

Communist International  
March (3), 1940, pp. 179-193

**THE LESSONS OF THE WAR OF THE SPANISH PEOPLE**  
(1936-1939)

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For nearly three years the Spanish people were engaged in a bloody struggle, fighting arms in hand to defend the independence of their country and their hard-won social rights. For nearly three years the Spanish people fought heroically and bore heavy sacrifices. But they were defeated. Nevertheless, the defeat is a temporary one. In spite of the bloody reign of terror, the dictatorship of the bourgeois and landlord reaction now ruling Spain cannot do away with the causes that drove the Spanish people into the struggle; it cannot appease the hatred of the Spanish people for this regime of oppression and reaction. The working class, the peasantry and the working folk of Spain generally, as well as the oppressed peoples of Catalonia and the Basque country have seen happier days; they have known what it is to live without big capitalists and landlords. The Spanish people are carrying on the struggle under the new conditions; they are mustering and uniting their forces, and are preparing—once the difficulties of the present situation have been overcome—to engage in new battles.

The just war of the Spanish people was one of the most important and outstanding events in the international movement for the emancipation of the working masses since the victorious socialist revolution in Russia in October, 1917. It has enriched the working class and all the oppressed peoples of the capitalist countries and the colonies with valuable experience in the struggle against home and foreign reaction, against coercion, oppression and exploitation.

*The Military Revolt and the Armed Struggle of the Spanish People for Freedom and Independence*

After the victory of the people at the polls on February 16, 1936, the petty bourgeois political parties and the Social-Democratic Party of Spain had neither the courage nor the ability to assume the offensive against the forces of reaction. The counter-revolution took the fullest advantage of the vacillation, weakness and cowardice of these parties and raised its mutinous head, seeking to prevent the spread of the revolutionary movement in the country.

On July 18 a mutiny was started by a section of the military clique that represented the interests of semi-feudal reaction, the big landlords, the church hierarchy, the financial oligarchy and foreign reaction. Their aim was obvious: they wanted to achieve what the reactionaries had failed to achieve in the revolt of General Sanjurjo in 1932, the abolition of the Spanish Republic, the suppression of the national liberties of the Catalans and the Basques, the withdrawal of the political, economic and cultural gains of the working people, the complete restoration of the power and privileges of the landlords, the church hierarchy and the big capitalists, and, lastly, the establishment of a reactionary regime and a terrorist dictatorship.

The working masses, the Spanish people, took the course of armed resistance.

This civil war, as it was called, was soon transformed into a war for the national independence and the political rights of the peoples of Spain, into a war for the protection and extension of the social and cultural gains of the working people.

In the process of this struggle, the Spanish people underwent a profound change, as did the political and economic life of the country, which had now set its foot on the path of progress.

A veritable revolution took place in the Spanish countryside, which had formerly groaned in servitude to the semi-feudal landlords. Over four million hectares of land were confiscated from the landlords, the church and the monasteries, and turned over gratis to the peasants. The peasants had their debts annulled and were granted credits, seed and agricultural machinery.

The working class received considerable increases of wages; labor protection laws were passed. The workers took an extensive share in the management of the factories and of the more important branches

of the national economy. The working class became the strongest power in the country and guaranteed the reconstruction of the national economic life, which had been brought to the brink of ruin by the counter-revolutionary revolt.

During the war the peoples of Catalonia and the Basque country consolidated and developed their national liberties.

In place of the old army, which had been a tool of reaction, a real people's army was formed for the protection of the interests of the people.

Women received equal rights with men and began to take an active part in the political and economic life of the country.

Youth secured opportunities of education and of training themselves for a future in a free and independent country. Culture ceased to be a class privilege. The schools and universities opened their doors to the people.

All the constructive work of the Spanish Republic and all the social gains won in the period of the war rested principally on the alliance of the working class with the working peasantry and the urban petty-bourgeoisie, united under the banner of the People's Front.

The People's Front, founded as a result of the experience gained in the armed struggle of October, 1934, increased the confidence of the Spanish people in their own strength, raised the political level of the masses to an unprecedented height, and induced new strata of the population to join the national revolutionary war for the republic. The growing complexity of the home and foreign situation during this period bore out the correctness of the policy of the People's Front, the policy of national unity for the struggle of the people in defense of their independence and freedom from the forces of reaction.

The People's Front was a suitable form for the development of the revolution during this period.

Spain, which at the beginning of the struggle was a republic of a bourgeois-democratic type, developed in the course of the war into a people's republic, a republic without big capitalists, landlords and reactionaries, a republic supported by the masses of the people and a regular people's army.

Spain became a republic in which the masses received the opportunity and right to share in the guidance of the political and economic life of the country, a republic in which, while in general private ownership in means of production was preserved, the big industries, the banks and the transport system were nationalized, the land of the big landowners was confiscated, and cooperative and collective enterprises formed on a voluntary basis, a republic in which substantial assistance was afforded to the workers and peasants by the state.

While defending their own interests and liberties, the Spanish people were also defending the interests and liberties of all nations against world reaction.

The struggle of revolutionary Spain became the vital cause of the working people of all countries. It awakened considerable forces among the working class and its allies and was directed against the bourgeois reaction, against capitalist aggression and imperialist war.

The armed struggle of the Spanish people was an important factor in the regrouping of the forces of the working class and the working people generally in other countries too, and helped to expose the true meaning of bourgeois "democracy." It showed who were the friends and who the enemies of the people, it increased the confidence of the masses in their own strength and rallied the people around the Communist Party, the only consistent defender of revolutionary Spain.

#### *The Attitude of the "Democratic" States to the Struggle of the Spanish People*

The whole policy of the "democratic" governments of imperialist England and France was inspired by the determination to prevent the victory of the Spanish people. A revolutionary Spain would give a powerful impetus to the struggle of the working people for emancipation from capitalist rule. In the opinion of the British and French imperialists, this had to be prevented at all costs. The policy of "non-intervention," which was designed for this purpose, reached its acme in the Munich conspiracy. Under the pretext of "neutrality" and of localizing the conflict, the European warmongers went to the length of

establishing a complete blockade of republican territory, and finally of direct military intervention in order to smash the resistance of the people's republic.

It was with this purpose in view that the volunteers fighting in the International Brigades were ordered to leave Spain and that attacks were organized by the British navy in conjunction with France to compel the republican stronghold of Minorca to surrender. It was for this same purpose that thousands of republican fighters who crossed into France and were waiting for the opportunity of returning to the central war zone in Spain were disarmed by the French Government and confined in concentration camps. But this was not enough for the British and French imperialists. In order to crush the republic completely, the imperialists engineered the conspiracy of the Casado-Miaja junta, which was to strike the weapons from the hands of the Spanish people and fling them beneath the bloody yoke of a bourgeois-landlord dictatorship.

Had it not been for the actual help given to Franco by the British and French reactionaries and the Social-Democratic leaders, revolutionary Spain would never have been defeated.

All historical development as well as the events of recent times confirm what Comrade Stalin said in 1927:

“British capitalism was, is and always will be the most vicious strangler of popular revolutions. From the great French Revolution of the end of the eighteenth century to the revolution in China today, the British bourgeoisie always was and still is in the forefront in crushing the emancipation movement of mankind.” (Joseph Stalin, *On the Opposition*.)

In contrast to the policy of those “democratic” countries, England and France—a policy which delighted the enemies of our cause—the great Land of Socialism rendered moral and political assistance to the Spanish people in their war from first to last. Day after day, the mighty voice of the Soviet people called for aid for the Spanish people. This contrast has helped even more clearly to bring out the true nature of bourgeois “democracy.”

The Communist Parties, true to proletarian internationalism, appealed to the masses to defend the Spanish people. They formed International Brigades, which displayed magnificent courage, solidarity and devotion to the interests of the working class.

But the working class of the capitalist countries was unable to render adequate help. It was prevented from doing so by the treacherous leaders of the Second International. In order to smash the front of reaction against revolutionary Spain, energetic and consistent joint action of the international organizations of the working class was required. But the leaders of the Second International did not want the forces of reaction to be defeated. They rejected every proposal of the Communist International for united action of the working class.

The working class of the capitalist countries drew their conclusions from these facts. They saw that while the Social-Democrats in the French, Belgian, Swedish, Norwegian and Danish governments were defending the interests of the capitalists, the Communists and the peoples of the Soviet Union stood shoulder to shoulder with the Spanish people's republic and with the working folk. The proletariat had one more opportunity to convince itself that the Communists and the Communist International, the great world party of Lenin and Stalin, defended the cause of the working people and will defend it consistently to the end.

### *What was the Situation in Spain?*

Until 1936, the working class of Spain was split to an extraordinary degree and isolated from the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie.

The victory gained in the elections on February 16, 1936, created the opportunity for united action by the proletariat, the peasantry and the urban middle classes, which, inspired by the common wish to overthrow the power of reaction, all united their forces. This unity made it possible to mobilize the masses for an energetic struggle against the military putsch. The masses, who possessed neither a military organization nor arms, gained big victories in several important centers of the country and

organized resistance to the forces of reaction.

The result of this fighting unity, of which the Communist Party was the driving force, was the creation of the People's Front. But the basis of this fighting unity was not sufficiently firm; its core, the working class, was split.

The Communists were the only party to realize how important it was to secure the unity of the working class. That is why the Communist Party strove so stubbornly for the creation of a united trade union center. But the "Socialist" and Anarchist leaders persistently worked to defeat this end, for they knew that the effect of such unity would be to strengthen the influence of the Communists in the trade unions and would lead to victory over the forces of reaction.

The Communists redoubled their efforts to create a single party of the working class based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism. But the "Socialist" leaders steadily opposed the formation of such a party, which would have ensured the hegemony of the proletariat in the People's Front and in the government.

Owing to the lack of unity in the Spanish working class movement, the political parties of the petty bourgeoisie were able to play a part altogether out of proportion to their real strength and influence. It was this that weakened the fighting efficiency of the republican army, prevented the adoption of a determined economic policy and the expansion of the munitions industry so absolutely essential in time of war, and left a free hand to all the enemies of the People's Front. It was the lack of unity among the proletariat that prevented the formation of a strong people's government capable of conducting the national revolutionary war with the necessary firmness.

The utter impracticability of the "theory" and tactics of the Anarchists became only too apparent during this war. The whole course of the popular revolution revealed how untenable, false and counter-revolutionary they were. The "anarcho-communist" experiments of the Anarchists consisted in the compulsory formation of collective farms and in expropriating, robbing and even murdering peasants and artisans. The Anarchists opened the front to the enemy. They became an armed force of the Casado-Besteiro-Miaja clique. The activity of certain Anarcho-Syndicalist leaders was wholly confined to saving the Falangists.

Those bandits, the Trotskyites, placed their full services at the disposal of the reactionaries and foreign espionage services. They betrayed military secrets to the enemy, opened the front and, in conjunction with the Anarchist provocateurs and in conspiracy with Franco, launched the counter-revolutionary putsch in Barcelona in May, 1937.

A part in this work of disorganization and demoralization was played by the unprincipled followers of the "Socialist" leader Largo Caballero, who relied on the backing of Anarchist provocateurs and adventurers and made full play of Trotskyite "arguments." Largo Caballero's followers tried to split the trade union center—the General Federation of Labor—and the United Young Socialist League. They did everything in their power to force the republicans to capitulate, and it was their filthy hand that was behind the treacherous desertion of Casado, Besteiro and Miaja in Madrid.

The leaders of the various "trends" in the Spanish Socialist Party and in the other parties of the Second International continued their opportunist and anti-proletarian policy. Notwithstanding the differences of opinion that prevailed among them, they were united in their hatred of Communism.

The Spanish Socialist leaders had no faith in the strength of the working class and denied its leading role in the struggle, with the result that they took the path of capitulation and treachery, in which they were spurred on by their colleagues in the Second International. The Spanish Socialist Party condoned every misdeed and crime against the interests of the working class. Control was entirely lacking. Every Socialist Minister in the Government did just as he pleased. There was no clear political line, no party discipline and no personal responsibility. The Socialist Party contained men like Prieto, who demanded the hegemony of the bourgeoisie in the revolutionary struggle of the Spanish people; Besteiro, who in Madrid revolted against the Negrin government, which represented the Socialist majority; and Caballero, who was constantly engaged in subversive activities and provocative actions against the

Communist Party and the people's army.

During the war the Spanish people came to know these traitors very well. It is not without good reason that they hold the leaders of the Socialist Party chiefly responsible for the defeat of the Spanish people.

The Republican Party had always vacillated. Its fear of the emancipation of the people and the development of a people's revolution had always tended to drive it into the path of reaction under the shield of the slogan: "The republic must be guided by republicans." It was anxious to oust the working class from the leading positions, it hampered in every way the activities of the People's Front Government, which were inadequate enough as it was, and wherever it could prevented the adoption of strict measures against the enemy.

Influenced by the French and British governments, many of the representatives of the Republican Party become standard-bearers of capitulation. Having adopted this course, some of them deserted their posts at the crucial moment, while others joined forces with the Casado, Besteiro and Miaja clique.

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The various governments of the Spanish republic largely reflected the tendencies of these parties and individuals.

A firm policy, answering to the requirements of the national revolutionary war, was absolutely essential for the victory of the Spanish people's republic. In industry, agriculture, transport, supply, military organization and the military training of the entire population, in foreign policy, finance and public order—everywhere a ruthless policy towards the intriguers and capitulators was required.

But such a policy would necessitate a *new government apparatus corresponding to the popular character of the republic*.

Notwithstanding this, the old government apparatus was not completely destroyed; it continued in part to exist even during the war, and at crucial moments worked against the interests of the people.

Only a government capable of tackling the difficulties unhesitatingly could have coped with this complicated situation, taken the helm firmly in hand and pursued the policy which the circumstances dictated. The Communists knew that the ideal form of such a government was a dictatorship of the proletariat. But since the war was a war for national liberation, since it was necessary to unite the broad sections of the people not only on republican territory but in the territory under the rule of Franco as well, since it was necessary to win over the middle classes in Catalonia and the Basque country, to gain a military victory over the enemy and secure the support for republican Spain not only of the international proletariat, but also of the non-proletarian strata, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat under the given circumstances was impossible.

To have attempted to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat would have meant skipping a necessary stage of development; it would have narrowed the social basis of the struggle of the Spanish people and would have made it easier for international reaction to destroy the revolutionary movement in Spain.

That is why the Spanish Communists did not issue the call for a dictatorship of the proletariat, but for the formation of a fighting people's government capable of uniting in the struggle all the forces of the Spanish people under the leadership of the working class. But no such government was formed, although there was every possibility of doing so.

The capitulators, intriguers and reactionaries remained in charge of the key posts in the government apparatus of the Spanish Republic, and its governments were not truly revolutionary war-time people's governments.

The first government, composed of representatives of the Republican parties, did not even attempt to tackle such problems as organizing an army, maintaining public order in the rear, production, and so on. The fact that the government lacked a proper orientation and a firm policy and that it was not energetic enough did not remain a secret to the enemy, who took advantage of it to conquer a number of Spanish

provinces.

The second government, headed by Largo Caballero, was not in a position to make full use of the complicated situation. Largo Caballero was bitterly hostile to the revolutionary unity of the working class. An enemy of Communism and the Soviet Union, he despised the masses and their initiative, and put complete confidence in untrustworthy and incompetent military experts. Clinging obstinately to this opinion, Caballero hindered the formation of a powerful republican army and did everything he could to counteract the efforts made in this direction by the Communist Party, which, in the shape of the Fifth Regiment, had created the firm foundation needed for a military organization. All Caballero's activities ran directly counter to everything the interests of victory over the reactionaries demanded. His course was one of constant compromise and capitulation. Caballero was deposed by the anger of the people.

Next came the Negrin-Prieto Government. The conduct of military affairs was entirely in the hands of Prieto. He began by introducing the principle of "proportional representation" in the commanding staff of the army and placed a whole series of incompetents and cowards at the head of the military groups. By refusing to undertake a purge of the military command, and by placing suspicious individuals in responsible posts, he protected wreckers and enemies. Prieto's hatred of the heroic Communists, who had safeguarded the existence of the department of war commissars at the most difficult moments, led to the latter's collapse and conversion into a bureaucratic institution. Valorous commissars, who had been tested under fire, were replaced by a horde of incompetents, without revolutionary staunchness, faith or enthusiasm. Prieto went so far as to forbid the spread of propaganda among the enemy's forces.

The Communist Party was the only party to carry on activities among the enemy's troops and in its rear; it was the only one systematically to tackle and overcome the difficulties caused by the government to the republic and the army. The victory of Teruel, which was one of the severest defeats the enemy experienced, could not be taken advantage of because nothing had been done to create reserves, and, owing to the criminal and senseless command to our troops to retire, the fortress was lost. Prieto's policy, moreover, led to the disruption of the whole Eastern Front and to the splitting of the republican zone into two parts. His wrecking activities were also to be seen in the way he drew up the military reports, in which he frequently announced the loss of areas, towns and positions before they had actually been captured by the enemy, thereby distorting the true relation of forces in favor of the enemy. The people and the men at the front, who realized the grave danger threatening the country and were aware of the fact that the government was being crippled by Prieto's capitulationist activities, demanded that a new government be formed to save the situation. In response to the wishes of the people and the men at the front, Negrin dismissed Prieto from the Ministry of National Defense and formed a government of national unity. Negrin himself took over the functions of War Minister, thereby assuming the heritage of Caballero's and Prieto's disastrous policy.

The new government energetically called upon the people and the army to combat capitulation and to fight for the defense of the country. It drew up the noteworthy eighteen points as a basis for the unity of the entire people in the struggle for independence. These points included: the safeguarding of Spain's independence; expulsion of the forces of intervention; formation at the end of the war of a democratic people's republic by a free expression of the will of the people, i.e., by a plebiscite; respect for the national rights and liberties of the peoples inhabiting Spain; inviolability of person and freedom of conscience; a guarantee to small property holders; a radical agrarian reform involving the abolition of the large estates and the turning over of the land to those who cultivate it; progressive social legislation; formation of a people's army.

The new Negrin government restored the disrupted Eastern Front and improved the organization of the army, which a few months earlier had fought so heroically on the Ebro.

Negrin pursued a policy of resistance, but he did not do so consistently; he made concessions to the foes of this policy. He did not carry out that thorough purge of the army, the navy and the government apparatus on which the Communists insisted. He tolerated the atmosphere of impunity created by his

predecessors, and took no measures to combat sabotage in the matter of concentrating reserves and in fortification work.

The results of this contradictory policy soon became apparent. The Republican army, which under the command of self-sacrificing and devoted officers, had displayed marvels of military maturity and efficiency on the Ebro—not to mention the amalgamation effected under the command of the Communists—was unable a few months later to deal a serious blow at the enemy and to parry its attacks, which led to the loss of Catalonia.

But even the loss of Catalonia did not yet mean the end of the resistance of the Spanish people's republic, as the Communists, with a full sense of their responsibility, assured the people and the army. The men who had been forced to retire from Catalonia onto French territory strove by all means to force their way through to the central zone of Spain. In spite of the fact that the reactionary French Government would not allow the armed men to return to Spain, in spite of war fatigue and the grave difficulties, the determination of the Spanish people in the center and the south to continue the defense was unbroken. Resistance was possible; and resistance would have reacted on the international situation and have modified it in the interests of the republic, as had happened in such cases before. It was possible to put up resistance to the enemy and at the worst to win a peace that would have saved the independence of the Spanish republic and the freedom of the Spanish people, and would not have resulted in the murder of some of its finest sons. This, in fact, was the purpose of the three points advanced by the government and endorsed by the Cortes (parliament) in Figueras—the independence of Spain, guarantee of the people's right to free self-determination by means of a plebiscite, and no reprisals—which were designed to secure an unconditional termination of the struggle.

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Treachery had already been at work long before the events of March, 1939. During the operations of the republican troops on the Ebro it was already apparent that the hand of treachery was active, and this became even clearer during the enemy's attack on Catalonia. Traitors were entrenched in the headquarters of the Central and Southern armies. This was also the reason for the deep-going wrecking activities that accompanied the operations undertaken for the relief of Catalonia, both during the fighting on the Ebro and during the attack on Catalonia.

The wreckers entrenched themselves not only in the headquarters of the army in the central zone, but also in General Staff headquarters. Hand in hand with them worked the capitulators and the traitors who had wormed their way into key positions in the government service and the army—Trotskyites, Caballero followers, and provocateurs from the Anarchist F.A.I. They launched a defeatist campaign and made every effort to discredit the government, on which they laid the sole blame for the military defeats. They stirred up unrest among the people, disseminated rumors to confuse the minds of the masses, worked to disrupt the unity of the army, supported the subversive activities of the spies and traitors of the Fifth Column on Republican territory, and savagely attacked the Communists.

When, under the pressure of the Communist Party, Negrin at last (three days before the Casado revolt) made up his mind to take certain measures against the instigators of treachery, the traitors hastened the hour of revolt.

The banner of the monarchy was raised in Cartagena. It was suppressed by several thousand men of the republican army—including leading Communists. But the fleet took to flight, after the Communist sailors had been arrested; and the Casado-Besteiro clique finished the treacherous coup in Madrid and began to take savage reprisals on the Communists. The Communists put up a stubborn resistance, and they would have been able to suppress the revolt if the enemy, in collusion with the traitors, had not attacked the section of the front that was manned by Communists.

On other fronts, the traitors threatened to allow the enemy through if the Communists should proceed against the Casado-Besteiro-Miaja clique. Twenty-three days later this clique opened the front to the enemy and abandoned the people to Franco's tender mercies.

## *The Communist Party in the War for Freedom and Independence*

All through the war the Communists fought self-sacrificingly for the interests of the working people.

The participation of the Communists in the government had the most positive results. The Ministry of Agriculture, which was in charge of a Communist, realized the hopes of the peasants: it confiscated the estates of the big landowners and handed them over gratis to the agricultural laborers and poor peasants. It gave assistance to the peasants in the way of credits, seed and agricultural machinery. The Ministry of Education, also headed by a Communist, did everything possible to bring culture within the reach of the people. Thousands of new schools, kindergartens and children's sanatoria were opened. "Cultural Militia Departments" were set up to teach reading and writing to the men in the trenches. High schools were opened for the working youth.

The Communists in the army— commanders, commissars and men —set an example of courage and discipline. In mills, factories, workshops and on the land, everywhere the Communists were the leading figures in production, and everywhere they set an example of undaunted will and enthusiasm.

The Communist Party was the only party that was active in every sphere of life connected in any way with the war. Closely welded by a united will, it pursued a uniform political line which was approved and supported by all its members and sympathizers. It was the only party in which genuine unity and firm coherence existed between the members and the leadership, and between the party itself and the masses. This was possible because it was the only party that rested on the revolutionary theory of Marxism-Leninism and trained its members in the Stalinist spirit of ruthless struggle against the class enemy, in the spirit of proletarian internationalism and loyalty to the interests of the working masses. The activities of the Communist Party of Spain, especially during the war, earned it the confidence and love of the masses and resulted in a considerable increase of its membership (from 100,000 members all over Spain before the war, to 300,000 on republican territory alone during the war).

But the Communist Party had its weak points. In its effort to keep the People's Front together, it did not warn the people in time that representatives of other parties and organizations were using the People's Front as a mask for their treacherous activities. Preoccupied chiefly with the condition of the front in view of the inevitable attack of the enemy, it neglected to mobilize the masses against the traitors and did not crush the treacherous revolt, although it had the required forces at its disposal. But for all these shortcomings, the Party unhesitatingly and self-sacrificingly performed its duty to the Spanish people and the international proletariat.

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What are the lessons to be drawn from the war of independence of the Spanish people? The experience of this war and the activities of the Communist Party show that the strength of the working class is multiplied a hundredfold when it is headed by a united, monolithic revolutionary party and by a united trade union organization led by that party.

The fundamental guarantee of an alliance of the working class with the peasantry and the middle classes is the revolutionary unity of the proletariat, headed by the Communist Party.

The war of the Spanish people showed that in the difficult and dangerous conditions in which the struggle was decided, all parties and organizations except the Communist Party capitulated and disorganized the masses by their policy and activities.

The firm solidarity of the Communist Party, down to its last nucleus, its initiative, its firm ties with the masses and, in particular, its independent activity are essential conditions for reducing the vacillations of the allies to a minimum and for removing the possibility of treachery.

In order to defeat the foreign enemy, it is necessary to destroy the enemy at home.

In order to inflict defeat on the enemy in a popular revolution, the old government apparatus, which serves the interests of reaction, must be shattered and replaced by a new government apparatus that will serve the interests of the working class.

In order to be victorious in a struggle similar to the one waged by the Spanish people it is essential to



have a firm government and a movement inspired by a common will that are capable of overcoming all obstacles and of mustering the whole country for the one aim of destroying the enemy.

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Since the termination of the war in Spain, the struggle of the Spanish working class and of the whole Spanish people has been developing under entirely new conditions at home and abroad, in the midst of a second imperialist war.

The country is in a state of ruin and dislocation. The war has wrought grave damage to many of the highways, the most important ports (Barcelona, Valencia, Cartagena, Alicante, Almeria), the railways and transportation services, the mercantile fleet, the automobile transport system, the mills, factories, etc. The cost of repairing the damage caused by the war is estimated at approximately 20,000,000,000 pesetas. A large number of the industrial plants that have remained intact are suffering from a profound crisis, due partly to lack of raw material and partly to economic dislocation.

Agriculture, too, is in grave difficulties. The Spanish reactionaries are attempting to escape from economic disruption and dislocation by brutally persecuting the working class, the peasantry and the broad mass of the working population. All the gains won by the workers and peasants through the People's Front have been wiped out. All the rights and liberties of the people have been abolished. The national rights and liberties of the Basques and the Catalans have been rescinded. The courts-martial are trying, on an average, four hundred men and women a day, some 70 per cent of whom are sentenced to be shot. It is believed that about 100,000 prisoners, among them 8,000 women, are languishing in the concentration camps and in the prisons of Madrid. So large is the number of arrested persons that the reactionaries have turned monasteries and bull rings into prisons. Twenty thousand have been shot in the Levante and 30,000 in Catalonia. Above 50,000 have been shot in Madrid alone. No less is the number which have been arrested and shot in Bilbao and Galicia. And the bloody reprisals are still going on.

A large part of the republican army has been converted into forced labor battalions which are compelled to work without pay. Simultaneously, the reactionaries have undertaken a "purge" of the mills, factories, banks, commercial houses and the government services, as a result of which thousands of men and women have been flung onto the street and left to starve. Wage contracts have been annulled. Wage scales have been introduced, corresponding to those prevailing prior to July, 1936. Taxes have been increased inordinately. A law has been passed making "indifference and negligence" at work a punishable offense. In a word, in addition to the reprisals, a brutal regime of exploitation and robbery of the workers has been established.

No less severe is the regime in the countryside. The land has been taken away from the peasants and returned to the landlords. The owners are demanding the payment of rent for the three years of the war as well as all previous arrears of rent. Starvation and want are rampant among the working population.

But the masses, the working class above all, are not resigning themselves meekly to this state of affairs. Discontent is spreading and assuming enormous proportions. Far from diminishing, hatred of the Franco regime is growing from day to day. Even Franco and his Ministers have been obliged to admit openly and publicly that the country is split into two mortally hostile camps as of old. The resistance of the proletariat and the masses to the reactionary regime and to exploitation is taking the most varied forms.

One of the forms of resistance is the sympathy and help given to the political prisoners. The campaign for the amnesty and liberation of the political prisoners is becoming one of the most important political and organizing factors in the movement of the poor, the working class, the peasants, and the working youth against the reaction. A struggle is being waged against the "fixed prices" and other forms of robbery of the peasantry. The struggle against profiteering is growing. The working class is beginning to resist—although not yet in a sufficiently organized and mass fashion—the reduction of wages and the slave conditions of labor; it is even beginning to fight for some minimum rights and liberties. In the countryside, a struggle is being waged—although not yet with sufficient determination and

organization—against enslaving contracts, high taxes and against the usurers and landlords. The oppressed peoples of Catalonia, the Basque country and Galicia are continuing to resist their butchers, who have robbed them of all their rights and privileges.

Economic ruin and the dissatisfaction and indignation of the masses, coupled with unemployment, starvation, profiteering and terrible exploitation, the hatred of the masses for the butchers and for the entire system of bloody reprisal and tyranny, the inability of the ruling clique to cope with the growing difficulties—all this is aggravating and intensifying class antagonisms to the extreme. And this, in its turn, is tending to aggravate and intensify the antagonisms arising within the camp of the reactionaries themselves.

The new international situation created by the second imperialist war has still further aggravated and intensified the antagonisms in Spain. The dark forces of reaction in Spain and the imperialist powers (England, France, Italy, etc.) are feverishly working to plunge that country into the fires of war. Spanish ruling circles, who have verbally proclaimed their neutrality, are actually negotiating with the imperialist powers with the object of selling the Spanish people to the imperialist group that will offer the best price. But the proletariat and people of Spain have not the slightest intention of fighting and shedding their blood in defense of the interests of the British, French, Italian or any other imperialists. The Spanish people have learned from bitter experience which is still fresh in their minds what is the true nature and meaning of the foreign policy of the imperialist powers, and they will therefore resist every attempt of the ruling clique to inveigle Spain into the imperialist war.

An examination of the situation in Spain since the defeat of the republic leads us to the following conclusions: the victory of reaction is by no means secure; the Franco regime has no firm foothold in the country and its instability is growing from day to day; dissatisfaction is spreading among the people and the resistance of the masses is gaining strength.

Such is the situation within the country, and in this situation the Communist Party is carrying on its work. The Spanish Communist Party, which has proved in action, in the course of three years, to be the most effective organizing and guiding force in the heroic struggle of the Spanish people for freedom and independence, is continuing despite all bloody reprisals to work indefatigably for the reorganization and consolidation of its ranks, for the mustering and amalgamation of the forces of the people in order to carry on the fight against home and foreign reaction. By organizing and leading the struggle of the workers and peasants for their immediate concrete demands, by employing the most diverse forms of struggle of the working people against the exploiters and the reactionaries, and by exposing the traitors of all shades, the Communist Party is enabling the masses to pass to a higher phase of the struggle.

Armed with rich experience, and guided by the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, the Communist Party, winning the confidence of ever broader masses, is leading the Spanish proletariat and the entire Spanish people to emancipation from reaction and capitalism.