

Emancipation

ANARCHIST ASSOCIATION OF THE AMERICAS

SPAIN'S REVOLUTION A LOOK BACK AT 50

Emancipation honors, this year, the 50th anniversary of the Spanish Revolution. In an article which we hope will be helpful to you in considering how to deal with some of today's problems, Sam Dolgoff maintains that Spanish workers in the 1930s demonstrated the enduring potential for anarchist syndicalist collectivization and organization. And while it is commonly recognized that the workers' revolution was eventually betrayed by its Soviet-backed allies, Dolgoff points out the equally fatal passivity of the liberal republican coalition government, whose suspicion of the revolutionary workers' movement superseded even its opposition to the fascist coup.

(1) THE ANTI-FASCIST COUNTER-REVOLUTION

Our survey of the constructive achievements of the Spanish Revolution must first briefly discuss how an anti-fascist, but also anti-revolutionary, coalition limited the expansion of the most radical revolution in modern history.

When the Spanish fascists began their military rebellion against the Republic July 19, 1936, the bewildered impotent governments which succeeded each other almost daily tried to appease the fascists, instead of fighting them, and lost popular support. Power rested in the spontaneous people's organizations and committees -- those "People in Arms" (arms, which the government at first refused to distribute). The spontaneous reaction of the masses wiped out the fascists in over half of Spain. To the anarcho-syndicalist CNT (National Confederation of Labor) and FAI (Anarchist Federation of Iberia) belongs the distinction of combining the anti-fascist war with a Libertarian Social Revolution.

But the political parties; the Socialist Party-controlled UGT (General Union of Workers) with a million members; the bourgeois republicans; Basque and Catalan nationalists; landlords; industrial and commercial capitalists; middle class journalists; educators and other professionals; local, provincial, municipal, and national members of Spain's vast bureau-