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## **The Struggle Against the Fascist Putsch** *(Letter From Madrid)*

Military-fascist putschists are spreading reports through the radio stations which they have seized, to the effect that the responsibility for the bloody civil war which they have begun lies with the anti-fascist People's Front. This is a lie, a slander and an act of provocation. I am making use of the first opportunity to send you this letter.

We want the whole civilized world to know the truth as to who actually are the criminals responsible for having begun the civil war victory over their reactionary enemies, the masses of the people took up an excessively trustful attitude towards them. How did the leaders of the monarchist fascist bands react to this? They made foul use of this trustfulness, against the people.

In words they declared themselves ready to make their peace with the democratic republic established in Spain, but in actual fact they immediately resorted to economic sabotage and dirty speculation, after the fall of their government.

The financial oligarchy began to transfer their capital abroad, and the foulest marauders on the Stock Exchange began to operate against the exchange value of the peseta.

The reactionary fascist cliques which were in power for two years brought the economic life of the country to ruin, in their own interests, in Spain.

Who are these people who have now hurled themselves on our people? What are the aims pursued by the organizers of the revolt? What forces stand behind them?

As is well known, the counter-revolutionary and fascist government was driven out of our country by the vote of the people. The anti-fascist People's Front won a victory at the elections to the Cortes held on February 16 this year, in spite of all the threats and demagogic promises of the monarchist militarists and fascist organizations. The country expressed its will clearly and in no uncertain fashion, to the effect that it was against the hated monarchy, against the feudal yoke, against a new fascist enslavement, and for a free and happy, democratic Spain.

Proud in the consciousness of their undoubted moral and political and when after the elections they were driven out, they tried to take their revenge on the country by preventing it in every way from setting the economic life of the country in order.

The big manufacturers demanded the abolition of the measures adopted by the government to lighten the burden of the masses of the people, and threatened that if this were not done they would declare a lockout.

The big landowners, supported by the banking clique, threatened a "strike" and declared that they would not let their fields be cultivated in the autumn if the government did not give up its land reforms and its defense of the interests of the agricultural workers and peasants.

It was only thanks to the powerful pressure of the overwhelming majority of the population, welded together in the People's Front, that the government did not give way to these threats and desires of the robbers and tricksters.

The government displayed excessive magnanimity towards the reactionary elements who met with complete defeat at the elections. In spite of the warnings and advice given by the workers' organizations, the leaders of the monarchists and fascists were left at liberty, and even continued to occupy some key positions in the army, fleet and the state apparatus.

How did the hangmen of the people reply to this magnanimity? By black betrayal. When they were still in the government, they made use of the entire state apparatus as a machine of violence and terror against the people. But when they were driven out of the government by the vote of the people, they resorted to the weapon of individual terror against the best sons of the people.

Not a single day passed without some active member of the working class movement and the People's Front being killed or wounded by the agents of the counter-revolution. The enemies of the people strove by these terrorist deeds not only physically to wipe out the people whom they hated, but also to create the impression that there was no firmly established order in our country.

The fascists and monarchists transformed the churches and monasteries into stores for their arms, and places of refuge for their terrorist bands, and at the same time provoked the firing of churches and monasteries, while themselves organizing such fires in order to set the religious section of the population against the other section of the population not linked up with the church.

"Beware of provocateurs", was the warning of the workers' organizations, "remember that those who set fire to the churches and the monasteries play into the hands of counter-revolution!"

The agents of the counter-revolution used every possible means to defend the feudal privileges of the landowners and big money-lenders who for centuries had oppressed the peasantry; and at the same time they strove to provoke conflicts between the peasants and the armed forces of the state.

The tactics of the monarchist-fascist counter-revolutionaries were to reduce certain sections of the working people to despair and hopelessness, to force the movement of the people to leave the path of open, organized and conscious mass struggle for the liberation of the whole people, and to provoke the outbreak of civil war in the country.

But the working class of Spain showed the whole world not only their heroic firmness and self-sacrifice, but also their high political maturity and wise determination; they showed themselves to be a force rallying and leading the whole of the population drawn into the movement of the People's Front.

The working class of Spain correctly estimated the degree of the maturity of the objective conditions, took a sound view of the relation of forces in the country and set before the People's Front those tasks of reorganizing and advancing the country which have fully matured at the present stage of development, and which, therefore, were accepted by the masses of the people as really their own tasks.

Thanks to this high level of class consciousness of the working class, and the profound educational influence exerted by them over the wide masses of their allies, the People's Front did not fall apart, but became steeled under the blows of the fascist counter-revolution.

Against whom have the most exploiting, the most parasitic and most reactionary elements of the propertied classes now raised revolt in Spain? Against anarchy, against fratricidal war—assert the putschists and their international fascist abettors and supporters. This is not true, of course. In our country, after the bloody reactionary government was driven out, a regime of firm democratic order and unity among the people was established, and not of anarchy and fratricidal war.

All honest people understand that the revolt was raised not against non-existing anarchy and fratricidal war, but against the regime of legality and order which bases itself on the undoubted will of the Spanish people whose interests it serves.

What are the putschists trying to achieve? They want to prevent the proletarian dictatorship in Spain, is the lying assertion of the provocateurs. No, they are striving to overthrow the democratic republic established by the people, to destroy the democratic rights and liberties won by the people in a stubborn and unswerving struggle.

What are the means being used by the fascist plotters to achieve the fulfilment of their criminal plans? The method of civil war. The method of letting anarchy loose. The method of unrestrained Hitlerite terror directed against all sections of the population. At all points seized by the fascists bestial punishment is being meted out to those who defend the people, and who belong to all the sections of the population.

But why do the plotters undertake such a desperate adventure as the attempt to overthrow by means of a putsch the democratic republic for which the Spanish people stand so firmly and courageously? Is it true that the democratic republic established in Spain has undermined the capitalist system, expropriated the bourgeoisie, and done away with private property in the means and implements of production?

No, of course not. The Spanish bourgeoisie themselves cannot and do not assert that the People's Front sets itself the task of overthrowing the capitalist system.

The struggle in our country now is not between socialism and capitalism, but between bourgeois democracy and fascism.

What forces can the military fascist putschists count on?

They did not succeed in catching the working class unawares, the most class-conscious and far-sighted of whom never ceased to expose the plot being prepared long before the putsch took place.

They did not succeed in introducing discord into the ranks of the People's Front, the solidarity of whose ranks is growing in the face of the offensive of our common foul enemy.

The main core of the counter-revolutionary forces is the Foreign Legion from Morocco, composed of the dregs of all nations. These troops are specially corrupted by the reactionaries in order to suppress the liberation movement both in the

colonies and in the home country.

The deluded Moroccans swooped down on the coastal regions of Spain as foreign conquerors. Behind them, openly or secretly, there stand the fascist forces of other countries, interested in the national enslavement of Spain.

It is as in a dirty and bloody *bloc* that the monarchist counter-revolutionaries of Spain, the agents of Hitler operating in Spanish and also French Morocco, the fascist plotters in France and the most reactionary elements of British imperialism have mingled their forces in the Spanish military putsch.

Hitler is directly guiding the putschist generals. We are well aware that General Sanjurjo, who was intended by the insurgents to be dictator, was Hitler's guest after his flight from Spain. Can the German fascists and the Spanish putschists refute the fact that Sanjurjo spent a number of months in Berlin in the Kaiserhof Hotel reserved for Hitler's guests?

After the plan of the putsch was drawn up Sanjurjo was sent to Portugal where the fascists prepared themselves for the movement of their armed forces. It was only by chance that Sanjurjo perished in an accident to the airplane which was to have brought him from Portugal to the place where the active forces of the insurgents were situated on Spanish territory.

The agents of German fascism, who are lording it in Spanish Morocco, organized the supply of munitions brought from Germany for the putschists. They are now spreading the network of their provocative intrigues in French Morocco as well.

We have irrefutable evidence that the threads of the putsch also lead to the French Hitlerites who are brazenly and openly taking under their wing the revolt organized by Franco, Mola and other counter-revolutionary generals. We hope that public opinion in the great French republic will expose the foul picture of the part played by the French fascists in the plot against our country.

The reactionary wing of the British imperialists is striving to place Spain in a position of dependence similar to that in which it has placed Portugal. The extreme reactionaries in England would like their obedient agents, operating not in the interests of the Spanish people but at the dictates of the "City" of London, to have their seats in the Spanish government.

We openly say to the English people, who without doubt sympathize with our struggle in defense of democracy against fascism, that the movement of British warships close to our coastline is a source of serious anxiety to us.

As is well known, the British Government did not send any of its ships here when the Leroux-Gil Robles government suppressed working class Asturias in October, 1934. The fact that these ships have appeared near the north coast of Spain at the present time coincides with the transfer of the armed troops of the insurgents to these regions. And this is no simple accident. The operations of the putschists show that they consider their communication lines secured by British warships. We have every ground for fearing that the fascist countries, Germany and possibly Italy, will base themselves on the British tactics, and send their warships as well to our coast on one excuse or another. This will mean direct support to the insurgents.

The putschists who are attempting to seize the regions bordering on Portugal are counting on their allies in Portugal itself. But the ruling parties in Portugal do nothing without instructions or the silent endorsement of British imperialism.

The support of the British reactionaries is not only felt in those places where the insurgents are preparing to make an assault. This support renders secure, in good time, those points which the insurgents will have to make for after their defeat.

The international instigators thus tell the organizers of the putsch not to be afraid of the outcome of their adventure, for they will in any case be secured the possibility of flight in the event of defeat.

International fascism in alliance with monarchist reaction—these are the forces waging bloody civil war against the People's Front in Spain. In defending their democratic liberties and their national independence against the monarchy and fascism, the Spanish people are defending the cause of democracy and liberty against the forces of international reaction, in the interests of all peoples.

We have no doubt in our victory. No forces will be in a position to deprive the Spanish people of what they have won, as long as they act in a united, wide and unshakable People's Front.

We are certain that the People's Front in our country will not depart from the principle of the defense of the republic and democracy. It will thereby rally the whole of the population still more closely for the struggle against fascism.

We have occupied the premises of the fascist organizations and in particular of the fascist newspapers. But this does not mean that we are confiscating capitalist property, as the enemies of the People's Front try to picture it. No, in handing over the premises and printing works of fascists to the workers' organizations, we are returning to the people the property of the enemies of democratic liberty and of the traitors to the people, who have entered into an arrangement with international reaction against our country.

The Spanish working class detachments are in the front ranks of the republican army against fascism, and in the struggle for liberty. The working class is firmly aware that nobody will drive it from this path, that without leaping ahead, without being led away by its victories, and in close alliance with all the parties of the People's Front, it will win a decisive victory over the dark forces of Spanish fascism.