The Spanish Revolution
The Life of Andres Nin
Wilebaldo Solano
The Spanish Revolution: The Life of Andreu Nin

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GLOSSARY

INTRODUCTION

Andreu Nin, one of the most important figures in the Spanish Revolutionary Marxist movement, was born in El Vendrell in 1892. His father was a shoemaker and his mother a peasant's daughter. El Vendrell has great character and can be justly proud of having given Catalonia both Pablo Casals and Andreu Nin. The parents of Nin made great sacrifices to give him a career. He was allowed to stay in school to qualify for entrance to Tarragona Teachers' Training College. Finishing there, Nin went to teach in Barcelona. While he was in his first school, the First World War broke out. Nin had arrived in the Catalan capital at a moment of political, social and cultural effervescence. This was the era of the Catalan Renaissance and of the rise of revolutionary trade unionism.

LIFE IN CATALONIA

Spanish neutrality in the First World War was a good thing for the Catalan bourgeoisie. Businesses had been established or expanded with the capital repatriated after the loss of Cuba and the Philippines in the Spanish-American War and these firms were prospering. This development of capitalism drew immigrants from the countryside. The proletariat of Barcelona, and of the other industrial centres in Catalonia, arose from, and was strengthened by, the arrival of thousands of peasants from Andalusia, Murcia and Aragon. The industrial expansion stimulated the organisation of this working class, and the natural dynamism of the class war became a decisive element in Catalan political and economic life.

Like many other youths of his generation, Andreu Nin felt the attraction of the leftwing of Catalan Nationalism, as well as of the Workers' Movement. The young school teacher did not wish to remain within the State system, and joined the staff of the "Escola Horaciana", an anarchist and lay institution, founded some years previously by the former textile worker, Pau Vila. But by now, Nin had found an additional vocation, that of a journalist. For a short time he was the editor of "The Catalan People", a Left-Republican daily. The school master journalist soon revealed a talent for public speaking. Joseph Pla has acknowledged, in an otherwise critical pamphlet published in 1958, that:

He spoke well, both with the unquestionable stamp of the orator, and with an unequalled respect for common-sense and syntax: qualities that were most exceptional in the history of our modern oratory.

Journalism and public speaking occupied more and more of Nin's time. In the existing climate of intense social and political agitation, he worked hard and his journalistic activities grew. The revolutionary wave of August 1917, the battles between the Catalan employers and their workers organised in the C.N.T.,1 and finally the Russian Revolution profoundly affected Nin. For a few months he belonged to the Socialist Party, and collaborated with Fabra Rivas in editing "The International". But before long he gave himself totally to the cause of Revolutionary trade unionism. Socialism was a new thing in Barcelona and the Workers' Movement was almost entirely under the control of the C.N.T.

WORKING IN THE C.N.T.
In 1918 Andreu Nin organised the Union of Liberal Professions within the C.N.T. His talent, self-abnegation and his moral qualities won him a place on the revolutionary general staff. He was the intimate friend of Salvador Segui, who was in Nin's opinion the most significant figure in the Catalonian Workers' Movement. Nin was collaborating closely with Angel Pestaña, Evelio Boal, David Rey, Manuel Buenacasa, Joaquim Maurin and other trade union leaders.

The C.N.T. held its Second National Congress in December 1919, at the Teatro de la Comedia in Madrid. Two essential problems were examined by the representatives of more than 700,000 organised workers: firstly, trade union unity with the U.G.T.; and secondly, affiliation to the Communist International, which had been founded in Moscow eight months before. Considering the situation in Spain and the character of the Spanish working class, the victorious Russian Revolution made a great impression throughout the country. Between 1917 and 1921, solidarity with the Russian Revolution and the question of the Third International dominated the debates within all of the workers' organisations. Recalling these days, Manuel Buenacasa wrote years later: "Who in Spain - being an Anarchist - disdained to call himself a Bolshevik?"

Nin played a major role in the La Comedia Congress of the C.N.T. and energetically defended adherence to the Third International. He declared:

I believe fanatically in action more than in far-off ideologies and abstract questions. I am for the Third International because it is a reality; because above ideologies, it represents a principle of action, a principle of co-existence with all purely revolutionary movements which aspire to the immediate establishment of Communism. For example, I was a member of the Socialist Party and remained a member until it agreed at its Congress to remain in the Second International. I announce to you all, comrades of Spain, that I continue being a revolutionary; from the day when the Spanish Socialist Party decided to continue in its old ways, I left the Party to fight with you on the pure terrain of the class struggle.

The 'La Comedia' Congress supported the thesis of Nin and his comrades, and it decided "to declare provisional adherence to the Communist International". A short time afterwards, the National Committee of the C.N.T. appointed a delegation of three militants to travel to Moscow. Only Angel Pestaña arrived in Russia, in late June 1920, when the creation of the Red Trade Union International was agreed upon, and he, together with Lenin, Trotsky and Bukharin signed the appeal of the Second Congress of the Communist International.

Between 1919 and 1921, Andreu Nin was active within the C.N.T. These were very difficult years for the trade union and workers' movement, especially in Catalonia. When the World War ended, the economic situation changed. During the War, the bourgeoisie had benefited in an exorbitant manner, but now, the Catalan bosses, worn out by a powerful and militant workers' movement, had organised the "Free" Unions. Acting as the bosses' gunmen and protected by the civil and military authorities, they murdered the most selfless of the working class militants: Salvador Segui, Evelio Boal, Canela and others. After the death of Boal, in March 1921, Andreu Nin acted as Secretary General of the C.N.T. He and Canela were victims of an assassination attempt. Canela was murdered, but Nin survived because he fell to the ground as soon as he was aware of the presence of gunmen. Nin was jailed several times. In this most dramatic period, the influence of Andreu Nin palyed a decisive role in establishing the orientation and tasks of the C.N.T.

TRAVELLING TO MOSCOW

In April 1921, a National Plenum of the C.N.T. was held in secret. The Russian leaders had invited the C.N.T. to send a delegation to the Third Conference of the Communist International and the founding Congress of the Red Trade Union International. The Plenum accepted the invitation and nominated a delegation comprised of Andreu Nin, Joaquim Maurin, Hilari Alandis and Jesus Ibanez. This decision was up-held, notwithstanding the fact that since the return of Pestaña from Moscow, the enemies of the Third International had been strengthened considerably.

Maurin has described how Nin and the rest of the delegation made the clandestine journey. In Paris, they were helped by Pierre Monatte, one of the most respected figures in the French working class movement. Monatte aided them in crossing the French-German border without papers. In Berlin, Maurin and Nin came into contact with the German anarcho-syndicalist organisation, led by Theodore Rocker and Fritz Katter. They also met the young writer, Theodore Plivier, who later became famous. According to Maurin:

The German police were quite agitated, looking for any suspicious Spaniards. There was the incentive of a million peseta reward promised by the Spanish Government to anyone assisting in the capture of the terrorists, who had in May of that year killed Eduardo Dato the President of the Council of Ministers, in Madrid.

The delegation had to take great precautions. The Russian Embassy had prepared their travel documents, and they passed off as "repatriated Russians". Theirs was a very complicated journey. They went to Stettin, where they embarked on a German vessel that carried them to Reval from whence a special train carried them to Petrograd. From there they were taken to Moscow.

It was the summer of 1921. The Bolsheviks had won the Civil War, and the Red Army, created by Trotsky on the basis of the workers' militias, had become a victorious barrier against the White and Foreign Interventionist troops. But the economic situation was very bad. The collapse of the German Revolution after the Spartacist uprising had destroyed the hopes of a general European Revolution. Lenin and Trotsky realised this, as did those who had raised the banner of Bolshevism in the West.

Nin, Maurin, Arlandis and Ibanez were very young, but they arrived in Moscow as representatives of a great working class organisation. This was in contrast to other delegations which counted for little in their respective countries. Because of this, the Spanish delegates were received with sympathy and comradeship by the Russian revolutionary leaders. In an article entitled 'Goodbye Andreu Nin', Victor Serge described the arrival of the delegation:

Nin arrived from Barcelona. He was young, slim, with an abundant head of wavy hair, a gaiety behind his glasses, and a precise voice, which already revealed an intellectual clarity. Nin explained to me that he was not an Anarchist, but strictly a syndicalist; he was not a Utopian; his sole preoccupation is the conquest and organisation of production. During the Congress, we found ourselves in the Kremlin, at the Hall of Columns in the House of Trade Unions. At night we came back to Maurín's room in the Hotel Lux to talk about art, the Red Army, the Red Terror, the Party Apparatus - we discussed everything. But this was not just talk, we had committed our lives.

In a testimonial to Andreu Nin, given in Paris in 1954, Alfred Rosmer, one of the most outstanding personalities in the French workers' movement and in the Communist International, also referred to the arrival in Moscow of the Spanish trade union delegation:

One of the stimulating episodes of the Congress was the arrival of the Spanish delegation, made up of Nin, Maurin, Arlandis and Ibanez. In 1920, the C.N.T. had been represented by Pestaña, who had arrived in Moscow with a mandate from the organisation, whose Congress had voted to adhere to the Communist International and had pronounced in favour of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. But Pestaña belonged to the group of trade union leaders who were paralysed by anarchist criticism. In Moscow, he had come under the influence of the Russian Anarchists, who were violently opposed to the Soviet regime, and he had become an enemy of the Red Trade Union International, the very International which he had always wanted and had helped to establish. The new delegation arriving in Moscow was of another tendency, which was embodied in the new generation of syndicalists - less inclined to endure endless
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discussions and much better prepared to understand the importance of the Russian Revolution. All four delegates were young, serious and humble; they immediately won the sympathy of the other delegates. Nin's interventions at the Congress attracted a great deal of attention. He had already shown himself to be a leader, a man capable of making decisions. The Secretary of the Red Trade Union International was Lozovski, and he understood at once the exceptional value of Nin. In the end, when the C.N.T. decided not to adhere to the Red Trade Union International, Lozovski made up his mind to bring Nin into his Secretariat. Nin became Assistant General Secretary of the Red Trade Union International. He soon had a determining influence over the new organisation. He was a tireless worker and there was a possibility that he would become a permanent part of the International movement. In the Second Congress, delegates marvelled as Nin presented a communiqué in all of the languages spoken by the delegates, including Russian.

In his essay, "On Communism in Spain", Joaquim Maurín confirmed the impressions of Serge and Rosmer:

The delegation of the C.N.T. played a leading role in the proceedings of the Congress, at which Nin was one of the leaders.

Nin, Arlandis, Ibanez and Maurin (none of them Communists at that time) were in fundamental accord and acted as a team. The delegation urged the release of the detained Russian Anarchists, and appealed to the Chief of the Cheka, Dzerzhinsky, and to Lenin himself. The delegates had interviews and discussions with Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek, Rykov and other Bolshevik leaders.

Maurin, Arlandis and Ibanez returned to Spain. At the Plenum of the C.N.T. in October 1921, Maurin made the report of the delegation and it was approved unanimously. But in June 1922, the C.N.T. Conference decided, under the influence of the Anarchists, to break with the Red Trade Union International. Nin left Moscow for Spain in September 1922, but he was detained in Berlin at the request of the Madrid Government, which wanted to implicate him in the assassination of Dato. He had not been involved in this plot and the demand for extradition was rejected by the German Government. Nin was released in January 1923 and returned to Moscow to pursue his job in the Secretariat.

LIFE IN MOSCOW

Andreu Nin lived in Moscow until 1930. According to Rosmer, those years were of great importance for Nin's personal development. While there, his life was closely linked to the Secretariat. According to Rosmer, the Red Trade Union International:

was not a war machine imposed by Moscow to cause splits in the trade union organisations of the world, contrary to what has been often said. It responded to an essential need, to the profound wish of the workers of all countries. Like the Socialist International, the old international trade union federation had collapsed in 1914. The leaders of its national sections had so tied themselves to the war policies of their governments, that the resentment they had caused discredited the trade unions. They were, said some militants, an organisational form of the past and it thus was necessary to lay the basis for another one. As is known, Lenin did not share this opinion. Neither did we the revolutionary syndicalists. We thought that the trade unions must not be left in the hands of reformist leaders. But it was necessary to direct their day-to-day struggles, using the means afforded by trade union democracy. In 1920, we were certain of our objectives, full of confidence and hope. The revolutionary trade unionists of Spain and Italy had voted overwhelmingly to join the Third International. In those places where the reformist leadership had survived, there were determined and growing minorities opposed to them which made it possible to foresee the formation of an authentic and mighty International, uniting all the new forces around the Provisional Council created in Moscow in June 1920.

On the basis of his experience in the C.N.T., Andreu Nin held the same point of view. All the statements I have been able to collect, including those of Nin himself during the Spanish Revolution, confirm that he had been totally devoted to his work in the Red Trade Union International. His excellent relations with Lozovskystemsky (Secretary of the Russian Trade Unions), and with Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin and Zinoviev, helped him considerably. The publications of those years; "Internacional Sindical Roja", "Communist International", and "International Press Correspondence", give an idea of Nin's enormous dedication. In those magazines can be found excellent articles, very well documented, on the most varied subjects: "The Fight for Unity in the Latin Countries", "The Economic Crisis and the Trade Union Movement", "Matters of Organisation in the French Trade Union Movement", "The Strike of the British Miners, 1926", et al. He also published several pamphlets on trade union problems, in French, German and Russian.

During this period there was free discussion and the faction fights took place in an atmosphere of comradeship and mutual respect. But according to Rosmer, Nin encountered difficulties after 1924. The International suffered from the "Bolshevisation" imposed by Zinoviev, although it managed to avoid them for a time. Then things became worse. The men Zinoviev had placed in responsible posts were incompetent, and had been appointed because of their servility. Andreu Nin remained very active and travelled to Italy and Germany, but when Stalin became the absolute dictator, Nin's activities became more and more difficult, as he had joined the Opposition. He was gradually excluded from active participation, although Lozovski continued to consult him and to discuss current problems with him.

Andreu Nin refused to limit himself to activities within the Secretariat. He followed the developments in Catalonia with passionate interest, and wrote regularly for "Lucha Social" and "La Batalla". During his years in Moscow, Nin's house was open to all Communist representatives, and in general to all Iberian visitors.

By the beginning of 1925, the Spanish Communist Party was practically decimated. Its main leaders were in prison and the organisation had been reduced to impotence by the repression of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship. Under such conditions, the prisoners in the Modelo Gaol in Barcelona asked for a leadership which could be centred in Paris, in order to reorganise the Party and the Communist International sent Nin to take up this task. He went to Paris, was arrested and spent a month in gaol before being thrown out of France. In January 1924, on the very day Lenin died, Nin was in Rome, meeting the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party as Special Delegate of the Executive Committee of the International. He was also in charge or organising the first Latin American Trade Union Conference.

All those who knew him at that time agreed that Nin adapted perfectly to Russian life. He was married to a young Russian militant named Olga, and had two daughters, Ira and Nora. He spoke perfect Russian and was a great admirer of the Russian classics. He read these in his rare hours of leisure, with the intention of translating them into Spanish and Catalan. Above all he loved the Russian people and praised their spontaneity, human warmth and revolutionary fervour. Nin was a passionate and intransigent internationalist, and he rebelled against the cosmopolitanism of the 'revolutionary snobs'. He always thought of his work in Russia as a contribution to the world revolution and the emancipation of the working class. But he knew that his roots were in Catalonia, in Spain, and he was preparing to play his part in the future Spanish Revolution.

SIDING WITH THE RUSSIAN OPPOSITION

In the struggle between the various factions in the Russian Communist Party, Nin did not hesitate to side with the Opposition. As Victor Serge wrote:

He was one of those in the Bolshevik Party who demanded the right to think, to speak, and he campaigned for a major reform of the regime in order to re-establish workers' democracy.
Many of the bureaucrats sided with those in power. But Andreu Nin chose the hard way of resistance to bureaucratisation and oppression. He was proud of having been one of the first to raise the flag of October in Spain, and he chose to join those who opposed the anti-Marxist thesis of "Socialism in One Country", and fought to keep alive the true spirit of Bolshevism.

Nin, who was a member of the Russian Communist Party, a Deputy to the Moscow Soviet, and a leader of the Red Trade Union International, endorsed the programme of the Opposition and participated in all its activities, in particular, the great demonstration of 1927. In 1926, the Opposition created an International Commission to defend its ideas. Nin had a prominent place on it, together with Radek, Kapitonov, Serge and Stepanov (later Stalin's agent in Spain). When the expulsions and deportations began Nin was excluded from the Secretariat and put under close supervision at the Lux Hotel in Moscow. According to Serge and Rosmer, his Spanish nationality and his international reputation saved him from deportation. Stalin did not yet dare to persecute foreign militants.

Victor Serge says in his "Memoirs of a Revolutionary", that Nin did not lose his hope or his good humour, even at the worst of times. At the height of the oppression, he sent parcels to the prisoners, compiled notes on Marx, translated Pilnikai into Catalan. Rosmer says that Nin took advantage of his "forced holiday" to continue his studies and to work on a book which was a reply to Cambó's "The Dictatorships". Primo de Rivera's dictatorship in Spain was weak. And when would it fall? That was the question asked by Cambo, who feared that a mass movement needed to topple the dictatorship could lead to a Socialist Revolution. In answer to Cambo, Andreu Nin wrote "The Dictatorships of Our Times". The introduction to the Catalan edition of this work was dated Moscow, March 1930. The Spanish translation came out in Barcelona on October 16, 1930. In the meantime, Nin had to leave Russia.

LEAVING MOSCOW BEHIND

Nineteen-thirty was the year of the great Stalinist turn. Stalin started to get rid of the "right wingers". Since 1929, Nin had thought that his task in Russia was finished and that he should be in Catalonia, where a new revolutionary process was beginning. Consequently, he asked for permission to go back, but the bureaucrats took their time. Impatient, Nin asked for the advice of Serge who had lived in Barcelona during the First World War, and who had worked with Segui. Serge shared Nin's hopes and his desperation. During one of Serge's visits to Leningrad, Nin made up his mind: "Tomorrow I will send a letter to the Central Committee written in such a way that they will have to either arrest me or let me go." The Central Committee chose to deport him, but did not allow his wife and daughters to leave. Olga Nin wrote to Lozovsky, threatening to kill herself if she was not allowed to join her husband, and the bureaucrats gave way. Nin and his family arrived in Paris penniless and were welcomed by their French friends, but they did not stay long in France. A few weeks earlier in Leningrad, Nin had said to Segui that "the Spanish revolution will be terribly complicated", and that he was in a hurry to get back to his proletarian Barcelona.

BACK TO CATALONIA

Andreu Nin arrived in Barcelona in October 1930, one month before the first general strike organised by the C.N.T., and two months before the Jaca Insurrection and the December general strike. The dictatorship of Primo de Rivera was overthrown on the 28th of January 1931. The Government of General Berenguer was intended to save the Monarchy from disaster but the Spanish Revolution had begun. Everywhere the workers' movements had reappeared with extraordinary power and dynamism.

Nin was 38 years old and had already reached full intellectual maturity, he had returned well-equipped, with a vast cultural capital and a rich experience of the international workers' movement. But two serious problems had to be faced: earning a living, and re-involving himself in his country's working class movement. He solved the first by beginning the exhausting task of translating the Russian classics into Catalan and Spanish. (These translations are still the standard ones in use.) Fortunately, the translation of the works of Leon Trotsky, and the prestige he gained following the publication of his "The Dictatorships of Our Times", gained him some financial support and opened the doors to several important publishers. The second problem seemed extremely difficult. Nin had maintained a close relationship with Trotsky and belonged to the "Left Opposition". But in Spain things were not so simple. In a letter to Trotsky, who was exiled on Prinkipo, Nin wrote this in reference to the Communist movement in Spain:

At present there is, 1) the official Communist Party which does not have any effective or strong leadership, and its authority amongst the masses is nil; 2) The Catalan and Valencian Communist Federations which have been expelled from the Party, and which are in reality (together with the most influential groups in Asturias and elsewhere) an independent Party; 3) The Catalan Communist Party, which has a good leadership cadre, can count upon a certain influence among the working class movement in Lerida and around the Barcelona port workers; 4) The Left Opposition which lacks a strong cadre in Catalonia.

During these first months, Andreu Nin maintained excellent relations with Joaquim Maurín, his friend and companion since 1919, and with the Catalan-Balearic Communist Federation. In his correspondence with Trotsky, he took up the defence of Maurín, presenting him as "a most intelligent comrade, above all, a most honest one", with ideas approximating to those of the Left Opposition. In January 1931, Nin was faced with the choice of joining or not joining the Catalan Federation. He wrote to Trotsky that "Andrade and Lacroix, the best elements we have here are in Spain, share my point of view", After the much-discussed speech by Nin at the Encyclopaedic Athenaenue in Barcelona, the Catalan Federation invited him to become a member. This was in May 1931, a little time after the proclamation of the Republic. Nin was disposed to accept their invitation but he received a reply from the Federation which was "an extraordinary surprise". Nin answered the Federation in the following words; "Your evasive response demonstrates that my sincere desire to contribute to the necessary unification of the Communist forces, has not found in you the echo it deserves". Afterwards, with the publication of the Platform of the Workers' and Peasants' Bloc (the mass organisation established by the Catalan Federation), and the speech by Maurín at the Madrid Athenaenue (following one in which Nin argued about the direction of the Bloc), they broke off relations. The meetings at the Madrid Athenaenue - in this period the principal political forum in Spain - demonstrated to the nation that Nin and Maurín were the most important figures in the Communist movement. But unfortunately they took different roads, though later both would end up together in the creation of the Workers' Alliance.

Without abandoning his literary work, Nin dedicated himself to organising the Communist Left (the Spanish Section of the Left Opposition International). The Communist Left was a small organisation of valuable cadres which had begun to publish an important theoretical review, "Communism", in June 1931. Later on, "The Soviet", a weekly, was launched and edited by Nin. The Communist Left, in accordance with the general strategy of the Trotskyist International, aimed to reform the Third International and its constituent parties. This was a difficult strategy. Moreover, by being involved in a small organisation, Nin and his comrades could not, for some years, play the role that legitimately belonged to them.

Taking part in militant political activity, Nin addressed numerous meetings in Workers' Athenaenues in Asturias and Catalonia. His splendid courses of lectures in Political Economy and Labour History contributed to the Marxist education of the younger generation. Nin alternated his political speaking activity with the writing and editing of numerous books and articles. "The National Emancipation Movements" is a book unique of its kind in that it considered and criticised the different positions taken in the Marxist classics (and by current leaders of the workers' movement) on the prickly problem of national liberation. Nin wrote this book between August and October 1934. The author had planned another volume, which he had thought of as a complete study of the national question in Spain. The Civil War intervened, and we have been deprived of a work of immeasurable value. Nor was Nin able to finish his planned biography of Segui.
Nin's major literary activity was concentrated upon the translating of the Russian Classics. But he lacked the time to complete this ambitious project. However, he was able to translate various books by Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Turgenev and Chekhov. But Nin did not limit himself to translation, and he prepared several essays of literary criticism on Russian writers.

**THE WORKER'S ALLIANCE**

The birth of the Workers' Alliance, in January 1934, opened a new phase in the life of Andreu Nin. Before the victory of Nazism in Germany, both the Communist Left and the Workers and Peasants Bloc had opposed Stalin's view that Social Democracy and Fascism were "twins". After the abject surrender by the German workers' movement and all the threats made by the Lerroux-Gil Robles Coalition, there arose in Catalonia a great unification movement inspired by the Workers and Peasants Bloc. This crystallised in the Workers' Alliance, formed with the U.G.T., the Socialist Union of Catalonia, the Communist Left, the Bloc of Workers and Peasants, the Spanish Socialist Party, the Opposition Unions of the C.N.T., the Federation of Unions expelled from the C.N.T. and the Peasants' ('Rabassaires') Union. From this time onwards, Nin had an arena of work and action which matched his talent and dynamism. The Workers' Alliance, in which neither the C.N.T., nor the insignificant Communist Party figured, organised a great campaign of agitation and propaganda. Nin had the opportunity to address the best of the working class, and to win support for his positions and ideas. The idea of the United Front had deeply penetrated the country. The example given by Catalonia was followed in the Asturias, and the C.N.T. was moved to join the Workers' Alliances in Valencia and Madrid. Moreover, the common efforts within the Workers' Alliance had lessened the differences between the Workers and Peasants Bloc and the Communist Left. This posed the problem of unifying revolutionary Marxists in a concrete way.

**THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION 1934**

Faced with the growing Fascist threat the workers' movement organised its reply: the October Revolution of 1934. At the historic meeting of the Catalan organisations within the Workers' Alliance, held in the Centro de Dependientes in Barcelona, on October 4th, Maurín and Nin appeared as the indisputable leaders of the workers' movement. The Workers' Alliance organised great demonstrations and called a general strike throughout Catalonia. The movement failed because the Generalitat (i.e. the Catalan Government) capitulated without resisting, and the C.N.T. did not want to mobilise its own forces. Nin was at the head of these demonstrations, and the militants of the Workers and Peasants Bloc and of the Communist Left led the last armed resistance on the outskirts of Barcelona. After the movement's defeat, Nin had to go into hiding, from where he edited the underground paper 'The Red Star'.

**FOUNDING P.O.U.M.**

The fundamental lesson of the October defeat was indisputable. Nin summarised it in this way: "The revolutionary army lacked a General Staff of capable, studious, and experienced leaders. Without a revolutionary party, there can be no triumphant revolution". Nin began to devote all his energies to the formation of such a party. During the discussions that began within the Workers' Alliance, two positions arose. There were those who favoured the creation of a single force in Catalonia, on the basis of a hybrid platform (in the first place the small Communist Party), and those (among them Nin) who favoured the fusion of the revolutionary Marxists within an all-Spanish party. Nin's supporters were the Workers and Peasants Bloc and the Communist Left. Following a lengthy period of discussion and common work, these two organisations united and became the Workers' Party of Marxist Unification (P.O.U.M.-). The Unity Conference was held in Barcelona in September 1935. Nin and Maurín drafted the programme of the new party and wrote the short article: "What is the P.O.U.M. and what does it want?" in which the basic positions of the new political group were popularised.

The P.O.U.M. did not present itself as the last word in revolutionary organisation, but as the first coherent effort towards the creation of the great party of the revolution. In its ranks were those who had introduced Marxism to Catalonia, as well as the main pioneers of the Spanish Communist movement. As was natural, this gave a great deal of prestige to the new party, nationally and internationally. In other countries, revolutionary Marxists were divided into a multitude of factions, and the P.O.U.M. became an example of cohesion.

This unification was facilitated and stimulated by the split between the Communist Left and the International Communist League, led by Trotsky. The international Trotskyist movement was in a state of complete crisis. Since its influence within the mainstream working class movements was minimal, Trotsky conceived of entry into the Social Democratic parties, so as to radicalise their left wings and influence the workers more effectively. In September 1934, Nin and his comrades declared:

The guarantee for the future lies in the United Front, but it lies also in the organic independence of the vanguard of the working class. In no way ... can we fuse within an amorphous conglomerate which would break up at its first contact with reality. However are sad and distressing, we are disposed to maintain the principled position we have learnt from our chief, even if we have to risk taking a different path from him on the road to victory.

The immediate experience confirmed that his position was correct. The P.O.U.M. became the leading workers' party in Catalonia. On the basis of the cells inherited from the two parent organisations, progress was rapidly made in the Basque Country, the Asturias, Valencia, Galicia and Madrid. But unfortunately there was not enough time to establish itself solidly throughout Spain, though it did win an indisputable place in the Spanish movement.

The P.O.U.M. differentiated itself from all the other working class organisations by stating its political and theoretical positions with extreme clarity. For it, the year 1936 was the crucial year. The Spanish Revolution was a revolution of a democratic socialist type. The choice was plainly defined: Socialism or Fascism. The workers had to take power, and they could not do it peacefully, but only by means of armed insurrection. The Revolution required the unity of the working class, that is to say the Workers' Alliance, which had demonstrated its capability in the Asturias in 1934. Spain was to be structured on the basis of a Union of Iberian Socialist Republics. At this time of crisis for the existing Internationals, it was necessary to move towards world-wide revolutionary Socialist unity on a new basis.

Andreu Nin was elected Secretary General of the new Workers' Federation of Trade Union Unity (FOUS). The former Secretary General of the C.N.T., and leader of the Red Trade Union International had returned to being a trade union leader. He was better prepared for the post than anyone else. This Federation was not a union splitting manoeuvre as some claimed at the time. It formed a centre for dispersed unions, which had no place in either the C.N.T. or the U.G.T., and its long-term perspective was the unification of all the trade unions in a single central organisation.

**STALIN'S POPULAR FRONT**

At the beginning of 1936, the Popular Front offensive initiated by Moscow and the Stalinists had considerably reduced the role of the Workers' Alliance. The Socialists yielded to the pressure, and when the February 1936 Elections were announced, they established an electoral bloc with the Republican parties. The
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P.O.U.M. held to its concept of the Workers' Front. But in the election campaign, it was faced with the choice of joining the lectoral bloc which had unfurled the banner calling for the liberation of the 30,000 political prisoners (victims of the repression following the Revolution of October 1934), or of splitting the mass movement and isolating themselves from other workers' organisations. As an enemy of parliamentary cretinism, the P.O.U.M. conceived of its participation in the election campaign as a means of carrying its revolutionary propaganda to the masses.

Nin justified this tactic with the following:

This position is correct. Lenin accepted temporary pacts with the radical bourgeoisie. But between this position and that which the Communist International has inaugurated - the Popular Front - which chains the workers' movement to the bourgeoisie, there lies an abyss.

The Madrid Electoral Commission of the Popular Front named Andreu Nin as their candidate for deputy (MP) for Teruel, a city where the P.O.U.M. had no influence, and it rejected petitions to include him in the lists for Castile or Asturias, places where Nin was popular and where the P.O.U.M. enjoyed strength and prestige. In Barcelona, the Electoral Commission had made a thousand manoeuvres, and there was only one P.O.U.M. deputy elected in Catalonia: Maurin in Barcelona. Lerida, the fortress of the party, was unable to return a P.O.U.M. deputy. These petty bureaucratic frauds kept Andreu Nin from representing the workers in the Parliament of 1936. Nevertheless, Nin participated in the great meetings in defence of the revolutionary positions and programme of the P.O.U.M. After the electoral victory of the Popular Front, the P.O.U.M. considered its commitment to the electoral front as over and proceeded with its own policies independently.

The tactic of the P.O.U.M. was generally successful but was criticised by Leon Trotsky who, ill-informed, wrote that Nin's party had been incorporated in the Popular Front. When this article was published, in which he ignored all of the Bolshevik experience, so masterfully explained by Lenin in the "Left Wing Communism. An Infantile Disorder", the Stalinists began a great campaign against the P.O.U.M., accusing it of being an "enemy of the Popular Front". Nin did not answer Trotsky's unfortunate article; events had already done so.

**FASCIST REBELLION 1936**

When the military-fascist rebellion took place in 1936, Joaquim Maurin was in Galicia attending a P.O.U.M. Congress in Santiago de Compostela. During the night of July 18th, when the P.O.U.M. put all its resources into action to fight the coup, Nin assumed the political leadership of the party. From a flat in Barcelona's 5th District, he and his comrades took the necessary steps to coordinate the struggle and to ensure contact with the Military Committee and with the militants fighting under Jose Rovira, Manuel Grossi and Germinal Vidal. To this flat came many delegations from all over Catalonia to give reports and to ask for arms and political directives. After the defeat of the rebellion in Catalonia, Nin became the Political Secretary of the P.O.U.M., as Maurin was trapped in territory which was dominated by Franco's forces. From then until his arrest by the Stalinist police on June 16th, 1937, Nin was to carry the highest political responsibilities.

**FOR A WORKERS' GOVERNMENT**

There were few men of Andreu Nin's calibre in the Catalan working-class movement, or in other spheres of political life. He enjoyed great prestige both inside and outside the P.O.U.M. This was why he was asked to cooperate in the most varied tasks. He was not a member of the Military Committee, the real power in Catalonia during the early months of the Revolution, when the General Command was superseded by the revolutionary process, because the P.O.U.M. wanted him to concentrate on the general role of political leadership. He became a member of the Economic Committee, which was to reorganise the collectivised industries and to establish the first elements of planning. On this Committee, Nin played a major part.

At a large public meeting in Valencia in early August 1936, Nin said:

In Spain we are now witnessing a profound social revolution. I saw the Russian Revolution and I can tell you, our Revolution is more profound than the 1917 Russian Revolution.

This was especially so in Catalonia. Nin emphasised in this speech that the P.O.U.M.'s idea of a democratic socialist revolution had been proved correct in practice. The working masses had, at a stroke, solved the outstanding problems of the democratic revolution (military, religious, nationalities, land etc.), and had at the same time moved on to the socialist stage of the revolution. The theory of the permanent revolution, sketched by Marx in 1848, and expanded by Trotsky in 1905, was once again proved right by events. The problem of power became the central question, especially in Catalonia, where the influence of the C.N.T. and P.O.U.M. and the existence of a nationality problem had raised the revolutionary process to the highest level.

When Companys, the President of the Generalitat, accepted that power belonged to the workers and told the Anarchist leaders that he was prepared to stand down, the P.O.U.M., which had established real workers' power in Lerida, made its position clear.

"We must form a workers' government i.e. a government made up of representatives from all working class parties and unions. Such a government will obviously have to be provisional, and work towards a new order of things. A government must be the expression of the workers, peasants and militia, who have achieved victory, and its aim must be to build the foundation for the new proletarian democracy." But this point of view, which was Nin's, was not accepted by any other group. The leaders of the C.N.T., supported by the other organisations, were content to form a Military Committee and an Economic Committee, without at the same time abolishing the Generalitat. Andreu Nin and the P.O.U.M. were left in a minority.

This first step backwards was to lead to others and to create the conditions for the return of bourgeois power. Dual-power remained for several months and was reflected in the first Council (government) of the Generalitat with working class participation on September 26th, 1936. After heated discussion, the P.O.U.M. decided to participate on the condition there was workers' majority and it had a socialist programme. Nin made his position clear:

The Generalitat is a mixture of organs of bourgeois power and organs of dual-power. But such a mixture cannot last. Either the revolutionary will take power, or the forces for which Catalan Stalinism speaks will remove the "awkward" elements of dual-power.

Andreu Nin was made Councillor (Minister) of Justice. In his first political declaration he said that the struggle "is not one of bourgeois democracy against fascism, as some people think, but of socialism against fascism". Everyone recognised that Nin was the most brilliant person on the Council of Catalonia. Besides his political work (his efforts to make the anarchist workers understand the problem of power and the need to go from the transitional stage to a government by the workers' organisations), Nin created throughout Catalonia, popular tribunals, like those the P.O.U.M. had established in Lerida. The popular courts were made up of one representative from each organisation, a more democratic structure than that of the Generalitat, and which guaranteed a decisive working-class majority. In a statement made after their formation Nin said, "Their basic quality is that they are class courts, which will produce working class justice. They are revolutionary working class courts." The popular courts ended the absurd extremes and injustices of the early revolutionary
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days. It is important to emphasise that Nin found himself facing very serious problems. The courts did not work in an arbitrary way, but they were severe and sometimes imposed death penalties. Nin was strict, but just and humane also. Many death sentences were commuted due to his intervention, with the backing of Companies.

Nin approved a Decree giving full civil and political rights to young people over 18 for the first time in Spain, a demand of all working-class youth organisations, especially the P.O.U.M. Youth. Nin's revolutionary speeches brought many complaints from the Popular Front Government in Valencia, and from some foreign Ambassadors. Nin categorically rejected any pressure that was put on him. When the Generalitat went to welcome Antonov Ovsenko, Consul of the Soviet Union in Barcelona, Nin made a speech in Russian and in Catalan, in which he reiterated the profound and total solidarity with the Russian October Revolution of those who had fought in Spain since July 1936. Ovsenko, the man who under Trotsky's leadership had taken the Winter Palace in October 1917, had (like Nin) belonged to the Trotskyist Opposition. After a shameful capitulation he had come to Barcelona as Stalin's representative. As Victor Serge had predicted, this was his last political task; on returning to Moscow he was executed like so many other Russian envoys in Spain.

THE STALINISTS MOVE IN

During August 1936, at the height of the Revolution, reports arrived of a new wave of repression in Russia, especially the trial and execution of Zinoviev, Kamenev and Smirnov. No one was as shaken as Nin, who a few years earlier had worked with the victims. His strong and courageous declaration of solidarity with the Bolshevists Old Guard (not even the Anarchists dared do the same), marked the start of the Stalinist offensive against Nin and the P.O.U.M. The journals of the Communist Party and of the Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia justified Stalin's crimes and started to spread all sorts of slanders against those who showed solidarity with Lenin's comrades. From the arrival of Ovsenko in Barcelona, the Stalinists demanded Nin's expulsion from the Generalitat. The main 'awkward' element of dual-power, the revolutionary element, was an impediment. Naturally, the petty-bourgeois forces agreed to Stalin's demands. The leaders of the C.N.T. also acquiesced in the manoeuvre.

On December 12th, Nin was expelled from the Generalitat. A few days later the Central Committee of the P.O.U.M. approved a resolution drafted by Nin, which concluded:

These are the basic demands now - dissolution of the bourgeoisie parliament; and a Constituent Assembly of delegates from the factory committees, peasant representatives and soldiers; a Workers' and Peasants' Government; workers' democracy.

All the P.O.U.M.'s activity in the following months was along these lines. In his articles and speeches, Nin spoke in particular to the anarchist workers, explaining that the counter-revolutionary forces were everywhere raising their heads. A revolutionary front of the C.N.T. - F.A.I. and the P.O.U.M. was imperative in order to change the course of events and to face the combined pressure of Stalin's policies and of French and British capitalism, the architects of the 'non-intervention' policy. This appeal for unity had some limited effect in the youth movements. The Revolutionary Youth Front was formed in February 1937, combining the Libertarian Youth and the P.O.U.M. Youth. The the Revolutionary Youth Front worried the Stalinists because it was a model of what could be done in the movement as a whole. At a large meeting of the P.O.U.M. Youth in Barcelona, Nin spoke of the problem of revolutionary solidarity between the generations, and continued:

Comrade Solano has read to you some extracts from the Press which show how far they have sunk. I regret not having on me a copy of "Division Marx", in which a cartoon appears showing me holding Franco's arm, together with an article saying that I do not have to work because I am in Hitler's pay. I am used to political fights and I cannot feel angry with those who slander me. When they reach such extremes, all I can feel is sorrow. And the sorrow is all the greater because the wretch who wrote this, is the first not to believe it. But those slanderers cannot come here and accuse me of desertion or betrayal in my 25 years of service to the cause of proletarian revolution.

Events now accelerated: on 25 April 1937, Nin gave an important talk in the Sala Mozart in Barcelona on "The Problem of Power in the Revolution". This talk, together with his political thesis for the P.O.U.M. Congress, was his most important political statement. A few days later, on May 3rd, the Stalinists organised the provocative attack on the Telephone Exchange in order to dispose of the workers' committee which was controlling communications. The workers brought out their arms and built barricades all over Barcelona. A delegation of the P.O.U.M. Executive met the Regional Committee of the C.N.T. Nin stressed the importance of events and demanded immediate common action. This was the time for a Revolutionary Workers' Front. The leaders of the C.N.T. were very glad that the workers had "shown their teeth" and they hoped Companies could grant, through negotiation, important changes in the composition of the Generalitat. Nin and his comrades left the meeting shocked by the short-sightedness and opportunism of the C.N.T. leaders. Committees for the defence of the revolution were organised everywhere. The fight continued for a few days. But the P.O.U.M.'s efforts to structure the committees and solve the problems of power failed. The main C.N.T. leaders went to Valencia and over the radio asked their militants to surrender unconditionally. The "Friends of Durruti", a small anarcho-syndicalist group, with a line similar to the P.O.U.M.'s were incapable of coordinating action and of offering a political alternative. Under such conditions (and considering the climate of hostility to revolutionary Catalonia created in the rest of Spain by Stalinist and Popular Front propaganda), Nin and his comrades had to order a retreat "to avoid desperate actions that could degenerate into a putsch and result in the crushing of the most advanced section or the proletariat".

The attitude of the P.O.U.M. and of Nin was later criticised by irresponsible intellectuals such as the American, Felix Morrow. The majority of revolutionary observers who were in Catalonia at the time understood that the P.O.U.M. had been in a situation similar to that of the Bolshevists in July 1917. Under such conditions it could not have done anything else. On May 12th, the P.O.U.M.'s Central Committee approved a document written by Nin, which made a complete analysis of the May events. It explained that they had been very close to taking power, but the P.O.U.M. did not have the strength to take power alone, against the other working class organisations, particularly the C.N.T. Their orientation had not changed: The strengthening of the party; Committees; working-class political power; a Workers' and Peasants' Government; workers' democracy.

ARREST AND MURDER

Because the P.O.U.M. had openly assumed its full responsibilities, it was logical that the offensive would be directed against it. Stalin's agents in Spain occupied the advance guard of this operation. However, they were unable to dissolve the P.O.U.M. immediately. More than a month passed (and at that time a day counted for much more than in normal times), during which the P.O.U.M. was preparing for a possible clandestine existence. Finally on June 16th, the G.P.U. discovered a "plot" and detained Andreu Nin and other leaders and militants of the P.O.U.M., without either the Republican Government or even the Generalitat knowing about it. The comuniqué from Madrid, efficiently assisted by agents in our city, has succeeded in completely and rapidly discovering the extent and complicated composition of the Generalitat. Nin and his comrades left the meeting shocked by the short-sightedness and opportunism of the C.N.T. leaders. Committees for the defence of the revolution were organised everywhere. The fight continued for a few days. But the P.O.U.M.'s efforts to structure the committees and solve the problems of power failed. The main C.N.T. leaders went to Valencia and over the radio asked their militants to surrender unconditionally. The "Friends of Durruti", a small anarcho-syndicalist group, with a line similar to the P.O.U.M.'s were incapable of coordinating action and of offering a political alternative. Under such conditions (and considering the climate of hostility to revolutionary Catalonia created in the rest of Spain by Stalinist and Popular Front propaganda), Nin and his comrades had to order a retreat "to avoid desperate actions that could degenerate into a putsch and result in the crushing of the most advanced section or the proletariat".

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Special agents from Madrid, efficiently assisted by agents in our city, have succeeded in completely and rapidly discovering the extent and complicated machinery of this espionage network. In the course of this most important action, a considerable number of detentions have resulted; among those which stand out in this most dangerous group are citizens, foreigners and personalities of a particular political party. The statements of the detainees, as well as the
documents found in their own records here, have totally corroborated the guilt of the detained individuals. The names of the detainees can not yet be given for publications.

It was a classic police statement. It tried to prepare the climate for justifying this infamy, and naturally it was necessary to speak of "foreigners" and "spies". The people thought that the statement was about fascist agents. There was widespread astonishment when on June 22nd, the Stalinist newspapers published another "report" with the following title: In the Espionage Ring Discovered During the Last Few Days - The Principal People Involved are the Leaders of the P.O. U.M. - Andreu Nin and Other Well-Known Detained Personalities.

The plot was perfectly clear. The Stalinists did not dare to proceed politically against the P.O.U.M., and to find a pretext for the "May Days", they resorted to "the espionage plot". It was the same method used in Russia against the Oppositionists, and which was put into practice again in the Eastern European People's Democracies, between 1945 and 1952. Luis Companys protested to the Valencia Government, and received several delegations from the P.O.U.M. The Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Justice received other P.O.U.M. delegations in a friendly manner. Olga Nin told the Ministers that the plot had been hatched by the Russian police and their helpers in Spain. The Central Committee of the C.N.T. and many Socialist and Anarchist leaders demanded explanations. But no one dared to confront the real conspirators, who acted as they pleased as if in a conquered country. Jesus Hernandez has mentioned in his book, 'I Was Stalin's Agent' that Jose Diaz himself, Secretary General of the Spanish Communist Party, had protested at a meeting of Stalinist leaders against what had happened. According to him, Stalin's agents in Spain (Togliatti, Codovilla, and Stepanov, an ex-Trotskyst friend of Nin in Moscow), ran everything, and the operations were directed by General Orlov, head of the Russian G.P.U., and his Spanish assistant, Colonel Ortega, Director General of the Security Forces (who had been imposed on the Government by the Communists).

The formidable campaign of lies that was unleashed after the detention of Nin and his comrades, was inspired by a communiqué from the General Police Commissariat to the Director General of the Security Forces, in which it was explained that an espionage ring had been discovered in the capital led by the Falangist, Golfin, which was in "communication with the P.O.U.M." The essential evidence consisted of a millimetre plan of Madrid, designed to facilitate the action of Franco’s artillery, on which was written a coded message from Golfin to Franco saying, "In compliance with the order you gave me, I have travelled to Barcelona to have an interview with N... leader of the P.O.U.M." Other grossly falsified documents attributed to a Falangist in Gerona, who in fact did work in Franco's espionage service, were made public. All this material was so flimsy that the Tribunal which tried the P.O.U.M. leaders in 1938, discarded the documents without hesitation.

The detention of Andreu Nin and his comrades stirred up a great protest inside Spain and abroad. In Spain, the militants of the P.O.U.M. and of the P.O.U.M. Youth covered the walls of the cities with the words: "Where is Nin?". The Stalinist leaders ordered the police to write underneath: "In Salamanca or Berlin". Nin found himself in a special prison in Alcala de Henares, in the hands of the G.P.U. At the beginning of July, the first clandestine periodical of the P.O.U.M. was published. It denounced the repression and demanded the immediate release of all those detained. A little later, "La Batalla" joined in the campaign. In a public meeting in Barcelona, some weeks later, Frederica Montseny, leader of the C.N.T., called for information regarding Nin's whereabouts. The anarcho-syndicalist press (especially in Madrid) demanded explanations from the Government and the Communists.

Abroad the campaign was huge. In Paris, a Defence Committee was formed on the behalf of Nin and the other P.O.U.M. prisoners. This was set up on the initiative of Victor Serge and Marcel Pivert, with the collaboration of numerous left-wing intellectuals and various workers' organisations. A delegation from this Committee was received by the Spanish Ambassador. A diplomat promised "guarantees of justice" for all of the detainees, but when asked about the case of Nin, he added "with a little gesture of despair"; (according to Victor Serge) "Nothing, nothing. I know nothing. I can tell you nothing." The socialist aviator, Edouard Serre, at that time the head of the Air France, promptly went to see the Russian Ambassador to demand that he should save Nin. On his return Serre explained to the Defence Committee: "The Ambassador, Surzit, received me most graciously and understood me perfectly. He advised me to address a secret note to Stalin. He will undertake to transmit it."

When he learned of Nin's detention, Victor Serge wrote in his notebook: "I understood immediately that Andreu, detained, was lost (the psychosis of the Russians)". Evidently it was not a matter of "psychosis", but rather of a certain experience of Stalinist methods. Nin was also the ex-Secretary of the Red Trade Union International, the comrade and friend of Lenin, Trotsky and Zinoviev, a former leader of the Left Opposition in Russia, a Bolshevik in the era when Bolshevik leaders were imprisoned and murdered in Russia. It was no accident that Nin had been detained the same month as Tukhachevsky and the Red Army General Staff, who were later shot as traitors and "agents of Hitler". The terrible foreboding of Serge was confirmed soon enough, although the international campaign expanded and various foreign delegations arrived in Spain to try and save Nin's life.

After his arrest, Nin was moved to Valencia, and from there to Madrid and Alcala de Henares. Thirty-five years after his death, it is not known how he was killed or where he was buried. Until now, only Jesus Hernandez, a member of the Politburo of the Spanish Communist Party and Minister of Public Instruction during the Civil War, has given a version that seems to be worth consideration. In his book, 'I Was Stalin's Agent', Hernandez wrote:

"Orlov and his crew approached Nin with the proposal that he would give a 'voluntary' confession in which he would have to admit his function as a spy in Franco's service. Expert in the science of 'breaking' political prisoners, in obtaining 'spontaneous' confessions, they believed that they had found in Andreu Nin's normally bad health the adequate material for offering Stalin the desired result. But the plan failed. Nin resisted "incredibly". The barbaric torture that was used on him did not bring him to "that physical and moral collapse that befell some of the more important collaborators of Lenin". He died without confessing, faithful to the ideals and convictions which he had defended during the whole of his life as a revolutionary.

POSTSCRIPT

Jesus Hernandez confirms that Commandant Carlos (Vittorio Vidale, Communist Senator for Trieste), proposed a plan to be applied immediately by the G.P.U.:

To simulate a raid by Gestapo agents who would be disguised as members of the International Brigades, an assault on the house in Alcala, and a new "disappearance" of Nin. It would be said that the Nazis had 'liberated' him, which would demonstrate the contacts Nin had with the national and international Fascism.

The truth is that the Stalinist Press printed a version of this sort, a version which no one believed. Hernandez adds that a day after the crime, the agents of Stalin in Spain (Stepanov, Togliatti, Codovilla and Gerö), had transmitted a message to Moscow which said: "Subject A.N. resolved by procedure A."

It is certain that Nin's resistance upset the plans of the G.P.U. and their Spanish collaborators. A 'confession' by Nin would have created a dramatic situation in the P.O.U.M. and among the imprisoned leaders. Upon this foundation it would have been possible to operate as in Russia and to show the world that Spain also had "Trotskyist traitors and they admitted their crimes". At bottom, the operation against Nin and the P.O.U.M. was an attempt to justify the Moscow procedures after the event. But thanks to the heroic sacrifice of Nin, they were not able to mount a "Moscow show trial" in Spain. The leaders of
P.O.U.M. appeared proudly before the Tribunal, placing a portrait of Nin and a bouquet of flowers in the dock, as a homage. They vigorously rebutted the whole of the slanderous accusations of the prosecutor and energetically defended their honour as revolutionaries. The Tribunal had no other remedy than to withdraw the accusations of "espionage". The judgement it delivered, in which the revolutionary character of the P.O.U.M. and its legitimacy were acknowledged explicitly, could not be published because it was prohibited by the Negrin Government censor.

The murder of Andreu Nin and the repression carried out against the P.O.U.M. stirred up an immense furore in Spain and all over the world. The revolutionary forces of the world and the most famous writers of the Left expressed solidarity with the victims and the persecuted. In many countries, articles and books were published about the affair, and outstanding among them was "Homage to Catalonia" by George Orwell. Trotsky, who had been particularly unjust in his polemic against Nin, and who was murdered three years later on Stalin's orders, declared on August 8th, 1937:

"Nin was an incorruptible old revolutionary. He defended the interests of the Spanish and Catalan people against the agents of the Soviet Bureaucracy. This is his only crime. And this crime has been paid for with his life."

Marceau Pivert said that Nin was "the symbol of the Spanish Revolution sacrificed to the egotistical calculations of the East and of the West". In 1954, Albert Camus wrote that "the death of Andreu Nin marked a stage in the tragedy of the Twentieth Century, which is the century of the betrayed revolution". The old French revolutionary, Pierre Monatte once said that he was convinced that Nin would one day be one of "the pure symbols of the renaissance of Socialism in Spain". That day now comes closer by giant strides.

A few months before his murder, at a meeting organised by the P.O.U.M. Youth in Barcelona, Nin said this:

"Because we remember the revolutionary tradition of Leninism, they want to eliminate us as the Old Guard was eliminated in Moscow. The campaign of slanders here, and the campaign of slanders in Moscow are intimately linked. It has destroyed the Bolsheviks physically. It plans our physical destruction because we are faithful to the Revolution. But those who think and act like that are mistaken. The truth will open up new ways and end up triumphant."

"The truth" has not yet triumphed, but it will one day open up roads in Russia, in the "People's Democracies", and in Spain.

Andreu Nin, Marxist militant and writer, was born in Catalonia, and learned his politics in Russia and in the international revolutionary movement. He dedicated all his talent and strength to the cause of the Spanish Revolution. He died in Alcala de Henares, firm and inflexible in front of his torturers. He belonged to a generation of intrepid fighters for the cause of Socialism. When he died he was only 45 years old. The best part of 25 years of his life had been devoted to the working class. His life, his work and his death are examples of faithfulness, dignity and courage, for a new revolutionary generation that is rising up against all forms of exploitation and oppression.

GLOSSARY

ATHENAEUMS

These clubs or institutes were scattered around Spain and performed many of the same functions as the 19th Century Mechanics Institutes in England. The Athenaeums were more than mere educational institutes, though that was probably their most important function. They were the centre of working class activity in the area. Most important working class meeting sessions were held in the Athenaeums. They were subsequently taken over by the Ministry of Information and Tourism under Franco, and are now used for cultural activities mainly for the benefit of the tourists.

C.N.T.

Confederacion Nacional de Trabajo, formed in 1911 by anarchists on the model of the French C.G.T.; C.N.T. refused to affiliate to the Moscow-based International of Red Trade Unions. Eventually divisions developed between syndicalists and anarchists.

F.A.I.

Federation Anarquista Iberica formed in 1927 by the Spanish Anarchists to control their activities in the trade union movement. In time it became "a revolutionary elite which took upon itself the task of leading the masses towards the realisation of the right revolutionary moment." (H. Thomas: 'The Spanish Civil War', p.68 Penguin 1968).

GENERALITAT

Seat of Catalan regional government in Barcelona; the Catalan Nationalist, Companys, was elected President of the Generalitat, and he assumed the title of President of Catalonia in 1936.

NEGRIN GOVERNMENT

Formed Popular Front Government after the resignation of the Largo Caballero Ministry on May 16, 1937; Negrin was a moderate socialist as well as being a total opportunist. He was extremely dependent on the Spanish CP and Russia.

U.G.T.

Union General del Trabajadores formed in 1888 on the English model with strike funds and paid officials. The Leadership was always Social Democratic