

TROTSKYISM
IN THE SERVICE OF FRANCO

FACTS AND DOCUMENTS
ON THE ACTIVITIES OF P.O.U.M.

By
GEORGES SORIA

INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK

Reprinted 2012

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FACTS AND DOCUMENTS

“To the Generalissimo: – I communicate personally the following: In executing the order you gave me, amongst other things, I went to Barcelona to interview the leaders of the P.O.U.M. I gave them all your information and suggestions. ...”

(Document found at the Peruvian Embassy in Madrid where there was a spying organisation.)

“The Witness: All the espionage material discovered by the other group, which is made up of the secret agents of the P.O.U.M., was transmitted to Perpignan by me...”

“The Witness: The outrage against Prieto and the heads of the Modesto and Walter divisions had been prepared by the group of secret agents of the P.O.U.M. which is directed by General Franco's espionage centre at Perpignan....”

(The above is an extract from the cross-examination of Joaquin Roca Amich.)

This pamphlet pleads its own case. It is written after spending a year and three months in Republican Spain. It is based on first-hand observation and on the study and analysis of official documents and papers.

Experience of the political situation in Republican Spain throughout the war, and the daily study of the problems which arise, have convinced me that the P.O.U.M. is one of the most important instruments which the Spanish rebels use in their struggle against the legitimate Spanish Government. I believe it to be my duty to make public the facts on which this conviction is based. And it will be instructive to find out if there are people who are still eager to defend the P.O.U.M. in the face of the evidence which I bring forward.

Trotskyism, typical of the parasitic growths which attach themselves to all great popular movements, has become today the refuge in

Spain of all the enemies of the Spanish Republic. The lesson to be drawn from this is of vital importance.

Police papers, documents, official reports of cross-examinations which speak for themselves, and accuse the P.O.U.M. and its leaders of having held, and of holding, relations with the rebels, have been submitted to me. They prove the liaison of the P.O.U.M. with the secret spying organisations which the rebels maintain in Government Spain.

The P.O.U.M. was the result of the fusion of the workers' and peasants' block, founded in 1930 by the Catalan, Joaquin Maurin, and a group of those who had been expelled from the Spanish Communist Party, amongst whom were Nin, Gorkin and Andrade. Until their arrest in 1937 they led the P.O.U.M. and were engaged in sabotaging the Republican institutions and in espionage. My aim in writing this pamphlet has been to advance no accusations which cannot immediately be supported by documents.

This will appear before the trial of Trotskyist leaders has taken place. The search, which was begun after the disturbances caused by the P.O.U.M. in Barcelona in May 1937, led to the discovery of documents which indisputably established the spying activities in which the principal leaders of the P.O.U.M. were engaged. This search is still going on. The public prosecutor of the Republic and his chief assistant have lately been working intensively on the files of the case. In a few weeks justice will be meted out. This news is comforting to all friends of the Spanish Popular Front, for then all the Fascist Press campaign, fed by the arguments of the Trotskyists and their allies, will be clearly revealed as a plot against the Spanish Republic.

The attempt on the part of the P.O.U.M. to break up the anti-Fascist organisations goes back to the formation of the Spanish Popular Front. Since its formation in Madrid, on June 2nd, 1935, the P.O.U.M., through its leaders, Maurin, Nin and Gorkin, fought and intrigued against the Popular Front which was destined to be successful at the general elections some months later and to throw clerical and agrarian reaction out of power. After the two years of terror which Spain had just experienced, the desire of the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie of the oppressed national minorities was to unite together against the forces of reaction. At that time the P.O.U.M. had only some 2,000 members and did not dare to come out openly against the growing forces of the Popular Front. But the reactionary bourgeoisie and aristocracy had already discovered that the P.O.U.M. and its liai-

sons with foreign powers could be turned into a most useful counter-revolutionary instrument. Owing to the conditions of the political struggles in Spain at this period the dividing line separating the Popular forces of the Centre from the Right was so distinct that the ruling classes could not themselves undertake the work of disorganising the Popular Front. They needed a reliable group, which would be bound to them by special considerations such as the concessions which they could give it once they had gained power, to lead a struggle against the Popular Front, a struggle which would have an air of revolution about it. Only an organisation which could penetrate right into the ranks of the Popular Front, adopting a revolutionary phraseology, could play this role without being exposed. The document which is reproduced below, found during a search made in Fascist quarters in Barcelona, is proof of the first contacts of the Trotskyist organisation with reaction. This is a letter from a Catalan lawyer to Gil Robles, who as Minister of War during the Lerrox Government was the personification of oppression against the working class.

"MY DEAR GIL ROBLES,

"A friend from Barcelona, the lawyer Jose Maria Palles, who on account of his position and interests frequently travels abroad, where he has important connections with the international world, has brought to my notice the fact that he intends to arrange for an agreement between the White Russian organisations and the Trotskyists, who would be able to put them in touch with the activities of the Communists against Spain...."

The following are some of the questions to which the White Russians and the Trotskyists propose to give exact replies:

"(1) Information about the Spanish section of the Third International, about the leaders of this section, their advisers and their movements.

"(2) Information about the illegal activity of the C.P. in Spain.

"(3) Information about the formation of the Popular Front and the parties of the Left in Spain."

In the months which followed, the Trotskyists gradually showed their hand. Having entered into the struggle against the Governments

which followed one another until July 19th, 1936, they were bound, once the insurrection of the generals had been suppressed in two-thirds of Spain by the Popular forces, to take up again after a short delay the struggle against the Caballero Cabinet. They were committed to a policy of sabotaging the Popular Front, and this policy was to lead them to insurrection and treason. They went, with absolute impunity, from provocation to provocation and finally to the Barcelona putsch, while at Madrid the most important members of their organisation, working hand in glove with the Fascist spy centres, daily gave the enemy military information about the position of troops, the situation of the fortifications, and helped to direct the artillery bombardment of Madrid.

SPIES IN THE PAY OF THE REBELS

ON June 16th, 1937, the Republican police, by order of the Minister of the Interior, arrested the P.O.U.M. leaders, Nin, Gorkin and Andrade, and accused them of treason. The evidence against Nin in particular was of such a nature that the relations of the organisation with the rebels were no longer in any doubt. In the course of a search which was made at the Peruvian Embassy in Madrid a mass of the most sensational and incriminating documents was discovered. The Falangists and the Fascists had not been able to destroy their papers before they were arrested, for the police had worked cautiously and cleverly. They had been on the trail for over a month gathering evidence and following developments before they made their pounce. When they did act they arrested over 200 people and amongst them some who had been manoeuvred into high positions in the general staff of some brigades, and in the Army supply service.

It was also discovered that the leaders of the P.O.U.M., in co-operation with Franco's Fifth Column, had installed a receiving and transmitting station in Madrid and were using it to keep in touch with the Fascist zone. This organisation, whose workings were strictly secret, had found cover for some of its most important members in some of the foreign embassies in Madrid and had succeeded until then in keeping them screened from the police. Amongst the documents found at the Peruvian Embassy were plans showing the exact positions of the anti-aircraft batteries defending Madrid and of the Republican batteries in the Casa del Campo; plans of the distribution of the army of the centre, staff maps, and many other plans of so strictly military a character that there could be no doubt that they had been taken from general headquarters. There was also a detailed large-scale map of Ma-

drid, carefully annotated with instructions for the Fascist artillery. From now on, the complicity of the Trotskyist leaders in the great spying organisation, which, as we shall see they had never ceased to assist, was proved in the main.

On the back of one of the maps of Madrid was written, in invisible ink and in code, the following:

"To the Generalissimo: – I communicate personally the following: We are telling you all the information we can collect about the dispositions and movements of the Red troops; the latest information given out by our transmitting station testifies to an enormous improvement in our information services."

The message continues:

"We have 400 men at our disposal. These men are well armed and favourably situated on the Madrid fronts so that they can form the driving force of a rebellious movement. Your order about getting our men to penetrate into the extremist ranks has been successfully carried out. We must have a good man in charge of propaganda. In executing the order you gave me, amongst other things, I went to Barcelona to interview the leaders of the P.O.U.M. I gave them all your information and suggestions. The lapse of communication between them and you is explained by the breakdown of the transmitting station, which began to work again while I was there. You should already have had an answer about the most important question. N. asks that you should arrange that I should be the only person to communicate with them apart from their 'foreign friends'. They have promised me to send people to Madrid to ginger up the work of the P.O.U.M. If it is reinforced the P.O.U.M. here will become, as it is at Barcelona, a firm and effective support for our movement. We shall soon be sending you some fresh information. The organisation of the action groups will be speeded up."

Here is the text of a letter found at the headquarters of the P.O.U.M. in Barcelona, addressed to the leader of the P.O.U.M., Andres Nin.

"Bayonne, July 12th, 1937, to the Executive Committee of the P.O.U.M. I confirm my former instructions. At last the split has become accentuated amongst the groups in the lower Pyrenees which we have already mentioned. If we can take advantage of this dissension we might be able to form a new group of our own party. The best of the lot, amongst them Walter and Bobinof, whose influence is particularly strong, are disagreeing with those from St. Jean de Luz because they refuse to send people out on a precarious mission before they have had full instructions. We must get proper authorisation, although the Bayonne people will only take action if they are quite confident of results. One thing is particularly interesting: they send us material from Barcelona, and several and all sorts of indications from which we can gather the distribution of the party; we will go ahead trying to form a group which will be absolutely firm and decided on all questions....

"Franco's wife is now in France. You may remember that in a previous communication it was suggested that she should go to Barcelona. What opportunities would this give us in the matter which Bonet discussed with Quirm? I insist, however, that it is vitally necessary to support both materially and ideologically this group which can be of such enormous use to us; but for this you must make certain that Walter goes to Barcelona. C. has already established contact with Perpignan. Where I am today, it is difficult to get any news for certain. You must acknowledge the receipt of all this by telegraph and let me know whether you intend to act on it. Salut and P.O.U.M.

SIGNED: "Ima."

The above document is only one of the many proofs of the complicity of the leaders of the P.O.U.M with Franco's agents. The following, for instance, is one of the statements published by the Barcelona Prefect of Police on August 20th, 1937, after the discovery of a secret centre of the P.O.U.M. at 158 Bailen Street in Barcelona.

"The owner of the house, Carmen Llorenis, and her daughter Maria Antonia Salines and the German Walter Schwarz were arrested. Secret publications of the P.O.U.M. were discovered on the premises as well as Fascist propaganda."

The statement adds that it has been proved that the arrested persons, who had several times crossed the French frontier, were in contact with Franco's agents.

And here is the latest case, which dates from October 23rd 1937 the echoes of which have not yet died down.

On October 23rd, 1937, the Chief of the Barcelona Police Lieut.-Colonel Burillo, a Regular Army officer who had distinguished himself at the defence of Madrid by his remarkable energy and the struggle he had carried on against the spirit of defeatism, called a conference of the international Press representatives and gave them the following *communiqué*, the contents of which follow below, and which also establishes the complicity of the I.O.U.M. with the Spanish rebels:

"The police have discovered an organisation of spies, of a military character, which, directed by the rebels' general staff, has extended its activities throughout the entire territory of the Republic, and especially Catalonia.

"This organisation has introduced its agents into the vital centres of the Army – infantry, artillery, tanks – Air Force and Navy. It has sent secret information to the enemy about the preparation and plans of our military operations, about aerodromes and the positions of troops, about supplies of ammunition, and various military activities, both in the front line and in the rear.

"In order to direct movements of these spies working in Republican territory, and to make better and more rapid use of the information they collect, ex-General Franco had organised a branch of the secret service section of his general staff at Perpignan. This secret service section at Perpignan had established contact with the spying organisations by means of liaison agents who maintained regular communications between Perpignan and the different towns of the Republic. As a result of the search which we have made, we are now in possession of a series of papers, bearing the signatures of those under arrest, containing secret information of a military character which was to be transmitted to the enemy.

"The statements of the prisoners, as well as the documents found, show that the organisation was also engaged in sabotage and that it intended to destroy important military

buildings, bridges, arsenals, etc., and that it was planning the assassination of some of the leading members of the Government and the leaders of the Army.

"The search, which was carried out at the house of Roca, one of the leading members of the organisation, revealed, between two mattresses, some extremely important documents which, together with Roca's own statements, show that one of the most important centres of this espionage organisation was composed of a large and well organised group many of whom were members of the P.O.U.M. This group had as its distinctive sign the letter C and each one of its agents in the network of spies was designated by the letter C and a corresponding number.

"In a letter found in the bookshop belonging to Roca's father, in the course of a search carried out on September 18th, was found the following information which had been sent to Franco's general staff:

'(1) The group led by agent C.16 succeeded on the 5th of last August in putting out of action three artillery pieces in Divisions K and M, in a decisive moment during operations.

'(2) The organisation is preparing to blow up the bridges across the Ebro.

'(3) The organisation informed General Franco's staff that a military train carrying arms had arrived and a specification of the arms was given.

'(4) Information about the artillery on the Aragon front.

'(5) On the question of food, the organisation has provoked protest demonstrations amongst the population.

'(6) Suggestions were made for the assassination of Walter and Modesto, leading figures in the People's Army.

'(7) Suggestions were made for an attempt on the life of one of the Ministers of the Republic, the idea being to make the attempt when he was driving in his car.... Two cars with men armed with hand-grenades should follow the Minister's car. *The carrying out of this attempt against the Minister's life had been entrusted to two members of the P.O.U.M. registered as C.18 and C.23.'*

"A plan of the P.O.U.M. workshop in which the hand-grenades were made was found in the letter.

"The leaders of the P.O.U.M.'s espionage organisation were complaining in this letter of not being able to make use of all their network of agents as the full list of secret P.O.U.M. agents was only known by two leading members of the P.O.U.M., and both of these were under arrest in Valencia awaiting trial."

This official document communicated to the Press of the world by the Spanish police raised the veil covering this gigantic case of spying, and once more made plain the complicity of the P.O.U.M.

Such great variety of documents were found that the Barcelona police had to condense into the above report only the essentials. After the discovery, the first consideration of the authorities had been to get their agents to make out a list of the objects and documents found which one of the accused signed with his own hand (facsimile of this published in the Appendix). Here is a verbatim text of the police document:

"In the town of Gerona at two o'clock on the morning of September 10th, 1937, the agents Isidro Nogues, Luis Fabrigat, Fernando Quadrado, Eduardo Montero, Miguel Parraga, Antonio Rupert, Stanislav Ferres and Antonio Gonzales, attached to the State department of information (the last-named in the position of secretary), put into execution the search-warrant issued by the Chief of Police, in the domicile of Jose Roca Falgueras, aged 58, widower, native of Gerona, son of Andres and Anna, living on the third floor of 6 Carreras Peralta Street. They went into a book-shop situated in Number 2 of the same street belonging to him, and in the presence of himself and his son, Joaquin Roca, they proceeded to a thorough search of all the offices and furniture of the shop in question. A chestnut-coloured fibre suitcase 48 cms. long, 30 cms. wide, and 14 cms. high was found at the back of the shop in the left-hand corner of a room. Also an iron box 24 cms. long, 18 cms. wide, and 9 cms. high. Inside the suitcase the following documents were found:

"Twenty-five plans describing the manufacture of different kinds of bombs and hand-grenades. Ten other plans giving details on the construction of different kinds of war materials. Two diagrams describing the composition of the bomb in

question as well as a detailed plan of the mechanism of several engines.

"At the bottom of the documents in question there is a stamp as follows: 'War Department, P.O.U.M., Central Military Committee.'

"A letter addressed to Mme. Barolet for M. Ferrer, 40 Rue des Augustins, Perpignan, and inside three sheets of paper and a mass of printed notes in the text of which several words had been written in by hand in capital letters, referring to questions of espionage and the organisation of acts of terrorism against members of the Republican Government.

"The suitcase also contained fifty newspapers of different dates. The iron box already mentioned contained Bank of Spain notes amounting to 11,825 pesetas in notes of 100, 50, and 25 pesetas, and the remainder in coins.

"In the safe of the shop were notes to the value of 135 pesetas, 2 pesetas in silver. In the desk was a letter and a post-card and a revolver.

"In a coat belonging to Joaquin Roca, a letter and unused envelope were found, the envelope bearing the number 8 and containing three 1,000-peseta notes."

This document was signed by each of the agents that took part in the search and also by the principal accused, Joaquin Roca.

Now follows the entire text of the letter referred to in paragraph four of the police report. This letter was to be sent from Barcelona to Perpignan and thence to Franco's headquarters:

"We take notice of your instructions that the liaison agents should not know all the secret groups of informers. Provisionally, we have put the agent of group C.4 in touch with group C.12 as the agent C.19 has not shown up for a fortnight – we learned later that he has been ill. In accordance with your wireless message we will send you all the secret information which we get from P.O.U.M. agents who have not yet been arrested; we will send this only by means of 'Litus'. Information from other secret agents will be sent to you as before. The job of speeding up the work of our secret P.O.U.M. agents goes very slowly. We don't even know all our agents, as a complete list was only known to 'Autor' and 'Clavel' who, as you know, are in prison in Valencia awaiting trial. As I said

above, I send you herewith by 'Litus' the following information gathered by agents C.5 and C.8.

"(1) Our people succeeded in putting out of action on the 25th August three of the guns of the 25th Division at a most critical moment. As you know, they had already put out of action four guns of the 45th Division. This job was done by group C.16 whose leader seems to be distinctly promising.

"(2) In answer to your question C.16 has noted that there are not ninety 75-mm. guns on the Aragon front but nine. It seems that a typing error had got into our first report. There are only seven 76-mm. guns. We should like to draw your attention to the fact that even if there is enough ammunition for the other guns there is not enough for the 76-mm. guns. We are concentrating our attention on putting artillery out of action.

"(3) Our people are getting ready to blow up the bridges over the Ebro. We have enough explosives and some of our men are experienced dynamiters. We are studying the control of the bridges and trying to find out how they are guarded.

"(4) We have not yet had reports from our agents on the subject of aviation. 'Imperial' comes back from Cancasnos next week and will also touch at Caspe.

"(5) I have been promised that they will get ready for the assassination of Walter and Modesto as soon as the fighting begins again.

"(6) You wanted to know how much material arrived on 4th September in the ship which unloaded at Rosas. Approximately there were 140 cases of light machine-guns and over 1,000 cases of Mauser rifles.

"(7) You ask me who C.29 and C.41 are. I told you in one of my previous letters that they are active leaders of groups of secret agents – Rosalio Negrete (Blackwell) and Gisella Winter Gerster. Walter Schwarz in whom you are interested is now out of prison; he hasn't come to see me yet but that is caution on his part.

"(8) I myself gave C.18 and C.23 your instructions about Prieto. I sent them to Valencia to stimulate the work of the P.O.U.M. group. Enclosed is the letter from C.18 and C.23. As you can see, your instructions are being carried out successfully.

"I am enclosing the designs for the manufacture of bombs which you sent me.

"(9) I am waiting for the spare valves for the radio – I must have them or the first time anything goes wrong we shall be cut off.

"PS. (1) I have just been told that the commander of the 45th Division, Kleber, has been dismissed and Hans has been put in his place. (2) I have just seen Flor. Vigorous preparations are being made for an insurrection in which the majority of the active members of the P.O.U.M. will take part. We have taken good advantage of the food shortage to organise a demonstration amongst the women. This should take place within two days."

It will be seen that the above document (facsimile of which is given in the Appendix) has been counter-signed by its author and certified as authentic. We now proceed to the following note, which was also found amongst this batch of documents, and which reveals what were the "instructions" given to agents C.18 and C.23 – to assassinate Prieto, the Minister of National Defence, with hand- grenades.

(The attempted murder of General Walter, one of the most popular commanders of the Spanish People's Army was not carried out according to plan and failed; when Walter was in Madrid an attempt on his life was made one night but luckily it was unsuccessful.)

Here is the text of the document concerning the attempted assassination of Prieto:

Letter Number 4

"With regard to P., after keeping a careful watch we have come to the following conclusion: we must give up the idea of arranging for an interview with P. in his office, as he is too well guarded. We have also to reckon with the fact that there are always a great many people walking about in this region. We have kept a very careful watch on the cars and we think that the road to Betera will be the best; traffic on this road is very irregular. We have already got two cars for the job. We have decided that hand-grenades will be best for him. I am now busy teaching our people the proper way of throwing them. *Signed:*"

Lastly, here is a further long but intensely interesting piece of evidence. This is the official report of the cross-examination of Joaquin Roca, one of the principal accused:

"In the town of Barcelona, at 12.55 on September 20th, 1937, before Antonio Gonzales Cruz, examining agent, and Jose Maria Balart Ramon, in the capacity of secretary, I, Joaquin Roca Amich, aged 23, native and inhabitant of Gerona, son of Joaquin Roca Falgueras and of Carmen Amich Escuero, living at Flat 2 on the third floor of No. 6 Dr. Carreras Peralta Street, state freely and spontaneously:

"(1) *Question to Accused*: Do you confess that you have formed part of a spying organisation and that you have taken reports of military secrets to send them to representatives of the general staff of Franco?

"*Accused*: Yes. It is true that I was part of an espionage organisation and that I have taken reports of military secrets in order to send them to a representative of the general staff of General Franco.

"(2) *Question to Accused*: Who, until now, has directed the work of espionage for General Franco and where is this person directing the organisation or his chief?

"*Accused*: I don't know who was directing the spying in Spain, but I do know that the man in charge of espionage work at Perpignan is my chief, Ramon Xifra Riera, who lives in the town of Perpignan.

"(3) *Question to Accused*: Where are the headquarters of General Franco's intelligence service and who are the most prominent people at this headquarters?

"*Accused*: I don't know where Franco's espionage headquarters are. All I know is that there is a centre which directs espionage for General Franco at Perpignan and the chief of this centre is Ramon Xifra Riera.

"(4) *Question*: What sort of instructions have you had from your chief on Franco's staff about military espionage?

"*Accused*: My chief, Ramon Xifra Riera, has asked me to give him information about the nature and quantity of war-materials entering Spain, about the defence works on the Catalan coast, about the morale and feelings of the population behind the lines. He has also asked me for reports on the sit-

uation on the Aragon front and for various other information of a general character.

"(5) *Question:* In what way was communication organised between you and the agent of Franco's staff?

Accused: My chief, Ramon Xifra Riera, wrote to me that I should write my information in invisible ink and send it to him by post. He advised me to use postcards as these would be less likely to arouse suspicion of the authorities. Riera also told me that later he would arrange to have my information carried by a man who would present himself at Cosme Dalmau Mora's house under the name of Dax. This man never turned up. I told my chief Riera that I did not want to send him any more reports by post and in future I would always send them by one of the people whom Cosme Dalmau Mora employed to help Fascists and deserters cross the border into France. Cosme Dalmau Mora had other agents working with him and with Franco's representative at Perpignan. Cosme Dalmau Mora also organised the flight of Fascist refugees abroad. This same Cosme Dalmau Mora was a most important person in Catalonia and the chief of a group of spies working for Franco. On Monday 13th of this month (I am not quite sure if it was 13th or 14th) Mora told me that the next Sunday he was going to smuggle fifteen people into France through the mountains.

"Owing to the exhaustion of the accused this statement finished at three o'clock on the day already mentioned. It will be continued at a convenient time. The examining agent, the accused, and myself, signed the document, which I certified in my capacity of secretary.

The accused Signed:
JOAQUIN ROCA.

*In the capacity of secretary the
examining agent Signed:*
ANTONIO GONZALEZ."

Second Statement

"In the town of Barcelona at 1.15 on September 22nd, 1937, before Isidro Nogues Porta and Jose Maria Balart Ramon, secretary, I, Joaquin Roca Amich, declare freely and spontaneously:

"(1) *Question to the Accused:* Are you the only spying link between Catalonia and Franco's headquarters at Perpignan?

Accused: No. There are other lines of spying as the following facts show. I got letters by means of Cosme Dalmau Mora and lately I have had another letter sent to me by means of a man who came to me under the name of Ferrer. There is another fact. Mora once showed me a paragraph in a letter from Ramon Xifra Riera which said: 'It would be useful if you could put us in touch with Roca (Litus).' This was the first invitation I had to join the espionage group in the service of General Franco.

"(2) *Question:* Is the espionage group of which you were a member the only group working in Catalonia under the direction of Franco's staff at Perpignan?

Accused: No. There are other groups directed by Franco's staff in Perpignan which work in Catalonia, but I don't know them because they are secret.

"(3) *Question:* What is the character of the reports which you have sent to Franco's espionage service in Perpignan and what are the most important pieces of information that you have communicated to them ?

Accused: Reports which I have sent to Franco's spy group at Perpignan are of a secret military nature, as you can see from the letter written in my handwriting and found between the mattresses of my bed. I was preparing to send this letter to the agent of Franco's staff at Perpignan. Actually, my reports dealt with the batteries on the Catalonian coast, the calibre and number of the guns, anti-aircraft defences, aerodromes, petrol supplies. In my report on the Aragon front I sent information about tanks, information about the Army, and especially about the existence of important groups of Fascist officers whom we thought we might be able to use against the Republican Government. I also sent reports on the number of gunners who were attached to the Fascist cause.

"(4) *Question:* Have you only practised espionage, or have you also taken part in acts of sabotage and in the destruction of material which is indispensable to the National Defence of the Republic?

"Accused: No, I have not been engaged in any work of sabotage or destruction.

"Question: That's not true. We know that your organisation was engaged in sabotage.

"Accused: I only suggested to my chief Riera, Franco's representative at Perpignan, that one of the three bridges over the rivers Ter, Fluvia and La Muga, on the railway line from the front to Barcelona, should be destroyed by bombing from the air, as a great deal of war-material, for the defence of the Republic is carried along this line. In my letter to Riera I said that there would be no danger in carrying out the air raid as there was no anti-aircraft defence, only an old half-useless machine-gun. I also wrote to Riera and told him that it was necessary to destroy three petrol depots near the railway station at Celra which are camouflaged and covered with branches.

"(5) Question: Who destroyed the three guns of the 25th Division and the four guns of the 45th Division mentioned in the letter that the police found at your house?

"Accused: I don't know who destroyed them because that job wasn't done by our group but by another group which was also working under the orders of Franco's agents at Perpignan, one of whom sent me the letter to which you have referred.

"(6) Question: The organisation of which you were a member has committed acts of terrorism against members of the Republican Government or against some of its representatives, hasn't it?

"Accused: I have not personally been concerned in any acts of terrorism, I have only carried on espionage.

"Question: That is not true because the letter which was found in your place mentions an attempt against Prieto on the Betera road as well as one against the Republican Army Commanders, Modesto and Walter.

"Accused: The attempted assassinations of Prieto and the Army Commanders, Modesto and Walter, was prepared by the secret group of agents of the P.O.U.M., which is directed by Franco's spying centre at Perpignan. The letter, which was given me together with other documents by one of the agents of the group in question who works illegally in Spain, testifies

to this. The agent in question told me that he would come back to collect the documents on the 19th of this month.

"(7) *Question*: Who is Litus?

"*Accused*: I am Litus.

"(8) *Question*: If you are Litus how do you describe your relations with the other espionage groups directed by Franco's staff at Perpignan?

"*Accused*: All the information collected by the other group, which is composed of the secret agents of the P.O.U.M., was sent to Perpignan through me, but I am not a member of this group and therefore am not responsible for what it does.

"(9) *Question*: Who is the person who sent you the letter containing reports on military espionage and in which the attempted assassinations are referred to?

"*Accused*: I don't know who sent me the letter with the military reports and the mention of the assassinations of Prieto, Modesto and Walter. As I told you before, this person called himself Ferrer. Physically he is short with a delicate skin, thin nose, black wavy hair and ordinary-looking mouth. I should think he was about twenty-five. He wore a brown suit with coloured stripes, a showy tie with a large knot. Altogether he was a very well dressed young man smelling of scent and with a slightly feminine appearance.

"(10) *Question*: Do you know if Cosme Dalmau Mora knew the group formed by the secret agents of the P.O.U.M., or whether he knew any one of these agents?

"*Accused*: I don't know.

"(11) *Question*: Tell me the names of the people who have given you reports which you have communicated to Franco's staff at Perpignan?

"*Accused*: Reports on the petrol depots at Celra were given me in all good faith by a schoolmaster in the village called Ciurana. I should like to state that this man is entirely loyal to the Republican regime. The reports on the Aragon front were given me verbally by Cosme Dalmau Mora, who added that in the event of an advance by Franco's forces the Republican Army would blow up the railway bridges. The information in my letter about Lerida (where there is no garrison) I got from a schoolmaster at Aiguaviva who is an officer."

The accused Signed:
JOAQUIN ROCA.

Examining agent Signed:
J. NOGUES."

These are the facts and in view of them any lengthy discussion is unnecessary. The documents speak for themselves and constitute a full condemnation of the criminal actions of the Trotskyist organisation in Spain. And these are only a selection from dozens of similar documents now in the possession of the Minister of the Interior establishing beyond all doubt the role of the P.O.U.M. as a spying organisation on Government territory. For months, since the search at the Peruvian Embassy, after which the leaders of the P.O.U.M. were arrested and imprisoned in Valencia, not a week has passed without the Minister of the Interior accumulating further evidence to show that the Trotskyist leaders were spies in the pay of the rebels and worked in close co-operation with the underground organisations of Phalangists and Monarchists.

One of the leaders however, Andres Nin, has escaped from the prison where he was shut up and we will now see to what fabulous legends and rumours this escape, which has been deliberately surrounded with mystery, has given rise.

NIN'S ESCAPE

After his arrest on June 16th, 1937, Nin was transferred to the civil prison at Valencia and thence to Madrid where he was immediately sent to the town of Alcala de Henares, about twelve miles from the capital, where he was locked up under a close watch by the police.

One night several men dressed as officers of the Regular Army, wearing badges of their rank, overpowered the guards of the prison, gagged and bound them, and went in and carried off the prisoner. From that moment, in spite of the most intensive search by the police, no trace of Nin has been found and no one has any idea where he is, whether he is a refugee in one of the foreign embassies which provide such generous hospitality to the Fascists of Franco's Fifth Column; or whether he managed to get through to the rebel territory and preserves his anonymity in order not to compromise his friends who are in Republican gaols.

Around the facts of Nin's escape the Trotskyists abroad built up, and continue to carry on, a tremendous Press campaign. The Fascist Press of the whole world gloats, intensifies its attacks against Republican Spain, and makes the escape the subject of all sorts of monstrous

rumours about the Spanish Communist Party and the Soviet Union. The lying rumours which were circulated in Paris at the time of the Koutieпов affair were revived. Queipo de Llano, in one of his daily mouthings from Seville over the air, declares that Nin has been murdered by order of the Negrin Government. The Fascist Press at San Sebastian claims that Nin has been assassinated by order from Moscow. The secret groups of the P.O.U.M. are circulating leaflets in which they hold Comorera (Catalan United Socialist leader), Prieto and Negrin responsible for Nin's "death" and demand their heads in expiation. All sorts of different versions have been published in the Press: some say that Nin has been murdered and some that he is being kept in secret confinement.

There is nothing really astonishing about all this nonsense, which is just what history teaches us to expect. If we read the evidence of one of the prison warders who was gagged and bound by the men dressed as officers, the "mystery" of Nin's disappearance itself disappears. The warder's statement is explicit. He said: "Nin went quietly out of the prison with the officers." The warder repeated that he went quietly without any sign of protest and added that at no moment did he try to call for help.

If Nin had been taken away against his will he would surely have made some attempt to attract the attention of the people outside and around the prison. The official statement mentions that there were some soldiers standing about outside the prison not far from the wall. They said that Nin got into the car with the officers in the most natural manner possible, and when they were questioned afterwards they all said that they had noticed nothing out of the ordinary.

All the evidence points to the fact that Nin was taken away by his friends, disguised as officers in uniforms which they could easily have procured in Madrid or Valencia. They had every reason for wanting to get him away before his examination, which would inevitably have revealed a mass of further incriminating evidence. Moreover, had he been found guilty by the people's court, he would certainly have been condemned to death for high treason and espionage.

The Republican Government and the Communist Party could have had no possible reason for wanting Nin to disappear and not stand at his trial. He was the most important of the accused, one of the principal leaders of the P.O.U.M., and the evidence against him was of an overwhelmingly grave nature. His cross-examination would have elicited most important information about the underground activity of his

organisation and its relations with the Fascist rebels. In reality, Nin's escape was nothing but one more act in a long series of provocations against the Republican Government.

THE MAY PUTSCH IN BARCELONA

By the beginning of May 1937, some days before the criminal rising in Barcelona began, the military situation of the Spanish Government was more favourable than at any time since July 1936 when Franco's rebellion broke out. The Italian troops were still recovering with difficulty after the tremendous defeat which had been inflicted on them at Guadalajara. The People's Army, formed after months of bitter defensive fighting and heavy losses, had at last shown its offensive potentialities. The relations between the various trade union and political organisations had improved. The great mass of the people was enthusiastic over the success of the Republican forces and was expressing its desire for the formation of a powerful, organised and disciplined army.

To any detached observer who was well informed about the situation at the front and behind the lines on both sides, it was obvious that the best way of discounting the advantages which the Republic had won would be to strike a blow at Catalonia. The rebels had just started their campaign against Bilbao and had good reason to fear that Catalonia would harass them by taking the offensive on the Aragon front.

Nothing could have been more acceptable to the Fascists than a diversion in Catalonia. The P.O.U.M., which for months had been trying to sabotage the Popular Front, was daily clamouring for its disruption and intriguing for the insurrection which would bring this about. The internal situation in Catalonia was such that the Government had to concentrate all its attention on it when dealing with it and was unable to assist the Basques. Caballero, and his Minister of the Interior, Angel Galarza, refused to see the danger and when pressed by the United Socialist Party of Catalonia as well as by the Spanish Communist Party gave evasive and dilatory replies.

Meanwhile, the P.O.U.M. was carefully planning the details of the insurrection. On May 3rd it was suggested that the Catalonian military authorities should take control of the telephone service. It was intolerable, for instance, when the Minister of the Interior was talking to one of the provincial governors, telling him what action to take against those responsible for various provocative activities, that the

P.O.U.M.'s agents should be listening in and able to warn their people to clear out.

At the same time, the Catalonian authorities had decided to dissolve once and for all the so-called "control patrols", which had been formed immediately after Franco's rebellion began and which had become inundated with all kinds of disruptive elements and adventurers. It was also taking in hand the organisation of the army on the Aragon front.

The P.O.U.M., finding that its situation was daily growing more unfavourable and that the masses were disapproving of its policy, chose this moment for its putsch.

Inevitably, the question arises: What were the real aims of the P.O.U.M. in fomenting this putsch? With only some thousands of supporters at its disposal it could not hope to seize power for itself. But it could hope to disrupt and split the two great trade union organisations just when their relations were improving. This is shown by the fact that as soon as the putsch began the leaders of the P.O.U.M. tried to win over to their own side some of the wilder elements of the C.N.T. (National Confederation of Labour, the Anarcho-Syndicalist organisation) and tried to get them to take part in street fighting against both the forces of the U.G.T. (Socialist Trade Union) and those of the Catalonian authorities and of the Central Government. Thanks to the calmness and energy of the leaders of these two organisations, this disaster was avoided and the Trotskyists found themselves on the barricades alone with the Fascists of the Fifth Column and a handful of disorderly elements.

The P.O.U.M., whose official organ, *La Batalla*, had been able to write without being suppressed that "the rebellion of July 19th broke out because the Popular Front was formed", had declared several days before the putsch that it was in favour of the constitution of a revolutionary junta which would take power by force. In a series of articles that appeared in *La Batalla* during the days before the putsch the Trotskyist leaders openly agitated for a *coup d'état*.

In the manifesto published by the P.O.U.M. on May 1st, we read:

"Conscious of its direct responsibility, the P.O.U.M., the Party of the Revolution, calls on all workers, on this 1st May, to form a workers' revolutionary front to fight against the common enemy, which is capitalism, to advance the Socialist

revolution, to destroy bourgeois institutions and create a workers' and peasants' government."

The following paragraph is taken from a manifesto signed by the Executive Committee of the P.O.U.M.:

"Rifles in hand, the workers are aroused because the working class has lost patience. The workers are tired of this wavering policy, of the sabotage on the Aragon fronts, with military disasters. That is why we are coming out into the streets."

The miserable demagoguery of the leaders of the P.O.U.M. with their Leftist phrase-mongering did not stop there. Having accumulated behind the lines arms, munitions and tanks that had been intended for the front, they announced:

"There are tanks, planes, and arms enough, but they won't give them to Catalonia; they won't let the revolutionary proletariat have them."

It should be noted that after the Barcelona putsch thousands of rifles were discovered, which the Trotskyist leaders had diverted from the front. The arms and war-materials which the P.O.U.M. had managed to collect by May 3rd included thousands of rifles, several hundred machine-guns and dozens of tanks.

On May 3rd, at three o'clock in the afternoon, the Catalan Commissioner of Public Order, Rodriguez Salas, went to the central telephonic exchange which the evening before had been taken over by fifty armed members of the P.O.U.M. Shock troops entered the building, turned out the fifty men, and the telephone exchange was in the hands of the Government.

So far there had been not the slightest trouble, but the Minister of Public Order made the mistake of thinking matters would end there and failed to take further precautionary measures. The fifty men were let go, and they roamed the streets of Barcelona and got together a mob. During the night several shots were heard.

The comment of *La Batalla* on this incident was as follows:

"As soon as the news went round the workers set up barricades."

The members of the P.O.U.M. were called together by a notice printed in *La Batalla* which read as follows:

"All militant members of the P.O.U.M., including those belonging to the Popular school of War, must come at once to the premises of the Military Executive Committee at No. 10 Ramblas de Estudios. This is urgent."

Barcelona then experienced the disorder which the leaders of the P.O.U.M. had so carefully planned. On the Plaza de España the Trotskyists brought into action the batteries of 75's which they had stolen from the Aragon front, and the blood of the workers flowed. Thanks however to the cool headedness of the leaders of the U.G.T. and the C.N.T. the fighting was localised. The Trotskyists resisted for some time, but were obliged to retreat before the overwhelming forces of the Catalan working class. In the course of this outrageous insurrection 900 were killed and 2,500 wounded.

A great wave of popular indignation swept through Barcelona and the entire people demanded justice. The first obvious measure seemed to be the dissolution of the P.O.U.M. and the suspension of its paper, *La Batalla*. But the Minister of the Interior of the Caballero Government, after hesitating for several days, refused to take any action against the P.O.U.M. Encouraged by this extraordinary attitude, the Trotskyists renewed their agitation. And while work was beginning again in the city and the forces of public order were disarming scattered uncontrolled groups, the members of the P.O.U.M. were found on the barricades side by side with members of Franco's Fifth Column.

The Fascists needed prolonged disturbances so that it would be impossible for Catalonia to send any help to the Basques, and so that a further Press and propaganda campaign could be carried on against Government Spain abroad. This indeed was exactly what happened. In the days that followed the reactionary and Fascist Press of the world raved about the chaos in Catalonia and the "rebellion of the people against the Soviet dictatorship". Meanwhile, the rebel radio stations of Salamanca and Saragossa repeated incessantly day and night the same advice as the P.O.U.M.:

"Hold on to your weapons – don't give up the struggle at any price – unite with your brothers at the front and hurl the Russian dictators out of your country."

On May 7th *La Batalla* appealed as follows to the soldiers:

"Leave the front and go and fight against the Government in Catalonia."

During this period the enemy suspended all activities on the Aragon front. It has since been discovered that Fascist planes were going to be sent to the assistance of the putschists. It is a strange coincidence that the aims followed by the P.O.U.M. should be identical with those of the Fascist general staff.

By the time that P.O.U.M. had been declared an illegal organisation by the Negrin Government, so many revelations had been made about its criminal activities that these were uppermost in the public mind and there has been a tendency to forget the long struggle which it had carried on against the Popular Front. Actually the later and brazenly treacherous activities of P.O.U.M., such as the Barcelona putsch and its contacts with Franco's espionage organisations, have their roots in its political history ever since the formation of the Popular Front.

THE P.O.U.M. AGAINST THE POPULAR FRONT

We have already referred to the formation of the P.O.U.M. in 1935, as the result of a coalition between the workers and peasant bloc founded by Joaquin Maurin and a tiny group of Leftists led by Nin, Gorkin and Andrade, and related how, from the day of its formation, the P.O.U.M. set out to wreck working-class unity in Spain. After the victory of the Popular Front at the elections, the P.O.U.M. redoubled its efforts. Its Press and its platforms poured out attacks against the leading figures of the Popular Front. At this time one of the P.O.U.M.'s leaders was a member of the Catalonian Government. After his expulsion the attacks became even more violent.

On December 15th, 1936, at a meeting of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the P.O.U.M. it was decided that the struggle against the Popular Front must be intensified. At this crucial time in the history of the Spanish people, when it was clear that their only hope of victory against the forces of Fascist intervention lay in Unity, the P.O.U.M. embarked on a policy the essential aim of which was to split the ranks of the People's Forces.

In the eyes of the leaders of the P.O.U.M. the alliance between the proletariat and the middle classes, which enabled vigorous resistance to be made against the Fascist rebellion and the formation of a Government in which working-class representatives collaborated with the forces of the Republican petty bourgeoisie, was infamous. A resolu-

tion adopted by this same Plenum of the Central Committee of the P.O.U.M., regarding the fundamental institutions of the Republic, demands:

"The dissolution of the bourgeois Parliament and in its place an Assembly composed of delegates from factory committees, representatives and delegates from the peasants and from the Fronts; a workers' and peasants' government, a workers' democracy."

These demands were made at the very moment when the mass of the workers had achieved active participation in the Popular Front Government, and when the workers and peasants had seen their conditions of life entirely transformed. The land had just been given to the poor peasants; the wages basis had been entirely revised; and Spanish democracy was organising the framework of social justice.

From the moment of its formation, and especially after July 19th, the Popular Front was the instrument of the liberation of the Spanish people. It was the means by which the United working class was able to shake off the yoke of feudalism, and when Germany and Fascist Italy intervened in Spain it was plain that the fight which the Popular Front led against foreign invasion was the fight for Spanish independence. While straining every nerve to overcome Fascism, both native and foreign, the Popular Front was struggling to transform Spanish society, which until then had been more or less feudal, into a parliamentary republic of a new type. The future of this new type of republic, which has already changed the conditions of life of the working class and the petty bourgeoisie, was and still is indissolubly linked with the struggle for Spain as an independent nation.

What was the attitude of the leaders of the P.O.U.M. on this question? Gorkin categorically stated at a meeting:

"It is impossible for a Marxist, a revolutionary, to say that he is fighting in a war of independence. Marx and Engels said that a revolutionary has no country, this war is a class war."

Following their usual practice of taking phrases from Marx and citing them out of their context, the Trotskyists tried to sow the seeds of doubt and dissension everywhere. It is easy enough to correct their distortions. In the sense in which Marx used it, the word "country" has nothing in common with a Spain set free from feudalism by the Popular Front. Marx was applying his analysis to "countries" in which the

situation was radically different. It will be remembered how vigorously Lenin fought against the method of applying classical texts to historic situations whose individual peculiarities were clearly defined, and of trying to draw practical conclusions from the application. Today the Spanish workers are defending the country which they themselves have conquered, while the Trotskyists, claiming to be the only true disciples of the founder of scientific Socialism, merely try to weaken the defence of the Republic.

Let us now consider the method which the P.O.U.M. employed against the political and trade union unity of the workers and anti-Fascist organisations.

The working-class organisation which was the object of the P.O.U.M.'s most vigorous attacks was the Spanish Communist Party. It will be reckoned the outstanding historic achievement of the Spanish Communist Party that, from the first weeks of the Fascist generals' rebellion against the legitimate Government, it clearly defined the war as the struggle of the entire Spanish people against its oppressors at home and their allies from abroad. By describing the war of Spanish independence the Communist Party entirely identified the Popular Front with the Spanish nation and thereby enlarged the basis of resistance against the invader. At the same time, it pointed out the needs which were essential to the conduct of the war: creation of a powerful war-industry, the re-establishment of order and discipline so that all the resources and energies of the country could be effectually mobilised.

What was the attitude of the P.O.U.M. in its opposition to the Communist Party and the P.S.U.C. (United Socialist Party of Catalonia)? The leaders of the P.O.U.M. suddenly started describing the Spanish Communist Party as the party of counter-revolution. The P.O.U.M. opposed all the main points of Communist-Party policy by putting forward a mass of demagogic demands. For instance, when the Communist Party sanctioned giving to the poor peasants the land which they had cultivated, but which they had not possessed, the P.O.U.M. clamoured tempestuously for the immediate and forcible socialisation of all land.

In order to try and delude the masses about the aims which it was really pursuing, the P.O.U.M. branded the Communist Party and the P.S.U.C. as reformists. Declaring themselves the "Guardians of the revolution" the leaders of the P.O.U.M. started a Press campaign, couched in seductively "theoretical" phrases, about the "degeneration

of the Communist Party and the P.S.U.C.", hoping to attract the few workers and peasants who had not understood the Communist and Socialist political line. In *La Batalla*, April 4th, there was an article about the "theoretical degeneration" of the Communist Party which actually claimed that the Communist Party had "*put too much emphasis on German and Italian intervention*". Another line of attack took the form of declaring that the Communist Party was "to the right of all parties in the Popular Front, even to the right of the Republicans".

Against the P.S.U.C. (United Socialist Party of Catalonia) the P.O.U.M. brought forward the usual accusation about the inactivity on the Aragon front:

"Listen, you workers who are kept in a state of paralysis at the front and paralysed behind the lines through lack of arms. The P.S.U.C. would like to make the revolutionary movement responsible for the inactivity on the Aragon front."

And all this time, while it was spreading these infamous lies, the P.O.U.M. itself was busy storing enormous stacks of munitions stolen from the fronts and waiting for the moment to turn these arms against the workers.

In its attempts to disrupt working-class unity, the P.O.U.M. also got to work amongst the Youth organisations. The Socialist and Communist Youth organisations had been united since June 1936 and from the beginning of the war onwards they have constituted one of the most powerful anti-Fascist organisations in the country, numbering 315,000. They provided a mass of troops and important cadres for the People's Army. The J.S.U. (United Socialist Youth) had been working hard for over a year to achieve the unity of Spanish youth and to form a National Alliance of Youth into which they have succeeded in incorporating the Anarchist youth. The P.O.U.M., with a great display of Leftist phrasemongering, began to form a skeleton Youth organisation of its own, which it called the Iberian Communist Youth and the aim of which was to prevent the young from taking part in the National Youth Alliance. The leader of the Young Iberian "Communists" described the National Youth Alliance as "a monstrous crime". Fortunately, however, the leaders of the young Anarchists did not allow themselves to be deceived by the P.O.U.M. and joined the National Youth Alliance.

La Batalla launched the most venomous attacks against the J.S.U., whose members were fighting on all fronts, and described it as coun-

ter-revolutionary and tried to discredit it in the eyes of the leaders of the young Anarchists. The P.O.U.M. followed the same tactics in trying to split trade union unity. Here is an example. On March 25th, 1937, Pedro Bonet, one of the Syndicalist leaders of the P.O.U.M., who had already made several venomous attacks against the U.G.T. (General Workers' Union – Socialist), declared:

"The S.E.P.I. [an organisation of small shopkeepers] must be the first to leave the U.G.T. This organisation of small employers and shopkeepers can survive if it likes, but only outside the organisation of the U.G.T. The workers of the U.G.T. cannot breathe in an organisation in which there are non-proletarian elements."

At the same time *La Batalla* ran a campaign which aimed to oppose the two great unions, the U.G.T. and the C.N.T. The C.N.T.'s answer to this piece of provocation was embodied in the call for unity of the masses of both trade unions which its leaders sounded on the day after the P.O.U.M.'s insurrection in Barcelona. Once again the disruptive plans of the Trotskyist leaders had failed.

THE P.O.U.M. AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT

ALL the attempts of the P.O.U.M. to wreck the unity of working-class and anti-Fascist organisations were part of a determined campaign against the Popular Front as such. Numerous quotations from Trotskyist literature can be cited to support this contention. According to the Trotskyist leaders the Popular Front is "a paper Government, an anti-workers' Government". Sometimes the P.O.U.M. was carried away by its provocative fury and forgot all political tact and attacked all the organisations which supported the Government. These attacks were met by an indignant reply from the C.N.T. organ in Madrid, which wrote:

"We cannot agree with the tone which *La Batalla* and the *Red Fighter* [another Trotskyist paper] adopt towards the Government Press in their grossly mistaken campaign against the Popular Front."

At the same time the P.O.U.M. was carrying on a shameful campaign, the aim of which was to popularise rumours that were circulating abroad about an approaching armistice. It did this at the moment when Madrid had won the admiration of the entire world for its glori-

ous resistance and when the Republican Army, having checked the German and Moroccan troops on the Jaramma front, had won a great victory over the Italians at Guadalajara. The weakness which the Caballero Government showed in allowing the P.O.U.M. to carry on their intrigues and agitation against the Republic was almost incredible, especially as the P.O.U.M. was quite as active against Caballero's Cabinet as against the Catalonian authorities and, later, against the Negrin Government. Caballero's Minister of the Interior, in particular, displayed an extraordinary tolerance towards the P.O.U.M.

Sometimes the Trotskyists tried to play off the Central Government against the Catalan Government, but the general line of attack against both Governments was equally violent.

We have already explained that whilst the Trotskyists were storing arms which were intended for the front they attacked the Government and blamed it for the delay. For instance, on January 17th at Castellon Gironella, one of the leaders of the P.O.U.M. said in a speech:

"You wonder why there is no advance on the Aragon front. No offensive has been launched on the Aragon front because the Government does not wish to take the offensive, and the reason why it does not wish to take the offensive is because it does not wish to arm the revolutionaries who are on that front."

The P.O.U.M., however, were not content with storing arms, but they also negotiated to buy them from abroad as the following letter shows. This was sent from Prague, by the Alarm Group, to Gorkin:

"Prague.

February 22nd, 1937.

"DEAR COMRADES,

"We have the opportunity of getting fifty machine-guns (Masch inengewehre, Model 6) from the Czechoslovakian Government at a very reduced price in a perfectly legal manner. We are writing to you because we think you will have a better chance than ourselves of being able to arrange this sale for the P.O.U.M. If you can be the intermediary in this sale please let us know at once. The price of the guns will be 15,000 Kc. in all.

"In awaiting your reply to this confidential letter we beg you, dear comrades, to accept our most cordial greetings.

"For the *Alarm* Group,
(*Signature illegible.*)

"P.S. We cannot give any credit and you will have to pay for the arms immediately."

Another form of Trotskyist provocative slander was to declare that the Central Government had given autonomy to the Basques, to Catalonia and to Aragon because, as Arquer said in a speech: "they haven't the strength to govern them themselves." This idiotic rumour was spread in spite of the fact that the political forces of the working class and especially the Communist Party have always been the champions of National minorities. Meanwhile, the P.O.U.M. did everything they could to discredit the Catalonian Government, which they described in *La Batalla* (December 20th, 1936) as

"the cause of the troubles behind the lines and of the disturbances and confusion at the front. The new Cabinet is in itself an advantage to the Fascist forces".

This attitude coincided exactly with the propaganda which was being poured out by the Fascist radio-stations at Salamanca and Seville. Indeed, it coincided with it on a great many other points, especially the question of the relations of the Spanish Government with the democracies of Europe. These relations the P.O.U.M. did their best to make as difficult as possible.

The P.O.U.M. incessantly attacked the Soviet Government, which by its generous attitude to the Republic had won the sympathy and friendship of the people of Spain. The effective solidarity of U.S.S.R. and Spain exasperated the Trotskyist leaders. They let loose a violent campaign against "Soviet aid" and used every one of the arguments which were being printed in the Fascist Press of the world, claiming that Russia was intervening in Spanish affairs and clamouring:

"We want the working class of Catalonia to be r absolute master of its own fate."

On December 18th, 1936, a resolution of the Central Committee of the P.O.U.M. concerning the question of Soviet aid declared:

"We want to stop this system by which, in exchange for material help, they are able to intervene in the leadership of the Spanish workers."

Thus the Executive Committee of the P.O.U.M. embraced the standpoint of international Fascism. It repeated stories which had appeared in Fascist newspapers and stories which had been spread by Gestapo agents abroad.

On December 9th it was announced that Victor Serge, who had been expelled from the Soviet Union, had joined the staff of *La Batalla*. Hitherto, the P.O.U.M. had denied having any relations with the Trotskyists. They persisted in this denial and on January 24th, 1937, *La Batalla* announced:

"We are not Trotskyists but we consider that this tendency in the working-class movement is quite as legitimate as any other."

This farce was not kept up very long, however, as the leaders of the P.O.U.M., who had all formerly been expelled from the Communist Party and who had adopted Trotskyist ideology, soon showed themselves in their true light. A delegation from the P.O.U.M. went to visit Trotsky in Mexico; Trotsky's son, Sedov, made more and more secret trips and his relations with the leaders of the P.O.U.M. became closer. The phantom section of the so-called Bolshevik Leninist Fourth International worked in full accord with the leaders of the P.O.U.M. A mass of documents found when a search was made at Gorssin's flat in Barcelona is evidence of this.

THE P.O.U.M. AGAINST THE PEOPLE'S ARMY

THE formation of the Spanish People's Republic's Regular Army, organised on the same basis as the most up-to-date armies of Europe, was an achievement made possible by extraordinary determination and patience. It is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable feats which the Spanish Popular Front has performed since the rebellion of Franco and his generals. To transform the gallant but disorganised groups of workers' militia, hurriedly gathered together on July 19th and armed with relics from the museums and anything that lay to hand, into a centralised united force properly commanded and trained in modern military technique, this was the urgent task which the Spanish people demanded of the Popular Front. It was a heavy and difficult task and it entailed months of patient effort in the course of which many disappointments and defeats had to be endured. But the loyalty and enthusiasm of the Spanish workers overcame all difficulties, as it will overcome all difficulties in the future. And with the valuable co-operation

of several hundred officers of the Regular Army who had remained loyal to their oath to the Republic, the militiamen were organised into a force which was capable of holding Franco's mercenary troops in check.

To this task, on which the very future of the country depended, and which constituted the only possible safeguard against the invasion by foreign Fascism, each of the parties of the Popular Front devoted their energies in proportion to their ability to size up the situation. For Spain it was a matter of life and death. The P.O.U.M., true to its habitual line, devoted all its efforts to hindering the creation and organisation of the Regular Army. In Catalonia, where, at first, local traditions tended to oppose the introduction of military discipline, the P.O.U.M. used the demagogic slogan: "The workers' militia overcame the rebellion, they will win the war," and resisted all the efforts of the United Socialist and Communist Parties to organise a regular army. The P.O.U.M. argued as follows:

"We don't want a regular army because that means the recognition of militarism, it means using the same methods and forms as those which existed in the old army, we want only revolutionary militias."

But in spite of this obstruction the People's Army took shape; and when it proved itself at Madrid by checking the Fascist troops at the gates of the capital the Trotskyists changed their tactics, for, although they had been masquerading as revolutionaries, their open opposition to the Regular Army had revealed them in their true colours. The P.O.U.M. then adopted its traditional splitting tactics. In the newly organised army, Socialists, Communists, Anarchists, Catholics and Republicans were fighting side by side. The P.O.U.M. opposed this with the conception of "a purely working-class army", and one of its leaders, Solano, declared in a meeting at Castellon:

"We cannot tolerate the formation of an army which included a crowd of young Liberals, petty bourgeoisie and Catholics."

La Batalla added: "an army without proletarian control is no guarantee for the revolution." This insinuation was a direct lie because the Spanish working class had just provided the new Regular Army with the majority of its officers and a host of thoroughly tried leaders.

Alongside this criminal campaign, which aimed at undermining the very foundations of the Army, the P.O.U.M. conducted a venomous attack against the officers of the old Army who had remained loyal to the Republic and used every means in its power to try and provoke their hostility to the new regime. It based this attack on the suggestion that the sole control of the Army was in the hands of professional soldiers "who could not be trusted". And it spread this idea at the moment when numbers of military leaders were springing up from the ranks of the people in a way which was reminiscent of the French Revolution, providing the Spanish Army with such commanders as Modesto, Lister, Campesino, Mera, etc., and while professional soldiers like General Miaja, the life and soul of the defence of Madrid, and General Bosas were making glorious history for the Republic and giving the best possible proofs of their loyalty to the Spanish people.

Every step which represented a real advance in the task of organising the People's Army was selected for attacks by the P.O.U.M. The General Military Commission, an institution which had been responsible for giving the Republican soldiers the high degree of political understanding which they have today, was also the object of Trotskyist provocation. The P.O.U.M.'s fundamental tactic was to cause disunity on all questions, and its leaders therefore urged that another military commissariat should be set up. This was the demand of Andres Nin when, on December 16th, 1936, he broadcast from Radio Barcelona, without the slightest compunction, all sorts of infamous abuse of this Republican organisation.

The practical result of this calculated piece of provocation was that the Trotskyists formed a division out of such dubious elements as expelled Phalangists and named it after Lenin. They opened a military school at Lerida and went on training officers there right up till May. The leaders of the P.O.U.M. hoped that they would have enough men on whom they could rely to influence any recruits whom Caballero, who was so tolerant towards them, would be foolish enough to provide.

Meanwhile the anti-Fascist organisations were sending thousands of their members to defend the capital. The P.O.U.M. then announced, with a great flourish, that its first contingent was about to leave for Madrid. The contingent actually did leave, but when it arrived at the capital its fighting strength amounted to the grand total of eighty men (this figure is corroborated on all sides).

As for the behaviour of the P.O.U.M. militiamen and the "famous Lenin division" at the front, their constant fraternisation with the Fascists during their long stay on the Aragon front was notorious. In some districts, notably at Huesca, they even played football several times a week with the Fascists. Evidence of this fraternisation is provided by a young English volunteer, a former member of the I.L.P. He reports:

"Since, throughout my life, I have been devoted to justice, I became a Socialist, and when Fascism launched its attack against the Spanish people, I came to Spain in order to take part in the fight together with three worker comrades.

"I arrived in Spain with a group of I.L.P. volunteers on January 11th with the intention of going to Madrid. But for reasons I have never been able to learn, I was kept in the 'Lenin Barracks' in Barcelona, which was controlled by the P.O.U.M. The only thing we did there was to take part in the daily march through the streets. This irritated our English group. Then we were incorporated in the P.O.U.M. militia on the Alcubierra sector of the Aragon front and placed under the command of Commandant Kopp.

"Here was a number of things we began to notice. Food in general was very scarce and we noticed that when the mules that brought the food to the front lines arrived the better kinds were always missing.

"Every night at 11 p.m. the sentries heard the rattle of a cart and we could tell from its light that it was crossing the space between the position on our left and the Fascist lines. We were ordered never to shoot at this light and when we grew inquisitive about it we were forbidden to try to find anything out. Our superiors gave us no satisfactory explanation and we each behaved as though none of us knew anything about any mysterious cart which crossed regularly to the enemy lines without being fired on. One day in the course of a skirmish we found, on the route that the cart must have taken each night, a small hut which must have been occupied by the Fascists. We succeeded in slipping past the sentries and trying to follow the cart on the next occasion, but the plan failed because the very same night there was a general recall and we were moved to another sector.

"Near Huesca there were the same difficulties about food. Our clothing was poor. And during a forward movement one night we saw Commandant Kopp returning from the Fascist lines.

"In their political work, also, the P.O.U.M. was similarly working for Fascism. The political reports given by representatives of the P.O.U.M. always painted defeat as inevitable, and was directed to make us believe that the workers were oppressed behind the front and about to be faced with a reign of terror. From time to time we were told of bloody clashes against the workers in the hinterland.

"When I got back to the front it was obvious that there was open fraternisation between the P.O.U.M. troops and the Fascists. Newspapers, tobacco and drinks were exchanged. Our positions were about 150 yards from the Fascist offensive, and despite the fact that the Fascists kept appealing to us to desert we had orders never to answer their fire. I realised more and more the pro-Fascist line of the P.O.U.M. and, with a friend named Arthur, asked permission to go home. I need not repeat all the excuses that were given for refusing permission. An American Trotskyist, on the other hand, was allowed back to Valencia, as soon as he asked.

"Arthur and I declared our refusal in advance to act for the P.O.U.M. against the Spanish Government, but offered to take part in building fortifications much needed in our sector. The P.O.U.M. then threatened to imprison us. We escaped to Barcelona and stayed there several days until we heard from a friend that the idea of resistance was abandoned. We then returned to the front and three weeks later incorporation into the People's Army took place without incident. These experiences for a long time shook my faith in the Socialist movement. Today, however, I realise that, despite the baseness of certain leaders whom I once trusted, we workers must carry on the fight. And now I hope that more experienced than before, I may be able to give useful service in the struggle against Fascism and for Socialism. Long live the Republican Spanish people! Long live the victory of all the workers of the world!"

Barcelona,

Signed: "J. A. FRANKFORT."

August 21st, 1937.

The Trotskyists also issued, in the form of anonymous leaflets, a flood of atrocious propaganda about the heroic International Brigade composed of volunteers from all countries who have come of their own free will to help the Spanish people. The following quotation, for instance, is worthy of Franco's most faithful supporters:

"Anarchist comrades! Do not trust the International Brigade. It will provide the core of the army which the Communists of Catalonia and Spain will hurl against you. In the same way that the Communists during the Russian revolution destroyed the Anarchists."

THE P.O.U.M.'S ATTEMPT TO UNDERMINE DISCIPLINE BEHIND THE LINES

It is an established fact of military experience that in a war between two forces which have more or less identical offensive opportunities the morale behind the lines plays a decisive part. In spite of its disadvantage in the face of German and Italian intervention, Republican Spain could count on the overwhelming superiority of its reserves, made up of enormous numbers of workers, peasants and petty bourgeoisie, who were fundamentally hostile to Fascism not only on ideological grounds but also because of their own economic interests. From the early days of the civil war when Franco had to rely on his Moorish troops to begin his offensive in the Tagus Valley, it was plain that he could only carry on his struggle against the Spanish people with the help of mercenaries and foreign allies. The overwhelming majority of the people of Spain were against Fascism and had lined up on the side of their legitimate Government. The result was that the superiority of the Government's reserve helped to compensate for lack of arms and military technique. And it was clear that the rebels would try and counteract this superiority by every possible means.

Owing to the incredible weakness of the first two Governments the P O.U.M. was allowed to become the open instrument of the rebels behind the Republican lines, and to disturb order and discipline and sow the seeds of discord everywhere.

The first obvious task of any Government after a rebellion has been crushed is to restore order. And the Republican Government could no longer tolerate the insistence of undisciplined bands which had rendered good service during the first days of the rebellion, but most of whose original members had left for the front and which had

now become nothing but rallying centres for disorderly elements and Fascists of the Fifth Column. These patrols, which the Central Government replaced by forces recruited from the workers and set on a legal footing, continued to disturb the economic life of Catalonia and the coastal provinces. As fast as the original members left for the front to join the People's Army, disorderly elements joined the patrols and turned them into a real menace to public order. They occupied cross roads, arbitrarily took over the control of villages and looted them. The P.O.U.M. became the most ardent champion of these patrols and although the President of the General Council of Catalonia announced to the Press that he could not allow this disorderly state of affairs to continue, the Catalonian Government, in which the Trotskyists had influence, were not able to effect a clean-up until after the Barcelona putsch in May.

Another instance of the P.O.U.M.'s criminally disruptive tactics is shown by its attitude towards the refugees who poured into Catalonia. In November 1936 when the situation in Madrid suddenly became critical and the civilian population was exposed to the terrible bombing raids of the German and Italian planes, the Government speeded up the evacuation of civilians from Madrid to the coastal provinces, which was already being organised. Hundreds of thousands of women and children were welcomed with open arms by the people of Catalonia, but the P.O.U.M. at once took the opportunity of trying to stir up bad feeling between the refugees and the local inhabitants. Andrade, one of the leaders of the P.O.U.M. who is now under arrest, made the following outrageous statement in *La Batalla* on December 8th, 1936:

"The refugees must remember that we are living in a time of civil war and not keep on making complaints, the only object of which is to try and get more comfortable lives for themselves than they had in Madrid."

The P.O.U.M. blamed the refugees for the food shortage and the overcrowding in houses, trams and public places.

CONCLUSION

In a pamphlet of this length it has not been possible to give a detailed history in chronological order of the various activities of the P.O.U.M. But it is plain that all these activities are part of a general policy, the aim of which is to wreck the Spanish People's Front. It is no accident that the men who attacked the Popular Front from the

moment of its foundation later worked in open association with the Fascist rebels.

All active members of the Popular Front have been convinced for a long time that the struggle against Trotskyism is a vitally necessary measure of defence against the common enemy. The Republican parties have openly denounced the P.O.U.M. as the direct instrument of Fascism in Spain. Led by the Negrin and Prieto group the Spanish Socialist Party has come out strongly against the Trotskyists and put all its energies into establishing and strengthening the Popular Front. The militants of the Left Wing, such as Del Vayo, the Spanish representative on the League of Nations Committee, are pledged to anti-Fascist unity and have taken a firm stand against Trotskyism. They stressed the necessity of the fight against it at the time when the Caballero group was wavering and hesitating.

For a time, indeed, the situation was curiously contradictory, for while the Caballero Government, which remained in power until May, was refusing to take any measures against the Trotskyists and treating them with extraordinary tolerance, the Madrid Junta, which had been entrusted with the defence of the capital, insisted on firm action. It suppressed their Press which had been slandering the Government and the People's Army, and took control of their radio-station from which they had been communicating with the rebels.

The People's Front took a firm line while the Caballero Cabinet wavered and hesitated irresponsibly. Whether this was due to weakness on the part of the Caballerists or mere political shortsightedness, the fact remains that even on the day following the May putsch in Barcelona, the Caballerists refused to take the measures which the people and the majority of the Government demanded – namely, the prosecution of the criminal instigators of the putsch. This brought the Ministerial crisis to a head. Fortunately the Negrin Government which took over power adopted an uncompromisingly strong attitude towards the P.O.U.M. and arrested its leaders after the discovery of the documents at the Peruvian Embassy. This was the reason for the intensified hatred of the P.O.U.M. against the Negrin Government and the attempted assassinations which have been described. These attempted assassinations mark the beginning of a new phase of terrorism on which the P.O.U.M. embarked. But the true face of the P.O.U.M. is now unmasked. The "Partido Obrero de Unificacion Marxista" is revealed as an instrument which foreign and Spanish Fascists are using against the people of Spain. The disguise of its Leftism and revolutionary phrase-

ology is torn away by the discovery of documents which establish its connection with the Fascists and their friends abroad.

The trial of the spies of the P.O.U.M. will soon take place. Its approach is causing considerable apprehension amongst all the friends of the P.O.U.M. Meanwhile, the Fascist Press is doing its best to work up a campaign and this campaign is being echoed in certain "Left" quarters. Articles have appeared in both English and French publications, notably *Le Populaire*, which are harmful to the Spanish Republic and which make use of statements which they allege to have been made by certain members of the Spanish Government.

I should like to stress once again the indignation which the whole affair of the Trotskyists and the P.O.U.M. has aroused in Spain. At the moment of writing this I have just returned from Spain where I had interviews with several leading members of the Government. All the statements made by the various members of the Government whom I saw agreed in every particular. There is not a word of truth in the article which appeared in *Le Populaire* of September 7th quoting a long statement supposed to have been made by members of the Government. There was absolutely no foundation whatever for the allegations which were made in this article. The Minister of the Interior, Zugazagoitia, has already replied to this article as follows:

"Some of the gentlemen of the Left adopt a very strange method of helping Spain. Whatever the authors of the article published in the *Populaire* have done to help our cause in the past has been entirely undone by their recent actions. They have delighted the Spanish rebel newspapers who have filled their columns with the unfounded statements which were made in this article. The authors of this article represent us, the Spanish Government, to the people of France as the tools of a foreign power which is exactly how we are described by the Fascist radio-stations. This description is grossly untrue. Our police are not an independent power working on their own apart from the Government, their only concern is to work for victory."

In the second part of his statement the Minister of Interior indignantly denies the suggestions which Maxton, Marcel Pivert and Daniel Guerin have made about the part played by the "foreign police of the G.P.U." He adds:

"We have good reason for being suspicious about the activities of certain embassies, but we have no doubts about 'this Embassy' [Soviet Embassy] which is the only one that does not conceal foreign individuals among the members of its staff. We only wish all the other embassies were like it, for then it would take our police much less time to clear the matters they are investigating. A long series of disillusionments gives us the right to ask many of the men of the Left whether they are really trying to help us or to strike us in the back."

I can still remember the expression of guilt on the face of Prieto's private secretary when he told me the impression which the *Populaire* article had made on his chief. "The Minister will never descend to arguing with these kind of people," he said, "and he has no intention of doing so."

The Under-Secretary of State, Garcia Pratt, was also thoroughly disgusted and told me:

"This article is an appalling mixture of incomplete sentences distorted and rearranged out of their context for a definite political purpose. All I said to the members of the international delegation who came to see me was that definite, concrete accusations of espionage been made against certain leaders of the P.O.U.M. They represented me as saying that I did not believe that these arrested leaders were spies. It is really absolutely incredible. Is this the way these people whom we thought were friends of Spain propose to help us?"

The part of the article in *Le Populaire* which attempts to show that the Trotskyists who were arrested after the discovery of the documents at the Peruvian Embassy were innocent, attributed the following statement to both the Minister of Justice and, in another form, to the Public Prosecutor:

"There is no longer any question of accusing any leader of the P.O.U.M. of espionage."

I had a long conversation with the Public Prosecutor himself at Valencia and he entirely refuted this statement. In effect he said:

"You understand, of course, that there is no foundation whatever for this suggestion. A legal enquiry has been opened against the leaders of the P.O.U.M. on the charge of espionage."

nage because we possess certain definite facts and documents. The case is now being proceeded with and until it is ready to be put before the courts the investigation is being carried out secretly. There is no question whatever under the circumstances of saying that the charge of espionage has been dismissed, very much to the contrary...."

There will be no unnecessary delay in the administration of justice, but it is instructive to consider the foreign pressure which has been brought to bear and the manoeuvres which have been made in certain quarters, all forming part of an attempt to try and make out that the May putsch in Barcelona and the espionage are separate matters, whereas in fact they are both really part of the same case. Now that Nin has escaped the rumour is being spread in Trotskyist and Fascist circles that the Barcelona putsch will be investigated first and that the charges of espionage will not be dealt with until Nin has been found.

Public opinion in Spain is absolutely convinced of the guilt of the P.O.U.M. The discovery of the espionage at Barcelona and the attempted assassinations have convinced the Government that weakness or hesitancy would be fatal. The Valencia Socialist paper, which voices official opinion, sums up the matter in its issue of October 24th:

"Spies and traitors! When will we have done away with them or when will they have done away with us? Are they spies in the service of a party, or is it a party in the service of spies?"

Commenting on the affair at Barcelona it adds:

"The P.O.U.M., the refuge of spies... the most dangerous acts of sabotage have been entrusted to two spies who are members of the P.O.U.M. The most dangerous of those who have been arrested belong to this party."

I think that in the course of this pamphlet I have provided enough material for people to form their own judgments. I hope that it will be of some service to the Spanish Republic which, in the course of the affair, has been made the subject of such slanderous attacks.