

For a Democratic Spain!

(Manifesto of the Communist Party of Spain)

The Communist, October 1936

For many days now the soil of our country has been shaken by the thunder of artillery and has been stained with blood, shed on account of a group of faithless reactionary generals who had repeatedly given promises of loyalty to the Republic, and sworn to be faithful to it. These generals took to arms and, having taken possession of the means intended by the state for the protection of the national territory, these traitors proceeded to ally themselves with the most degenerate sections of the ruling class, and the most shameless fascist scoundrels, of the fanatical and criminal traditions of the Inquisition, and set to work to crush the Spanish people. They are guilty of the most frightful crimes that can possibly be imagined, devoid of every semblance of humanity.

The traitors who have revolted realize very well that the people love the Republic and, from the depth of their feelings for the Republic, would have given a fitting answer to anyone who had spoken of destroying it.

Hypocrites and cowards came into the streets, proclaimed a state of war, loudly cheering the while the Republic, which they hate with the whole of their despicable monarchist souls. Thus they forced the soldiers into civil war. They have already shown their monarcho-fascist and reactionary character in Navarre, Burgos and Morocco, in which places they are setting up a fascist government in opposition to the legal government, which resulted from the correctly and honestly carried out elections of February 16 in our country, and which represents the overwhelming majority of the Spanish people.

They thought that the elements of surprise, deceit, and hypocrisy would combine to make their triumph easy, and that, once victorious, they would be able to hoist the black flag of reaction on the mountain tops of Spain.

But the unexpected happened. The people, whom they thought to be powerless, rose up with wonderful élan, capable and strong, with the support of the loyal forces, among whom the sailors of the fleet, the air pilots, and the Storm Guards distinguished themselves especially. They have already inflicted severe defeats on the black

reaction, and have made it realize that it is not a simple matter to conquer a nation which is fully aware of its honor and which prefers to shoulder courageously the burdens of war rather than to enter into fascist slavery.

And neither the betrayal of a handful of treacherous generals, nor the desperate endeavors of the degenerate fascist “gentry”, nor the frightful crimes of the fanatical priests will be able to break the inflexible will of the *women* who are taking part in the fight with unshakable courage. The rebels may be able to take over a few towns and to hold them for a certain length of time, to destroy a certain portion of the people, and to get assistance from foreign governments who are the accomplices of these traitors; but all this does not make us anxious or throw us into confusion, for if the fascists can boast of the help of the fascist states, we, for our part, can count on the support of the democratic forces of the whole world. Despite all the changing fortunes of war and every difficulty through which our country goes, we always bear in mind that final victory is ours.

Why do they continue the revolt? They know that their cause is lost. This they show in their anxious radio appeals, in their preparations for flight, they show it clearly by evacuating their families abroad. Why then do they continue the revolt? Because they desire to see the best fighters of the people shed their blood in streams, and because they, who continuously have the name of Spain on their lips, represent to the least degree the interests of Spain. They continue the revolt because in their wretched betrayal of the country they are seeking the aid of foreign powers, which they will also get, because they offer the prospect of parts of the betrayed fatherland to those who give them immediate help. They continue the revolt, not only because they are under the influence of an ideology which has made slave nations out of two European nations, but also because they hope to be able to effect a compromise with these two dictatorships. This compromise is to provide a pretext for the two fascist powers to intervene in Spain, to turn our country into a fascist colony whose harbors and islands in the Mediterranean and North Morocco would become bases and provide facilities for provisioning in the world war which is daily drawing nearer, to be bases for the ships of those countries which desire to wage war with the democratic countries, and above all with Socialist Russia.

The fight has assumed the character of a national war. For the first few days this fight could be regarded as a struggle between democracy and fascism, between progress and reaction. Meanwhile, however, this war has changed into a holy war, into a national war, into a war of defense of the people against its betrayers, of a people wounded in its deepest feelings. It sees its fatherland, its homes, villages, the places where its forefathers rest, exposed to danger, trodden underfoot, wiped out, and to be sold to foreign countries. The independence of Spain is in danger! And as in the glorious days of the Spanish War of Independence, all Spain that thinks and feels, the Spain of labor, of science, the Spain of culture and art, the women, children, men old and young, full of enthusiasm and the desire to express their flaming protest, have taken arms boldly, and have prepared themselves for defense, ready to sell their lives and the soil on which they first saw the light of day, as dearly as possible. They will not allow their country to be given into the clutches of the traitors to the fatherland. We shall follow the example of a nation which, attacked by all the imperialist powers, nevertheless succeeded in defeating them and in driving from its soil those who wished to share out its territory as war booty.

Shame on those miserable wretches who are incapable of fighting fairly, who committed treason out of cowardice, and have flung open the gates of the country to the bloodiest enemies of Spain!

How shall we defeat them finally? The intentions of the enemy become clearer every day: to prolong the fight in order to tire out the energies of the people and to destroy the economy of the country. They wish to leave tracks of blood, misery and terror after their defeat. To these foul intentions our people, which has given incomparable proofs of its heroism, must oppose its organizational capabilities.

Reorganization of the armed forces. The treachery of the fascist generals has clearly demonstrated the corruption and incompetence of an army built up on a basis of feudal despotism, and therefore characterized by the mentality of those in whose interests it operated. The honorable exceptions, who turned aside from these grasping and pretentious generals, this military clique, have, together with the militia created out of the ranks of the people, laid the foundations of a new army of the future, the members of which, conscious of their responsibilities and enthusiastic, go into battle regardless of

death, and compel the enemies who far outnumber them, to retreat. It is necessary that this heroic army of the people should receive the discipline it requires. Every operation, every armament, must be in accordance with an organized plan of a war necessity. When we speak of discipline we mean conscious discipline, respectful, democratic discipline for the highest positions as for the lowest, as much for the units as for the command.

The hinterland must be organized. We must realize that we have to carry on a long war. Our comrades at the front can only put up resistance to the extent that matters are being organized in the hinterland, including the organization of supplies for the civil population as well as for the fighters at the front.

The traitors are seeking assistance from abroad, but we must draw upon our own resources. With energy and with enthusiasm we shall be able to cope with all requirements which war brings with it, and to look after the necessities of life for a people that has no wish to die.

Our women are showing their capabilities and their heroism; the old superstition that the only use for women lies in house-work has been swept away. The women must go into the factories, into the workshops and offices, on to the railways and the tramways. The adaptation of private industries for war production must be completed quickly. All men capable of fighting must go to the front; all women to work. If we observe these basic points our victory will be assured in a short time.

The significance of our fight. The whole nation is ready for war and is aware of the significance of the present fight. It sees all democratic gains, all liberties of the people in danger. In view of the fascist menace, we have arisen to defend the Republic. We are defending our right to life. We wish to spare our country the danger of new military revolts, we wish to live at peace with all peoples of the world. We are defending true democracy. We are fighting so that the workers may receive decent wages, for we do not wish to be haunted by the specter of hunger and thirst. We are fighting for the just dispensation of laws, for equality of political and social rights for women. We are fighting so that the peasants shall receive sufficient land in order to be able to live. We desire prosperity for the whole people, and we know that within our democratic republic this is possible. That is why we are defending also those liberties to which Catalonia, the country of the Basques, Galicia and Morocco,

have a right. We respect religious views just as we wish our own views to be respected, but we are fighting ruthlessly the grasping dealers in religion who are making centers for conspiracies and espionage out of the churches and the cloisters, and are turning these buildings into fortresses, which are directed against the people.

People of the Basque country! People of Catalonia! Abandon the treacherous leaders who would make you feel the lash of oppression and the most shameless exploitation on your backs after their victory! The people calls to you and will welcome you with heartfelt embraces.

Peasants! Soldiers! We are fighting in order to emancipate ourselves from feudal slavery, so that the ground of the landlords, who are your masters and at the same time traitors to the fatherland, may pass into your hands so that you may have an assured existence and a peaceful life, and not one of slavery!

Spaniards, on to the fight! Everyone must take the position assigned to him. It is possible to serve the Republic at the front just as well as in the hinterland. Wives, mothers! The fight which is drenching the soil of our country with blood is the fight for liberty, for the bread of your sons! Let there be no weakness nor cowardice! Forward to victory so that our triumph may open up long years of peace, work and prosperity for our country!

Long live the democratic republic!

Long live the heroic people of Spain!

Long live the government troops!

Long live our brave airmen and our heroic marines!

Long live the Peoples Militia!

Madrid, August 20, 1936