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## **Stalin's Teachings – A Lodestar to the Spanish Communists**

By José Diaz

The national revolutionary war in Spain kept the revolutionary and progressive forces of the whole world at a high tension for two and a half years. The Spanish people waged a magnificent armed struggle in defense of its revolutionary achievements and its national independence against a superior enemy, a struggle that was protracted, stubborn and rich in heroism.

A united front of the entire international reaction, a united front of the imperialist powers, had actually crystallized against revolutionary Spain. These powers – some openly, others in a more or less concealed form – pursued a policy of intervention on a grand scale against the Spanish people. In order to help reaction strangle the heroic struggle of revolutionary Spain, the leaders of the Second International joined forces with reaction and the traitor Blum, in the name of the Second International and at the behest of the English and French imperialists proceeded to slip the noose of "non-intervention" around the neck of our people.

Thus, the struggle of the Spanish people was strangled by the united forces of reaction which attacked the country. However, the heroic resistance of revolutionary Spain, written in letters of fire, will live forever in the minds of the Spanish and the international proletariat, in the minds of the toiling masses, in the minds of the peoples subjugated and enslaved by capitalism. The lessons of the heroic struggle of the Spanish people will help them to understand better the nature of capitalism, the instigator of predatory wars. These lessons will serve them as a weapon in the struggle against the exploiting classes, in the struggle against the present imperialist war.

The Spanish people found the energy to resist the superior forces for such a long time because it fought for a just cause, because the broadest masses took active part in this struggle with flaming enthusiasm, with unsparing self-sacrifice, with inexhaustible initiative, and because the general uprising of the masses of revolutionary Spain, of the toilers united in the People's Front, evoked a wave of international solidarity in all countries and found unstinted moral and political aid and support primarily among the peoples of the U.S.S.R.

This broad mobilization of the workers, the peasants, the urban petty-bourgeoisie and the progressive intellectuals, however, would not have been possible without the consistent work of the Communist Party, without its correct Marxist-Leninist political line.

The Communist Party was able to develop this political line and to put it into practice, making it the backbone of the struggle of the Spanish people only because it always strove to follow the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin and to apply, in the concrete conditions of Spain, the tactical principles of Leninism which were developed and supplemented by Stalin.

*The Concrete Situation in Which the Struggle Developed,  
and the Strategy of the Communists*

Comrade Stalin teaches us that the starting point for the development of a correct political line is *"the principle of absolutely taking into account the national peculiarities and the specific national features of each single country."* (J. V. Stalin, *Remarks on Timely Themes*, p. 19, Russ. ed.)

What does this mean? It means that it is not enough to learn by rote various theses and teachings of Marxism-Leninism to avoid political mistakes, but that it is indispensable for the Communist Party to analyze the concrete internal and international situation with the greatest care, to study with the utmost seriousness its interaction and alignments. Only an analysis which does not merely make a general comparison of the situation at a given moment with that of other epochs and in other countries, but also takes into account the specific features and characteristics of the situation, only such an analysis can serve as the starting point for the formulation of a correct political line.

What was the concrete situation? And what were its specific features at the moment of the uprising of the Spanish reactionaries and during the period of intervention?

Spain was primarily an agrarian country of a petty-bourgeois type with considerable remnants of feudalism. This general character of the country was not changed during the five or six years of the bourgeois- democratic revolution (from April, 1931, to July, 1936), which preceded the national revolutionary war. Fifty-nine per cent of the employable population was engaged in agriculture and not more than 20 per cent in industry, transportation and commerce. The rest of the population was employed either in the state administrative apparatus or in the municipal apparatus, in the army and in the so-called free professions. The distribution of land ownership was the best indication of the peasant, petty-bourgeois character of the country with strong influences of feudal remnants on the economic and political life.

Two per cent of the land owners, who could be described as large landowners (one hundred hectares and upwards), possessed 67 per cent of the entire arable land. To this group belonged the enormous latifundias of the Duke of Alba covering 96,000 hectares, those of the Duke of Medinaceli with 79,000 hectares, as well as those of the Duke of Penderanda with 52,000 hectares, and others. Eighty-six per cent of the owners of land (up to ten hectares) possessed altogether only 15 per cent of all the arable land. This picture becomes even clearer when we add that 39 per cent of all the owners of land possessed less than one hectare and that this enormous mass of land-impoverished peasants possessed altogether only 1.1 per cent of the entire acreage. Besides this, there were two and a half million land workers who had no land at all. A considerable part of the peasants who were counted as owners of land in the statistics, in reality were nothing but tenants or sub-tenants, so-called "*rabassaires*," a tenant relationship which most clearly reflected the semi-feudal character of Spanish agriculture.

The Catholic Church, the consort of feudalism, possessed nearly one-third of all the wealth of the country as well as a third of all the arable land. There were 200,000 monks in Spain. As against the 35,000 schools in Spain, there was a total of 36,000 churches, monasteries and chapels.

Of the 24,500,000 inhabitants, 7,000,000 belonged to the national minorities of Catalonia, the Basque country and Galicia. The national question was only partially solved by the Republic. The complete solution of this question was still ahead.

Heavy industry and machine construction, the barometer of the economic level of every country, were only slightly developed. Light industry (working-up of agricultural products, textile industry, etc.) which employed 67 per cent out of the total of 1,900,000 industrial workers, occupied a dominant position in the whole economic development of Spain. In light industry, handicraft production played an exceptionally big role; in the textile industry the small and middle owners likewise predominated. Light industry was only slightly concentrated. The

opposite was the case, however, in heavy industry, especially in mining (coal, iron-ore, lead, copper, potash, quick-silver, etc.). Here, monopoly capital played a decisive role.

Spain was a capitalist country which oppressed colonial peoples; at the same time, however, Spain was a country exceptionally dependent on foreign capital, a country which was the theater of struggle between individual imperialist Powers who fought one another for consolidation of their own influence in this country at the expense of their rivals.

The strong remnants of feudalism prevailed especially in the army and navy as well as in the state apparatus whose leading cadres, particularly the top cadres, were recruited from the old-established nobility.

The historical consequences of this backwardness of Spain, as well as its medieval past which had not been completely overcome – provincialism, cantonalism, and regionalism – could be felt at every step. Provincialism not only put its stamp on the economic and political life of the country but also influenced the labor movement which was far more disunited than in any other large country of Europe. The well-known Spanish "Caciquism"\* predominated in the state apparatus as well as in the villages, in the municipalities, in the political parties of the bourgeoisie and the petty- bourgeoisie, including the Socialist Party, in the trade union centers of the U.G.T. and the C.N.T.\*\* Many provinces and cities were under the control of a clique of a few powerful and influential people who held sway absolutely without any hindrance.

Although the bourgeois-democratic revolution lasted more than six years, the basic tasks confronting the revolution remained unsolved, primarily the agrarian question.... Of the total of 4,000,000 land-impoverished peasants and land workers, only 150,000 had received land and this to an entirely unsatisfactory extent, without the necessary tools and instruments for its cultivation. The Church which was formally separated from the state was able to preserve all of its material possessions and consequently also a considerable part of its influence on political life. The army remained what it was before: the old reactionary army dominated by a caste spirit, a nest of counter-revolution. The condition of the working class likewise had not changed essentially.

The working class and peasant classes reacted to the sabotage of the capitalists and landowners with strike struggles and other methods of struggle. However, they did not receive the necessary support from the government, which was composed of representatives of the republican parties, so as to liquidate the counter-revolutionary machinations of the bourgeoisie, the landowners and the military which were secretly preparing an uprising.

This characterization of the internal situation must be supplemented by some of the most important features of the international situation in which the struggle of the Spanish people was taking place. This international situation was characterized by the intensification of the contradictions among the separate imperialist powers although this intensification had not yet led to the unleashing of war. In other words, there was still the possibility of forming a reactionary united front against revolutionary Spain.

All these peculiarities of the internal situation of the Spanish Republic as well as of the international situation were of decisive importance for the strategic task of the working class. To the Communist Party it was clear that in such a backward country as Spain, whose democratic problems were unsolved and which was faced with the urgent necessity of extending the social basis of the struggle inside the country as well as the basis of international solidarity, the socialist

revolution could not be posed as the immediate task. For that reason, the Party, basing itself on the analysis of the given situation and on the concrete estimation of the interaction of forces, set itself the *task of further developing and completing the bourgeois-democratic revolution*.

This goal could only be attained by transforming the bourgeois-democratic republic into a democratic republic of a new type, a republic without big capitalists and landowners, a *people's republic* in which power would not be in the hands of the bloc of the bourgeoisie and the landowners as in the republic established April 14, 1931, but in the hands of the bloc of the working class, the peasants, the urban petty-bourgeoisie, the national minorities, a bloc in which the proletariat was destined to play the leading role.

The Communist Party understood that the development of the bourgeois-democratic revolution was a decisive prerequisite for interesting the broad masses of workers, peasants and petty-bourgeoisie in the armed struggle against the Spanish reactionaries and foreign interventionists, and that, furthermore, only a military victory over this enemy could make it possible to complete the bourgeois-democratic revolution and thus create the necessary prerequisites for the complete victory of the working class.

#### *The Tactics of the Communists in the National Revolutionary War*

But Comrade Stalin also teaches us that, in working out a correct political line and putting it into practice, it is not enough to confine ourselves merely to a concrete analysis of the situation in each country during each single period of struggle. A correct analysis can only be the basis, only the indispensable starting point for a correct tactical line. In addition to this, it is necessary to take into account:

"...the principle on the basis of which the Communist Party of each country must utilize even the slightest possibility of assuring an ally to the proletariat among the masses; even if this ally is only temporary, vacillating, insufficiently firm and uncertain." (J. V. Stalin, *Remarks on Timely Themes*, pp. 19-20.)

There were such mass allies of the proletariat in Spain. The Communist Party waged a consistent struggle in order to win these allies to the side of the proletariat. Its whole tactic, during the entire course of the national revolutionary war, was permeated by the effort to attract and keep these allies of the proletariat.

But in order to enable the working class to attract mass allies, to keep them, and to lead them over every turn and twist in the road and all the difficulties in the war; in order to enable the working class to overcome all frictions and conflicts and to eliminate all obstacles along its road, it was necessary to have a revolutionary party, a party which has accumulated sufficient experience, which is solid and disciplined, a party which can master the advanced revolutionary theory. The working class needed a truly Communist Party, Only such a party was able to assure the unity of the working class and faith in its own power during the struggle, as well as its hegemony in the bourgeois-democratic revolution, in the struggle for national independence. We Spanish Communists fought for the creation of such a party.

The decisive prerequisite for the realization of this leading role by the working class was the revolutionary unity of the proletariat. The Spanish proletariat was disunited. In addition, the Communist Party entered the arena of battle in a period when other parties, for example, the Social-Democrats and the Anarchists, already had great influence among the working masses. In individual provinces, as in the Basque country and Galicia, a considerable part of the workers

were still under the influence of the bourgeois nationalist parties. The majority of the working class was united in two of the biggest trade union organizations, the U.G.T. and the C.N.T., organizations which had had deep roots in the Spanish labor movement for a long time. But these two trade union centers marched separately, each going its own way and not infrequently bitter fights took place between them.

All this shows that the question of realizing the unity of the proletariat in Spain was different from what it was, for example, in pre-revolutionary Russia. There, as Comrade Stalin points out, the political party of the working class had come into existence before the trade unions. There, the political party directly led the struggle of the proletariat in all spheres, including the economic struggles.

The situation was different in the capitalist countries of Western Europe and Spain where the trade unions had come into existence much earlier than the labor parties. This peculiarity of the Western labor movement was expressed even more sharply in Spain than in the other countries. All the more so since Anarchism which was deeply rooted in the labor movement had carried on a systematic struggle against participation in politics by the workers and had done everything in its power to prevent the proletarian masses from understanding the decisive role of the revolutionary party in the labor movement.

The Bolsheviks who, under the brilliant leadership of Lenin and Stalin, had created a revolutionary party of a new type, were able right from the very beginning of the labor movement, by an irreconcilable struggle against the Mensheviks, to prevent the latter from taking root in the decisive sections of the labor movement and were thereby also in a position to insure the revolutionary unity of the working class under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party. The situation was different in Spain. The Communist Party of Spain had to forge this unity during the war. It had to make up for all that had been neglected in the course of decades and it was therefore necessary to take into account the powerful role which the trade unions traditionally played in the labor movement, and after the outbreak of the military uprising in the life of the entire country.

The Communist Party had achieved certain partial successes on the road to the creation of the unity of the working class (realization of united action between the U.G.T. and the C.N.T.); but it did not attain its main goal and primarily because cliques of politicians, reformists and Anarchists firmly entrenched in the apparatus of these two trade union organizations did not concern themselves with the interests of the working class since they did not want to carry the struggle to a victorious conclusion but, on the contrary, were trying to bring about capitulation. The lack of trade union unity weakened the unity of the working class and prevented the proletariat from playing the decisive role in the bourgeois-democratic revolution and in the struggle for national independence.

The most important ally that the Communist Party had to attract to the side of the proletariat was the tremendous mass of the peasantry. From the first day of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, the Party fought for the solution of the agrarian question and, at the same time, for the liquidation thereby of the feudal remnants which were widespread and deeply rooted in the country. In this way, it could establish a firm bond between the working class and the millions of peasants.

Our Party was the only political party in Spain which understood the vital necessity of such an alliance. It was the only party which issued the slogan of the confiscation of landed estates and church lands without compensation, as well as the slogan of the free distribution of this land

among the poor peasants and agricultural workers. The Party was able to carry out the solution of this most decisive problem of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in a revolutionary manner only in the course of the war. It based itself on the revolutionary determination of the peasant masses to secure land.

The decree issued by the Communist Minister of Agriculture on October 7, 1936, fundamentally solved the agrarian question in the republican zone free from Franco rule: 4,860,386 hectares together with the inventory which is indispensable for cultivation of the land passed into the hands of the poor peasants and the agricultural workers. In addition, by granting credits and seeds, as well as by means of technical aid, the Ministry of Agriculture gave the most intensive material aid.

The Communist Party, striving for a close alliance with the peasants, took into account that the overwhelming majority of the peasants were not yet ready to cultivate the land collectively. It was therefore necessary to wage a stubborn and bitter struggle against the Anarchists as well as against the anarchistic Socialists who propagated the adventurist policy of the forcible collectivization and syndicalization of the land. Thanks to this consistent policy and the practical work of the Communist Party, these enemies of the peasantry who had done so much damage to the cause at the beginning of the war were unable to achieve their goal. The alliance of the working class and the peasantry was strengthened and assured.

By assuring this alliance with the peasant masses, however, the problem of allies was not yet fully solved. It was also necessary to draw in the sections of the lower middle class in the cities as well as those sections of the bourgeoisie which, for one reason or another, were interested in the struggle for the national independence of Spain. The People's Front policy as well as the endeavor of the Communist Party to broaden the social base of the People's Front with the object of transforming the People's Front into a national front was determined by the necessity of establishing a broad fighting front of the entire people under the leadership of the working class.

Since our Party went directly to the masses of people and to the soldiers and explained to them its own position which differed from that of the other parties and organizations in the People's Front, our Party was quite successful in reaching its goal. In this way, it gained influence among other parties and organizations and was able to induce their leaders to take the road pointed out by the Communists and desired by the masses.

The unification of the Socialist and Communist youth was of exceptionally great importance for the consolidation of the unity of the people's forces and for the extension of our possibilities for struggle. The United Socialist Youth gave the movement tens of thousands of self-sacrificing fighters who were loyal and devoted to the cause of our people.

From the very first days of the rebellion, the Communist Party understood that it was necessary to have a well-armed force, an army for the struggle against such a powerful enemy as ours. This recognition was strengthened by the experiences of Soviet Russia's civil war and the foreign intervention against it. We were guided by the words of Comrade Stalin which he had uttered at the Eighth Congress of the Bolshevik Party when the war against the interventionists was still in full swing:

"Either we create a real worker and peasant – primarily a peasant army, a strictly disciplined army, and defend the republic, or we perish." (*History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union [B.]*, p. 235. International Publishers, New York.)

The Fifth Regiment established by the Communist Party was the basis for the realization of our line directed towards giving the people a politically reliable and trained military force. The social composition of the Fifth Regiment, its organization, discipline, fighting capacity and its heroism proved to be the strongest argument in convincing the broad masses whose hostility to the military was deeply rooted in hatred for the old army that the creation of a strong military formation was indispensable. Without it, the possibility of a successful struggle against internal and foreign reaction was entirely inconceivable.

By its daily experiences, the Fifth Regiment was able completely to demolish the "theories" of the Social-Democrats and Anarchists who, because of their inability to understand the fact of the transformation of our civil war into a national revolutionary war, stubbornly resisted the creation of an army on the "ground" that Spain was a country of partisans and not of soldiers and that its army always acted against the interests of the people. A serious blow was likewise delivered at the plans of the leaders of the republican parties and the military who aimed at merely uniting the remnants of the old army. The Communist Party knew how to overcome the resistance of all these and to insure the creation of regular people's army. The creation of a regular people's army followed the dissolution of the Fifth Regiment. The 70,000 fighters of this regiment were the nucleus and the soul of this new army. Thousands of the best commanders and commissars of the people's army came out of the Fifth Regiment.

However, with the creation of the army, new tasks arose for the Communist Party. The struggle for the necessary reserves had to be continued and it was also necessary to protect the political unity of the army against the daily attacks and the intrigues of the leaders of the Socialist, the Anarchist and Republican parties.

The line followed by the Party on the organization of the country's economy was determined by the necessities of the war as well as by the necessity of utilizing all possibilities to keep our allies. The war demanded the concentration of the most important economic resources of the country in the hands of the Government. However these objectives had to be achieved without weakening the alliance of the working class with the peasantry and the petty-bourgeoisie as with a part of the bourgeoisie. For these reasons, the Communist Party formulated the question of nationalization in such a way as *not to affect all industries* but only those enterprises that had been left behind by their owners who were connected with counter-revolutionary rebellion, as well as key industries, chiefly the war industry but also the transportation system (railroads, shipping and automobile transport).

The Communists advocated coordination of the basic branches of economy and therefore proposed the establishment of a Supreme Economic Council. The Communists combated the expropriation and the "collectivization" of small plants, a practice which was very much in vogue with the Anarchists and the Caballero-ites. The Communist Party carried through a policy which made it possible fully to utilize all the resources of the country without repelling the allies, at the same time strengthening the leading role of the working class in the development of the economic life.

The Communist Party fought for the establishment of a strong people's government, for a government which was capable of overcoming all difficulties and obstacles, capable of assembling and utilizing all the progressive forces and resources of the country in the interest of the victory of the Spanish people. It fought for a people's government which would express the alliance of the working class with other social strata of the population that were interested in the

struggle for national independence. It fought for a government in which the leading role was to be reserved to the working class.

The Communist Party did everything in its power to destroy the old state apparatus and to establish a new apparatus in the service of the people. Such a strong people's government and such a state apparatus, indispensable instruments of a determined policy guaranteeing victory, could not be achieved, however, because of the insufficient revolutionary unity of the working class, because of the intrigues and the sabotage of the Social-Democratic, Anarchist and Republican leaders.

The Communist Party took account of the great importance of the tactical principle formulated by Comrade Stalin concerning the necessity for insuring mass allies for the working class. Our allies, for example, the Basque and Catalonian nationalists, and also the Spanish republicans, were constantly vacillating; they proved to be unstable and wavering. The Communist Party succeeded in keeping the allies on the side of the working class for a long time. However, the Party was unable to keep these allies of the working class up to the end of the war. The vacillations of the allies increased particularly in the final phase of the war; a part even left the People's Front at the most difficult moments. That was one of the causes for the defeat of revolutionary Spain.

*The War in Spain Was a Lesson for the Masses and also for Us Communists*

In determining our political and tactical line, we Spanish Communists took into account the tactical principle of Leninism formulated by Comrade Stalin:

"The principle of absolutely taking account of the truth that propaganda and education alone are not yet sufficient for the political education of millions, but that the political experience of the masses themselves is necessary." (J. V. Stalin, *Remarks on Timely Themes*, p. 20, Russ. ed.)

The bourgeois-democratic revolution, particularly during the period of the national revolutionary war, provided the masses with tremendous experience. In the course of this great struggle, the proletariat recognized its power and its role as a leading class. The peasant masses saw in the working class their new ally and best leader.

Thousands of new people emerged from the depths of the working class and from the Spanish people, men who, thanks to their heroism and their abilities, held 80 per cent of the higher and 90 per cent of the intermediate positions of command. In industry and agriculture, tens of thousands of men, women and youth revealed their creative enthusiasm by displaying a productive power hitherto unknown in the country and thereby insuring uninterrupted work in spite of the fact that the centers of production were the object of the chief and constant air attacks and bombardments by the enemy.

The initiative of the masses, their enthusiasm and their abnegation were the prerequisites for our biggest military operations: the defense of Madrid is the most conclusive evidence of the will and the energy of the people which made up for the mistakes of incompetent and subsequently traitorous commanders. A further evidence is the defense of the Levant where thousands of fighters fought without the slightest let-up for weeks on end, where the masses, with the fevered energy of inspiration, transformed the fields and hills of the Levant into fortified zones within a few days, blocking all the roads to the invading enemy. Finally, we must cite as evidence of this the battle at the Ebro, one of the biggest battles of our war, in which thousands of fighters, soldiers, commanders and political commissars stood firm for more than four months under the



fire of hell and gave an example which may once again serve as evidence of the invincible power of the working class and its creative capacities.

In our war, the masses acquired their knowledge from living examples, a knowledge which is of decisive importance for the continuation of the struggle under new conditions. The masses grasped the importance of revolutionary unity, they understood that it is the task of the working class to assume leadership in the struggle of the entire people. They understood the importance of a firm alliance with the peasantry. After their bitter experiences with the "non-intervention policy," they understood the importance and the essential nature of bourgeois democracy as a form of capitalist rule. They convinced themselves that this democracy is nothing but a means for deceiving the masses, nothing but a smokescreen behind which the ruling sections of capitalist reaction conceal themselves. They convinced themselves with their own eyes that the "theory" and practice of anarchism collapsed at the first contact with the reality of the people's revolution. They convinced themselves that Social-Democracy leads the working class to defeat and that the leaders of the Second International betray the interests of the international proletariat just as they betrayed the interests of the Spanish people.

In their stubborn and heroic struggle, the masses recognized that there is no other road to liberation from exploitation and the yoke of capitalism than revolutionary struggle. The Spanish working class recognized that proletarian internationalism is that force which welds the working class into a united front against the common enemy. From the experiences of their struggle, it also recognized the deep abyss which separates the capitalist states from the land of socialism. The idea of socialism therefore struck deep roots in the consciousness of the masses for, during the days of the difficult struggle, its most devoted friends were by their side. That is why the Spanish workers utter the words "Soviet Union" and the name of Comrade Stalin with profound and inexhaustible love.

Millions of workers, peasants and intellectuals have understood the role of a revolutionary party for the first time. They saw this party in its daily work, at the most dangerous posts and they recognized in it a powerful, reliable force capable of defending the interests of the working class. They recognized it as their own party. That is why they joined with it in solving the daily tasks; that is why they actively supported it and gave it their fullest confidence.

If the toiling masses were able to understand all this, it is only because of their own experiences and the leadership of the Communist Party which strove to raise their class consciousness on the basis of their own experiences.

If the Communist Party became a genuine mass party of the working class, it is because it not only educated the masses but also learned from the masses. In doing this, we followed the eminent words of Comrade Stalin:

"We leaders see things, events and people from one side only; I would say, from above. Our field of vision, consequently, is more or less limited.

"The masses, on the contrary, see things, events and people from another side; I would say, from below. Their field of vision, consequently, is also in a certain degree limited. To receive a correct solution of the question these two experiences must be united. Only in such a case will the leadership be correct." (J.V. Stalin, *Mastering Bolshevism*, p. 56. Workers Library Publishers, New York.)

At the beginning of the bourgeois-democratic revolution (April, 1931), our Party was not much more than an association of groups scattered throughout the country, lacking ideological clarity as well as organizational stability. The Party grew in the daily struggles, gradually freeing itself from sectarianism and by 1935 numbered 20,000 members.

The Party's active participation in the armed struggle in Asturias, its work in uniting the forces of the working class, its vanguard role of drawing all the progressive forces of the country into the ranks of the people's front against reaction – which was preparing the establishment of a terroristic dictatorship – all this encouraged thousands of supporters to join the ranks of the Party so that it had 100,000 members on the eve of the putsch engineered by the generals.

When the armed struggle began, the Party had to solve political and organizational tasks of the greatest importance while on the march, so to speak; tasks which in view of their character and their scope were unprecedented. The war required Party cadres for the army, for industry, for the fields, for the state apparatus, for the trade unions and for the current Party work; it required reliable and capable cadres who understood the new situation and were the real guides and leaders of the masses.

The Communist Party grew and was steeled in the armed struggle at the front and in the struggle against the enemies of the people at the rear, against the so-called Fifth Column and criminal counter-revolutionary Trotskyism. The Party grew and was strengthened in the struggle against Anarchistic adventurism and against Social-Democratic opportunism.

Comrade Stalin teaches us to watch over the unity and ideological purity of the Party. We waged a merciless struggle against all deviations in our ranks; we strengthened Party discipline and were able to establish iron unity in our ranks to the extent that we were able to meet all the tests which the war brought with it.

The teachings of Lenin and Stalin on the Party of a new type enabled the Spanish Communists to forge a party of more than 300,000 members (in the Republican territory alone), a Party which corrected its mistakes and was not afraid of criticism and self-criticism. From the great Stalin, we Spanish Communists also learned revolutionary boldness, vigilance against the intrigues of the enemy, firmness in carrying out policy, and flexibility in face of sudden unexpected changes in the situation.

Our Party enjoyed the authority and support of the broadest masses. And that was quite natural since the people saw the courage and the heroism of the Communists during the unforgettable days of the defense of Madrid, of Teruel and the battles at the Ebro. The people saw that the Party did not merely confine itself to correct directives and teachings but led the way by example. The Party understood how to communicate its spirit of self-sacrifice and heroism to the masses. During the uninterrupted struggles, the Party always maintained the closest ties with the masses. That is why the Communist Party was loved by the Spanish people and will always continue to be loved.

The Communist Party of Spain followed a correct political line during the national revolutionary war. But it was not free from mistakes. The chief mistake of the leadership of our Party was the fact that, in face of threatening counter-revolutionary rebellion in Madrid (March 5-6, 1939), it did not inform the masses of this; and that it did not act as boldly and resolutely, when the rebellion was already in progress, as the difficult situation required. But the Party always

recognized its mistakes honestly which contributed to the fact that its prestige and ties with the masses were only strengthened.

But despite the correct political line of our Party, the Spanish people suffered a serious defeat. The Franco Government wanted to utilize this fact in order to destroy our Party, that selfless and ardent fighter against the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the landowners. Despite the countless blows against the Party, it will always live, for it lives deep in the hearts of the masses.

In the new situation, the Spanish Communists were seized neither by panic nor despair. We remember the words of Comrade Stalin:

"A real revolutionist is not one who displays courage in the period of victorious uprising, but one who knows how to fight well not only at the moment of the victorious advance of the revolution but also in the period when the revolution is retreating, who displays courage in the period of the defeat of the proletariat, who does not lose his head, who does not go off the track when the revolution suffers defeat and the enemy records successes, who does not become panicky and fall into despair in the period when the revolution is retreating." (J. V. Stalin, *On the Opposition*, p. 105, Russ. ed.)

Our Party, educated in the spirit of Lenin and Stalin, has preserved its political unity, its loyalty to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, its firm determination to overcome this transitory and difficult period. It has preserved its unshakable faith in the inevitable victory of the working class. All this steels the Communists and makes them firm, unshakable champions of the working class.

Neither the sudden change in the situation nor the propaganda with which reaction wants to conceal the imperialist character of the war, neither hunger nor terror are able to disconcert the Communists, to frighten or terrorize them.

The majority of our members are fulfilling their Party duty in the new situation also. In the concentration camps of Spain, simple Party members are giving an example of steadfastness, self-sacrifice and an unshakably firm will to meet these new tests of the struggle.

Franco's tribunals have condemned thousands of Communists but they have been unable to hold a single public trial of Communists as they did in the trials of the "penitent" Socialist and Anarchist leaders, because the Communists are steadfast and courageous. In the preliminary hearings and in court as befits proletarian revolutionists.

The thousands of Communists, penned-up in the hell-holes of French concentration camps, preserve their loyalty to the Party and the working class.

"You will understand the difficulty of our situation," one comrade writes, "for the policy of reaction is frightful towards us. Each day, the struggle assumes sharper forms inside as well as outside our prisons. Our enemies utilize every opportune moment to deal us a blow. But we are resisting and they are driven to despair. To this very day, we have not lost a single position, a single man. We guard the Party like the apple of our eye and can record good results.

"...We find the direction ourselves, we increase our resourcefulness, we do not submit but go forward. We shall never desert our place of honor as the vanguard which we conquered for ourselves. We perfect ourselves in the daily struggle against the enemy and by studying the work of our teachers.

"...Our roofs are falling to pieces, the windows are without panes, the doors do not close and our stomachs are empty, but you may be sure that our arms are not folded -- we are fighting for our common cause."

The triumph of reaction in Spain has not eliminated the causes which drove our people into battle, but has only made them more acute. The working class, the peasants and the masses of people have experienced better days. They had the factories and the land in their hands; they had seen what freedom is and they were masters of their own fate. Our people lived without landlords, without big capitalists and they know what this is worth.

For that reason, the struggle continues in a new form. In this new situation, a struggle to reconquer that which was robbed from the masses, a struggle to enhance all the gains up to complete emancipation. For this struggle, the masses have the rich experiences of a war and a revolution which constitute an invaluable arsenal for the coming battles.

The Spanish working class has its Communist Party which -- educated by the teachings of Marxism-Leninism and steeled in the severest struggle -- is working for the reunification of its own forces and the forces of the working class for the struggle against the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the landowners. In the Communist Party, the Spanish working class has a Party which, in the present difficult situation, will more than ever be guided by the brilliant teachings of the great masters Lenin and Stalin, a Party which will lead the working class to victory under the triumphant banner of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

\* *Cacique* – the most Influential figure in the semi-feudal Spanish village, the chief representative of the reactionary policies of the landowners, in reality, the all-powerful and absolute lord and master of the village.

\*\* The General Workers Union and the National Confederation of Labor respectively. – *The Ed.*