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LENIN AND SPAIN

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Address delivered at Lenin Memorial Meeting held January 20, 1937,
at Madison Square Garden, New York City.

Lenin and Spain

By EARL BROWDER

THIS is the thirteenth year we have been meeting to commemorate Lenin, the founder of the first socialist state, the leader of the oppressed of all the world, the teacher and guide of ever new tens of millions every year in their struggle for a new and better life. Thirteen years ago Lenin died, but never was his spirit more powerfully shaping the destinies of mankind than today.

What would Lenin speak about, if he could be with us tonight? Unquestionably he would speak, first of all, about the epic struggle for human liberation being waged for over six months by the heroic Spanish people, assaulted by the concentrated forces of world reaction. If we would honor the memory of Lenin, then tonight's meeting must be, primarily, the occasion of raising higher the banner of solidarity with the embattled democracy of Spain.

A deep blush of shame should sweep over every American, whenever Spain is mentioned, since that day, at the opening of Congress, when the administration at Washington rushed in such indecent haste to place a blockade against democratic Spain—a gratuitous act of war against a friendly nation—upon the hypocritical plea of “neutrality” and the desire to keep out of war. To avoid embarrassing Hitler, who threatens the whole world with war, our government actually performed an act of war against Spain, against Spanish democracy and for the alien fascist hordes bombarding Madrid and slaughtering hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children. And it was only a year ago that the same people were telling us that a blockade against fascist Italy, in the act of raping Ethiopia, was impossible because that would threaten peace. Evidently the principle that is guiding these policies is to

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help the fascists in the hope they will not attack America, but under no circumstances to help smaller nations, even though democracies, but rather help their enemies, because these democracies neither could nor would threaten America. It is the principle of rewarding our enemies and punishing our friends. And this is called a "peace" policy! What utter degradation to which we are descending!

Our enemies accuse the Communist Party that we, in demanding the support of Spanish democracy, are bringing some alien doctrine to America. They say our Leninist principles are "imported from Moscow". It is really too bad, if true, that defense of democracy can come only from Moscow. It is true that of all governments of the world, only that of the Soviet Union has stood staunchly, without wavering, at the side of Spanish democracy in its hour of trouble. That is to the glory of socialism and the Soviet Union, and the shame of all governments calling themselves democracies. But it is not true that this same spirit must be imported from Moscow to New York. In America there still live the fierce passion for liberty and hatred of tyrants which brought our country to birth and preserved it in many trials, the revolutionary traditions at the heart of Americanism—even though our government has betrayed this Americanism.

What arrogant stupidity to bring forward this blockade of democratic Spain in the name of Americanism! Even Al Smith, the mouthpiece for the du Ponts and Hearst, must pay lip service to Thomas Jefferson as the first great ideologist of the American democratic tradition. Let us ask Thomas Jefferson where he stands on this issue.

In a report on some negotiations with Spain, March 18, 1792, Jefferson observed:

"In the course of this war [American revolution] we were joined by France as an ally, and by Spain and Holland as associates; having a common enemy, each sought that common enemy wherever they could find him."

About the French revolution Jefferson said, in a letter to Edward Rutledge, August 25, 1791:

"I still hope the French revolution will issue happily. I feel that the permanence of our own leans in some degree on that; and that failure there would be a powerful argument to prove that there must be a failure here."

And what should be done when a sister democracy is threatened by a concentration of enemies? Jefferson gave the answer when he recorded a conversation with George Washington, dated December 27, 1792:

"... he [Washington] observed to me that he thought it was time to endeavor to effect a stricter connection with France. He went into the circumstance of dissatisfaction between Spain and Great Britain and us, and observed there was no nation on whom we could rely, at all times, but France. (I was much pleased with the tone of this observation. It was the very doctrine which had been my polar star. . . .)"

When France was attacked and blockaded, did Jefferson want the United States also to rush to join the blockade? Not at all, although the United States was a relatively weak country. In a letter to James Madison, Jefferson said, in March, 1793:

"The idea seems to gain credit that the naval powers combining against France will prohibit supplies, even of provisions, to that country. . . . I should hope that Congress . . . would instantly exclude from our ports all the manufactures, produce, vessels, and subjects of the nations committing this aggression, during the continuance of the aggression, and till full satisfaction is made for it."

What a world of difference between this bold defense of democracy against all its enemies, and the present cowardly crawling on the belly before Hitler!

Jefferson further elaborated this fundamental American doctrine in a letter to Gouverneur Morris, Minister to France, on March 12, 1793:

"... we received information that a National Assembly had met, with full power to transact the affairs of the nation, and soon afterwards the Minister of France here presented an application for three million of livres, to be laid out in provisions to be sent to France. . . . We had no hesitation to comply with the appli-

education . . . and we shall . . . omit no opportunity of convincing that nation how cordially we wish to serve them. Mutual good offices, mutual affection, and similar principles of government, seem to destine the two nations for the most intimate communion; and I cannot too much press it upon you to improve every opportunity which may occur . . . for placing our commerce with that nation and its dependencies on the freest and most encouraging footing possible."

How far, how far, we have traveled from Jefferson, when an administration acts upon the opposite principles; instead of advancing finances, places all possible obstacles in the way of simple transfer of the funds of the friendly democracy in trouble; when no opportunity is lost to demonstrate that no help will be permitted, even of private persons. Mutual good offices, mutual affection, and similar principles of government, count no more than the principle of defense of democracy and peace. Commerce is prohibited, instead of made as free as possible. It is the anti-democratic attackers to whom Jefferson would apply the embargo, but our administration has turned Jefferson's principles exactly into their opposite.

President Roosevelt would do well to ponder the words of Jefferson in a letter to Edmund Randolph, June 2, 1793, in which he said:

"Indeed, I fear that if this summer should prove disastrous to the French, it will dampen that energy of republicanism in our new congress, from which I had hoped so much reformation."

Jefferson's doctrine, so opposite to that cowardly "neutrality" that attacks a friendly democracy instead of aiding it, expressed the deepest sentiments of the masses of the American people, not only at that moment but generally. During the French Revolution, money and arms were sent to France, American Jacobin Clubs were formed here, and all except the extreme reactionaries openly expressed their support and admiration for its democratic principles.

During the European revolutions of 1848, America showed deep sympathy for the revolutionaries. They welcomed with great acclaim such revolutionary leaders as Weydemeyer, Kossuth, and Carl Schurz. During our Civil War, it was the

boast of the North that revolutionary leaders from Europe were fighting in the Union ranks against the slave power, just as it was our boast that the French, Spanish and Hollanders helped us in our War of Independence.

When, during the Civil War, Great Britain tried, not to place an embargo against the North as we have against Spain, but merely to grant belligerent rights to the South, Lincoln almost went to war against Britain. This was avoided only because Karl Marx rallied the English working class to defeat their own Tories and prevent them from sending arms to the South.

These are the true doctrines of Americanism. They fit in exactly to the doctrines of Leninism. That is why we, who meet here tonight to honor the memory of Lenin and continue his work, are the ones to whom it is left to quote the exact words of Jefferson in relation to the burning issues of the day. And that is why we can truthfully say that Communism is the Americanism of the twentieth century and that we, followers of Lenin, most carefully preserve the treasures of the American tradition, which our government has betrayed.

It is no accident that it has been left to the Soviet Union to be the only firm and reliable friend of embattled democracy in Europe today. That is because the big capitalists, and all whom they control, are abandoning democracy in favor of fascism. Wherever the big capitalists still hold power, democracy is being attacked and threatened with destruction. It is impossible to defend democracy without uniting the people against big capital, to wrest from it the controlling power. The Soviet Union is able firmly to defend democracy everywhere, because it has within its own territory completely eliminated capitalism and all exploitation, and developed for itself the greatest democracy the world has ever known.

Thus it is at the exact historical moment when the capitalists are overthrowing their own democracies that the Soviet Union comes forward with its new Constitution, which translates the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness into the unalienable right of every citizen to work, to education, and to

leisure, the material realization of those things which in bourgeois democracies are but abstract promises to the mass of the people.

The new Constitution of the Soviet Union registers what is already achieved, not what is promised for the future. It marks the fruits of the great work of Lenin, whose memory we honor tonight, the final and irrevocable victory of socialism in the largest country in the world.

It is the sign of the greatness of Lenin that he left with us when he died thirteen years ago, not only a firm and monolithic Party, fully consecrated to his teachings, but a disciple who could take up Lenin's work and bring it to completion, an architect who could fully guide the building of the structure of the socialist society, who could defeat all its enemies, who could make it an impregnable fortress in a world of enemies. Just as Lenin's name was carved indelibly beside those of Marx and Engels by his creation of the Bolshevik Party and the victory of October, 1917, just as surely has another name taken its place beside that of Lenin, by virtue of the victorious socialist construction, symbolized in the new Constitution. New glory has been added to the names of Marx, Engels, and Lenin by that other name, that of the leader of all the progressive forces of the world, Joseph Stalin.

Who is so poor of spirit that he cannot rejoice in the recognition of the world-shaping achievements of the tens of millions of the formerly downtrodden and oppressed, organized around the working class by the guiding genius of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin? Who is so blind that he cannot see that these achievements open up a new and glorious page in the history of mankind?

Socialism is inevitable, because the working class inevitably responds with enthusiasm and heroism to the inspiring call of such leaders. Capitalism is doomed beyond all reprieve, because it can by no means produce men or ideas which shape the human spirit beyond the most ephemeral moment.

The fight for democracy, peace, and progress will go forward to new victories in Spain, and in the United States

throughout the world, because it has on its side that solid bulwark established by Lenin, the Soviet Union, because that bulwark has been completed and made impregnable by the genius of Stalin.

Everywhere in the capitalist world this fight marches forward under the banner of the People's Front against fascism and war. The People's Front is growing everywhere. And everywhere the most energetic and loyal builders of this front are the Communists, trained in the school and on the model of Lenin and Stalin. The men and women of the Communist International, in all countries, whom millions recognize as their guides, are of that mold: Dimitroff, the hero of Hitler's Reichstag Fire Trial in Leipzig, who singlehanded and in irons met and defeated the Nazi dictatorship, convicted it before the whole world; Thaelmann, the banner of liberation of the whole German people, whom even after four years Hitler dares not bring to trial; Andre Marty, the hero of the Black Sea Mutiny of the French fleet, now a front line defender of Madrid; Carlos Prestes, leader of the Brazilian people's struggle against a fascist regime, now threatened with judicial murder; Mao Tse-tung, chairman of the Chinese Soviets and leader of the national liberation movement of his country. Each of these men, embodying the best of the national traditions of his country, is at the same time the embodiment of internationalism, as Thomas Jefferson was for the America of his day.

As the American democratic revolution of the eighteenth century had its Benedict Arnold and Aaron Burr, so the proletarian revolutionary movement of the twentieth century has its Trotsky. As the British Tories made heroes of these traitors, so do the capitalist class and its press shriek in our ears the "revolutionary virtues" of the traitor Trotsky. The same press to which the slightest labor militancy is anathema as "Bolshevism", which even raved against the "Bolshevism" of President Roosevelt, sings the softest songs of praise for the "revolutionary", the "ultra-revolutionary" Trotsky. In the fascist countries, where death is the penalty for distributing a Communist leaflet, Trotsky's books are placed by the authorities

in the prison libraries for political prisoners. Truly the fascists and reactionaries know their own men; but just as surely does the working class know its own. That is why the counter-revolutionary scum of Trotskyism is being thrown out of the labor movement as fast as it shows its face. That is why the Socialist Party, which swallowed this poison less than a year ago, is already in the paroxysms of vomiting it forth again. That is why Lenin, through long years, fought against and defeated Trotsky and Trotskyism, and thereby made possible the Russian Revolution.

Political reaction and fascism were given a resounding defeat in the last elections in the United States. The people, by overwhelming majority, gave a mandate for democracy, progress, higher living standards, extended civil right and peace.

But, as we Communists warned the masses from the beginning of the election campaign, the Roosevelt middle-of-the-road administration cannot be trusted to carry out this mandate. On every point it is compromising or betraying the mandate of the elections. Only the mass organization and struggle of the people, only the building of the People's Front, can realize that mandate. This is the message of Leninism to the people of America today.

Already this spirit of Leninism is beginning to permeate the American masses. They are building their mass organizations. They are beginning to conduct mass struggles to realize the election mandate.

We are proud of the American workers, proud that already they have produced hundreds of American Lafayettes who stand in the front lines of the defense of Madrid, of the democratic republic of Spain!

We are proud of the Farmer-Labor Party movement, which produced the voice of Congressman Bernard which alone shouted "I object" to the betrayal of democracy by the voting of the blockade of Spain! That shout crystallized the conscience of the nation, and rendered inevitable the revocation of that crime and the re-establishment of the principles of Jefferson—and of Lenin—in our relations to Spain.

We are proud of the American people who organized the

North American Committee for Spanish Democracy, which has collected a million dollars in money, clothing, and food, and sent it to the Spanish fighters.

We are proud of the Society for Technical Aid to Spain, which is organizing all-around measures to strengthen the forces of Spanish democracy!

We are proud of the trade unions which are conducting the valiant battles for industrial democracy in the auto and marine industries, in steel, in textile, and in a dozen industries and a thousand localities!

We are proud of the unity of the unemployed, in the Workers Alliance, which registered so effectively last week in Washington the demands of the millions of American unemployed and of the whole working class, for effective work and relief measures, and for social insurance!

We are proud of our Negro brothers, who are rising to organization and struggle to realize some of that equality, the promise of which added their votes to the great popular mandate of the elections.

We are proud of the great united youth movement, whose pilgrimage to Washington will soon place their demands before Congress and the President, and of the united student movement which has brought life to our stagnant universities, colleges and high schools! We are proud of the women's movement which is now crystallizing around the Women's Charter!

We are proud of all the rising manifestations of the People's Front in the United States. We see in them the proof that the American people will meet and solve their problems, will crush fascism, and will open up the way for the future realization of socialism in our country also, will realize the prophecy of Lenin.

These organizations and movements give the immediate program of the People's Front in America. In fighting for the immediate aims of these mass movements, the Communists are at the same time the best and only consistent fighters for the new socialist society.

The fight for the People's Front in all its manifestations is

Spain Bans "POUM" As Ally of Franco

Police Ordered to Break Up Trotskyite Group in All Loyalist Spain as Plot Against Popular Front Is Exposed

MADRID, Monday, Feb. 8 (UP). — Police throughout Loyalist Spain today were instructed to break up the "Workers' Marxist Party," accused of being followers of Leon Trotsky and of plotting the overthrow of the "Popular Front" government.

The government's decision to break up "P.O.U.M." was made after leading Madrid newspapers warned it was a subversive influence, an ally of rebel General Francisco Franco. Support of Leftist and trade union organizations against "P.O.U.M." is confidently expected by the government.

Emphatic support was given the government Sunday by the newspaper "Ahora," organ of the Unified Socialist Youth.

"We accuse 'P.O.U.M.,' it said, "of working against the unity of the anti-fascist proletarian forces and of being bitter enemies of all parties and

organizations connected with the Popular Front."

(By United Press)

MADRID, Feb. 7. — Under agreement with the Defense Junta, police here announced the seizure of a Trotskyist radio station and a Trotskyist newspaper, "El Combatiente Rojo," on the ground of "constant attacks against the government and the Popular Front."

The Defense Junta is a united front body composed of Socialists, Communists, Left Republicans and Basque and Catalunians.

nationalists, for the common defense of Madrid against the fascist General Franco.

It was finally forced to take police measures against the traitorous activities of the Trotskyists, who have been consistently sabotaging and hindering the united defense of Madrid. The fascist press has been quoting liberally from the Trotskyist press, which continually seeks to undermine discipline in the ranks of the People's Front armies, and strives to demoralize and disunite the united defense of the Spanish Republic.

FIGHT AGAINST DEFENSE

As an example of the criminal lengths to which the Trotskyists in Spain have gone, the following is quoted from one of their recent leaflets distributed in Madrid:

"There do not exist military-geographic frontiers, but only class frontiers on both sides of the front. . . . It is not a question of fighting against General Franco today in order to better defend ourselves tomorrow. . . . Transplant the scene of your struggles from the military-geographic lines in the cities and villages. . . . To the stage-play of the People's Front answer with the force of your weapons!"

Such propaganda against the defense of Spain has been the stock-in-trade of the Trotskyists in Spain in their struggle against the People's Front. In the interests of the common struggle against the fascists, the Madrid government has finally been forced to take decisive measures against them.

Note: The above dispatches are reprinted from the *Daily Worker* February 9, 1937.

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