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F R E E D O M

"SPAIN."

INFORMATION BULLETIN OF THE C.N.T. AND F.A.I.

Issued through the International Working Men's Association (I.W.M.A.).

C.N.T. - Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo (National Confederation of Labour).

F.A.I. - Federacion Anarquista Iberica (Anarchist Federation of Iberia).

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THE TRUTH ABOUT SPAIN.

By MAX NETTLAU (*The veteran revolutionary historian*).

All progressive elements in Spain have risen in arms; like one man to crush the treacherous attack of army officers, the mercenaries of an African legion, fascists, clericals, monarchists and their dupes.

Their success has been remarkable, and they were most successful in places where the ground had been prepared by generations of struggle for autonomy and federalism, association and solidarity, and for the highest cultural aims: free thought, a free social life; for what is now called in Spain, Libertarian Communism.

Fighting for these aims are the advanced revolutionaries of the F.A.I. (Federacion Anarquista Iberica—the federation of the anarchist groups of Spain and Portugal, founded in 1927) and the members of the C.N.T. (Confederacion Nacional de Trabajo—National Labour Confederation, founded in 1910), workers organised in unions who aim at Libertarian Communism by direct action in the day-to-day labour struggle, and, of course, in the whole struggle for their very existence now forced upon them by the fascist attack.

CATALONIA is the region where the advanced political and social life of an anti-State, federalist type described above has its deepest roots.

ANDALUCIA is where workers, labourers and small peasants form a firm bond of solidarity.

The peasants and fishers in north-west GALICIA, miners of ASTURIAS and the BASQUE Country, the workers and peasants of ARAGON, the rapidly-increasing industrial population of MADRID, the lively workers and peasants of southern VALENCIA, all these are old national units, pursuing, each in their own way, but as their chief aim, independence and the solidarity of free association.

Local differences do not mean chaos. Autonomy indeed strengthens the movement, casting aside the centralisation which has for ages been a burden which the Spanish peoples have always desired to throw off, even by open rebellion, and a thing which in daily life they defy as far as they possibly can.

Spaniards have always considered central government, whether monarchist or republican, as the people's enemy and simply the support of big absentee landlords, merchant sharks, generals, a clergy whose

highest achievement was the Inquisition, the present hotbed of militant clericalism, which turns religious buildings into arsenals and snipers' nests.

This may help to explain why the Spanish people has always hated and distrusted the State and all who, under its protection, prey upon it, fleece and coerce it and the clergy's main work—try to suppress its intellectual development.

It explains too why Spaniards fight so desperately for what they hold to be the cause of liberation; for it is always a supreme effort for real, complete emancipation from authority and exploitation.

Thus it is easy to see that authoritarian state-socialism met with no serious response in Spain while free federalist socialism was eagerly welcomed.

The Spanish Branch of the International Working Men's Association was formed under the inspiration of Fanelli and Bakunin in 1870, merging workers' associations widely developed since 1840, and at once adopted collectivist anarchism.

The State-socialist fraction was imported by Paul Lafargue, Marx's son-in-law, in 1871. From it derives the present Socialist Party, divided into a reformist and a more advanced wing.

The Communists, divided into several fractions, entirely failed to carry the workers with them in the years following the revolutionary strikes of 1917, and have remained insignificant fractions ever since.

But in reality all this party strife has been relegated to history since October, 1934, when Anarchist, Socialist and Communist workers fought side by side in ASTURIAS in a desperate protest against a reactionary regime, and were brutally crushed, murdered, tortured after an heroic resistance.

This brought the workers themselves together, and since then their best elements, especially the younger workers, have wanted to throw aside whatever divided them before. This means that they want to emancipate themselves from their political bosses, future deputies and ministers, and work solidly together in the spirit of the C.N.T., which at the May Saragossa Conference held out the hand of friendship to all workers.

The C.N.T. and F.A.I. and the Socialist and Communist militants were at their posts confronting

the fascist-militarist onslaught of July 18-19 from the first moment.

Here again the principle of autonomy was vindicated in practice. Where some measure of local autonomy exists, as in Catalonia, the people could, and did, get arms at the right time, and could therefore act. Where autonomy did not exist and the official governors had to refer to the central government, little or nothing could be done in time, and the enemy thus—and only thus—gained a temporary advantage.

Seldom has revolutionary resistance shown greater courage, good humour, comradeship. Sleep, food, drink, comfort—many knew nothing of them for nearly a week. Their gun was their only close companion and the fearless feeling of solidarity. A supreme equality without distinctions; gaiety, jests, brisk discussions. Women and girls and boys, too. Happiness, boundless hope. Death had no terrors, there were so many good comrades among the dead and among the living.

It was a really libertarian effort. No one even thought of dictators. The enemy was the dictator, the fascist or any dictator. That is the great point of this heroic struggle.

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WHAT ARE THE C.N.T. AND F.A.I.?

It is undeniable that the victory of the anti-fascist forces in Catalonia was made possible only by the fighting qualities and masses' support of the C.N.T. and the F.A.I.

The C.N.T. is the National Confederation of Labour, trades-union federation which believes in the direct action methods of syndicalism.

At the C.N.T. Congress at Saragossa last May delegates represented 600,000 workers. Since then membership has risen to over 700,000. Its influence over the unorganised workers raises C.N.T. strength to at least 1,000,000 in all.

Chief strength of the C.N.T. is in Catalonia, Aragon, Andalusia, Levante, (Valencia and Alicante).

The Socialist U.G.T. has the majority in the Castiles, Basque Country and Extremadura.

In Madrid, C.N.T. influence is increasing and a few days ago it began to issue a daily, "C.N.T."

Over all Spain, the C.N.T. and U.G.T. are roughly equal in numerical strength, but the influence of the C.N.T. on the unorganised workers is probably bigger.

In Catalonia, about 80 per cent. of the organised industrial workers are C.N.T. At the Saragossa Congress, delegates represented 150,000 members here. U.G.T. has about 12,000 members in Catalonia. Other Marxist parties (POUM, Unified Marxist Labour Party and Third International) about 6,000.

On the first two days of recruiting for the Anti-Fascist Militias, C.N.T. and F.A.I. contributed 13,000 men, U.G.T. 2,000, POUM 3,000.

The F.A.I. is the Anarchist Federation of Iberia, with aims similar to those of C.N.T. Since its foundation in 1927, it has acquired an enormous influence over the Spanish working-class. F.A.I. was an illegal organisation since its foundation until after the February 1936 election. Leading the fight against the

fascists are men who were badly wanted by their present allies, the armed police, only six months ago. Durutti, leader of the advance column marching on Saragossa, figures time after time in the Spanish "rogue's gallery." F.A.I. came straight out of illegality to lead the armed forces of Catalonia.

Though F.A.I. has the same final aims as the C.N.T. the two organisations are completely separate, except that many members of the C.N.T. are also members of the F.A.I. They have formed a joint Defence Committee.

Neither C.N.T. nor F.A.I. have outstanding leaders or party bosses. The organisations are completely democratic. All their best-known militants, including the intellectuals, have fought and are fighting in arms against the Fascists.

F.A.I.'s great influence comes from the workers' boundless admiration for its long fearless fight against every kind of dictatorship and tyranny.

It is for this reason that the Spanish, and especially the Catalan, workers have rallied with such tremendous enthusiasm behind the red-and-black banner of F.A.I.

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PRESENT POSITION OF F.A.I. AND C.N.T.

Barcelona, Sunday.

The victory of the workers of Catalonia over the Fascist-military attack was made possible only by the generous and whole-hearted support of F.A.I. and C.N.T.

After the victory, the power was in the hands of the biggest fighting organisation, C.N.T.—F.A.I.

The Catalan Government, the Generalidad, presided over by Luis Companys, had to recognise this fact. It declared its readiness to form an Anti-fascist Military Committee of Public Safety, in which F.A.I. and C.N.T. participated. This Committee holds the supreme power in Catalonia.

Of its 15 members, C.N.T. has 3, F.A.I. 2, but U.G.T.'s 3 members were really more of a gesture towards co-operation with Madrid than a proportional representation of Socialist strength, and they vote with the Anarchist group, as does the representative of the Rabassaires, the Catalan Peasant Party.

In effect, F.A.I. controls the Committee, and therefore the anti-fascist struggle in Catalonia.

The Generalidad can make no important decision without consent of the Committee. Actually, it has lost no powers thereby, since it never had control of the armed forces. The Civil Guards and Blue Police, too, numbering some 4,000, are constitutionally under the orders of the central government in Madrid.

Present work of the Committee is cleaning up the remaining Fascists lurking in the city, normalisation of the city's economic life and direction of the great campaign against Saragossa.

For this, it disposes of 10,000 men actually in the field, some 30,000 more in the city, ready to leave at an hours' notice and a fighting fund of over 20,000,000 pesetas drawn from confiscated property of the Church and Fascists.

F.A.I.'s attitude on the Committee has been of great moderation. The C.N.T. is using every effort to bring back normal life. It has called off the general strike and enforced the immediate settlement of all pending disputes. Certain enterprises deserted by their owners have been taken over by the workers under the direction of their Syndicates, but there is no immediate intention of introducing Anarchist Liberterian Communism.

The really important thing which takes precedence over everything else is the great struggle against fascist militarism.

F.A.I. is not only directing it in the Committee, but its best militants are leading the columns closing in on Saragossa.

This is F.A.I.'s and C.N.T.'s fight. They led the battle in the streets; the influence of F.A.I.'s groups, especially in the Navy, did a tremendous amount to prevent the revolt spreading and to bring the armed forces out against Fascism beside their proletarian brothers; and they are leading the fight in the field.

Since the bloody morning of Sunday, July 19th, F.A.I. and C.N.T. have won a position right in the forefront of the workers' battle in Spain.

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NEWS FROM THE FRONT.

ANARCHISTS CONDEMN LOOTING.

Barcelona, Saturday.

Important decisions were taken at F.A.I. meeting to-night:—

In face of the fact that Barcelona underworld is disgracing the Revolution by looting, F.A.I. directs all its members to exercise the utmost vigilance to prevent such abominable activities by every possible means. — Should they, however, be repeated, F.A.I. will treat as they deserve all who disgrace the Revolution, and their punishment will be exemplary.

Smash the riff-raff!

If we do not, the crooks will smash the Revolution by dishonouring it and thus making its triumph impossible.

NO PROFITEERING.

Strict orders were issued to all shopkeepers at the beginning of the general strike that under no pretext might prices be raised. Some shopkeepers who had attempted to make up to 200 per cent. profit were arrested.

When a butcher attempted to double his price, indignant buyers called in a carload of Militia who wrecked his shop.

The Anti-fascist militias are seeing that shopkeepers do not put up prices.

THE MARCH TO SARAGOSSA.

Important sidelight on state of public opinion here is story of the provisioning of the Saragossa column on Friday.

Amidst immense enthusiasm the column left Barcelona at noon. At two that afternoon an urgent radio appeal was received: the column had forgotten to take any food with it!

Within five minutes of the appeal being received, four lorries were crammed with every kind of eatable from sardines to caviare, from mineral water to champagne.

What is even more important than the spontaneous generosity of the people of Barcelona is the fact that the street where the lorries were loaded, the Paseo de Gracia, is a wealthy residential quarter.

This incident shows clearly how all classes are determined to stamp out the fascism which made its brutal and unprovoked attack on the workers and bourgeois supporters of the People's Front alike.

Barcelona, Sunday.

After fighting several small engagements, in which victory was purchased all too heavily, the columns from Barcelona have halted while the anti-fascists' forces concentrate for the big assault on Saragossa. Considerable Fascist forces provided with armoured cars and a large quantity of machine-guns at Naja were bombarded by loyal planes.

DANGEROUS ELEMENTS.

When 9 million pesetas were confiscated in the Bishop's Palace at Vich (Catalonia) yesterday, F.A.I. chose as its escort militants who had the worst police record for their previous political activities.

Needless to say, the money arrived in Barcelona perfectly safely.

URGENT PUBLICATION OF FREEDOM.

As it is of the utmost importance that the real situation in Spain should be made as widely known as possible, it was decided after hearing Comrade Albert de Jong, a delegate straight from the C.N.T. and F.A.I. in Spain, who explained the exact position there, that the "Freedom Publications Committee" in conjunction with the Special Spanish Committee set up by the "Freedom Group" should issue temporarily "Freedom" as a "Spanish Bulletin".

"Freedom" "Spanish Bulletin" will therefore be published from time to time immediately information is received from the C.N.T. and F.A.I. through the International Working Men's Association, to whom these organisations are affiliated. This information can be relied upon by all readers.

In order to carry out this most important work, and to give the workers in England this information, financial support must be forthcoming from every reader and sympathiser, as upon the support received will depend how many copies can be printed. The object is to distribute as widely as possible and to do this, money is required.

You are therefore urgently asked to subscribe immediately and to your utmost in these most urgent circumstances remembering that Spain is the first country to put up a real fight against "Fascism", and it is our bounden duty to support our Comrades in Spain, if only in our own interests.

A fund is also being opened for the Spanish Workers. All monies subscribed to this fund will be forwarded by the "Freedom Group" to the "Anarchist and Syndicalist Committee for the Defence and Liberation of the Spanish Proletariat", Paris.

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106 Coningham Road,
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"Editorial Committee."

THE SPANISH WORKERS' FIGHT FOR LIBERTY.

The attention of the whole world is drawn to Spain, and we have followed the events as reported in the newspaper press with the deepest interest, sympathy and anxious hope for the success of the Spanish workers.

We see once again the evidence of lying humbug on the part of the enemies of freedom and the workers. Though the newspapers of the rich—of the millionaires—always deprecate the threat or the use of violence on the people's side, they are acclaiming, and encouraging the most brutal violence on the part of the militarists and the wealthy property owners in Spain.

The officers in the highest ranks of the Spanish Army have treacherously plotted to overthrow the existing political constitution by force. They had their plans ready for execution, and were backed with millions of pounds supplied by people like the multi-millionaire, Senor March. It is said that Berlin and Rome both had a finger in the pie.

So complete were the preparations for the establishment of a military dictatorship that the Republic was left practically without soldiers, naval or police forces. The voluntary action of the masses of the working people alone saved the situation. Very many have nobly and enthusiastically given their lives for the Cause.

It is alleged that the outbreak of the military revolt was somewhat premature—by a few days, or weeks. If so, we rejoice that it should have failed to that extent in its commencement.

It seems that the recourse to armed revolt by the propertied class—to which the army officer caste belongs—was occasioned by the concession to the starving peasantry of the use of some of the landed estates for the purpose of producing food for the people.

But over and beyond that was the fear of the determination of the Workers in Spain to bring about radical changes of an economic and social character, approximating to a reign of justice in the distribution

of the products of industry. Also that the majority of the Spanish Workers have resolved that these purposes should be realised by their own direct action.

That was quite enough to alarm the monopolists of the land and the wealth produced by labour, and, rather than permit peaceful progress in that direction, they have entered upon a campaign of wholesale slaughter of the Spanish people.

The solidarity of the rich has been shown by their haste to misrepresent the Spanish Republican Workers. They try to raise a scare in their newspapers about atrocities, when the fact is that it has been the revolting militarists who have been guilty of the worst crimes in this respect.

The revolting militarists have murdered unarmed men, women and children. They have massacred helpless prisoners and hostages, and made every effort in their power to terrorize the general population. It is clear that if barbarity can bring about the triumph of the re-actionaries nothing in that way will be lacking.

Fortunately, the workers of Barcelona, Madrid, the Asturias, and peasants of many country districts, have heroically held the foe at bay: though we feel afraid that a most terrible struggle has yet to be fought out before the end comes.

Most splendid, too, has been the conduct of the men in most of the ships in the Navy. Though their officers joined the conspiracy, the men imprisoned them and fought on the side of the Republic.

Italian aeroplanes and other foreign arms have been provided to assist the effort to overthrow the Republic and to crush the Spanish Workers.

Is it not an example of Internationalism which the workers of all lands should hasten to follow?

We earnestly wish to identify ourselves with our Spanish comrades, and to do whatever lies in our power on their behalf. To the C.N.T. and the Iberian Anarchist Federation we send our heartfelt greetings, and hopes for speedy success.

We know that they seek to make Justice and Liberty the working conditions of everyday life; to put an end to economic robbery and plunder, and to political and social oppression.

We call upon all those who seek to realise the Emancipation of Labour to demonstrate a World Unity in the Spanish Crisis. The victory of the Spanish Workers will be our own. Their defeat would be a calamity for the world.

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