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Manifesto of the Thirty

Treintistas

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August 1931

Translated by Stuart Christie.

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to remind them that these are grave times and we remind each of them of the responsibility he assumes by virtue of his action or inaction. If today, tomorrow, the day after, or whenever... they are urged to participate in a revolutionary revolt, let them not forget that they have obligations towards the National Confederation of Labour (CNT), an organisation which has a right to be its own master, to monitor its own movements, act upon its own initiative and determine its own fate. And let them not forget that the Confederation itself must be the one to determine, in accordance with its own reckonings, how, when and in what circumstances it should act; that it is possessed of an identity of its own and the wherewithal to do what must be done.

Let all be alive to the responsibilities imposed by the extraordinary times in which we live. Let them not forget that, though the act of revolution may bring success, one should go under with dignity in the event of failure to succeed, and that any reckless attempt at revolution may lead to reaction and to the triumph of the demagogues. Let each of them now adopt whatever stance he deems most suitable. Ours you already know. Steadfast in our purpose, we shall always and everywhere stand by our choice, even though others not of the same mind may overwhelm us.

Barcelona, August 1931

(Signed): Juan López, Agustín Gibanel, Ricardo Fornells, José Girona, Daniel Navarro, Jesús Rodríguez, Antonio Vil-labriga, Ángel Pestaña, Miguel Portolés, Joaquim Roura, Joaquim Lorente, Progreso Alfarache, Antonio Peñarroya, Camilo Piñón, Joaquín Cortes, Isidoro Gabín, Pedro Massoni, Francesc Arín, José Cristiá, Juan Dinarés, Roldán Cortada, Sebastiá Clara, Joan Peiró, Ramon Viñas, Federico Uleda, Pedro Cané, Mariano Peat, Espartaco Puig, Narciso Marcó, Jenaro Minguet.

So the difference is very considerable. A moment's deliberation will show up the advantage of one approach or the other. Let each person decide which of the two interpretations to make his own.

Last Words

It will be readily understood by anyone who reads this that we have not written and put our signature to the foregoing for pleasure's sake, nor out of any whimsical desire to have our names feature at the bottom of a text which is of a public nature and which concerns doctrine. Our attitude is unwavering: we have espoused a course which we deem necessary in the interests of the Confederation and which is reflected in the second of the interpretations of revolution set out earlier.

Yes, we are revolutionaries; but no, we do not cultivate the myth of revolution. We seek an end to capitalism and to the state, be it red, white or black; but not so that we may erect another in its place, but so that, once the economic revolution has been made by the working class, that revolution may thwart the reintroduction of all power of whatever persuasion. We seek a revolution sprung from the innermost feelings of the people... a revolution along the lines of the one being forged today... and not a revolution which is offered to us, or which a few individuals seek to deliver to us... individuals who, were they to succeed in this would turn into dictators on the morrow of that success, regardless of how they call themselves. But we seek and desire that success. Is this what the bulk of the organisation's membership also desires? This is something worth exploring, something that needs clarification as soon as possible. The Confederation is a revolutionary organisation, not one that has a hankering for ambush or riot, nor one which makes a cult of violence for its own sake, or of revolution for revolution's sake. This being the case, we address ourselves to all members,

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storm into power, has — paradoxically though it may seem — advocates in our own ranks and it has reasserted itself in certain groups of militants. Without their realising that they are falling into all the vices of political demagogy — vices which would induce us to hand over the revolution, were it to be made successful in those circumstances, to the first political party to come along, or even to become the government ourselves, to take power so as to govern as if we were just another political party. May we, must we... may the National Confederation of Labour (CNT), must the National Confederation of Labour (CNT)... rally to this disastrous concept of revolution, of the revolutionary act, the revolutionary feat?

Opposed to this simplistic, classical and somewhat cinematic concept of the revolution, which at the moment would lead us to a republican fascism disguised under the Cap of Liberty, but nonetheless for all that, stands another concept, the true, the only practical and universal concept which may bring us, which will ineluctably bring us, to the attainment of our ultimate objective.

The latter concept means that it is not merely the aggressive, fighting personnel which have to be trained, but these plus moral factors which today are the sturdiest, the most destructive, the hardest to overcome. It does not trust the revolution solely to the daring of the more or less daring minorities, but wants there to be an ongoing movement of the people en masse, of the working class en route towards its ultimate liberation, with the unions and Confederation determining the date, technique and precise timing of the revolution. It does not hold that revolution is only order, only method: this is a large factor in the training and in the revolution itself, but sufficient scope must also be left for individual initiative. Against the chaotic, incoherent concept of revolution entertained by the first group, stands the ordered, prescient, coherent concept of the second. The former is tantamount to playing at riot, ambush, and revolution: it amounts in fact to delaying the real revolution.

always been the work of daring minorities that have exhorted the people against the constituted authorities. Is it enough that these minorities should so desire and so scheme, that, in a similar context, the destruction of the prevailing regime and of the defensive forces that uphold it should become a fact? Let us see. One fine day, perhaps availing of the element of surprise, these minorities, complete with some aggressive elements, confront the security forces, stand up to them and spark the violent clash that may lead us to revolution. A little rudimentary training and a few shock elements are more than enough to begin with. They entrust the success of the revolution to the valour of a handful of individuals and to the problematical intervention of the multitudes who would rush to their aid once they were on the streets.

No need to make provision for anything, no need to make calculations, no need to think about anything other than taking to the streets to rout the mastodon: the State. Thoughts about its having formidable means of defence at its disposal, or about its being hard to destroy as long as its resources of power, its moral sway over the people, its economy, its courts, its moral and economic credit have not been smashed by its thievery and vileness, by the immorality and incompetence of its leaders and by the undermining of its institutions: it is a waste of time to think that the state cannot be destroyed. This is to turn a blind eye to history and to display ignorance of human psychology itself. And that blind eye may be turned at the present time. And so that this blind eye may be turned, a blind eye is turned also even to revolutionary morality itself. Everything is trusted to the serendipity factor, everything is expected of the unforeseen: there is belief in the miraculous feats of the blessed revolution, as if the revolution were a cure-all and not a painful, cruel event that has to forge men with bodily suffering and mental distress. This concept of revolution, the spawn of the sheerest demagoguery peddled over decades by all men of the political parties which have tried, very often unsuccessfully, to

To the comrades, to the unions, to everybody: A superficial analysis of the situation in which our country finds itself will lead us to pronounce that Spain finds herself in circumstances of intense revolutionary propensities from which deep-seated collective excitement is going to derive. There is no denying the magnitude of the moment, nor the dangers implicit in this revolutionary period, because, whether we like it or not, the force of circumstance alone must ensure that we all suffer the consequences of the upheaval. The advent of the Republic has opened a parenthesis in the normal history of our country. With the monarchy toppled, the king driven off his throne, the Republic proclaimed by the tacit concerted efforts of groups, parties, organisations and individuals who had suffered the attacks of the dictatorship and of the period of repression under Martínez Anido and Arlegui, it will be readily appreciated that this whole succession of events had to bring us to a new situation, to a state of affairs different from what the nation's life had hitherto been over the past 50 years, from the Restoration onwards. But if the aforementioned facts were the mobilising factor which induced us to destroy one political situation and to try to usher in a period different from the past, what has come to pass since has borne out our assertion that Spain is living in truly revolutionary times. With the way made easy for the flight of the king and with the expatriation of the whole gilded and "blue-blooded" rabble, capital has been exported on a huge scale and the country has been impoverished even beyond what it was. The flight of the plutocrats, bankers, financiers and the gentleman stock and bondholders of the State has been followed by shameful and brazen speculation which has given rise to formidable depreciation in the value of the peseta and a 50 per cent devaluation in the nation's assets.

This assault upon economic interests, calculated to produce hunger and misery for the majority of Spaniards, has been followed up by the covert hypocritical conspiracy of all the cowl and soutane wearers, of all who, in order to ensure their vic-

tory, do not shrink from lighting one candle to God and another to the devil. The power to dominate, subjugate and live upon the exploitation of an entire people that is reduced to its knees is being given primacy over everything. The upshot of this conspiracy of criminal procedures is a deep-seated and intense blockage of public credits, and consequent collapse of all industries, leading to a fearful crisis such as our country has, perhaps, never before known. Workshops are shutting down; factories are laying off their workers; projects are coming to a standstill or no longer being launched: in commerce, there has been a fall in orders, and no outlet for natural produce; workers go week after week without finding work; countless industries have to cut back to two or three (and a very few to four) days working. Those workers who manage to find a whole week's work and who can show up at the factory or the workshop six days, account for no more than 30 per cent of the workforce. The pauperisation of the country is already an accepted fait accompli. Alongside all of these misadventures that have befallen the people, one notes the lethargy and exceedingly legalistic approach of the government. Though every one of the ministers owes his position to revolution, they have reneged upon it by clinging to legality the way a mollusc clings to a rock, and they show no signs of energy except when it comes to turning the machine guns on the people. According to them, it is in the name of the Republic and in order to defend that republic that the entire repressive apparatus of the State is deployed and the workers' blood spilled daily. Now it is no longer a case of this or that village, but in every village that the dry bark of the Mausers has cut short lusty young lives. Meanwhile, the government has done nothing in the economic sphere, nor is it going to do anything. It has not expropriated the great landowners, the true bogeys of the Spanish peasant; it has not reduced, by as much as one single céntimo, the profits of those who speculate upon the public interest: no monopoly has been done away with: nothing has been done to limit the abuses of

those who exploit and grow fat on the hunger, pain and misery of the people; it has struck a contemplative pose when what was needed was the crushing of privilege, the destruction of injustice and the prevention of thefts as infamous as they are vile. How should we wonder, then at what has happened? On the one hand, superciliousness, speculation, tinkering with public affairs and with collective values, with that which belongs to the common man, with society's values. On the other hand, leniency, tolerance shown to oppressors and exploiters who victimise the people, whereas the people are imprisoned and harassed, threatened and exterminated.

And, down below, as a worthy counterpart to this, the people... suffering, languishing, undergoing hunger and misery and watching as they trifle with the revolution that the people have made. Still ensconced in public office, on the judicial bench... from where they may betray the revolution... are the ones who achieved those positions through the official bounty of the king or the influence of his ministers. This situation, after having brought destruction to one regime, demonstrates that the revolution left unmade is becoming inevitable and a necessity. We all acknowledge that... the ministers by recognising the collapse of the economic system... the press, by recording the disaffection of the people, and the people by revolting against the offences perpetrated against them. So everything appears to confirm the imminence of decisions that the country will have to make in order to save itself by saving the revolution.

One Interpretation

The position being one of thoroughgoing collective tragedy, the people's wish being to shrug off the grief which torments and kills them, there being but one option, revolution... how are we to go about it? History tells us that revolutions have