the nature of "work in progress".

**1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

In the first three decades of the 20th century the economic and political conditions of Spain remained, to a substantial extent, feudal. Capitalism existed, as it were, on sufferance. The great majority of the working population were engaged in agriculture. The real rulers of the country were a handful of big aristocratic landowners, known as the oligarchy. A census carried out before the fall of the monarchy revealed that some 200,000 landowners owned between them 44 per cent of the land under cultivation. At the other end of the scale, more than half of the four million peasants owned no land at all. Whether they worked as wage-labourers, or as small tenant farmers or sharecroppers, the peasantry remained in bottomless misery, on the verge of starvation.

The two to three million industrial and mining workers and the million small craftsmen were only relatively better off than the peasants, being cruelly exploited. The grinding poverty in town and country alike hindered the development of industry, since there was no adequate market for home products. The main industries-textiles in Catalonia, mining and metallurgy in Asturias and the Basque country-were highly monopolised, protected by enormous tariffs, and dominated by foreign capital (French-mining, textiles and chemicals; Belgian-railways; Britain-metal industry in the Basque country, the naval shipyards, and the copper mines of Rio Tinto).

Besides the landowners-who were often also the monopolists-and the Crown, two other sections were vitally interested in maintaining the old regime: the Church and the Army. The Church, with a priest for every 900 persons (the highest proportion after Italy at that time), was not only the greatest landowner but the greatest industrialist, banker and school-master in the country. The Army contained one General for every 538 soldiers, and one officer for every six other ranks. The Army had won little or no distinction in foreign wars but was admirably suited for repression at home. The most professional branch of the army was the Foreign Legion (Franco's shock troops). The vast majority of the officers were monarchists, opponents of change and deadly enemies of anything that looked like revolution. The conscript soldiers were poor and ill-armed.

Against these elements, the progressive forces consisted of first, the industrial workers, numbering no more than one and a half million, who, despite their division into anarchist and socialist were highly militant and had established themselves as the leading force in the progressive camp from the general strike of 1909; second, the smaller manufacturing people and trades, and thirdly, the intellectuals. After the workers the greatest support for the Spanish revolution came, as in other countries, from the landless peasants. The nationalist parties in Catalonia and the Basque region generally ranged themselves with the Republican Government.

By 1931 the monarchy had become so discredited that the overwhelming victory of the Republican parties in the municipal elections led to the departure of Alfonso XIII (he did not officially abdicate, so as to leave open the possibility of a return) and the Second Republic was proclaimed. The moderate government that then came to power drew up a new constitution and made a start on the pressing question of land reform. But it failed to reckon with the deliberate sabotage of the old ruling class, and in 1933 an ultra-Right-wing government was returned under Lerroux, which promptly proceeded to undo most of its work. The new labour laws were abrogated, landed proprietors recovered their estates which had been expropriated and the secularising regulations (abolition of salaries paid to priests, introduction of divorce by mutual consent, freedom of worship for non-Catholic sects among others) were suspended.

When it was announced in October 1934 that Lerroux's Radicals and the ultra-conservative CEDA (right-wing Catholic, what was then called "clerical fascist") had come together to form a government which bade fair to become an open fascist-type dictatorship, armed risings took place in Catalonia and Asturias. That in Catalonia was soon put down, with 20 dead, but the Asturian miners and people paid a terrible price-1,500 dead, 3,000 wounded, 25,000 imprisoned, 730 buildings destroyed or severely damaged and Oviedo, the provincial capital with wrecked buildings. Foreign Legionaries and Moorish troops were sent specially from Africa to quell this uprising. The entire operation was directed, from Madrid, by General Franco.

It was as a result of these experiences that the working-class, with the Communist Party in the lead, began to build the Popular Front, which won a resounding victory at the elections of February 1936-a victory which the people celebrated by releasing 30,000 political prisoners from the jails. Steps were begun for the reintroduction and continuation of the democratic legislation begun in 1931, and Statutes of Autonomy were put into effect or voted for in referendums for Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia. The new government was headed by Manuel Azana, a moderate Republican, and its programme could hardly be considered more than radical-it was in fact the minimum programme to which all the parties in the Popular Front had subscribed. (It is worth keeping in mind, in view of the still-current Right-wing efforts to depict Franco's rebellion as a "crusade against Communism", that the new Cortes consisted of 278 seats for the Frente Popular, of which 99 went to the Socialists, 87 to the Izquierda Republicana, 39 to the Union Republicana-dissident Radicals-36 to the Catalan Separatist Left, and 17 to the Communist Party; as against 176 for the Right and 56 to the Centre parties.)

The programme, however, was much too progressive for the landowners and the Army, who resumed their traditional occupation of plotting to destroy the Republic, and, tragically enough, were able to do so without hindrance. Political tension mounted during the summer and on July 17-18, 1936 a group of high Army officers revolted, among them Franco.



## 2. INTERVENTION

The rebels imagined they could gain a quick victory. The revolt had been proclaimed from the barracks of every town of any size. But within a few days the people, almost unarmed, had forced the rebel troops to surrender in all the main industrial and commercial areas of the country. In Madrid and Barcelona there were tremendous feats of heroism by the workers and the People's Militia. Asturias and the Basque country remained loyal. The rebels won quickly in the poorer, more backward, mainly agricultural areas. If it had remained simply a Spanish war, there is little doubt that the Republican Government, supported by the Air Force and most of the Fleet, would have defeated the rebellion.

It did not remain a Spanish war. Indeed, it had not even begun as one. As far back as 1934, Mussolini "had paid out to anti-Republican plotters the substantial sum of a million and a half pesetas, promised them 200 machine guns and 20,000 grenades in order to hasten the moment of revolt, and authorised the training of 400 Carlist volunteers on Italian soil."<sup>1</sup>

#### FRANCO AND THE POLITICS OF SPAIN

On the 19 July 1936, Franco addressed an SOS to Mussolini, and seventy-two hours later a similar appeal to Hitler. On the 10 August, forty German Junkers-52s and Italian Savoia-Marchettis, lent to Franco, effected between Tetuan and Seville the first air-ferry, carrying 500 men and fifteen tons of equipment **every day** across the Straits of Gibraltar. This was but the start of Axis aid. "Franco has stated", wrote Count Ciano (Mussolini's son-in-law) in his **Diaries** (1940),"that if he received twelve transport and bomber planes he would win the war in a few days. Those twelve aircraft became 1,000 planes, 6,000 dead and millions of lire ...." Mussolini sent several divisions of the Italian army to Spain complete with their staffs, arms, equipment,etc. In all, the number of Italian troops who took part in the Spanish war amounted to 150,000. The Italian Air Force carried out 86,420 flights and 5,318 bombing raids in the course of which 11,585 tons of explosive were dropped on the Spanish population. Italian submarines sank dozens of ships in the Mediterranean -not just Spanish but Soviet, British, Norwegian and others. In October 1936, Hitler sent a special air unit under the command of General Sperrle: the Condor Legion. It started with 5,000 men but was later enlarged. He also sent tank units, artillery and signal units and equipment, as well as thousands of officers to train and organise Franco's forces. The fact that 26,113 German military personnel received decorations from Hitler for "meritorious conduct" in the Spanish War gives some idea of the extent of German intervention; the number of German officers and specialists sent to Spain is reported to have totalled over 50,000<sup>2</sup>, but the above figure of 21,113 is probably nearer the truth.



#### SPAIN

A Portuguese contingent of about 15,000 men fought in Franco's army, but perhaps even more important was the help provided by the Salazar dictatorship in the form of facilities for the rebels. A big proportion of the shipments of German arms reached them through Portugal; Portuguese aerodromes, telecommunications and radio were put at Franco's disposal, and his troops moved freely through Portuguese territory.

Officially the United States proclaimed its "neutrality " and imposed an "embargo" on the sending of arms to either side. Nevertheless. Franco throughout the war was able to draw on practically unlimited supplies of petrol (which neither Germany nor Italy was in a position to supply and without which their aeroplanes, tanks and armies could not have moved), provided by the big US monopolies, particularly Standard Oil, which delivered supplies on credit (thus financing the rebels with millions of dollars). According to Sandoval and Azcarate, Texaco (a subsidiary of Standard Oil) supplied Franco with 1,866,000 metric tons of petrol. Ford, Studebaker and General Motors sent 12,800 trucks.<sup>3</sup>

#### 3. "NON-INTERVENTION"

Of equal, or perhaps even greater help in assuring Franco's victory was the hypocritical policy of "Non-Intervention". A great deal has been written about the origin of this iniquitous policy-whether it actually emanated from British or French supporters of Franco. The question is immaterial. On the 20 July 1936, the French Premier, the socialist Leon Blum, received a telegram signed by the Spanish Republican Premier, Jose Giral: "Request you to send arms and aircraft urgently. Fraternally. Giral." There was nothing unusual about this request. It referred to a commercial treaty according to which France had a monopoly for supplying arms to Spain. Not only could Giral apply to Paris, he was **obliged** to do so by this contract, and entitled to do so by the terms of international law.

Blum at once began conversations with his Minister of War, Daladier, to work out the size of the aid to be given to the Spanish Government and the means for accomplishing it. But by July 25, the date of the Cabinet meeting which was to make an official decision about French support for Republican Spain, important things had happened. Blum had noted, on a visit to London, the hostility of the Baldwin Government to any involvement in the Spanish conflict, a hostility indicated by the well-known journalist Pertinax ("it is not well-regarded here ....") and confirmed by the British Foreign Secretary. Anthony Eden. Blum returned to Paris to meet a violent campaign in the French press, and a sharp division in his own Cabinet, as well as in French Right-wing parliamentary circles, already panic-stricken by the successes of the Popular Front in France itself. Fearful of the isolation from Britain which would result for his support for the Spanish Republic, Blum sent Admiral Darlan to London to get in touch- through Lord Chatfield, First Lord of the Admiralty, whom Darlan knew personally -with Sir Maurice Hankey, Permanent Secretary of the Cabinet. Since Lord Chatfield regarded Franco as "a good Spanish patriot" and the Conservatives sympathised far more with Franco than with the "Reds", about whom the Tory press was telling the most atrocious falsehoods, Darlan's mission could only end in failure

It was in these circumstances that the French Premier put forward the proposal for "non-interference in Spain's domestic affairs", and an appeal was sent to the rest of Europe, inviting all countries to conclude a "non-Intervention" agreement.

Neither Germany nor Italy were anxious to offer formal opposition to this proposal, but they fussed about with time-wasting questions and confusing negotiations, designed to gain time in which to supply Franco with the arms necessary for winning a victory which they still imagined would be a quick one. What was to be understood by intervention? they asked. Would the commitments made by governments be binding only on states, or on individuals as well? What kind of control was envisaged? Negotiations dragged on, and only on September 9 did the inaugural meeting take place in London. Twenty-five powers were represented, including Germany, Italy and the USSR. The sole action taken at that meeting was to decide on the name: International Committee for the Application of Non-intervention in Spain. The German Charge d'Affaires in London, Prince Bismarck, reported to his superiors that "with France and England, it is not so much a question of taking actual steps as of pacifying the aroused feelings of the leftist parties in both countries by the very establishment of such a committee."

He was right. For the dominant section of the British ruling class the "Non-Intervention" Committee was a big camouflage operation for the policy of appeasement which was to culminate at Munich. It was put across to the British people with a big lie that it was a policy of peace, that the only alternative was a European war. With this argument, Parliament and people were expected to swallow the massive and ever more open intervention of Italy and Germany in Spain, the sinking of British merchant ships carrying goods and foodstuffs to Spain, the growing threat to British communications in the Mediterranean and the pro-Franco actions of the Government, which became increasingly blatant as the Spanish war approached its conclusion. It effectively prevented any real discussion of the Spanish issue in the League of Nations, which could and did take refuge in referring awkward matters to the "Non-Intervention" Committee; and this could be relied on to produce endless shilly-shallying and crass inaction.

It was a policy which brought the British government, and Chamberlain himself, to the depths of degradation and infamy, as is exemplified in the diary of Count Ciano in the following entry for January 27, 1939, shortly after Franco's troops had entered Barcelona: "Lord Perth has submitted for our approval the outline of the speech which Chamberlain will make before the House of Commons in order that we may suggest any changes, if necessary. The Duce (i.e. Mussolini) approved it, and commented: 'I believe this is the first time that the head of the British Government has submitted to a foreign government the outline of one of his speeches...'"

To its everlasting shame, the National Council of Labour actually supported the "Non-Intervention" policy for the first vital year of the Spanish war. They explained this by pointing to Leon Blum, who was described by Walter Citrine, then General Secretary of the TUC, as "a socialist, a man of proved international repute, of courage and broad-mindedness and of intelligent understanding." These were his words at the 1936 TUC Congress, where Ernest Bevin argued that a vote against "Non-Intervention" might help to bring about the fall of the Blum government. (Far from discussing the mobilisation of the anti-fascist forces in support of the Spanish struggle, one of the main items on its agenda was a discussion on a document entitled "The British Labour Movement and Communism-an Exposure of Communist Manoeuvres".)

After the Spanish war had ended, the Labour Party met on May 29, 1939, for its annual conference, where Sybil Wingate (sister of Wingate of Burma) told the leadership "Lord Halifax has told us recently that the Government has no Spanish blood on its hands. We know what to think of that Pontius Pilate, but what are we to say of ourselves, of our movement, of our National Executive who by their betrayal during the first terrible year, and their obstinate refusal to take any effective action worthy of the situation afterwards, have cost us the key position in the fight against fascism and sacrificed the lives of so many of our best and bravest comrades?" Michael Foot has described how, when the issue of Non-intervention was being debated at the Plymouth TUC (1936), Charles Duke explained that the National Council of Labour had not been "able to secure a tittle of evidence" that arms were pouring in to the rebels. Shortly afterwards, Aneurin Bevan went to the rostrum and denounced the attitude of the supporters of Non-intervention in the following words:

"We have been told by Mr Bevin and we are told by Mr Greenwood that those of us who were critical of the Party were being governed by our sentiments and not by our heads I listened to Mr Dukes with great care, and if Mr Dukes is representative of the cool, calculated and well-informed manner in which the official policy of the Party is being decided, then I am all for sentiment and emotion. He told us there was no evidence before the National Council of Labour as to the supply of arms to the rebels in Spain. Every reputable visitor from Spain informs us that the Government of Spain is without arms from outside and the rebels are getting all they need to support them. Every newspaper in London is full of information about arms pouring in through Lisbon. Del Vayo has made statements at Geneva and laid a document before the League to the effect that arms are pouring in to the rebels and that now the rebels are superior in the air. Everybody in the world knows about the rebels getting arms -except the National Council of Labour"<sup>4</sup>

The Soviet Union tried extremely hard to get Britain, France and the other states, jointly with itself, to declare that in view of the blatant breaches by Germany and Italy of the "Non-Intervention" agreements, these should be rescinded and the right of the Spanish Republic to buy arms from other countries should be restored. But these proposals met with refusal. Consequently, on October 7, 1936 the Soviet Union sent an official communication to the London Committee, which stated

"The Soviet Government cannot, in any event, consent to the Non-intervention agreement being transformed by certain of the parties into a screen intended to conceal the military aid being given to the rebels against the legal Spanish government. Consequently, the Soviet government finds itself obliged to state that if these violations do not cease immediately, the USSR will consider itself freed from any obligations ensuing from the "Non-Intervention" Agreement "

On October 23, 1936. In a further letter to the London Committee, the Soviet Union declared that the only solution was to restore to the Spanish Government all facilities for acquiring arms abroad "The Soviet government," said the letter "cannot feel itself bound by the Non-intervention Agreement to any greater degree than any of the other parties to that agreement "

The decision did not remain a purely verbal one.

To the very end, the British Government did its best, inside and outside of the "Non-Intervention" Committee, to obstruct aid to the Republic and to obscure the role of the fascist powers in their assistance to Franco. The full story has not yet been told -and cannot yet be fully discerned even though the thirty-year rule has opened the Public Records-of the British role in aiding the Casado "coup" whereby Madrid, and central Spain, were yielded up to Franco despite the fact that the Republican Government (supported by the Communist Party) was determined to continue the struggle even after the fall of Barcelona. But it is widely believed that the British Government played a large part in this manoeuvre. "Casado had undoubtedly been in touch with foreign diplomats, especially British ones... he had frequent contacts with Cowan [one of the representatives of the British Commission for the Exchange of Prisoners, led by Field Marshal Sir Philip Chetwode. Ed.] who seems to have been the actual instigator of the plot, even advising the colonel in the choice of his collaborators."

The fact that Casado left Spain on a British warship, the **Galatea** and lived for some years in this country (he died in Spain in 1968) adds support to this, and the fact that the British Government, with indecent haste, recognised the Franco dictatorship on 27 February, 1939 is a further indication of its complicity in the betrayal.



#### 4. SOVIET AID TO THE SPANISH REPUBLIC

The arrival of the first Soviet planes and tanks in Spain, together with Soviet volunteers and military advisers, in October and November 1936, when German and Italian aid to the rebel generals had already reached massive proportions and when Madrid was in imminent danger of falling to the fascists, was a decisive point in the Spanish War. Together with the entry into action of the International Brigades on the Madrid front, at about the same time, it made a vital military contribution towards holding and stabilising the front and provided a tremendous boost to the morale of the Spanish people, who realised that they were not standing entirely alone against a **de facto** alliance which stretched from London to Berlin.

In both bourgeois and "leftist" literature dealing with Soviet aid to the Spanish Republic two tendencies emerge which would seem to be mutually exclusive but which nevertheless sometimes manage to cohabit in a precarious way in the same work. One of these tendencies is grossly to exaggerate the extent of foreign aid to the Spanish Republic -the numerical strength of the International Brigades and the amount of Soviet aid, so as to place it on a par with the help given to Franco by Hitler and Mussolini, thereby trying to justify fascist intervention and seeking also to obscure the fact that on the Republican side the war was fought to an overwhelming extent by Spaniards and that throughout the war the Republican forces were in a situation of tragic inferiority as regards planes, guns and tanks.

Then there is the other trend-to claim that the Soviet Union and the Communist International betrayed and abandoned the Spanish Republic. When propagated by British authors this leaves a singularly unpleasant taste in the mouth, if one recalls the role which British Tory governments played in strangling the Republic with their "Non-Intervention" policy.

Before even beginning to consider this question, it is as well to give a moment's thought to the international situation as it was in 1936-39 and to the position of the Soviet Union at that time. In 1936 the Soviet Union was far from possessing the economic and military strength which has enabled it today to impose a policy of peaceful co-existence on the main capitalist powers. This is a truism, but such truisms are easily forgotten, especially by those who want to forget them. In 1936-39 the danger of capitalist encirclement and of a war on two fronts (east and west) was a very real one for the Soviet Union and its first duty, both to the Soviet people and to the working-class and progressive movement everywhere else, was to do its utmost to preserve world peace and to ensure its own strength and survival. If anyone doubts that for one moment let him consider the situation that would have developed in the Second World War if the Soviet army had not been strong enough to "tear the guts" out of the Nazi forces at Stalingrad and elsewhere. Let him consider, too, the situation which faced the Soviet Union when Chamberlain and Daladier had done their deal with Hitler at Munich.

All of which means that there was a limit, somewhere, to the amount of aid which the Soviet Union could spare for the Spanish Republic, not to mention the very great difficulties which stood in the way of delivering to the Republican forces the aid which could be spared in the light of the difficulties created by the one-sided application of the "Non-Intervention" policy and the physical losses inflicted by the submarines of the fascist powers.

These are factors which are brushed aside lightheartedly by those whose main concern is simply to attack the Soviet Union and the Communist Parties.

Professor Hugh Thomas writes:

"The German Government was ... encouraged to think that it could act with impunity towards Spain by the noticeable cooling of Soviet interest in Spain in the autumn of 1938, and indeed by various gestures, especially after Munich, of the Soviet Government towards Germany herself."<sup>6</sup>

And again:

"Hitler and Stalin both found various reasons to justify to themselves the continuation

of the war in this way. They could continue to test military (and political) techniques. For each of them, victory in the Civil War might bring as many difficult Questions as defeat. If the Civil War continued, such questions could be postponed."<sup>7</sup>

Following Munich, says Thomas: "Stalin's Government desired to have its hands free to take any action which it judged necessary for its self-defence. This would demand an end to Russia's continued commitment in the Spanish War, and particularly of the army of the Comintern, the International Brigades."<sup>8</sup>

As for what really happened, perhaps the most convincing evidence on how the Soviet Union stood by the Spanish Republic to the end comes from the chief of the Republican Air Force, General Ignacio Hidalgo de Cisneros. In his memoirs<sup>9</sup> he has given an account of a mission to the Soviet Union which he undertook in the second half of 1938, on the instructions of Prime Minister Negrin, in order to ask for a further large consignment of armaments-250 planes, 250 tanks, 650 guns, 4,000 machine guns, etc. As Negrin and his closest advisers saw it, only Soviet assistance on that scale could prevent, or at least delay, the fall of Catalonia in face of the massive offensive of the Italian, German and Franco forces which was then imminent.

On the day of his arrival in Moscow, Hidalgo de Cisneros saw Marshal Voroshilov, the Soviet Defence Minister, and handed over three letters from Negrin, one addressed to Voroshilov himself and the others addressed to Stalin and Kalinin. On the following day he was received in the Kremlin by Stalin. Voroshilov and Molotov. They questioned him closely about the situation in Spain and went on to consider the request for arms. Hidalgo de Cisneros, who personally regarded the figures in Negrin's list as "astronomical", was surprised and delighted to find that Stalin was favourably disposed towards the request, although Voroshilov did ask at one point, in a good humoured way: "Does Comrade Cisneros want to leave us without weapons?"

Before the end of the meeting it emerged-and Negrin had deliberately neglected to inform Hidalgo de Cisneros of this-that the gold deposits of the Bank of Spain in Moscow were already virtually exhausted, because of previous purchases of arms, foodstuffs, etc., which the Republic had been obliged to acquire abroad during the war. Hidalgo de Cisneros quotes Voroshilov as saying: "The Spanish government still has a credit in the Soviet Union amounting to ..." And he adds that he does not recall the exact figure, but it was less than 100,000 dollars. "So we must look for a way of meeting the difference". Voroshilov continued. "Tomorrow you will have a talk with the Minister of Trade, Comrade Mikoyan, so as to finalise this matter."

The rest of the evening was spent in a friendly and convivial atmosphere and, summing up his impressions. Hidalgo de Cisneros writes:

"I do not claim to have painted a likeness of the Soviet leaders who took part in the interview and who behaved towards me in such a friendly and straightforward way. Subsequently, for instance, the character of Stalin has been presented in all its complexity. I also learned that blameless Soviet military men who had distinguished themselves by their bravery when fighting on our side in Spain, had become innocent victims of his intolerable and calamitous suspicions. Nonetheless, I want to reiterate here my firm belief that the attitude of the Soviet Union towards the Spanish Republic during our war was one of complete solidarity and support. The warmth shown towards me was naturally not due to my personal qualities or to the fact that I was Hidalgo de Cisneros. The Soviet leaders welcomed me with the same affection which the people of the Soviet Union showed everywhere towards the Spanish people and the Spanish cause."

Following Hidalgo de Cisneros' talk with Mikoyan, it was decided that the Soviet government would grant a loan to the Spanish Republic to cover the cost of the consignment of arms (somewhat over a hundred million dollars). Hidalgo de Cisneros points out that the only security for this loan was to be his own signature, and he adds: "That is to say, on the strength of my signature alone, the USSR, at a time when the war was almost lost, was providing Spain with more than a hundred million dollars."

The consignment of arms was sent from Murmansk to France in seven Soviet ships. The first two reached Bordeaux while there was still time for the arms to have helped the Republican Army, but the French government placed all kinds of difficulties in the way of moving them to the Spanish frontier, and Hidalgo de Cisneros comments bitterly:

"When the arms began to arrive in Catalonia, it was already too late. We no longer had aerodromes at which the planes could be assembled, nor did we have the territory on which we could defend ourselves.

"If the Paris government had facilitated the transit through France of the armaments which the USSR was sending us, the fate of Catalonia might have been changed. With those arms we could have held out for some months, and with international conditions as they were in Europe at the time, that resistance might have been fatal for the fascist plans.

"No words can describe our despair, knowing as we did that the longed for weapons had arrived at a French port, that we might have had them in our hands in a few hours, and seeing the days go by and the fascists making themselves masters of our territory', while the French authorities procrastinated and procrastinated quite deliberately in authorising the passage of the weapons through France. Most shamelessly, they were giving a hand to that fascism which, not many months later, was destined to take possession of their own country."

Figures for Soviet military aid to the Spanish Republic were recently quoted in the Soviet contribution to International Solidarity with the Spanish Republic 1936-1939 (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975), which says:<sup>10</sup>

"In Western literature one finds fantastically exaggerated figures about Soviet participation in the military operations in Spain. In fact only a little more than 2,000 Soviet volunteers fought and worked in Spain on the side of the Republic throughout the whole war, including 772 airmen, 351 tank men, 222 army advisers and instructors, 77 naval specialists, 100 artillery specialists, 52 other specialists, 130 aircraft factory workers and engineers, 156 radio operators and other signals men, and 204 interpreters. What is more, there were never more than 600 to 800 present in Spain at one time. So this is the truth behind the 'Soviet intervention' and 'Russian divisions' proclaimed by fascist propaganda, which served the hypocritical 'appeasers' of fascism in Paris and London ruling circles as a pretext for equating the Soviet people's aid to the Spanish Republic with the massive invasion of Spain by hundreds of thousands of regular Italian and German troops in support of the insurgents.

"The total extent of Soviet military supplies may be seen from the following figures: the Soviet Union sent to the Spanish Government 806 military aircraft, mainly fighters. 362 tanks, 120 armoured cars, 1,555 artillery pieces, about 500,000 rifles, 340 grenade launchers, 15,113 machine-guns, more than 110,000 aerial bombs, about 3,400,000

shells, 500,000 grenades, 862 million cartridges, 1,500 tons of gunpowder, torpedo boats, air defence searchlight installations, motor vehicles, radio stations, torpedoes and fuel. Not all these war materials reached their destination because, as has already been mentioned, some Soviet vessels and ships chartered from other countries were sunk by the Italians or forced into ports held by the insurgents.

Soviet military cargoes were delivered to Spain by two routes -by sea to Spanish Mediterranean ports and overland through France. Both routes were extremely unreliable. The French Government allowed military cargoes to cross its territory only at certain times and then not in their entirety. They used to be held up in France for months. In the period from autumn 1937 to spring 1938 the Pyrenean frontier was firmly closed to Soviet arms. The last large consignment of Soviet war material sent to France did not begin to cross the Franco-Spanish frontier until the end of January 1939. when a considerable part of Catalonia had already been captured by the fascists."<sup>11</sup>

Nearly 200 of the Soviet volunteers were killed in action in Spain. <sup>12</sup>

Speaking of the Soviet military advisers who were with the fighting units. Santiago Carrillo, the general secretary of the Spanish Communist Party, says "They were military men of great quality and exemplary courage. Many of them gave their lives at the front ... In short, the Soviet advisers, tankmen and airmen who helped us from the first days were men of great worth"<sup>13</sup>

We have concentrated so far on Soviet military aid to the Spanish Republic, but Soviet aid took other forms as well. Large quantities of foodstuffs and clothing were sent and by early August 1936 the Spanish aid fund of the Soviet trade unions had raised 12,145,000 roubles and the Soviet State Bank sent the equivalent-36,435,000 francs -to the Spanish government. By the end of October this sum had risen to over 47,595,000 roubles.<sup>14</sup>

In addition the Soviet Union fought a stubborn struggle in the international field for the rights of the Spanish Republic. The names of Maxim Litvinov and Ivan Maisky will always be remembered in that connection.

With the influence and membership of the Spanish Communist Party growing rapidly during the war as it did. and with Soviet aid assuming crucial importance, it was almost inevitable that accusations to the effect that undue Soviet influence was being exerted in the Republic should be heard from some quarters. The Italian anti-fascist, Carlo Rosselli wrote in May 1937, shortly before he was murdered in France by fascist agents "Certainly the USSR is intervening in Spain more than is right and necessary." But he went on to ask "But without the USSR would there still be a Republican Spain"<sup>15</sup>

Many lies have been told about Soviet pressure on the Spanish Republic. The Prime Ministers of the Republic, the socialists Largo Caballero and Negrin. whatever shortcomings they may have had. were not the kind of human material out of which puppets are made, nor were the principal military leaders of the Republic.

Interesting in this connection is a letter which Stalin, Molotov and Voroshilov sent to Largo Caballero on December 21 1936, in response to an appeal from the Spanish Prime Minister for arms and military advisers. In their letter the Soviet leaders said "The Spanish revolution is opening up roads which are different in many respects from the road travelled by Russia. This is determined by the difference in conditions in the social, historical and geographical spheres, the demands of the international situation, which

are not the same as those which confronted the Russian Revolution. It is very possible that the parliamentary road may turn out to be a more effective procedure for development than it was in Russia.

"Taking everything into account, however, we believe that our experience, and especially the experience of our civil war, properly applied to the special conditions of the Spanish revolutionary struggle, can be of definite value for Spain. Bearing this in mind and in view of your insistent requests ... we agreed to put at your disposal a number of military specialists, to whom we gave instructions that they should give advice in the military sphere to those Spanish officers whom they would be assigned by you to help.

"They were warned in a categorical manner not to lose sight of the fact that, with all the awareness of the solidarity with which the Spanish people and the peoples of the USSR are today imbued, the Soviet specialist, since he is a foreigner in Spain, cannot be really useful unless he abides strictly by his function as an adviser, and only an adviser."

The Soviet leaders went on to ask for a frank opinion from Largo Caballero on how the Soviet advisers were carrying out their mission and whether the Soviet Ambassador in Spain, Marcel Rosenberg, was performing his duties in a satisfactory way or whether it would be better to replace him by another representative.

The Soviet leaders put forward four suggestions for Largo Caballero's consideration

1. Measures should be taken to satisfy the aspirations of the peasants. The peasants should be encouraged to join the Republican Army and also to form guerrilla groups in the rear of Franco's forces,
2. The petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie should be attracted to support the government or at least to take an attitude of benevolent neutrality towards it. They should be protected from attempts to confiscate their property and should have freedom to conduct their businesses, otherwise they would support the fascists.
3. The leaders of the Republican parties should be drawn into the work of the government, especially in the case of Azana and his group, doing everything possible to help them to overcome their vacillations. It was also necessary to prevent the enemies of Spain from seeing in it a communist republic, thereby preventing their open intervention, which constituted the most serious danger facing the Republic.
4. An opportunity should be found to declare that the Spanish government would not tolerate any encroachment on the rights and legitimate interests of foreigners in Spain, of citizens of countries which were not supporting the rebels. <sup>16</sup>

The whole tone of the Soviet letter showed the determination at the USSR to respect Spanish sovereignty scrupulously and not to exploit in any way its position as the only great power that was helping the Spanish Republic. It is necessary, too, to bear in mind the immense prestige which the Soviet leaders enjoyed at that time as the representatives of the party and the country which had carried out the first, and up to that time the only, successful socialist revolution in the world. As such their advice was solicited, not resented, by revolutionary leaders in other countries. Largo Caballero sincerely regarded himself as a revolutionary socialist and his admiration for Lenin was very great, although unfortunately his understanding of Leninism was not equally so. It is clear from his

reply to Stalin, Molotov and Voroshilov that it was he who had asked the government of the USSR to send Soviet military advisers to the Republic and that he welcomed their help and wanted the Soviet leaders' advice, even if he was not necessarily prepared to follow it.

"The letter which you have been so kind as to send me by Comrade Rosenberg has made me very happy ...", he said, "The aid which you are giving the Spanish people and which you have imposed upon yourselves, regarding it as a duty, has been and continues to be of great benefit to us. You can be sure that we appreciate it at its true worth.

"From the bottom of my heart, and on behalf of Spain, and especially on behalf of the working people, we thank you for it; we hope that in the future, as has been the case up to now, we shall not be without your help and advice.

"You are right to point out that there are substantial differences between the development followed by the Russian Revolution and that followed by our own. In fact, as you yourselves point out, the circumstances are different: the historical background of each people, the geographical position, the economic conditions, social evolution, cultural development, and above all the political and trade union maturity within the framework of which the two revolutions have taken place are different. But, in answer to your reference, it should be pointed out that whatever fate the future has in store for parliamentary institutions, they do not enjoy enthusiastic support among us, or even among the Republicans. ["Republicans" is used here in the sense of members of the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois Republican parties. Ed.]

"The comrades who, at our request, have come to help us, are doing us a great service. Their great experience is very useful to us and is contributing in an effective way to the defence of Spain in her struggle against fascism. I can assure you that they are performing their duties with real enthusiasm and with extraordinary courage.

"As for Comrade Rosenberg, I can assure you very sincerely that we are satisfied with his conduct and with his work with us. Everyone is fond of him here. He works hard, too hard, and is harming his health, which is not good. I am very grateful to you for the friendly advice at the end of your letter. I value it as proof of your cordial friendship and of your interest in the successful outcome of our struggle ..."

We cannot do better in concluding this assessment of the significance of Soviet aid to the Spanish Republic than to quote what Santiago Carrillo has said on the subject. He was a member of the Madrid Junta of Defence in the crucial weeks at the end of 1936 and was leader of the United Socialist Youth (in which socialists and communists were united) throughout the Spanish War, and is consequently in a position to speak with some authority:

"It is true that the Soviet Union ... sent us war material, and it was with this that we were able to wage war for three years and avoid being throttled in a few weeks. It has been said that the Soviet Union could have helped us more. I myself-and I cannot be suspected of being an 'unconditional' -believe that in view of the state of the Soviet army at the beginning of the war, it was not possible for them to do more. That is my sincere conviction. And there was also the blockade, which prevented part of the arms the Soviet Union was sending us from reaching Spain."<sup>17</sup>

## 5 SOME PROBLEMS OF THE REPUBLIC-THE RELIGIOUS QUESTION ANARCHISM AND TROTSKYISM

We have shown that the decisive cause of the defeat of the Spanish Republic was the

intervention of Hitler and Mussolini and the policy of Non-intervention pursued by the British, French and United States imperialists. An important secondary cause contributing to defeat was the failure to build sufficiently strong working-class and anti-fascist unity, sufficiently strong national unity against the foreign invaders. Nevertheless, what was accomplished in this sphere was far in advance of what any other people in capitalist Europe achieved at that time. If one is to speak of the "immaturity" of the Spanish working-class, as is sometimes done, then what is one to say of the British and French working-class? If they had achieved the same measure of unity as was secured in Spain the policy of Non-intervention could have been brought crashing down in ruins.

As the Manifesto-Programme recently adopted by the Communist Party of Spain rightly says: "In defence of the Republic the people, united in the Popular Front, wrote one of the most glorious pages in its history. On Republican territory profound social transformations were carried out: this was, with all its difficulties and contradictions, the first experience of a pluralist system of collaboration of various parties: communist, socialist, anarcho-syndicalist, democrats, nationalists, Catholics, in a democratic struggle which was opening up prospects of socialism."

One of the factors which operated strongly against the broadest possible anti-fascist unity was the attitude of the Church hierarchy in Spain, which, with certain honest and very courageous exceptions, threw itself wholeheartedly into the struggle on Franco's side and enabled him to secure a certain amount of success in presenting the rebellion of the fascist generals as a "Christian crusade"

Nowadays, after Pope John and Vatican Council II, it is hard to realise how intensely reactionary most of the leading Church dignitaries were in Spain in 1936 and this attitude was maintained throughout the war. On April 1, 1939, when the rebel troops and their Italian and German allies had finally overrun the whole of Spain, Pope Pius XII sent a cable to Franco in which he said: "Lifting up our heart to God, we give sincere thanks with Your Excellency for Spain's Catholic victory."

At no time, however, did the Popular Front government pursue a policy directed against freedom of belief and freedom of worship. There were practising Catholics in the government and Catholics held important posts in the army. The Basque provinces, generally regarded as the most Catholic region of Spain, were wholeheartedly on the side of the Republic and so were large numbers of the Basque clergy.

Nevertheless, anti-clerical excesses did, of course, occur. Given the historical background and the fact that in the first months of the war churches were often used by the fascists, with the connivance of priests, as military strongpoints and arms stores, it was almost inevitable that churches should be burned down and priests killed at a time when the Republican government, through the fault of the rebels, was without the means to establish order.

In 1936, too many of the Spanish clergy regarded unconditional support for the interests of the property-owning classes and hostility towards the Republic as fundamental tenets of the Christian faith, while too many on the Republican side, especially among the anarchists and some of the petty-bourgeois liberals, were ready automatically to equate the word "Catholic" with the word "fascist"

The power and wealth of the Church in Spain, and the way in which they were used, had given rise to a fierce anti-clericalism which had deep roots in Spanish history. Friars were murdered in Madrid in 1834 and monasteries were set ablaze in Barcelona, Murcia

and other places in 1835. Churches had already burned in 1823 and they **burned** again in 1868.

Another unhappy tradition existed which also added fuel to the flames of anti-clericalism. Opportunist politicians "on the make", who had no desire to get to grips with the great social evils in Spain but who wanted to masquerade as fiery revolutionaries, discovered that savage anti-clerical propaganda suited their requirements admirably.

On a slightly higher plane, the men who came to power with the Second Republic in 1931 were to a large extent the heirs to an anti-clerical tradition. The socialist historian Antonio Ramos Oliveira has summed up their position in the following words:

"Philosophic Republicanism under the Second Republic showed no trace of having suffered the slightest change during the past 130 years. The Liberal middle-class in Spain wrote and spoke as the Spanish Liberals used to think and write in 1810. It was a case of mental stagnation at its worst. They thought in all good faith that men could only begin to live in Spain on the day when the Church was separated from the State. Whatever fell outside the ecclesiastical question was, for them, a subsidiary matter."

The Republican government did all it could to re-establish normal conditions for religious worship<sup>18</sup> and the appointment of the Catholic Don Manuel Irujo as Minister of Justice was intended to further this policy. By the winter of 1937-8, large numbers of priests who had gone abroad in the early stages of the war had returned to Republican territory. Yet it was one thing to want to see normal facilities for religious worship established and another to implement this policy in practice. Anti-clericalism was not the only obstacle to be overcome. As Hugh Thomas writes: "The Vatican .... was not at all enthusiastic for the formal re-establishment of religion in the Republic—since this would have weakened the Catholic purity of Franco's cause."

Undoubtedly the support given him by the great majority of the Church hierarchy was a tremendous asset for Franco, in a country where a large section of the population were fervent Catholics.

Today, owing to a variety of causes—a better educated priesthood, the influence of world developments and above all the bitter lessons taught by the years of Franco dictatorship—the Church in Spain has undergone a profound transformation, a transformation so great that it is now regarded by the most reactionary circles in the country as "a den of heresy and Marxist infection".

In Spain, at the time of the Spanish War, anarcho-syndicalism was still a mass movement with great influence among large sections of the working-class. In the space available here an exhaustive examination of the historical, social and economic causes of this phenomenon is not possible. We can only indicate in general terms some of the main reasons why anarchism had such a power of attraction in Spain, alone among the coun-

tries of Europe. The anarchists' rejection of all central authority was attractive in a country where the provinces regarded the rule of Madrid as highly oppressive, and in the case of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia, as alien as well, while the terrorism of the authorities served as justification for the terrorist methods employed by the anarchists. Lenin once remarked that anarchism was frequently a kind of penance for the opportunist sins of the working-class movement. The policies pursued by some of the socialist leaders—the preaching of "class peace", the search for accommodation with Primo de Rivera's dictatorship and then acceptance of the tutelage of the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois Republican parties, etc—certainly contributed to an anarchist "backlash", especially at a time when the Communist Party was very small, very sectarian and, for the most part, in prison. The opportunism and corruption of many political figures, coupled with the extreme difficulty, not to say impossibility of securing fair elections in Spanish conditions, helped to win support for the anarchists' policy of abstention from elections and rejection of parliamentary action.

The fragmented character of much of Spanish industry, the large number of small factories and workshops, was another very important factor. The combination of brutal oppression, grinding poverty and widespread illiteracy provided a fertile soil for illusions about destroying the state at one stroke and introducing "libertarian communism" overnight.

The unsuccessful putsch carried out by a section of the anarchists and the members of the POUM (usually regarded as Trotskyist) in Barcelona in May 1937 has been the pretext for a vast amount of misrepresentation which has given this episode a greatly exaggerated position in the history of the Spanish War.

What is Trotskyism? Unfortunately we must stay, if not for an answer, then at least for a few observations on this somewhat Pilatean question. At various stages in the history of the Soviet Union the meaning of Trotskyism, the nature of Trotsky's policies, was clear enough. To the extent that Trotsky's policies were followed they cost the Soviet Union dear, and if they had been carried through to the end, the consequences for the Soviet Union and doubtless for all mankind would have been altogether disastrous. The fight against those policies in the USSR—and we should not forget that questions of life and death were involved—was conducted in a special way in very special conditions. When we come to consider the role of Trotskyism in Spain, it has to be borne in mind that in the situation prevailing in that period—given the enormous prestige of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Communist Party—there was inevitably a considerable "overspill" from the Soviet struggle on to the Spanish scene.

In Spain the communists and the socialists were confronted with the problem of an anarchist movement with enormous mass influence. With that problem, they scarcely needed any others. Anarchists had assassinated members of the Communist and Socialist Parties and during the Spanish War they pursued policies (forced collectivisation, confiscations, religious persecution, etc.) which were calculated to alienate the middle-

class and the peasants without whose support victory was unthinkable, and they were, in the early stages of the war at least, bitterly opposed to the creation to a disciplined regular army.

Yet despite all this, and a great deal more besides, the Spanish communists were able, in the main, to consider the anarchist problem with remarkable restraint and tolerance, in a rational and scientific way, to understand its origins, to appreciate that Spanish anarchism was not a homogeneous force, fossilised for all time, but was developing quite rapidly under the influence of the revolutionary war and the problems it posed for all anti-fascist forces. They saw that the anarchists were in their great majority sincere opponents of fascism and that many of them were valiant fighters, but that they often had great difficulty in advancing from ideological positions which were highly unproductive in the situation that existed in Spain. They were greatly helped in achieving this understanding by the fact that some of the finest leaders of the Communist Party of Spain had served their apprenticeship in the class struggle in the ranks of anarchist organisations.

The communists were consequently able to play a major role in assisting the evolution of the mass of the anarchists, and of some of their leaders as well, along a more constructive and fruitful path. This process, of course, was neither simple nor universal in the ranks of the anarchists. Some of them, especially in the leadership of the FAI (the Iberian Anarchist Federation, which became, in all but name the political party of anarchism), adopted as their main aim, not victory in the fight against fascism, but preparations for what they saw as an ultimate and inevitable settling of accounts with the communists and the other parties of the Popular Front. For a little while, in March 1939, some of them were able to realise their ambition when they took part in the Casado coup in the units under the anarchist military leader Cipriano Mera, which fought the communists and helped to hand over to Franco what was left of the Republic and its armed forces.

Yet the evolution which took place among the anarchists was very real and very considerable. As early as the autumn of 1936 large numbers of members of the CNT<sup>19</sup> and especially among those fighting in the militia columns, began to realise that the classical doctrines of anarchism—destruction of the state and of the army as an immediate step, and decentralisation of the economy—would, if applied, prove detrimental and even fatal to the chances of victory against fascism. The anarchist leaders were compelled, willy-nilly to revise their policies. By September 1936 anarchists had even joined the Catalan government and in November of the same year they joined the government of the Spanish Republic. They also took part in the Sovereign Council of Asturias and other state bodies. Eventually, after much valuable time had been lost, they declared themselves in favour of creating a regular army and consented to take their places in that army, accepting military discipline, uniforms, ranks, etc.—all things which had been anathema to them in the very recent past.

In spite of all the difficulties, the Spanish communists succeeded in building up remarkably good and comradely relations with large sections of the anarchists. One of the consequences of this was that when the war was over and only the communists proved willing and able to continue the struggle in the extraordinarily difficult conditions of Franco terror, quite a number of anarchists joined their ranks.

We have dwelt on this attitude of the communists towards the anarchists at some length because it was highly significant in itself and also because it was in very distinct contrast to the attitude adopted towards those who were, or who were regarded as, Trotskyists—the members of the POUM (the Workers' Party of Marxist Unification, as it chose to

call itself). This was a "leftist" party with a very mixed assortment of members. Some of the leaders and members could be very reasonably described as Trotskyists, in the sense that they were more or less directly influenced by Trotsky and espoused many of his main ideas. Others had no doubt joined the party almost by chance, attracted by its ultra-revolutionary slogans and its promise of a short cut to socialism and a workers' state. Because of its amorphous nature and the fact that applicants for membership were not subjected to any close scrutiny, the fascists in some parts at least of Republican territory were advised to join the POUM at a time when membership of an anti-fascist organisation was a valuable form of insurance. And to all appearances the POUM was an anti-fascist party. It had signed the Popular Front pact in January 1936 and one of its leaders, Andres Nin, had become Councillor (Minister) of Justice in the Catalan government. It was in Catalonia, and above all in Lerida, that the POUM had its main strength. Elsewhere in Spain it was without any mass basis.

Trotsky's personal direct influence on Spanish events was probably quite small. In a recent issue of Cogito Monty Johnstone has done a useful job in examining Trotsky's views on the Spanish War and placing them in the perspective of his views on international affairs and the international working-class movement in general. Trotsky's actual writings on the subject can be found in *The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)*. By the time he was writing about the Spanish War Trotsky had become so utterly obsessed by his hatred of the Soviet leadership and the leadership of the Communist International that he was no longer capable of those flashes of insight and good sense which he had shown earlier, notably in relation to the situation in Germany. The book also provides a grisly example of the folly of trying to interpret a revolution mechanically in terms of another and earlier one. As far as Trotsky was concerned the Russian Revolution was being fought again in Spain. "Actually two doctrines in the so-called republican camp fought—Menshevism and Bolshevism," he wrote.<sup>20</sup> He discussed what he called "the Bolshevik point of view", which, of course, was his own. "... The Comintern has fully rehabilitated the doctrines of Menshevism," he declared.<sup>21</sup>

What we needed in Spain, according to Trotsky, was "a break with the bourgeoisie", "a revolutionary onslaught of the workers". This would obviously entail a break with almost everybody else, with the exception of a mystical entity known as "the masses" ... "Neither the Socialists nor the Anarchists seriously opposed the Stalinist programme. They feared a break with the bourgeoisie. They were deathly afraid of every revolutionary onslaught of the workers ... The Anarchists had no independent position of any kind in the Spanish revolution. All they did was to waver between Bolshevism and Menshevism."<sup>22</sup>

As for the POUM, Trotsky wrote:

"The record of the POUM is not much better. In point of theory, it tried, to be sure, to base itself on the formula of permanent revolution (that is why the Stalinists call the POUMists Trotskyists). But the revolution is not satisfied with theoretical avowals. Instead of mobilising the masses against the reformist leaders, including the Anarchists, the POUM tried to convince these gentlemen of the superiority of socialism over capitalism ... By isolating the vanguard from the class the POUM rendered the vanguard impotent and left the class without leadership ... Contrary to its own intentions, the POUM proved to be, in the final analysis, the chief obstacle on the road to the creation of a revolutionary party."<sup>23</sup> "The Spanish proletariat fell victim to a coalition composed of imperialists, Spanish Republicans, Socialists, Anarchists, Stalinists, and on the left flank, the POUM."<sup>24</sup>

And so **ad infinitum**.

Obviously the links between Trotsky and the POUM were not simple and straightforward, and the problem of the extent to which the POUM was Trotskyist or just "leftist" would make an interesting subject for a thesis. For those who regard "Trotskyist" as a satisfactory blanket term for all "leftists", no problem, of course, arises. The POUMists shared some of their cherished doctrines with the anarchists as much as they did with Trotsky—the idea of "instant revolution" and rejection of any alliance with the petty-bourgeoisie and medium bourgeoisie for instance. The anarchists wanted to introduce "libertarian communism" at a stroke. And if neither Trotsky nor the anarchists had existed, then in the somewhat apocalyptic atmosphere that prevailed in Republican Spain in 1936 and 1937, some people would still have gone looking for short cuts and voluntarist solutions.

What is very significant is, as we have said earlier, that the approach of the Communist Party to the POUMists and their sins (which were real and great) was different from the approach to the anarchists. For the anarchists, repentance and salvation were possible but for the POUMists (as Trotskyists) the gates to Paradise were irrevocably closed.

The great crisis came in May 1937, and the action taken then by the POUM was almost wholly dependent on an alliance with a section of the anarchists.

A situation intolerable for the forces of the Popular Front and the Popular Front Government had developed in Catalonia. The Aragon front, through the fault of the Catalan anarchists, was inactive. In October 1936 the fascists were estimated to have 42,000 men on that front, whereas in April 1937 they had only about 24,000, while the Republican positions were occupied by some 40,000 frontline troops. The anarchists blamed the central government for this inactivity and claimed that it would not supply the arms needed for an offensive. Yet in Barcelona the FAI had substantial arsenals at its disposal.

A prominent member of the FAI, Abad de Santillan, wrote that when the May putsch in Barcelona was over, "there remained in the hands of the population of libertarian tendency bombs in unlimited numbers, machine guns and even artillery."<sup>25</sup>

While at Madrid arms and ammunitions were being exhausted in savage fighting, in Catalonia and Aragon the anarchists were keeping their units idle and intact and were piling up war material with the clear intention of using it at some convenient time to impose their will on the other parties and organisations of the Popular Front.

The Anarchist Councillor (Minister) of Defence of Catalonia did nothing to bring into the armed forces the thousands of young volunteers who were eager to join them. The anarchist Abad de Santillan, who was in charge of Catalonia's Department of the Economy, did nothing to improve the economic situation or to organise the war industry. In the countryside large numbers of peasants had been alienated by compulsory collectivisation, violence and threats. The anarchists regarded their CNT-FAI committees as the real organs of power and defied the agencies of the central government and the government of Catalonia.

The majority of the leaders of the FAI in Catalonia were favourable towards the idea of seizing power in Catalonia by means of a coup d'état against the other anti-fascist forces. These leaders and the forces under their control formed a bloc with the leaders of the POUM, which, since it had been ousted from the Catalan Government in December 1936, had been engaged in the most savage attacks against the Republican institutions. Its newspaper *La Batalla* campaigned against the creation of a regular army and called

for the overthrow of the governments of the Republic and of Catalonia. In its issue of December 2, 1936 it wrote "The parody of the bourgeois Parliament is continuing ... The Madrid Parliament must be buried." A leaflet distributed by the POUMists said: "Madrid ' The tomb of fascism Catalonia ' The tomb of the government " <sup>26</sup>

The atmosphere in Catalonia became increasingly tense. In April there was fighting in the streets of Barcelona between the youth organisations of the various contenders and on April 25, Roldan Cortada, a leader of the UGT,<sup>27</sup> was assassinated. His funeral, which was attended by thousands of members of the CNT, as well as great numbers of socialists and communists and non-party trade unionists, was turned into a great demonstration against those who were fomenting strife and disorder.

Government forces took over control of the frontier districts bordering on France, ousting the bands of anarchist "uncontrollables" who had made this area a happy hunting ground. The government also began to take action against the possession of weapons without a licence. On May 2, the forces of public order under the command of a major presented themselves at the Barcelona telephone exchange, which was occupied by the FAI, and attempted to take it over. The FAIists resisted. They presented an ultimatum, demanding the immediate resignation of the government and the dissolution of the armed forces of the Catalan government. On the night of May 2 and 3, anarchists began to build barricades and Barcelona was turned into a battlefield. Armed groups, brought from the front, attacked the police headquarters, the headquarters of the Catalan government and other buildings. Rifles, machine-guns, mortars and artillery, which had never been used against the fascists, were brought out of hiding and used against the government forces and the members of the working-class organisations (especially the United Socialist Party of Catalonia and the United Socialist Youth) who fought bravely to bring the putsch to an end.

What really doomed the putsch, however, was the fact that it never had the support of the mass of the working-class members of the CNT, who remained neutral and passive.

The final blow of the putschists was the assassination of Antonio Sese, general secretary of the UGT of Catalonia and a veteran Communist Party member.

Military units under anarchist and POUMist command abandoned the front and set out to march on Barcelona, but were energetically dissuaded by the Republican Air Force, Assault Guards and armed peasants. Order was eventually restored. Official figures gave the casualties as 800 dead and 1,000 wounded.

A very strong indication that fascist agents were involved in the **putsch** is provided in a report which the German Ambassador with Franco, Von Faupel, sent to his Foreign Minister on May 11, 1937.

"As for the disorders in Barcelona, Franco informed me that the street fighting had been started by his agents. As Nicolas Franco [Franco's brother] further told me, they had in all some 13 agents in Barcelona. One of these had given the information a considerable time ago that the tension between the Anarchists and the Communists was so great in Barcelona that he could guarantee to cause fighting to break out there. The Generalissimo told me that he had not at first placed confidence in the statements of this agent but had then had them checked by others, who had confirmed them. He had intended at first not to make use of this possibility until a military operation against Catalonia was begun. Since the Reds, however, had recently attacked at Teruel in order to relieve the Euzkadi government, he had judged the present moment to be ripe for the outbreak of disorders in Barcelona. Actually the agent had succeeded, within a few days of receiving

such instructions, in having street shooting started by three or four persons, and this had then produced the desired success."<sup>28</sup>

This criminal adventure in Catalonia sounded the death knell of the POUM and cost the anarchists themselves dear in terms of influence and membership.

The problem of how to deal with what was left of the POUM and with its leaders continued to be a subject of dissension between various forces in the Popular Front. The very summary execution or murder of Andres Nin seems to be the only explanation for his disappearance in mysterious circumstances. This was scarcely one of the finest episodes in the history of the Republic, although Santiago Carrillo has explained the general and very understandable attitude of Spanish anti-fascists to it and other questions relating to the POUM at the time.

"You must take one thing into account: it happened in the midst of war. In the eyes of public opinion the Barcelona putsch was a counter-revolutionary act; there was a revolutionary war in Spain and, for the whole of the army and the people, that putsch, which a small group of anarchists and Trotskyists had got together to carry out, appeared to be a counter-revolutionary act aimed at opening the front and helping the fascist offensive. Franco boasted of having agents of his among the putschists. If you don't bear this in mind, you won't understand why it was that the fact that Nin disappeared at that moment didn't make much impression. Now, certainly, I don't believe that Nin went to Burgos or Berlin. I believe it to be possible that he was executed in our zone. But at that time, following a putsch of such a kind, I accepted the possibility that Nin might have escaped and have gone over to the enemy camp, as the majority of the public thought. And the putsch of May 1937 strengthened us in the opinion that the Trotskyists were counter-revolutionaries."<sup>29</sup>

Stories about "NKVD agents" in Spain, especially in relation to the fight against Trotskyism, have been propagated so widely that one meets them almost everywhere, and this includes works by progressive historians. The authors of this article are inclined to think that most of them are apocryphal. One of us (Nan Green) was in Spain from September 1937 until the end of October 1938 and the other (A M Elliott) from May 1937 until February 1939, sometimes in circumstances in which we might reasonably have expected to hear of such activities by Soviet security agents if they had been at all widespread. We never did. This is not proof, of course, that they never existed. But Santiago Carrillo, who was in a much better position than either of us to know what was going on, has the following to say about this:

"Listen, I myself was a sort of Minister of the Interior, at Madrid, in the Junta of Defence. What I can tell you is that in the course of those two months I had no contact with services of the Soviet Union."

"Yes, but you are talking about 1936," said his interlocutor.

"Perhaps there were some later." replied Carrillo. "Perhaps there were some even then, but in the apparatus which we controlled at that time there were no Soviet personnel. It all. Later, probably, the Soviet people came to arrangements with the Spanish government -not with the communists. With Largo Caballero and Negrin, perhaps. It is like the question of the gold [The gold reserve of the Spanish Republic. Ed.] At a particular time the gold was removed to the Soviet Union without us knowing anything about it, without any intervention by our Party. Later, when we learned of it, we thought it was actually the best solution, otherwise there was a risk of losing it. France might have handed it over to the Francoists, just as she had already done with a depot at Mont-de-Marsan. But we played no part in that decision. Lastly, it is true that it has

been said that there were GPU prisons. I personally have no proof that there were and I never saw one, even though I believe the Soviet people must have had certain services in Spain, connected with the presence of their volunteers who were fighting at the front."<sup>30</sup>

And as for the question of whether a different approach might have averted some of the worst consequences of the POUMist excesses-speculation that belongs to the realm of "if only ..." -we cannot do more than endorse Santiago Carrillo's cautious observations:

"Now, with the hindsight and the experience of history, it may be thought that if the overspill of the international contradictions of the Soviet revolutionary process into the international sphere could have been avoided, it might then have been possible to avoid at the same time the putsch of the Trotskyists and anarchists. But how was it possible to avoid that overspill when through its historical weight and the situation in those years, the Russian Revolution was the dominant factor in the entire revolutionary movement ?"

### POSTSCRIPT

It is seldom remembered that Spain has endured fascism for a period roughly twice as long as that suffered by Italy. During that time big social and economic changes have taken place. Particularly since 1960, there has been considerable economic growth and in the economic sphere Spain has drawn closer to the advanced capitalist countries of Europe, although still lagging some way behind. The working-class has grown in numbers and strength and there has been an exodus of considerable proportions from the countryside. The active population engaged in industry and the services is now 72 per cent of the total active population, while the active population engaged in agriculture has dropped to 27 per cent.

These changes have taken place the hard way, with the maximum sacrifices and suffering being inflicted on the workers and peasants, and indeed on almost everyone with the exception of the big monopolists, financiers and landowners.

The exodus from the countryside is happening, not so much as a result of the modernisation of agriculture, but because of cruel exploitation. Large numbers of villages are being abandoned or are inhabited only by women, children and old people.

Big changes have taken place also in the alignment of political forces since the days of the Spanish War. One of the most striking has been the disappearance of anarchism as a mass movement. In the conditions of savage terror which followed Franco's victory and in the resistance to fascism, anarchism as a movement played no part. It had nothing to offer the Spanish people. The Communist Party of Spain, on the other hand, in spite of tremendous losses, has come through the ordeal strengthened and with tremendous prestige. It has become the party of the Spanish working-class and also of large sections of the middle strata and what the Spanish communists call the "forces of culture" as well.

In the situation that has developed since Franco's death there has been ample evidence of how well the lessons of anti-fascist unity have been learned by the progressive forces in Spain.

It is often assumed that in the last stages of the war anti-fascist unity foundered completely. Yet this was by no means the case. The division was not between socialists and communists, or between communists and Republicans etc.. but between those who

wanted to capitulate and those who wanted to fight on to the end, and beyond the end to a new beginning. Up to the very end of the struggle the Prime Minister of the Republic was the socialist Juan Negrin.

The Communist Party's response to Franco's victory was to launch an armed guerrilla struggle which played a major role in preventing Franco from taking a more active part in the war at the side of Hitler and Mussolini, and it then went over to a mass struggle in the factories and the fascist trade unions and among the students and professional people which has provided a shining example of how to work in a revolutionary way in the conditions imposed by fascism.

Since Franco's death the main efforts of the most reactionary forces in Spain have been concentrated on an attempt to isolate the other forces of the anti-Franco opposition from the communists, to sell to the population the idea of a "democracy without the communists". These efforts have failed completely up to the present and a movement of struggle for genuine democracy has been created, extending over a very broad political spectrum.

A few ghosts from the past remain, generals without an army, calling themselves socialists, although they are quite divorced from the mainstream of Spanish socialism. They have learned nothing and forgotten nothing since the days of the cold war. They may still have some friends in London and in Bonn, but they have very few in Spain. The Spanish people are following the path of united struggle for liberty, progress and socialism.



## 6. HOW FRANCO SURVIVED

Franco's regime was able to survive for 36 years by a combination of brutal repression. Franco's own cunning and tenacity, and foreign aid. And the greatest of these was foreign aid.

The Terror The first result of Franco's victory' was an appalling reign of terror, as he sought systematically to liquidate all opposition to his rule. Ciano, visiting Spain in July 1939, wrote (Diplomatic Papers)

"The problems which face the new regime are many and serious; first of all there is the question of the so-called Reds. Of them there are already 200,000 under arrest in Spanish prisons .... There are still a great number of shootings. In Madrid alone between 200 and 500 a day, in Barcelona 150, in Seville, a town which was never in the hands of the Reds, 80."

A V Phillips, Madrid correspondent of Reuters and the News Chronicle reported in 1940 that "death sentences are pronounced in Madrid at the rate of about 1,000 a month", and stated that in the eleven months March 1939 to March 1940 almost 100,000 Republicans had been executed in that city alone. According to official figures, given by Franco's Minister of Justice to the Associated Press correspondent, A F Folz, between April 1939 and June 1944, 192,684 people had been executed or had died in prison. These official figures do not include the summary liquidations of the first few months, when teams of Falangists roamed the villages and city neighbourhoods, hunting out all who had made their mark under the Republic. Six thousand school-teachers are said to have been shot. The sole fact of having been an officer in the Republican Army meant immediate death. The prisons were full to bursting. Cold and hunger (prisoners were fed mainly on vegetable peelings), neglect and lack of hygiene often served as a substitute for the work of the firing squads. Thus perished tens of thousands of Spaniards.

For Franco there was to be no national reconciliation between "Reds" and "Nationalists". Disabled soldiers who had fought on his side were granted (meagre)pensions. Republican soldiers were not. It was even reported that widows of Franco soldiers were granted licences to act as prostitutes while widows of Republican soldiers were denied them.

All political parties with the exception of the "Movement", all trade unions and democratic organisations were banned, and the very membership of any of them became a crime, punishable in many instances by the death sentence. To obtain work—in conditions of vast unemployment -the applicant had to be sponsored by a Falangist, a Catholic priest or some other "reputable" character. And the country was literally starving. Industry was slow to resume production. In the countryside, the landlords having recovered their power, the wages of those fortunate enough to find work were reduced to the starvation level of 1936. The major preoccupation for the whole people (which ever side they had been on) was the problem of getting enough to eat.

The extent of the terror, though never its vindictiveness, lessened somewhat with the years. Any activity considered "political", including such things as the handing out of leaflets, led to arrest and trial by a military tribunal. Imprisonment, torture and death still awaited those who continued to struggle against tyranny. The mere membership of the Communist Party—as in the case of Julian Grimau, against whom a whole tissue of falsehoods was concocted concerning alleged crimes committed 25 years previously and presented to the military court which sentenced him to death without the slightest corroborative evidence—was enough to incur the death sentence even as late as 1963. In the same year two young Anarchists were put to death by the barbarous garrote vil. And, as will be recalled, Franco ordered the execution of five young Basque nationalists within a few weeks of his death, despite worldwide appeals for clemency.

That the struggle against the tyranny continued throughout the whole period is testimony to the Spanish people's unquenchable thirst for freedom, and above all to the determination and heroism of the Spanish Communists, acknowledged by all to have been the strongest and most sustained of the opposition forces. From 1939, guerrilla forces continued to struggle against Franco in the mountain areas, especially in Aragon, the Levante and Andalusia. Aircraft, tanks and artillery were used against them but did not exterminate them. Nevertheless, fearful losses and the increasing isolation of the guerrilla bands could not be denied, and in 1948 the decision was taken to discontinue the armed struggle in favour of systematic work among the population and particularly in the "vertical syndicates" (the trade union structure founded on Mussolini's corporate state). The result, after years of patient, dogged and highly dangerous work, was the

formation of the Workers' Commissions which, bypassing the old trade union and political antagonisms and uniting the broadest spectrum of the working people, succeeded eventually in wresting recognition from employers and superseding, in all but formal legality, the Franco vertical syndicates, and became the spearhead of the struggle for liberty and democracy. From 1956, strikes began to multiply, in April 1962 the Asturian miners staged the biggest strike since the war (300,000 workers came out). In 1969 a total of 459 strikes were officially recorded; in 1970, 817. Under the slogan "Amnesty for political prisoners" several tens of thousands of workers struck work simultaneously in Catalonia, the Basque country, Madrid, Seville and Galicia. As the movement grew it was joined increasingly by other sections of the population, students, intellectuals, film-makers, artists, professional groups. The vicious penalties imposed on leaders of such actions ranged from six months' imprisonment to ten years or more. In 1969 the Communist, Horacio Fernandez Iguanzo was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment for illegal activity. In 1971 the arsenal of repression was strengthened by the Cortes: persons who spoke ill of the regime, hitherto subject to civil jurisdiction, were now brought before courts-martial. Fines levied by the Tribunal of Public Order were increased fivefold. Capital punishment was to be automatic in the case of anyone found guilty of "guerrilla activity or terrorism". This was in the year that the Spanish Travel Agency put out the slogan "Feel free in Spain".

That strikes, student actions, demonstrations and all forms of protest continued to grow is an illustration of the unconquerable determination of the Spanish people to win their freedom, that they had not overthrown Franco's regime by the time of his death is due above all to the ruthless repression with which even the smallest sign of protest was treated.

**Franco's Balancing Act** Franco's internal support came, not, as in Germany or Italy, from a single fascist (or Nazi) party, but from a number of reactionary elements with contradictory ideologies and varied historical backgrounds. He had the Church hierarchy (about which see Part 6). He had the Army, the Monarchists- Alfonsists and Carlists (with each group wanting its own Pretender back on the throne of Spain;) he had the Right-Wing Catholics who desired an authoritarian regime, and the Falangists whose aim was a pure and strict fascist-type dictatorship. The Falange, as a separate entity, lasted barely four years. Numbering scarcely 30,000 in 1936, it became for a time almost a state within a state, with an armed militia copied from the Nazi SA, its own propaganda media, women's and youth sections, etc. Its increasing militancy and arrogance worried Franco, as also did the ultra-reactionary Carlist *Comunion Tradicionalista*. Fearing a monarchist coup as early as 1937, Franco on the 18 April that year announced the merging of the Falange with the Carlists and several smaller groups into a single formation entitled *Falange Espanola Tradicional y de las Juntas de Ofensiva (FET y JONS)* which has ever since been known simply as "the Movement".

Between these disparate elements Franco could, and did, manoeuvre with the utmost cunning, in the eleven governments he formed between January 1938 and his death in 1975, promoting and demoting, dismissing Ministers, shuffling and re-shuffling and adjusting the weight of the various trends as he thought expedient. From the early 1950s, the secular institution *Opus Dei* occupied an increasingly large place at his side. This semi-secret religious confraternity gradually introduced its members into strategic government positions and became more and more identified with the "technocratic" phenomenon: the application of modern methods into Spanish industry, "commercial dynamism" and so forth. (They were heavily involved in the *Matesa* affair: the biggest financial scandal in the history of the Franco regime.) Franco repeatedly played off the "technocrats" against the military and the Falangists, favouring sometimes one and sometimes, the other and thus maintaining his position. (It would be a mistake to regard

the *Opus* technocrats as doves and the military as hawks; more modern and more intelligent than the "old shirts", *Opus Dei* is potentially a neo-fascist organisation of Catholic colouring, which could be perhaps even more dangerous than the die-hards of the *Falange*.)

**Foreign Aid** Franco signed the anti-Comintern Pact in March 1939. As repayment for the assistance given him by Hitler and Mussolini, he granted anchorage facilities for German and Italian submarines and warships, put Spanish bases at the disposal of Axis meteorological and naval reconnaissance aircraft patrolling the Atlantic, allowed complete freedom of action for Gestapo and Italian SIM agents operating in Spain, and sold vast quantities of iron, wolfram, potash and other ores to the industries of the Reich.

Hitler went to Hendaye in 1940 to meet Franco in a vain attempt to get Spain into World War II. He failed even to obtain a free passage across Spain to attack Gibraltar from the land. Franco stalled by demanding large deliveries of wheat, petrol, heavy artillery and aircraft—and the acquisition of Gibraltar, Morocco and "Spanish" Algeria (Oran) which Hitler, in view of his relations with the Vichy government, could not promise. Franco, it is true, did send the Blue Division—some 45,000 Falangist "volunteers" to fight on the Russian front; they lost more than 4,000 killed and 8,000 wounded and were not highly regarded by the Germans.

In fact, Franco could do no more. Spain was bled white. Her people were starving. Industry was almost at a standstill. And moreover, a part of his military force was heavily engaged in harassing the guerrilla movement to which reference has been made. Thus, besides those Spaniards who had gone into exile and had fought in the French resistance movement, in the British army and elsewhere, the guerrilla forces inside Spain made a noteworthy contribution to the Allied victory.

By the autumn of 1940, having noted Hitler's setback in the Battle of Britain and the first Italian reverses in Cyrenaica, Franco declared Spain a "non-belligerent". After El Alamein, in 1942 and 1943, he withdrew the Blue Division, and in May 1944 he suspended the export of raw materials to Germany. It is significant that by 1943 the Allies had become the principal importers of Spanish wolfram (in that year the USA took 3,335 metric tons whereas Germany got only 900).

In October 1944, Franco sent his well-known letter to Winston Churchill in which he offered Spain's post-war collaboration in anti-bolshevism and the defence of Western civilisation. It was nevertheless stated at Potsdam that Spain "does not possess the necessary qualifications" for membership of the United Nations. He resorted to further shifts and subterfuges, jettisoned some undesirable ministers, expelled Pierre Laval from his refuge in Spain, and published with great ceremony his third "Fundamental Law" which stated: "The Spanish state proclaims as the ruling principle of its acts, respect for the dignity, integrity and liberty of the human person" (this while at least 25,000 political prisoners were rotting in jail, some having been there for six years or more).

In February 1946, the UN General Assembly declared itself convinced that the Franco government, imposed by tyranny with the aid of the Axis powers, did not represent Spain and had rendered its participation in international affairs impossible. In March, the French government closed the Pyrenean frontier. But in that same month, Churchill made his Fulton speech, triggering off the Cold War. The Madrid press stressed the fact that Churchill had echoed Franco's ideas about "containing Communism". (The frontier was re-opened in February 1948).

Moves now began, particularly in the US, for the "normalisation" of relations with Spain which had, wrote the **United States News**, increasing strategic importance. A number of American public figures were invited to meet Franco, and President Truman announced that the US government had no objection to loans from private banks to Spain. In May 1948 France and Britain signed substantial commercial treaties with Madrid: Franco's Foreign Minister told the Cortes that these were the biggest to date. "We can regard a considerable part of our problems in foreign currency as solved ...." he said. "It is certain that the immediate future of our country will be much more propitious. We welcome all those who are coming closer to us."

The US set to work to demolish the **cordon sanitaire** around Spain. Truman told Admiral Forrest Sherman "I don't like Franco and I never will, but I will not let my personal feelings override the convictions of you military men." In August 1950 he ratified the granting of a loan of 62,500,000 dollars to the Madrid government. In September 1953 an agreement was signed with the USA on economic and military aid and mutual defence (the Pact of Madrid). It allowed the US three air bases, a naval base with a highly sophisticated radar system and an oil pipeline, 800 km. long, from Cadiz to Saragossa. The agreement was intended, said the document, "to strengthen peace and international security .. and to help Spain by supplying her with war material." It was to run for ten years, and thereafter to be renewable at five year intervals. All this entitled Spain to receive aid amounting to 2,000 million dollars over 17 years.

The Spanish economy began to pick up. By 1957, the bases had already contributed 300 million dollars to the Spanish treasury and 500 million were invested in the pipeline. Nevertheless, Spain still had a trade deficit, and in July 1959 a stabilisation plan was announced: the peseta was to be devalued, exchange control strengthened, wages and prices were frozen, credit and public expenditure were restricted and legislation was introduced favouring foreign investment. The deficit in the trade balance for 1957-9 was over a thousand million dollars; this was partly covered by stocks of gold and foreign currency held by the Spanish Institute of Foreign Currency and by loans granted by the USA (326 million dollars), the International Monetary Fund (75 million dollars) and the OECD (145 million dollars).

With the devaluation, prices rose but wages did not. There was vast unemployment, and vast emigration-between 1959 and 1962, some 700,000 Spaniards went abroad to seek work, making their own not small contribution to the growing prosperity by the money they remitted home. Tourism began to flourish: four million people visited Spain in 1959. 8,600,000 in 1962. In 1960-61, private banks recorded the biggest profits in their history.

In 1963. the Pact of Madrid was renewed: Washington placed at Spain's disposal credits to a total value of 100 million dollars, only half of which was to be spent on arms purchases, plus 100 million dollars' worth of additional supplies of war material free of charge. In August 1970, the lease of the air bases (which permitted 8,000 GI's to be stationed on Spanish soil) was renewed (at 20 million dollars in "rent", the cession free of charge of the oil pipeline, and a credit of 125 million dollars for the purchase of Phantoms, helicopters, heavy trucks and other material).

The older foreign capitalist enterprises in Spain for example. Rio Tinto Zinc have been joined in recent years by a string of multinationals Ford, Chrysler, Massey Ferguson. General Electrics, ITT, ICI, Unilever,etc, all gaining advantage by the relatively low wages of the Spanish labour force, and assisting the Spanish economy by their investments

None of the foregoing is intended to signify that Spain is a prosperous country. Subject like the rest of western Europe to the prevailing inflation, many Spanish workers still have recourse to "double-employment"-evening jobs to implement their earnings, and recent demonstrations against the high cost of living show that the situation is not improving. The fact is that Spain is relatively better off in relation to the starvation years of 1939-1963 and that this is due, in the main, to the propping-up operation-in the interest of anti-Communism and the Cold War-undertaken by western capitalism and above all by the United States.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Edouard de Blaye, **Franco and the Politics of Spain** (Pelican 1976) p.100n.
2. The above figures are taken from Jose Sandoval and Manuel Azcarate, **Spain 1936-9** (Lawrence and Wishart. 1966) pp 42-3.
3. *ibid*, pp **47-48**
4. M. Foot. **Aneurin Bevan** (London 1962) I p 288.
5. P. Broue and E. Temime, **The Revolution and the Civil War in Spain** (Faber and Faber 1972) p.527.
6. Hugh Thomas, **The Spanish Civil War** (Penguin 1965) pp.766-7.
7. *ibid*, p.767.
8. *ibid*, p.700.
9. Ignacio Hidalgo de Cisneros, **Memorias** (Paris 1964) II pp. 445-53.
10. **International Solidarity with the Spanish Republic 1936-9** (Progress Publishers. Moscow 1975) pp. 328-30. The figures come from Novaya i noveishaya istoria ( 'Modern History' ). 1971, No. 2 p. 145 and **Voенно-istoricheskii Zhurnal** (Journal of Military History'), 1971, No. 7 p. 75.
11. Lina Argenti, writing in **World Marxist Review** (July 1976 p.20), provides figures which differ in some respects from these. The figure for Soviet volunteers is put as about 3,000 with other military aid as follows: 'from October 1936 to February 1939, the Soviet Union delivered 648 aircraft, 347 tanks, 60 armoured cars, 1,186 guns, 20,486 machine guns, about 500,000 rifles, large quantities of ammunition and other military supplies'.
12. **World Marxist Review**, July 1976, p.21.
13. Santiago Carrillo, **Dialogue on Spain** (Lawrence and Wishart 1976) p.64.
14. Lina Argenti, **World Marxist Review**, July 1976, p.20.
15. Paolo Spriano, **Storia del Partito comunista italiano** (Turin 1970) III p.209.
16. The texts of the Soviet leaders' letter and of Largo Caballero's reply are given in **Guerra y Revolucion en Espana** (Progress Publishers, Moscow 1966) IIpp. 101-3.
17. Santiago Carrillo, *op cit*, p.62.
18. One of the present authors recalls being invited, by a written questionnaire handed to every member of the military unit to which she belonged, to opt for the attachment of a Chaplain to the unit.
19. National Confederation of Labour, a national confederation of trade unions, anarchist in tendency.
20. L. Trotsky, **The Spanish Revolution 1931-9** (New York 1973) p.307.
21. *ibid*,p.308.
22. *ibid*,p.312.
23. *ibid*, pp.317-8.
24. *ibid*, p.365.
25. D. Abad de Santillan, **Por que perdimos la guerra** (Buenos Aires 1940) p.139.
26. This account of events is taken from **Guerra y Revolucion en Espana** (Progress Publishers, Moscow 1971) III pp 65-78. This work, of which three volumes have so far been published, was produced by a commission with Dolores Ibarruri as its chairman. There is unfortunately no English translation up to the present.
27. The national trade union organisation to which socialists and communists belonged.
28. **Documents of German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945** (HMSO 1951) series D, III (Germany and the Spanish Civil War 1936-9) p.286.
29. Santiago Carrillo, *op cit*, pp.52-3.
30. *ibid*, p.52.