

Arthur H.
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SPAIN
the
unfinished revolution

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To the memory of Lieutenant Colonel Julio Mangada, loyal soldier of the Regular Spanish Army, defender of Madrid, supporter without reservation of the Popular Front of the Spanish Republic.

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(Note: Some omissions have been made by the transcriber of this work. The Notes section has been changed so that each page with footnotes has them at the bottom, rather than at the ending of the book. The index was also removed since the page numbers do not match up to the numbers of the book, though this is just about the entire book sans the previously mentioned omissions. Furthermore, I have altered some things slightly in the event of typos or other errors. For what it's worth, the pages of the PDF intentionally do not line up to the pages of the book. Also, pictures from the book are not included. I have not included the 5-page bibliography. – Transcriber, July 2009)

Foreword

“People of Madrid! History has presented you in this hour with the great mission of rising before the world as the obelisk of Liberty. You will know how to be worthy of so exalted a destiny. You will tell the world how men defend themselves; how people fight; how Liberty triumphs. You will tell the world that only a people that knows how to die for Liberty can live for freedom.

People of Spain! Put your eyes, your will, your fists at the service of Madrid. Accompany your brothers with faith, with courage, send your possessions, and if you have nothing else, offer us your prayers. Here in Madrid is the universal frontier that separates Liberty and Slavery. It is here in Madrid that two incompatible civilizations undertake their great struggle: love against hate; peace against war; the fraternity of Christ against the tyranny of the Church . . .

Citizens of Madrid! Each of you has here on this soil something that is ash; something that is soul. It cannot be! It shall not be that impious intruders trample the sacred tombs of our dead! The mercenaries shall not enter as heralds of dishonor into our homes! It cannot be! It shall not be that the somber birds of intolerance beat their black wings over the human conscience. It cannot be! It shall not be that the Fatherland, torn, broken, entreat like a beggar before the throne of the tyrant. It cannot be! It shall not be! Today we fight. Tomorrow, we conquer. And on the pages of history, Man will engrave an immense heart. This is Madrid. It fought for Spain, for Humanity, for Justice, and with the mantle of its blood sheltered all the men of the world. Madrid! Madrid!”

– *Radio Appeal of Member of the Cortes, Juan Valera, November 7, 1936*

For over a generation, scholars and artists have probed the ruins of the Spanish Republic. Learned men have tucked elements of the tremendous tragedy of Spain's Civil War into erudite footnotes, producing in the process 14,000 books. Innumerable works of fiction, most of dubious historical value or aesthetic merit have accumulated. The cinema has portrayed Robert Jordans and quaint guerrillas. Picasso's lonely masterpiece Guernica reminds us that artistic genius generally recognizes reality before the cautious scribes of academe.

Now Arthur Landis, the chronicler of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, has written another book, *Spain the Unfinished Revolution*. Given the alpine mass of books about modern Spain, why should this one engage our attention? What are its special merits?

Firstly every generation rewrites its important history, not merely because new raw evidence comes constantly under scrutiny or forgotten archives yield new secrets. The main drive arises from the collective political experience of mankind. New insights are the product not just of private intuitions but of widely shared historical experience of multitudes. Landis reexamines the Spanish War because the pattern of revolution and counterrevolution concealed in the chaos of the Spanish struggle is of terrible relevance for the crises of today and tomorrow.

Victor Hugo wrote over a century ago: “That brilliancy called history is pitiless; it has this strange and divine thing about it, that, all light that it is, and because it is light, it often

throws shadows over spots before luminous." As we shift the temporal perspective of our historical light, moving in accordance with the insights of new experience, we can uncover precisely those parts of the landscape of the past previously in shadows that are most important for tomorrow's historical actions.

Landis has reexamined and rethought the politics of a conflict that was both a civil war and a revolution. He makes available to a generation that faces problems similar to those that faced Spain in 1936, the experience and lessons learned by Spaniards between blood transfusions and last rites. The response of the antifascist Republican forces to the revolt of the generals demanded creative innovative actions for which there were no precedents. Under the hammer blows of domestic and international counterrevolution, a people's army was created; a society shackled to an obsolete and humiliating past turned its face toward the future. Spain became a hand clasped about a revolutionary rifle. The heart and soul of three years of resistance was supplied by the workers, peasants and intellectuals of Spain. The record of these achievements, the triumphs and the defeats, defeats engendered by incompatible versions of the politics of victory, are herein subjected to careful analysis. This is most timely, considering the old and new legends that encumber this subject. It has been fashionable of late for some of the political literati of the United States and Great Britain to puff up the reports of Orwell and Borkenau to the status of incontrovertible historical documentation—to fashion the mythic image of the anarcho-syndicalists of Catalonia as the singular authentic heroes of Spanish proletarian revolution, true men done in by the robots of Stalin.

Here, Landis carefully and candidly sets the record straight.

He shows how the iron hand of chaos that the anarchists laid on Spain squandered the military and industrial resources of Catalonia and placed a crushing burden on the disciplined columns of the Fifth Regiment, the International Brigades and the few units organized by the regular officers loyal to the Republic. These were the units that wrote in blood the epic of Madrid, and in the face of the betrayal by the bastions of Western democracy, fought off the invading Axis forces.

Landis pays fraternal tribute to those brave men of the C.N.T. and F.A.I. who died with their Bakunist faith unsullied by the defeatism or calculated betrayal that ultimately undermined Republican resistance.

The revolution of the Spanish people was crushed by domestic and foreign counterrevolutionary force; but revolutions arising from the historical experience of an ancient people will reestablish roots in the very earth that temporarily serves as a shroud for the entombed revolutionaries. Such now is the Spanish earth.

The decaying Falangist state proposes to preserve itself by replacing the future corpse of

Generalissimo Francisco Franco with the Bourbon cretin, Prince Juan Carlos. This planned restoration is ardently supported by would-be Metternichs of Europe and America.

Readers of Landis' book will recognize that there is not enough napalm or holy water to stabilize such a phantom monarchy. When Spain is reborn it will be as a revolutionary Republic.

Robert G. Colodny
University of Pittsburgh

BOOK ONE:

The Second Republic

April, 1931—July, 1936

The Beginning

The Republic of Spain was not defeated on the field of battle. It was instead betrayed! Brought to a bloody death, April 1, 1939, after almost three years of unparalleled heroism and sacrifice.

The cost of resistance to this first onslaught of World Fascism was one million dead, of which as many as 400,000 were executed.¹ Over a half million others were forced into exile, while a sizable part of the remainder of the country's population was then interned in prisons and concentration camps; subjected to forced labor and later, after release, to joblessness, starvation, and police harassment across the span of three decades.

The “Law of Political Responsibilities” promulgated by the Franco regime, February 9, 1939, clearly outlined just *who* were the losers. Article Two informed the world that: “All the parties and political and social groups which belong to the Popular Front, the separatist organizations, and all those who have opposed the National Movement ARE DECLARED OUTSIDE THE LAW!”

The “losers,” then, were not just Anarchists, Communists, Socialists and Republicans, but *all* who voted for the Popular Front of the Spanish Republic, and *all* who fought for it: No

1 The Franco government has constantly used the phrase “One million dead” to emphasize the high cost of its victory. Indeed, the author, José María Gironella, has also used it as the title of his greatest work on the Civil War.

Jesús Villar Salinas, in his study, entitled *Repercusiones demográficas de la última guerra civil Española* (Madrid, 1942) suggests the total number to be 800,000.

Mr. Gabriel Jackson, author of the very comprehensive work, *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War* (Princeton University Press, 1965), gives a final figure of 580,000 (pp. 529-539) broken down as follows:

100,000 battlefield deaths
10,000 air raid deaths
50,000 disease and malnutrition deaths
20,000 Republican zone political reprisals
200,000 wartime, Rebel zone executions
200,000 “Red” prisoner deaths, through execution and disease—1939-1943

Mr. Jackson, however, in his “battlefield deaths,” has left out the entire area of the Aragón front from the beginning of the war to the end, inclusive of the great campaigns for Belchite and Zaragoza; the fighting for Huesca and the great retreats of March 10, 1938.

single group or sect, or highly trained—though often missing in the breach —“revolutionary cadre,” but the Spanish people. *They* were the losers. And this is something for all free men to remember

The history of the Spanish Civil War is essentially the history of the short-lived Second Republic. But in order for there to be a “second” there quite obviously had to be a First.

This First Republic (1873-1874) was born of three quarters of a century of fighting the French, of the Carlist Wars, and in support of various cliques of generals, *caciques*, and pretenders of the aristocracy. Political lessons of those years of struggle profoundly influenced the thinking of most Spaniards. It was the Spanish people and not the kings who drove the armies of Napoleon from the Peninsula. It was the people, too, who created the Cortes of 1810, and the Constitution of 1812. It was the patriots of Cádiz, influenced by Marat, Danton, and revolutionary France, who brought about the suppression of the Inquisition. The end product of all this was a strong republicanism; a contempt for the ruling class, the church and the monarchy. So much was this true, that when Amadeo de Savoy, proclaimed king in 1869 in a period of total political chaos, followed his predecessor, Isabelle II, across the border into France, the First Republic was born.

That it was born at all was simply because for that small moment in history its opponents were totally divided. Its leadership, however, in a time when republics were new and untried things, was weak, inept, vacillating and incompetent. Three presidents succeeded each other within a year; ministries changed every few days. Some parts of the country sought a maximum of independence. Federalist-Cantonalists seized many cities, inclusive of Cartagena with its sea transport; though they were forced to surrender these ships to men-of-war of the British and German fleets that “just happened to be visiting.” At this point a rising of Carlists in the north, the stoppage of payment of certain taxes, and the constant and ever ominous threats of the feudal order threw the naïve republican deputies into a state of paralysis.

The Generals petitioned for free reign to restore order. The Government complied, and they did—to a point where Pavia, the Governor-General of Madrid, turned the Cortes itself into the streets.

And that, briefly, was the ignominious 'life and death' of the First Republic.

A prime example of the developing class nature of the struggle even in that far time, is seen in that throughout the Federal Republic's short reign, the Spanish masses, the peasantry and the guildsmen, had shown themselves organizationally disposed and willing to fight for their government. The leaders of the Republic had not. This pattern, over the years, was to prove all too familiar.

On January 10, 1875, Don Alfonso XII landed in Barcelona, and with the aid of the army and the church the Monarchy was again restored.²

There then began a period of some fifty years in which Spain lost the remainder of her colonies, with the exception of those in Africa; fought a war with the United States, and generally remained at a standstill while the rest of the world forged ahead.

But the people, again, were not idle. Separatist movements, Basque, Catalan, etc., grew in strength to challenge the Monarchy and the feudal aristocracy. And Republicanism became something more than just a bourgeois bid for power. Concepts and theories of scientific-socialism, along with the thinking of Bakunin and Kropotkin, had found a fallow field.

From the Restoration of 1875 to the abdication of 1931, Spain's history seemed but a re-alignment of forces for the "second round." Crisis after crisis shook the Spanish body-politic. And, while the game of "musical chairs" continued, with liberals, conservatives and monarchists tossing the ball between them, the level of industrial development, and industrial unrest, grew ever higher. Massive strikes rocked the Peninsula in the 1890's. And a general strike and "rising" in Barcelona, July 26, 1909, brought martial law to all Spain, "to avert civil war."³

It is notable that whereas most students of the "left" are familiar with the France of Robespierre, the Paris Commune, the 1905 revolt in Tsarist Russia, and the final, October Revolution of 1917, few are aware of the truly massive people's movements that simultaneously swept the breadth of Iberia.

In the very midst of the holocaust of World War One, for example, and but two months prior to *Smolny* and the guns of the *Aurora* over the Winter Palace in Leningrad, demands for constitutional reforms, pressed by Spain's militant Socialist Party, Catalan Separatists, and other parties of the left, were striking at the very heart of the Spanish Monarchy.

Again the leadership failed to measure up to the base. For, while the Monarchy wavered, made concessions; while the railway workers of Spain were on strike, to be followed August 13, 1917, with a general strike covering all Spain, and led by the Socialist Unions of the U.G.T., the *Unión General de Trabajadores*, they retreated. The strike was clearly revolutionary; those leaders opting for a republic were not. The Government regained the initiative. Martial law was declared and the strike as ruthlessly crushed by all the power of the State.

An extremely interesting aspect of those "days of August" was that the influential and

² *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 21, p. 130

³ *Ibid.* p. 130

growing Anarchist movement had refused to cooperate. They gave the strike little or no support, establishing a pattern of non-cooperation with Marxist Socialists that would be followed all too often in the days to come.⁴

A Church locked in antiquity, a feudal order and an army, all committed to holding back the hands of a clock which, despite all they could do, moved inexorably forward

A body-blow to the Monarchy, in terms of its ability to maintain any semblance of quasi-parliamentary authority on the Peninsula, came with the disastrous war and defeat in Morocco in 1921. The slaughter by Abd-el-Krim's Riff tribesmen of ten thousand Spanish troops, and the capture of 4,000 others, plus the destruction of an army, is a story in itself.⁵

On April 23, 1923, a Republican-Socialist coalition took power as a result of elections forced upon the Monarchy. Upon which, in a frenzied effort to hold back the future, the King suppressed his own Parliament. With the open connivance of Alfonso XIII, Don Miguel Primo de Rivera, Captain-General of Catalonia, Marques de Estella, was made head of the Spanish State. He tried instantly to convert it to a "Corporate State," following the as yet but partially developed social experiments of Mussolini, designed to perpetuate ailing oligarchies of the Right. In his efforts to form a Fascist party, to be called "The Patriotic Union," Primo de Rivera oddly enough won the support of a large section of the Socialist leadership.

No support, however, was sufficient to save the feudal order from its own contradictions. The entire structure remained in such dire straits that by 1929—in the midst of the world-wide depression that *preceded* America's stockmarket collapse—Alfonso died a turn-about and dumped his dictator. A temporary government under General Damaso Berenguer was appointed to prepare the way for a return to bourgeois-democratic rule. In this manner, and with this controlled but ridiculous sop, Alfonso foolishly hoped to retain some modicum of power.

But time had run out. He would not be deserted by his own feudal order.

An additional blow to any support the Monarchy may have counted on was the fact that the sterling exchange, which had dropped from 29 to 36 during 1929, fell to 51 by 1930. Republicanism gained enormously; so did the Socialist, Communist, and Anarchist movements.

A final blow, and one clearly designed to substitute a republic—though one bereft of any guts—for the Monarchy, was that the heretofore political economy of Republicanism, Don

4 *Spanish Labyrinth*, Gerald Brenan, Cambridge Univ. Press. London, 1950, p. 64

5 *Spain, a Modern History*, Salvador Madariaga, Praeger. N.Y., 1958 pp. 351-352

Niceto Alcalá Zamora, "Liberal," and ex-minister of the Crown, broke with the Monarchy. Indeed, between 1927 and 1931, a substantial number of "Liberals," previously content with the Monarchy, became Republicans. Zamora, who would most happily sacrifice a king to preserve the financial oligarchy itself, appealed to the conservative, Catholic, and moderate opinion of Spain to rally to the Republic. Together with Miguel Maura, son of Antonio Maura, leader of the Monarchist-Conservative Party, he then formed on July 14, 1930, the Liberal-Republican Party of Spain. The Socialists, under Largo Caballero, almost instantly aligned themselves with this opposition. And, in the words of one source, "The Republican movement had never covered so wide a sector of opinion."

Municipal elections were called for April 12. Results were: Republicans, 34,368 Council Seats; Socialists, 4,813; Communists, 67; total of Anti-Monarchists, 39,248; Monarchists, 41,224. But the Republican vote represented the cities; the Monarchist, the countryside. The one vote was free. All Spain knew that the other was not.

On April 14, 1931, Alfonso XIII left for Cartagena. The following day he sailed from Spain, never to return.

FIRST YEARS:

Salvador de Madariaga, a Spanish historian of the stripe of Churchill, wrote of the elections that: "The workers affiliated to the U.G.T. voted for their men. But the Anarcho-Syndicalists voted for the middle-class liberals. There were two reasons for this: the first, the unbridgeable enmity which separates Socialists and Syndicalists, due to their rival bid for the leadership of the working classes; and the second, that as the Anarchists always preached contempt for suffrage, they had no political machinery of their own; so that when it coming to voting—which they did this time to help oust the Monarchy—they preferred to vote for the middle-class Republican whose liberal views *were more in harmony with the anti-Marxist idea of the Spanish Syndicalists than with the orthodox and dogmatic tenets of the Socialists.*"⁶

Though the Anarcho-Syndicalists, if not the F.A.I., *Federación Anarchista Ibérica*, were more flexible than Madariaga implies, this preference was generally true. And throughout the years, even until the final betrayal, it remained so, as we shall see.

The beginnings of the Second Republic, then, was but a reflection of the First, in that other than the presence of the Socialists, real power remained in the hands of the middle class. Elections to the Constituent Cortes gave the Radical Party of the crypto-fascist demagogue, Alejandro Lerroux, 90 deputies; the Republicans of Manuel Azaña, Zamora, etc., 150; the Socialists 115, and the Monarchists less than 50. On December 9, 1931, Don Niceto Alcalá Zamora became the Second Republic's first President, and Manuel Azaña y Díaz, its first Premier. Azaña, according to historian Gerald Brenan, "was the guarantee that the Republic would not move to the left." This, despite the fact that his first cabinet was composed of Republicans and Socialists.

An indication of a potential for *a priori* destruction of any positive Socialist contributions were soon seen. For at this very apogee of Republican strength, with the Monarchy in ruins, with the opposition of the feudal oligarchy again weakened and off balance; with two of Spain's three most dynamic Socialist leaders in favor of entering the government in collaboration with the "left" Republicans, and third, Julian Besteiro, chose to dissent; to refuse; to take what some called an "Anarcho-Syndicalist" attitude; but for Rightist reasons. The danger, to any principled socialist-humanist, was obvious. The Republican leadership remained essentially bourgeois, and therefore strongly susceptible to the machinations of the Right. At this point, unlike the First Republic, the now strongly oriented socialist base of the people was the one guarantee against the return of reaction. It ill behooved any socialist leader, therefore, to reject the reins of power; to give them over instead to those who, in the final analysis, had more in common with the castle than with the hut.

6 Ibid. p. 383

The tasks of the Second Republic were formidable. The Spain of 1931 was still 72% agricultural. It was a country of limited industry, of great absentee landlords and an impoverished peasantry. One per cent of the population owned 51.5% of all the arable land. Forty per cent owned no land at all.

An investigation into agrarian conditions in one third of Spain's provinces revealed that of 17,000,000 hectares there were 6,130,000 holdings—approximately three hectares per farm. But 514 landowners in the province of Cáceres alone held 566,415 hectares.⁷ The abyss between upper and lower classes was understandably formidable. The Second Republic, in this most important area, the question of land, failed miserably until *after* the insurrection from the Right. Until 1936, and the very eve of the apocalypse, the Duke of Medinaceli *still* owned 195,680 acres, the Duke of Penderanda 104,345 acres, the Duke of Alba 89,625 acres, the Marquis de Comillas 42,795 acres, the Duke of Lerma 25,560 acres, and so on down a long list of titled and untitled landholders.⁸

Parallel to this grinding poverty of the landless and the contrasting opulence of the landowners was the enormous, brooding, omniscient power of the Church with its great wealth. It goes without saying that the Church in Spain in that third decade of the twentieth century was exactly as it had been in the reign of *Isabel la Católica*. Nothing had changed.

“What does Liberalism teach?” it asks. And it answer: “That the State is independent of the Church.” It then points out that this is wrong; that the State *must* be subject to the Church as a body to the soul, as the temporal to the eternal. It enumerates, among the false liberties of Liberalism: liberty of conscience, of education, of propaganda and of meeting—all of which it is heretical to believe in. It continues:

“What kind of sin is Liberalism?”—“It is a most grievous sin against faith.”

“Why?”—“Because it consists in a collection of heresies condemned by the Church.”

“Is it a sin for a Catholic to read a Liberal newspaper?”—“He may read the Stock Exchange News.”

“What sin is committed by him who votes for a Liberal candidate?”—“Generally a *mortal* sin.”⁹

Spain's army too was an anachronism; a vicious and brutal burden to the populace. In 1931 it consisted of 16 divisions of 105,000 men. For this small army there were 159 active generals and 437 in reserve. In addition there were 5,938 higher officers, colonels, majors, captains, etc., and a total of 10,988 officers above the rank of sergeant: one officer

7 “*International Labor Review*,” June, 1925

8 *Guerra y Revolución en España*, Vol. I., Editorial Progreso, Moscow, 1966, p. 33. *The War in Spain*, Louis Fischer. The Nation Inc., N.Y., 1937, p. 4

9 Brenan, pp. 51-52

*for each ten men.*¹⁰

And finally, the Second Republic entered upon its maturity in the midst of a world-wide depression. The period of Spanish industrial expansion had been far too short: 1898-1918. The end of World War I saw Spain's infant industry fall sharply behind in the imperialist race for markets. Even her internal market lost out to the more efficient industrialized powers. The Rivera dictatorship sought to protect this market with the application of high tariffs.

This too failed, however, in that England and France moved swiftly in retaliation against Spanish agriculture. Felix Morrow writes that: "The resultant agricultural crisis caused the internal market for industry to collapse. In 1931 this country of twenty-four millions had nearly a million unemployed workers and peasants, heads of families; before the end of 1933 the number was a million and a half."¹¹

In terms of these quite basic problems it is often said that the bloodless overthrow of the Monarchy was actually but a simple, desperate and universally popular move to expel the middle-ages from Spanish soil.

The author, Louis Fischer, substantiates this thinking. He declares that: "It was the enlightened bourgeoisie, the intellectuals, the working man and the peasants who banded together to rid the country of the incubus of medievalism." But, he observes, and correctly so, "Though the physically subnormal and mentally disintegrated House of Bourbon allowed itself to be swept into the dustbin of history, the Republic was too weak, perhaps because too indecisive, to dislodge the social stratum on which the Monarchy rested. *The feudal barons accepted the form of the Republic in order the better to destroy its content.*"¹²

One might add, in this seventh decade of the twentieth century, that they did their work well. For the revolution of 1931, did indeed fail completely to solve Spain's major problems, inclusive of that most important problem of the land. The "feudal barons" obstructed every reform which could have dissipated social unrest and raised the standard of living. A full year and a half was wasted in the drafting of a new land law, which strikes born of hunger and desperation swept both the cities and the countryside. These were bloodily repressed. And Azaña indeed lived up to the expectations of those who had accepted him as "the guarantee that the Republic would not move to the left." He himself, at a later date, in an attempt to explain his cowardice, protested that: "I tied myself with legal bonds, yet even so the Right objected."

The pattern was an all too familiar one. The power of Government was misused and

¹⁰ *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 33

¹¹ *Revolution and Counter-revolution in Spain*. Felix Morrow, New Park Publishers, London, 1938-1963, p. 5

¹² Fischer, p. 3

wasted. The euphoria of popular enthusiasm, sufficient in its first days to utterly destroy the strength of the reactionaries and deprive them of power in the state apparatus, the army, etc., was ignored by Republican and reformist Socialist alike. Indeed, in many instances, with Besteiro and company playing a prime role, the Socialist leadership trailed even *behind* the bourgeoisie in revolutionary zeal.

The Communists, Sandoval and Azcárate, write that: "From 1931 through 1933, not a single one of the major problems of the democratic revolution were solved." And further that, "Reacting against this reformist policy, many Spanish workers with a revolutionary outlook came under the influence and leadership of the Anarchists, who squandered the energies of the working class in *putsches* and irresponsible actions, from which only the reactionaries profited."¹³

With a weak central government incapable of even the slightest real improvement in the condition of the people, the strikes continued; with, in some cases, an actual seizure of the land and factories. These seizures were usually isolated and uncoordinated by any union or specific political leadership. And for this very reason they were sometimes accompanied by a provocative and self-defeating burning of churches; playing directly into the hands of the feudal order, who was even then massing in a new bid for power.

A first blow came on August 10, 1932, when General Sanjurjo, commander of the *Guardia Civil* throughout Spain, together with the generals', Barrera, Ponte, Cavalcanti, Villegas and others—and in a manner similar to the *pronunciamientos* of the coups of the eighteen hundreds—declared the Second Republic null and void.

The act was slightly premature. The reactionaries of the oligarchy were not quite prepared for it. And, while they hesitated, the largely Communist controlled workers in Seville, General Sanjurjo's H.Q., called an effective general strike.¹⁴ Sanjurjo fled the city; was arrested, and was then allowed to go to Portugal, from where he would prepare the great insurrection of 1936. His companions too, received minimum sentences and were shortly reinstated to their posts in the army.

Spanish Reaction's half-hearted support of the Sanjurjo effort was singularly indicative of the fact that things had changed somewhat on the Iberian Peninsula, and the hierarchy knew it! They were no longer opposed by just Republican enthusiasts of the middle-classes. Great sections of the Spanish people were organized politically and economically, and they were in motion on a *class* level. A simple resort to violence by the Right was no longer effective. Indeed, there were those on the highest levels of the oligarchy who knew that *outside aid* would now be needed if violence was to be the chosen path.

13 *Spain! 1936-1939*, Sandoval and Azcárate, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1963. p. 12

14 The Communists, reputedly, had wrested control of the port workers from the Anarchists, and in this way attained substantial leadership of the other syndicates of the city.

SPANISH FASCISM: THE FIRST FORM

Suffice it to say, just as the rise of Benito Mussolini had been looked upon with great favor, if not downright relief, the new star on the horizon, Adolf Hitler, was greeted with paroxysms of joy by Spanish reaction. The echoing jackboots on cobbled German streets, plus the beginnings of the slaughter of thousands of German Communists and Socialists, was a pleasant sound indeed. It was a stimulus, really, for the re-creation from the defeat of Sanjurjo, of a new force with a mass base. This force would be formed of a number of Right militant groups. They would then, together with older parties of reaction, plus the church and the army, comprise that final force to subdue for all time the Republic of Spain. If there was to be a “thousand year Reich,” fine! Mussolini's *Mare Nostrum*, however, would have to be shared with the new and militant Spain of *Hispanidad*!

On March 16, 1933, the first and only issue (there would be others with different names) of a newspaper, *El Fascio*, appeared in which a number of Right militants expressed their admiration for the methods of Hitler and Mussolini. Translations of speeches and doctrines from these two wholly Fascist sources made up the body of the paper.¹

On the Ninth of October, '33, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, son of the erstwhile dictator, met with Mussolini in Rome. On the Twentieth of that same month he addressed a first meeting of militants in the *Teatro de la Comedia* in Madrid. On hand were the two other leaders of incipient Spanish Fascism, Onésimo Redondo Ortega, and Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, founders of the *Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista*, or J.O.N.S., an amalgam of two groups which they led. Of this meeting was born the *Falange Española*; to be known from 1934 on as the *Falange Española de las J.O.N.S.*

The slogan of the F.E., typical of the universal Fascist mind, was “We recognize no dialectics but that of the pistol.”² Its lexicon of social concepts was the usual admixture of anti-Marxist, but semi-Syndicalist nonsense designated to appeal to the class and populist sentiments of the people. Indeed, its very banner was the red and black of the Anarchists, upon which was superimposed the yoke and five arrows. And, following the pattern of National “Socialism” in Germany, and the studied appeals to the higher paid workers and the middle classes of Italy by the ex-Socialist, Mussolini, the program and phraseology of the demagogues was the same. It was a plea for a national renaissance, for the mystique of a new *Hispanidad*: Get back the colonies; for unions free of the corrupting influences of entrenched trade-union bosses, or *caciques*, and free too, of the international controls of the Socialists, Communists and Anarchists. Death to all foreign influence was the cry; and to intellectualism. And death certainly and now to the bumbling, inept and corrupt government of the Second Republic. A last point, which was really the main point, was for law and order, to be imposed by them: defined by the Anarchists as the law of the pistol

1 *Falange*, Stanley G. Payne, Stanford University Press, 1961, pp. 30-31

2 *They Shall Not Pass*, Dolores Ibárruri, International Publishers, N.Y., 1966, p. 123

and the order of the grave.

All Fascist movements have one thing in common whatever their particular pitch. They are either subsidized directly by the State, or by the financial oligarchy of the given country's power structure, or both. The Falange had such aid from the beginning—and more. Indeed, it was, perhaps, the first Fascist organization to be subsidized by States other than its own. The Italian O.V.R.A. (secret police) and the Gestapo, operating out of the embassies of Italy and Germany, laid the groundwork for a form of interference in the affairs of another country which America's C.I.A. Would hasten to emulate in later years. The U.S., of course, operates with a higher, more refined American “know-how,” plus unlimited funds.

Other than the Italo-German duo, José Antonio's F.E. was also financed by Spanish monopoly capital, inclusive of that of Juan March (the J. Paul Getty of Spain), Antonio Goicoechea, Monarchist chief and lawyer to the oligarchs and the *latifundistas*, José Felix de Lequerica, politically bound to the great capitalists of Bilbao and the Bank of Vizcaya, controlled in part by the Jesuit Order.³

Regarding the referred to Falangist “quasi-syndicalist” programs, it is notable that Ledesma incorporated whole areas of Anarchist phraseology and syndicalist organization into the totalitarian structure of the J.O.N.S.; though he rejected completely the Anarchist, humanist philosophy. All this was also incorporated into the F.E./J.O.N.S. The J.O.N.S. had actually, in 1932, won support from the befuddled Secretary of a large Madrid C.N.T. (*Confederación Nacional del Trabajo*) Anarchist led union, strictly on the basis of the J.O.N.S. supposedly syndicalist sympathies.⁴

As for José Antonio, his first act was to run for office in Cádiz. He won! Upon which he appeared in the Cortes and, in a heated argument with his Socialist opponents, he punched Indalecio Prieto in the nose. He reputedly jumped over three rows of benches to do this.⁵

José Antonio had been introduced to the political methods of the oligarchy during his electioneering, about which he later wrote an unfinished novel in English, entitled *The Anarcho-Carranzists*. It had to do with the Marques de Soto Hermosa, the oligarchy's political boss in Andalucía. José was fascinated to discover that the Marques paid off many Anarchist leaders in his district to keep their followers from the polls on election day. Consequently he guaranteed a comfortable Right majority over Left-wing candidates.⁶

3 *The Masquerade in Spain*, Charles Foltz, Houghton-Mifflin, Boston, 1948, p. 84

4 Brenan, p. 310

5 Foltz, p. 69

6 *Ibid.* (loc-cit), p. 69. Also see Payne, p. 44

Though the demagogic programs of the early days of the Falange—its call for “social revolution” and its lip service to anti-capitalism—followed the well-worn path of the Nazi and Fascist movements before it, the end product would be the same. All these ideas would die in the first days of the revolt of the generals; to be replaced with a structure designed purely to save the oligarchy, and to further the ends of “National” Spain as seen by the Power Structure.

SPANISH FASCISM. THE SECOND FORM:¹

Unable to achieve the hoped for base for a rapid “march on Madrid,” the Falange was forced instead to lend its support to its brother parties in reaction. These were: the *Comunión Tradicionalista*, (Carlist) *Revovación Española*, (Bourbon Monarchist) and C.E.D.A., *Confederación Española de Derechas Autonomas*, the Clerical Party of Catholic Action. All would combine their efforts in the latter part of 1933, to seize power in the Cortes from Azaña and Zamora.

The C.E.D.A., strongest of the Rightist movements, was destined to be the most important political organization of the counter-revolution. It was founded in October of 1932, as a combination of a number of reactionary organizations built around the original *Acción Popular* which itself was derived of *Acción Católica*, organ of the Church, and was its political arm. Its leader was José Maria Gil Robles, lawyer to the great Castilian landowners. Its political brains, however, were those of the Jesuit, Angel Herrera y Oria, director of the newspaper, *El Debate*. Gil Robles, graduate of the College of Salesian Fathers at Salamanca, had gone to the staff of *El Debate*, married the daughter of the Count of Revillagigedo, one of the wealthiest men in Spain, and all-in-all pleased his masters so much that he was chosen to head the new Catholic Party. On a honeymoon in Germany he became entranced by the Wagnerian mystique of the first great Nuremberg Rally. He became entranced with Hitler too; but not with Adolf's pagan renunciation of the true cross. He settled on the idea of a clerical party as embodied in that of Engelburt Dolfuss of Austria. Like the Falange, the membership and leaders of the new party were heavily influenced by Hitler, Mussolini, Salazar, Horthy, and any Rightist *credo* that gave evidence of a plausible plan and program for the seizure and maintenance of power in the face of the rabble.

In its early days the C.E.D.A. played it “cool.” It refused to commit itself to either the Monarchy or the Republic. Its full intent, however, was shown in October, 1933, after Gil Robles had met with the deposed Alfonso XIII, in Fontainebleu: “Our need,” Gil Robles announced, “is for complete power Democracy for us is not an end in itself, but the medium to launch us in the conquest of a new state. The moment is coming! The Parliament will either submit, or we will see that it disappears!”²

In true demagogic fashion the great newspapers, controlled in the main by Rightists or *Cedistas*, began a completely hysterical campaign against the Republic, the Parties of the Left, and the workers organizations. Leaders of the government coalition, socialist and republican, were hit with the full weight of a now quite purposeful reactionary offensive. Simultaneously with this punitive campaign of vituperation and deceit, terror was

1 (The citation does not appear on this page due an error committed by Landis, but it is noted in the Notes section of the book. – Transcriber) *The Spanish Civil War*, Hugh Thomas, Harper and Brothers, N.Y., 1961, pp. 68-70

2 Ibárruri, p. 129—See Brennan, p. 281

unleashed in the streets. The Falangists of José Antonio joined with the J.A.P. (*Juventud de Acción Popular*), the young shock troops of the C.E.D.A., in physical attacks upon the left. The streets of Spain were witness to pitched battles in which gangs of uniformed Fascists attacked workers headquarters and the socialist, *Casas del Pueblo*: a certain harbinger of things to come. Hundreds of Socialists, Communists, Anarchists, Moderate Republicans, workers, judges, military men of the Left, and journalists met their death by Fascist bullets.

To counteract this open terror the parties of the Left fought back with every means at their disposal; though the death of a deranged Falangist pistolero can hardly be equated with that of the leader of the socialist workers U.G.T. The Communists called for an anti-fascist militia of Spain's youth, "to defend democracy and the working masses"—a first step in the direction of a much needed unity on the left.

But the Government of Azaña bowed before the Rightist onslaught. In place of a common front against the enemy all Left Republicans and Socialists were forced to resign. And Don Niceto Zamora asked the Radical Party of Lerroux, designed as "the most corrupt section of Republicanism" to form a transitional government, pending new elections. Lerroux accepted with alacrity.

The elections were held on November 19, 1933. The Right won a substantial victory, ushering in two "Black Years," the *Bienio Negro*. The Monarchists—Carlist and Bourbon—took forty seats between them. The C.E.D.A. captured 110 to become the largest single minority. Together with the Radicals of Lerroux, who won a hundred, they swept the Cortes. The Party of Manuel Azaña was virtually wiped out, while the Socialist representation was halved. The Communists had increased their total vote at this early date to 400,000. But, according to Dolores Ibárruri of the P.C.E., "The electoral law . . . was specifically directed against the Communists. Because of its provisions . . . only one of our many candidates, Cayetano Bolívar Cortez, was elected deputy, on a coalition ticket by the workers of Málaga."³

3 Ibid. pp. 123-124

WHY DEFEAT?

The overwhelming mandate given the Socialist-Republican coalition in 1931 had ceased to exist. True, the Right, as opposed to the Center-Left, was still a minority. It had less than half the delegates to the Cortes. The Monarchist-turned-Republican President, however, was quick to remedy that little problem. Alcalá Zamora now appointed Alejandro Lerroux as Premier. And thereafter, as one source put it, “The Radicals governed on behalf of the Right,” a situation by no means unpleasant to Gil Robles and the Monarchists.

The obvious question is: How could such a reversal of popular sentiment take place? The answer is simply that with the exception of a minimal number of “Republican” losses of votes—it hadn't. The Socialist Party, for example, was slightly stronger in 1933 than it had been in 1931. In terms of the popular vote the Rights had won *no* victory.

New election laws had been devised to favor the formation of but two major groups in the Cortes—the “electoral law” referred to by Dolores Ibárruri. List of candidates and parties could, by combining in a united front, obtain a certain advantage over those who did not. The victorious slate would then be given additional representation in the Cortes out of all proportion to the votes received. In the U.S. it's called “gerrymandering”; other countries have different names but it all results in the desired product of bilking the voter of his real voting strength. In 1933 the Right in Spain presented a united slate; the Left did not. The Right was then given twice the seats in the Cortes as the Left, though the number of votes they received was actually less than the total cast for the Left.¹

The prime cause for this Rightist victory then, was simply that the Socialist leaders had refused any longer to collaborate with the Party of Azaña. The Government's failure in-re any serious attempt at agrarian reform—and the Socialist participation in this foot-dragging—had made them highly unpopular within their own ranks. Their refusal to unite with the Republicans put them once more in the good graces of their constituents. The net results of the '33 election proved this. As stated, their popular vote rose, though they lost half of their seats.

An additional cause for the disastrous losses of the Azaña Republicans was a *complete Anarchist abstention from the polls*.² In 1931 they had chose to vote—“to help pull Alfonso down.” In 1933 they demanded that their members not vote at all, and organized an hysterical campaign of *No Votad!* backed by all their resources and propaganda.

D. Abad de Santillán, a member of the executive of the F.A.I. writes in his work, *Porqué Perdimos la Guerra*, that: “A violent anti-electoral campaign was unleashed throughout the country by our organizations (F.A.I. and C.N.T.) whose original intent—at Figols at the end

1 Brenan, p. 265

2 Ibid. p. 266

of 1931, and in other parts of Spain in January of 1933—was to stand solidly in the path of the Republic. Naturally this abstention gave the power to the conservatives; the monarchists, the military and the church; all enemies of 'legitimate' Spain, whose principal base was that of an historical continuity of peasants and workers of Iberian race and spirit. The Republicans had not profited by their lessons, not understood that the revolutionary workers of Spain were the only authentic progressive power. And without them, *no* regime could be established more-or-less-liberal; and no one could govern them in the name of reaction.”³

The contradiction here is easily seen that in 1931, despite their so-called “puritan principles,” the Anarchists had thought nothing of supporting the parties of the very men they now decried as their enemies, while simultaneously refusing to accept any responsibility for the results of their act. With this in mind their equally hard-nosed attitude toward the Socialists who had supported the Azaña government, would then seem but an extension of their own opportunism.

In 1933, their policy of *No Votad!* quite obviously was the hammer that shattered the Party of Azaña's Left Republicans: the difference in the strength of Azaña's Party in 1931 as opposed to 1933, being, possibly, the Anarchist vote!⁴

Again, in the 1933 elections the Anarchists could have either supported the Socialists, who were visibly heading in the direction of a more left position—or entered the lists themselves. Their principles, it would seem, were certainly not at stake since they had already seriously compromised them by voting for republicans. One way or the other, the developing “new left” of that far time would have been immeasurably strengthened. The fact that the Anarchists did neither is clearly an example of opportunism to the nth degree. Their watchword remained: No unity! No joint effort to stave off the now dangerously rising tide of organized reaction and fascism. No front for the betterment of the conditions of the workers and peasants. What would be done, would be done their way—or not at all.

Considering the total tragedy of all ensuing events, inclusive of the war itself with its one million dead, one is entitled to wonder just what would have happened if in the elections of '31 and '33 the Anarchists had either entered the list themselves, or given full support to the Socialists. But then, again, if they had done this, they would not have been Anarchists.

3 *Porqué Perdimos la Guerra*, Diego Abad de Santillán, Ediciones Imam, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1940. p. 33

4 Madariaga, p. 351. We refer here to a reversal of the Anarchist vote as pointed out by Madariaga in the elections of 1931.

THE ANARCHISTS!

Other than the Anarchist bands of Makhno in the Soviet Union and the tendency behind the Kronstadt revolt of 1921, the only 20th century evidences of Anarchist strength has been in Spain, and to a far lesser degree, in Italy and Cuba; this last resulting from Spanish worker immigration.¹ Syndicalist concepts, to be sure, have held sway in many countries at one time or other, with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in the United States of America being a prime example.

But syndicalism is a far cry from the thinking of Bakunin. It is, specifically, a form of trade-unionism originating in France. The very “word” is French for trade-unionism, and the revolutionary-syndicalist movement was derived of the last decade of the 19th century development of that movement. The Millerands' of that day, as “Parliamentary Socialists,” had constantly aborted all principles of Socialism while leading the workers up the proverbial bourgeois bridal-path. Other than having created the great French Alliance of Trade Unions, the CHT (*Confederación General de Travail*) the movement, as such, aimed at the possession of the means of production and distribution; and ultimately at the control of society by federated bodies of industrial workers.

Anarchism, in terms of its quite simplistic-idealist, and extremely limited theory, regards the absence of all direct or coercive government as a political ideal, and proposes the cooperative and voluntary association of individuals and groups as the principle mode of organized society.

Given an ideal situation Anarchist concepts could very easily suit the syndicalist structure. But, in the process of creating such a halcyon state of affairs one must, from a Marxist point of view, first engage in tedious battle. This involves understanding—in a constant eyeball confrontation with the enemy—of the existence of the class-struggle in which, if the people are to win, the ideological forms of the struggle must be subordinated to the tactics of the political battle A condition which continue even after initial victory in the form of the “dictatorship of the proletariat.”

And there's the rub!

Bakunin split with Marx in the First International over precisely this contradiction in Anarchist thinking. Bakunin believed, briefly, and correctly so, that the chief oppressor of man was the State. Man's freedom, therefore, would only ensue with the State's destruction and the concomitant exclusion of the principle of authority from man's social environment. He believed implicitly too, in the social instincts and inexhaustible spontaneous revolutionary spirit of the masses, mainly the peasantry and the *lumpenproletariat*. He denied the need to prepare for revolution and was completely

1 “Granma” (newspaper) May 10, 1970, Havana, Cuba, p. 2

unable to grasp the significance of the application of scientific method to the theory of society. He strongly opposed Marxist teachings on the class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Essentially, Bakunin's differences were two: whether or not there should be *any* participation in the political struggle, and whether the organization of the International should be centralized or federalized. Marx, quite realistically, wished to conquer political power for the people. Bakunin wished only to destroy *all* political power.

Since both the formation of the First International (1864) and the Paris Commune (1871), there is little doubt that these events influenced that fledgling body. The results, however, were not exactly as some “historians” would have us believe. It has been said by many—and repeated by Anarchists who should know better—that the followers of Bakunin were instrumental in the creation of the Cantonalist movement within the First Republic. The facts show otherwise. Indeed, it is perhaps here that the *mythos* of Anarchist organizational prowess first began.

Málaga, Granada, Seville, Córdoba, Valencia, Cartagena and many other cities were seized by Republican-Federalists of the Cantonalist movement in the period, 1873-1875. In most cases they held out for many months against the regular army.

The historian, Gerald Brenan, writes that: “It is sometimes asserted that the Internationalists (Anarchists) infused their tactics and principles into the Cantonalist movement, in imitation of the Paris Commune. There is not the least truth in this. Compared to the *petite bourgeoisie* with its long insurrectionary tradition (Republican), who formed the bulk of the Federal Party, they were quite insignificant. For another, it had been decided at the two assemblies held at Barcelona and Alcoy on the eve of the general elections, not to take part as a body in any political action, though individual members would be allowed to cooperate with the Federals, if they wished to do so. The Anarchists were to confine themselves to pressing for better conditions, whilst keeping the social revolution as a distant objective The only risings where the Anarchists played any role were those led by the local federations of Alcoy and San Lucar, which grew out of strikes that had purely economic objectives. The Federals—despised bourgeois that they were—proved themselves a thousand times more revolutionary.”²

A parallel here is that at the time of the Second Republic, when those same despised bourgeois, led in most cases by other elements of the Left, were again fighting for their very lives, and for certain basic freedoms for all Spaniards, the Anarchists, in their revolutionary “purity,” again withheld their support, as we shall see.

The claim, therefore, that from the beginning some purely Spanish mystique dovetailed

2 Brenan, p. 167

exactly with an ascetic workingclass mystique possessed only by Anarchists, to form an amalgam best suited to Spain's struggle for liberation, is seen to be without substance. Indeed, first inclinations toward Anarchist leadership were born of the blood-and-guts struggles of the workers and peasants of the 60's and 70's of the 19th century—before ever that “leadership” had defined its theory and proclaimed itself Anarchist. When it did, and sought to apply Bakunin's thinking to the matrix of the fledgling trade unions of Spain, its influence suffered considerably. So much so that it would not regain a commensurate prestige and power until the advent of the new concepts of Syndicalism at the turn of the century.

Historically then, in terms of influence in Spain, it can rightly be said that the period of 1870 to 1900 belonged to the Socialists.

The split between Marx and Bakunin also proved internationally disastrous for the Anarchists. The attempts to impose Bakuninist doctrine upon the already quite sophisticated European unions likewise met with little success. In fact, the Anarchist loss of control of the great Jura watchmaking unions sounded a death-knell to their efforts. The concept of a natural Anarchist *mystique* is further dispelled when we see that the Italian factory workers, in their majority, also spurned Anarchism. As in Spain—and this is singularly indicative of the true class nature of Anarchism—only the *petit bourgeoisie* intellectual and the peasants in the blighted areas of the south were strongly attracted to it.

Malatesta, the great Italian Anarchist theorist, in his frustration and anger at workers rejection, declared unequivocally at the Berne conference in 1876 that: “Trade Unionism is a reactionary institution.”³

The creation of the Socialist Second International, with its federations of trade unions and programs toward the seizure of political power within the framework of existing governments—or otherwise, (this prior to the watering down of programs and the ascendancy of reformism) bit deeply into the strength of Anarchism in Spain. The contradictions in Anarchist doctrine were all too apparent. The workers demanded organization now! Political action now! And this with the weapons at hand that they knew and understood. Food for hungry mouths would not wait for the *millenia*; nor would decent wages, housing, education and suffrage. The decades between 1880 and early 1900 saw a degeneration of the Anarchist movement into simple frenzied acts of pure and self-defeating terrorism—born of frustration and a sense of defeat. The greater part of Spain continued as an arena of the contending factions of Socialists and Rightists; with but here and there small islands of Anarchist influenced workers and peasants.

It was not until October of 1910 that a Congress of Anarchist groups and certain

3 Ibid. pp. 158-161

independent federations of workers met in Seville. Of this Congress was born the C.N.T., the *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo*, which was to be *the* great syndicalist organization on the Iberian Peninsula, in opposition to the Socialist, U.G.T.

The “key,” according to some Anarchist theorists, had been found. The syndicates would be organized on a local basis—no national craft or trade unions. The dues would be little, or nothing; with Andalusian peasants required to pay nothing at all. There would also be no social insurance and no strike funds, nor would any secretaries or officials be paid. And thus would Anarchist doctrine be infused into syndicalist structure.

In the workers' eyes this simplistic approach gave the C.N.T. an instant moral superiority—over the centralized Socialist unions of the U.G.T. For these had a considerable paid secretariat. The actual key to worker support, however, was not so much the loose knit, catch-all approach, but rather the fact that across the monopoly years of Socialist control, the unions of the U.G.T. had, in many ways, fallen victim to the reformist trap—and the workers knew it. Many of them were, therefore, quite willing to try something else.

Though the new way had been created whereby the Anarchists could achieve control over Spain's working masses—so they thought—the following years were to prove this not quite correct.

The opposite was the case in many areas; namely that the very concepts of syndicalism took its toll of Anarchist leaders. For at no time has syndicalism essentially opposed participation by its members or its organization in bourgeois parliaments.

Such men as Salvador Segue, who was largely responsible for the forging of the C.N.T. into the fighting force that it soon became, along with the Syndicalist leader, Angel Pestaña, and many others, soon demanded unity with the U.G.T. and the despised Socialists, *in a united front of political action against the establishment*.⁴

There is no doubt of the massive, grass-roots support, however, or of the skilled leadership of the anarchist workers within the structure of the syndicates; or of the dedication and almost religious morality with which they were imbued. In like manner, there is no doubt of the resultant dissipation of worker and peasant strength into unreal struggles, which by their very nature, played into the hands of the forces they sought to oppose.

Rural Anarchist strength in the early 20th century and after was primarily derived of intolerable conditions about which absolutely nothing was done. This was especially the case in Andalucía. It is fact that in other parts of Spain, wherever peasants owned or rented sufficient land to support them, the Anarchists made little headway. In Catalonia,

4 Ibid. p. 176

the industrial heart of Anarchist control, the small peasants never became Anarchists. They gave their support instead to the *Catalan Esquerra*, a separatist republican party.

Brenan writes that: "In the same way the prosperous peasants of the irrigated *vegas* of Valencia and Castellón de la Plana belonged either to the Catholic Right, or to one of the Republican parties, whilst the peasants or laborers of the equally fertile plains of Granada, though in constant and bitter struggles with the landowners, preferred the Socialists."

"It was only the landless laborers and small peasants of Andalucía and the dry eastern regions, struggling with hostile agrarian conditions, who embraced Anarchist Libertarian doctrines. These comprised, of course, the majority of the agricultural workers south and east."⁵

It must be assumed, therefore, that the two distinct roots of Spanish Anarchism were the agricultural workers of Andalucía and the industrial workers of Catalonia, the area where syndicalist efforts, influenced by the Anarchists, were most successful. There are solid reasons for this particular, almost geographical, worker-peasant alliance. Andalucía was the best source of cheap labor in Spain. Catalan industrialists were constantly and almost hypnotically drawn to this source, though they knew that the final result would not be to their advantage. For the new workers would very quickly join the unions. The next batch of laborers, greeted instantly by their now militant cousins, would join the unions too, and so on

The Andalusian workers were grist for the mills of Catalan Anarchism. And the area from which they came was, in turn, enriched by an attendant window; opened, as it were, to a world they might not otherwise have known.

In 1923, the C.N.T., under Anarchist direction, dissolved itself; the idea being that the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera would soon do the same thing anyway, so why not do it themselves under controlled circumstances? It is notable that the U.G.T. did *not* do this; stayed alive, and helped lay the groundwork for the demise of the dictatorship and the overthrow of Alfonso XIII.⁶ The membership of the C.N.T. then entered the syndicates of Rivera, supposedly to maintain the skeletal structure of their own organization for some future rebirth. It was not until 1927 that the Anarchist movement founded the F.A.I., the *Federación Anarquista Ibérica*, designed to consolidate all Anarchist groups on the Peninsula for the express purpose of penetrating, organizing and controlling the C.N.T., once it was re-established.

A brief summation then of the Anarchist record prior to the Second Republic, reveals but a minimum contribution to the progress of the Spanish people as a whole. The strikes, local

⁵ Ibid. p. 1985

⁶ Ibid. pp. 223-224

insurrections, demonstrations and battles across the span of sixty years had achieved, essentially, nothing. Whatever the level of the economy, living conditions for the agricultural workers controlled by the Anarchists remained the same. In Catalonia, economic battles waged by the C.N.T. had led to a marked increase in wages for the workers. But in this too they had been matched and exceeded, and with far less posturing, by the Socialist U.G.T.

As to Anarchism's "revolutionary" achievements, while the simplistics of Anarchist theory had shown itself most effective in creating revolutionary sentiment amongst the Spanish workers, it had proven itself incapable of carrying them to any meaningful conclusion. Anarchism expressed admirably the uncompromising resistance of Spain's poor to conditions imposed upon them by a capitalist society. Yet, its organization, or lack of it, and its "principles" condemned it forever to a sterile role. For even when social revolution presented itself—and certainly the Cantonalist seizures of 1873, the forcing of the king to abdicate in 1931, and the great battles that then ensued until the death of the Second Republic, were most definitely in the category of social revolution—the Anarchists forever lagged behind.

As Dante A. Puzzo so aptly put it in his work, *Spain and the Great Powers*, "The Anarchists had a barricade" psychology and spoke the language of revolt in season and out. Frozen in a posture of defiance, they were boisterous, turbulent, and troublesome always, effective revolutionists never. Thus had it been under the Monarchy, thus had it been under the dictatorship, and so it was under the Republic. It was only after the revolt of the generals that the Anarchists seized the opportunity created by that event to implement their notions of "libertarian communism," and then only in Catalonia where they were strongest.⁷

Brenan declares that, "Ineffectual as a revolutionary force, only moderately successful in improving the conditions of the workers, it (the Anarchist movement) has dogged and hampered every government, good or bad By playing always for the highest stakes, it has necessarily proved on many occasions, the friend of reaction."⁸

Despite the truth of these summations, however, a part of the summing up must be that nothing can alter the fact that the simple Anarchist morality of the early days touched a deep well of affinity within the hearts of the Spanish poor. Others on the Left would do well to emulate that facet of Anarchist thinking.

7 *Spain and the Great Powers*, Dante A. Puzzo, Columbia University Press, 1962, p. 40

8 Brenan, p. 168

THE COMMUNISTS:

Little has been written of the Communist Party of Spain, its beginnings, its growth and its singular role in defense of the Spanish Republic. Of that which has been written, the greater part is utter nonsense. Unfortunately the Spanish Communist Party, itself, has done little to either dispel the lies, or to clarify events as they saw them.¹ Especially is this true in terms of written data in the English speaking world. It would appear, almost, that the Communists have been ever so careful *not* to state their case; hoping, perhaps, to avoid divisive polemics which would endanger some supposed “unity on the left.” The sole product of this reticence, however, has been that fascists, liberals of the stripe of England's Wilson and the U.S.A.'s Humphrey, plus the usual coveys of ultra-left ideologues, have had a field-day. In fact it can be said with some truth that the cold-war orchestration of the U.S. State Department, together with its “allies” of Downing Street and that cabal of butchers known as the Franco Government, have won out. They have succeeded in concealing the facts of Spain's most dynamic years, so that these years—so rich in lessons for the world—have, in essence, ceased to exist.

Which, of course, was the way it was planned.

The Communist Party of Spain did not, as some would have us believe, spring fully formed from Zeus's forehead in the winter of 1936. (When Soviet aid to the Republic became substantial). Like the majority of Communist Parties in the major countries of the world, the P.C.E. (*Partido Comunista Española*) was formed as a result of the October Revolution in the Soviet Union and the resultant split in the ranks of the Second International. Those who would remain in the Socialist or Social-Democratic parties (the actual or euphemistic term for right-wing socialist) remained in the Second International; the new Marxist-Leninist parties going to the Third.

It is of notable interest that votes in two consecutive Spanish Socialist Congresses of 1919 as to whether to affiliate to the Third “Communist” International were: First Congress, 8,269 *for*; 5,016 *against*: Second Congress, 6,025 *for*, 8,880 *against*. The reason for the final negative vote being simply, that of the two delegates sent by the Socialist Executive to Moscow to observe procedure, etc., at close hand, one of these, Fernando de los Ríos, as opposed to Daniel Anguiano, was strongly against affiliation. He was given backing by the venerable ‘father of Spanish socialism,’ Pablo Iglesias. Iglesias, though too ill to attend the Second Congress, sent a letter declaring that an acceptance of the “twenty-one conditions” asked by the Third International as a basis for affiliation, would seriously split the Spanish Socialist Party.²

1 Only in 1966, three decades after the opening guns of the Spanish War, did the Spanish Communist Party come out with the first two volumes of its incompleted, definite work on the war years.

2 Ibárruri, p. 68

As stated, the vote was negative; but the split took place anyway. Founded in April, 1920, the fledgling Communist Party sought an immediate rebirth of the early Marxist orientation of the Second International. For the P.S.O.E., (*Partido Socialista Obrero de España*) the Socialist Party, had long suffered the twin diseases of reformism and opportunism.

The P.C.E. was formed of the most militant of the old-line Socialists. Men such as Antonio García Quejido, a founder of both the Socialist Party and the U.G.T., Facundo Perezagua, one of the first of the great Basque Socialists, Fernando Mora, Virginia González, a national director of the Socialist Party, Daniel Anguiano and many others. These, *together with the entire Central Committee of the Socialist Youth*, constituted themselves as the Communist Party of Spain.³

Historically it would appear that the new party had its share of difficulties. Despite the adherence of many prestigious militants—inclusive of the well-known Anarcho-Syndicalists, Andrés Nin and Joaquín Maurín—in no way did their numbers immediately equal those of the parties of the other post World War One countries such as Germany, Italy and France. The myriad of reasons for this cannot be explained in this work. Suffice it to say that the almost instant arrival of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship which forced the new organization underground; a resultant “leftist” and sometimes adventurist dogma—which it was unable to rise above—and the simple fact that the Spanish Socialist Party, though reformist in nature, was still far more militant than its European counterparts, and had not, therefore, lost control its worker adherents, was reason enough for slow development.

The aforementioned “leftist dogma” was, perhaps, the central obstacle to growth for the P.C.E. during the decade of the twenties. The ex-anarcho-syndicalists, now “left-communists” within the organization, Maurín, Nin, and Andrade, who had visited the Soviet Union and had decided generally for the theories of Leon Trotsky, were the prime instigators of this dogma.

Indeed, it was not until the latter part of 1931 that the official Party was free of their polemics. For it was then that these gentlemen broke from the parent organization to first form the “Left Communist Party,” and then to break into two smaller groups, the one under Maurín with a majority of the Catalan members calling itself the *Bloque Obrero y Campesino*; the other with Nin and Andrade, forming the *Federación Comunista Ibérica*. They were to unite at a later date under the name of the *Partido Obrero Unificado Marxista*, or P.O.U.M., in February, 1936, on the eve of the elections for the Government of the Popular Front.

A factor of singular interest here is that the leadership of these splinter groups, despite

3 Ibid. p. 68

their professed Marxism, as opposed to the anti-Marxism of the F.A.I., chose to identify and to syndicate with the F.A.I. and the C.N.T., as opposed to the Marxist unions of the U.G.T. and the P.C.E.⁴

Despite the existence of left-opportunism within its ranks prior to 1932, the P.C.E. still writes of those years as being generally positive ones. Prior to the municipal elections of 1931, for example, they drew up a revolutionary program to mobilize the people against the Monarchy of Alfonso XIII, and for the establishment of a “Republic of Workers and Peasants,” which made a great deal of sense. According to this program the Democratic Revolutionary Republic would provide for a solution to the problem of Nationalities and their right to self-determination, such as Catalonia, Galicia, Euzkadi, etc., *and to concede independence to Morocco and all other Spanish colonies*.⁵ Urgent means would be taken to raise the standard of living for all workers; to bring to a head the question of the separation of Church and State; to grant civil and political rights to women—inclusive of equal work for equal pay; to protect and stimulate the total development of working class youth; and to establish diplomatic and civil relations with the Soviet Union.⁶

The P.C.E. Also professes to have been the sole workers party with an advanced ideology, and the only one to give major proof of its combativity and its willingness to fight. This, of course, could certainly be questioned by the other parties of the Left. As an example of this claim, it states that with the outbreak of the revolt in Jaca, in December of 1930, led by the two young Republican officers, Fermín Galán and Angel García Hernández; while the responsible directors of the U.G.T., Julián Besteiro, Gómez, Saborit, Muniño and others sabotaged the accords of the executive of the Socialist Party to call for a general strike throughout Spain, the Communist Party, in every area of its strength, Bilbao, Asturias, and Seville, declared the strike; which was then seconded by tens of thousands of workers. They were especially successful in Bilbao, the Basque capital and in Seville.

The question of strength in terms of membership of a Left party is, at best, a difficult thing to assess in circumstances of legality, let alone during those of repression. However, so much has been made of the supposed weakness of the P.C.E. prior to the opening guns of the war, that the record will be set straight—here and now.

It should first be pointed out that the juggling of figures has been a deliberate attempt by those who would falsify history, to depict the P.C.E. as having never been indigenous to the Spanish scene. They hope in this way to prove that only with the advent of Soviet arms—and a *de facto* control of those arms—was the P.C.E. able to expand in terms of membership and power. Conversely, this would also prove that the policies, programs and general “line” of the P.C.E. during the periods of crises, had no bearing whatsoever upon

4 Brenan, p. 296

5 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 30

6 Ibid. p. 30

its rapid growth and influence.

What has been said to date?

David T. Cattell, in his work, *Communism and the Spanish Civil War*,⁷ gives us a quote from the Soviet periodical, *Novy Mir*, in which Michael Koltsov, *Pravda*'s chief correspondent in Spain, reports that in 1931 there were but 800 Communist Party members in the whole of the Peninsula. However, since our pundits never take a "commie's" word for anything, especially that of a *Pravda* correspondent, perhaps we should be consistent and pass on this one too; at least for the moment. Then we have another Russian, no less than General Walter G. Krivitsky who, by his own claim, was head of the G.P.U. intelligence for Western Europe. He was also a defector to the United States. The General insists that as of February, 1936, the eve of the elections that ushered in the Government of the *Frente Popular*, the Communist Party of Spain had but 3,000 members.⁸

Hugh Thomas, author of *The Spanish Civil War*, the Liberal's "bible" on the Spanish conflict, writes in one of his more candid moments, that *Krivitsky shouldn't be trusted*; that "Krivitsky's evidence must be regarded as tainted unless corroborated. His (Krivitsky's) book," according to Thomas, "and the articles in the *Saturday Evening Post*, of which the book was an expansion, were probably written by a well-known American Sovietologist, often thought to be helped in what he writes about Russia by the *F.B.I.*."⁹ Thomas ends with the suggestion that the real figure for February, 1936, was actually 30,000; with the General having dropped a digit.¹⁰ At this point this supposed chronicler of all things Spanish, who has said that the defector, Krivitsky, could not be trusted, moves ahead twenty pages and promptly forgets his own notes. For he then suggests that despite the passage in time of four critical months of recruitment after the Popular Front victory, that the P.C.E. has "still only about 10,000 members in all Spain."¹¹ He gives no sources at all for this new set of figures. And for this and other similar errors, we are inclined to equate him with his own evaluation of Krivitsky—not to be trusted

To view our figures on the P.C.E. in proper perspective, the strength of the other parties of the Left should be checked simultaneously with those of the Communists. And while we do so, it would be good, perhaps, to remember that the beginning of the Russian revolution, the Social-Democratic Party of Lenin had exactly 65,000 members in the whole country.

The historian, Gerald Brenan, a most trustworthy and meticulous researcher, a friend of the Anarchists and certainly no friend of the Communists, lists some rather interesting

⁷ *Communism and the Spanish Civil War*, Berkeley, 1955, David D. Cattell, p. 217

⁸ Thomas, p. 71

⁹ Ibid. p. 263

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 71

¹¹ Ibid. p. 99

figures. He writes that for the years 1934, through 1936, the F.A.I. had a membership of 10,000;¹² the Socialists in 1934, approximately 60,000. Official figures for the U.G.T. and C.N.T. respectively, and again for 1934, were 1,444,474 and 1,577,547. He gives no figures for the Communist Party, but does go on to say that after Maurín and Nin and Andrade split with the official Communist Party of Spain to form the *Bloque Obrero y Campesino*; *Federación Comunista Ibérica*, and the *Left Communist Party*, that these had a membership respectively of: 25,000, 3,000 and 5,000.¹³

This last quote from Mr. Brennan, whose research, as stated, is above reproach, leads us to an interesting area of speculation. For we see that the end product of the split in the P.C.E.—with a membership, according to Koltsov, of only 800 in 1931—was that in but two years the splinter groups ran their half of the membership up to 33,000, more than three times as many as the highly touted Anarchists.

Assuming that there were maybe, 3,000, in 1931, and not just 800, we are still presented with an absolutely remarkable growth of the splinter groups. Accepting this fact, and this writer, for one, does not question Brennan's figures, is it so difficult then for historians to accept an equally remarkable growth for the *parent* body, the Communist Party of Spain?

One would suggest that the archives of the German Gestapo for that period be made available by our State Department. They would no doubt give us an exact accounting. Like our C.I.A. today—it can quote the exact number of Socialist chickens in Patagonia at moments notice—they were quite meticulous in the compilation of the strength of their enemy everywhere.

What do the Communists themselves say of their strength?

Simply this: "Between February of 1936, and until July 18th and the Fascist rising, the numerical strength of the Party rose giddily from 30,000 to approximately 102,000."¹⁴ In summation, since we have seen Brennan's figures for the F.A.I. to be at 10,000; the three splinter groups at 33,000 and a final tally by Madrid's great Liberal newspaper, *El Sol*, for the fifteenth of July, 1936, placing the Socialist strength at 59,846, we then have a most remarkable situation. Namely that the Communist Party of Spain, on the very eve of the Rightist insurrection, was actually the most powerful of the Left organizations on the Iberian Peninsula.

Obviously this is not the whole picture. There should be no doubt, for instance, that those ten thousand Anarchists controlled the C.N.T. rank-and-file, million and a half members; there is no doubt too that the Socialists exercised *majority* control over the 1,500,000

12 Brennan p. 184—notes.

13 Ibid. p. 296

14 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 87

members of the U.G.T.; though here it must be pointed out, the P.C.E. not only controlled a union membership of its own, the C.G.T., which as early as 1934, according to police figures, had a strength of 133,236,¹⁵ but simultaneously with this had made serious inroads into U.G.T. control itself. The main point, however, remains: The Communist Party of Spain as a militant, disciplined political organization, had emerged as *the* Left Party with the greatest strength before ever the Republic had deigned to recognize the Soviet Union; before the revolt ever began; and long before a single rifle had been sold to the Spanish Government under the normal terms of international law and commerce The election of a new Central Committee at the Fourth Party Congress in 1932, created the ideological basis for a reaffirmation of Marxist-Leninist principles, and the application of those principles to the tactics and strategy of the struggles of the Spanish people for liberation. Among the members of the new Central Committee were: José Díaz as Secretary General, Dolores Ibárruri (La Pasionaria), Vicente Uribe, Antonio Mije, Pedro Checa, Manuel Delicado, Jesús Larrañaga, Cristóbal Valenzuela, and many others. All were slated to play a highly responsible role in one of the truly great social revolutions of mankind

15 Brenan, p. 296

THE SOCIALISTS:

In this brief examination of the parties of the Left and of the Right it must be understood that as much as we are interested in the theoretical motivation behind the various tendencies in the day-by-day development of the Spanish War, the limited nature of this work precludes any in-depth study of that phenomenon. Rather, we would hope, that a flat presentation of that which was done and *not* done by these tendencies will, in a sense, determine the correctness of their actions and provide a clue, perhaps, to the real causes for the destruction of the Spanish Republic.

A general description of the Spanish Socialist Party's development has already been noted against the background of the Anarchists and Communists.

As a result of the Rightist victory and its own, previous sorry role, the Socialist Party, heavily compromised by that subservient collaboration with Azaña and Zamora, now sought to redeem itself.

Specifically, the successive Republican-Socialist Governments had shown two faces: one of indulgence and weakness for the old ruling castes; and one of cruelty and stupidity for the workers and peasants. Their weakness gained them only the contempt of the Right; their severity cost them the support of the people. Repressions carried out in many Spanish towns and villages gave eloquent testimony to the “popular” policies of the Republican-Socialist governments.

The examples of gross error were all too many. The two years of coalition, for instance, had witnessed a widely based peasant movement constantly attacked by the government while demanding a revolutionary agrarian reform. As in the 19th century, Andalucía and Extremadura led in the efforts to bring down the system of feudal land tenure. Literally hundreds of campesinos and the families dared to occupy the lands upon which they were employed; most of them with rank-and-file Socialist support. Indeed, many Socialist leaders reacting to the Communist complaint—that they had not included the countryside in their plans—had begun to do exactly that. Wherever peasant organizations did exist, other than those controlled by the Anarchists, they were principally Socialist. Many strikes had taken place under their leadership. And *Casas del Pueblo*, the workers club houses, an idea borrowed from the Belgian Socialists by Spain's venerable Pablo Iglesias for the P.S.O.E. and the U.G.T., now thrived in hundreds if not thousands of villages.¹ The policy had been simply to organize pressure upon the Republican government for agrarian reforms through the media of the *Campesino* collectives; this in contrast to the Anarchist program of the imposition, here and now, of the concepts of “Libertarian Communism.” Hundreds of collectives had, in fact, been organized; a great number of these with Communist help. They existed in Ciudad Real, Jaén, Badajoz, Valenica—

¹ Brenan, p. 219

everywhere.

It is important that these facts be known. Since these meaningful collectives, constructed long before the forced “communes” of the F.A.I. in Catalonia and Aragón, encompassed a truly significant section of the Spanish peasantry. Indeed, in a number of areas agricultural schools were set up; some even with classes for the use of tractors. Brennan writes that: “Although few of the collectives were sufficiently wealthy to acquire tractors, most of them seemed to have worked well enough to remain in existence *down to the end of the civil war*.”²

In reply to these ever more militant struggles for bread and land, the Republican-Socialist Government, as a concession to the Right, enacted the perfidious “Law for the Defense of the Republic,”³ instantly seized upon by the Republic’s enemies to crush the aspirations of both workers and peasants.

But in the beginning, when the Socialist leaders had been blind to the threat of Fascism, their membership had not. These fought back in anger and consternation. For it was stinging obvious to them that the tactics of their own party, far from leading to socialism, was in reality aiding fascism and reaction.

The failure of the Socialist leaders had not been in their collaboration with the Government of Azaña, but rather in the *form* of that collaboration. This, plus the resultant just discontent of the people, and the open adoption of communist positions by many socialist workers finally produced the long-foreseen split within the Socialist Party. Two clearly defined groups emerged: The Right, with the collaborationists, Julián Besteiro, Saborit and Trifón Gómez—and the Left.

The Left was headed by Largo Caballero. It soon became the dominant faction. Largo's attitude reflected the new radicalization of the Socialist masses and their desire to reach an accord with the other parties of the Left. His, however, was actually an ultra-left position, the “pendulum swing,” as it were. Though it was neither politically astute nor effective, it nevertheless represented a step forward in the recreation of the P.S.O.E. as a class-conscious workers movement. It would also pave the way for an understanding between the two workers parties, the Socialist and the Communist.

Any doubts as to the direction of the new Rightist Government were soon dispelled. “Within weeks all legislation fixing wages and conditions of employment passed by the previous Cortes was either repealed or allowed to lapse: the tenants guarantee against capricious eviction by landlords was rescinded; some 19,000 peasants who had actually

2 Ibid. pp. 275-276

3 Gabriel Jackson, p. 52. The law, passed for by Azaña, gave the Government power to impose fines of up to 10,000 pesetas and to deport individuals within the Peninsula or to the African provinces.

been settled on large estates in Estremadura were evicted: wages fell by 40% to 50% and landlords, to add misery to the terror, began dismissing many workers and peasants. Simultaneously with this all anti-clerical legislation, pending, was brought to an end, and all substitution of lay schools for religious ones was postponed indefinitely. Expenditures for education were also drastically reduced. And finally—and this of a most ominous portent—an amnesty bill was passed giving freedom to all those still jailed who had participated in the Sanjurjo rising. Their ranks and positions were returned to them, as was all arrears in pay for the time they had spent in prison. Grandeos, too, whose estates had been confiscated, had “their” property returned to them.”⁴

As stated, the masses of the Spanish people could hardly accept the Rightist “victory” at the polls as a mandate for repression. Nor would the fast changing Socialist Party.

So much was the situation unacceptable to the Socialists that for the first time in the history of the Second International, a Socialist Party of one of the leading Western Democracies set out to plan and to carry through a revolution aimed at a seizure of power by naked military insurrection. This fact has lent credence in certain quarters to the suggestion that it was for this very reason—that Spanish Socialists dared to fight; dared to attempt the destruction of its ruling class—that later, when the Fascist insurrection shook Spain, they were deserted *en-masse* by their brother Socialist Parties in Western Europe. For they had committed the cardinal sin of attempting to actually carry out the mandate of their membership and of their principles.

The road back from the swamps of reformism, however, was not to be an easy one. Seven years of alliance with the dictatorship of Rivera, succeeded by three years of collaboration in Republican governments, was not conducive to the abrupt transition from the cabinet to revolutionary opposition. Special interests had developed within the Party, guaranteeing that its class-character, dissipated during the easy years, would be difficult, if not impossible to reestablish.

Indeed, participation by Socialists in the government had resulted in a more serious anti-Marxist eclecticism within the Party than had already existed. Because of this the ranks had been swollen by opportunists and *petit bourgeois* intellectuals, who contributed little or nothing that was positive to the organization.

Dolores Ibárruri, *La Pasionaria*, speaking for the Communists, declares that the Socialist Party, “then had no choice but to suffer the consequences of this influence. It was unable to counteract it or to rescue these intellectuals from their own ideological weaknesses. For the Party, itself, now lacked a solid, revolutionary Marxist theoretical base.”⁵

4 Brenan, p. 296

5 Ibárruri, p. 125

And also, as noted, there had been the decline in Party membership, if not in influence. In 1932, at the height of its collaboration with the government, card-carrying Socialists numbered over 80,000; at the end of 1933 the figure dropped to less than 60,000. It would remain at this level until the eve of the insurrection.

All these problems together were bound to produce serious divergences within the Party of a political nature, touching primarily upon the tactics and strategy of Socialist policies.

In January of 1934—and as a direct result of some exhaustive soul searching and study—the Executive of the Socialist Party promulgated a new ten-point program designed to switch it from the classical collaborationist policies of European Social Democracy, to a more Marxist, class position. In the broadest sense the program provided for immediate attention to the problems of the land, inclusive of nationalization, distribution, and the formation of collectives throughout the country; the nationalization of basic industry; the dissolution of the Army and of the Civil Guard, and their reconstitution as a people's organization pledged to the Republic; a final solution to the problem of the church, etc., etc. In order to attain this new program, to make it a reality, five steps were proposed:

1. The organization of a frankly revolutionary movement with all possible urgency, utilizing all available methods.
2. A declaration of the direction of the movement, inclusive of the intent to take definitive and advantageous action prior to any action of the enemy—"Whose preparations for revolt are well known."
3. To place the Party and the General Union (U.G.T.) in direct liaison (and at their head) with all other elements who wish to cooperate with the movement.
4. The Socialist Party and the U.G.T., having seized political power as a result of the triumph of the revolution, will allow for governmental representation of all elements who have cooperated directly in the revolution.
5. To pursue the minimum goals toward revolutionary power immediately, and without procrastination, as projected in the ten point program of the National Executive of the Socialist Party of Spain.⁶

It cannot be pointed out too strongly that this initiative of the Socialist Party of Spain was predicated upon the open and quite cynical preparations for a seizure of power by the Rightists and the C.E.D.A., the Falange and the entrenched feudal aristocracy. Álvarez del Vayo, Socialist, and Spain's last Foreign Minister, explains that Socialist position thusly: "The feeling among Spanish Socialists was 'Better Vienna than Berlin,' referring to the fact that at least the Austrian Socialists of the *Schutzbund* had gone down fighting, as opposed to the German Social-Democrats who had meekly stretched their necks for Hitler's axe. Confronted with threatened aggression by the reactionaries and a government incapable of a vigorous policy of Republican defense, the Left had no alternative but to take the defense of the Republic into its own hands, making known to the government and the country that it would not tolerate a Monarchist (or Fascist) *coup d'état* cloaked in a

6 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 54

fictitious parliamentary proceeding. To a full Chamber, after having been authorized by our parliamentary group, Indalecio Prieto declared that if power were handed to the Right, the Socialist Party would start a revolution.”⁷

With this, what amounted to a dual manifesto, the Left Socialists within the Party, headed by Largo Caballero, Juan Negrín, Álvarez del Vayo, and tepidly supported by Indalecio Prieto, had definitely concluded that revolutionary action directed by the P.S.O.E. and the U.G.T. was on the order of the day.

Both the program and the “five points” were presented by Prieto, representing the Socialist Executive, to Julián Besteiro, now head of the U.G.T., and his cohorts, for approval. Besteiro refused to accept any part of it. He instead proposed a counter plan in which Spain's aristocracy and bourgeoisie would be allowed to continue at the head of the State. His “plan” called for certain hydraulic works in place of the needed agrarian reform; for the exclusion of the 'national problem' in its entirety: the question of Basque, Catalan, Galician and Moroccan Separatism, and for respect for the established order. Besteiro bluntly demanded the establishment of an assembly on corporate lines only which, in his opinion, “should not have legislative powers, merely consultative ones.”⁸ Besteiro's “plan” was rejected by the executives of both the U.G.T. and the P.S.O.E.

Besteiro epitomized the “social-democrat” as the ultimate collaborator. Blind to both facts and history, he could actually be accused of being a moral coward whose prime weapon was to accuse others of cowardice. Example: As late as December, 1933, Besteiro announced smugly: “There is no danger of Fascism in Spain Fascism is but the sound of mice scurrying in an old house, frightening only the weak and cowardly.”⁹

That such a man headed the directorate of the Socialist Trade Unions at this most critical moment was, indeed, a tragedy. The error was rectified in short order, however, in that Besteiro was removed from his responsibilities in both the U.G.T. and the Executive of the P.S.O.E., in January of 1934.

And thus began the long battle within the Socialist Party against the crypto-reactionary policies of Julián Besteiro and others of his ilk.

7 *The Last Optimist*, Álvarez del Vayo, The Viking Press, N.Y., pp. 260-261

8 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 55

9 Ibárruri, p. 127

TOWARD THE OCTOBER REVOLT OF 1934:

In this same period of Socialist reorganization and challenge, the Republican Parties too moved to regroup and to strengthen themselves. In April of 1934, Manuel Azaña created the *Partido de Izquierda Republicana*, the Left Republican Party, from an amalgam of Radical Socialists, Gallegan Autonomists and the *Acción Republicana*. Also, in May of 1934, a small fraction of Lerroux's Radicals, headed by Martínez Barrio, broke away to constitute themselves as an independent party under the name of the *Republican Union*.

The national movements of the Separatists intensified in Catalonia, Euzkadi (the Basque country), and Galicia. And the deputies of the Catalan Left—the *Esquerra Catalana*—departed the new Cortes in anger at the abuse of the “Rights of Autonomy” previously granted to them and now ignored. They were followed in a gesture of solidarity by the deputies of the Basque Nationalists, the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco*.

In the month of July, 1934, a first indication of just how the Socialists intended to bring about their revolution in the face of the Rightist menace was shown when a Señor Lluhí, Madrid agent of Luis Companys, approached the Socialist Executive. Companys was President of the Catalan government, the *Generalitat*. The message brought by Lluhí was that: “The *Generalitat* was disposed to resist any further encroachments upon their autonomy, that it would not give up its authority even if the Madrid Government declared a “State of War.”¹ It is notable that the *Catalan Esquerra* was, next to the Anarchists, the strongest political force in the four provinces of Catalonia, having all republicans, small businessmen, and the greater part of the Catalan peasantry, the *Rabassaires*, on their side. And *this* was the Party of Luis Companys.

The Socialist Executive deliberated but briefly, and then informed Lluhí in somewhat cavalier fashion that “they would take Company's advice into consideration.” And that was the end of it. No attempt at any meaningful liaison; no effort at coordination of either defense or attack. Dominated by the illusion that all forces of the Left and Center not directly influenced by themselves, and therefore not controlled by them, were superfluous, the Socialist Party took the first blundering steps toward an almost certain defeat of its own cause. It further refused to synchronize its efforts either with Azaña's Republicans, or with the Basque and Galician Nationalists.

Though committed to a revolutionary strategy, the Socialist Party still functioned without the slightest attempt at a Marxist evaluation of the existing objective conditions. They had actually concluded that they and the U.G.T. alone, were sufficient for the job—that all others on the Left would, of necessity, be drawn into the fight under their control as the situation developed. No closely coordinated procedure had even been contemplated with the unions of the C.N.T., nor was the rapidly growing Communist Party which, alert to the

¹ *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 57

danger, was sending proposal after proposal for the creation of a united front in arms—given so much as a nod.

Indeed, as a counter move to a unity of free and equal partners, the Executive of the P.S.O.E. created in February, 1934, the *Alianzas Obreros*, the Workers Alliances, composed solely of elements of the Socialist Party, the U.G.T., the Socialist Youth, *Juventud Socialista*, the *Sindicatos de Oposición* (Thirty unions that had seceded from the C.N.T. Under the leadership of the Anarchists, Pestaña and Peró), and the small party of Left Communists under Maurín.²

The P.C.E., for whatever reasons, decided at first *against* joining the Socialist catch-all group. They quickly changed their minds, however.

The Communists entered the *Alianza Obrera* on September 12, 1934, just one month prior to the Socialist rising. Some say this was a reflection of the new line of the 7th World Congress of the Communist International which dealt with new concepts of a possible “united front” of Left and Center organizations in bourgeois-democratic countries faced with the rise of incipient fascism. But, since these same pundits fail to mention that this same Congress would not yet be held for a full year, until August of 1935,³ one can suggest that their thinking is slightly awry. The Spanish Communists say simply that the time was ripe for their entry; that, “The rapid development of events, themselves, forced us to reconsider and to look for some *modus-vivendi* with the P.S.O.E., inclusive of a truce and a mutual suspension of partisan attacks in their press and meetings as a first step for future and joint actions.”⁴

There was simply no question as to the rapidly mounting danger of a Fascist putsch. Some kind of unity on the left was definitely on the order of the day. Minimum reservations by the P.C.E. were still avowed, however, in a declaration to the Alliance, they stated that: “It still lacked that broad representation needed to bring a revolution to a successful conclusion, namely the unions of the C.N.T. and the masses of peasants.” The name, itself, they said, should reflect this mass base; it should be changed to the *Alianza Obrera y Campesina*.⁵

As for the Anarchists of the F.A.I. and the C.N.T., contact remained at a minimum. Neither Socialist nor Anarchist was quite up to forming a positive relationship. The decades old enmity between Marxist concepts of proletarian discipline as a weapon in the political struggle for power, as opposed to the theories of *indiscipline* and *spontaneity* as advocated by the Anarchists, remained the strongest of barriers.

2 Brenan, p. 274

3 Thomas, p. 90

4 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 58

5 Ibid. p. 59

Indeed, the Anarchists questioned the whole idea of a “Left coup” not organized by themselves. While criticizing the Socialist tactics, however, they made little use of the opportunity to advance their own ends. Instead they accused their Socialist opponents of “creating the apparition of a revolution simply to intimidate the government of the Rightists and C.E.D.A.”⁶ In one brief exchange with the U.G.T. Executive, the Anarchists demanded that the P.S.O.E. and U.G.T. manifest clearly and publicly just what its “revolutionary” aspirations were, beyond the ten-point-program. And that they should include in this reckoning that they did not mean simply a change of power, such as took place with the fall of the Monarchy, *but a complete and total suppression of capitalism, and the State with it—in any form.*⁷

This demand, of course, especially with the last three words tacked on, was infantile, detached from any kind of reality, typical of the simplistic Anarchist thinking. Who, for example, on the left would *not* want to see that stateless Eden wherein man-made authority of one man over another is nonexistent? Who would not opt for such a possibility given the opportunity? The question is: was that really the situation in terms of attainable goals on the Iberian Peninsula in the autumn of 1934? That there was some logic to Anarchist fears in-re Socialist past policies of collaboration is undeniable: that this same fragment of logic justified their withholding support to the revolt was something else again.

The Communists define the Anarchist's boycott in the following manner: Dolores Ibárruri writes: “Objectively the refusal of the Anarchists to act helped the reactionaries, and contributed strongly to the failure of the movement. But would the Anarchists have acted that way if they had been consulted or included in the discussions prior to the insurrection? Instead they were ignored and it was taken for granted that they would march automatically behind the Socialist Party. After all they did represent a numerous sector of the working class. This is a question that has remained unanswered, but the facts are plain to see.”⁸

Another, equally irritating fact was that for the Anarchists to effectively 'rise' in Catalonia, they would have had to fight jointly with, what was to them, their enemies of the *Catalan Esquerra*. The Separatist Catalan Left, or *Esquerra*—equivalent to Azaña's Left Republicans—had won control of Catalonia from the Madrid Government. Luis Companys, a former mayor of Barcelona, had been appointed Civil Governor.

Companys was a lawyer and an old friend of the Anarchists, or at least so the records tell us. Upon assuming office he thought it proper to inform the Anarchists that: “Since you

6 Ibid. p. 59

7 *Los Anarchistas en la crisis política española*, José Peirats, Editorial Alfa, Buenos Aires, 1964, p. 98

8 Ibárruri, pp. 130-131

are not yet ready to make your revolution, why not let us make ours and use the liberty the new regime gives you for your propaganda?"⁹ The F.A.I., however, was not about to accept any proposals from Companys. He had embarrassed them at one point in that in a situation where they had called for a twenty-four hour general strike, Companys had declared the occasion a national holiday.

Like every other Party coming out of the period of the Primo de Rivera repression—and into the comparative freedom of the Second Republic, the F.A.I. had been hard at work organizing. In the summer of 1931 its influence within the C.N.T. had grown immensely, primarily in Catalonia. And, since it was in Catalonia where the Anarchists had attained their greatest thrust, it is therefore in *that* area and against *that* background that they can best be judged. They had, in that same year of 1931 (October) forced the eminent Juan Peiró and *his entire staff* from the editorial offices of the greatest and most influential of the Anarcho-Syndicalist dailies, *Solidaridad Obrera*; and this because of Peiró's refusal to endorse a new F.A.I. terrorist policy of "revolutionary action of small groups."¹⁰ Peiró's ouster was followed by that of angel Pestaña, the Secretary of the C.N.T. from the Metal Workers Syndicate at Barcelona. The reason for this last, according to Brennan, was that Pestaña had, "vented his disapproval of the insurrection in the Llobregat Valley." A number of well known Anarchists, among them Peiró and Juan López, supported him and published their disapproval of the policy of the F.A.I. in a document which, because it had thirty signatures, was known as the *Trentistas* proclamation. The consequences of this were that they too were expelled from the C.N.T. and, as the syndicates which they represented followed them, there came about a split in the Confederation. The dissident syndicates, which comprised those of Tarassa and Sabadell in Catalonia, *half* of those in Valencia and one in Asturias, were known as the *Sindicatos de oposición*.¹¹ The same, it must be pointed out, that had joined in the Socialist's *Alianza Obrera*.

The referred to "rising" in the Llobregat valley had come about when a handful of armed militants of the F.A.I. seized public buildings in the towns of Manresa and Berga. It hardly need be said that the Anarchists *consulted no one* in terms of their own plans. The rising was put down and a hundred and twenty F.A.I. members were taken in custody. Among those were the very courageous Buenaventura Durruti, and Francisco Ascaso. They were sent, without trial, to penal colonies in Spanish Guinea.

In January, 1933, García Oliver, another noted Anarchist leader, led a handful of militants in another futile gesture to secure the release of the prisoners of Africa. It was an even greater fiasco, and led only to more arrests and the capture of the arms they had managed to accumulate. Brennan writes that: "The Anarchists then complained bitterly that the

9 Brennan, p. 252

10 We are reminded here of the seizure of the "ecumenical" Left-Radical paper, the *National Guardian*, by a small anarchistic segment of its staff in mid-1970.

11 Brennan, p. 255

Republican Government was more tyrannical than that of Primo de Rivera. *They conveniently forgot that during his dictatorship the C.N.T. had been dissolved, the Anarchist press suppressed—and that in all those five years not a single Anarchist had dared to make himself seen or heard.*"¹²

Unrest coupled with strikes and demonstrations continued in every part of Spain. Some attempts at joint action were made by the U.G.T. and the C.N.T. involving farm workers. In June of 1934, continued misery was such that a general strike involving the peasants was called all over Spain. But the forces of repression remained strong, while the forces of unity were not. The strike was soon broken.

The *Alianza* too was active, slowly gaining strength for the role it was to play. It attempted a general strike in Catalonia in August of 1934. That the strike was successful in but one city, Sabadell, was beside the point. The fact that it could be called at all, in Anarchist territory, and by Largo Caballero, caused the ideologues of the F.A.I. to be suddenly apprehensive—and thoughtful.

The Republic as it was now constituted hovered daily on the brink of an abyss. The Lerroux government, formed on the 24th of January, 1934, had given way to another on the Fifth of March. The Third of April saw an additional shift in the Rightist game of "musical chairs" in which the Radicals of Lerroux returned, but with Señor, Ricardo Samper as Premier. Each government held power solely by the votes of the C.E.D.A., whose tactics of the moment were to play it cool; to aid the Radical governments without direct participation, and in this way prepare the ground for the desired clerical-fascist regime utilizing the parliamentary institution. Gil Robles hoped first for a coalition with the Radicals; then to hold power alone; then, having created the proper atmosphere—a veneer of constitutional respectability—to call for elections which he would control so as to ensure an overwhelming victory. He would then revamp the constitution and opt for a corporate state along the lines of that of Italy, and of the Austrian model of Dollfuss.

The Fourteenth of September, 1934, saw the greatest demonstration for unity on the left ever held in Madrid until that time. More than a hundred thousand workers gathered in the Metropolitan Stadium to hear the speeches of representatives of the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, and of the youth movements of these organizations.

The Right, unfortunately, got the message. It reacted immediately. In a swift change of tactics Gil Robles decided that the C.E.D.A. would enter the Government *now*, and not wait for the "propitious moment." He was determined to do this even if the act precipitated civil war, as the Socialists had warned that it would. On October 1, the Cortes met and, as if to show who was really in control, the Government of Samper dutifully resigned. Gil Robles demanded a majority of seats in the next cabinet for his followers.

¹² Ibid. p. 253

The Socialists were now faced with their moment of truth. And were instantly, and again, divided. Indalecio Prieto wavered, fearing that the revolt they had called for might fail. Prieto, who had sold newspapers in Bilbao as a boy, and who had risen by his boot-straps—though many point to the aid given him through the years by the wealthy banker, Horacio Echevarrieta—to the ownership of the liberal newspaper, *El Liberal de Bilbao*, and high offices in the Socialist Party, placed himself in opposition to Largo Caballero.

Caballero, the opposite of Prieto in spirit and temperament, was a Madrid plasterer who had learned to read only at the age of 24. His roots, from a class point of view, were those of a working man of Castile; not those of a dabbler in commercial interests in Bilbao—an area more European than Spanish. Whatever his faults the revolution was no intellectual exercise to Caballero. He was ready now to go into the streets in defense of the Republic; in defense of what little had been gained since 1931, and in the hopes of a victory which would settle once and for all the question of power and who would control it, Spanish reaction and Fascism, or the Spanish people and Socialism.

In a vote of the Socialist Executive, Indalecio Prieto, like Julián Besteiro before him, was voted down.

All Spain held its breath.

SPAIN'S OCTOBER!

On the second of October, amidst rumors of strikes, putsches and violent demonstrations everywhere, the Communist Party Executive proposed to the Socialist Party that the working class weapon of the General Strike be put into effect now! Immediately and throughout the country as a most viable means to impede the drive for power by the C.E.D.A. and the reactionaries. In proposing such a move the P.C.E. counted on two ensuing developments. One: That with the strike in full force and the threat of civil war in the offing, Alcalá Zamora could be made to refuse all attempts by the C.E.D.A. to enter the Government. Indeed, it was still possible to reconstitute a Cabinet of Left-Republicans which, for the moment, the Communists would neither hinder nor support. Two: If Zamora bowed to the Financial Oligarchy, and to the subsequent unleashing of a Fascist drive against the Spanish working class, the general strike would then have helped prepare and mobilize all left militants, since the workers and all democratic forces would have no recourse but to resort to arms to bar the road to Fascism. The proposal for the general strike was therefore an effective means of mobilizing the workers for the second alternative, so that the total initiative would *not* be left in the hands of reaction.¹

Over Largo Caballero's head the Socialist Party still decided to wait, though it had not given up its intent. No orders were issued to the U.G.T. Having already sublimely announced that if the C.E.D.A. entered the Government they would move to insurrection, they were strangely confident that this was sufficient to give Zamora pause—a totally unreal attitude held over from their collaborationist days.

On the Fourth of October some of their illusions—but unfortunately not all, were against dispelled. A catastrophic, but hardly unforeseen—by Marxists that is—decision was made. Indeed, it can be said that much of what then ensued, inclusive perhaps of the civil war itself, may have been avoided if the decision had been different. Don Niceto Zamora, Monarchist-turned-Republican, instructed Lerroux to form a government in which there would be three members of the C.E.D.A. They would be given the all-important ministries of Labor, Agriculture, and Justice. *The first step toward Clerical-Fascism had thus been taken.*

But October, 1934, was a far cry from that Christmas Eve of 1874, when a Spanish general, Martínez Campos, pronounced the death of the First Republic. The people, as Sanjurjo and his cohorts had but recently found out, were disposed to argue the question.

On the following day, October 5, a majority of the Republican leaders, Manuel Azaña, Diego Martínez Barrio, Miguel Maura, and Felipe Sánchez Román, hurried to absolve themselves of any responsibility or complicity in Zamora's act. They sent letters, remarkably uniform in content, to Zamora stating that, “they were breaking all relations

¹ *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 60

with the 'existing institutions' of the country, and that the President was guilty of handing over the Republic to its enemies.”² In this manner, those same Republicans could cleanse their skirts of complicity before the people—they would do nothing to prevent Zamora from taking the action he did—and simultaneously prepare for a retention of leadership in any future developments.

The resultant vote was massively in favor. Julián Besteiro, Andrés Saborit and their followers, however, voted no! An act considered by Spain's Socialist Party to be a vote against all meaningful opposition to the intent of the C.E.D.A. and to, in effect, deprive the Spanish working class of its most potent weapon in the face of the gathering Fascist storm.

The “fate” theme of *Carmen* intrudes here; muted to be true, but audible in the background as the forces for disaster moved to the fore; no longer able to hind behind the sophistry and the lies of their polemics.

With the action of the Besteiro “Socialists” and the quite obvious *inaction* of the F.A.I. and the C.N.T., the threat to the very existence of the Spanish Republic could now be clearly defined as two-fold: The first, from the Fascist and Reactionary Right; the second, from the Besteiro Socialists and the Anarchist Left.

These two tendencies of the Spanish Liberation Movement were to fight their comrades of the Left-Socialists and the Communist Party a thousand times more strongly than they would ever fight the enemy. Across the years of blood and suffering they would do this. And in the end they would join in that final treacherous cabal that opened the gates of Madrid to Francisco Franco; brought destruction to the Popular Front of the Spanish Republic, and sent two hundred and fifty thousand Spaniards to brutal death before the firing squads of the Army of Africa and the *Señoritos* of the *Falange Española y de las J.O.N.S.*

The General Strike, minus the critical support of the C.N.T. (Every historian from Hugh Thomas to Gabriel Jackson records that the Anarchists abstained almost entirely), spread throughout the country. The revolutionary movement that followed, though poorly conceived and ridiculously inadequate, broke out simultaneously in three centers—Barcelona, Madrid, and in the mining districts of Asturias. In the majority of the other provinces wherever the U.G.T. had sufficient strength, the strike prevailed—but that was all. The country districts, in the main, were quiet. The strikes in the *campos* in June had exhausted them. Only in a small area in Extremadura did a rising of the *Yunteros* take place, this under the courageous leadership of the Socialist Deputy, Margarita Nelken. It was quickly put down.

In response to the altogether inept first movements of the revolutionary forces in Madrid

² Jackson, p. 147

and Barcelona, President Alcalá Zamora, declared a “State of War” on the morning of October 6.

In Madrid, as in no other Spanish city, the complete inability of the Socialists to organize a *coup d'état* was tragically evident. The following transcript of the first hours of the revolt is from Álvarez del Vayo's “Last Optimist.” It will not only speak for itself quite clearly, but should also serve to give the lie to any who would call Del Vayo a Communist:

“As the time of the legislative session approached, the plan to give power to the Right developed rapidly; and on our party the machinery of the revolution was made reality to function the moment the order should be given. Largo Caballero called together those of us who, in the eve of success, were to form the new government of Spain. We had a long exchange of views and were instructed to be ready to take our posts at a second's notice.

On the eve of the uprising Caballero and Prieto, as directors of the movement, established their headquarters in the Madrid home of a Socialist whose residence seemed to offer the greatest guarantee of secrecy. Caballero was of the opinion that those in the new government should not disperse too widely; following his advice the majority of us installed ourselves in the studio of the painter Luis Quintanilla, a Socialist and an old friend. His neighbors, fortunately, were accustomed to the going and coming of all sorts of people, even at late hours. It was a large room with a still larger terrace which, in addition to being an excellent observation point, allowed us to go out and enjoy the delicious air of those wonderful October nights.

At first all was optimism of those congregated there. Felipe Pretel, treasurer of the U.G.T., explained in broad lines the plan of attack. He had helped Caballero and knew exactly what arms were available, because he had paid for them.

We believed that we could rely on the cooperation of a good number of officers commanding regiments and battalions in Madrid and the provinces. It was also justifiable to hope that once the rising started, it would be joined by many Republicans for whom President Alcalá Zamora's decision to hand over power to the Gil Robles party constituted an act of betrayal. But bourgeois parties had not been asked to participate in the movement; nor, if success came, were they to be invited at once to join the new government. This time a Socialist Government, strong and homogeneous, would try to lead the way to the profound social transformation the country needed. The period of coalition governments, combining Socialist and middle-class parties, was considered to be at an end. When Caballero went out of power in 1933 he swore that he would never again collaborate with the Republicans. It took the Franco rebellion two years later to make the veteran Socialist leader revoke his decision.

Much depended on the fate of a number of audacious strokes, which had to be executed between midnight and dawn. The most important were the arrest of the principle ministers and the assault on the barracks. Responsibility for the latter was placed with those army officers who had agreed to lead certain regiments into the street. The mission of the Socialist militias—the armed workers—was to act as a surprise and shock force, to make the necessary arrests and to launch an attack on the barracks, which would cause confusion and permit sympathetic military elements to overcome the officers who refused to participate.

Midnight came and passed. One o'clock struck, and from the terrace of the studio Madrid seemed the most peaceful city in the world. Stretched face down on the only available bed, Negrín and Zugazagoitia were sleeping; around the table Quintanilla held the attention of his other guests with lively and amusing talk.

The suspense began to wear upon some of the group, and at last I yielded to the suggestion of Araquistáin that we take a walk to whether we could find out why none of the prearranged actions had begun to materialize.

In the *Central de Telefonos* in the Calle Alcalá, at the entrance to the Puerta del Sol, a habitual meeting place for journalists and an inexhaustible source of news and rumor, people were commenting on the declarations of certain leaders and republican parties announcing their break with President Alcalá Zamora and their opposition to the new Republican-Monarchist-clerical government. This was the only clear thing we could pick up. The rest was a gabble of speculation. Our presence there must have disconcerted those who were expecting something extraordinary to happen at any moment. It did not seem natural that two Socialist Deputies, known to be among those closest to Caballero, would be strolling along at the Alcalá if a rising was imminent . . .

At about four o'clock in the morning (in Quintanilla's Studio), Amaro del Rosal, who was in charge of the Socialist militias, rushed to tell us that things were going badly. He was out of breath, his face was worn, his hair tousled. One had only to look at him to realize his desperation. He had come to get a drink of something and to exchange impressions, especially with Pretel; also to await a reply from Caballero, to whom he had sent an urgent message informing him that the troops from the barracks had failed to move into the street.

When things began to go wrong, everything went wrong. One of the planned coups failed through a series of unfortunate coincidences. This was the seizure of the Ministry of Home Affairs by an armed group comprising real Civil Guards mixed with brave, tough men from the trade unions disguised as Civil Guards, all under the command of a heroic officer, Fernando Conde, who later met his death in the Spanish War on the side of the Republicans. In this particular episode there were the comic details that are never lacking in any tragedy: the ersatz Civil Guards had not been properly disguised because the comrade entrusted with preparing their equipment, instead of buying boots, had given them white *alpargatas*, or hemp-soled canvas slipper, which he had painted black. As a result the improvised Civil Guards had to remain with their militia instead of playing the role assigned to them.

But it was not because of this or any other single detail that the operation missed fire. The failure had many causes. First, the Army officers, on whom we had depended, remained in their barracks for reasons we discovered later. The shock troops of the Socialist Youth were also partly responsible; some of them were youngsters, from sixteen to eighteen, full of fervor and capable of any risk, but with no street fighting experience. *Above all, necessary unity among the workers was lacking.* Before the rising started, strikes had taken place, including a violent one declared by the peasants, against the advice of Caballero. There had also been sporadic strikes in Madrid, which not only took strength from the great October movement but put the police on guard. This with the seizure of the *Turquesa* and of other smaller arms dumps in University City and in the Casas del Pueblo, explained why the essential element of surprise was missing.

These adverse circumstances could have been partly off-set if there had not been too much delay about giving the order to start. The twenty-four hours during which the government was being formed were decisive. To the very last, Caballero, to say nothing of Prieto, nursed the hope that President Alcalá Zamora would not take into the cabinet known enemies of the Republic. When the news came that the coalition government had been completed, Caballero was with Prieto and a couple of other leaders of the movement. Caballero's comment revealed his stubborn desire to trust Zamora: 'Until I see it in the *Official Gazette*, I won't believe it.' Caballero's closest associates, including myself, earnestly insisted that the rising should begin that night, *October 4*. In the end Caballero gave in, but by then it was too late. It had to be postponed until the next night. During those twenty-four hours martial law was declared, and this meant

the collapse by its own weight of the plan for military cooperation. Under martial law all officers, pro and anti-Republican, were confined to barracks. Thus, when the rising finally got under way, its changes were much diminished. We found ourselves lacking the military support on which we had counted; the Socialist militias were in the street but were unable by themselves to carry out the crucial missions assigned to them.

The calamity of that night did not prevent the declaration of the General Strike. It was maintained for some time in the hope that, in the rest of Spain, the rising might have better luck and that it might be possible to begin afresh in Madrid. During these tense days the Socialists gave many proofs that their fighting spirit had not been crushed. Every attempt by the Falange . . . to gain command of the streets and to hunt down the strikers was met with undiminished courage. It was clear that the workers of Madrid were determined, as they showed two years later in their formidable resistance to Franco, to prevent the new 'March on Rome.' But with Madrid under full martial law it was physically impossible to get the machinery of revolution into action again. The Government began a wide search for Socialist deputies and labor leaders. The revolutionary 'Cabinet' assembled in Quintanilla's studio dispersed, and several were arrested, including our host. Three of us, Negrín, Araquistáin, and myself—were given shelter by Jay Allen, that excellent American journalist, who was then representing the *Chicago Tribune*. He was the best informed correspondent in Madrid, and his home was both an ideal place of refuge and incomparable news center. After a few days we decided that, since the rebellion in the capital was rapidly losing momentum, there was no longer any point to remain together. Negrín and Araquistáin left the same morning; I waited until three o'clock in the afternoon. At three-thirty the police paid a courtesy visit to Allen's floor, and, once again by a matter of minutes, I slipped through their hands.”³

And thus are revolutions and those who must fight them—those men in the streets—sometimes brought to bitter despair.

Dolores Ibárruri sums up in part her Party's criticism of the actions of the Socialist leaders with the following caustic and, to this writer, quite correct observation.

“But what did the Socialists *do* after giving the order for the general revolutionary strike? They broke all relations with the P.C.E. and hid from the police. While dodging police persecution was justified, the Socialist Party was certainly not justified nor correct nor revolutionary in failing to form a committee of alliance members to direct the insurrection and mobilize the masses. Indeed, it let the battle run under its own steam, following Largo's theory that a revolutionary cannot be organized, but that it spontaneously generates itself.”

“Meanwhile, although the Socialist leaders had not communicated their plans to us, the Communists plunged into the movement right from the start, fighting side by side with the Socialist workers. With the aid of the workers during the battle (inclusive of Asturias), we transformed the Workers Alliance into Workers and peasants Alliances which, in some places like Asturias, where the Anarchists were *Alianza* members, became true organs of power.”⁴

3 Del Vayo, pp. 263-267

4 Ibárruri, p. 131

BARCELONA:

In Barcelona, the results were the same, though the action was quite different. Luis Companys, President of the *Generalitat*, or Autonomous Catalan Government, had made every effort to contact Zamora to no avail. The *Esquerra*, therefore, the ruling Catalan Left Party, was to take the only course left open to it. In the interests of its minimum sovereignty it would defy the C.E.D.A. and the Central Government and join in the Socialist insurrection. Without Anarchist support the *Esquerra* would be alone in this venture. And, though it was by far the most powerful single voting group in the four provinces of Catalonia, it was anything but a homogeneous body.

It was composed actually of four separate groups:

1. The Catalan *petite bourgeoisie Esquerra* (Left Republicans) led by Luis Companys.
2. The *Etat Catalá*, a crypto-fascist separatist group led by José Dencás and Miguel Badia; this last a municipal police chief of Barcelona.
3. The Catalan Socialist Party, a small group composed mainly of workers and linked closely with the U.G.T. and the Cooperative movement.
4. The *Rabassaires*, or Catalan Peasants Party, whose members were, essentially extremely militant, *non-anarchist* tenant-farmers who cultivated the grapevine under long term contracts; the produce being divided 50/50. The tenancy lasted until three-quarters of the vine had died; a feature in the contract known as the *rabassa morte*, and thus the name, Rabassaire. Luis Companys had founded and led the the Rabassaires, and its program was to gain title to the vineyards for those who worked them

For many months a struggle had been going on within the *Esquerra*; resolving itself finally into a battle between Companys and Dencás. Companys position, enjoying by far the majority support, was simply that the workers, like the middle class and the great mass of the Catalan peasantry—who *were* the *Rabassaires*—had Catalan sympathies and preferred the *Esquerra* to any party, Socialist or Monarchist, that took its orders from Madrid. José Dencás, on the other hand—his was a semi-fascist movement in which the members wore green shirts, called themselves *Escamots*, squads, and drilled with rifles—saw Catalan separatism solely as an opportunity to seize power in the four provinces under his own leadership.

President Luis Companys was indeed in the eye of a hurricane. On the ultra-left the Anarchists simply watched and waited. The *Rabassaires* cursed those in Madrid who had annulled the *ley de cultivos* passed by the *Generalitat* to allow tenants to acquire the land when they had cultivated it for fifteen years. They were ready to seize that land, now! The *Escamots* of Dencás threatened a rightist putsch which, though of a separatist nature, was hardly better than that planned by the Falange and the C.E.D.A. And against *this* background, Companys, who later would die courageously before the firing squads of

Franco, was being asked by the entire liberal left of Spain to join in action to forestall the fascism of the ruling Financial Oligarchy.

In continuity, immediately after Zamora's pronouncement of a State of War throughout Spain, President Luis Companys called General Batet, himself a Catalan, in command of the Barcelona military district. He asked that Batet place himself at the service of the "Federal Republic," meaning the *Generalitat* of Catalonia. The general equivocated, stating that the proclamation of martial law applied to all Spain.⁵

At 7:30 p.m., October 6, President Luis Companys went to the balcony of the governmental palace overlooking the tens of thousands of assembled Catalans in the square of St. James below. Companys began to speak. His prime thrust, though larded with Catalan nationalism, was directed strongly against the open fascist threat of the C.E.D.A. He declared that: "The Monarchical and Fascist powers which have been for some time attempting to betray the Republic have attained their objective. In this solemn hour, in the name of the people and of the Parliament, the Government over which I preside assumes all the functions of power in Catalonia, proclaims the Catalan State of the Federal Spanish Republic (shades of the Cantonalists of 1873) and, strengthening its relations with those who direct this general protest against Fascism, *invites them to establish the Provisional Government of the Republic in Catalonia.*"⁶

The detractors of Companys claim that he trembled as he made this pronouncement; that his real preference had been to stay with Zamora and against the rising. The facts belie the implications. For if that were the case Companys need not have, would never, in fact, have dared in the face of a revolt already lost to invite the defeated leaders of that revolt to declare themselves, *now*, the legitimate government, and to freely establish themselves in Catalonia, come what may.

The crowd, it is said, roared its approval. But that was all that it did. Confused by the almost cynical passivity of the Anarchist leaders, lacking sufficient support from the *Alianza Obrera*, dependent, really, upon the militant peasant unions of the *Rabassaires*, whose forces were only now being mobilized, and would arrive on the scene much too late; dependent, too, paradoxically, upon the *Escamots* of Dencás and Badia, Companys had little choice but to barricade himself and his 'Government of Catalonia' in the *Generalitat* and hope that the *Rabassaires* would arrive in time.

The *Generalitat* was protected by exactly one hundred members of the *Mossos de Esquadra*, armed militants of the *Esquerra*, and that was all. Dencás had retreated instantly to his offices where he remained, refusing all appeals from Companys to come to the aid of the government. At 10:00 p.m. the forces of a division of the Army, commanded by General Batet, marched to the Palace and surrounded it completely. Artillery was

⁵ Jackson, p. 152

⁶ Thomas, p. 79

moved into position and a few shells were fired. By morning Luis Companys and his Government were taken prisoner and all fighting had ceased.

Casualties throughout the city were at a minimum. The only fighting Dencás' *Escamots* had involved themselves in was, and now unexpectedly, a brief firefight with Companys' *Mossos*. Other, sporadic skirmishes, launched by the weak forces of the *Alianza*—Communists, Socialists, Left-Communists, and some workers from Peirats *Sindicatos*, cost perhaps twenty lives and as many as a hundred wounded. The tally was comparable to that of Madrid after the unsuccessful assault by the Socialist militias against the Minister of the Interior in the Puerta del Sol.

Barcelona, like Madrid, had fallen, but for different reasons. The one notable feature here was that the Republican-humanist, Companys, had stood staunch against the C.E.D.A. and the Right until the end—a far cry from the “Socialist” Besteiro's and their ilk, or the ideologues of the F.A.I. Nor had he hidden in an artist's room in Madrid; but rather had dared to go before the assembled people of Barcelona; to name the enemy as Fascism, and to challenge that enemy in battle.

José Dencás, the leader of incipient Catalan Fascism, who had kept his stalwarts in their barracks, refusing the orders of Companys, dismissed them finally, and then escaped from Barcelona through the sewers of the city to take refuge in Italy. One source claims that Dencás had been in the pay of the Monarchists all along; that he was, in fact, an *agent provocateur*.⁷

7 Brenan, p. 284

ASTURIAS!

Only in Asturias did the true potential of the Socialist rising show itself. Here were no bumbling Socialist leaders trapped by their own irrational rhetoric and infantile ineptness. Here too were a minimum of F.A.I.-istas to declaim against the movement and sabotage it as being a thing—bourgeois inspired. For it must be understood that the greater part of the forces of the C.N.T. in Asturias that supported the rising were precisely those who had split from F.A.I. leadership, and decried its infantile divisive tactics of terror squads and opposition to meaningful unity on the Left.

In Asturias there already existed a considerable degree of unity among the forces of the Left. They had long adopted the rallying cry of “U.H.P.!”—*Union de Harmanos Proletarios*. The C.N.T. had joined Caballero's *Alianza Obrera*. And, in September, when the P.C.E. Gave its adherence to the *Alianza*, it instantly became the *Frente Union*, the prototype of the coming Popular Front, United Committees of Communists, Socialists *Cenetistas* were then organized in every town and village.

Alert to the danger as posed by the Right, the *Alianza* had prepared for it—but really prepared. There was to be no tragicomic-opera rising. Guns had been surreptitiously gathered, fighting squads had been organized. Areas of attack had been assigned to each militia column.

On the night of October 4, when word of the action of Gil Robles reached them, they delayed not a second. They considered themselves serious people, not dilettantes. And they took the Socialist Executive at its word: “that if the C.E.D.A. attempted a seizure of power, all Spain, under the Socialist Party and the *Alianzas*, would instantly rise.”

That is exactly what they did. The word went out for the General Revolutionary Strike, and the Committees moved to implement it with armed insurrection.

On the morning of October Fifth, Socialist miners stormed the police barracks at Sama with sticks of dynamite. A simultaneous military confrontation took place in the town of Mieres where two hundred militants of the Communist-led miners of the area, armed with but thirty rifles, surrounded the barracks of the Civil Guard and the Town Hall. They used their few guns in such a way as to make them seem like many, firing them from a number of positions around the redoubts. The Civil and Assault Guards surrendered. The following day these same fighters, their numbers growing by the hour, seized every town and village between Mieres and the capital, Oviedo.

Joining with militant columns of Socialists and *Cenetistas* they then numbered some eight thousand. They stormed the provincial capital itself. They had no artillery and but a minimum quantity of rifles and explosives, yet within hours they had taken the major

areas of the city. On the Eighth, the small-arms factory at La Trubia was captured together with 30,000 rifles and some machineguns.

On the Seventh, news filtered through to them of the failure in Madrid and Barcelona. But the miners were so accustomed to the lies of the bourgeois media that they refused at first to accept the veracity of the reports. They continued fighting, confiscating certain businesses in Oviedo, and establishing the rationing of food and basic materials throughout the occupied territory, which now extended to the Cantabrian coast and the port city of Gijón.

By the Ninth of October all Oviedo was in the hands of the insurrectionists except for the Cathedral, and the Governor's Palace and Pelayo Barracks. The Army garrison of a thousand men, plus the remnants of the Assault and Civil Guards, had taken refuge there and could not be dislodged without artillery.

In the spirit of U.H.P., Revolutionary Committees shared power in Oviedo; likewise, the Anarchists of the C.N.T. and the Socialists and Communists shared power in Gijón, La Felguera, Mileres, Trubia, and all the captured towns and villages.

Much has been written as to exactly how the leaders and supporters of the Asturias rising conducted themselves during their short period of control of the Asturian *enclave*. Gabriel Jackson, one of the more honest historians of the Spanish War writes that: "For the best of the militant elements, the revolutionary regime was to be a demonstration of proletarian morality. The bourgeois received the same food rations as did the workers. In the hospital doctors were instructed to treat equally the government wounded and the revolutionary wounded. Non-political middle-class and professional people were to be protected, even at the risk of life, by the revolutionary militia . . . for a tiny, primitive minority who had learned class hatred without learning 'revolutionary discipline', physical liquidation of the enemy was in order. At Mieres, on the morning of October Fifth, when the Assault Guards had surrendered, the crowd had demanded the death of two particularly hated guards. The Committee had refused, *forming a circle with their own bodies to protect their prisoners*. One of the guards, crazed with fear, had broken out of the circle and been shot down."¹

Reports of atrocities by the Revolutionary Committees assumed avalanche proportions in the Rightist press during and immediately after the rising. A number of these atrocity tales persist to this day; some fostered by men who know better. Hugh Thomas, for instance, writes deliberately and with no indication of sources that: "At Sama thirty Civil Guards and forty *Asaltos* sustained a siege of a day and a half. When they surrendered they were all shot."² After the fighting ended the influential Madrid newspaper, *El Sol*,

1 Jackson, p. 156

2 Thomas, p. 81

made a thorough investigation of all atrocity stories and found not a vestige of truth in any of them, inclusive of Thomas' report. Brennan tells us that: "As to the real 'atrocities' of the Asturian miners, these were confined to the shooting in cold blood of about twenty persons, all men. Fourteen of these were shot at Turon and included a priest and six teachers of the Brothers of Christian Doctrine Several churches were burned. At La Felguera the Anarchists set fire to the church and all its images with great ceremony."³

The greater part of the province of Asturias was now in the hands of the Revolutionary Committees, and a radio station quickly installed at Turon proclaimed the Socialist Republic.

In October of '34, the Financial Oligarchy and the great landowners had settled upon a group of generals known as the 'Africanists' to be their military arm. One member of this group was short, paunchy, and at age forty, known for his courage, luck—and cruelty. His name was Francisco Franco y Bahamonde; birthplace, EL Ferrol in Galicia in 1892. The young Franco, upon graduating from the infantry academy at Toledo in 1907, was posted instantly to Morocco. There he became in quick succession, the youngest Captain, Major, Colonel, and General of the Spanish Army. He commanded the Foreign Legion from 1923 to 1927. His brother-in-law, by the marriage of his wife's sister, was Ramón Serrano Suñer, youth leader of the C.E.D.A.

The Lerrouxist Minister of War, Diego Hidalgo, had had occasion some weeks prior to the general strike and rising to call both Generals' Franco and Goded to the Peninsula on the pretext that they would participate in certain military maneuvers in the province of León. The Rightist government was already preparing to move—one way or the other.

This fact is quite interesting since it poses the question of, just how did Franco come by this exceptional invitation; to catch the eye, as it were, of the Lerroux War Minister over the heads of a half-hundred other generals of equal stature and much more seniority. The answer is equally interesting; more for the fact that it has generally been avoided to date in discussions of the Spanish Civil War.

In early 1934, Francisco Franco was the acting Commanding General of the Balaeric Islands, with his *Estado Mayor* in Palma de Mallorca. He was actually, in fact, a sort of viceroy for the financier, Juan March, who was also on the island and owned a great part of it. The War Minister, Diego Hidalgo, had occasion to visit Palma to see March, since March was the *gran patron* of Lerroux's Radical Party. It was common knowledge that Juan March *owned* the party. Hidalgo was introduced to Franco and told just how things were to be. March's sires were, essentially, orders, and the act sufficiently explains and answers the question of "why Franco was accredited to the Ministry."⁴

3 Brennan, p. 287

4 Diego Hidalgo, *Porqué fui del Ministerio de la Guerra*, Madrid, 1934, p. 80

An additional point is that the relationship between the Africanist, Franco, and the multi-millionaire and contrabandist (This last was a fact known to all who operated in the international financial crisis of the times), dated from the period of Franco's campaigns in Morocco, and the handling of certain supplies to the Army.

When the general revolutionary strike exploded in October, Franco was therefore conveniently on hand for the job, and was instantly called to the Ministry to take complete charge of putting down the revolt in Asturias.

The paunchy little general moved quickly. Regular troops in Asturias under the command of General López Ochoa would need support, some of them being undependable except for holding actions. Other units of the Army were also sympathetic to the Rebels. The chief of the air-base at León, for instance, resisted all Franco's orders, and Lt. Colonel López Bravo, Commander of the 8th battalion of Light Infantry of Africa, the first unit to leave Ceuta in Morocco for Asturias, counseled his men that, "they should not fire against their brothers."⁵

Franco then, and with the full compliance of the Government of Lerroux, ordered the Foreign Legion, the *Tercio*, with contingents of Moorish *Regulares*, under the command of Colonel Yagüe, another Africanist, and an ardent Falangist, to be instantly dispatched to put down the miners.

This decision to use colonial troops against Spanish workers; to give them *carte blanche* to commit any crime, to loot and kill in any Austrian village, had no precedent in Spanish history. The use of Moors was an abomination. Brennan writes that: "For eight hundred years the crusade against the Moors had been the central theme of Spanish history. Yet they were not being brought to fight in Asturias, that one sacred corner of Spain where the Crescent had never flown. By this single act the Spanish Right showed that neither tradition nor religion—the two things for which they professed to stand—had any meaning for them. In the terror produced in them by the rebellion of 40,00 miners, they showed that they were ready to sacrifice all their principles."⁶

Francisco Franco y Bahamonde was to repeat this exploit in 1936, and on a much heavier and bloodier scale. Simultaneously with orders to the Foreign Legion, the Civil Guard Commander, Doval, was ordered to take charge of security. Doval, whose record for sadistic ferocity had no equal, moved swiftly to the job at hand.

The government response began with the first hours of the rising. Therefore the rapid delivery of troops by ship allowed the *Tercio* and the *Regulares* to land at the ports of

5 Ibid. p. 30

6 Brennan, p. 288

Aviles and Gijón on the Eighth; to seize these cities and to effect a juncture with the columns of General López Ochoa before Oviedo on the Twelfth of October. The miners fought hard to stem their advance, defending every town and village. But they were badly outnumbered and certainly no match militarily for the forces arrayed against them. The battle aged in the streets of Oviedo for three days, until by the seventeenth nothing remained in the hands of the Revolutionary Committees but the railway station. The center of the city was in shambles. Artillery had destroyed the water and power stations, and hundreds of homes and the University Library were in ruins.

By now, obviously, the workers and their leaders knew that they stood alone; that there would be no help from any source. González Peña of the U.G.T. asked that the miners surrender; that the position was now hopeless. They refused and he resigned. It was then that the Communists came to the fore. They insisted that they fight on as best they could; that that was the only way in which they could force the government to grant freedom from the bloody reprisals that would instantly ensue with an unconditional surrender.

Mieres, where the revolt had started was, oddly enough, by October Eighteenth, the last redoubt of the heroic Revolutionary Committees of Asturias and their Socialist Government. Belarmino Tomás, Socialist Delegate on the Committee, was sent to General Ochoa to negotiate the terms of surrender. The Revolutionaries demands were simple: No Moors were to be allowed to enter the villages; nor foreign soldiers of the *Tercio*. If there was to be no guarantee of this, then the miners would fight on until the end. General Ochoa, aware that in the latter case, it might take weeks to pacify Asturias, agreed.⁷

The surrender was then concluded.

And the miners conditions were instantly trampled upon. The agreements concluded with Ochoa were superseded by the Minister of War.

"The fate of the victims then devolved on the Guardia Civil and the Foreign Legion," writes Brenan. "Thousands of arrests were made and the prisoners (except for those killed on the way) were brought to the police barracks at Oviedo. Here they were taken out and shot without any trial at all in batches. Colonel Yagüe's Foreign Legionnaires and Moors had already, as was the custom, shot all prisoners taken in the fighting. How many more fell in the execution squads of the Civil Guards it is impossible to say The miners had captured large numbers of arms; many of these could not be found. It was evident that they had been hidden. To find out where, a torture squad was organized by a certain police Major named Doval. All the devices of the worst German concentration camps were then resorted too. That this is not invention is shown by the investigations made separately by Fernando de los Ríos, Álvarez del Vayo, and Gordon Ordas and presented to the Cortes with full particulars of names, dates and signatures. The Government at first

⁷ Jackson, p. 159

refused to believe that such things were happening, but in the end grew frightened, dismissed Doval, who had to leave the country, and set its face against further executions.”⁸

The first truly Socialist revolution in Spain's history had ended. The casualties were over 3,000 dead; 7,000 wounded.

Among the dead were 100 Civil Guards, 98 soldiers and 86 *Asaltos* and *Carabineros*. The remainder were the miners and their sons and their wives. Of the more than 30,000 political prisoners taken throughout Spain as a result of the rising, the majority of these were from Asturias.

POPULAR FRONT GOVERNMENT

The movement of "October" was by far the major battle of the Spanish workers until that time. The revolutionary spirit of the working class and its capacity for armed struggle was now indisputable. Indeed, it is said that if the Spanish working class had not been steeled in the fires of October, then the masses of the people could not have withstood the force of the Fascist rising in 1936.

In spite of the fact that the October movement had been defeated, the results of the battle were by no means sterile. It had sent a veritable chill of terror up the spines of the Oligarchy, and had instantly and strongly impeded the consolidation of Gil Robles bid for powers and the installation of a fascist-corporate state by semi-legal and "parliamentary means." All was now held in abeyance.

Another aspect of the insurrection, by no means the least important, was that it represented a change in direction of the thrust of the left movement. Until that point the working class had forever attached its political strength to the tow-rope of bourgeois-republicanism, or dissipated it in the blind alleys of Anarchism. After October it became, effectively, the leading force in Spain's march toward democracy.

Until October the Socialist Party had been the most important of the working class parties in Spain. *After* October the influence of the Communist Party rapidly began to supplant that of the Socialists in many areas; spreading to every corner of Spain; into the unions at all levels, the youth, the peasant cooperatives, and among the intellectuals.

The Socialist leaders and especially Largo Caballero, who was visited in prison by José Díaz, refused Díaz' proposal that the Socialists and the P.C.E. jointly accept all responsibility for the movement of October. The P.C.E. then publicly accepted full responsibility for the defeat themselves; thereby, with the act, winning great prestige among the Socialist militants and the workers generally, who were well aware of the active role of the P.C.E. cadres and leaders in October.

Dolores Ibárruri writes that, "The people had been given the opportunity to see three different methods in action:

1. The Socialist program, all-inclusive, professing to monopolize the leadership of an insufficiently prepared revolutionary movement and failing in the undertaking.
2. That of the Anarchists who, because of their sectarianism, shied away from a battle which could have been decisive and thus played into the hands of the enemies of the working class.
3. That of the Communists, who participated openly in the movement, leading it in some places, fighting for victory, and publicly assuming the responsibility for the

insurrection.”¹

The Government of Radicals and *Cedistas* had imprisoned 30,000 political prisoners, among the Asturian leaders being the Socialists, González Peña and Belarmino Tomás, and the Communist Manso. Among other jailed were Manuel Azaña, Left-Republican, Santiago Carillo of the J.S.U., and many older Socialist and Republican Ministers plus the entire government of Catalonia with Luis Companys at its head. The Left press was prohibited, union offices were padlocked, and all constitutional guarantees were suspended.

Despite the brutality of the repression, however, the 'victory' of reaction was pyrrhic. For them October had indeed been a manifestation of weakness rather than strength. So much was this true that by December of '34, a powerful resurgence of the movement began anew, throughout the country, which the government could neither halt nor hinder.

The most impressive phenomenon, politically, was the absence of any defeatist spirit.² The very opposite was true, for the reverses and bitter experiences of the debacle had served principally to create a new and much stronger unity of the people. The U.G.T. and the C.N.T., though now illegal, remained intact and were actually strengthened: this in bright contrast to the total destruction of the earlier (February) Socialist *Schutzbund* rising in Vienna.

With popular pressure mounting, Gil Robles softened his language and curtailed his pro-fascist declarations. The C.E.D.A. was now in no position to establish a clerical dictatorship. With this knowledge Robles settled to a continued observance of constitutional forms and collaboration with the Radicals.

The same pressures that had caused the removal of Doval in December, crested to demand that the death sentences too, be lifted. Lerroux and the Radicals, highly nervous—they were essentially petty gangsters, not Right-wing putschists—and wanting some kind of stability, agreed. The C.E.D.A., however, and therefore its Ministers, supported the death penalty. Alcalá Zamora, to his credit, reminded the government that General Sanjurjo and his co-plotters had all been reprieved in 1932. The sentences were then commuted; upon which the C.E.D.A. ministers promptly resigned.

A government crisis then ensued. Lerroux was asked by Zamora to form a new government. He did: this time with five C.E.D.A. Ministers.

But the popular pressures continued to mount.

The government was next forced to free Manuel Azaña; while the unions and political

1 Ibárruri, p. 131

2 H. Gannes, *Spain in Revolt!* N.Y., 1937, p. 66

organizations went on to reconstitute themselves, aided in this mobilization by many who were still in prison.

In May of 1935, Gil Robles was appointed War Minister by the new Lerroux government. He immediately and personally began to place the most reactionary “Africanist” officers in key positions of command. General Francisco Franco y Bahamonde was appointed chief of the forces of Morocco; General Emilio Mola Vidal, chief of the Army of Morocco; General Joaquín Fanjul Goni was named as subsecretary of the Ministry of War; General Manuel Goded Llopis, Director General of Aviation, and Colonel Aranda Mata was posted to the special and newly created '*Comandancia de Asturias*.'

This Africanist *Camarilla*, backed by the War Ministry, lifted the Colonel, Varela, to General; gave the Military Medal to Lt. Colonel Yagüe, the butcher of Oviedo, for “meritorious service,” and shifted the command of a regiment to Moscardó.

Many of the military were chosen from the so-called *Unión Militar Española* to command garrisons in strategic areas. The U.M.E. was a notorious 'secret' right-wing organization within the Army. Loyal Republican officers such as Riquelme, Manga, Saravia, Miaja, Cmaacho, Sandino, Viqueira, Hidalgo de Cisneros and others were meanwhile set aside and ignored.

Of the 80 chiefs designated in this period to command divisions, corps, and military districts, only twenty respected the protocol of offering the salute to the President of the Republic.

The U.M.E., aided by the Minister of War, expanded its role. The interior service of the corps—the secret service of the headquarters—was entrusted, on the 24th of October, 1935, to the Chief of Artillery, Luis López Varela, who then headed this organization.

The Communist Party claims to have created, as early as 1934, a counter military group called the *Unión Militar Republicanas Antifascista*; the U.M.R.A. was never to achieve sufficient strength, however, in the face of support by the War Ministry to the Africanists, to prevent the penetration of Fascist ideas into the command structure of the Army.

An example of early Fascist and U.M.E. operational control within the High Command is seen in that as early as 1935 fortifications were being built in the Sierra Guadarrama, to be used later against Madrid. Maneuvers were constantly conducted with entire divisions against cities and provinces—such as Asturias—in mock preparation of the rising to come. All these activities were presided over by Gil Robles, Franco, Goded and Fanjul.³

3 *Momentos interesantes de la Historia de España en este siglo: Preparación y desarrollo del alzamiento nacional*, Felipe Bertran Güell. Valladolid, 1969, p. 144

The naming of the C.E.D.A. chieftain to the War Ministry obviously augmented the Fascist threat, stimulating additional currents of working class unity. Within a few days of the provocative act, fraught with peril for the people, the P.C.E., in a meeting held in the Monumental Cinema (June 2 of 1935), proposed to worker and republican party alike that a *Popular Front* of all Spanish liberal, progressive and Left forces be created *now*, throughout Spain. The following points were presided as a programmatic base:⁴

1. Confiscation of the land of the great landowners . . . without indemnity; the land to be given immediately and finally to the poor farmers, and to the agricultural workers.
2. Liberation of the peoples oppressed by Spanish imperialism, conceding them the right to freely decide their own destiny; and these inclusive of Catalonia, Euzkadi, Galicia and Morocco.
3. An immediate general betterment of the conditions of the working classes; adjustment of wages etc., to be made through the appropriate syndicates. Absolute liberty in the right of assembly; to a free press, to the strike, and to freedom of speech.
4. Liberty for all imprisoned revolutionaries. Total amnesty for all those imprisoned and persecuted for their political and social activities.⁵

And here, again, to those who slyly suggest that the P.C.E. followed the dictates of the C.I., the lie is given. For this action took place months prior to the call for “joint people's fronts against fascism” by Georgi Dimitrov at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. The idea of the *Frente Popular* as having first originated within the Communist International and *not* with the Communist Party of Spain as a result of the very conditions of the Spanish body-politic, has been an outright lie perpetuated through the years by all those who would vilify the P.C.E. and the Spanish Republic.

This call of José Díaz received little attention at first from either the Socialist or Left-Republican leadership. It instantly, however, attracted immense enthusiasm among the workers, leading quickly to the creation of many local, multiple committees of the *Frente Popular*. The people were quite aware that it had been their unity alone that had forced a commutation of the death penalty of thousands of militants; and that it would be their unity alone that would bring amnesty to the 30,000 still in prison.

It is notable too, that the lessons from the fighting in October, in-re the discipline and unity of the P.C.E. and its orientation, had created a considerable increase in Communist influence within the mass of the Socialist and Anarchist workers. This was reflected in a qualitative move toward Leninist concepts by Santiago Carillo, José Cazorla, Federico Melchor, Ignacio Gallego, and others. It was at this point that relations between the

4 If there are those who think that this is too much C.P. propaganda, recall that it is the *birth* of the Popular Front Government we are writing about.

5 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 67

Socialist youth, 200,000 strong, and the Communist youth, listed at 50,000, began their move toward unification.⁶

Claridad, the Left-Socialist organ of Caballero (Prieto controlled *El Socialista*), commented favorably on the Popular Front decisions of the P.C.E. when they were published. And the P.C.E., seizing upon this positive attitude pushed for a unification of the two parties based upon the postulates of the Congress, and achieved thereby, at least a betterment of relations and the possibility of a political dialogue.

This led in December to the Communist bloc of the C.G.T.U. unions entering in to the U.G.T.⁷

These examples of growing working class unity both stimulated and alarmed the bourgeois-republicans. Their agitation was immediately shown in the creation of a campaign of public meetings called by Azaña throughout the country.

Azaña's prestige had deservedly risen as a result of his having been jailed in October. His trial before the Cortes, "had put them all (the liberal-left leaders) on notice that the Fascist-Right would stop at nothing to destroy them."⁸ The parties of Azaña and Marcelino Domingo fused to form the *Izquierda Republicana*. The Galician liberals of Casares Quiroga joined them. Professor Felipe Sánchez Román and Martínez Barrio agreed upon a program of cooperation between their three parties. At one of the public gatherings addressed by Azaña, at Comillas outside the gates of the Capital, he spoke to an audience of over 400,000—by far the greatest political gathering in Spain's history.

The end of 1935, therefore, witnessed the political phenomenon of a general *re-approchement* between the Azaña and Prieto forces on the one hand, and the Revolutionary Socialists and the Communists on the other. The Anarchists brooded on the sidelines, having done nothing; doing nothing, and therefore accomplishing nothing. If the affairs of the Right had been as equally sterile, the history of Spain might have been a great deal different.

The Rightists had tentatively lost the control of the streets. They were also in danger of losing both the parliament and the government. To make matters worse the corrupt Radicals were caught in a ridiculous financial scandal having to do with the introduction of a new type of roulette wheel, the *straperlo*, by Strauss, a Dutch financial adventurer. Radical Ministers, Lerroux's nephew, etc. were all somehow involved. Lerroux and many others were forced to resign. Señor Chapaprieta, the then Prime Minister quarreled with

6 Jackson, p. 207. Also on this page Mr. Jackson gives us yet another figure for C.P. strength (50,000) and again without a source.

7 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 68

8 Jackson, p. 185

the C.E.D.A. over the proposed budget, upon which Gil Robles and *his* friends resigned. The Africanists were left alone to chew their nails.

Don Niceto Alcalá Zamora then tried every possible combination to achieve a new administration. He failed. Upon which he dissolved the Cortes and called for new elections.

The time was January 4th, 1936; the elections were called for February 16th, 1936. Alcalá Zamora appointed Portela Valladares, ex-minister of the Monarchy to form a caretaker government.

It took exactly one week between the time that Portela dismissed the Cortes and announced for new elections, for the Popular Front Pact to be created. On January 15th the Left Republicans of Azaña, the Republican Union of Martínez Barrio, the *Catalan Esquerra*, and the Communist and Socialist Parties formed an electoral alliance. Its minimum program called for a more rapid land reform, an immediate amnesty, for the 30,000 political prisoners, and a return to the policies of the first *biennium*.

A coalition list for elections to the Cortes was established, allotting in advance the proportion of seats to go to each party. A final agreement—and to those who fear Popular Fronts with Communists, this should be interesting—was that all agreed that the government should be composed only of Republicans, while the Socialists and Communists were pledged to support that government for the purpose of fulfilling the announced “bourgeois-democratic” program.

The Left Socialists and Communists would support the government in the fulfillment of a minimum program, but would refuse to share responsibility, in this case, with the bourgeois parties.

As a result of the ridiculous debacle of the Radicals of Lerroux, the Rightists, of necessity, were forced to reorganize. The so-called 'National Bloc', originated by Calvo Sotelo after a voyage to Italy, and consisting of *Renovación Española* and the *Tradicionalista* groups, whose leaders were such men as the Duke of Alba, Albiñana, Lequerica, Arilza, the father Gafo, Maeztu, Ansaldo and other ultra-reactionaries, wanted to strike a blow immediately. The C.E.D.A., falling back on its astute Jesuit training, termed such a precipitate gesture, suicidal . . .

In the name of the National Bloc, Ansaldo suggested to the Generals' Franco, Fanjul and Goded, in the War Ministry, that they rise now. They vacillated a few hours and then decided that “now” was not the time.⁹

9 *Memoirs d'un monarchiste espagnol*, Juan Antonio Ansaldo, Monaco, 1953. p. 39

The Rightists, according to the Communists, accepted the elections with clenched teeth, for their road to power now could lay only in violence and the military coup, whereas the forces of the Left could succeed through the media of the elections. The peaceful road; the parliamentary road could and would determine the future of Spain—if allowed.¹⁰

On February 16th, the Sunday of the Carnival before Lent, all Spain went to the polls. Approximately 34,000 Civil Guards and as many as 17,000 Assault Guards were on duty. There was a minimum of violence. The final tabulation was as follows:

POPULAR FRONT AND BASQUE NATIONALISTS 4,838,449

PARTIES OF THE CENTER . . . 449,320

PARTIES OF THE RIGHT . . . 3,996,931

NUMBER OF DEPUTIES:

SOCIALISTS . . . 99

REPUBLICAN LEFT . . . (Azaña) 87

REPUBLICAN UNION . . . (Martínez Barrio) 39

CATALAN ESQUERRA . . . (Companys) 36

COMMUNISTS . . . 17

TOTAL 278

NATIONAL FRONT (RIGHT)

C.E.D.A. . . . (Gil Robles) 88

AGRARIANS . . . (Landowners) 11

MONARCHISTS . . . (Calvo Sotelo) 13

INDEPENDENTS . . . 10

TRADITIONALISTS . . . (Carlists) 9

TOTAL 134

CENTER:

CENTER PARTY . . . (Portela Valladares) 16

LLIGA . . . (Catalan Right) 12

RADICALS (Lerroux) 4

PROGRESSIVES . . . (Alcalá Zamora) 6

BASQUES . . . 10

OTHERS . . . 7

TOTAL 55

¹¹

And thus the Popular Front of the Spanish Republic was brought to power by the majority

¹⁰ *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 69

¹¹ (The citation does not appear on this page due an error committed by Landis, but it is noted in the Notes section of the book. I have made an approximation of where the citation may be. – Transcriber) Publication of the Spanish Embassy, London, England: Secretariat of the Spanish Parliament (Cortes) 1936.

mandate of the people. Its impact was not confined to Spain alone. In France, England; in all the countries of the Western World where Fascism was not a most tangible threat, the victors and the *form* of their victory was well noted. It was to be repeated in France in April and May, with both French Socialists and Communists making tremendous gains. On July 4, 1936, Leon Blum formed the first Popular Front Government of the French Republic. The breath of a dual spring blew softly over Europe. For, as of that moment, those who had feared the seemingly omnipotent onslaught of Fascism, had found a tentative weapon to halt its march toward apocalypse. The key to the maintenance of the strength of that weapon—absolute unity on the left—was the *a-priori* fact they had yet to fully understand.

A footnote to the elections and their immediate aftermath is hereby described by Álvarez del Vayo:

“The morning after the elections the Popular Front victory was fully confirmed. At noon, Señor Largo Caballero and I, as elected members for Madrid, called on the Prime Minister to protest against the first of the Fascist assaults, which had taken place that very day in the streets of Madrid. (Members of the Falange had fired on a demonstration chiefly composed of women, who were marching to the prison to bring the political prisoners the good news for the election.) Señor Portela Valladares received us with courtesy, and said unhesitatingly: 'In you I greet today's victors.' A year later, during the war, Señor Portela Valladares, when he attended a meeting of the Cortes in Valencia for the express purpose of proclaiming to the world that the Parliament formed after the elections, over which he had presided, was 'truly representative of the nation's will,' disclosed that our call on the Prime Minister had *not* been the most important he had received that day. 'At four in the morning on the day after the elections,'—I quote Señor Portela Valladres—'I was visited by Señor Gil Robles and Calvo Sotelo who proposed that I should assume dictatorial powers, and who offered me the support of all the groups defeated in the elections. At seven that evening the same suggestion was made to me by the General Francisco Franco.'”¹²

The electoral victory of the Popular Front Government of Spain in February, 1936, has been argued in many ways; with the figures so juggled in certain analyses of the Right as to prove that the victory was actually theirs. The Left on the other hand—the “Left” in this case being the Popular Front, which was quite different from the real Left, as we shall see—included the separatist Basque Nationalist Party, which was strongly catholic-conservative in its politics. Essentially, if the Basque vote were to be added to the Center, and both of these given to the Right, then indeed would the final tally be almost equal.

There are no exact figures on the votes for Socialists, Republicans, C.E.D.A., etc. But the proportionate representation given each party as a result of the total vote indicates that

¹² *Freedom's Battle*, Álvarez del Vayo, Alfred Knopf, N.Y., 1940, pp. 5-6.

the Republican vote within the Popular Front was at least as large as the combined Communist-Socialist vote and those others of the Left Independents, inclusive, of, perhaps, 700,000 votes of the Anarcho-Syndicalists who at this time had voted for the amnesty.

That is to say that in terms of a true vote in-re the simplistics of capitalism versus socialism, the then grouping of Right-Center-Republicans outnumbered the bona-fide Left at three to one. Considering, however that a large percentage of the Anarchist votes had gone to Republicans rather than to Socialists or Communists, and that in the villages, for the simple reason that they had to live there, great numbers of villagers voted Right who were strongly Left, the real tally would be like two to one. The true Left, in other words, was still outnumbered; with about 33% of the total vote.

A salient point of the Popular Front, however, was that its Republican adherents wanted no part of the Center or of the Right; certainly no dictatorship from any source. They were bourgeois and they wanted a bourgeois state of laws, governed by a mandate of the people, preferably themselves. But when one writes of Republicans, one writes primarily of the mass of Republican voters; not the leadership. The difference being, a limited but positive idealism on the part of the mass, and a propensity for class-collaboration and corruption on the part of the leadership.

Considering all these facts one must conclude that the Popular Front vote was *no* mandate for “The Dictatorship of the Proletariat,” the nationalization of industry, or the creation of communes in the areas of agriculture, as *some* would have *others* believe But it *was* the form of government under which these concepts—as of that moment in time—could be advocated and worked for freely, and with a minimum of interference from the Republican bourgeoisie.

Fascism would most certainly not grant the Left this right. Indeed, the prime objective condition here was that the Financial Oligarchy could not countenance the continued existence of the Popular Front for precisely these same reasons. That the ultra-left, the F.A.I., the P.O.U.M., etc., could not understand this, to a point where they would fight the Popular Front far harder than they would ever fight the real enemy was, over the years, the tragedy of the Spanish Republic.

Alone among the parties of the Front and of the Left, the P.C.E. did seem to understand the above facts. This is not to say that hundreds of thousands of socialists, republicans, anarchists, workers, intellectuals and students did not. But it is to say that their organized leadership seemed forever abysmally ignorant of the facts.

That a Rightist rebellion was now imminent was common knowledge; to everybody, that is, except the majority of the Republican leaders and some Socialists. The threat of it lay

like a miasmic cloud over the length and breadth of the country, ominous and foreboding. The force of the rising, when it came, would be disciplined and terrible. And there it would be but one weapon in the people's arsenal to hold it and destroy it. That was the now proven weapon of Left-Republican unity embodied within the structure of the Popular Front of the Spanish Republic.

The battles won thus far, for amnesty and for the restoration of all gains of the 1931 elections, had been won within that structure; had been won by the whole of the people who had fought for and created the Front; who had worked for the Front; who had voted for the Front, and who had not sat on their hands.

The P.C.E. too had fought wholeheartedly for the Popular Front; were in fact its initiators, its creators. And it was, perhaps, because of this reason, that they continued an almost selfless support to this same "unity of the people" that their strength grew rapidly from the days of February to the days of July.

FEBRUARY TO JULY

Portela Valladares resigned precipitously from the Government, not even waiting for the protocol of the formation of Azaña's cabinet. Azaña became Prime Minister to the echo of hundreds of thousands of voices celebrating their victory in the streets.

On the international front, the forces of Fascism moved rapidly. On the Fifth of March, 1936, Hitler reoccupied the Rhineland in a show of force. On the Fifth of May, Mussolini occupied the capital of Abyssinia, bringing the colonial war against that country to a tragic and bloody close. The total passivity of England and France in the face of these and other moves was not only indicative of where their true interests lay, but was simultaneously a stimulation and a green-light to the two Fascist countries to plan new aggression.

Despite the predilection of some areas of the Left, then and today, to ignore the international repercussions of the birth of Spain's Popular Front as incidental and with little bearing upon the internal problems of the country—the evidence is all to the contrary.

So also is this true of the appearance of the Popular Front Government of France. For the formation of *two* Popular Front Governments had instantly and seriously posed the first decisive threat to the Italo-German fascist drive for power. Their very existence as an alternative to the rise of incipient fascism in every country in Europe posed a problem most certainly not confined to Spain and France alone. For it was obvious to the two Fascist powers and to the Right generally, that if these two countries, Spain and France, would opt to defend Western Europe with a policy of collective security then, together with the Soviet Union in the East, a very powerful force for peace could be created. Germany and Italy would then find their policies of political and military aggression more difficult. And the policies of the United States and England which seemed in deed, and in fact, to encourage a Fascist *drang-nach-osten* against the Soviet Union, would be defeated.

Conversely then, the prevention of just such an alignment became the number one priority for Nazi-Germany and Fascist Italy. Likewise, but for different reasons, the imperialist circles of England, France, and the United States, would also opt for the destruction—or subversion—of the two Popular Fronts.

In March of 1936, General José Sacanell Sanjurjo flew from his villa in Portugal to Berlin. He was received by Adolf Hitler as an *official* representative of the Spanish Cortes, as he no doubt thought he would soon be. Accompanied by high military and civilian personalities such as the head of the Nazi espionage service, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, and the two future German ambassadors to Spain, Wilhelm von Faupel and Eberhard von Stohrer, Sanjurjo visited arms factories and negotiated for the help the Financial Oligarchy

would need for the rebellion. The military attaché of Spain's Embassy, Colonel Juan Atienza Beigbeder, took part in these negotiations.¹ Nazi Germany was intensifying its efforts to aid the coming rebellion.

Italy too, prepared. And Spain's Oligarchy accelerated its activities on the home front. The Right lost no chance to express its pro-fascist sentiments in the Cortes, the press, the Army, and from the pulpit. Crimes against the Left were on the order of the day: anything to provoke hatred and create chaos, with the resultant dislocation of normal life, closed factories and hunger was considered a weapon in the plan of the rising.

And, though until now the leader of the C.E.D.A., Gil Robles, had been the heart of the counter-revolutionary forces, this was no longer true. For Gil Robles had been the symbol of the intent by the Right to seize power legally—and he had lost! The defeat of the *bienio negro* and the policies of the Right in the electoral campaign had been, above all, the defeat of the ideas of Gil Robles.

After February 16, the Oligarchy decided for rebellion, pure and simple. All Fascist and other Right organizations prepared for armed violence against the people. The C.E.D.A. youth movement, *Juventud Acción Popular*, or J.A.P., educated by Gil Robles himself, went over almost *en-masse* to the Falange. It is notable too that until the very moment that the hierarchy gave its nod to Fascism as the *form* under which the insurrection would be generally conducted, the F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., or Falange, had never achieved a membership of over 25,000, and had elected no single representative to the Cortes of February. A final gesture toward the consolidation of the new plan was for the Oligarchy to channel all available funds directly to the Africanists, who were given the military responsibility for the organization of the rebellion.²

In assuming State Power, Azaña, as it was known he would do, formed a Cabinet of Republicans only. The P.C.E. demanded that an “authentic Popular Front Government be formed,” but all other parties opposed this solution and Azaña was left to do as he pleased. He wanted to govern alone! He and his cohorts thought, naïvely, to tame, or to de-fang the Right in this way. He had most obviously learned nothing from the lessons of 1931-1936.

Then, on the third week of April, the Cortes deposed Don Niceto Alcalá Zamora, for amongst other things, his having permitted the C.E.D.A. to enter the Government. Martínez Barrio, President of the Cortes, was then temporarily the President of the Republic, as provided by the Constitution.

A new President must be elected, however. And though Azaña favored Felipe Sánchez Román, a moderate Republican, he had been one of those who refused to sign the

1 *Pravda*. March 12, 1936. Moscow

2 “*How France financed his War*,” J.R. Hubbard, *Journal of Modern History*, Chicago, Dec., 1963.

Manifiesto of the Popular Front. This automatically made him unacceptable to the Left. On May 8th, with the Monarchists and Cedists boycotting the elections, Don Manuel Azaña, himself, was elected to the presidency of the Spanish Republic.

He instantly, and with the sure knowledge of the professional politician, offered the office of Prime Minister to Indalecio Prieto. But Prieto, faced with the opposition of the Socialist Executive, was forced to decline. The high office was then offered to Azaña's personal friend and colleague, Don Santiago Casares Quiroga. Quiroga, though ill at the time, accepted.

That Indalecio Prieto had been forced to decline at all was sharply indicative of the cleavage within the Socialist Party leadership. To the far right was Besteiro, then Prieto, Zugazagoitia, Asúa, etc., then Dr. Juan Negrín, Álvarez del Vayo and Largo Caballero, in that order. Prieto's pronounced position was akin to that of the now despised Besteiro: that *all* strikes and disorders, regardless of their causes, would only drive the middle classes into the arms of the Oligarchy, and to armed rebellion and Fascism. He thereby placed the onus for the coming Rightists insurrection exactly where the Rights themselves placed it—upon the shoulders of Spain's working class and the poor.

But times had changed. The political maturity of the Spanish people as a whole had been raised to a new and profound level. The reformist solutions of 1910 fell far short of the needs and potential of 1936.

Prieto had further compromised himself in that he had fled to France with the defeat of October. And though he had returned clandestinely a year later, he had not shown his face in public until after the amnesty of the Popular Front victory.

He then participated strongly in the attack on Zamora; some say to recoup his own somewhat tattered prestige. In barnstorming the country he was literally shouted down in almost every town and village by the rank-and-file socialist workers and peasants; and especially by the members of the youth organization of the Socialist Party. They looked upon him as a reformist of the worst stripe, on the order of Besteiro. In Cuenca, May 1, 1936, he told his audience that: "Violence will consolidate nothing, neither democracy, nor socialism, nor communism; church burnings and street brawls will lead only to fascism." He insisted too that, "Capitalism still had an essential role to play in the economic program."³

In the face of the avowed Fascist menace Prieto's position would seem at least partly acceptable; as one of Socialist Republican conciliation in line with the concepts of the Popular Front. He had again, however, ignored all Fascist provocations and Rightist responsibilities for the difficulties facing the Republic. And he had, again, placed the blame

3 Jackson, pp. 205-206

upon the people. An additional contradiction in Prieto's thinking was that despite his limited collaboration and aid to Azaña he in no way made the slightest effort to use this support as pressure upon the government for the needed economic and social transformation with which to attack the base of reaction. His position was therefore suspect within his own party.

To the right of Prieto, Julián Besteiro followed his usual bent. As was expected he adopted Azaña's position—no Socialists in the government; but not for the ultra-left reasons of Caballero. Indeed, Besteiro “remained what he was, the social-democrat, the constant appeaser in the socialist camp—the collaborator with the bourgeoisie.”⁴

The schism between Largo Caballero and Indalecio Prieto, already of long duration had reached a point of no return as early as July of 1935. For it was then that the young intellectuals among Largo's supporters founded a new weekly, soon to be a daily, named *Claridad*. It came out in opposition to the official Party organ, *El Socialista*, controlled by Prieto. The purpose of the youth was to reach the mass of the party, those already conditioned events of October and the consequent prestige of the Communist Party, with the message that the Besterios and Prietos had deformed the traditions of the Spanish Socialist Party. They pointed to the revered founder of the organization, Pablo Iglesias, who taught always the eventual necessity of a revolutionary seizure of power. The Soviet Union and its first and second five years plans, and its international opposition to the developing fascist menace were constant topics for editorials and articles. In some ways *Claridad* had taken the place of the Communist organ, *Mundo Obrero*, which had been suspended completely from the rising of October, thru January 2, of 1936.

The hero of the Socialist Youth, then, was Largo Caballero. To them he was the epitome of the proletarian revolutionary. Besteiro had opposed the rising in October. Prieto had fled to safety beyond the frontier. Caballero had been jailed and had conducted himself courageously. It is said that in the company of many of these same fiery intellectuals he had studied the works of Marx and Lenin for the first time, and had made his decision to use all his powers to place the Socialist Party on a revolutionary footing.

By the end of 1935 the overwhelming majority of the socialist workers and peasants, the U.G.T., and the youth favored Caballero over Prieto. Local Party elections in many cities and provinces such as Madrid, Badajoz, Murcia and Málaga gave decisive victories to the pro-Caballero slates.⁵ On December 21, 1935, the editors of *Claridad* stated that “the task of the moment was to consolidate the bourgeois-republic, but that inevitably the class struggle would sharpen under that regime, and that the Party must prepare for the

4 This, added to Caballero's position of “no Socialists in the Government,” could only add to the developing confusion and disarray of the Government.

5 Jackson, p. 206

advance to Socialism.”⁶

In March, after the victory of the Popular Front, the Left Socialist newspaper called for the first time for the unification of the Socialist and Communist Parties, and of the U.G.T. and the C.N.T. “Spain,” it declared, “was to become a confederation of the Iberian peoples, including Morocco, with the right of self-determination for each people.”⁷

Caballero, suspicious of the Communists for reasons rooted in his own past, opposed unification. But even then such men as Álvarez del Vayo, Santiago Carrillo, Carlos de Baraibar and others favored unification. These same youth leaders, according to the historian, Gabriel Jackson, moved in an atmosphere of euphoria, “intoxicated with the assurance that they represented ‘the wave of the future,’ they expected that in the proposed fusions they would dominate the Communists and educate the C.N.T. masses to their way of thinking. They proposed to expel Besteiro from the Party on the ground that he was not a Marxist. Prieto was at best a ‘reformist,’ at worst a would-be Mussolini, planning a Azaña-Prieto coup.”⁸

Caballero's position at the head of his troops was simple. He considered it convenient to allow the Republicans to “waste themselves governing.” For he was confident that history would grant the ensuing power—after the fall—to the Socialists. His speeches hid little of the clarity of his young Left followers. They devolved on many occasions into left-wing clichés against “collaboration with the bourgeoisie” etc. His posturing showed that he had little understanding, actually, of the true class forces present within the parliament structure of the Popular Front, or of the possibilities of using these forces against the Fascist enemy. Gerald Brenan has written caustically that: “Had Caballero been indeed the Spanish Lenin . . . he would have made terms with Azaña and allowed the Socialists to enter the government (though not with the same perspective as Prieto) *It was because he was at heart a social-democrat playing at revolution that he did not.*”⁹

Basically neither Prieto nor Caballero understood the importance of the Popular Front, its corresponding role in the fight against Fascism, nor the diverse forms existent within its structure, inside and outside the parliament.

6 Ibid. p. 206

7 Ibid. p. 207

8 Ibid. p. 208

9 Brenan, p. 305. Brenan, at this point, gives a very detailed and interesting analysis of the Right and Left Socialists in-re the Govenrment of Azaña. The one singular problem in Brenan's work is his obvious anti-communist phobia. Wherever it intrudes his materiel suffers. Example: after discussing the Socialist position, he moves to that of the Communists—and promptly dismisses them, saying that according to Krivitsky they had only 3,000 members; that they, themselves, claimed 20,000 at the end of 1935, bu nobody believed them. One can ask Brenan, if such was the case, just why the J.S.U. with an admitted (by everyone) membership of some 200,000 young Socialists, would even consider joining with the Communist Youth; or the P.S.O.E., itself, consider merging with the P.C.E. if that organization's membership was but 3,000

The proclaimed position of the P.C.E. in-re the Azaña Government was simply that, while they would give loyal and and defense against reaction, they would simultaneously reserve the right to criticize the government, to the end that it would seriously comply with the programs of the Popular Front. They demanded the rapid implementation and the total realization by democratic means of the questions of the land; of the church and its power; of the restructuring of the Army, and of all needed economic reforms.¹⁰

The number of effectives in the P.C.E. had made it the strongest of the parties of the organized Left. If any doubt remains as to this fact, the following data should dispel it once and for all.

In April of 1936, the Socialist Youth, the greatest of the youth organizations of Spain, having some 200,000 members, joined with the Communist Youth with a membership of 50,000.¹¹ Together they formed the *Juventud Socialista Unificada*, the Unified Socialist Youth. An idea of the strength of this quarter of a million organized militants in a country with a population of but twenty-six million can best be understood by an equivalent comparison. If such a youth group existed in these United States in the year 1972, for example, the Nixon-Agnew administration would then be confronted, not with a fragmented sub-culture of semi-anarchistically inclined youth with a penchant for dropping out of the scene entirely—but with some *two millions* of young people in an organized militant association of Socialist-Communist Youth!

Interesting, isn't it? This moreso since our "historians" have never examined the importance of this salient fact, but rather have sought to deprecate it; to hide it; to otherwise deny its existence. We have seen that the 100,000 member P.C.E. had emerged as the strongest of the parties of the Left. But this is best understood against the background of its massive influence within the J.S.U. and its 200,000 members; within the U.G.T. and its almost 2,000,000 members; the Socialist Party itself, with its 60,000 members—the greater portion of whom were Left Socialists and not followers of Besteiro or Prieto, and finally the P.S.U.C., the Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia, born later of an amalgam of the Socialist and Communist Parties.

The P.C.E. at no time dominated these organizations of the Socialist Left. They hardly had to. For the areas of agreement were in most cases far greater than the areas of disagreement. And *therein lay the strength of the Left-Socialist-Communist coalition*.

At the risk of being repetitive the fact that a Left-Socialist-Communist coalition existed must be emphasized. For it was this coalition that would shortly be the heart and soul of

¹⁰ *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 87

¹¹ Jackson, p. 207. Also see Brenan, p. 308. In this case Brenan gets his dates wrong—anti-communism does strange things to some people's heads—he writes that: "A few days *after* the civil war broke out the whole body (J.S.U.) under their Socialist secretary, Carillo, went over to the Communist Party. At one swoop Caballero lost some 200,000 of his most active supporters."

the resistance of the Spanish people to the onslaught of *world* fascism.

The P.C.E. had also energetically applied itself to the creation of Popular Front Committees in every town and village. "Anti-Fascist Organizations of the Masses," they were called; and the influence of the P.C.E. was again extended, inclusive of the fact that they recruited heavily from these new, grassroots groupings.

The presence of seventeen Communist deputies in the Cortes was also a new and extraordinary fact. The P.C.E. writes of its efforts as having, "brought to the Parliament a breath of fresh air demonstrating that the tribune of Parliament could, indeed, be a most efficient front-line position for revolutionary struggle."¹²

Many writers, non-communists and even some rightists, have belatedly underscored the progressive character of the policies pursued by the Communists during this period. The political line of the P.C.E. from *its* point of view, was clear and conclusive: "To aid the Government of the Republic on the basis of honoring the program of the Popular Front."¹³ Its cadres were oriented toward the peaceful development, by parliamentary means, of the democratic revolution.

The Anarchists will most certainly attest to this. But between the Fascist accusation of a Communist plot to seize power and the Anarchist accusation of a Communist sell-out to a bourgeois parliament the immediate observation would be that you cannot have it both ways. The Anarchists were correct in observing that the P.C.E. chose to work with a Republican Parliament; that this act was a sell-out is something else again that demands substantial proof other than the F.A.I. facsimile of "Bell, Book, and Candle." The Communists state that insofar as their Party was concerned, and especially under the particular historical circumstances—it was but one, if not the best method of defending the interests of the workers and peasants etc., inclusive of the interests of the *petit-bourgeois* against the Financial Oligarchy and the threat of imminent Fascist rebellion.

¹² *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 88

¹³ *Ibid.* (loc-cit,) p. 88

PROVOCATIONS

It is a matter of record that Republican, Socialist, Syndicalist and Communist deputies to the Cortes consistently denounced the insane spirit of civil war that permeated almost every sentence of Rightist oratory. All demanded that the Quiroga cabinet take drastic and immediate measures against the now quite visible preparations for rebellion.

Indalecio Prieto, in his speech at Cuenca on the occasion of the 2nd phase of the elections, strongly denounced the Rightist maneuver of placing General Franco's name in the lists. "They hope even now," he said, "for the Parliamentary investiture of a military chieftain."¹

But, if Prieto attacked the patrons of the candidacy of Franco, he simultaneously excluded Franco from that attack, saying further that, "I accept completely his (Franco's) declaration of being 'Apart from politics,'"² at the very movement that Franco was applying the match to the fire.

The all-republican government of Azaña-Quiroga continued along its bumbling, arrogant way until the very eve of the fateful days of July, 1936. They most decidedly lacked either the spirit or the desire to face up to the Fascist conglomerate of the Oligarchy's Falange Africanist Cedista cabal. Instead of accepting the proffered aid of all elements of the Popular Front, they rejected it out of hand. Instead of initiating and encouraging the organization of the people—they went in deadly fear of them. They demonstrated a sluggishness in the application of the programs of the Popular Front while simultaneously allowing the web of military conspiracy to be woven with completely immunity. They refused completely to listen to warnings from the great unions of the U.G.T., the C.N.T. and the parties of the Left.³ The few measures taken against the Right, such as the detention of certain Falange chieftains, inclusive of José Primo de Rivera, were too little and too late. Considering the breadth and gravity of the plans of the Oligarchy, the arrest of a handful of Falangists was grotesque.

The best that can be said of the Azaña-Quiroga government is that, shackled by the absurd concept that "The State is above all classes," they hoped to create some impossible equilibrium between the forces of reaction and the forces of the people. In pursuit of this chimera they neglected to apply even minimum measures against the most implacable enemies of the Republic. Instead they joined with them at tea parties and whatever. And in their stubborn blindness helped to braid the very rope with which they were later strangled.

An applied policy of energetic anti-fascism could have saved the country from ensuing

1 *"El Socialista,"* May 2, 1936. (Newspaper)

2 Ibid.

3 Ibárruri, p. 129

tragedy. But by invoking the illusion of “equilibrium”; of “calm”; the Republican leaders actually encouraged Spanish reaction to choose the path of civil war.

Among the many lies advanced by the Right and persistently echoed by historians of the “castle” variety, is that the insurrection took place to bring an end to the state of chaos and disorder reigning in Spain. The facts of the matter are somewhat different. The disorders prior to July 18, 1936, were certainly of a nature to demand the immediate attention of the government. A large percentage of them, however, were provoked precisely by elements of the Right for the sole purpose of being injurious to the government and creating the atmosphere for the rising itself.

Applying the methods used by the Nazis in 1932, when they unleashed their war of nerves against the Weimar Republic, the Spanish Oligarchy and their Fascist cabal embarked upon a systematic campaign to destroy the normal life of the country. This was done immediately upon the victory at the polls of the Popular Front. Financiers and businessmen alike exported capital, closed factories, prolonged labor disputes which otherwise would have been easily settled; and in many areas left crops unharvested, or burnt them to force farm workers into further unemployment and despair.

Simultaneously with this, the Falange and J.A.P. launched its corps of *pistoleros* into the streets in renewed and bloody battle against the leaders of the Unions and the political parties of the Popular Front. Hugh Thomas writes: “Riding around in motor cars armed with machineguns, the *señoritos* of the Falange did everything they could to increase disorder, from an attempted assassination of the author of the Constitution of the Republic, the Socialist lawyer, Jiménez de Asúa, to church burning—which would be attributed to the Anarchists.”⁴

Bombs were exploded at Socialist meetings and in the home of Eduardo Ortega y Gasset, brother to the famed philosopher. The Socialist Malumeres, Director of the Weekly, *La Reunión*, was murdered in Santander. In San Sebastián the Director of *La Prensa*, Manuel Andrés, was shot down in the streets. On the Thirteenth of April the Magistrate, Manuel Pedregal, fell beneath a hail of Falange bullets. And on the Fourteenth of April at a Republican gathering a bomb was exploded in the seating area where Azaña himself was expected; this following an attempt on the life of Largo Caballero and the assassination of the Republican Captain of Engineers, Faraudo. The victims were in the hundreds.

No method was left unused. Scandals in parliament and in the press were expanded to ridiculous proportions. All incidents, whether an altercation in a tavern or a crime of passion, from assassinations by pistoleros to the most insignificant labor dispute—were systematically amplified in the reactionary press to create the impression that with the Popular Front there would never be normalcy in Spain.

4 Thomas, p. 98

The massive inundation of Rightist propaganda was also used to sow seeds of rebellion in the garrisons. Officers posted bulletins referring to the total destruction of "law and order," suggesting that the Republic was in danger.

Naturally this work of political sabotage and economic disorganization; the provocations, the excesses and murders, served only to exasperate the workers, leading to additional conflict.

It is distinctly notable, however, that despite all efforts of the Right the normalcy they sought so desperately to destroy continued to prevail in the major areas of the country. Provocations were isolated; strikes, though many and varied, and in most cases justified, were controlled. The people remained whole-heartedly in favor of the Government. And the only activity that could be truly designated as 'disorderly', and chaotic was that generated by the Rightists themselves.

The American Ambassador to Spain, Mr. Claude Bowers, traveled throughout the country to check for himself. He reported: "We saw nothing of the disorders so picturesquely painted in the foreign press of the regions through which we passed. In search of the anarchy about which we were daily told, we saw and heard nothing At a place of entertainment in Málaga, I had my first contact with the incredible Fascist propaganda flooding the world from Spain. There, officers of the Foreign Legion, returning to Africa from the Asturias, were telling a startling tale. Solemnly they assured us that when the Legion disembarked at Cádiz to change boats, a mob attacked them and they were forced to shoot, ten being killed by the volley. Then, they said, the mob ran amuck, burning churches and convents. The story was told with the best barracks-room swagger, and General Fuqua, professionally interested, asked many questions, which were answered glibly. I have no doubt this story reached the foreign press. A day or so later we learned positively that on the occasion there had been no mob, no attack upon the Legion, no shooting, no burning of churches. I was convinced then as I am now, that such fantastic stories were part of the systematic plan for creating the impression that Spain was in a state of anarchy to justify the Fascist rebellion in the offing and the intervention of Hitler's and Mussolini's troops."⁵

Álvarez del Vayo writes that, "With the exception of the spontaneous and natural mobilization of the masses to demand an amnesty, nothing happened until the month of July to justify the accusations of anarchy and chaos leveled against the government by the Fascist conspirators, the better to cloak their own subversive activities. *Agents provocateurs* abounded. After the rebellion many of them were to boast of their exploits in the spring months in sowing the disorder which the leaders of the rebellion regarded as essential to their preparations. Moreover, there was complicity on the part of many men in governmental agencies, civil governors, Civil Guard commanders, and others who,

5 *My Mission to Spain*, Claude Bowers, Simon & Schuster, N.Y., 1954. p. 205

charged with the sacred duty of keeping order, connived at provoking disorder.”⁶

Another of the distortions of history contrived and directed by Franco propaganda was that the revolt was necessary to 'save Spain from Communism.' But we know by now that though Communist strength was in the ascendancy, there was simply no possibility of such an event. Indeed, its very strength was based upon the fact that it was the staunchest supporter of the Government of the Popular Front.

Calvo Sotelo, himself, was left clear testimony showing that the pretext of a “Communist plot” was a gross lie. On the morning of the Eleventh of July, while responding to questions put to him by the correspondent of the Argentine periodical, *La Nación*, Sotelo stated flatly that he didn't believe that *El Marxismo* was intent upon any seizure of power. “I had,” he said, “much more fear of such an event last February.”⁷

The Government did finally move to shift certain generals away from supposedly key areas. The cries of the Right, that their followers in the Army were being crushed, fell on deaf ears. The country knew that the opposite was the case, for almost all who were to head the rising continued to occupy strategic positions of command.

The Government of Azaña-Quiroga named Francisco Franco to the Military Command of the Canary Islands situated off the coast of Morocco, a key point in the preparations for the rebellion and the very heart of “Africanist” power. General Goded was named Commander General of the Balearics, and General Mola, Military Governor of Navarre—this last being the very center of all Carlist political and para-military strength.⁸ Cabanellas was directed to the Command of the Organic Division of Zaragoza—where the F.A.I. had just held a successful and enthusiastic national convention. Queipo de Llano, a professed loyal republican general, was named to Director-General of Carabineros, headquartered in Seville. Colonel Yagüe and González de Lara were ordered to the command of the Burgos Brigades, and General Aranda to the *Comandancia Exenta de Asturias*. The Republic of Azaña-Quiroga had literally covered those who would be her assassins with honors and commands.

At the end of 1936, before he left Madrid for the Canary Islands, Franco met again with Mola, Villegas and Varela at the home of the Monarchist deputy, José Delgado. In the course of this meeting the decision was made to move toward rebellion. Methods were adopted for contact and liaison with all generals of divisions in whom they had confidence to accelerate preparations. Key maneuvers were decided upon. Communication lines were cleared and military preparations were combined with an extensive political campaign

6 Del Vayo—*L.O.*, p. 18

7 “*El Sol*,” July 15, 1936. (Newspaper)

8 Thomas, p. 101—notes

toward the same end.⁹

Shortly after the meeting a *Junta* of Generals was constituted to direct and organize the revolt. Sanjurjo was designated chief, General Rodríguez del Barrio, coordinator of activities, etc. In all divisions integrated committees of officers and fascists within each garrison area were formed to work out details of all plans; to recruit, etc.

Franco also visited with the young Falange leader, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, at the home of Serrano Suñer. He suggested to José Antonio that he maintain contact with the known Falangist officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Yagüe, at that time, commander of the 2nd Legion of the *Tercio*.¹⁰ Franco's was not a casual interest in José Antonio. The Oligarchy was quite aware that the Falange had, on its own, proposed and prepared for such a revolt as early as June, 1935. In this regard the testimony of Francisco Bravo, member of the political junta of the Falange has written the following: "On the Sixteenth of June, '35, we who were in the leadership of the Falange held a reunion at El Parador in the Gredos, with José Antonio and decided to rely on a revolution as the one method with which we could be sure of saving Spain from Communism."¹¹

On the First of April the Military Junta decided on a maximum time limit of three weeks to finalize plans for the insurrection. The first date for its realization was put at April 20. The original plan was to strike a blow in Madrid where Varela was with the War Ministry, and where Orgaz was the acting Captain General. This rising would then be followed by others in Pamplona, Valladolid and the garrison cities. Instructions to all leaders of the rising were the following: *Instrucción Reservada número 1*: "It will be borne in mind that the action, in order to crush as soon as possible an enemy who is strong and well organized, will have to be extremely violent. Hence, all directors of political parties, societies or syndicates not pledged to the movement will be imprisoned, and such people will suffer exemplary punishment so that movements toward rebellion or strikes will be strangled."¹²

The date of April 20 was soon seen as premature. Rodríguez del Barrio suggested to Varela that the timing was not sufficiently convenient. Very shortly after that, the Government, suspecting that something was in the wind—and as a preventive measure—transferred Varela to Cádiz and Orgaz to the Canary Islands with Franco. A new date in the month of May was selected to coincide with the naming of Azaña to the Presidency. This too was aborted for the same reasons, unpreparedness, lack of coordination, etc. . . .¹³

These facts—the decision to revolt by Spain's Financial Oligarchy—as being the direct result of the people's victory at the polls in February—should destroy once and for all the

9 Güell, p. 116

10 *Franco!* Joaquín Ararrás, Valladolid, 1939, p. 230

11 "Occident!" (Newspaper) Jan. 25, 1938

12 Güell, p. 128

13 *El Requeté!* Barcelona, 1957. Luis Redondo and Juan de Zavala, p. 353

tissue of prevailing lies: that the rising was *spontaneous*; a reaction to the intolerable condition of chaos.

EVE OF THE REVOLT

The Militarists revised their plans again. At the end of May, Mola was confirmed as Chief of the Rebellion until General Sanjurjo would arrive from Portugal to preside as Military Director. In the original plan—that of April-May—the strategic first move was to have been made in Madrid, and in the style of the old *pronunciamientos*. In the process of putting the rebellion together, however, this idea had most definitely been discarded. In Mola's new plan, sent to his constituents on the Twenty-Fifth of May, he suggested that: "In Madrid we may not find the assistance we would hope for. We could find ourselves without leaders or troops—and maybe both."¹ The new plan envisioned a simultaneous rising in all the areas of the country, beginning with the proclamation of a "State of War." The first and immediate objective would be to paralyze all possible resistance, occupy all strategic points, etc.

Four mobile columns would be launched against Madrid along the principal roads to the capital: from Aragón through Guadalajara; from Navarre through Somosierra; from Valladolid through the 'gates' of the Guadarramas and Navalcerrada, and from Valencia through Tarancón. And, until Madrid was taken, Pamplona would be the political and military center of the rebellion.

Concomitantly with this new plan, and with its successive modifications, the conspiracy proceeded with the following assignments of authority: Mola would direct the tactics of the rising and command the *Resquetés* of Navarre. General Franco would take command of the expeditionary force to be sent from Africa. General Llopiés Goded was to be asked at the last moment to command the rising in Barcelona in place of General González Carrasco who would head the rising in Valencia. Alicante and Murcia were also to be subordinate to Carrasco. General Fanjul and García de Herrán would command the fighting in Madrid proper, since General Villegas declined to head the rising in the capital. Saliquet would rise in Valladolid, González de Lara in Burgos, and all Asturias would be seized by General Aranda. Also, the conspirators who had already made their contacts with Queipo de Llano and Cabanellas, ordered these two to head the rising in Seville and Zaragoza, respectively.

A cursory review of all this will reveal that, essentially, the perspective of the Generals was to stake all on a single powerful military blow—the *golpe militar*! Considering the result of their act—the bloodiest war in all Spain's history—Franco historians have sought constantly to place the blame on their opponents. But the facts are that though the plotters had not envisioned the staunch and sometimes terrible resistance offered by the people, they had not overlooked the eventuality of a long war.

The biographer of Franco, Joaquín Ararrás, cites a conversation with the general shortly

¹ Güell, p. 123

before the rising. Reputedly, when one of his adjutants expressed the hope that only a week would be needed to do the job, Franco replied: "If the *Golpe* is successful, yes! But the Government has many elements at its disposal . . . if the *golpe* is defeated, *the civil war will be bloody and long.*"²

Still another date was fixed by General Mola—the Twenty-Fourth of June. This too was made useless by new demands from different sources. Dissent grew from certain basic, unresolved questions. All wanted to install a military dictatorship that would leave no stone upon another in terms of the liberties of the Republic; of the workers and peasants gains. The difference concerned the *form* of the new regime to be erected in Spain. Each faction aspired to play the role of "architect."

In view of the failure to create a Spanish Fascist Party with mass base, the developing situation was contrary to, and therefore more complex than anything that had occurred in Italy and Germany. The Oligarchy had decided to use the Army as its principal instrument for the establishment of its dictatorship. The parties of the Right therefore, were forced to fall in line. But all jockeyed for power within the structure of the new phoenix.

The designation of Sanjurjo as Chief was agreed upon by C.E.D.A., Monarchist, and Falange alike. In terms of his prestige, he would figure strongly in the allegiance of the military. But this designation was considered a provisional compromise which by no means resolved the final problem of hegemony within the movement. The Cabinet of Sanjurjo was to be transitory, having power only until the violent destruction of the Republic had been achieved.

The Monarchists demanded from the first that the Rebel movement take on the character of a Monarchist movement. The political thrust of the two groups, Carlist and Bourbon, was represented jointly in the Republican Cortes by José Calvo Sotelo, though only the Carlists could point to any real base among the people, and that limited strictly to the area of Navarre. Those for Alfonso had to search outside Spain for support. They found it in Italy where the king now lived in exile.

Of the two Monarchist factions the Carlists alone launched a tenacious fight to impose its solutions, pointing to the quite obvious strength of its para-military arm of the *Requetés* which already was at an armed strength of approximately 9,000 men.³

The conditions for the employment of this force was formulated by the Carlist *Comunión* in a note sent to Mola on the Eleventh of June. The note ended with: "And we are given to understand that the movement as a whole will rise under the bi-color." (The red and yellow banner of the Monarchy. The flag of the Republic was red, yellow and purple.)

2 Ararrás, p. 260

3 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 98

The letter upset Mola considerably, since the Junta feared that the soldiers would not rebel under a monarchist flag. In reply to the Carlists, on the Fifteenth of June, he offered a counter proposal, that a military directorate would simply suspend the Constitution of 1931, though the *form* of the Republic would be retained if for no other reason but expediency.⁴

If one is led to believe by this that Mola had Republican sentiments, read on. “Look, Señores,” he wrote, “For me the rising is being made under the bi-color. But it is to our interests *to misrepresent the character* of the National Movement to the enemy.”⁵

And the Falange Chieftain, Luis Redondo, has commented that: “With the Monarchist flag he had not the slightest doubt of the support of the Carlists—and it was his flag, too. But under the existing circumstances the use of it could only be viewed as a weapon of unnecessary discord which could cause many of the militarists to beg off, since these wished to rise against the government only, and not the Republic; they cared little or nothing for either Carlist or Bourbon.”⁶

The conflict continued, lasting through the first dangerous days of July. On July 7, Mola sent a letter to the Requeté Chief, Fal Conde, who was meeting with other Carlists at St. Jean de Luz. He stated bluntly that the question of the flag must be left until after the rising. “You must realize” he wrote, “that while everything is being paralyzed by your attitude, *certain* things are so far advanced that it would be impossible now to withdraw.”⁷

Fal Conde answered stubbornly that the question of the flag would have to be decided immediately. Mola was infuriated. Only the intervention of Sanjurjo, with a conciliatory note, which both Conde and Mola accepted, was sufficient to save the day. Sanjurjo wrote that those who wished to use the old flag, should use it; for those who wished to use the Republican Bandera—fine, let them use that. And for those who wished to rise under no flag at all—that, too, was acceptable.⁸

The Falange, for its part as an instrument of the most reactionary group of aggressive monopoly capitalists, had brushed aside the question of 'monarch or republic' to focus its efforts on the implantation of a Fascist dictatorship of the terrorist type; its mentors being Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. The Falangist membership had grown considerably with the infusion of the members of the J.A.P. Despite this growth, however, its greatest affliction was akin to that of the Alfonso Monarchists; the absence still of any meaningful base among the people.

4 Redondo, p. 358

5 *General Mola*, J. Vigón, Barcelona, 1957. p. 105.

6 Redondo, p. 356

7 Hugh Thomas, quoting from Carlist archives, Seville. p. 118

8 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 103

Despite earlier liaison with Franco, Yagüe, and Ramón Serrano Suñer, the Junta as a whole had neglected the potential of the Falange. They thought that little come come from that direction. Only when preparations were quite advanced was contact established by Mola with the jailed José Antonio Primo de Rivera, though the writer Stanley Payne suggests that it was the other way around: “The *Jefe Nacional*,” wrote Payne, “first made official contact with General Mola on the Twenty-Ninth. The agent was one of his principal messengers, Rafael Gaercean, a former law clerk in José Antonio's office.”⁹ The young Falange Chieftain then made available to Mola confidential information about the personnel and the organizational structure and function of his party.

In a message sent to Mola on the First of June, José Antonio confirmed his acceptance of the plans for the rebellion and cheerfully offered all that he had to give: 4,000 armed Falangists.¹⁰

During this entire period of internal dissention and conflict, General Francisco Franco maintained a surface attitude of detachment and non-involvement. Throughout his career he had handled his relationships with all groups of reactionaries with a remarkable dexterity. With the Lerrouxists in 1934; the C.E.D.A. in 1935; and in 1936 with the Monarchists and the Falangists, with whose chief he had personal relations since 1934.

In the month of April, 1936, it was Franco who proposed that justifications for the rising would be found in the pretext that nothing else but “The salvation of Spain” was at take, and that “No roads should be closed, but that once victory was achieved they could *then* install the regime they deemed more appropriate to their needs.”¹¹

A prototype of the “Africanist” military chief; having prospered in the colonial wars against the Moroccans; an intriguer without scruples, Franco was the total, the absolute epitome of the enemies of the Spanish Republic and of the Spanish people.

Situated at first in a secondary position in terms of leaders of the rebellion—the principal figures were Sanjurjo and Mola—Franco aspired to be chief! From the very beginning he had put into motion all of the factors resulting from his secret influence with diverse reactionary groups, and with the Nazi espionage service. His influence with certain persons of the financial oligarchy, such as Juan March, has already been noted. Ambitious, totally unscrupulous, even among his own, Franco played a most cautious game. His profile as always that of the “simple military man,” apolitical, incapable of disloyalty. The apogee of his double-dealing and dissimulation, however, is revealed in his letter of June Twenty-Third, 1936, directed at the Minister of War in the Quiroga Cabinet:

9 *Falange*, Stanley Payne, Stanford Univ. Press

10 *Historia de la Cruzada Española*, Tomo IX, Madrid, 1939-1943, p. 511

11 *E.M.C. del Ejército*, p. 241

“Those who suggest that the Army is disaffected from the Republic, are lying. It would seem that they are confused by their own plots and passions. They do a disservice to their country, for they attack the patriotism and dignity of officers and dare to accuse them falsely; making them appear as symbols of conspiracy and disaffection.”¹²

And even while he wrote he conspired against the Republic. He was a key force among the plotters, and was a major force in convincing his constituents of the Army of Africa of the need to rebel.

As stated previously the first plans for rebellion had not included the use of colonial troops. The unfavorable repercussions of 1934 were well remembered both inside and outside Spain. Less scrupulous than his companions, however, General Franco insisted on their use. “From the first minute,” wrote Luis Redondo, “General Franco indicated his preference for rebellion in Africa, so that the Army would then be the most effective piece of the *mechanic belico*.”¹³

Franco had quite astutely seen that the Army of Africa could easily be the decisive force and, more, it could be *the* instrument that would provide him a place of absolute prominence in the development of the war. It was the key which would allow him to vie for leadership with Mola and Sanjurjo.

At first he agreed that the utilization of the colonials would be simply as a reserve; that they would enter action only in case of dire emergency. But later, in the first days of July, 1936, he maneuvered their inclusion so that they became the shock force of the rebellion. Franco was then designated as Chief of the Expeditionary Force of the Army of Africa. A first battle had been won along the road to becoming the *Caudillo* for all the insurrectionary forces.

On July 10, after weeks of fruitless attempts at warning the Government, the heads of all the Left parties of the Popular Front visited Casares Quiroga to demand that measures be taken against the conspirators. Upon which, Quiroga refused, denying that such a situation even existed. He put out a press release to the effect that: “The head of the Government is satisfied that the institutions of all the armed forces of the Spanish Republic are responding perfectly and with complete discipline to the legitimate commands of the Government.”¹⁴

At 9:00 p.m. on the Twelfth of July, Fascist *pistoleros* gunned down Lieutenant José Castillo, an officer of the Republican *Guardia de Asalto*, and a man known for his strong

12 The text of this letter can be found in J. Ararrás, biography of Franco

13 Redondo, p. 352

14 *El Sol*, July 11, 1936

Republican sympathies. A few hours later, at three in the morning, Castillo's companions of the *Asaltos*, furious at his murder, took the Monarchist-Fascist Calvo Sotelo from his home and executed him out of hand. That Sotelo was in fact, as history now knows, one of the active organizers of the revolt, was actually incidental to his killing. For the *Asaltos* were unaware of this at the time. They simply sought revenge. To them Sotelo was a leading spokesman of the Right. Ergo, get Sotelo! Not just another demented Falange gunman—but Sotelo!

The killing of Sotelo has also been advanced by Spanish fascism and all other Franco apologists as *the* cause for the immediate rising at that time. Here, too, however, the facts prove otherwise. For at the very hour of his death, the mechanics for the rising had already been put into high-gear, as we shall see.

As to Sotelo's being an active organizer of the revolt, amongst other data the writings of the Monarchist, Bertrán Güell, tell us that: "Calvo Sotelo had, during those days, many interviews with both civilian and military authorities. Among his visitors was General Rafael Villegas, slated to head the rebellion in Madrid."¹⁵

The Franco historian, Manuel Aznar, writes that one month prior to the revolt the Monarchist chieftain told him personally that: "The *Civil War* that is upon us will not be easy, nor will it simply be a 'palace revolt.' If we can obtain 30,000 men, fervently nationalistic; and if these can be united with the Army, we will be saved. If we do not succeed in this, then we can consider ourselves lost."¹⁶

And here we have an intrusive example of the unconscionable and totally irresponsible reporting of the Castillo-Sotelo incident, and an indication too of what the Spanish Republic was soon to be up against in terms of the "leaders" of her fellow "Western Democracies." Sir Anthony Eden, titular head of the British Foreign Office at the time, said this of the affair: "On the night of July 12,13, Lt. Castillo, a *Communist* official of the military police was assassinated in Madrid. On the following night a uniformed group of *Guardias* murdered Calvo Sotelo, thereby completing a sinister prophesy of La Pasionaria, a woman Communist and a member of the Cortes. After Señor Sotelo's final remarks in a debate, she exclaimed: "Those will be your last words!"¹⁷

The famed "historian" Salvador Madariaga, reports the canard without the slightest proof. But Mr. Madariaga is guilty of this tactic throughout his work, and can indeed be considered a historian of the 'castle.'

No less than Winston Churchill is guilty of declaring that the killing of Calvo Sotelo was a

¹⁵ Güell, p. 130

¹⁶ *Historia Militar de la Guerra de España*, Manuel Aznar, Editora Nacional, Madrid, 1958, 3rd Edition, p. 38

¹⁷ *Facing the Dictators*, Sir Anthony Eden, Cambridge, Mass., 1962

Communist murder. And he is answered by no less than the U.S. Ambassador to Spain, Claude Bowers who writes that his, Churchill's, statement was, "utterly without justification and completely false."¹⁸

And thus is history made.

As for the Communist woman deputy to the Cortes, Dolores Ibárruri, *La Pasionaria*, these are her words on that fateful day according to the *Diario de Sesiones* for July 12, 1936:

"(Directing her remarks to the Prime Minister) Señor Casares. In order to avoid the perturbations of the peace that cause such distress to Señores Gil Robles and Calvo Sotelo; in order to end the state of unrest which exists in Spain it is not enough to lay the blame for what may happen solely on Calvo Sotelo or his associates. The government must begin by jailing those who refuse to abide by its laws.

The government should jail the landowners, who keep the peasants in poverty and starvation, as well as those who, with an unheard of cynicism, come here, still bloodstained from the October repressions, to demand condemnation for deeds which have not been committed.

And when this work of justice is carried out, Señor Casares and Honorable Ministers, there won't be a government more popular or stronger than yours, because the people of Spain will rise up to fight against all those forces that in all conscience should not be seated here today."¹⁹

A wave of strikes had indeed swept the country in interim of February through July. Considering the people's emergence from an almost feudalistic order, with all the consequences derived of such a regime, it would be difficult to have had it otherwise. But these strikes were still, in their great majority, but a weapon to insure the economic and physical redress of the conditions of semi-slavery borne far too long by the workers and peasants.

One strike, however, and this is a summation of the thinking of the various parties of the Left, did not wholly serve the interests of the people. A joint action had been called by some 40,000 Madrid construction workers and 30,000 electricians and elevator repairmen of the two major unions. It lasted for more than six weeks, until the eve of the Fascist rising. A singular characteristic of this strike, other than the national prominence given it by all forms of the media, was that it epitomized a growing rift between the Socialist-Communist unions of the U.G.T. and the F.A.I.-led unions of the C.N.T. And it did this at a time of absolute crisis when Largo Caballero had chosen to speak for U.G.T. and C.N.T. unity and the possibility of a "proletarian" government. The Madrid F.A.I. took him up on this. But by their actions they proved that both unity and the potential government would be Anarchist controlled or there would be neither unity, nor government.

In the first week of the strike, as a salient example of the application of "Libertarian

¹⁸ Bowers, p. 242

¹⁹ Ibárruri, p. 80

Communism" the Anarchist leadership encouraged their workers to eat in restaurants without paying, and to appropriate food from the shelves of any grocery store that happened to be handy.²⁰ This of course to the discomfiture of the small shopkeepers, and the jubilation of the Right for this gem of a new weapon so irresponsibly given them. The Liberal Madrid, *El Sol*; the Socialist newspapers, *Claridad* and *El Socialista*, and the Communist paper, *Mundo Obrero* denounced these tactics as "the worst kind of Anarchist provocation." On June Third, even the Anarcho-Syndicalist journal, *Solidaridad Obrera* felt the need to editorialize that: "The accumulation of strikes was injuring the interests of the working class, and workers should seek lower prices rather than wage increases."²¹

The strike in Madrid continued, however, until the Government offered to convene a mixed jury to arbitrate the workers demands. The U.G.T. workers voted to accept the jury as did the majority of the employers. Their vote was an overwhelming 7,564 to 510. But the C.N.T. leaders kept their workers out, forcing the U.G.T. to follow suit.

Eduard Domínguez of the U.G.T., in a behind the scenes polemic against these C.N.T. tactics, stated unequivocally that a continuation of the strike under the prevailing circumstances, and especially in the face of the mounting crisis, was imperiling the regime.²²

Cipriano Mera and David Antona, for the C.N.T., insisted on a common "revolutionary front"; no arbitration, no forced agreement, and with pressure to be applied equally upon both employer and government. The strike dragged on for better than six weeks, not ending until July 16, the very eve of the Fascist uprising.

Other than the event itself which proved quite unproductive, two items of a singular importance are derived of the actions and the leadership of the F.A.I. One: Caballero's strength lessened. He had failed to control his membership in the face of the Anarchist maneuver, and had thereby weakened the position of the Socialist Party within both the Cortes and the leadership of the U.G.T. He had, essentially, been neither as romantically revolutionary as the F.A.I., as hard-headed and practical as the Communists, nor as reformist as Besteiro would have been. He had, in fact, been nothing but one gigantic vacillation, so that the tide within the Socialist Party leadership threatened to turn once more toward the "moderates" such as Prieto and Zugazagoitia.

The second item of interest is that the Anarchist leader, Cipriano Mera, was to be one of the F.A.I. chieftain to rise to the prominence of a Corps Commander of the Army of the Republic. *He was also slated to epitomize for all time the treason of a significant percentage of the Anarchist leadership*, for other than the questionable acts and deeds of the F.A.I. across three years of the Spanish War he, Mera, was to turn the weapons of his command

20 Jackson, p. 220

21 Ibid. 220. Notes

22 Ibid. p. 221

against the people, on the order of the traitor, Casado, and to open the front to the Franco Armies. Thereafter, he and his cohorts, some of the highest ranking leaders of the F.A.I., such as Melchor Rodríguez, Lorenzo Iñigo, Eduardo Guzmán, Orobón Fernández, Enrique Marcos, Cipriano Damiano and many others were given their freedom by Franco. They were given safe conduct to France while the first whispers of the ensuing fusillade of bullets began their work of slaughter against some 250,000 Spaniards who had been truly loyal to the Republic.²³

In point of fact the mechanics of the rebellion were already in motion. A chartered British plane had left Croydon airport on the Eleventh of July. It was piloted by a Captain Bebb who was accompanied by the correspondent for the Monarchist A.B.C., in London, Luis Bolín, and one other. On the Twelfth the plane, a *Dragon Rapide*, landed in Lisbon so that Bolín could meet hurriedly with Sanjurjo with last minute information as to developments. It then flew to the Canary Isles to pick up General Francisco Franco, for transport to Morocco and the rising of the Army of Africa.

Simultaneously with the plane's departure from England, Falangists in Valencia rose, seized the central radio station and screamed revolt prematurely until they were dislodged by the police and people.

Also on the Twelfth, having terminated intense maneuvers of the *massif central* of the Riff mountains, the troops of the Protectorate of Morocco, the Army of Africa, being in this way most conveniently mobilized for precipitate action, gave a parade of units—and waited! Colonel Yagüe sent Mola an urgent note in which he stated that as of the Sixteenth, all of his forces were fully prepared. The letter ended thusly: “I have prepared all: the proclamations of war are ready. I do not for a moment doubt our victory.”²⁴

The facts are that many days prior to Sotelo's death the mechanics of the rising were in motion, with only the differences between Mola and the Carlists having held it up that long.

On the Thirteenth, the Cabinet, which had been in continuous session, ordered the closing of the Carlist, Monarchist and Anarchist headquarters in Madrid. In the meantime the heads of the Popular Front again met to petition the government for immediate and drastic action. Manuel Lois represented the U.G.T., Edmundo Domínguez the *Casas del Pueblo*; José Cazorla and Santiago Carrillo, for the Federation of Socialist Youth; José Díaz and Vincente Uribe for the Communist Party; Jimenez de Asúa, Cruz Salido, Indalecio Prieto and others, for the Socialist Party.

Prieto led the delegation to Casares Quiroga at 12:00 midnight. He offered the aid of the

²³ *Nuestra Guerra*, Enrique Líster. Colección Ebro, Paris, 1966. p. 290

²⁴ *Hacia las rutas de una nueva España*, R. Fernández de Castro. Artes Gráficas, Mellila, Morocco, 1940. p. 97

Madrid Popular Front in defense of the government against a subversive attempt to overthrow it. And he demanded from Casares Quiroga that arms be distributed to the workers organizations.²⁵

Casares Quiroga again refused.

On the following day the Popular Front National Committee published this declaration:

The intentions of the reactionary enemies of the Republic and working class have been made known, the political and labor organizations represented by the undersigned have met and unanimously agreed to offer the government the support and aid of the masses herein represented, in whatever capacity, for the purpose of defending the government and repelling all attempts against the regime.

The unanimity is not merely provisional; we have every intention of making it permanent, insofar as conditions make it advisable, in order to strengthen the popular front and satisfy the aspirations of the working class, now in danger from its enemies and the enemies of the Republic.²⁶

In Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia; in every major city of the Peninsula, the tension lay heavy in the summer air. Armed guards stood before every *Casas del Pueblo*; before every U.G.T. and C.N.T. headquarters, and before every party headquarters of the Left or Right. They maintained their vigils throughout the night.

On the Fifteenth, a meeting of the permanent committee of the Cortes gave an opportunity to opposition members to launch a broadside attack on the government. Gil Robles made what was undoubtedly the most insolent and aggressive speech in his political career. He blamed the government for all acts of violence anywhere, and stated that the Quiroga Cabinet had made “democracy a farce.” His speech was interspersed with biblical phrases, one of which afterwards found to be a warning to the conspirators that the decisive hour was approaching. “Over that meeting,” wrote Álvarez del Vayo, “the threat of violence hung like a heavy cloud.”²⁷ As for Gil Robles, he, with full knowledge of the immediacy of the coming holocaust, left Spain the following day for Biarritz. He would not return until the long war was over.²⁸

The Government of Quiroga-Azaña continued blind—or worse. And on Friday, the Seventeenth of July, the greater part of the Socialist deputies to the Cortes left Madrid for the weekend to tour their provinces, and to appear at public meetings to counteract the demagogic attacks on the government by the enemies of the *Frente Popular*. A full half of these would not return again. For within days or hours they were to be murdered by the Fascist Military in captured towns and villages.

25 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 117

26 *Ibid.*

27 Del Vayo—*Freedom's Battle*, Spanish version, p. 27

28 Thomas, p. 128

On that same morning, at precisely 6:30 a.m., an agent of General Mola deposited in the *Central de Telégrafos* of Bayonne, France, the coded telegrams ordering the rebellion to begin.²⁹

Among the myriad facts and deeds relating to all that transpired prior to the eve of rebellion, three prime causes emerge as being essential to the unleashing of the civil war.

The principal cause was the monumental intransigence of the Financial Oligarchy and the great landowners who, driven from power in 1931, refused the road of democratic reform and violently opposed the consolidation of a regime that, despite its glaring faults, gave promise to all citizens of those fundamental rights and privileges long enjoyed by others in the Western World.

Secondly: The Oligarchy and the *Terratenientes* were actually encouraged to resort to armed violence by the vacillation and weakness of the various Republican-Socialist governments, and the final Republican Government through all the years of 1931, 1933, and 1936. For they had neither been resolute in applying the needed economic, social, and democratic reforms; nor had they attacked in any way the economic base of the Oligarchy. They had proven themselves more fearful of revolution from the Left than from the Right. And as a consequence they proved incapable of displacing Reaction from any position of power in the State apparatus; and above all, in the Army. They, themselves, had opened the road to subversion and civil war.

And finally, in the international arena, the Fascist dictatorships of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, with the direct or indirect connivance of other imperialist powers, both instigated and aided Spanish reaction to rebel against the Republic. Their objective being to bring down the Popular Front, thereby destroying a long-term threat to themselves—and to insure the creation of a Fascist government which would aid them in their coming struggle for world power.

In retrospect, though every working class child above the age of ten in England and France knew this to be fact, the governments of those two countries were to remain deliberately obtuse and indecisive. And like their counterparts, the Azañas and Zamoras, who had, essentially, betrayed a country to the horrors of Fascist war, they were shortly to betray the world to that same holocaust.

To any thinking human being, the opening guns of the Spanish War, were also the opening guns of World War Two.

²⁹ *Historia de los Monárquicos bajo la Segunda República*. Santiago Galindo Herrero, Madrid, 1964, p. 167

BOOK TWO: The Revolt of the Fascist Military

EIGHT DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

At five in the afternoon of July Seventeenth, 1936, the Army of Africa arose in rebellion. The “State of War” was first declared in Melilla then, in rapid succession, throughout the Protectorate of Morocco. On the *altiplano* of Quetama 20,000 troops had been waiting: six *banderas* of the *Tercio*, the Foreign Legion; five *banderas* of *Regulares*—Moorish troops—fourteen squadrons of cavalry; sixteen machinegun companies, nine artillery batteries, plus battalions of engineers, communications, etc. This extraordinary force had been waiting since July 12. In effect they had been in rebellion since that date. Their concentration had enabled Colonel Yagüe, chief of the rising in Morocco, to transmit his last instructions directly to his constituents. By the 15th, all were at their posts. Yagüe in Ceuta; Segui and Solans in Mellila, Saenz de Buruaga in Tetuán, and Magica in Larache.

In Melilla, despite the warning of the trade union leaders and many loyal officers, the Chief of the *Comandancia*, General Romerales, had adopted no single measure of security. On that same morning he had said to one of his adjutants: “Watch! Penuelas! Nothing will happen, we will sleep with complete tranquility.”¹

A few hours later he was shaken from his lethargy by a call from Casares Quiroga in Madrid ordering him to search the buildings of the *Comission Geografica de Limites*, which had been converted into the H.Q. For the Rebel Command. From that instant things moved with machine gun rapidity.

The conspirators, cognizant of the order, and in fear of arrest, called in a section of the *Tercio* who arrested the searchers. It was 5:00 in the evening.

Armed units of Legionnaires and Moors immediately moved on Melilla. At the gates of the city was the airfield of Tahuima. The first Tabor of *Regulares* occupied it without firing a shot. All others of the conspirators were notified by Yagüe of this necessary, premature, move. He also contacted the mainland with the information that the rebellion had begun.

When Casares Quiroga called again from Madrid, the Commandante General of Malilla,

1 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 110

Romerales, was already under arrest.

In the streets of the city broadsides were being posted declaring the 'State of War' in the name of General Franco. These declared—and the pattern of duplicity was to become all too familiar—that the Army had risen to establish 'order' within the Republic The people reacted as they would react in every city and village on the Peninsula.

In the *barrio* of Poligono a demonstration began, headed by the Socialist and Communist youth. Groups of workers simultaneously attacked the armories to the cry of the general strike—“*A la huelga general!*” All businesses were almost instantly shut down. But the city, taken by surprise, was quickly occupied by the Tercio and the Regulares. The workers were forced back to the barrios where, individually and in groups, from balconies and roof-tops, and with but a handful of arms, they held off the advancing troops.

Meanwhile, General Gómez Morato, Chief of the Armed Forces of Africa, was in Larache, two hundred miles to the east and on the Atlantic coast. He was ignorant of all that had occurred. Informed of what was happening by Quiroga, Morato flew to Tahuima where he was instantly arrested by the occupying Regulares.

Fighting then broke out between the rebels and loyal forces at the hydroplane base at Atalayan. A handful of men led by a Captain Laret, fought valiantly against elements of the 1st Cavalry Squadron of Moorish horsemen. The arrival of the 2nd Tabor of Alhucemas decided the battle, however, and Captain Laret, two lieutenants and ninety-five soldiers were then made prisoner.

The majority of these were instantly shot.

At 9:00 p.m. Melilla was completely occupied.

At 11:00 a.m. Colonel Yagüe sent his troops into the streets of Ceuta.

At 2:00 a.m. rebels in Tetuán occupied the offices of the High Commissioner, Plácido Álvarez Buylla, at the exact moment when he was speaking to Madrid. Hours before Buylla had been told to resist at all costs. But even then Buylla was a prisoner, in that he was enmeshed in the treason that surrounded him. From that point only the Commander of the airfield at Sania Ramiel, Lapuente Bahamonde, remained loyal.

The fighting was heavy in Larache, continuing throughout the dawn hours. One group of Republican officers and workers held the telegraph and post-office building before being overwhelmed by superior force.

On the 18th, though groups of workers continued to fight in Melilla, in Tetuán only aviators

and mechanics still held out beneath a now growing barrage of shells from the big guns ranged against the airfield. Before they surrendered they destroyed all gasoline reserves and seven Briguet bombers on the field so that these would be of no use to the Fascists.

They too, were shot.

Bands of Rightist militants moved house to house through the barrios of all the cities. The pattern followed was to be that for all Spain. They had lists of leaders and members of unions and political parties of the Left. The ensuing murders rapidly assumed the proportions of a general slaughter. For not only were the workers killed out of hand, but all of the loyal military too, and every Republican leader of any capacity.

Those simply jailed were in the thousands. Wagner, the Nazi-Consul in Tetuán, communicated the following to his government:

“... Since the local police are desirous to contain, and appropriately so, the many people who have been jailed, the greater part of them have been taken to a 'concentration camp' on the outskirts of Tetuán.”²

Despite the fast developing reign of terror, with its accompanying declaration of martial law, the working class of Ceuta, Melilla, Tetuán and Larache sustained the general strike for a number of days. The Fascist-Military were forced, in fact, to use the Army for the maintenance of electricity, the ports, transport and the banks. The strike was then literally decapitated and truncated in the truest sense of the word, in that its militants were executed without mercy.

The rebellion produced only a certain disquietude within the Arab population itself. The principal fear of the Moroccans was that their earth and their people would not suffer the horrors of a new war. Republican aviation bombed Tetuán on the 18th, confirming these fears. The Arab masses then angrily took to the streets in a tumultuous demonstration against the war being waged on *their* soil. They attempted to assault the officers of the High Commissioner. The Rebels directed the Grand Vizier, Sidi Hamed el-Guamia, a representative of feudal reaction and an accomplice of the Generals, to intervene with the crowds. He did, with the usual lies and promises.

For this service he was later decorated, with the *Gran Cruz Laureada de San Fernando*. But the authors of the work, *Centinela de Occidente*, state that if it had not been for his intervention at that time that: “there could have occurred a great catastrophe that would have been terrible for all.”³

2 *Les Archives Secretes de la Wilhelmstrasse—Vol. III. L'Allemagne et la Guerre Civile Espagnole*, p. 67. Noted hereafter with the English title—Documents on German Foreign Policy—or / D.G.F.P., French Ed.

3 *Centinela de Occidente*, Luis de Galinsoga and Franco Salgado, Barcelona, 1957. p. 237

The first small attempts at opposition by the true forces of the Arab People were brutally suppressed. On July 26, the *Caid*, Beni Hamed, and many others of his tribe were summarily executed for refusing to send recruits immediately to the Army of Franco. Four days later the *Caid* and the notables of the tribe of Beni Iriagal were jailed for resisting the payment of “tribute.” While in Xauen, a movement against recruiting began, and the *Caid*, Sidi Driss Riffi, was forced to flee to Tangiers to escape the faid of the *Caid*, Hamed.⁴

As noted, a British plane had flown to the Canary Islands for the express purpose of taking Franco to Morocco. The pilot was the British Captain, Bebb. The fact that Commander B.C. Pollard, an agent of the British C.I.D. was also aboard lends another fact to the diamond. Considering known activities of the British Secret Service then—and America's C.I.A. Today—any astute observer has the right to suggest that a most manifest complicity existed between Her Majesty's Government and the Spanish Financial Oligarchy, who were now in rebellion against the duly constituted Government of the Spanish Republic.⁵

The *Dragon Rapide* was detained at Las Palmas for lack of certification. Upon which, Pollard, to expedite matters, called the British Consul and had him inform Generalissimo Francisco Franco y Bahamonde that they had arrived.⁶

On July 16, the Military Commander, Blames, of Las Palmas had met his death mysteriously. He was supposedly killing while playing with his gun. His death was most fortunate for the future *Caudillo* in that it was well known that the Commander was strongly opposed to any idea of a rebellion captained by Francisco Franco. The future *Caudillo* piously attended the funeral of his opponent.

On the 18th, Franco was informed that things were going well in Morocco. By this time things were *not* going well in Las Palmas. At two in the morning he enplaned for the continent, leaving General Orgaz to command the troops now in rebellion on the islands.

Since the people were already fighting in the streets of Las Palmas against the Military, the road to the airport was now closed—partly because Orgaz was covering the main thoroughfares with shrapnel from an umber of guns. Francisco Franco was forced to go by boat along the coast to the field.

As late as the afternoon of the 18th, the Civil Governor of Las Palmas had informed Madrid that he was defending the government with all forces at his command The island of

4 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 113

5 *Ibid.* loc. Cit., p. 13

6 *Ibid.* p. 113. Also Thomas, p. 129. Thomas, who refers to Capt. Bebb as “dissimulating with success to the authorities at Las Palmas, as to why he had landed without papers at the airport,” makes no mention of the agent, Pollard. Pollard actually called the British consulate from the airport. The Consulate called Franco, and Franco demanded and got the release of the plane.

Santa Cruz de Tenerife resisted for a full ten days with only the rifles of a small group of the *Guardia de Asalto*, until the 28th, they fell beneath the guns of the Rebel Cruiser, *Canalejas*.⁷

General Franco, in the *Dragon Rapide*, exercised his usual caution. He made one stop at Agadir and passed the night in Casablanca, in *French Morocco*. Altogether we now have three heretofore unlisted facts: The accompanying British Agent, B.C. Pollard; the awareness at the *Comandancia* of the *French Foreign Legion* that rebellion had broken out in Spanish Morocco, though its commanding General was on *French* soil, in Casablanca. And the fact that the armies of Franco were shortly to receive levies of recruits from French Morocco to be incorporated into the Regulares of the Army of Africa.⁸

On the 19th, satisfied that nothing could possibly happen to him if he landed, Franco arrived in Tetuán. It was from here that he broadcast his first radio message of the rising. The directions he gave to the garrisons of the Peninsula were more like orders than suggestions—pointing to the fact that he felt himself already secure in the leadership of the rebellion.

And not without reason! The following day, and again in a most providential manner, the Monarchist General, Sanjurjo, was killed in a fire aboard a plane piloted by Juan Antonio Ansaldo, who was flying the General from Estoi in Portugal to Burgos in Spain to assume his post as Commander in Chief of the “Nationalist” forces in rebellion. The pilot, Ansaldo, in his book, *Para Qué?* Does not dismiss the idea that the accident was quite likely an act of sabotage.⁹

With the Monarchist, Sanjurjo, out of the way, and the opportunist, Mola, soon to follow him in the very same manner, there remained but one beneficiary, Generalissimo Francisco Franco y Bahamonde.

7 Ibid. p. 114

8 Ibid. p. 115

9 *Para Qué?* Juan Antonio Ansaldo, Buenos Aires, 1951, p. 144

A MORE SUBTLE TREASON:

The rebellion of the Army of Africa, despite all warnings from the political parties of the Left, and of the unions, still came as a “surprise” to the heads of the Azaña-Quiroga government. Indeed, when Azaña was elevated to the presidency in May of 1936, the generals who now headed the rising—Franco, Goded, Cabanellas, Queipo de Llano, Aranda, Mola—all had been the first to express complete loyalty to the new President.

The skill in mass murder possessed by these same generals and their backers of the Financial Oligarchy, was surpassed only by one other attribute—duplicity.

On July 16, General Batet was sent to Valladolid to question the position of Mola. Mola told Batet: “On his word of honor,” that he had no intention of rebelling. Within two days Batet was to be taken before a firing squad and shot, by orders of the most “honorable” Mola.¹

In Asturias, General Aranda, well known for his “free-masonry,” and his “integrity” as a “republican,” insisted until the very movement of rebellion upon his absolute loyalty to the legal authorities.

On July 18—after Morocco had already risen—the Fascist Generals, Capaz and Virgillio Cabanellas, like Colonel Yagüe before them, went to Casares Quiroga to profess their complete loyalty.

Under the influence of Azaña and his own class interests, Casares Quiroga committed the same errors, inclusive of the fact that, with the rising already a reality, he resisted any serious attempt to crush it.

News and alarms of rebellion swept the Madrid populace as early as high-noon on the 17th. That very night the council of Ministers met in a most relaxed and ordinary atmosphere. Not until all the usual petty business was dealt with did Quiroga, seemingly as an afterthought, mention the revolt in the Protectorate. The contradictions existing at the summit of government *before* the rising were now quite evident in the *laissez faire* attitude of Quiroga before his subordinates of the hierarchy.

While telephoning military governors and pleading for their loyalty he, in a form of betrayal worse than that of the Fascists themselves, prohibited the civil governors of all provinces and military zones, from arming the people. His only excuse was that: “He did not want to be accused of causing unnecessary mischief.”²

But while the Government vacillated the leaders of the political parties and the workers

1 Thomas, p. 149. Jackson, p. 234

2 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 116

organizations understood the gravity of the situation all too well. They dared to inform the populace of what was happening. They called upon the people to go into the streets! To resist! To demand arms of their government, now!

With the Army subverted; with the state apparatus undermined and weakened by treason and vacillation; with the parties of the Right fully committed to civil war, there was but one way to go—The Republic could contain the Fascist-Military *only* by placing confidence in the people, and giving over to them the defense of the Republic.

Not a few of the bourgeois historians are aware of this. Hugh Thomas makes the definitive observation that: “The only force capable of resisting the rebels was that of the trade unions and left-wing parties.”³ But then he states that: “Yet for the government to use this force would mean that it accepted the inevitability of a left-wing revolution.” A remark which flies in the face of all reason; denying the reality of the Spanish body politic. Moreover, this choice implication—that a left-wing revolution was the only alternative to appeasement of Spain's Fascists by Azaña-Quiroga et al—underwrites the basic reasoning of the Fascists themselves; that a Communist revolution was in the offing; that apart from essentially Rightist or Fascist control, Spain would inevitably succumb to the machinations of the ultra-left.

Though possible, the switching from right-opportunist positions tending toward appeasement, defeat and subsequent dictatorship; toward a sharing of real power with the people was, admittedly, a most difficult act for the Republican leaders to contemplate. The question of arming the people, therefore, became a political battle—And that in a very moment of crisis.

On July 13, when the rising seemed imminent, a delegation of the *Frente Popular* had gone to the government to offer its services.

Quiroga, as noted, had contemptuously refused to give them arms. On the 17th, when it became known the storm had broken in all its fury, the people poured into the streets of every major city, expressing their adherence to the Republic, and to the Government, and asking anew for arms!

The reply of Quiroga-Azaña came in the form of eleven successive radio broadcasts on the same day of the 18th. The first, at 8:00 a.m., from *Radio Unión*, declared that: “The best help one can offer the Government is to guarantee the normalcy of life, and to give an example of serenity and confidence to the areas of power.” In justification of this insulting answer to those who would soon face death in their tens of thousands, the claim was then made that: “The criminal intent against the Republic has been defeated,” and that, “The Fascist

3 Thomas, p. 141

revolt has been confined exclusively to certain cities of the Protectorate.”⁴

At 3:00 p.m. and at 5:00 p.m., other messages declared that: “Thanks to methods of foresight, no one—absolutely no one on the Spanish mainland has taken part in this plot.”⁵

But the Quiroga Government lied and the people knew it. The flames *had* reached the Peninsula. At 2:00 p.m. that afternoon Seville had risen under the General Queipo de Llano. At 7:20 radio Madrid admitted it, announcing that a state of rebellion existed in Seville; though the rebels were being contained by loyal elements.

This too was a lie.

At that very hour forces loyal to the civil government had surrendered, and the workers were being forced back to the barrios where they were fighting alone and against overwhelming odds.

The rebellion on the Peninsula had erupted as per plan in Cádiz, Córdoba, Algeciras, La Línea, Jerez de la Frontera and Málaga, and throughout all the north, from Pamplona to La Coruña.

But Casares Quiroga and the ominously silent Azaña continued in their chimeric intent to “put down the Fascist revolt by constitutional means”; by calls to a “recognition of duty” to men who, already in violent opposition to the constitution, had brought the armed forces into rebellion, and who, even now, in every part of the country were arming the Falangists, the Carlists and all other parties of the Right against the people.

On the 18th the Government approved three decrees. The first, to strip the various generals of all authority. The second, to demobilize all troops whose commanders had risen. The third, to annul the “State of War” wherever the Rebels had announced it.

The gesture was pathetic; worthy of the contempt with which the people greeted it. In lieu of the guns with which to save the Republic, they were given unenforceable demands. For, since no-one involved in the afore-mentioned acts were in the physical jurisdiction of the Republic the decrees, were indeed, unenforceable.

Before the gravity of the hour the proletarian organizations of the Spanish people multiplied their pressure upon the government to give arms to the people.

At 9:00 p.m. on the 18th, the leading organs of the P.S.O.E. and the P.C.E. published a joint note to all their affiliates:

4 “*El Sol*,” July 19, 1936

5 “*New York Times*,” July 20, 1936

We ask that each militant present himself immediately to the local organization nearest him, and that he await the order for action—which will be given at the very instant that we deem it necessary. The Popular Front is now faced with the duty of ratifying with arms that victory which we won at the polls. We say to the Government loudly and clearly: Here we are, resolute, serene, disposed now and forever to defeat those who have risen in rebellion, and who would bloody the earth of Spain and deliver her up to the degrading pretension of reaction and fascism.⁶

The moderation of the note is evident, and demonstrates again the speciousness of the Rebel contention of a 'Communist danger.'

Neither the Socialist Party nor the Communist Party was intent upon breaking constitutional order. Nothing signified the rupture of discipline within the Republic of the Popular Front.

Great crowds were now in the plazas of all the major cities, Valencia, Barcelona, San Sebastián, Madrid. The situation of a Government that would not respond to the demands of its people in the face of their possible slaughter was becoming untenable.

A new, hastily organized, delegation of the *Frente Popular* went to Casares Quiroga to beg him, again, *to arm the people*. And delay now, they said, would be suicidal. For in Madrid, too, the rising was imminent.

Completely incapable of dominating the situation; impotent, overwhelmed by perfidity, treason and the insanity of the military in whose gentlemanliness he had believed, Casares Quiroga simply gave up.

The final words of this "gentleman," who had previously announced that, "anyone who gave arms to the workers without his orders would be shot,"⁷ were, "I will arrange for the few arms we have to be distributed. But *I* am resigning."⁸

At three in the morning on July 19, Manuel Azaña called upon the most conservative member of the Government, Martínez Barrio, to form a government *which would treat with the Rebels*. He had plainly made up his mind as to where his loyalties lay, since his choice of a new cabinet was a total break with the Popular Front. Barrio, quite justly accused by the Anarchists of being the friend of the great Andalusian landowners,⁹ accepted. He did this after a conference with Sánchez Román, leader of the small *Partido Republicano Nacional*. Román, too, had long refused to ascribe to the pact of the *Frente Popular*.

6 "El Sol," July 19, 1936

7 Thomas, p. 135

8 "El Sol," July 19, 1936

9 *Grand Camouflage*, Burnett Bolloten, Hollis & Carter, London, 1961, p. 33

At the news of this new government of *surrender*, and the naming of Román to the cabinet, the streets roared to the cries of “Treason!” and tens of thousands of workers in Madrid surged toward the Puerto del Sol. The shouts again were: Arms! Arms! Arms!

The new government immediately sought some form of compromise with the Generals', Mola, Cabanellas, etc. . . . Conferences were conducted by telephone. The Republican Generals' Miaja and Rafael Sánchez Guerra spoke for the Barrio Government, and Mola for the Rebels. Mola was offered, by the authority of Barrios, and likewise, Azaña, the post of Minister of War, with two additional posts to be held open in the cabinet for the Rebel Command.

These gestures of appeasement fell on deaf ears. Mola was not at all disposed to compromise. Nor, considering the fact that the *real* power was even now ploughing the Straits from Africa to Cádiz, would it have made any difference if he had.

The Republican bourgeois leaders, Azaña, Quiroga, Barrio, Román and the rest, had hoped desperately to break with Spain's working and peasant classes to save their own necks and their positions of power. But there was no “middle-road” between capitulation and resistance, in which the “hollow-men” could share the fruits of the Oligarchy's strength. The Rebels would consider nothing short of the surrender of the Republic, itself. In essence Martínez Barrio-Azaña and company were prepared to do even that. Only the refusal of the Fascist-Military prevented this from happening. *All* offers were turned down, which included any part of the existing regime.

It was now patently manifest to the most opportunist and obtuse representative of the Republican Right that Fascism could be opposed in only one way—by arming the people and passing to the offensive in all those areas where the rising had taken place. Few of the Republican leaders were willing to take this new road. The vacillations and dismay determinedly influenced by Azaña, had already facilitated the triumph of the Fascists in a great part of Spain.

The sins of the leaders within the Republican parties, however, were not necessarily the sins of the followers. These, simple people, workers and peasants too, small shop-keepers, small landowners, had believed and believed strongly in the concepts of the Popular Front. And they were still a majority within its ranks. Their combined strength was 168 delegates to 108 for the combined Socialists, Communists, etc. . . . Of those who voted for the *Frente Popular*, some 4,500,000 or more, at least half or better were Republicans.

An additional point to remember is that other than the massive vote for the Front, there were still a half-million Center votes and 4,000,000 Right and Catholic votes. *And no Socialist or Communist leader with an ounce of integrity or common sense would set out to*

impose a "left revolution" upon such a majority.

Reforms in the areas of public schools, land distribution, church and state, trade union freedom, demands for certain long-overdue economic reforms, even nationalization of certain industries—Yes! But fratricidal revolution to impose their will upon the majority of the people—No! That is the Fascist, or Right method, proven now in a hundred countries around the world, where military regimes have driven popular governments from office.

Spain was only the first. And that was her tragedy; that her people fought for the government of the Republic; for the laws of the Republic; for the constitution of the Republic; a constitution more conservative than that of the United States of America. And while she fought, her supposed friends, the masters of dissimulation in the Western World were the first to betray—as we shall see.

This is not to suggest that Left-Socialists and Communists would cease for a single second in their demands for social justice, and for popular ownership of the basic means of production. But it is to say that theirs was, and could only be, an essentially humanist approach to an essentially human problem—the “theorists” of the F.A.I. notwithstanding.

It would mean, and this is beyond all doubt, that never again would there be those in power who would be allowed to impose fascist or reactionary solutions upon the social problems of the people And perhaps it is this that those of the Right and their constituents fear most; the lack of power which alone allows them to impose their solutions, and which for them can be held and maintained only with the gun.

The question arises: Why did neither the Government of Quiroga, nor that of Martínez Barrio take the only meaningful step? The explanation lies in their class limitations. These “leaders” of the Republican bourgeoisie did most definitely prefer an understanding with the Rebels to arming the people.

After the Rebels themselves had slammed shut the gates to those who had hoped for compromise, Azaña, to retain some modicum of personal power, had no recourse but to take a different tack. New consultations were held with Barrio, Prieto and Caballero. The latter demanded, in the view of the urgency of the situation and the procrastination that had helped create it, that arms be given to the people now! And even as he spoke, Dolores Ibárruri, *La Pasionaria*, was delivering her famous address to the people of Spain to resist the onslaught of Fascism.

On Sunday of the 19th, at dawn, the multitudes still congregated in the Puerto del Sol. They awaited the final answer of their government. They were aided now by profound dissent rising within the rank and file of the Republican parties, accompanied by open demands

that were the prevailing line to be changed.

At 4:00 in the afternoon the resignation of Martínez Barrio was announced, along with the information that a new government was being formed which would accept "*Fascism's declaration of war upon the Spanish people.*" The Government would be presided over by José Giral. The posts of War and Government would be given to two proven Republican officers, General Castello and General Sebastián Pozas. Things had remained the same in that Azaña had again created an all-Republican government. Even in this hour of absolute crisis no single representative of the workers and left parties had been invited into the government, though this time they had offered their aid.

The constitution of the new government, however, did demonstrate that the pressures of the small bourgeoisie and sections of the middle classes to defend the republic and to take their positions at the side of the workers, had had their effect.

The first act of Giral was to issue orders to all civil governors throughout Spain to distribute arms to the people, or to the workers organizations. The vacillations of Casares Quiroga and Martínez Barrio had already cost the Spanish Republic a considerable number of lives and territory; but it was still not too late.

The *civil war* in Spain would last eight days. In the following pages we will see just how that war was won, and who won it. Some myths, we hope, are about to be dispelled.

THE RISING IN ANDALUSIA:

Rebel plans had provided that Andalucía would be the link between the Army of Africa and the Peninsula. The ports of the Andalucían littoral were to be used to disembark the expeditionary force which would then, hopefully without major resistance, march upon Madrid. Alfredo Kindelán, Chief of the Franco Airforce, writes that: "In accordance with the agreed upon plan, the troops of Mola and Cabanellas initiated a combined maneuver designed to culminate with an attack on Madrid, simultaneously with the arrival of the Army of Africa from the south."¹

But plans are not necessarily the father of fact. And those of the Rebels for a quick victory were to be utterly destroyed by the heroic resistance of Andalucía. The people, though betrayed unto death by the Fascist-Military, and the Azaña-Quiroga government, were not disposed to surrender their liberties lightly.

At 2:00 in the afternoon, on July 18, while the Government of Casares Quiroga still issued its tranquilizing messages designed to confuse and confound, the rebellion began in Seville.

Its leader was General Queipo de Llano, mason and known supporter of the anti-monarchic conspiracies of 1930. He had but a handful of young officers to command. But these, with the element of surprise and the lie of a "defense of the Republic," soon brought the *Comandancia Militar* and the garrisons under their control. General Villa Abrille of the Organic Division was placed under arrest; likewise General López Vistas, Captain Hidalgo and other officers who sought to project their *Jefe*. With what amounted to ridiculous ease, the Commander of the 6th Infantry Regiment, Colonel Allanegui; the Commander of the Cavalry Regiment and many other officers were also arrested. This achievement showed that the rising had taken the most honest, but stupidly unsuspicious officers completely by surprise. The conspirators encountered a number of complexities which, for fear of defeat, they managed to keep from subalterns. They wished no repeat of the Sanjurjo rising of 1932.

The leaders of the Left political parties; the unions and the youth movement, all took their places instantly at the head of the anti-fascist militias.² They had but eighty carbines, given them by an officer of the Assault Guards at the request of Manuel Delicado, a member of the Central Committee of the P.C.E. A delegation of the Militia and of the Popular Front demanded of the Civil Governor that arms be distributed immediately. He refused despite the fact that the Fascist-Military had already moved their units into the streets.

At three in the afternoon an armed struggle began between loyal *Asaltos* who had

¹ *Mis Cuadernos de Guerra*, Alfredo Kindelán, Madrid, 1945. p. 26

² Del Vayo, *L.O.*, p. 28

occupied the Telephone building, the *Ayuntamiento*, the Hotel Inglaterra and the Plaza Nuevo. The Rebels then made use of the heavy guns of a subverted artillery regiment, and the course of the battle was decided. The *Asaltos* surrendered.

At 5:00 in the evening the Civil Governor telephoned Queipo to announce his surrender. Upon which Queipo de Llano promised to respect the lives of the besieged. His word was as good as Molas'. The defenders, including the governor, were immediately shot.³

By 6:00 in the evening the Fascists had captured the center of the city. The workers, meanwhile, had declared the general strike from the central radio station, and called all militants to the barricades, ready to fight; appealing also to the peasants of the surrounding towns and villages to hasten to the aid of Seville and the Republic.

With the fall of darkness, however, the frantic calls died. The radio station, attacked by a strong detachment of rebel infantry, was overwhelmed.

With the few carbine at their disposal, and with a few hundred hand-guns completing their total arsenal, the workers organized the defense of the *barrios*. In the Gypsy section of *La Triana*, beneath, it is said, a “Lorca” moon and the smell of the waters of the Guadalquivir; in the barrios of *La Macarena de la Flamenca*, of *San Julián* and *San Bernardo*—in all parts, the fight began with an unequaled ferocity. And everyone, Socialists, Anarchists, Communists, Republicans of the *Izquierda*—all sensed that they would be truly brothers now in a fast gathering and frightful death.

And the women too; those who brought food and water to the barricades; gave succor to the wounded and dying. They would suffer a common fate.

Each hour that passed became more difficult. Surrounded completely in the barrios, with full knowledge that aid would most likely never come, they still had no thought of surrender. And, in the towns of Utrera, Alcalá de Guadeira, Carmona and Morón, the peasants frantically sought to organize help for the embattled workers of Seville.

On the 19th, the Civil Governor of Huelva sent a detachment of the *Guardia Civil* to their aid. With these “*Civiles*” went a column of miner volunteers from Rio Tinto. At the gates of Seville the well-armed *Guardias* attacked the miners column which, poorly armed and taken by surprise, were massacred. Content in their treachery, the Guardia Civil of Huelva passed over to the Fascist-Military.⁴

The working class of Seville fought on.

3 *Un ano con Queipo*, Antonio Bahamonde, Barcelona, 1938. p. 24

4 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 125

On the 20th, with hundreds already dead and thousands wounded the defenders were confronted with rebel reinforcements—Moorish Regulars and the Foreign Legion, disembarking in Cádiz. The *Jefe* of the 5th Bandera of the Tercio, Major Castejón, assumed command of the attack against the barrios. Heavy machinegun fire swept all the streets and plazas, as did shrapnel from the heavy guns. The barrios of *La Triana*, *Macarena*, etc., were completely destroyed. The colonial troops then entered the fighting with a brutal ferocity. In the name of “Christian civilization” they butchered men, women and children alike, committing crimes that would see no parallel until the days of Buchenwald and the new horror of *My Lai*. By July 25, after the loss of thousands of dead, all worker resistance ceased. The correspondent of *Paris Soir* telegraphed his paper:

“It was implacable, inexorable slaughter. When on the second day (after the colonial attack) one could contemplate the ruins, one found the bodies of men intertwined, having seemingly been prepared to be strung like beads through the gaping wounds of bayonets and knives thrust into their bodies to the hilt.”⁵

Some small groups of *valientes* broke the circle to escape to Huelva to the west, where the garrison of that provincial capital, though compromised in the rebellion, was neutralized for the moment by the strength of the workers and the declaration of the general strike.

In Cádiz, the news of rebellion in Morocco had come as a clarion alarm. The Civil Governor and commander of artillery, Mariano Zapico, knowing of the potential for treason of his compatriot, General Varela, ordered Varela imprisoned in the castle of Santa Catalina. But by noon of the 18th, the Military Commander, General López Pinto, celebrated for his reactionary ideas and brutality, had liberated Varela. Varela then called the troops into rebellion and pronounced the State of War.

Mariano Zapico then made a fortress of the *Comandancia*. And, with various leaders of the Popular Front, some loyal army and navy men and three hundred workers, he prepared to defend the Republic. In the Mayoralty building an additional center of resistance was created. Radio Cádiz, in loyal hands, called the people to fight against Fascism, and the Unions declared the general strike. In some streets barricades went up. But, as in Seville, the forces to man them had but a handful of weapons given them by Assault Guards.

The fighting became generalized, continuing through the night. On the following day the Rebels brought artillery into the plaza and shelled the Republican strongpoints. At 6:00 a.m. of the 19th, the Destroyer, *Churruca*, arrived at Cádiz and disembarked a Tabor of Regulares, a Bandera of the Foreign Legion and a squadron of cavalry. In the afternoon these forces took by assault the buildings of the Civil Government and the Mayoralty. Governor Zapico and most of the defenders were shot.⁶

5 “*Paris Soir*,” July 25, 1936

6 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 126

At the arsenal of Carraca the fighting was prolonged through the days of July 21 and 22. The workers of the base hoped to seize the arms in a movement combined with loyal sailors of the *Cánovas* and the *Lauria*. The Rebel officers of this last ship discovered their intent and forced their men to shell the *Cánovas*.

The Fascist-Military then attacked the sailors and workers of the arsenal with Regulares and the Tercio, and they were defeated.

The coming of these colonial forces had most definitely decided the fate of Cádiz, and the question of victory or defeat for the Rebels. It would do this also in Algeciras, La Linea, Jerez and many other towns and villages where the population already fought desperately against a well armed enemy.

On the 18th a delegation of leaders from the U.G.T. and the C.N.T. visited the Military Governor of Algeciras to ask for the distribution of 500 rifles from the arms deposits of the barracks, and to emplace a few batteries in the Port to impede the possible disembarking—which they judged to be imminent—of troops proceeding from Africa.

The Governor refused, *himself* declared the State of War, with the help of the Civil Guard, and called the troops into the streets.

On Sunday, the 19th, Colonials from Africa disembarked in Algeciras. All popular resistance was then put down after three days of fighting.

In Córdoba, the Military Governor, Colonel Cascajo, had hesitated not a second; but brought the troops into the streets and declared the State of War. The sparks of resistance were then promptly suffocated. And, as in all other towns and villages where the Fascists had won, the resultant repression was monstrous.

Thousands of anti-fascists were shot. Among the first to fall was the Socialist deputy to the Cortes, García Hidalgo, and the Communist deputy and erstwhile metal-worker, Bautista Garcés.

In Granada, General Campins, the Military Governor, a Catholic and a conservative, declared openly that the idea of breaking his word to the Republic was distasteful for him. He resisted the pressures of the Rebel officers for two days. At noon, on July 20, the Fascist-Military, convinced that Campins would not violate his word, arrested and shot him, along with a number of his supporters. The troops were put into motion; the State of War was declared. The workers and members of the *Frente Popular*, having already proclaimed the general strike, now put up barricades in the *barrio de Albaicín*. But again, with few arms, they suffered bloody defeat and subsequent massacre. There is no more poignant page in Spanish history than the murder of the supporters of the Republic in

Granada. The cities five thousand dead lie mostly in the ravines of Viznar, but a few kilometers from Granada. And mingled with those corpses in the mass graves is the body of García Lorca—and Granada is forever known as the city that killed its poet⁷

Over the entire Spanish land of Andalucía there now fell an awful cloud of terror. As early as July 18, at 8:00 p.m. in Seville, Queipo de Llano, to the tune of the Republican anthem, the “Himno de Riego,” inaugurated the first of his infamous broadcasts: these would not cease throughout the years of the Spanish War. His time was consistent and all-pervasive. To those who would offer resistance his answer was simply: “Os mataremos como perros! —We will kill you like dogs!”⁸ The terror spread to the loyal military; the functionaries of the administration, and to the thousands of persons whose sole “crime” was that association with the parties of the Left, or of having voted for the deputies of the *Frente Popular*. According to incomplete statistics from the *Colegio de Abogados de Madrid*, Seville alone saw nine thousand dead in the first weeks. And, as stated, Granada, five thousand.

The lawyer, Francisco González Ruiz, ex-Rightist Governor of Murcia, writes of the terror in the cities and towns of Andalucía in his book, *I Believed in Franco*. “In Jerez de la Frontera more than three thousand were shot. This figure approximates those killed in Morón, a town of 18,000; and is proportionate too to the towns of Puente de Genil, Carmona, Castilleja de la Cuesta, La Palma de Condado, and many more.”⁹

In Lora del Río, the colonial troops burned a eucalyptus tree in which some peasants who had offered resistance had hidden. They were burned alive. In that same village over 1,800 were killed.¹⁰

The ferocity with which the Tercio and the Regulares conducted themselves was only exceeded by the studied sadism of the Falange. The Falange had seemingly been converted into an organization of specialists in murder, torture and assassination. Their leaders killed literally thousands of people for a simple act; for any suspicion, or for reasons of personal vengeance. In the fields, the latifundist *señoritos* organized hunting parties of men, venting their hatred on the most militant of the peasants. Charles Foltz, former chief of the Associated Press Bureau in Madrid, writes of the above fact in the following way:

“In Andalucía the sons of ranchers held week-end ‘vengeance parties’ in the pitifully poor rural villages which had unwisely voted for the Republic in 1936. No one will ever know how many thousands died in such family parties. Whole families, whole villages were wiped out. The landowners finally complained

7 *Face of Spain*, Gerald Brenan. Grove Press, N.Y., 1956. Mr. Brenan's chapter on Granada, in this work—in which he revisits the city and looks for the burial site of García Lorca—is a most moving and poignant bit of writing.

8 Bahamonde, p. 26

9 *Yo, he creído en Franco*, Francisco González Ruiz, Barcelona, 1938. p. 157

10 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 128

that their labor supply was being seriously endangered.”¹¹

Of the eight Andalusian capitals, four were captured by Rebels. These were Cádiz, Seville, Córdoba and Granada. Surrounding control, however, was for the moment limited to the villages in their approximate zones. The remaining four, Huelva, Jaén, Málaga and Almería, remained in Republican hands, thanks to the heroism of the Andalusian people; the workers, miners, journeymen and peasants.

In Málaga the Fascists had declared the State of War on the 18th. But General Patoxt, the head of the rising, commenced to vacillate before he knew he was a massive popular movement against him. The planned disembarking of African troops in the port did not take place. Moreover, the workers had obtained some arms from the *Asaltos* who remained loyal to the Republic.

That night, in the Plaza de la Trinidad, workers and *Asaltos* together attempted to persuade the *Guardia Civil* to unite with the people. They failed, achieving only a superficial neutrality. Simultaneously with this effort, militia detachments surrounded the Capuchinos barracks where the troops were confined. At three in the morning they launched an impetuous assault, upon which the soldiers surrendered in great numbers and asked that they be incorporated into the ranks of the people. Their officers surrendered.

On the morning of the 19th, jubilation over their victory reached its zenith with the arrival in the port city of the Republican Destroyer, *Sánchez Barcaiztegui*, bringing their arrested officers plus those of the Destroyers' *Lepanto* and *Almirante Valdez*, to be jailed.

Málaga was firmly on the side of the Republic.

In Almería, the parties of the *Frente Popular* had been in constant session to counter the rebellion which they knew to be imminent. Even before the news from Morocco they had sent a commission to the Civil Governor, Dr. Juan Ruiz Peinado-Vallejo to propose the adoption of joint measures to prevent the rising. The Governor refused, alleging that the Army and other units of “public order” had reiterated their loyalty to the Republic. What was clear to all was apparently not clear to the Governor. “His attitude,” according to the Communists, “seriously impeded the arming of the people, and left the capital and the province defenseless.”¹²

The Governor writes in his memoirs, however, that as early as July 18 he received a telegram from Madrid, uncoded, which informed that that: “Within the gravity of the present situation we ask that you proceed to arm the people.” The Governor writes

¹¹ Foltz, p. 97

¹² *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 129

further: "What arms? Where will I get them? Where do Governors get arms to distribute to the people? The arms of the State are always placed in the power of the Army."¹³

As early as the 17th a number of *Carabineros*—escapees from the quarters where they had been confined—had brought information to the Popular Front Committee that the Military was even then in rebellion.

With this most alarming news the people commenced the same day to build barricades of paving stones in the Puerta de Puchina, and to establish control of the streets and of the highways to Granada and Málaga.

Gabriel Pradal, the Socialist Deputy, and Amador Fernández, member of the provincial committee of the P.C.E., and many other leaders of the Front, inclusive of the Left-Republican youth *Jefe*, Paco Barrilado, all went to the building of the Civil Government. The Governor had concentrated approximately one hundred and ten members of the *Guardia de Asalto* there and converted it into the central point of resistance. The Governor had been right as to the paucity of arms. Other than those of the *Asaltos* there were only a few hunting rifles and shotguns.

On the 18th the Military called into the streets a machine gun battalion and units of the 71st Infantry Regiment of the garrison of Almería, and the *Guardia Civil*. With a preconceived plan the rebels centered their attacks upon the Government building. They were energetically repulsed. They then occupied the radio station, the Socialist Center and the Casa del Pueblo with a consequent number of dead and wounded on both sides.

During the interim of this fighting in the capital, workers and peasants militia of the province attacked the 3rd Regiment of Catalonia attached to the Viator barracks approximately eight kilometers from Almería. The soldiers had no heart for the battle; capitulated, as did the officers. And the victors moved toward the aid of the capital with the captured guns. They were met on the road from Granada by a group of aviation personnel retreating from the Fascist-Military of that city. The arrival in Almería of this column of militia and soldiers lifted everyone's spirits and produced great enthusiasm among the populace. Together they reduced the points of insurgent resistance. They were, however, repulsed in their attacks on the communications radio center now held by the *Guardia Civil*.

The Republican Destroyer, *Lepanto*, anchored in the port of Almería on the 21st. A delegation of the *Frente Popular* contacted the ship's captain with a request that he help in liquidating this last Rebel redoubt. The Captain sent a radiogram to the *Civiles* commanding them to surrender or come under the fire of his batteries. The reply was not long in coming. The white banner was raised and all resistance ceased.

13 *Cuando la muerte no quiere*, Dr. Juan Ruiz Vallejo. La Impresora Azteca, Mexico d.f., 1967, p. 140

Almería was in the hands of the Republic.

The rising crushed, columns of militia marched instantly to the aid of Granada. But the courage of the people, poorly armed and unskilled in military arts, could not win over the trained troops of the Army and the Civil Guards. Granada remained in the hands of the insurgents. One workers column, calling itself the “Lenin” battalion and commanded by a Captain Ledesma, moved on to liberate Motril with the aid of the Destroyer Lepanto.¹⁴

In Jaén, the firmness and efficiency of the parties of the Front neutralized the Fascist *Terratenientes* and the Civil Guard, aborting the rebellion. On July 14, at the initiative of the P.C.E. representatives, the Provincial Committee of the Front sent delegations to the villages to alert the parties of the Left and the peasant unions to the imminence of rebellion; and to propose the immediate formation of armed groups to crush such an attempt.

On the same day the Provincial Committee of the *Frente Popular* installed itself in the buildings of the Civil Government in Jaén, where it would be in constant contact with the people of the province.

On the 18th, with the news of the rising in Morocco, the Committee sent delegates to the countryside to head up the newly-formed militia of workers and peasants. The Civil Governor, meanwhile, had called in all Civil Guards and somehow managed to disarm them, though many protested their loyalty. The Governor took no chances. And his act, together with the efficient mobilization of the people by the Front—they were given the arms of the *Civiles*—saved Jaén for the Republic.

14 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 130

THE MEANING OF REVOLUTION:

To define that which now unfolded throughout the length and breadth of the Spanish Peninsula as simply a civil war in the classical sense of the 19th century—Bourbon against Carlist—would be to play the game of the “castle historians.”

The pious reckoning of so many churches burned; so many priests shot and/or otherwise, property destroyed, cannot for a single second conceal the fact that those of the Spanish Right—the hierarchy of financial oligarchs, landowners, church and army—had not risen to redress these petty grievances. They had risen for one purpose and one purpose alone: to crush for all the years of the foreseeable future any aspirations whatsoever on the part of the great majority of the people which could threaten their power. They had not unleashed just a “Civil War.” They had unleashed “Class War.”

It was the first example, though this last half of the 20th century has shown us many more,¹⁵ of a situation in a given country where the people had ostensibly achieved power by the ballot, only to find in the roar of guns and the clash of steel, just how hollow that “power” was without the force to back it up.

But “class war” in the year 1936 did not necessarily follow the clotured path of ultra-left dogma: namely that “class war” was between the workers alone all powers of the powers of the State.

And therein lies the secret and the meaning of the strength of the Spanish people against their oppressors.

For the facts were that with the advent of the freedom and promise of the Popular Front—workers, peasants (militant or conservative), intellectuals, small landowners and businessmen—*all* had a stake in the Spanish Republic. The existing ruling class, that strongly entrenched, reactionary minority of the Spanish people, had no use for *any* government which held a potential for the destruction of its powers.

Revolution, in the accepted sense, is the armed rising of one group or segment of the population of a given State against another. It is not necessarily a rising against the State Apparatus, or the “form” of the State, itself.

Spanish Reaction rose against its own State Apparatus, fearful that it was slipping from their grasp. By so doing they but guaranteed that it would.

Classical revolutions of the Left are defined as those in which a majority of the people rise against both the Apparatus and the Power of the State. The Power being simply, *all* of the

15 [Not filled in by Landis – Ed.]

military, the para-military and the armed police.

In Spain State Power moved against the people. And they, in turn, organized and led by the working class through their political parties and their trade unions of the U.G.T. and the C.N.T., and in the knowledge that they had already won the Apparatus by their majority ballot, met the State Power with a counter power—themselves, their few arms, and their ability to organize to defend their gains.

The armed forces of the Financial Oligarchy came out against them. They in turn arose against that Power. And thus in essence was the true “People's Revolution” begun on Spanish soil.

THE FLEET IS ANTI-FASCIST!

The well-laid plans of the Fascist-Military began now to show their first flaws. Though popular resistance had failed to impede the movements of the rebellion in the Protectorate of Morocco and certain areas of Andalucía, Fascist illusions of a quick advance to Madrid were fast waning.

A prime reason for this was the total defeat of the Rebel attempt to win the fleet. They had thought they would achieve this with ease. They had forgotten that the crews of the ships were, in the main, Socialists and Republicans, and that these would not stand idly by and allow themselves to be used against the people.

It is a thing to know that no parallel exists in modern history comparable with the seize of almost the entire Spanish fleet; the greater part of it on the high seas, by sailors, oilers, wipers and engineers, from their aristocratic officers.

The mutiny of the Tsarist battleship, *Potemkin*, in 1905; that of the French Black-Sea Fleet, in 1918; the British ships of the line at Invergordon, though generally sagas of courage and resolution—all pale before the deeds of these thousands of simple Spanish sailors.

The most impressionable fact was that this fleet, under the command of these same sailors, fought from the very first moment on the side of the Spanish Republic, and thereby inflicted upon the Fascists their first great defeat.

At the beginning of the rising the Spanish Fleet was composed of two battleships, the *Jaime Primero* and the *España* (this last without guns in the port of El Ferrol), five cruisers, *Libertad*, *Miguel de Cervantes*, *Méndez Núñez*, *República* and the *Almirante Cervera*. In addition there were twelve destroyers, twelve submarines, eight torpedo boats, nine minesweepers, five gunboats and other auxiliary units.

Under construction were the cruisers, *Canarias* and *Baleares*, three mine-layers, five destroyers, three submarines and one gunboat.

The officers of the fleet were committed to the rising. In the month of May, on orders of General Franco—he was in the War Ministry at the time—the Fleet engaged in naval maneuvers in the waters of the Canary Islands under the command of Admiral Javier Salas.

This maneuver afforded both Franco and the Rebel Admiral the opportunity of sounding out the other commanders as to their disposition to participate in the revolt. The conversations ended in complete accord. The final problem, the inclusion of the Army of Africa as the *key* factor in the rebellion was solved. The commanders of the fleet agreed to

transport the colonial army to the Peninsula.

Information concerning this meeting reached the Admiralty. And, since it coincided with one of the many dates set for revolt by the then, Sanjurjo-Franco-Mola triumvirate, the ships were ordered to port so that none would be in the area of the Protectorate should the attempt be made. The major units, a battleship and some cruisers, were put en route to El Ferrol. The destroyers returned to Cartagena. The majority of the ships of the fleet were in these bases, therefore, at the time of the rising. In Cádiz there were the two gunboats previously mentioned, the *Cánovas* and the *Lauria*, plus the dismantled cruiser, *República*. A flotilla of submarines, the B1, B2, B3, and B4, plus an additional squadron were in the pens at Cartagena.

With the knowledge of the rising on the 17th, the destroyers, *Almirante Valdez*, *Sánchez Barcaiztegui* and *Lepanto*, anchored in Cartagena, together with the squadron of submarines, were ordered by the Government to put to sea. Their mission was to prevent the movement of troops across the Straits of Gibraltar, and to shell the Rebel city of Melilla.

Since no effort had been made to guarantee the loyalty of the officers commanding these ships, a danger existed that they would simply join the rebels rather than oppose them. Of the three ship's commanders, only Valentin Fuentes of the *Lepanto* was to prove loyal to the Republic. The others but awaited the moment to rebel.

They arrived in the port of Melilla at dawn of the 18th. Instead of shelling the city the *Sánchez* and the *Valdez* put into port and established contact with the Fascist-Military. They sought to jointly come up with a method whereby they could deceive the sailors and involve them in the rising.

The vigilance of the crews, however, prevented the consummation of this treason. When they found that their officers were attempting rebellion, they weighed anchor and headed for the open sea. The Commander of the *Valdez* managed through trickery to run his ship against the rocky promontory of *Morro la Muele*. At ten that night, with the propeller broken and the ship taking water, the sailors of the *Valdez* despite enormous difficulties, made the necessary repairs and were soon outside the reach of the coastal batteries.

The crews of both destroyers then arrested their officers and conducted them to the Peninsula, while the *Lepanto* remained on guard at Melilla before sailing to the relief of Almería.

On the afternoon of the 18th, the Commanders of the *Churruca* and the *Laya* received orders to open fire on any ship attempting to transport troops from Morocco, and to bombard the fortress of Ceuta. The ship's officers, already in rebellion, kept these orders

hidden from the sailors.

The *Churruca*, itself, picked up the 5th Bandera of the Tercio in Ceuta and set out for Cádiz. The officers of the *Layo* put their ship at the service of the rebels in Larache. But once on the open sea again, the crew of the *Laya*, seizing rifles from the ship's arsenal, attacked the officers. After a brief struggle the ship was again at the disposal of the Republic.

On the night of the 19th the crew of the submarine, C-3, finding that its officers had concealed the orders to sink transport bound for the mainland, arrested them and sent word to the other ships of their squadron of the officer's disloyalty. By the 22nd, all submarines of the Spanish Navy had arrested their officers and declared their ships for the Republic.

With this same courage and loyalty the crews of the cruisers' *Libertad* and *Miguel de Cervantes*, plus the crew of the battleship, *Jaime Primo*, also declared themselves for the *Frente Popular* of the Spanish Republic.¹

On July 18, with news of the rising in Cádiz, the Government ordered the above three ships to sail from Galicia to put down the rebellion of Varela. In the communications center of the Admiralty in Madrid, the radio-telegraphist, Benjamin Balboa, arrested the Chief of the rebels of his particular service. He consequently established direct contact with all "ship's radio operators," cautioning them to extreme vigilance in-re their commanding officers. To prevent the isolation of the sailors from the Madrid Command, orders were given to *all* ship's commanders on the high seas to communicate their position every two hours. The radio-telegraphists were given the following message:

"The *Jefe* of Communications of the Admiralty has been detained for complicity in rebellion. Codes in his possession are also in the hands of the Commanders of your ships. Therefore, from this moment, and so that you will not be taken by surprise—if the conspirators *seem* to affirm orders from the Admiralty—you will accept no orders in code. All that will be sent you from the Admiralty will be in proper language. Consider as Fascist that which is not!"²

One can imagine the countless meetings of the common sailors aboard the ships of the Spanish fleet, at sea or in port. The act of mutiny is not taken lightly. To lose, either to a ship's commanding officers, or later, to a victory of Fascist-Militarism, would mean their deaths. But yet they risked it. And in this way the radio-telegraphists of the fleet became the "heralds" of the Republic on the high seas.

The first crew to command a ship was, fittingly, that of the *Libertad*. Arriving before Cádiz, the commanders of the cruiser used every means to conceal the order given them by the Government: to bombard the military objectives of the city. The radioman, Antonio

1 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 134

2 *La Escuadra la mandan los Cabos*, Manuel D. Benavides, Mexico, D.F., 1944. p. 134-135

Cortejosa, aware of what the officers were *not* doing, established a hook-up with the “Voice of Madrid” over the ship's P.A. system—and himself proclaimed the officers traitors “to yourselves and the Republic.” He then ended his personal broadcast with a call to arms.³

The Corporals, Romero and Bertalo, keepers of the arsenal, distributed two hundred rifles to the sailors and organized the ensuing battle. A short time later a telegram was received in the Admiralty in Madrid: “The crew of the cruiser *Libertad*, have arrested the officers of the ship and hold them in their staterooms and berths. We place our ship at the disposal of the Republic.”⁴

At 5:30 p.m. on the evening of the 19th, one hundred rifles were pointed at the bridge of the *Miguel de Cervantes*. The Fascist officers surrendered their pistols to the sailors without a fight.

At 2:00 p.m. On the afternoon of the 20th, the sailors of the battleship, *Jaime Primo*, intercepted a Fascist radiogram commanding the ship to sail to the port of Ceuta. The crew, led by the sergeants, Rogelio Souto, García, Alonso y Mosquera; and the master-gunner, Antunez, and the machinist, Caneiro, armed themselves with rifles and demanded that the officers surrender. The officers refused and a bloody fight developed for the bridge.

Very shortly thereafter this laconic message was received by the Madrid Admiralty:

“We have had serious resistance from the commanders and officers on board, and have subdued them by force. Killed in the fight were one captain and one lieutenant; gravely wounded were eight corporals, one lieutenant, one ensign, one artillery corporal and two sailors. Urgently request instructions as to bodies.”⁵

The Admiralty's reply was equally sanguine: “Admiralty to crew, *Jaime I*: Lower bodies overboard with respectful solemnity. What is your position?”⁶

The *Jaime I* arrived before Tangiers on July 21, to be met by a large part of the other 'hero' ships. It was truly an amazing armada of battleships, cruisers, destroyers and submarines—commanded by corporals, machinists, gunners and sailors of the Republic. They had cleansed themselves of their fascist officers and were now governed by committees elected temporarily by the crews.

In the north the destroyer, *José Díaz* (it would later conduct a lonely battle against the entire Fascist fleet before Gibraltar), led by its commander, José Antonio Castro, was

3 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 134

4 Benevides, pp. 134-135

5 Ibárruri, p. 198

6 Ibid.

committed to the fight against the rebels from the first day.

The bases of Mahón, Cartagena, Cádiz and El Ferrol were all scenes of bitter, no-quarter fighting between sailors and rebels. The first, Cartagena and Mahón were conquered for the Republic. Cádiz and El Ferrol fell to the Fascists.

To the Republican fleet was also added the cruiser, *Méndez Núñez*. Surprised by the revolt in Spanish Guinea, the crew under the command of the ensign, Rodríguez Sierra, and others, put the rebel officers ashore and weighed anchor for the Peninsula.

Spanish sailors had written one of the most glorious pages in the history of the Spanish navy.

The Nazi Charge d'affairs, Voelckers, sent this report to his government:

"The defection of the fleet may frustrate completely the project of Franco. This quite serious organizational set-back threatens the plans from the beginning. The resultant weakness can sacrifice the garrisons of the major cities. Above all precious time is being lost."⁷

In the Protectorate the Fascist's only victory was the capture of the Gunboat, *Dato*, and various transports.

With the fleet loyal and operating in the Straits, the transport of troops of the Army of Africa by sea had, of necessity, to be suspended.

As of the moment the revolutionary sailors had closed the road of the sea to the Fascist-Military.

REVOLT IN THE NORTH:

Initiated on the 17th in Morroco; developed still further in Andalucía on the 18th—by the 19th and 20th the rebellion had extended to the entire area of the Spanish mainland. It encompassed the zone from Casares and Toledo through Madrid to the Cantabrian coast; and from the Atlantic and the Portuguese border to the littoral of the Mediterranean and the industrial cities of Catalonia.

In all, the rebellion affected twenty-nine provinces of the territories of Galicia, Asturias, León Castilla la Vieja, Navarre, Vasconia, Catalonia, Aragón, Castilla la Nueva, Estramadura and the Balearics . . . (Isles).

The profusion of military force in these zones was greatly superior to that in other parts of Spain. The eight *Organic Divisions*, the core of the mainland army, plus the regiments of the *Comandancia de Asturias Extenta*, and the *Comandancia de Baleares*, had been concentrated for precisely the job at hand.

But it was in exactly the areas listed that the Rebels suffered their principal defeats. Fir Madrid and all of *Castilla la Nueva*; Barcelona and all of Catalonia, Santander, Asturias—with the exception of Oviedo—Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa, Levante; almost all of Estremadura, and a good part of Aragón fell to the arms of the Republic.

The Rebels won only in zones which were predominantly agrarian, and where there were but small groupings of organized workers.

In the area of the Seventh Organic Division, for example, the Fascist rising triumphed rapidly. This division, commanded by the loyal general, Molero, had its H.Q. in Valladolid, center of great landowners, wheat growers of the Castillian *mesas*; and a city wherein the Falangists could count upon one of their principal organizational nuclei.

The night of July 18, the Fascist Generals' Saliquet and Ponte, accompanied by various officers, went to Molero's headquarters. They demanded that he relinquish his command. The General refused. They produced pistols and a gunfight ensued in which the General was seriously wounded and his two adjutants, Leal Travieso and Rioboo were killed. In the skirmish the loyal officers managed to account for two of Saliquet's men.

At 2:00 a.m. of the 19th, the State of War was declared. The Unions replied instantly with the general strike. In the Calle Molins a battle developed. There the Casa del Pueblo was converted into a bastion of popular resistance. In the vanguard of the embattled workers of Valladolid were the railroad unions of the U.G.T. Meanwhile the Civil Governor—he too had denied a request by the workers for arms for their defense—fled. The Guard, the Assault Guard, and the Army, plus para-military units of the Falange. Only when artillery

had totally destroyed the Casa del Pueblo did organized resistance cease.

In Palencia too, the people fought with the few arms that the Civil Governor placed at their disposal at the last moment. To no avail . . .

The rebellion had begun simultaneously in Burgos, led by officers of the *Sexta División* which covered a part of Castilla la Vieja, the Basque country and Navarre.

The Commander of this military region was the newly arrived General Batet. As previously stated, Batet had been arrested by Mola together with General Mena who had come to Burgos on the 18th to replace the Fascist General, Golzález de Lara. Both Batet and Mena were shot!¹

The strongest citadel of popular resistance in this province was the city of Miranda del Ebro. It was a rail division center. And the railroad syndicates of the U.G.T. fought valiantly for some days before they were finally overcome by units of the army and the rebellious Civil Guard.

The city of Logroño was at the mercy of officers and soldiers of an artillery regiment. The opposition of the people, however, plus the vacillations of the military commander, General Carrasco, who for a time resisted the Rebel demands, caused them to remain in their barracks. The arrival of a column sent by Mola then decided the issue.

In Navarre, the Rebels encountered no armed resistance. General Mola, himself, declared the State of War at 6:00 in the morning of the 19th, in the *Plaza del Castillo* of Pamplona. The young commander of the *Guardia Civil*, Rodríguez Mendel, with a group of loyal *Guardias*, attempted to flee the city. Their effort, an heroic saga in itself, became a running battle through the city streets in which they were killed, one by one; no one escaping.

For a hundred years Navarre had lived an isolated, almost sequestered existence. The accumulation of hatreds; the political rancour against all who opposed their Carlist pretensions was the Spanish anachronism of the 20th century. To them the Bourbon Monarchy which had taken away their rights in 1887, and the Republic, which they characterized as “corrupt bourgeois,” were one and the same. They remained as a barren island amidst the struggles for social change. A Spain moving toward industrialization and democracy meant nothing to them. Navarre lived as in the past, maintaining the class of tradition and influence of Carlist reaction—as a *votive lamp*.

Only in Pamplona, capital since 1823 of “The Kingdom of Navarre,” and in a few towns linked with the Basque province of Guipúzcoa, had any social “unrest” penetrated—and this to a proletariat in small shops and modest factories. There were also a few weeks

1 *Guerra y revolución*, p. 137

cells of socialists and republicans, and that was all.

Navarre then, and not without reason, was a natural redoubt of the insurrection. Carlist and clerical influence had truly made Navarre—the *Vendée Española*!

Participation in the rising by the Navarrese peasants, however, cannot be attributed solely to tradition and the backwardness of the people. The grave errors of the various republican governments in-re the question of religion and the land, plus the insensate passivity of Azaña which allowed the generals to pursue the subversion with impunity, created no sympathies for the Republic. Indeed, when Azaña appointed Mola as Military Governor of Pamplona, Mola is supposed to have remarked: “Well, this is the single thing that Navarre has been without.”²

And he was right!

Navarre was to be the only zone wherein the rising would be based upon the mass of the people.

General Cabanellas headed the rebellion in Zaragoza. The Government had conveniently given him the Fifth Organic Division with which to do this. On the 18th, in view of the General's suspicious conduct, and fearing that this “mason,” and therefore, presumably, a Republican, intended to declare the State of War, Quiroga sent his emissary, General Nuñez de Prado, *Jefe* of Aviation, to convince him not to. Nuñez de Prado was supposedly an intimate friend of Cabanellas. When his plane landed he promptly informed Cabanellas that “A forth-coming change of Ministries will satisfy all of the General's (Mola's) demands and obviate the necessity of a rising.”³ Despite this most friendly overture General Cabanellas promptly arrested General Nuñez de Prado and shot him then and there.

The decisive moves of Cabanellas and his Fascist constituents did not meet with the necessary counter-action by the Anarchist leadership of that Aragonese Capital. The Zaragoza workers awaited the call to action in vain. They were left in a state of confusion and uncertainty. The leadership of the C.N.T. and F.A.I., in this most militant of cities, remained passive; considering useless any combative mobilization of the people.

At 4:00 a.m. on July 19, the Civil Governor proclaimed the State of War. The accompanying statement of the Republican General, Cabanellas, is a marvel of absolute perfidy:

“Extraordinary circumstances existent in Spain today have placed in my hands, by constitutional mandate—and in the highest interests of Spain and the Republic—the obligation to assume total public power in the province of Zaragoza. This is done with the exclusive objective of establishing order—indispensable to the normal conditions of life.

² Ibid. p. 138

³ Thomas, p. 140

In this respect I would point out that my traditional love of Spain and the Republic is well known by all the people of Aragón.”⁴

Only then did the C.N.T., under the leadership of the F.A.I., declare the general strike. But it was much too late. The workers had been essentially disarmed by inaction, and would now have to do battle under the worst possible circumstances.

A major C.N.T. activist, Cueva, wrote later of the irresponsibility of the Anarchist leaders:

“We were very naïve. We wasted a great deal of time in futile meetings with the Civil Governor We trusted exclusively to his promises. We did not foresee that in the face of an action as violent as that unleashed by the Fascist, we would have no choice but to fully commit *the 30,000 workers* in Zaragoza to battle. We, the militants of the Confederal Organization of Aragón committed the ultimate error of taking neither Old Spain, nor *Fascism*, seriously.”⁵

The victory of the Fascist-Military in Zaragoza had grave consequences for the cause of the Republic; permitting the rebels to win also in Jaca, Huesca and Teruel; buttressing what would have been an untenable situation for the conspirators.

These cities fell after a series of bloody battles. In Teruel the workers declared the general strike. But the Civil Guard and the *Asaltos* united with the Fascists and broke the back of the people's resistance.

Though Jaca and Huesca were seized by the Rebels, both cities remained almost surrounded by the workers militia. Only one road led from Huesca, and it was under Republican rifle and machine gun fire.

The city of Barbastro remained in loyal hands, thanks primarily to the steadfastness of the Army Colonel, Villalba, chief of the local garrison. In all these regions, however, popular resistance had been weak—this with the exception of certain rail cities where railroad workers had fought with admirable heroism. The Fascist terror was as brutal and bloody as in every other part of Spain. Punitive detachments of Fascists and Carlists, armed by the military, moved through every town and village to “settle accounts” with those of the Left.

In Valladolid, according to information from a Catholic deputy, the number of persons assassinated was above 9,000. The College of Lawyers of Madrid state that in Zaragoza alone, the so-called “Nationalists” murdered over 2,000 people in the first weeks of the rising.

In Teruel the Fascists organized executions in the *Plaza del Torico* with the active assistance of the Señores of the “High Society.” Bloody killings of workers, peasants and

⁴ J. Vigon, p. 125

⁵ *En la Tormenta*, Manuel Chueca, p. 71

intellectuals were converted into “exciting spectacles” for the *Señoritos* and the distinguished *Damas*. Teruel, however, had no monopoly on sadism. In Salamanca, in the month of August, 1936, “The daughter of the Director of the prison arrived at the Grand Hotle at 'tea-time' to invite her friends and their associates to witness the nightly execution of prisoners.”⁶

Burgos did not escape this repression. Despite the fact that it was a city with but a minimal Left movement and few unions all who were known as “liberal” were arrested, and in their major part, executed.

A representative of the International Red Cross, Doctor Junod, who visited the town of Aranda de Duero in August of 1936, recalls that the Count of Vallelano told him bluntly that: “I fear that we shall soon have all the city in jail, and that most will be executed.”⁷

A year after the rebellion the Inspector of Sanitation of the province of Burgos found himself still obligated to send circulars to all mayors with instructions to 'bury the bodies abandoned in the fields.'⁸

In Navarre, the repression reached such terrible heights that the Bishop of Vitoria, Monsenor Mugica, who hoped, though in vain, to bring a halt to the killing, wrote that:

“With astonishment and terror we learned from the lips of a Chief of the Requetes of Navarre, that in the month of September 1936, the Franco adherents had killed some 7,000 people of the Left in Navarre alone. And this in an area which the 'Nationalists' had taken without a fight.

During this same period they had shot innumerable citizens who had never raised a hand against them—in Beasain, Villafranco, Villabona, Andoain, and Oyarzun; without counting the dead in San Sebastián, Vitoria and La Roja In the following months the numbers of killed rose to still more monstrous proportions with the shooting of prisoners of war and civilians in Mondragón, Marquina, and the regions of Guernica and Bilbao.”⁹

6 *Chemises noires, brunes, vertes en Espagne*, Georges Oudard, Paris, 1938. p. 40

7 *Warrior Without Weapons*, Dr. Junod, London, 1951, p. 89

8 *En España sale el Sol*, Pedro de Balsuada, Buenos Aires, 1938. p. 80

9 *Ibid.* p. 85

EUZKADI: ASTURIAS: GALICIA.

Africanist generals in support of the Financial Oligarchy, had placed high hopes in the Basque country—Euzkadi. They were confident that the sector of the Basque people influenced by Socialists and Communists would be neutralized by the Catholic-bourgeois masses who marched behind the banners of the Basque Nationalist Party.

But such was not the case. The Basque Nationalists, especially the youth, rose above the vacillations of their leaders and pronounced for the defense of the Republic and against the Fascist rising.

The Basque working class in every part of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa called for the general strike, and for the mobilization of all unions and organizations. Thanks to the unity among the Socialists, Communists, Anarchists *and* Nationalists, the rising was contained in both these provinces. In Alava, on the other hand, a zone with but a few militant workers, Colonel Alonzo Vega declared for the Rebellion and seized the city of Vitoria and all its surrounding territory.

In Bilbao, the Basque capital, the instant and energetic reaction by the workers paralyzed the rebels. The Assault Guards, commanded by the Captain, Aizpura, and the Civil Guards, under Lt. Colonel Colina, continued loyal. The fortress of Basurto was over run and the rising aborted, with the military abandoning the premises without resistance.

Euzkadi, the Basque country, was for the Republic.

There was, however, very violent fighting in San Sebastián, capital of Guipúzcoa. U.G.T. leaders had been attending a provincial congress there on the 19th, when news came of the revolt. They made haste to return to their specific towns. Many went to Eibar where, in spite of the order of the Civil Governor prohibiting the possession of arms, they had gathered some rifles, pistols and ammunition.

The troops in San Sebastián remained in their barracks. The situation, however, was at best, indecisive. At a meeting of the forces of the Popular Front the Communists demanded that the military be made to clarify their position immediately. But then, without waiting for this clarification, the Front voted to sanction the sending of two columns of militia to Vitoria, where there was an estimated armory of 20,000 rifles, and to seize the city from Colonel Vega. San Sebastián was then left stripped of any meaningful defensive force. With the departure of the militia the garrison rose in rebellion. The major buildings, the Hotel María Cristina, the Nautical Club, the Radio Center, the *Comandancia Militar*—all were seized. The Rebels then dominated the center of the city and a number of positions on its outskirts.

Fighting immediately began for the reconquest of the city. It was led by the young *Jefe* of the Socialist Youth of Mondragón; by Celestino Uriarte, a loyal professional; by the liaison officer of the military H.Q. For Guipúzcoa, Pérez Garmendia, and the P.C.E. Leader, Jesús Larrañaga (shot by Franco in 1942), and many others. The militia of the province were aided by a column of 300 men from Vizcaya commanded by Lt. Justo Rodríguez of the *Guardia de Asalto*.

By July 23, with but a minimum of arms, they recaptured the *Comandancia Militar* and the Nautical Club. The Fascist-Military, encircled in the Hotel María Cristina, then created an example of almost unheard of brutality. They had taken some prisoners. These were now forced to lie within the window gratings; serving as sandbags. Throughout twelve hours of fighting they were kept in this position. Many were killed. The wounded were forced to remain where they were. The attacking militiamen were not aware of what was being done to them. At the end, when the Fascists sensed defeat, the prisoners were removed from the windows. The survivors were later liberated.

There remained the Loyola barracks where the rebels were strongly fortified. The militia, with arms gained mostly in the fighting itself, hastily organized a last assault. It was most urgent that resistance be brought to an end since rebel troops, marching from Navarre, had arrived in the vicinity of Oyarzum, and were rapidly nearing Rentería.

On July 25, after days of fighting, the Rebels capitulated. An essential factor contributing to their defeat had been the attitude of the soldiers. These, in many cases, had fled the barracks and joined the workers. The majority of prisoners taken were Falangists introduced into the barracks the day before the rising and given uniforms by the rebel military.

Various columns of volunteers were equipped with the captured arms. These moved towards Vitoria and against the columns of advancing Navarese *Requetés*, who hoped to seize Tolosa and the mountain pass at Berastegui.

On the outskirts of Irún on the French-Spanish frontier; in the industrial centers of Guipúzcoa—Eibar, Mondragón, Beasain, Villafranca, Pasajes—the Basque forces now mobilized to repulse the columns now being hurled against them by General Mola. In this new phase the Basque Nationalist forces, especially the youth, were incorporated into the armed struggle.

The process of the formation of battalions and brigades of militias now began. One of these of 600 men, advanced toward Vitoria and occupied Arloban, Ochandiano and Ubidea. Assault Guards, in a column of 500 men, marched against Orduna within the province of Burgos to impede any Fascist infiltration from that area. Gorbea mountain, lifting between Alava and Vizcaya, was host to the strangest militia unit of all. This was the

Mendigoxales Battalion, commanded by a Doctor, Angel María de Aguirretxe, and made up completely of athletes from various sports clubs.

The military front to the south of Vizcaya-Guipúzcoa was finally situated at approximately twenty kilometers from Vitoria, and generally followed the line of the Basque frontier.¹

¹ *Guerra y Revolución*, pp. 156

ASTURIAS:

As a result of the rebellion of 1934, the forces of the Right had moved to implement the act of Gil Robles—to create a strong military apparatus in the area which could be mobilized rapidly for any repressive action needed against the Asturian workers. This military apparatus was named: The *Comandancia Exenta de Asturias*. General Miguel Aranda was placed in command.

Aranda, who had figured strongly in the brutal repression of October, sought to hide the facts of his bloody conduct. He presented himself as a loyal republican “without sin” and gained the friendship of certain Republican leaders, plus the Socialist, Indalecio Prieto.² This gave him solid protection until the very moment of the rebellion.

In his book, *El Movimiento Nacional*, the author, M. Liébana, writes that the organizers of the rebellion, “had classified all cities in the categories of: actives, passives, and 'lost to the fascist cause'; Oviedo was one of the cities listed as 'lost.'”³

And no one thought it would be any different.

The revolutionary combativeness of the Austrian working class had been observed on repeated occasions, and was well known by friend and foe alike. Mola had asked that Aranda but carry on a defensive action limited to the following objective: “That the forces of the *Comandancia Militar of Asturias* contain the miners in the districts of *Cuenca Minera* and Puerto del Musel. And that a part of the Seventh Division, garrisoned at León, assist in this.”⁴

In the first hour Aranda had intended to abide by these instructions. On the 19th, however, he decided to go further than the mission allotted him. The cause of this audaciousness was to be found in the errors committed by the Republican and Socialist authorities, which facilitated a most adept maneuver by this traitor.

On July 5, 1936, two weeks before the rising in Africa, a meeting had been held in Oviedo of the U.G.T. and C.N.T. It was addressed by members of the central committee of the P.C.E., among others. “If one thinks,” Dolores Ibárruri told them, “that the reactionary fascist forces are resigned to the defeat suffered in February, they are in error! Asturianos! Be vigilant. Reaction is even now in arms. If they dare attempt to rise, you will know what to do. Retrieve your arms *now*, from where you have hidden them—and keep your powder dry!”⁵

2 *Histoire de la Guerre d'Espagne*, Robert Brasillach & Maurice Bardeche, Paris, 1939. p. 106

3 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 157

4 “*Plan Mola*,” 125th of May, 1936

5 “*Mundo Obrero*,” July 6, 1936

These words were locked into the memory of the Asturian workers. On the 17th, with the news of the rising in Melilla, Asturias was the scene of an impressive popular mobilization. Workers of all tendencies gathered by the thousands at the *Casas del Pueblo*; they considered themselves to be in a “state of war” *now!* In Oviedo, Gijón and other cities, committees of the Popular Front, born of the original U.H.P., held strategy meetings.

The United Provincial Committee, constituted on Oviedo, went to the Civil Governor on the 18th. They asked that he order Aranda to instantly begin the distribution of arms to the workers organizations. Aranda refused, alleging that he had no orders to that effect from the Madrid Government.

The Governor and the Committee delegates then left, convinced by the protestations of Aranda that he was at least loyal to the Republic. Golzález Mallada, the Anarchist representative to the Committee, notes in his work, *Asturias ante la Historia*, that, “from Madrid they had cautioned calm; that they had complete confidence in Aranda and in the Governor, despite the fact that arms had not been distributed: that the garrison of Asturias, together with the Civil Guard—was loyal.”⁶

In such a situation Aranda was able to act with impunity. So, while refusing to distribute arms, he did the following: He demanded that all available arms *not* under his jurisdiction be concentrated in the arsenals of the various barracks, and that all six companies of the Civil Guard be moved to Oviedo, and issued machine guns to the artillery regiment of the Asturian capital.

According to Golzález Mallada, Indalecio Prieto, at that point, telephoned from Madrid asking for the aid of a few hundreds of miners with rifles and dynamite. Aranda seized upon this opportunity, and strongly persuaded the Provincial United Committee that those miners concentrated in Oviedo and the principal villages on the cities outskirts could be better used in this way. He suggested that they begin the march now, toward León . . .

“In order to secure our communications between Asturias and Madrid” and, “To aid the Madrid workers.”⁷

“In Asturias,” he continued, “there is nothing to do. The military is on the side of the Republic, and the workers are needed in Madrid.”

The Socialist representatives, González Peña, Belarmino Tomás and Graciano Antuña,

6 *Ante la Historia—Asturias!* González Mallada, Anarchist Representative of the Comité Unitario Provincial de Asturias. Selecciones. G&R. p. 158

7 *Guerra y Revolución*, pp. 158-159

strongly backed this initiative—just as they had called for an *unconditional* surrender in 1934. The P.C.E. representatives just as strongly opposed it, calling attention to the deadly peril for Asturias should a surprise move come when her real defenders were far away. Their opinion did not prevail. The Anarchists supported the P.C.E. But the Republican representatives too agreed that the miners should go to the aid of Madrid.

On July 18, at 12:00 midnight, two columns left the town of Mieres for León; one in trucks, the other by train. They moved on a parallel route. The initial nucleus of 1,300 men were joined by hundreds of other fighters at Sama, Laviana, La Felguera and Mieres, until it finally reached a total of 2,500 men of which only 400 had arms. Aranda had refused to arm this column, saying that they would receive all the arms necessary at León. Antuña and Golzález Peña then proposed that yet a third column be organized. This time, however, the Communist representatives prevailed with the aid of the Anarchists and some Socialists led by Javier Bueno. The project was dropped.

Nevertheless, Aranda had achieved an important objective. He had rid himself one of the most decisive and militant detachments of the Asturian proletariat. And with them had gone eighty per-cent of the scarce arms possessed by the workers in the area.

The P.C.E., led by the secretary of the provincial committee, Carlos Vega, insisted before the leaders of the Popular Front that the situation was indeed grave. Vega expressed a total lack of confidence in Aranda.

The Unity Committee decided then to demand of Aranda that arms be immediately distributed, and that he bring to an end the confining of the troops to the barracks.

Aranda refused.

In the face of this the Communists demanded that Aranda and the head of the Civil Guard remove themselves to the offices of the Civil Governor, and that they be prepared to stay there, together with the representatives of the Unity Committee until such time as the situation was resolved.

The Socialist, González Peña, pleaded with General Aranda, saying “You must give some guarantee to the ‘extremists.’”⁸ Aranda, for the moment, had no choice but to agree. But on the 19th, pleading an urgent call from the Comandancia, he asked permission to leave. The Communists were again opposed to it. The Anarchists, who had supported the Communists to this point, were apparently convinced of Aranda's loyalty: they joined the Socialists in allowing Aranda to leave. And the Governor affirmed that “after all, Aranda was a man of honor.”⁹

8 Ibid. p. 160

9 Ibid. Loc.-cit. p. 160

Within hours General Antonio Mata Aranda pronounced the State of War and called the troops of Asturias into revolt against the Republic. The Civil Governor and a great many of those who “didn't wish to offend the sensibilities of Aranda,” were shortly after that shot to death—with all honors—before the firing squads of the Fascist-Military.

Aranda's hour had arrived. Taking full advantage of the absence of the Asturian militants, who were now half-way to León—any of them on a voyage of “no return”—the troops were ordered into the streets. Artillery was hauled up and brought to bear upon the Governor's Palace.

Leaders of the U.G.T., the C.N.T., and of the political parties of the left, were arrested and shot down in the streets. In this way fell Graciano Antuña, leader of the Socialist Party for Asturias and Carlos Vega, Secretary of the Provincial Committee of the Communist Party and tens of others.

Groups of workers, Socialists, Communists, Anarchists, upon hearing of the treason of Aranda, marched quickly to the quarters of the Republican Assault Guards, confident that the *Asaltos* would give them the arms with which to confront the rebels. But a group of *Asaltos* under the command of Gerardo Caballero, assassinated the loyal commander, Ros, when he was disposed to do this. They then opened fire upon the massed workers in the patio, killing tens of militants, among them the courageous young leader of the Unified Socialist Youth of Asturias, José María Castro.

The two columns of miners that had left for León on the night of the 18th, arrived there the following day. The Socialist, Otero, commanded one column; the Communist, Damian Fernández, the other. The entire contingent was under the command of another Socialist, Dutor.

León received these fighters for the Republic with jubilation. The Military Commander, Gómez, loyal to the Republic, was favorably disposed to their request for arms. The Chief of the garrison regiment, however, opposed this; though he did allow the issuance of approximately 250 rifles and ammunition.

Some members of the parties of the Left and of the loyal military asked that the miners remain in the area of León until the situation became clearer. They suspected that many of the military would rise the moment the opportunity presented itself. Dutor said no to this. They marched on to Benevente where they took by assault the quarters of the rebellious Civil Guard. They were preparing to move on to Zamora when they received the news of Aranda's rising in Oviedo. Turning back to León, they found that the Fascists had risen there too. In Ponfeirado, the column of Otero was attacked by the Civil Guard that had previously declared its loyalty to the Republic. In a despicable act of cowardice and treason, they machine-gunned the miners as they confidently entered the streets of the

town.

The columns returned to Asturias.¹⁰ The consequences of the errors of the Republican and Socialist leadership were already irreparable. General Aranda was now the master of Oviedo, for the poorly armed militia were in no position to attack. Indeed, they were forced back to the outskirts of the city where they completed its encirclement on the night of the 19th and 20th of July, cutting the roads from Mieres and Gijón and repulsing various attempts at breaking out by the Fascist-Military. On the 24th, a militia battalion, “Blood of October,” led by Damian Fernández, dislodged the Fascists from the *Monte Naranjo*, a height that dominated the city. The Rebel, Aranda, was then totally isolated from the terrain occupied by his compatriots, and in the midst of a population that, according to his own words, was “hostile.”

“On that same night of the 19th and 20th,” he writes in his memoirs, “we offered to arm all the people who in turn offered us guarantees. But the population did not respond.”¹¹

The Fascist rebellion was crushed throughout the remainder of Asturias. The Civil Guard barracks at La Felguera was captured by the popular militia columns of Sotrondio and Las Frieres, commanded by Emilio Morán and Severino Riera, respectively. The workers of the port city of Gijón, aided by miners of La Felguera, and with the help of certain Carabineros and a company of *Asaltos*, occupied the city on July 19.

On the 20th, however, Colonel Pinilla, who had on repeated occasions pledged loyalty to the Republic, attempted belatedly to rebel. The movement of his first companies into the streets were sufficient to spread the alarm. The Gijonese women marched forward in great mass, confronting the soldiers of cries of “Brothers, do not fire! Put down your arms!”¹² The soldiers then passed over to the workers contingents. Pinella tried once again—and failed again. By then the workers militia had passed to the offensive and were attacking the quarters of the Civil Guard who capitulated after a brief exchange of fire. By noon of the 20th, the last of the military rebels were besieged in the infantry quarters of *Simancas*, and the engineer quarters of *El Coto*. They were soon over-run and forced to surrender.

The columns of armed workers militia then established their positions, generally, on the line of the area of Galicia to the west, and of León to the south, dominating the mountain passes of *Pajares*, *La Mesa*, *Ventana* and *San Isidro*; and joining in the east with the popular forces of the zone of Santander.

10 Despite many references to these Asturians arriving in Madrid, all data indicates that *none* got through. Hugh Thomas, and again with no documentation whatsoever, states that 5,000 fully-armed Asturians arrived on the *eve* of the storming of the Montaña barracks.

11 *Resumen Tecnico sobre el cerco de Oviedo*. Miguel Aranda. Published in the works of Manuel Aznar, Spanish edition, pp. 400-412

12 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 162

In Santander itself, where the rebels had also taken victory for granted, they suffered catastrophe. The 23rd Infantry Regiment simply refused to rebel, thanks to security methods previously adopted by the forces of the Popular Front. The Republicans then organized a column of 300 men; many being soldiers of the garrison. This column occupied the Riaza Valley, and carried the line of fire to the outskirts of Villasanta. Another column of 1,200 men, formed by the unions of Reinosa and Metaporquera, and led by miners from Barruelo de Santillán, created a front extending from Peña Labra to Codo del Ebro, fronting Quintanilla de las Torres. From Santoña came another column of milicianos. They mounted the high passes of the Puerto de los Tomos, and descended all the way to Becedo, in the province of Burgos. Santander, with Asturias and the Basque country, then settled for a long and *hard* war.

GALICIA:

La Coruña, the capital of Galicia, had, in effect, been occupied for quite some time by the *Comandancia* of the 8th Organic Division headed by General Salcedo. The city garrison was composed of the 8th infantry regiment, an artillery regiment, and various units of engineers and other auxiliaries.

Reacting to the bitter news from Morocco the leaders of the workers syndicates asked the Civil Governor, Joaquín Pérez Carballo, for arms. He called Madrid and received the now familiar negative response from Casares Quiroga. The efforts of the Popular Front in Galicia to get the authorities to act on their own was futile. General Rogelio Caridad Pita, Coruña's Military Governor, made one gesture of concern. He called his subordinates together and asked for their "word" that they would not rebel. They gave it—just as Mola had given his.

On the 20th, the commanders of the 8th infantry regiment brought their men into the streets along with units of the Civil Guard. General Caridad Pita and General Salceda, along with the chief of artillery, Torrado, were arrested and immediately shot.

The news of the executions traveled swiftly, and by a prearranged signal, the sirens of the port then called the workers to battle. At two in the afternoon a demonstration of women marched through the streets cheering the Republic. Barricades were up in the barrios, while an immense crowd of workers, fishermen and peasants from the outlying villages congregated before the offices of the Civil Government clamoring for arms.

Only when troops had encircled the residence of the Governor himself did the volunteers receive a few arms. They fought courageously but it was too late. The Governor was given a last lesson in fascist concepts of "legality," when he was captured and executed on the spot by the armed minions of the financial oligarchy. His wife died with him, despite the fact that she was pregnant. The people say that she was forced to miscarry, and then taken by stretcher to the body of her husband where she was shot.¹³

That night the buildings of the Government, the Palace of Justice, Radio and Telephone; all defended by the people, together with some loyal units of the Assault Guards, fell after a bitter struggle. The fighting continued in the workers quarters, with Communists, Anarchists, Republicans and Socialists repeating the saga of Seville and a hundred other towns and villages.

In the Calle Fernández Latorre, one small group of workers held out until the 21st, succumbing only when their fortress was reduced to rubble by artillery.

¹³ Ibid. p. 163

On the 22nd, when the rebels were already the rulers of the city, a column of miners from San Finx-Noya assaulted La Coruña from the south with dynamite and rifles. They captured the railroad station and made a fortress of it, then penetrated the barrio of Santa Lucia, and on to the very heart of the city; not being halted until they had reached the *Ayuntamiento* itself.

But the forces of the opposition were overwhelming, and the miners were forced to retreat to the countryside where they broke into small groups for continued guerrilla resistance.

The name of La Coruña joined the list of Spain's martyred cities.

El Ferrol, the Naval Base, was also taken. The fighting there began on the day of the 19th. A delegation of U.G.T. and C.N.T. Leaders met with the Mayor to demand arms. The *Jefe* of the Naval Arsenal, Rear-Admiral Azarola, refused to give them any, though he claimed loyalty to the Republic. His pretext was that those were the orders given him by visiting officials.

The Fascist-Military then declared the State of War and assaulted the City Hall and the Casas del Pueblo with units of the 29th Marine Infantry and the 3rd Regiment of Coast Artillery. The workers in the Casas del Pueblo and the *Asaltos* defending the City Hall held out for a number of hours. But when night fell the city, in its entirety, was occupied except for the Naval Arsenal and the harbor where a nuclei of loyal units still held out.

The First, a section of Marines under the Ensign, Mouriño, defended the barracks of the Instruction Brigade. Mouriño's men, after hard fighting, broke out of the barracks to capture the radio-telegraph station, making prisoners, all the officers who defended it. They were then overwhelmed by heavy Fascist reinforcements. The Ensign, Mouriño, was killed in the fighting.

The second unit to resist was aboard the warships in the harbor. As previously noted, the Cruisers, *Libertad* and *Miguel de Cervantes*, together with the Battleship, *Jaime Primo*, had weighed anchor on the 18th and sailed for the Straits of Gibraltar. There remained in the port of El Ferrol the Cruiser *Cervera*, the Battleship *España*; the Destroyer *Velasco*, the Coast Guard ship, *Xauen*, and the Torpedo Boats, no. 2 and no. 7. All these ships, with the exception of the *Velasco*, were loyal to the Republic. Aboard the *Cervera*, where the crew was reinforced by some Naval Construction Workers, the defense was given to Commander Sánchez Ferragut.

On all the other ships the officers had opted for the rebellion and had been arrested by the sailors.

The Coastguarder, *Xauen*, and the two Torpedo Boats moved out to sea, hoping to find a

lyoal port. Only the *Xauen* made it. The Torpedo Boats, short on fuel (all the fuel was ashore in Fascist hands), put in at Puentedume and Viveros, respectively. The ports were Fascist held and the captured crews were executed.

In El Ferrol the situation was touch and go. Both the Cruiser, *Cervera*, and the Battleship, *España*, were out of action, in that the *Cervera* was in dry-dock, and the *España* in repairs; else they too would have headed for the open sea. Nevertheless, the *Cervera* managed to neutralize the Destroyer, *Velasco*, with its heavy guns, and then joined the *España* in a gigantic battle with the combined Rebel forces of the Army, the Civil Guard, the Marines, the local Falangist contingents and the personnel of the Naval Arsenal.

Considering that the loyal ships, as stated, were in “dry-dock” and in “repair,” they were unable to bring their heavy guns to bear upon the shore batteries and guns of the Rebels. The Rebels, in turn, could cover the docks and ships with both a hail of machine gun fire, and fire from the shore batteries as well. The crews of the Republican Battleship and Cruiser, however, continued to resist.

The Fascists resorted to their usual subterfuge. On the 21st they faked a radiogram from the Admiralty in Madrid to the Commander of the *Cervera*, Ferragut, ordering all resistance to end, “to prevent the unnecessary shedding of blood.”¹⁴

The loyal Commander, naïve, as most loyal Republican officers seemed to be, lifted the white banner and offered to negotiate a cessation of the fighting. His fundamental condition for surrender was that there were to be no reprisals. This was agreed upon and the Cruiser was given over to the Fascist-Military. They proved against to be false to every letter of their word. Commander Ferragut was summarily executed along with the greater part of the crew of the *Cervera*.

At 6:00 a.m. Of the 22nd, after intense fire from the shore batteries and the Naval installations, the Battleship, *España*, also surrendered; they had no knowledge of the fate of their companions. In the epic fighting between sailors of the captive ships and the Fascist-Military, many had distinguished themselves. Among these were the Engineer, Coruña, of the *Cervera*, who refused to capitulate until the last moment; the Ensign, Vázquez, the Machinists, Catála and Noche—those last from the Transport, *Casado*—and a Lt. Romalde of the 3rd Artillery Regiment.

Like tens of others these men too were shot in cold blood. Twenty-five youths of the *Cervera* were actually hung from the ship's mast where they were left for days as an example to all those who would resist. A short time later, Rear Admiral Azarola; many soldiers of the Instruction Brigade; workers of the Ayuntamiento—and *all* political and

14 *Guerra de Liberación*, José Díaz de Villegas, Barcelona, 1957. p. 58

union leaders of the city were shot!¹⁵

An identical situation prevailed in Pontevedra, where the Civil Governor, Gonzalo Acosta, was also content to accept protestations of loyalty from the Fascist-Military. He declared that he considered “as visionaries all who disbelieved, or thought that these would rise against him.”¹⁶

On the 20th, however, the Fascists did exactly that. They entered the city and executed every single defender of the Civil Government.

On that same day, at 11:00 a.m., rebellion began in Vigo. A Captain Cerrero, at the head of a company of drunken soldiers, proclaimed the State of War. In the Puerta del Sol, the masses of workers received it with the cry of TREASON! The Captain shot on the spot a young anti-fascist and ordered his troops to fire upon the people. Thirty persons fell victim to this first volley.¹⁷

The people retreated to the working class barrio of *Lavadores*, disposed to fight for the Republic, but, again, with an absolute minimum of arms. The previous day, Sunday, they had met before the Casa del Pueblo where the representatives of the political and union organizations had gathered. These had reaffirmed their decision to defend the regime, and to again ask arms of the Civil Governor.

“If from that reunion,” wrote an observer in an editorial in *La Habana*, 1938, “the working population had received arms, the rebels would easily have been defeated. The garrison of Vigo had scarcely 400 men; the Fascist officers, hardly a dozen. There were other officers, also Fascist, who were afraid. Many of these didn't show up until the fighting was over.”¹⁸

Hundreds of fishermen gathered at the barrio of *Lavadores*. They came from the nearby villages of Cangas, Labriegos de Porriño, Puenteareas, Salvatierra, La Cañiza and Mondariz: this last arrived with the President of their Popular Front Committee, Luis Soto, at their head.

The ensuing fighting was directed by the Socialists, Botana and Bilbaitus; the Republican, Fresco, the Communists, Garrote and Eduardo Araujo and many others.

One group of C.A.M.P.S.A. workers, aided by Naval Reservists, raised the first barricade at *Los Llornes*. Other barricades were constructed in depth, while the H.Q. of that brave and improvised resistance was established in Porriño, a few kilometers to the south east. The

15 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 165

16 *Ibid.* p. 165

17 *Ibid.* pp. 165-166

18 *Lo que han hecho en Galicia*, Editorial Alfa, La Havana, Cuba, 1938. p. 21

most important, and almost the only weapon of this resistance, was the hunting rifle.

The Fascist assault began on Tuesday, the 21st. On the 22nd, the *Guardia Civil* also rose in rebellion. They machine-gunned the Republican volunteers from the flanks, forcing them to abandon the barricades and to fall back on Porriño. There they held out until the 25th, at which point they were crushed beneath an absolute preponderance of enemy weaponry.

In the city of Tuy the resistance took on a more organized and tenacious character. As early as July 18 the Popular Front Committee had created a *Junta* of Defense which, among other notables, included the mayor, Gumersindo Rodríguez.

Assured of the support of the Carabineros, who had placed their rifles at the service of the Republic, the *Junta* relieved all officers of their responsibilities, and arrested all suspected Fascists. They then organized a column of 3,000 men—including the Carabineros, sailors, and simple peasants. They had only the guns of the Carabineros, plus a few others, 200 in all, *all that existed in Tuy*.

They dug trenches and erected fortifications and prepared to defend the city.

On the 26th, at 8:00 a.m., the combined forces of the rising of Orense, Vigo and Pontevedra launched a strong attack against the Republican positions. The battle raged for three days with the rebels repulsed at all points. By the 29th, however, the ranks of the workers, peasants and Carabineros had been decimated by the machineguns of the enemy, and the greater part of their leaders were dead. The order was given to retire to Monte Ayala close to the Portuguese border where they would make a last defense. Again they fought until all that was humanly possible was done. The survivors then retreated across the border into Portugal, thinking to save their lives.

The Government of Salazar, setting the stage for the later massacre at Badajoz, arrested and returned them to the Fascist-Military—where they were executed to the last man.

And in this manner the last small blaze of the rather magnificent fire, lighted by the heroic working classes of Galicia, was extinguished. The Fascist terror then descended upon all the land.

The victims were numbered in the thousands.

In La Coruña, the wives of the prisoners remained almost permanently before the gates of the jails, seeking to prevent the nightly *paseos* in which dozens of their men who had been selected for execution were shot. In the Galician capital alone, according to the testimony of Hernan Qijano, more than 7,000 were murdered. In El Ferrol there was insufficient

room in the cemeteries for the bodies.¹⁹

Galicia poured out its blood in La Coruña, Vigo, in Cerdero, in Betanzos, in Mugardos, in Cerdeira, and in dozens of towns and villages. *Galicia could easily have been saved*. The suicidal blindness of the Republican authorities who had refused—and they could not have had a better cause—to give arms for the legitimate defense of the Republic, had condemned the people to death and martyrdom.

19 Ibid. p. 239

Madrid!

Historically, there is hardly a parallel for the events of the eight days of the Spanish Civil War. Just as no Naval mutiny in the Western World could even begin to compare with the seizure of the Spanish Fleet by its ships' crews—so, too, do *all* contemporary revolutionary actions of this 20th century pale before the days of July, 1936.

Heroic as the storming of the Winter Palace in Leningrad may have been, the fighting in *any* Spanish town was far more terrible; most costly in blood and lives. No major city since the days of the French revolution has witnessed anything like the battalions of Madrid workers storming the great, rebel-held Montaña Barracks. It is something to know that no country in the Western World, other than the Soviet Union, has even begun to experience the scope and depth of a “peoples war” such as that which shook the Iberian Peninsula.

It was and is an encapsulated collage of all the complexities of the struggle of a whole people to free itself from the shackles of feudalism and corporate dictatorship—and to dare set the stage for something better.

From the first moment of the rising the eyes of the world were focused on Madrid. For any successful rebellion on the Peninsula depended largely upon a seizure of the capital.

The Madrid garrisons strategically encircled the city. Some, however, were situated within the city itself. The four most important were the Montaña barracks, the Saboya barracks, the Tank and Armored-Car Headquarters at the María Cristina barracks, and the Park and Military Electro-Technical Center. On the periphery of the city were the military airfields of Getafe, Leganes, El Campamiento, Vicalvaro and El Pardo.

The rebel plan for the capture of Madrid, as prepared by Colonel Álvarez Rementería,¹ consisted in the creation in Carabanchel and Getafe of a strong column utilizing forces of a regiment of armored artillery, horse artillery; troops of engineers and soldiers from the schools of *Equitación* and *Tiro*. These were to march upon Madrid where they would join infantry regiments from the barracks of La Montaña, *Wad Ras*, *Saboya* and others.

Simultaneously, armed Falangists, operating from various buildings: convents, churches; from a fleet of private automobiles, would open fire in the streets to create panic. These Falange units would also attack the radio stations and government buildings, with the aid of the Civil Guard.²

The principal focus of the Fascist-Military would be the Montaña Barracks. These quarters (they no longer exist today) were a key point located between the Paseo de Rosales and

1 Kindelán, p. 16

2 “*El Sol*,” 25-26th, September, 1936

the Calle de Ferraz. They were solidly constructed and constituted a veritable fortress difficult to assault.

On July 18, Cadets from the Military School in Toledo were introduced into the barracks, as were many hundreds of fully armed, uniformed Falangists.

On the following day General Joaquín Goñi Fanjul arrived at the barracks to assume command of the rebellion. His first act was to harangue the troops and to declare the State of War in Madrid. He declared that his orders were from the headquarters of the First Organic Division.

The Madrid unions had finally been issued some hundreds of rifles.³ But when the imminence of the revolt was evident, Lt. Colonel Rodrigo Gil, Commander of the Artillery Park of El Pacífico, visited the leaders of the Communist Party to offer them arms at his disposal. The P.C.E. sent its men immediately to take charge of these arms and to defend the Park against any assault.

On the night of the 18th these rifles were distributed to workers of the U.G.T. and C.N.T. By dawn of the 19th, groups of armed workers formed by the P.C.E., the P.S.O.E., the U.G.T., the Unified Socialist Youth and elements of the C.N.T., Republicans and other workers groups —*had virtually encircled every barracks in Madrid.*⁴

The “Anti-Fascist Workers and Peasants Militia” of Madrid was the principal organized popular force. But they were generally without arms, hoping by their presence alone to “fix” the enemy in his redoubts, as one holds the attention of the bull. Each detachment of the M.A.O.C. was given the task of preventing the troops from leaving the various barracks.

On every side of the *Cuartel de la Montaña*, especially, a close watch was being kept. Men stood guard on all the rooftops and balconies of the Calle de Ferraz, the Paseo de Rosales and the Plaza de España. A similar noose tightened, grew ever smaller around the other barracks. Whereas in Barcelona the Fascist-Military had been able to deploy its troops and to pass over to the attack, in Madrid this was not so. The people seized the initiative from the first moment, impeding the deployment of the units of the Army; *forcing the rebels to the defensive.*

At Getafe and Carabanchel, where waited the aforementioned concentration of forces, all was ready. The signal was a shot fired from the El Campamento barracks where, on the 19th, the Fascist General, García de la Herrán, had taken command. The signal was given at 4:30 a.m. on the morning of the 20th.

The struggle for Madrid began.

3 Thomas states that of the 55,000 rifles issued the militia of the unions, 50,000 were without bolts. p. 154

4 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 149

At 5:00 a.m. the Artillery Regiment of the Getafe Barracks opened fire on the hangers, stores of gasoline, etc., of the airfield of Cuatro Vietnos, where the officers had remained loyal to the Republic.

While the workers militia then surrounded the Getafe barracks, the airforce officers sent a column of soldiers and armed workers to the aid of the encirclers. These were under the command of Captain Manuel Gascón, and the Lieutnants Hernández Franch and José María Valle. Shortly afterwards militia and soldiers united in an impetuous attack against Getafe, and a half-hour later the rebellion at that barracks had ended.

The column of airforce soldiers and workers, reequipped with the arms captured from the barracks, and aided by a group of artillerymen, marched rapidly to aid the militia who now held the barracks of El Campamiento under siege. A quick attack aided by aviation and a half dozen shells was sufficient to decide that combat.

“Our General, García de la Herrán,” recounts one of the soldiers, “tried to flee when he saw that all was lost. But we leveled our rifles at him. And when he in turn was disposed to fire—we shot him.”⁵

The garrison at El Campamiento passed over in its entirety to the Republic.

The Rebel nucleus at Carabanchel and Getafe had been liquidated.

Serious dissension now existed in many of the military units. In the Sappers quarters, for example, the soldiers had shot their chief officer, Colonel Carratala. Rebel officers of the Tiro School expelled a Colonel from their ranks who opposed them.

Simultaneously with the fighting for the Getafe barracks, the Government ordered General Fanjul to “abandon his threat of subversion.” An hour later they repeated this, saying that if he did not, the Cuartel would be assaulted. Fanjul refused to capitulate.

The first attacks of the contingents of trade-unionists and volunteers from Madrid's populace were repulsed. The deadly fire of many machine guns, rifles and mortars swept the plazas and streets surrounding the barracks. Though the people suffered hundreds of casualties, their spirits were by no means dampened.

For each casualty there were ten to step forward to take up the fallen rifle. At their side, participating actively in the fighting, were loyal elements of the *Guardia de Asalto*; particularly from the 2nd Group, commanded by Captain Fontán.

The enthusiasm of the attackers rose to new heights with the arrival of two field pieces.

5 “*Claridad*,” July 21, 1936: The account of the soldier, Emilio Pacheco

This unit was led by Captain Oraz and Lieutenant Vidal from the *Porque del Artillería de Pacífico* (which had given its small arms to the Communist leaders). In the midst of the treason of so many of the military, the officers of the Artillery Park, coming to the side of the Republic, was reminiscent of a similar situation on May 2, 1808, when the Spanish artillery officers, Daoíz and Velarde, fought and died with the people, in almost the same spot, against Napoleon.

The fighting before the Montaña barracks became every more bloody. At 9:00 a.m. of the 20th, the Government again invited the Rebels to surrender. The reply of the Generals' Fanjul and Fernández was again negative. Nevertheless the morale of the Fascist-Military had declined considerably. A Republican plane flew over, dropping a few small bombs. It was, so to speak, the needed "straw." In the windows of the fortress white flags appeared. Leaders of the workers contingents moved forward to accept the surrender. They were met with heavy fire. This cowardly act reflected, actually, a fight that had developed within the barracks, between the rebels and the common soldiers who wanted to surrender. They were forced to continue fighting with the threat of being shot on the spot.

One group of rebels thought to escape the barracks through a portal opening on the Paseo de Rosales, toward the *Estación del Norte*. They were driven back. Indeed, in hot pursuit, a group of militia penetrated the barracks through the breach.

The final assault then begun.

A furious rebel fire cut into the advancing workers from many points; many were killed; many wounded. But the rebel position was already untenable. They could not contain the flood of humanity. The milicianos swarmed rapidly over every part of the barracks.

Rebel officers, Falangists and Cadets, abandoned by the soldiers, sought to create a fortress of one wing of the first floor, but were overwhelmed in one audacious charge. Fanjul was captured along with Fernando Quitano and many other officers. Those who attempted to flee or resist were shot then and there by the exuberant militia. The soldiers and others, such as a handful of loyal officers who had not been killed and were now in the barracks prison, were freed.

The great Spanish poet, Antonio Machado, comparing the storming of the Montaña barracks with the days of May 2, 1808, wrote:

"The immortality of a people consists precisely in this: No one dies when they are assassinated. And therefore *I* did not die in that far time. Because from the humid blood of those martyrs surged the first great war of independence; the heroic deeds of Mina, and of Juan Martín, and the defeat of the *First Captain* of that century.

And *I* will not die, great captains of our day, because that people is the same as those who fight today

against the fascists of all Europe, to defend the integrity of Spanish soil—and the liberty of the world.”⁶

The taking of the Montaña barracks crowned the victory of the people of Madrid over the Fascist-Military. The remaining bastions fell rapidly. The Fascist officers of the infantry regiment of Wad Ras, who had arrested their anti-fascist corporals, sergeants, etc., and machine gunned the milicianos posted in the barracks proximity, were forced to surrender.

In the quarters of the 6th Infantry Regiment, the rising was broken before it began. Thanks, in this case, to the Socialist *Brigadistas*, Moreno, Prieto y Benitez, and by the *Comité de Cuartel*, generally led by various soldiers and corporals of Communist persuasion.

In the other garrison units it was the same. Only the *Regimiento del Transmisiones del Pardo* was able to flee the capital, and to unite with the forces of General Mola. And this only by the use of lies. The officers told the soldiers that they were actually on the march to “attack Mola.” They took with them as hostage the son of Largo Caballero.⁷

With the arms won from the garrisons, the Madrid militia marched quickly to the points of greatest danger. One column, under the command of Colonel Puigdemongas, advanced against Alcalá de Henares to the south-east, where the garrison of Engineers and Cyclists had risen. They had executed their commander, Colonel Monterde, and gravely wounded his aide, Colonel Azcárate, before seizing the city.

The militia crushed the rebels, re-established the authority of the Republic and moved on to Guadalajara where the Generals' González de Lara and Barrera, had declared the State of War. After a series of sharp, no-quarter battles, the Fascists were driven in the direction of Sigüenza, where they were again defeated. The militia then occupied a line, north-northeast, front the threat from Aragón.

Meanwhile the workers contingents of the C.N.T. had also contained the rebels in the fortress of the Alcázar at Toledo.

Thus the danger of an immediate attack against Madrid from the south was also eliminated. This from the direction of the Guadarramas and Somosierra. To contain the advance of the Army of Mola, the first truly organized units of the popular militia moved by truck to the Sierras. They would write a new page in the epoch of Madrid. For the columns of Falangists, Requetés and battalions of the regular army now advancing to conquer the city, as per plan, would be stopped dead in their tracks. In place of Madrid they would find only those fortifications built by Franco for just such a contingency, when Gil Robles was Minister of War.

⁶ *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 152

⁷ *Ibid.*

From the north and north-west, the Fascist-Military would advance not one foot until the three long years of tragic drama had ended.

CATALONIA/BARCELONA

This work is not dedicated to the perpetuation of myths, but rather to the introduction of facts into what has been to date, a rather *gris* crystal ball. Therefore the exact way in which Catalonia, and particularly Barcelona, was won for the Republic may come as a surprise to some.

The historians of the “castle,” just as the apologists for the Franco regime and the 'ultras' of the Left, have generally indicated that the seizure of Barcelona, and all of Catalonia for that matter, from the Fascist-Military, was the work of the F.A.I. and the C.N.T. alone.

Indeed, the Trotskyist, Felix Morrow, with the omniscience that the ultras seem to reserve for themselves alone, states pontifically that:

“The Barcelona proletariat prevented the capitulation of the Republic to the Fascists. On July 19, almost barehanded, they stormed the first barracks successfully. By 2:00 p.m. the next day they were masters of Barcelona. It was not accidental that the honor of *initiating the armed struggle against Fascism belongs to the Barcelona proletariat.*”¹

In terms of Mr. Morrow's remarks it is questionable as to just what country he was writing about—and just what game he was playing. The previous pages have definitely listed the hour-by-hour, bullet-by-bullet, heroic struggle of the entire Spanish people in every town, village and province of the Spanish mainland. It is a perversion of fact to state that they had sat on their hands “awaiting the initiation of the armed struggle by the F.A.I. in Barcelona.” Nor had the Barcelona proletariat “prevented the capitulation of the Republic to the Fascists.” The people of Spain alone had done this. No one group, or political tendency or sect—and least of all the F.A.I.

To suggest otherwise is to obfuscate the realities of the Spanish War, and to destroy the meaning of its heroism and fighting spirit across three of the bloodiest years in modern history.

It is no accident, however, that the conclusions of fascist and “castle” historians in every area of crises in the Spanish body-politic coincide closely with those of the ultra-Left. Nor is it an accident that these same conclusions are presented as dogma by those who would prevail today.

And having written this it is still possible to say that the major glory of the struggle in Catalonia *did* belong to the C.N.T.; unions led by the F.A.I. But they were not alone. Without the help of *all* the forces of the Popular Front, and of the loyal Republican military, the story may have been a great deal different.

1 Morrow, p. 17

The rebellion broke in Catalonia on July 19. The central epic of that gigantic clash between the Rebels and the organized strength of the Catalan people took place in Barcelona. The people, with few arms, were aided from the first moments by the corps of the Civil Guards and the *Guardia de Asalto*.² They defeated in the space of thirty-two hours, three regiments of infantry, three regiments of artillery, two regiments of cavalry, and a regiment of engineers. These last were, in fact, the controllers of the central arteries of the city.

The Fascist-Military had planned carefully. But their calculations came to naught. That most cosmopolitan of Spanish cities, eye of the political life of Catalonia, leading nucleus of the national movement of the C.N.T. and, above all, center of a workers movement, hereditarily combative, arose unconquerable.

Anarchist influence continued predominant in the Catalan working class, though this influence had suffered serious defeats in the previous years. In documents published in the Anarchist periodical *Solidaridad Obrera*, the eight principal syndicates of the Catalan capital had seen a reduction in affiliated members of from 105,200 in April of 1931, to 67,180 in May of 1936.³

In contrast, those organizations which could be characterized as Marxist had experienced an increase in membership. This especially applied to the unity organization, the P.S.U.C., the United Socialist Party of Catalonia.

The Fascist-Military rebellion came at a time when the working class parties of Catalonia had entered into a process of joint action. And though this situation contributed strongly to the extraordinary show of unity and heroism in the struggle against the rebels, it failed to impede the Anarchist intent to monopolize political control in Catalonia—after the rising had been crushed—and to initiate the first great act of division by insisting before the people that they were the only one who had fought the Fascist-Military.

The facts, again, as we shall see, are otherwise.

Just a number of days prior to the revolt cadres of the C.N.T., J.S.U.C., and U.G.T. had patrolled the streets of the city by night, placing guards at all syndicate and workers headquarters to prevent a surprise move by the Fascists.

On the 18th, the President of the Generalitat, Luis Companys, refused to give arms to a joint

2 This phenomena of complete support from both the Civil Guard and Asalto forces, existed in no other city, zone or province in Spain. Without a doubt its contribution to the total struggle was decisive. For the Anarchists to belittle these facts as they have done, distorts completely the role of the loyal military in Catalonia, and the rising too.

3 "*Solidaridad Obrera*," May 6, 1936

workers delegation, that had asked for their immediate distribution. Elements of the C.N.T. then assaulted the city's armories. Winchester carbines and pistols, hidden since the skirmishes of October, made their appearance again on the streets of Barcelona.

The Fascist-Military had by no means ignored the combativeness of the Barcelona working class. They placed their hopes in an offensive tactic which would be both violent and continuous; preventing the people from organizing sufficiently to meet the danger.

Strategically the plan consisted in a simultaneous action by all troops of the garrisons which would form, in the first place, a circle on the order of a wheel with spokes, in the center of the city. The spokes of this wheel would be the radiating arteries of the great avenues. Later they would overcome the centers of government; of the political parties, the unions, hubs of communication, strategic buildings and the port. The essential mission of the troops was to hold the mass of the workers in the suburban districts, and to deny them the center of Barcelona, so that later they could be liquidated section by section.

The rising began in the early morning of July 19; a day chosen for the opening of the *Popular Olympiade*, in which many thousands of athletes from many lands were to participate. In some quarters the Fascist officers told their soldiers that they were marching out to take part in a military parade in honor of the *Olympiade*.

At 4:00 a.m. the 10th Infantry Regiment left the Pedralbes barracks, deployed down the Diagonal and made contact with a regiment of Cavalry from the barracks of Calle Tarragona. Simultaneously with this, two batteries from the Regiment of Artillery of San Andrés converged on the cross-roads of the Diagonal and the Paseo de Gracia, along with the Cavalry from the barracks of Del Guinardo.

At 5:00 in the morning, in the Plaza de España and at Cinco de Oros, the first skirmishes began. The *Guardia de Asalto*, having been placed at strategic points in the city, brought the rebel troops under fire. Colonel Jesús Pérez Salas, a loyal Republican officer, who would later command the 24th Army Corps, writes—and he was there—that: “The forces of the *Asaltos* joined in bloody combat with two regiments of artillery that were advancing, protected by the fire of their guns, toward the vital defenses of the capital of Catalonia.”⁴ The sound of heavy machine gun fire sounded the alarm throughout Barcelona.

The march of some of the rebel-soldiery seemed to be haphazard in terms of direction. But the cavalry units moved deliberately toward the occupation of the great Plaza de Universidad, while infantry from the Pedralbes barracks gained the Plaza de Catalonia and proclaimed the State of War to the roll of military drums.

4 *Guerra en España*, Col. Jesús Pérez Salas, México, D.F., 1947. Grafos Imprenta, p. 98

The infantry regiment of the barracks of Las Atarazanas and La Maestranza then came out to the Paralelo. The plan was succeeding.

Meanwhile in the Military Comandancia, the loyal General Llano de la Encomienda, Chief of the 4th Organic Division, had been made a prisoner in his own H.Q. by rebelling officers. General Fernández Burriel assumed command of all troops in rebellion and ordered the deployment into action of the regiment of the barracks and the infantry regiment of the barracks of *Jaime I*. Both units were to attack the *Consejería de Gobernación*, and to make contact with the forces of Ataranzas, closing in this way the circle of iron that separated the workers barrios from the major centers of the city.

As fighting continued in all parts, General Burriel called General Goded in Mallorca by telephone. He stated perfunctorily, but something prematurely, that the rising was successful throughout Barcelona—that the rebellion had triumphed!

At 11:00 that morning, Goded flew by hydroplane from Mallorca, and was shortly installed in the *Comandancia Militar* of the 4th Division. He would have been far wiser to have remained where he was. For the fight had, actually, just begun. There now entered upon the scene the principal protagonist of the day—the Catalan people.

Since the first hours of the morning eighteen hundred *valientes* of the *Guardia de Asalto* had been fighting heroically. Without a doubt their immediate intervention in the first phase of the fight had been absolutely decisive for the final victory. They effectively impeded the rebel deployment of troops, made chaos of their communications, occupied some strategically important points, and brought precious time for the people's mobilization.⁵

It must be remembered that unlike Madrid, where a superior workers organization had surrounded every barracks with a wall of men from the first day, in Barcelona the troops were already deployed in the streets, and in position for battle.

Despite the fighting spirit of the *Asaltos*, however, only the massive intervention of the Catalan working class could change the character of the struggle.

The mass of the workers moved offensively against the Fascist-Military. Workers of all political tendencies, from the great contingents of the F.A.I.-C.N.T., to the smaller groupings of the Catalan Esquerra, the United Socialist Youth, the U.G.T., and the Communists and P.O.U.M.—all mixed with other loyal forces of the Republic. They made a fighting contact with the rebels in the port area of the Icarria barracks; in the Plaza de Universidad; in the Brecha de San Pablo; in the streets of Claris; on the Avenida Diagonal (now Francisco Franco); in the great Plaza de Cataluña and Plaza de España; the great of

5 Ibid. p. 100

the city. In truth, no one can say “this glory was mine alone, or *ours* alone.” It was a gesture of the entire people.

The armed units of the *Guardia Civil* now entered the battle too.

At eight in the morning the loyal General Aranguren, with Civil Guard Colonels' Escobar and Brotons—all to be shot by Franco with the defeat of the Republic—appeared at the head of two *Tercios* of the Civil Guard of Barcelona. They marched in perfect formation, with squad, banner and baton, to the Plaza del Palacio. They were preceded by a vanguard deployed in order of combat. They had come to place themselves at the orders of the Government of the Generalitat.

Upon news of this the emotion of the Republican combatants was indescribable. They were already aware of the role of the heroic *Asaltos*. But now there were loyal Republican Generals too! Soldiers! Civil Guards! All disposed to fight, and to die if necessary, for the government of the people.

The skirmishing continued, growing more bloody by the hour. C.N.T. contingents launched themselves again and again against the major redoubts of the rebels. A block of Communist workers fought shoulder to shoulder with the *Asaltos* to hold the *Conserjería de Gobernación*. Young Socialists and Libertarian Youth fought to prevent artillery from reaching the rebels entrenched in the *Comandancia Militar* in the Capitania. The arrival of the first battery in the proximity of the French Station, was met with a veritable wave of Anarchist fighters, upon which the common soldier wasted not a second; he tore off his tunic and joined with the people.

Among the officers made prisoner was the Captain, Luis López Varela, who had been Chief of the *Unión Militar Española* of the Army Internal Security—the *Servicio Interior de los Cuerpos*. He had also acted as contact between the rebel conspirators and the Fascist-Military of Barcelona. One of the captured pieces of artillery was now placed in front of the *Comandancia Militar*, where it began to speak the only language that General Goded understood.

In the Calle Claris, heavy fighting between the rebels and republican combatants ended in victory for the workers. Here, too, artillery was won from the enemy and turned against him, causing terrible losses. In the Brecha de San Pablo, C.N.T. members of a woodworkers syndicate, together with many youth of the J.S.U.C., prevented all attempts of the insurrectionists to advance as per plan. Units of the *Guardia Civil* simultaneously stormed the Icarria barracks.

The fighting at the great Plaza de Cataluña reached a crescendo. Shortly after the rebel infantry occupied the Plaza, young men of the working class parties, of the Libertarian

Youth and of the J.S.U.C., swarmed from the Metro entrances, while from balconies and roofs the soldiers were met with heavy fire.

These had had time to fortify, however. They had sandbagged the windows and doorways of the Telephone building, the Hotel Colon, the *Maison d'Or*, and the Army and Navy club from where they now criss-crossed the great Plaza with the fire of many machine guns. The square was soon littered with the dead of the workers parties. Among the fallen was the young leader of the J.S.U.C. of Catalonia, Jaume Graells, the Anarchist *Jefe*, Enrique Obregón, the Communist, Fournier, and dozens of anonymous heroes.

It was just then that a full *Tercio* of the *Guardia Civil* deployed from the surrounding streets into the Plaza. With the quite conservative but pro-Republican, Colonel Escobar at their head, baton in hand, they marched in disciplined order across the Plaza and straight into the guns of the Fascist-Military. The workers then joined the battle from every side-street; various groups entered combat from the Calle Caspe and the Rambla de Canaletas. These were of the J.S.U.C. and the P.C.E., and they assaulted and captured the Hotel Colon, which later became the H.Q. of the J.S.U.C. of Catalonia. Other combatants joined with the *Civiles* in taking the Telephone building and the Army and Navy Club.

The Rightist historians, Brasillach and Bardeche, apparently stood aghast at this particular phenomenon of courage. They wrote "The attack of the masses, overflowing but maintaining Barcelona in the hands of the Reds, is one of the most beautiful and heroic pages in the history of revolution."⁶

The capture of the Plaza de Cataluña was the beginning of the end of the revolt in Barcelona.

As in Madrid, the barracks were now encircled. The Regiment of Quartermaster Service, with its *Jefe*, Sans Neira, at its head, proclaimed its loyalty to the Republic. Captain Neira then turned his guns upon the 34th Infantry Regiment with the threat that he would use them if they attempted to revolt. A first effort of this regiment had already been frustrated. A company of troops sent out against the people returned without attacking.

At the airfield of Prat de Llobregat, Colonel Sandino seized the compromised commanders, placed them under arrest, and announced that the airforce was now at the service of the Republic. Simultaneously with this the Hydro Base (Aeronáutica Naval) also passed to the side of the people. Colonel Díaz Sandino, according to Jesús Pérez Salas, "contributed amply to the victory in that he sent flight after flight of the few planes at his command to swoop low over every individual barracks, threatening them with bombardment if they came into the streets."⁷

6 Brasillach & Bardeche, p. 106

7 Salas, p. 99

The plan of the Fascist-Military, to link their forces and to isolate the workers in their barrios, had failed utterly. Indeed, it was they who were fragmented and broken, and doomed to fall one by one.

At 2:00 in the afternoon the rebel defenders of the Plaza de Universidad surrendered; at 3:00, those in the Convent of the Calle Claris; at 5:00, hundreds of armed workers marched upon the *Comandancia* of the Capitanía.

The artillery piece captured before the *Consejería de Gobernación*, and commanded now by the Captain Pérez Farras, made a number of direct hits upon the H.Q. of General Goded.

At 6:00 p.m., the white banner flew from a window. But the workers representatives, advancing to receive the surrender, were met with a hail of bullets. One group of militants, braving this enemy fire, forced the main doorway and burst into the interior of the building. The others followed. General Goded was placed under arrest, and with him his entire staff.

The Fascist military rebellion in Barcelona had been defeated. Later, at the Generalitat, General Goded declared into the assembled microphones: "I must now inform the Spanish people that my luck has been adverse. And further, that those who wish to continue the fight can no longer count on me."⁸

The following day, Monday of the 20th, the final act was played to its bloody end. Thousands of militants of the C.N.T., led by the famed Buenaventura Durruti and Francisco Ascaso, stormed the one remaining rebel stronghold. At 1:30 in the afternoon this Fascist redoubt, the Ataranzas barracks, was taken and with it an arsenal of 14,000 rifles. The courageous Anarchist leader, Ascaso, was killed in the assault.

Victory in Barcelona determined the fate of the rebellion in the remainder of Catalonia. Regiments in the cities of Gerona and Tarragona, confined to barracks and awaiting the signal, simply remained there. They did *not* rise. Elements of an infantry regiment in the large city of Lérida moved into the streets, declaring the State of War. Notices of the rebel defeat in the capital, however, caused the Fascist officers to beat a hasty retreat; then to surrender without firing a shot. The same thing occurred in Manresa.

Columns of the milicianos were formed immediately to march to confront the Fascist-Military in Aragón. And, as in the north, the lines would soon be sharply drawn, with barbed-wire, sandbags and the various paraphernalia of war.

Before leaving to assume command in Barcelona, General Goded had brought the garrisons

⁸ Ibid., loc.-cit., p. 99. Also, *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 147

of the Balearic Islands into revolt. In Mallorca the fighting was extremely unfavorable for the Republic. In Soller; in the Hydro Base of Pollensa, and in Palma, the capital, all loyal resistance was brutally and bloodily erased. Mallorca, from the first days, was Fascist territory.

The rebels suffered defeat in Menorca. The soldiers of the garrison and the sailors of the base crushed all attempts at mutiny by the Fascist-Military. Aided by the peasants and workers of the island, they kept it as a part of free, Republican territory.

The Catalan people had fought a brave and heroic battle. Above all else, it was an anti-fascist "people's battle." History will record it in exactly that manner.

VALENCIA: LEVANTE:

The defeat of the rebellion in Levante, and particularly in Valencia, a zone that the Fascist command had considered secure for themselves, was a serious blow, indeed, for the rebels. Situated between Madrid and Catalonia, the Levante region, with its capital of Valencia was a key link in the chain which could complete the encirclement of Madrid from the east, isolating it from Catalonia and the French border, and from the Mediterranean littoral.

In contemporary political history Valencia was traditionally Republican. The question then is: why had the Fascist-Military considered it secure, and how had they planned to take it? The answer is that the commanding officers of the garrisons of Levante had been hand-picked by Franco, himself, while he was an appointee to the War Ministry, courtesy of Gil Robles. The Africanists assumed that in Valencia there would be no “second thoughts,” no wavering; certainly not the slightest possibility of treason to their cause. But such was not the case.¹

With knowledge of the rising, delegates from the Valencia Popular Front visited General Martínez Monje. They wished to ascertain what he proposed to do to secure the republic and to prevent the army from rising—which it was already in the act of doing. The General simply reiterated his loyalty to the Republic. He refused, however, to commit himself to any measures against the threatened rising.

The situation was generally the following: A majority of the 13th infantry regiment favored rebellion. The 20th regiment was predominantly neutralist—“it would wait to see what happened.”² A cavalry unit was completely for the rising, as was a regiment of engineers. An artillery regiment was predominantly for the Republic; though some would refuse to intervene against the Fascist-Military if they remained within their barracks.

And thus Valencia, too, was forced to live with the ominous nightmare of the “Barracks.”

The Valencian militants of the U.G.T. and C.N.T. declared an indefinite general strike on the 18th of July. The political forces within the Popular Front Committee took a series of measures to prevent any movement of the rebels, and to cut them off if they tried.

All gun stores and aristocratic gun-club centers had long been registered. A few hundreds of rifles and pistols were taken to arm the anti-fascist militias, which had already converted into paramilitary units; in squadrons, and with some discipline.

With these arms and men a total vigilance was organized over the barracks of the 13th

¹ Aznar, p. 87

² *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 168

regiment, the regiment of Cavalry, the forts of Serranos and Cuarte; all public buildings, and the river bridges.

At night thousands of people, despite the fact that they were unarmed, encircled the barracks, disposed to fight the soldiers if they came out.

The burning problem was the one faced by all Spain in confrontation with the enemy: arms! How to obtain them? The first barracks to surrender was that of the Quartermaster Services. They did this on the 20th. Situated in the center of the city on the Calle Guillén de Castro, they had no possible defense. But there were no arms there, just a few carbines to augment the “arsenal” of the Republic.

A second disappointment to the Fascist-Military was the attitude of the Civil Guard. The commanders of this corps—they too had been surrounded in their barracks—waited for the Army to make its decision; to declare the “State of War.” As the force for public order, the Civil Guard of Valencia considered itself dependent upon the orders of the Governor.

The *Jefes* of the Frente Popular demanded then that the Civil Governor summon the Chiefs of the Guard. If they were not in rebellion, they should then be placed at the Governor's disposal—in *action*. If the commanders refused, then the orders should be given to consider them as being in rebellion.

The *Jefes* of the *Guardia Civil* accepted the invitation to meet, first with the Governor, then with the leaders of the *Front*. In these meetings the Chiefs declared their loyalty to the Republic and expressed a desire to cooperate with the authorities.

In this way a bloodless victory was won. From that day, the 21st of July, the militia squads patrolling the streets of Valencia were augmented by well-armed *guardias*. Not a few of these officials and guards conducted themselves loyally until the end of the war.

Of the peripheral cities within a hundred miles of Valencia, Castellón, Alicante and Alcoy remained loyal. But Albacete (later to be the Base of the famed International Brigades) and Teruel were both in the hands of a rebelling Civil Guard. A column was organized to march to the attack of Albacete. They would join other units surrounding the city. It was taken by assault on the 26th of July.

In Castellón, a column was organized to liberate Teruel. Many hundreds volunteered, though only 180 carbines were available. A Captain of Artillery, Luis Siera, was placed in command, along with a loyal Lieutenant of infantry, Joaquín Oset Merlo. The Company of Civil Guards garrisoning Castellón, having declared itself loyal, marched off with the 180 armed milicianos. At the head of the column there also marched the Republican deputy for Castellón, Francisco Casas Sala. On the road they were joined by eighty youths coming from the city of Sagunto, without arms, plus two full companies of Civil Guards from

Cuenca.

The column was then divided into two groups. The Militia marched to Mora de Rubielos, which they occupied without firing a shot. The Guards and the youth of Sagunto marched to Pueblo de Valverde. Once inside the city the *Civiles* passed over to the enemy. And as proof of their treason, massacred the unarmed youth.³

Alarmed by this news, brought to them by peasants, the Militiamen moved off at a forced march. Mora de Rubielos was but 17 kilometers from Pueblo de Valverde, and with what proved to be suicidal candor, the Deputy, Salas, and the two loyal military commanders, kept their troops in the outskirts of the town while they went to 'parley' with the mutinous Civil Guards. The *Guardias* simply extended their crime by summarily executing the three patriots too.

Notice of the event reached Valencia, and the Fascist-Military, jubilant, moved into open rebellion with Colonel Cabellos at their head.

The rebels commenced to fire over the heads of passersby from the barracks. The streets were quickly deserted. Rumor flew that the rebels would shortly declare the State of War. Barricades went up in the workers barrios.

A clash was imminent. The Popular Front Committee, commandeering the central radio station, issued a call to all campesinos of the province. IT described the situation bluntly and stated: "We ask your support with all urgency. March now! Bring arms! Rifles, dynamite, knives—the Republic is in danger."⁴

The story is that more than 20,000 peasants presented themselves within a few hours of the call. This, with a very few arms, but disposed to fight to the end.

On the night of the 29th/30th, the problem of the engineers barracks was solved unexpectedly. There was a Communist cell in this unit. And it had made contact with a Sargeant Fabre, a sincere Republican. That night the officers of the regiment were meeting in the headquarters room, making final preparations for the morrow. A squad of soldiers commanded by Fabre, inclusive of those soldiers of the Communist cell, broke into the headquarters room. They ordered the officers to raise their hands; any attempt to resist and they would be instantly shot. The officers surrendered; the gates of the barracks were opened; hundreds of waiting militiamen streamed in and the barracks was taken.⁵

3 *Generación Rojo!* Organ of the Provisional Committee of the P.C.E. of Castellón de la Plana.

4 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 171

5 *Ibid.* Loc.-cit., p. 171

The Socialist and Communist deputies, at this point, felt that the moment had come to attack every barracks regardless of costs, and to liquidate the ever ominous threat of the garrisons. The Civil Governor demanded that all action await the result of a parley between his emissary, the Republican Captain, Saenz de San Pedro, and the Rebels. But the Fascist-Military had made strong fortresses of the barracks, and like Mola in his parleying with Barrio, they were not disposed to treat with anyone. Captain Saenz de San Pedro, in fact, was seized and subjected immediately to a simulated firing squad and then imprisoned. Later, when he was released by the militia, the story is that his hair was quite white.

The assault on the first barracks began at dawn. In a few minutes the white banner of surrender flew from a window. The 13th regiment then announced that it would capitulate, but only to the Civil Guard. This was allowed, with the militia seizing all weapons.

With the aid of a squadron of *Asaltos* the Cavalry barracks was the next to be attacked. IT surrendered without resistance. The same with the next barracks; those who encircled it entered without firing a shot. The Fascist-Military, though hand-picked by Franco, had done a worse job by far than any other rebellious unit in the country.

All of the worker's militia were now armed, and an additional 20,000 rifles were sent to Madrid where they were sorely needed. From far Asturias there came two transport planes, also asking for help. They were loaded immediately with ammunition, and carbines, which weighed less than rifles, and sent on their way.

Shortly before the rising was put down, Don Diego Martínez Barrio had arrived in Valencia. He came as an emissary of the "all republican" Giral Government. On the day of July 17th, the Civil Governor called the leaders of the Popular Front to a meeting presided over by Barrio, who informed them of the object of his visit. There was the possibility, he said, that Madrid would be captured or encircled. In either case continuity of authority would have to be maintained. A delegated *Junta* would be created in Valencia to assume the power of the Republic and its Government during any interim situation of crises in which the official government could not function.

By unanimous decision of the Committee of the Valencian Popular Front was then constituted as the delegated Junta to assume such powers. Representatives of the diverse parties were named to the duplicate Ministerial Posts and the Junta commenced to work—though without the presence of Martínez Barrio, who returned to Madrid.

Valencia was with the Republic.

And the fact that it was had its residual effect. In the south-west for example, in Murcia, an

artillery regiment in barracks, and poised in a rather expectant attitude, hurriedly placed itself at the command of the Republic. The heart of the rebellion, in Doce Puentes, and in Alicante was also brought to heel.

In the Naval Base at Cartagena things were already under control. General Martínez Cabrera, the Military Governor, together with many officers of the Army and Navy, had remained loyal to the Republic. The rebels had concentrated their efforts in the Hydroplane Base and in the Arsenal, where they were quickly defeated by the base workers, the auxiliaries, some marines, and aviation from the airfield at Los Alcazares; which also sent a column against the Hydro-Base command by a Captain Ortiz. Essentially the whole of the Spanish Mediterranean east of the Rock of Gibraltar was for the Republic.

The War is Won!

The firmness with which the people everywhere had opposed the Fascist rising was an example to the countries of Europe, beset by their own burgeoning movements of fascism and reaction. With one great continuous, shattering eight-day battle, the people of Spain had destroyed a feudal structure that had enveloped the Peninsula in a shroud of ignorance, despair and economic deprivation for a dozen centuries.

Commenting on this popular reaction, the Catholic writer, Henry Buckley, writes that "It was a week of miracles, during which God was most certainly on the side of the humble man."¹

To those whose familiarity with Spain is limited to imported wines of Jaen and Tarragona; to litho bull-fight posters, and to tourist postcards, it may not have seemed so. But it was! And these same people had, without a doubt, defeated one of the most carefully laid plans, backed by one of the most powerful military machines of that day.

What was the force that created this miracle?

The answer is simple:

It was the people of Spain, united as never before in defense of their lives, their liberties, and their future as a free nation.

The working classes had been the heart and soul of the fight, impregnating all with their spirit of combativeness and their firmness against what, to the bourgeois elements, seemed impossible odds. Its principal armament had been: the general political strike; revolutionary initiative in seizing arms from the government; a final *legalization* of their efforts by that same government. And Popular Front Committees in every town and city which rallied the people, organized them, and dared to place them in direct confrontation with the war machine of the Financial Oligarchy.

The principal armament of the people then, had been decisive. The government of their choice had defeated those who would destroy it, and had now but to mop up those areas of remaining Fascist strength.

Where the people acquiesced to legalistic pretexts by Civil Governors, etc., they had been defeated. Where this legality had been put aside; with the people becoming the owners of arms by methods of its own will, and moving instantly to the offensive, they had triumphed.

¹ *Life and Death of the Spanish Republic*, Henry Buckley, London, 1940, p. 216

Reactionary historians have sought, with an almost perfect unanimity, to find explanations for the defeat of the rebels in a “previous distribution of arms, or an accumulation of arms by the workers.” The truth is that there had been no “previous distribution.” In Madrid, for example, neither Quiroga nor Barrio had given arms to the people. Only in the last hours of the 19th of July, when the rising had already taken place in all Spain, had the Giral government issued orders to distribute arms. By then, however, it had little effect, for the order had come much too late. And in most cases the military authorities still refused the orders. The fact that such an order was issued, simply honors the leaders, those Republicans of the Giral Cabinet. It served but one meaningful purpose, however, *to legalize the armament which the people had already seized from the military on their own.*

It is fact that the real distribution of arms by the military had been limited solely and specifically to adherents of the Right: To the *Requetés*, the youth of the C.E.D.A., and to the Falange throughout Spain. In Oviedo some 600 Rightists had joined with Aranda and been given uniforms and guns; in Barcelona more than 500; in Zaragoza historians recount how Requetés and Falangists were armed and uniformed in every garrison. In the Montaña barracks in Madrid alone were 800 of these 'receivers of arms and uniforms.' The list is long and encompasses almost every stronghold of the Fascist-Military in Spain, from Melilla, and the first moments of the rising, to Valencia, Gijón, San Sebastián and many other cities. It is oddly paradoxical, in that if there had been orders to distribute guns to the people, in some areas the military would have found it difficult, for the simple reason that these arms, in their tens of thousands, had already been given to the enemies of the Republic.²

The heart and soul of this first great victory over fascism had been, most definitely, the unity of the workers syndicates with the membership of the political parties, working in the main within the Popular Front Committees.

In the midst of such a vast movement, across a panorama of simultaneous action in cities, towns and villages—and obfuscated somewhat by a thousand deeds of spontaneity—two prime factors of the people's movement emerge clearly and unequivocally. One—and to all those who have the courage to examine the facts, this cannot be disavowed—was the tactics and strategy of the Communist Party of Spain, whose general line of unity and anti-fascist combat, had been accepted by the Popular Front Committees throughout the country, and at the decisive moment: And, Two—the superb organization and discipline of the Spanish proletariat which had responded unanimously to the first call of its political organizations and unions.

The P.C.E. had never ceased in its insistence upon the absolute peril of a Fascist Military rising. Casares Quiroga had accused them of “Seeing Fascists everywhere.” The Anarchists

2 Fernández de Castro, p. 122. Also, Brasillach & Bardeche, pp. 87-85-104

had smiled cynically at their insistence of a Fascist menace. Right-Socialists, Besteiro and others, had done likewise. A phrase had even been coined by the Socialist, Julián Zugazagoitia, “Bah! Fearful stories!”³ which was repeated often, whenever Communists pressed their point. But the P.C.E. Persisted. Disregarding the myopic preoccupation of their brother parties of the Left, they maintained an attitude of absolute vigilance within the Committees of the Popular Front.

According to the P.C.E. archives, it had by no means limited itself to the rhetoric of alarm. They state that from 1933, they were aware of the Fascist danger, and had pressed for the creation of an anti-fascist militia of workers and peasants.

The resulting M.A.O.C., was not only the first disciplined shock force to move against the Fascist-Military, it was also that nucleus around which tens of thousands of other workers were organized for combat. It was not for nothing that they were then called, “Milicianos.”⁴

Thanks to the foresight and hard-headed practicality of the P.C.E. the rebel weapon of surprise, considered a prime factor, necessary to the rapid triumph of the revolution, was non-existent. Quite the contrary. The *grito*, the cry of “*No Pasarán!*” coined by the Communist deputy, Dolores Ibárruri (La Pasionaria) over Radio-Madrid on that fateful night of July 18th, became the slogan, the cry of combat of the whole people until the final days of the conflict.

Loyal Spain, itself, was transformed into a “militia.” Left Republicans, Catalans of the Esquerra, Socialists, Anarchists; those who had laughed at the seriousness of the P.C.E., now went all-out to organize their own militias.

In October of 1934, the mass of the Spanish workers in Asturias had understood the meaning and value of unity. The lesson had not been lost. Indeed, its residual effects had had no parallel in any other country in the world until that time. The Popular Front; trade union unity; the unification of the two great youth organizations into the J.S.U.; the rapport between Socialists and Communists which grew closer each day—All this had created a fallow field for the germination of the harvest of combative unity in July of 1936.

A document signed on the 13th of July in Madrid by Edmundo Domínguez, for the *Casa del Pueblo de Madrid*; Luis Jiménez de Asúa, for the Socialist Party; Manuel Lois for the U.G.T.; Santiago Carrillo for the J.S.U., and José Díaz for the P.C.E., established in fact the “United Front” against the menace of a Fascist attempt at rebellion.

“This occurrence,” states the document, “is not merely circumstantial; to the contrary it is proposed as

3 *Historia de la Guerra en España*, Julián Zugazagoitia, Buenos Aires, 1940, p. 5

4 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 177

permanent, in whatever circumstances may arise. It is designed to strengthen the Popular Front, and through it to give fulfillment to the needs of the working classes, placed in danger by their enemies, who are the enemies of the Spanish Republic.”⁵

On the 18th of July, at the news of the rising in Morocco, the leading organizations of the Communist and Socialist Parties published another joint notice to their militants, placing them on a *war footing*.

Simultaneously with this the Regional Committee of the C.N.T. of Catalonia joined in this unity effort with the following manifesto:

“Barcelona, July 18th: ‘We must act with all energy; firmly and with unity—at all times together! So that no one is isolated. All contacts must be narrowed. In these moments of concurrence everyone must occupy his post of combat. There can be no waste of energy in fratricidal fighting.’”⁶

In those times, there is no doubt that errors were made in many areas; no doubt too that some acted more decisively and intensely than others. But basically those were days of a marvelous unity. They were glorious, heroic days for all the popular forces—republicans, communists, socialists and anarchists alike. All fought, and *all* were exemplary.

Unity in combat by the working class in the leadership of the Spanish people had saved the Spanish Republic.

5 *Mundo Obrero*, July 14, 1936

6 *Peirats*, p. 140

THE SUMMING UP:

As early as the 22nd of July, 1936, a first reckoning of the fight between the people and the Fascist-Military could be made. The strategic provisions of the plan, as elaborated by the Africanist Generals, had failed in its basic points.

They had failed utterly to seize the fleet which meant that only a small portion of the Army of Africa could be transferred to the mainland.

In Santander, Euzkadi and Levante—areas where easy victories had been contemplated—the opposite was the case.

Of the four columns the Fascist-Military had hoped to launch against Madrid, only two had materialized; those of Valladolid and Navarre. Both of these were contained in the Sierra.

The Africanist Generals were victims of their own propaganda. Having nothing but contempt for the people; having accepted too the spectacle of disorders, dissention and confusion given them by certain republican leaders—they had simply disregarded the people as any serious force in their plans for rebellion.

And all had been brought to naught.

The Rebels were now isolated within three zones of Spain. The Protectorate of Morocco, a section of Andalucía, describing an arc from La Línea to Córdoba, inclusive of Cádiz, Seville and Granada, and the north of Old Castile—Navarre, León and Galicia. It was separated from the south by approximately two hundred kilometers at its narrowest point.

The rebels controlled a territory of 175,000 square kilometers. The Government more than 350,000, with a population more than triple that of those in the Fascist zone.

The popular forces occupied the principal mountain passes on the French border, and the greater part of the Mediterranean littoral, from El Cabo de Cruces to Málaga. Loyal to the Republic too were the principal industrial zones of Euzkadi, Catalonia, Asturias, Levante etc. In respect to agriculture the Government controlled the best. The *huertas* of Valencia and Murcia, and the great wheat zones of La Mancha and Estremadura.

And though the Cantabrian terrain of the Republic had been isolated from the rest of loyal Spain, the general situation of the republican forces was, without a doubt, more favorable than that of the Fascists.

A brief glance at the map will show us that, in effect, on one side was industrial Spain of the great political, cultural and economic centers wherein the greatest influence was that

of the organized working classes, and on the other was backward Spain. This was the Spain of a feudal, agricultural economy, where the wretched peasants and villagers were dominated completely by the great landowners, the *latifundists*, and the church.

In the days immediately following the rising the picture of the armed forces of the Fascist camp, as opposed to those of the Republic, was extraordinarily complex.

In Fascist hands—other than the Army of Africa—were twenty-five of the thirty-nine infantry regiments on the Peninsula and adjacent islands. There were also four battalions of engineers, two battalions of machine-gunners, and sixteen of the twenty-seven artillery regiments in existence.

It goes without saying that the overwhelming majority of the officers of these units were with the rebels. The Government would reap, in this case, the fruit of the military policies of a Republican leadership that had given the key posts of the Army to Fascists and Rightists, since the units left to them were now without officers, and generally in a chaotic state.

Nevertheless hundreds of officers had remained loyal to the Republic. Some, for their Republican persuasions. Others, and here we have not a few examples of men of catholic and conservative conviction, with a genuine impulse toward patriotism. The question of honor was involved, as they understood it. They had given their solemn oath to the Republic as it was legally constituted. The sacrifice that many of these punctilious professionals made, plus the inestimable aid that some gave to the anti-fascist cause, is recorded with profound gratitude by the Spanish people.

For having refused to join with those in rebellion against the Republic of the Popular Front; for having been true to their word, Commanders and Officers of the Army, the Airforce and the Navy were summarily shot or later executed by the Fascists. Those killed in the first hours of the rising in Morocco were: The High Commissioner for the Protectorate, Álvarez Buylla, the Generals' Manuel Romerales and Gómez Morato; the Chief of Aviation for the zone, Colonel Lapuente y Bahamonde; in Melilla, Bermúdez Reina, the Regimental Commanders', Seco, Izquierdo and Juan Villasán, and the Captains'; Rotger and Laret and many more.

The list is long. In Andalucía, the Generals' Villa Abrille and Campins. The Commander of Artillery, Mariano Zapico. The Civil Governor of Cádiz. The Colonel, Allanegui. Lt. Colonel, Berzosa. Frigate Captain, Tomás Azcárate. Corvette Captain, Biondi, and the Captain of Aviation, Burguete.

In Valladolid, General Molero, General Leal Travieso and Captain Rioboo. In Burgos, the Generals', Batet and Mina. In Pamplona, Commander Rodríguez Mendel. In Gijón, Captain

Gómez. In Zaragoza, the Commander of the Republican Airforce, General Nuñez de Prado and Colonel León. In Madrid, Colonel Carratala. In Alcalá de Henares, Colonel Monterde. In Oviedo, Commander Ros. In La Coruña, Generals' Salcedo and Caridad Pita. In El Ferrol, the High Admiral, Azarola, and Commander Sánchez Ferragut. In Pontevedra, Captain Juan Rico González. . . .

The list of murdered loyal, professional bourgeois officers who had stood by the Popular Front of the Spanish Republic, is *indeed* long. It cannot begin to be included in these pages. It is equaled and surpassed a dozen times, however, by the civilian mayors, town councilors and other officials and leaders of the *Republican parties* in a thousand towns and villages who were likewise slaughtered. All this, in case there are still those who would insist, in their counter-productive sectarianism, that only the parties of the extreme Left had the questionable honor of death before the Franco firing squads.

Despite the fact that the great majority of Spain's military were active in the rebellion, the Africanists had shown from the beginning that they placed little faith in the army of the Peninsula. Because of this their strategy had become firmly based upon use of the troops of the Foreign Legion and the Regulates (Moroccan levies). This, plus the planned aid from Italy and Germany.

The Franco historian, Manuel Aznar, affirms in his work, *Historia Militar de la Guerra de España*, that, "other than the Army of Africa, the Rebels counted on no one."¹ The reality was that the Commanders of the Army of the Peninsula could not guarantee the troops' loyalty.

It was true that the greater part of the soldiers could be taken into the streets. But the causes which allowed the Fascist-Military to do this are in themselves otable. They were, for instance, the existence of a discipline of terror; absolute fraud, in that in almost every barracks the soldiers poured forth with the cry, 'Viva la Republica!,' and the complete and deliberate isolation of the troops, in that during the days of peril they were kept from all contact with the people and confined to barracks.

The exception to this last, of course, was Barcelona and Madrid. It is also notable that neither the Government nor the Republican officers had taken the trouble to inform the soldiers of the Rightist and Fascist machinations.

Despite all these factors favoring rebel plans, it is still fact that soldiers from the various regiments in Madrid, etc. did contribute, in one form or another, to the defeat of the rebels.

The greater part of both officers and soldiers of the Airforce had remained loyal to the Republic. The nucleus of conspirators in that branch of the armed forces had been almost

¹ Aznar, p. 135

totally frustrated by the diligence of the Director General of Aviation, Nuñez de Prado; by the Airforce Commander, Hidalgo de Cisneros, and many others. Of the 764 officers of the Navy, just 38 were loyal.² The sailors, however, to a man, were fervently Socialist or Republican. And we have seen just how they responded to the call of the Fascist-Military.

Of the land security forces, over 15,000 of 22,000 of the Guardia Civil rose in rebellion; of the Assault Guards, perhaps half. The 16,000 men of the Carabineros remained almost in their entirety with the Republic.³

In resumé, the rebels had absolute superiority in the area of the land army and all its auxiliaries, and in cadres and organized military effectives. The Republic possessed superiority in the airforce and in the fleet.

But the greatest strength of the Republic, that which gave it an enormous superiority over the rebels, was the spirit of the great mass of Spaniards who had chosen to defend the gains they had won against the counter-revolutionary efforts of the Fascist-Military. And this was not simply a “transcendental political fact,” but rather, it was a military factor of the highest order.

The Rebel Army had been defeated. In Republican territory the rapid creation of new armed forces began apace. The decree of July 18th, liquidating all troop units whose commands had rebelled, involving 90 percent of the Army, had been a stimulus for the F.A.I. in Catalonia, Aragón, etc., to immediately disband *all* military units, loyal or not, and inclusive of many whose officers had fought at the side of the Republic.

The Communists suggested, in view of the fact that German and Italian planes were already appearing in Spanish skies, and news of shipments of war materiel, already on the high-seas, was fact, that it was necessary to incorporate all existing forces into the militia, army, or whatever, in order to win! They insisted that the possibility was grave; that the war was just beginning!⁴

They gave as an example, and it was not an isolated case, an infantry regiment which, despite the fact that its officers had been arrested for complicity in the rising, had remained intact, and even now was fighting on the Somosierra front.⁵ In this way the Republic had not lost the benefits of these trained and disciplined cadres.

As of the 20th of July, throughout Republican Spain, the organization of military contingents began. It proceeded rapidly, continuously—giddily: columns, detachments,

2 Benevides, p. 156

3 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 184

4 *Ibid.* p. 184

5 Ibárruri, pp. 266-267

companies and battalions of volunteers; most without arms. By the end of July, the Republic could count upon approximately 60,000 armed militia, in the field and fighting.

On the 23rd of July the rebels were defeated at Guadalajara; on the 24th, the militia reconquered Motril; on the 26th, the Fascist-Military pocket of Albacete-Hellín-Chinchilla-La Roda; on the 28th the barracks of Loyola in San Sebastián surrendered; and on the 30th of July, the republican militia retook Yestes and Villanueva de Córdoba, in Andalucía. The strength of the popular militia was definitely in the ascendancy.

Conversely the situation for the rebels on the Peninsula was becoming desperate. Some Fascist generals already thought of capitulation; of fleeing, and even of suicide. For, as Aznar wrote: "They had encountered in their path incredible obstructions and obstacles, impossible to rise above."⁶

As early as the 27th of July, Mola sent a telegram to Colonel García Escámez, commanding the column fighting on the Somosierra Front. The message reflected the critical situation the rebels now faced. "It is impossible," he stated, "to send ammunition. I have but 26,000 cartridges for the entire army of the north."⁷

This pessimism of Mola was justified. The Colonial troops of the Army of Africa, having been denied the Straits of Gibraltar by the presence of the Republican fleet, remained where they were—with the exception of one or two regiments. Mola prepared orders for the Carlists to retire from the heights of the Sierra, and to accept the defeat that seemed inevitable. In a message to Franco he expressed the opinion that they had lost the game. "Their hopes," wrote the Franco historian, Ararrás, "were dissolving in complete defeat. There were many now who lacked the confidence in the cause of the movement. England had consulted her Consulates in Spain. Of thirty-two replies received, thirty suggested a triumph of the Madrid Government."⁸

The opinion seemed general among all other world governments, inclusive of the United States.

In those eight days of tumultuous battle it has been conclusively shown that the forces of Spanish Democracy were superior to the forces of reaction; even with a subverted army fighting against constitutional power. On the 25th of July the German Ambassador in Madrid also telegraphed his government. "Unless," he stated bluntly, "there occurs something out of the ordinary, it is now difficult to understand how the military rebellion can succeed."⁹

6 Aznar, pp. 134-144

7 Ibid. Loc-cit, p. 184

8 Ararrás, pp. 273-274

9 D.G.F.P. (English Edition) p. 13

But General Mola, naïve, perhaps, since he too would soon die like Sanjurjo, in a plane crash of mysterious origin, had based his thinking upon a struggle whose chief characteristics were those of an interior war. Generalissimo Francisco Franco y Bahamonde, who knew better, for the simple reason of his knowledge of what the *total* commitment of Nazi-Germany and Fascist-Italy would be—and, as we now know, his links with British intelligence—asked, simply, that resistance be prolonged just a little longer. Hiding cautiously in Africa, sheltered by the Straits of Gibraltar, he prepared the second and greatest treason against the Spanish Republic—the armed intervention of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.

BOOK THREE:

The Intervention of the Great Powers

A QUESTION AND AN ANSWER:

The revolt of the Fascist-Military had been defeated. A few weeks, a few months at best, and the Spanish people would have retaken all territory still in Fascist hands.

This raises a most interesting point. For there is a question that has never been asked; certainly not by “castle” historians because the resultant, opened “Pandora's Box,” might easily have gotten out of hand. But it should have been asked across this span of some thirty-five years. For the answers to that question are the key to all that then ensued.

The question is: As a result of the defeat of the rising of the armed might of Spain's ruling class, what forms, social and economic, would the *new* Republic now pursue?

That it would swing to the Left, there was no doubt. But would there be a nationalization of all the basic means of production; a total socialization of the economy; a collectivization of the land? Would there be an expropriation of the property of those who had sought to bring down the Republic; of the great landowners, the church, the industrialists of Bilbao and Barcelona.

All iffy questions.

The answer, perhaps, will be found in the simple fact that insofar as it had been the Spanish Republic of the *Frente Popular* that the Fascist-Military had attacked, it would therefore be the *Frente Popular* of the Spanish Republic that would decide what course to pursue.

The people of Spain had not been called to battle with the slogans of “Land! Bread! Peace! and All-Power-to-the-Soviets” (Workers Councils); but rather to the cry of “No Pasarán!” They were faced with the overt and immediate threat of being forced back into the feudalism of Alfonso, or into the new feudalism of the corporate state of *Hispanidad*. They fought to defend what they had won at the polls of February. That a revolution in the truest sense had taken place, however, was fact. But it was still not the classical “socialist” revolution that some would have us believe; these being the Fascist Right and the dogmatists of the ultra-left.

Power had passed from the hands of the Right-Republican leadership. But that same power, now in the hands of Left-Republican leadership, was still no mandate for instant socialism.

We have seen that Right-Republican leadership had not only been derelict in its duties to the very State and Constitution which it had proposed to lead, but had also attempted to make a deal with Fascism and the Financial Oligarchy. Their only recorded excuse—the cop-out of establishment representatives, no matter what their guise—was that they had sought to avoid bloodshed.

It is axiomatic that the *Right*, historically, *never* seeks to avoid bloodshed. But to the contrary, consistently precipitates it unless its demands are met.

In this case, however, the Spanish people had chosen to fight. And, with Left leadership, they had won. As for the question of “Socialist Revolution,” as opposed to the reality of the Spanish scene, one but need review again the percentage of tendencies within the Spanish body-politic. For the Popular Front, *an absolute majority*: for the Socialists, Communists and Anarchists—at best a third of the total vote. To reiterate: the people, essentially, had risen against the Fascist rebellion to maintain that which they had won in February, and to save themselves from the oppression of a new dictatorship of the Right. The Socialists and Communists knew this quite well; knew too that they had not been given the mandate for the imposition of the Marxist “Dictatorship of the Proletariat.” Unfortunately, the Anarchists and certain others of the P.O.U.M. neither knew nor cared that this was the case. The F.A.I. was to apply its concepts of Libertarian Communism wherever it had the military strength to do it—and bedamned to the absolute fact that they were but a minority within a minority.

Changes, reforms, whatever: none could, therefore, be imposed by the parties of the Left, despite their new strength. Rather, change would only come about as the end product of a consistent, grass-roots, effort, and a resultant mass approval of Left programs as advanced by Left leadership as solutions to the problems of the day.

The one thing that *had* changed was that if the mass of the workers, peasants and middle-classes were ready to accept the nationalization of Spain's coal mines, etc., the

Government would now do it. For there would be no armed force of the Oligarchy to stand in the way. The Spanish people now had freedom for the application of alternatives, other than capitalist, to their myriad of problems.

The power, generally, was in the hands of the people And *that* is the thing that terrified the ruling classes of the Western World in all their guises.

Carried still further, the victory of the Spanish people could not but strengthen its sister-government across the Pyrenees, France. And would it not follow that two strong uncompromising 'people's governments' upon the continent of Europe could just possibly sound the death knell to the minority regimes of Nazi-Germany and Fascist-Italy?

One last point in this area of the new republic's potential, aside from the machinations of the dogmatists who would proclaim—and did—a betrayal of the working class if the immediate socialization of everything did not take place. There are those of the Right, and some who call themselves “liberal,” who would say: “Well. If the situation was as suggested, then it still means that eventually there would be a nationalization of industry and a collectivization of the land, right?” The answer is simple: “Yes, without a doubt. Just as—to any thinking person—there will someday be a socialist-humanist world.”

THE INTERVENTION OF GERMANY AND ITALY:

Dante A. Puzzo, in his work, *Spain and the Great Powers*, writes that, “There is a certain irony in the fact that the self-appointed custodians of the 'traditional Spain,' and the Spain of consummate pride and independence of spirit, were forced by the fierce resistance of the Spanish masses to seek, almost from the beginning, foreign aid in their bid to win mastery over Spain.”¹

Quite true. Though the “nationalism” of these 'nationalists' was actually the *internationalism* of Fascism and imperialism—a pattern that continue through to this day.

The so-called Nationalists were referred to as Fascists by the Government of the Republic; the true nationalists being the Basques, the Catalans, the Galicians—all at the side of the Republic. Even the Carlists could hardly be considered Nationalist, for they were Monarchists in the truest sense.

The first words that Francisco Franco was to hear upon landing in Tetuán on July 19th, were those of the Commander of the Army, Sáenz de Buruaga. He said: “If the problem of transport continues, and if hope is lost in bringing the Army of Africa to the Peninsula—then what shall we do?”²

Franco was not unduly alarmed. For, like Mola, Sáenz de Buruaga was not aware of that which, almost alone among the chiefs of the revolt, Franco knew. Having *Carte-Blache* with the Fascist powers, and others, his first act was to telegraph Berlin requesting immediate air/transport and war plans with which to protect them. The telegram was signed by both Franco and Beigbeder, the former military attaché at the Spanish Embassy in Berlin.³

On the 22nd of July two agents of the Nazi espionage service in Morocco, Johannes Bernhardt, and the head of the local Nazi organization, *Orstgruppenführer*, Adolf Alangenheim, flew directly to Berlin aboard a Lufthansa plane. They brought with them Franco's special representative, Francisco Arranz. He had a personal letter to Adolf Hitler. The Führer, being in Bayreuth, Germany, at the moment, they were taken in hand by *Gaulieter*, Bohle, who left immediately to meet with Hitler and other Nazi Chieftains.⁴

“The first meeting with the Führer,” according to German archives, “during which he was given the personal letter from Franco, took place in Bayreuth on the night of the day of the 25th of July, when the Führer had returned from the theatre. Immediately afterward the Führer called Marshal Göring, the Minister of War, General Blomberg, and an Admiral (Canaris) of the German Navy. That same night it was

1 Puzzo, p. 60

2 “*Arriba!*” Falange periodical. Article by Luis Galinsoga, Oct 1, 1961

3 Barcia, p. 218

4 D.G.F.P. (Eng. Ed.) pp. 10-11

decided to come to the aid of General Franco, and the following day certain hard policies were adopted.”⁵

In his declaration before the International Tribunal at Nuremberg, where he was condemned to death, Reichs-Marshall, Hermann Göring, gave the following details of that meeting.

“When the Civil War in Spain broke out, Franco send a demand for aid to Germany, asking that this be particularly in air-transport. One must not forget that Franco was in Africa with his troops and could not be transported across the Straits because the fleet was in the hands of the Communists The decisive question was, above all else, to get the troops to Spain. The Führer considered the request, and I insisted that it was necessary to give aid whatever the circumstances.”⁶

Adolf Hitler issued the order that 20 huge transport aircraft, JU 52's, be flown instantly to Spanish Morocco. The first of these left a Berlin airfield on the morning of the 27th of July, and arrived at Tetuán on the 28th.⁷

Simultaneously with this demand for aid from Nazi-Germany, Franco made direct liaison with the multi-millionaire, Juan March. Utilizing the plane that had brought him to Tetuán, the *Dragon Rapide*, he sent two emissaries, Luis Bolín and Luca de Tena to Biarritz with a mission to meet with March who had a residence in that city along the French Basque coast.

From Biarritz, Bolín and Luca flew to Rome, arriving on the 22nd of July to be received by Count Ciano, the son-in-law of Mussolini. Simultaneously, the Monarchist leader, Antonio Goicoechea, who had made the 'pact of 1934' with Mussolini, arrived in Rome from Burgos. He was accompanied by Sainz Rodríguez. Juan March, himself, arrived a few days later to act as the Franco representative to the Mussolini Government.⁸

The first known aid from Fascist-Italy, were eleven Savoia 81, bombers. As early as July 13th, the pilots and crews of the 55th, 57th, and 58th squadrons of the Royal Italian Airforce on Sardinia had been ordered to “stand by for duty in Spain.” The eleven bombers flew from fields on the island of Sardinia; their destination was Nador in Spanish Morocco. Two of them, short of gasoline, were forced to land, one at Bekrane in French Morocco, and at Zaida, Algeria. Simultaneously with their landing, a small Spanish plane followed them in with spare uniforms of Spain's *Tercio*, or Foreign Legion.⁹

On August 1st there arrived in Melilla, in the Protectorate, an additional eighteen Italian Savoia-Marchetti planes; on the 9th of August ten Savoia tri-motored bombers landed in Seville, together with eighteen Junker Trimotors with thirty German pilots, a number of

5 D.G.F.P. (French Ed.) p. 2. Note 1

6 *Trial of the major War Criminals*, Vol IX, p. 280

7 *Die Deutsche Politik gegen über dem Spanischen Bürgerkrieg*, Manfred Merkes, Bonn, 1961

8 Hubbard, p. 307

9 Puzzo, p. 68

Heinkel 51, fighter planes, and an undisclosed number of anti-aircraft guns for the defense of the fields. These, along with additional rapid shipments of fighter and bomber aircraft, began the heavy bombing of Spanish cities in every area of the mainland. In the last week of July and the first week of August, alone, Guadix, Badajoz, Málaga, Cartagena, and Irún and the Basque capital of San Sebastián, were heavily bombed.

There had obviously been little or no delay.

For those who would play the game of insisting on some hesitancy or reticence on the part of the Fascist Powers to aid Franco, know this: The logistical organization of the sending of war materiel from one country to another—especially in terms of “secret” military intervention, where a State of War exists, is not done easily; certainly not spontaneously. Of necessity it must be well-planned and coordinated.

The prompt arrival of 20 German JU 52 Transports in Spanish Morocco on the 28th of July, along with 11 Savoia 81's and the additional 18 Savoias three days later; all in the Protectorate, was without a doubt the results of a preconceived, emergency plan, to be put into motion if things did not go well.

The immediate result of the shipment of these planes was the consolidation of the Fascist hold on Estremadura. For within hours thousands of troops were flown across the Straits with full equipment. As stated, it was not done without plan; or as a “spontaneous reaction by Hitler and Mussolini to Franco's peril.” That the intervention did not begin until that peril was solidly obvious, is understandable. No Spanish regime, Fascist or Socialist, would welcome foreign troops unless they were necessary to save them from disaster. The point here is that the “disaster” was evident. And because of this, previously laid plans went instantly into effect. These plans included the use of Nazi and Fascist aviation; ships of the German and Italian Navy, and the immediate transportation of war materiel to the rebel ports of La Coruña, Cádiz, Algeciras and the port of Lisbon in Portugal. Two German freighters, the *Kamerun* and the *Wigbert* arrived in Lisbon as early as the first week in August, loaded with war materiel.

Mr. Herbert Feis, who held a post of responsibility in the United States embassy at the time, writes in his work, *The Spanish Story*, that within a week, with the aid of the Junker transports, more than 14,000 troops of the Army of Africa were flown to the Peninsula; likewise tons of ammunition, artillery, machine guns and all the necessities of war.¹⁰ German pilots flew transports; Savoia 81's and JU 52's bombed, while the famed Nazi “pocket battleship,” *Deutschland*, placed itself *between* Fascist-held ports and Rebel sea-transport and defied the Loyal battleship, *Jaime Primo* and the destroyers *Lepanto*, etc., to fire, and thereby create an international incident whose results at the time could not be

10 *The Spanish Story*, Herbert Feis, New York, 1948. p. 281

known.¹¹ And, in the continuity of rapidly developing events, it is notable that after a visit by Franco's Air Minister, Alfredo Kindelán, to the British bastion at Gibraltar—on a rather strange mission, since England recognized only the Spanish Republic—that almost immediately after, the British warship, *Queen Elizabeth*, dropped anchor in the Fascist-held port of Algeciras, deliberately preventing units of the Republican fleet from shelling the port.¹²

And finally, in respect of the use of the deep-water port of the International Zone of Tangier, where the greater part of the Republican fleet had gone to more rapidly interdict the transport of troops and war materiel from Morocco, we shall see how the *dicta* of International Law was totally and cynically abrogated by the Power Elites of the Western World.

The Control Committee of the International Zone of Tangier was composed of representatives of England, France, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Holland and Portugal. A delegation was sent to this committee by the Franco *Junta* on the 20th of July, just two days after the rising. The delegation demanded that the Republican fleet be forced from the bay; this from Generals who but two days before had rebelled against the legally elected government.

The Committee, ostensibly bound to uphold the accords of International Law, became suddenly and almost obsequiously subservient, to the point of grovelling, to the delegates of the Spanish Fascist Junta. The result was a Committee declaration that “In the interests of *neutrality* (they thereby granted Franco the belligerent rights of a recognized government) the Republican fleet must leave the harbor of Tangier.”¹³

More! Enter now the United States of America, who had never recognized the Statue of Tangier, nor contributed in any way to the Committee of Controls:

*By orders of the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, the American Petroleum Company, Vacuum Oil, which serviced the ships of the port, was asked to cease and desist in fueling any ships of the Spanish Republican Navy. This on the 23rd of July, but five days after the rising.*¹⁴

The Nazi Naval squadron, led by the *Deutschland*—the German Admiralty informed Hitler as of the 22nd of August, that almost the entire German fleet was now operating in the Straights—¹⁵joined with ships of the Italian Royal Navy. On August 5th, the first large rebel convoy with thousands of troops and hundreds of tons of war materiel sailed from Cueta to Algeciras. It sailed under the direct protection of military aviation and naval ships of

11 *Civil War in Spain*, Frank Jellinek, London, 1938. p. 349

12 Kindelán, p. 19—Jellinek, p. 349

13 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 195. Vol. 1

14 Foreign Relations of the United States—Diplomatic Papers, 1936, Vol. II., p. 445

15 D.G.F.P., (Eng. Ed.) p. 52

the Fascist Powers, plus the active benevolence of England.¹⁶

On the following day there arrived in Cádiz from Hamburg the first shipment to that Fascist port. The *Usaramo* docked with a new expeditionary force of 86 pilots under the command of Colonel Alenxader von Scheele, of the German Regular Army, and with a cargo of Heinkel 51, fighter planes, anti-aircraft artillery and other materiel of the war.¹⁷

One is forced to reiterate that this was not simply “a reaction by the Fascist Powers to the plea of Franco.” But rather it was the result of plan and purpose by Spain's Fascist-Military in conjunction with their cohorts of the Reichskancellory and the *Ballila* den of Mussolini.

16 Manfred Merkes, p. 29

17 Ibid. p. 29

GERMANY:

Details of how the shipments were handled, etc., are beyond the scope of this work. They are, however, well documented for those who care to seek them out. Suffice it to say that essentially, across the years of the Spanish War, the Italo-German contribution proved decisive against the Spanish Republic; especially so, since with the exception of the Soviet Union, and one shipment of rifles from Mexico, the Republic was denied access to arms—anywhere in the world.

By September Germany had sent to the Franco regime nine complete squadrons of fighter planes and bombers, two companies of tanks, a great number of artillery batteries and tens of thousands of rifles and machine guns, plus other war materiel.¹ Throughout the course of the war a German freighter left the Port of Hamburg every five days; over a hundred and seventy ships sailing in this manner. Fighter planes, as a rule, went by ship; heavy bombers such as the JU 52's, went directly by air. Also, at least once a week four great transport planes were flown to Spain with whatever was considered urgent at the time.²

At the beginning of September the Nazi Colonel, Walter Warlimont, assumed command of all German troops in Spain. These consisted principally of those of aviation; of the various anti-aircraft units, artillery units, and tank units under the command of Col. Ritter von Thoma. Aided by various German staff officers, Von Thoma, took upon himself the additional task of familiarizing Franco's officers with the latest methods of the Prussian military school.³

By the end of October, 1936, the German intervention acquired major proportions, with the creation of the *Condor Legion*. To understand the enormity of the German commitment it is sufficient to point out that in the bloody fighting in Aragón, March 9th, 1938, the following units participated directly in the action: The German tank corps under the command of Col. Ritter Wilhelm von Thoma, comprising four battalions, each of three companies with fifteen light tanks to a company. These were accompanied by thirty anti-tank companies, with six 37mm guns each. A total of 180 PZKI tanks and approximately 180 anti-tank guns. Overhead would be the supporting planes of the Condor Legion, consisting in this particular action alone, of over three hundred fighters and bombers.⁴

The total amount of German military cadres known to have participated in the war on the side of Franco is approximately 50,000 men.⁵ Though there are no official documents to substantiate the exact figure, studies made after the conclusion of World War Two,

1 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 99. Notes.

2 *La Guerra en el Aire*, José Goma, Barcelona, 1958. p. 66

3 *The Other Side of the Hill*, Liddell Hart, London, 1948. p. 98

4 *Ibid.* p. 123

5 Del Vayo, FB., p. 59

generally indicate the above to be correct. The fact, for example—and it is documented—that 26,113 German soldiers and officers were decorated by the Hitler regime for their services, would easily endorse the Del Vayo figures.⁶

And too, in one of the statements made by Nazi officers, it was affirmed that the Military Attaché of the German Embassy in Paris, dining with his opposite of the American Embassy, made the statement that, in his opinion, over 30,000 German troops were serving with the Franco Army. The date was February 23rd, 1937. The very day in which the famed Abraham Lincoln Battalion of the 15th International Brigade was undergoing its baptism of fire on the Jarama Front below Madrid.⁷

⁶ *Die Orden und Ehrenzeichen des Gross-deutschen Reichs*, Henrich Doehle: Berlin, 1941. pp. 14-15.

⁷ Foreign Relations, U.S. Diplomatic Papers, Vol. 1. p. 247. 1937.

ITALY:

The influential Italian magazine, *Informazione Diplomatica* (Rome) wrote in February of 1939, a month before the war's end, that: "Italy responded to the first call of Franco on the 27th of July, 1936. Our first losses stem from that date."¹

The personal organ of Mussolini, *Il Popolo d'Italia*, wrote on May 20th, 1938, that: "We intervened from the first moment to the last."²

From the first days of August, U.S. Consulates in Seville and Vigo were forwarding information to Washington in-re the arrival of German and Italian warplanes in those cities.³

Other than the immediate aid of planes, artillery, men, and units of the Italian Navy to hinder the Republican fleet, a considerable number of submarines were given outright to Franco. These were to supplement the action of the Italian submarines which, from the first days, sank ships of the Republican Merchant Marine. The Spanish island of Mallorca was, throughout the war, a major Italian Naval Base.

Speaking of this fact, Mussolini told the Hitler Minister, Frank, in Rome on the 23rd of September, 1936, that: "Much Italian blood has flowed and the Balearics have been saved only with the aid of Italian men and equipment."⁴ A year later, speaking with Ribbentrop on the 6th of November, 1937, he insisted that: "It is a fact that we have established in Palma both an air and Naval Base. Warships are maintained permanently at the Base and we have three airfields at our disposal. We hope to prolong this situation as long as possible. In any case Franco must understand that in the eventuality of our evacuation, Mallorca must continue to be an Italian Base in case of war with France."⁵

The following figures will give some indication of the enormous amount of materiel given Franco by Italian Fascism during the course of the war:

1,930 artillery pieces of all calibers; 7,514,537 shells; 240,747 rifles, carbines etc.; 324,900,000 cartridges, 10,135 machine guns, 7,633 motor vehicles—and 950 tanks and armored cars.⁶ Simultaneously with this 91 warships, inclusive of submarines of the Italian Navy, took an active part at one time or another against the Republic, while 92 cargo ships were utilized in transport.⁷

1 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 201.

2 *Ibid*, loc-cit, p. 201.

3 Foreign Relations U.S. Diplomatic Papers, Vol. 1. p. 247. 1937.

4 *Europa hacia la Catástrofe*. Count Galeazzo Ciano, Barcelona, 1949. p. 42

5 *Ciano's Diplomatic Papers*, London, 1948. p. 146

6 Thomas, p. 634. Also, Broue, p. 320

7 Agencia Stefani (vide supra), Italy

Benito Mussolini, as early as September, 1937, announced on one of his trips to Germany that his fleet had already sunk 200,000 tons of merchant shipping serving the Republic, and that the torpedoings continued.⁸

Count Ciano declared in an interview with Hitler on the 28th of September, 1940, that 1,000 Italian planes had participated in the war in Spain.⁹

According to data published in the Italian Press in June of 1939, Italian pilots in Spain had flown a total of 86,240 bombing missions; dropping over 11,584 tons of bombs—all this exclusive of fighter-aircraft operations.¹⁰

The following facts offer major proof of the absolutely predominant role of Italian and German aviation in the Spanish War: Of 163 pilots (rebel) taken prisoner during a twelve-month period, 60 percent were Italian (98), 30 percent were German (49) and 10 percent were Spanish (16). So much for the so-called “Nationalists” of the Spanish War.¹¹

Unlike Nazi-Germany, Italy sent complete units of its Regular Army to Spain. According to German sources, Mussolini sent his first detachments of infantry as early as August of 1936. In terms of numbers the official Armed Forces Review of the Italian Army, *Forze Armate*, wrote on the 8th of June, 1939, that 100,000 Italian soldiers, armed and equipped, participated in the war against the Spanish Republic. And it must be noted that the equipment for these divisions was apart from the previously listed war materiel sent the Franco Armies.¹²

Neville Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, while selling the Czechs down the road at Munich, was told at the time by Mussolini that: “I am sick of Spain. We have lost 50,000 men—dead and wounded.”¹³

As to the cost of Italian intervention against the Spanish people, Ciano, in a conversation with Hitler on the 28th of September, 1940, confessed that his Government had spent 14,000,000,000—fourteen thousand million lira—the equivalent at that time of \$700,000,000 millions of dollars.¹⁴

The best comment one can make in summing up this brief resume of the military intervention in the Spanish War by the great Fascist Powers, is to repeat the following

8 D.G.F.P. (Eng. Ed.) Vol. 1, p. 5

9 Ibid. Vol. 3, p. 933

10 Article: *Prelude to World War*, “Foreign Relations Magazine,” October, 1942. p. 111. By John T. Whitaker

11 Del Vayo, F.B., p. 64

12 Ibid., see pp. 49 through 64.

13 *Life of Neville Chamberlain*, Keith Feiling, London, 1946. p. 376

14 D.G.F.P., (Eng. Ed.) Vol. 3, p. 933

phrase spoken by Adolf Hitler in a conversation with Ciano in 1940:

“Without the aid of Italy and Germany,” Hitler said, “*Franco would not exist today.*”¹⁵

¹⁵ Ibid.

PORTUGAL:

Little or nothing has been written about Portuguese aid to Franco. Yet, this aid too, viewed against a particular time period, can be considered as having been decisive.

Like Germany and Italy, from the first month the Dictator Oliveria Salazar, was on the side of the Fascist-Military. As of the 18th of July the policies of Salazar converted Portugal into one of the principal bases of rebel operations. In contrast, the Spanish Ambassador to Portugal, in Lisbon, the revered historian, Sánchez Albornoz, was confined to his home, subjected to the most despicable of insults, denied all elemental guarantees due to his position, and was finally expelled from Portugal.

Meanwhile the Rebels entered and left Portugal when they chose. A Fascist-Military headquarters was established in the Hotel Aviz, in Lisbon, where it rapidly became both a political and diplomatic center. A direct telephone line was opened from this headquarters to Franco's military centers of Seville and Burgos, uniting the two sections of Fascist Spain across the more than two hundred kilometers that separated them.

The first effects of the Portuguese intervention was to save the rebel troops from disaster on the Guadarrama and Somosierra Fronts. Alfredo Kindelán writes: "A very critical situation had developed, for we were almost without ammunition for rifles and machine guns. We finally received these munitions from the south, by way of Portugal, who had aided us from the first moment in every possible way."¹

Oliveria Salazar took personal charge of Portugal's intervention in Spanish affairs. A note from the German Ambassador in Lisbon to Berlin on August 22nd, states that: "The President of the Cortes, Salazar, has personally eased the acquiring by the revolutionaries of every type of war materiel. I am informed by a sure source that he authorized the transit through Portugal of a munitions train from Seville to Burgos before ever Badajoz fell, permitting the direct movement of arms and men."²

Airfields in Portuguese territory were used by German and Italian warplanes for the bombing of Republican cities. Salazar's police, in concert with Spain's Fascist-Military, arrested thousands of citizens who sought safety on Portuguese soil. More than 5,000 Spaniards fleeing the disaster at Badajoz were forced back from the frontier and subsequently shot by the Rebels.³

Financially, a close relationship was established between the National Bank of Portugal and Franco's outlet, the Bank of *Espiritu Santo*.

1 Kindelán, p. 27

2 D.G.F.P. (French Ed.) p. 43

3 Bahamonde, p. 153

All radio stations in Portugal became direct instruments of Rebel propaganda. Certain factories such as *La Barcarena* and *Bemfica*—producing machine guns, hand grenades and shells—were placed at the disposition of Spain's Fascist-Military.⁴ And over 20,000 troops of the Portuguese armed forces fought in the ranks of the Spanish Rebel Army.

The Portuguese people, however, were overwhelmingly opposed to these tactics of their government. Throughout the length of the war, Socialists, Communists, the common people generally, kept faith with the common people of Spain. Audacious acts of sabotage were organized; trains blown up and derailed; ships sunk; convoys ambushed. A high point of Portuguese resistance to the dictates of Salazar took place on the 11th of September, 1936, when the Army of Africa was already pounding toward the outskirts of Madrid beneath an umbrella of German and Italian bombers. A part of the Portuguese Navy mutinied and raised the flag of solidarity with the Spanish people. The revolt was put down. The repression, following the pattern of the Fascist-Military in Spain, was terrible.⁵

4 Hodgeson, p. 70

5 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 217.

MOROCCO:

The Army of Africa was not the only military force from the Protectorate to inundate Spanish soil with blood and steel. Across three years of war over 100,000 Moorish mercenaries were to be recruited from both Spanish and *French* Morocco. The French refused to admit this fact—but they didn't deny it either.

The Spanish Republic protested vehemently at all diplomatic levels against this utilization of Moroccan troops by Spain's Fascist-Military. A letter signed by Spain's Álvarez del Vayo to the participating members of the 'accord' of Non-Intervention, stated the following:

“With the impossibility of recruiting *Spanish* troops to aid in their rebellion, the Fascist Generals have sought to recruit in foreign countries. This is especially true in terms of the heavy recruitment of mercenaries from Morocco. This procedure should scandalized the civilized world It constitutes a flagrant violation of the establishment rules existent in the Act of Algeciras and the French-Spanish treaty of 1912. This point of view has been further confirmed by the attitude of the Sultan himself.”¹

The situation in Morocco has been dealt with by the Spanish Communist Party in the following way; it is used in its entirety, since nowhere has this writer found as concise a resume relating to the disastrous policy pursued by the Spanish Republic in-re the national forces of Morocco.

“Moroccan troops constituted, next to the Foreign Legion, the shock force with which Franco conquered the greater part of Andalucía, and advanced from Algeciras to the gates of Madrid.

But though the *Caid*s in the northern zones of Morocco aided Franco from the beginning, other sectors of the Moroccan population lifted their voices in protest against recruitment of Moorish troops to fight the Spanish people. Indeed, Franco's constant acceleration of the embarkment of troops was his fear that these small sparks of revolt would affect the spirit of the men.

Groups of Moroccan Communists—these existed primarily in the French zone, and as a force were still weak—nevertheless did create a number of very effective and energetic acts, meetings, demonstrations, etc., of solidarity with the embattled Spanish people.

Anti-fascist Moroccans on the Peninsula, considered the Africanist Generals to be enemies of their people, formed a militia battalion in Madrid, which became a part of the famed, Communist-led, *Fifth Regiment*.²

In the *Rif*, in *Sahel*, and in many zones fighting broke out between Franco troops and Moroccans who opposed recruitment.

The ancient Grand Vizier of the famed Abd-el-Krim, Sidi Mohamed Aser Khan, who was then in the French zone, directed a message to the Berbers of Beni Urriaguel in the *Rif*, calling upon them not to enlist with the Fascists.

1 Note of Álvarez del Vayo to members of the “Accord of Non-Intervention Committee” in London, September 15, 1936

2 “*Mundo Obrero*,” Oct. 6, 1936

On the 5th of December, 1936, the Sultan of Morocco sent a letter to the Resident General of France in Rabat, which he said:

'We attend with great sadness the battles that now rend a friendly country And though we may seem emotional about the sufferings of our own subjects, we cry profoundly that some of these have been called to sustain a war without mercy; not to defend a government with whom they have relations, from attack. But to the contrary, to sustain the designs of that government's own sons who wish to destroy it.'³

Despite his position, however, the Sultan, thereafter, made no effort to halt the active and enthusiastic collaboration entered into by the Moroccan authorities of the Spanish zone; above all the Grand Vizier and the Caliph, Muley Jasan.

In the months of September and October, 1936, the principle representatives of the Moroccan national bourgeoisie sent two delegations to Europe: one to Paris, the other to Madrid; with the proposal of organizing a revolt against Franco in exchange for certain concessions—national rights—those those in the Spanish zone.

The Paris delegation received a wholly negative action from the Government of the 'Socialist,' Leon Blum. 'This,' Blum declared years later to a visiting English historian, Geoffrey Fraser, while he, Blum, was imprisoned in the Castle of Riom by the Pétain Government, 'was the major error of his political career.' Having repulsed, categorically, the proposals of the Moroccan nationalists—to raise the *Rif* in Franco's rearguard—Blum, loyal guardian of the interest of the French Colonialists, was afraid that such a revolt might unleash a rising in the French zone too. And so, in the interest of the *Colons*, he provided Franco with an invaluable service.

Likewise, the delegation to Madrid met with no positive response. Few records exist of this attempt by the Moroccan nationalist delegates. The French historian, Rezette, a specialist on North Africa, has written: 'Two nationalist delegations went from Tetuán to Madrid, by way of Geneva at the beginning of the Franco insurrection in Spain. They offered the Madrid Government the aid of the Moroccans in exchange for the independence of the *Rif*. Sure, at the time, of its strength, the Republican Government refused.'⁴

The facts are fundamentally as Rezette describes them, though his interpretation is subject to criticism. . . .

Having been frustrated by its petition to the Madrid Government, the Moroccan delegation went to Barcelona where it was put in contact with the C.N.T. and the P.S.U.C. And in this case we are better informed since we have the testimony of Rafael Vidiella of the latter organ, who personally met with the delegates.

What the Moroccan nationalists sought, according to Vidiella, was not the 'independence of the *Rif*,' as Rezette has written. Their plea was much more modest: They asked that the Government declare that it would concede to the zone of the Spanish Protectorate of Morocco, *the same political and administrative autonomy as that given to Catalonia*.

All political forces in Catalonia decided to aid this plea. And, since at the time a new government had been formed under the leadership of Largo Caballero, a Catalan delegation was sent to Madrid to ask that satisfaction be given the Moroccan delegates. The Catalans met first with Indalecio Prieto, the new

3 "L'Humanité," Sept 6. 1936

4 *Les Partis politiques Marocains*, Rezette. Paris, 1955. p. 100

Minister of Air and Marine. He told them bluntly that if this question was forced upon the Council of Ministers that he, personally, would vote against it; for the Republic, above all, *must comply* with its other international commitments. Friendly relations with France and Britain *must* be maintained.

The Catalan delegation then went to Largo Caballero, who took exactly the same position as Prieto. He refused to bring the question before the council.

The position of Prieto and Caballero was but one more proof of the Socialist Party's complete lack of understanding of the 'national question' in time of war, and of the problem of Morocco in particular. Anchored to its antiquated 'centrist conceptions,' they refused to accept the fact that the fight for the national liberation of Morocco could be an important aid to the Spanish people in their fight against the Fascist-Military.

This anxiety to conform to 'international commitments'—to maintain Morocco beneath the colonial yoke—was the more absurd since Franco had already violated the treaties of the Protectorate in organizing the recruiting, *en masse*, of Moorish troops—with the complicity of the Imperialist Powers.

If Spain's Socialist leadership could have liberated itself from the sick obsession of not 'irritating England and France' (while both of these were already doing everything short of military intervention to suffocate the Republic); if they could have taken a clear and positive position on the nationalist aspirations in Morocco, then a most difficult situation, indeed, would have been created for Franco.

The Spanish Communist Party—whose Ministers, like the others of the Council, were never informed of the Moroccan petition, had fought constantly for the very measures that the delegation had proposed—this to stimulate all susceptible forces to take a stand throughout North Africa against the Rebel Generals.

On December 12th, 1936, the pressure of the P.C.E. finally forced Caballero to at least mention the problem of Morocco before the Cortez. But even then his words were vague and confused, alluding only to some future eventuality in which a revision of the status of the Protectorate could be considered. He offered no clear position. And the words of the head of Spain's Popular Front Government, were considered by the Moroccans of the Nationalist Movement as being negative and totally dilatorious to their needs of the moment. . . .

While the proposals of the P.C.E., like those of the Catalan delegation, were refused, Caballero and other Ministers took certain initiatives that were bound to fail for the very falseness of their approach.

They sent a man to French Morocco, Carlos Baraibar, who had the confidence of Caballero. Baraibar was distinguished in the columns of the *Claridad* for his demagogic tone and the violence with which he excited the differences within the Socialist Congress. The ideas of Baraibar rose, not from a base of political democracy, but from typically colonialist conceptions. His plan was, simply, to *buy* certain daring *Caid*s and chiefs of the Berbers. The results were truly lamentable; the Government lost enormous amounts of foreign currency given to Baraibar, *and obtained not one practical result.*"⁵

The treatment of the just demands of the Moroccan Nationalists was one of the gravest errors committed by the Spanish Republic throughout the length of the war. It was unworthy of the Socialist leadership; in no way corresponded to the thinking of the masses of the people who had voted for the Popular Front, and was an affront to all those

who at the time were shedding their blood in an anti-fascist, anti-colonialist cause.⁶

⁶ (Mentioned in notes but not on actual page, so no clue where this note belongs. - Ed.) *Guerra y Revolución*, pp. 218 through 225.

ENGLAND AND FRANCE:

The most despicable and cynical form of intervention in the Spanish War was that which was hidden behind the deliberately contrived and unconscionable cloak of *non-intervention*.

When the war began economic relations between France and Spain were regulated by a commercial treaty signed in 1935, one of whose secret clauses obligated the Spanish Government “to buy from France war materiel, especially aviation, to the amount of 140,000,000 francs.”¹

The existence of this treaty; the traditional political affinity between the forces of the Left, vitalized now by the existence in both countries of Popular Front governments—was sufficient cause for the Giral Government to solicit from the French Government a diverse quantity of arms. These being 20 Potez bombers, 8 light machineguns, 8 Schneider cannons, 20,000 bombs, 250,000 machine gun bullets and 4,000,000 cartridges.²

The first reply from French circles was, as expected, favorable.

But, immediately, those elements of the Power Elites of the Western World who favored Fascism moved effectively to obstruct any aid to the Spanish Republic.

On the afternoon of the 22nd of July, Charles Corbin, France's Ambassador to England, and an extreme rightist, telephoned his government to express the fears of certain British circles in-re the events in Spain, and to implore Leon Blum to join him the following day. Blum agreed to go immediately to the English capital.

Anglo-French conversations then took place on the banks of the Thames, with Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, and the titular head of the British Foreign Office, Anthony Eden, for England, and Blum and the Foreign Secretary, Yvon Delbos for France. Eden spoke of his “fears” that any aid from France to Spain would produce the gravest international consequences. He then and there projected a program of non-intervention, and suggested to the French Prime Minister that France take the initiative in proposing this policy within the European family group.

The instant, and therefore almost obscene capitulation by Leon Blum, the “socialist,” to the conservative government of Baldwin, representing the extreme Right of the British ruling class, was catastrophic for the government of the Spanish Republic. The more so, because Blum and the others knew full well of the aid to Franco already on the high-seas from the Fascist Powers. British espionage was excellent, as was that of France.

1 Barcia, p. 23

2 Thomas, p. 218

Baldwin's proposal that the issue of non-intervention be put forth by France is totally indicative of the perfidy agreed upon. Only the Government of the Popular Front of France, presided over by the "socialist" Blum, had the capacity of the role of "Judas goat." Only the government of France could confuse and confound the Social-Democratic governments of Belgium, Holland, Denmark, etc., and simultaneously, since it was led by a socialist, disrupt the structure of the French Popular Front from within—to the detriment of the Spanish Republic.

It is solidly indicative too of the game agreed upon, in that this first act in the creation of a so-called policy of *non-intervention*, came but five days after the war had begun—and at the very moment when it was seen that the Fascist-Military had lost.

Paralleling the policy of the Conservatives of England, the French Financial Oligarchy moved likewise to see that Republican Spain received nothing from any source on the European continent. The Press of the Right in Paris launched a frantic campaign to counteract any attempt at aid. A campaign meticulously prepared beforehand by the Spanish Ambassador to France, Señor Juan F. Cárdenas y Rodríguez de Rivas, and his Military Attaché, Barrose—both pro-Fascist, and compromised the revolt—went into high gear. Documents stolen by these functionaries, plus their sensationalist declarations to the aforementioned press, fed the campaign of hysteria by the French Rightists.

General Franco then intervened in person. Through certain channels he put additional pressure upon the Blum government. In a conversation of July 24, with the German Consul in Tetuán, he expressed fear that the French Government would send twenty-five planes to the Republic, and then stated "But negotiations are even now in motion to prevent that shipment."³

To what negotiations did he refer? Those taking place in London? Possibly. Since the meeting between Blum and Baldwin was secretly taking place at that very moment.

The day following Blum's return from London, a cabinet meeting was held in which Blum, aided by the Right socialists, plus Daladier and Delbos and other "Radicals," adopted the policy suggested by England.

The official note given the press declared that the French Government, by unanimous decision, had decided not to intervene in any manner in the internal conflict in Spain, and that arms would not be sold to the legal Spanish Government.

This declaration, from the view of view of International Law, was monstrous; violating all commercial treaties; equating simultaneously a legal government, freely elected by its

3 D.G.F.P. (French Ed.) p. 5

people, with a band of Fascist Generals who had already lost their *coup*, but who even now—and the French and British knew it—were receiving the first massive shipments of war materiel from the Fascist Powers.

The Spanish Premier, José Giral, upon hearing of the French decision, remarked wryly that:

“By forcing the hand of Paris they (The British) have committed more than a crime, they have committed an enormous ineptitude for which sooner or later they will have to pay. It was sufficient for the city of London to fear a Republican victory—they are blind enough to suppose that the Republican emblem is the hammer and sickle—and to go scuttling to the Foreign Office like a lot of frightened old maids. The latter (Blum and Co.) promptly made common cause with them, and accepted the responsibility before history of threatening the French Popular Front with a cancellation of the Locarno Pact if they allowed the export of arms to Spain.

But the Spanish people will defend the Republic with their own bodies, and we shall defeat the rebel generals in spite of the selfishness of London and the traitors in our own midst.”⁴

Certain Ministers, however, in particular the Socialist, Auriol, and the Radical, Pierre Cot, assured the representatives of the Republic that the decisions of July 25 would not impede the shipping of certain provisions already transacted.

On August 1, the Government of France met again. They decided, in their application of the London plan, to propose publicly, in the first place to Italy and England, and after, to other European countries, that all adopt the compromise of nonintervention in the war in Spain: not to send arms to either the legal government, or the rebel military.

The French Government, awaiting replies from the other countries, stated that it, of course, reserved the “freedom of reappraisal.” This phrase reflected the pressures of those sectors that wished to aid the Spanish Republic.

And it was at this time that the only shipment of warplanes and other materiel was allowed by the French Government, at the express demand of the Air Minister, Pierre Cot. This single shipment consisted of the following: 12 fighter planes, *Dewoitines*, an old model without armament, and five Potez bombers, equally antiquated. They would present no problem to the latest Italian Fiats and Heinkel 51's.

In the meantime Leon Blum secretly sent an emissary on an exploratory trip to England, ostensibly to sound out British military channels in-re the Spanish question. His man was a known Rightist of the French Navy, Admiral Darlan.⁵ Darlan was to speak to the First Lord of the Admiralty, Chatfield, and then, through him, to the Secretary of the Cabinet, Maurice Hankey.

⁴ *Les Partis politiques Marocains*, Rezette. Paris, 1955. p. 100

⁵ *Tres Años de la Lucha*, José Díaz, p. 343

The mission was brief, its results unequivocal. Chatfield informed Darlan brusquely that he considered Franco to be “a good Spanish patriot.” He refused to place Darlan in contact with Hankey. One French historian states that Darlan's trip in the first days of August was the last diplomatic effort to be made by the French Government in favor of the Spanish Republic.⁶

What is certain is that apart from this mission, Blum had not the slightest doubt that the real political objective of the English was to bring about a Franco victory.

On August 4 and 5, Blum, in accord with the British, submitted the concrete text comprising the non-intervention policy to the other European governments. The result was not a collective pact, but rather a “declaration of unilateral coincidents” in which each government would decided to “rigorously abstain from any direct or indirect aid to either party, in terms of the 'internal' struggle on the Iberian Peninsula.”

1. To prohibit the exportation to Spain of all classes of arms, and all classes of aircraft and naval ships of war.
2. That the governments participating in the accord inform all other governments of the methods taken to make this prohibition effective.

While Paris awaited replies to the above, Vincent Auriol, Socialist Minister of Finance in the Blum Government, met almost daily with the new Republican representatives. (Cárdenas and his Rightist colleagues having been dispossessed from their place in the Embassy). These were the professors' Fernando de los Ríos and Jiménez de Asúa—both Socialists. The Republican, Álvaro de Albornoz, was then delegated Ambassador, and arrived in Paris on the 9th.

Asúa, a friend of both Blum and Auriol, had met with Auriol in-re the details of the Republic's acquiring various types of arms, the first of which were supposedly in Bordeaux. On August 6, Asúa gave a check to the amount of 13,000,000 francs to the Minister of Finance. But no arms were shipped from Bordeaux. Asúa questioned Auriol who declared only that Blum wished to speak to him.

Blum received Asúa with tears in his eyes, declaring that he was dishonored; saying too that he was going to resign because he could not live up to his promise to the “Spanish comrades.”

“England has informed him,” Blum explained, “that if the French Government was disposed to facilitate the sale of arms to the Spanish Republicans, and that if this brought about 'other international complications for France,' then the British Government would

6 *Guerra y Revolución*, pp. 218 through 225.

revoke its pact with France and declare itself neutral.” Blum explained that this information had come to him through the English Ambassador in Paris. He cried that “he could not take the responsibility of endangering the French-English alliance.”⁷

Fernando de los Ríos, Jiménez de Asúa, and the new Spanish Ambassador, Albornoiz met. They concluded that it would be catastrophic if Blum and his government were to fall. In their naivete they decided to do whatever possible to save the French leader. Asúa, personally, withdrew the check and declared to Auriol that the contracted obligation was canceled.⁸

This maneuver of Leon Blum—to threaten the Republican leaders with his resignation, plus the consequent collapse of the French Popular Front—was as malicious as it was skillful, and it succeeded all too well. The Spanish Socialists and the Republican Ambassador were, in this way, forced to halt all efforts to acquire arms in France.

On August 8, the French Government, having given sufficient sanctification to London's demands, made public its resolution to prohibit, unilaterally, all exportation of armament and aircraft to Spain. This, on the very day in which 30 Italian and German trimotor bombers landed on the airfields at Seville.

The decision was a landmark of pre-World War Two European politics. The policy of “non-intervention,” as an arm of international imperialism to suffocate the Spanish Republic, was, in essence, an authentic profile of the times. For the French “hard decision” *not* to abide by the tenets of international law, and to sell arms to the Republic, was made with the full knowledge that at that very instant, Germany and Italy, with their naval squadrons, their artillery parks, their massive supply of aviation, machine guns, bombs, tanks, etc., were giving full aid to the rebel cabal of Generalissimo Francisco Franco.

Non-Intervention has been referred to quite frequently as a “farce.” That it was totally cynical in its external manifestations was true; but it was much more than a farce. In fact, among those who played the imperialist game, it was a species of tactic, strictly applied by all of them; with this exception. The Pact of Non-Intervention was used against the provisioning of the Spanish Republic alone—In no way did it ever apply to the Rebel Armies of the Spanish Financial Oligarchy.

7 (Footnote but no actual mention in notes. - Ed.)

8 (Footnote but no actual mention in notes. - Ed.)

ENGLAND AND ITS PURPOSE

The Pact corresponded completely to the general orientation of British foreign policy which, superficially, seemed to be a bowing to the demands of Hitler in the hopes of changing the thrust of German aggression toward the east: the Soviet Union. It went deeper than that.

In furthering this design British imperialism had as a prime objective the ruin of the Spanish Republic, and the defeat of democracy in that country.

The two British Ambassadors to Nazi-Germany during this period, Sir Eric Phelps and Sir Neville Henderson, respectively, publicly sympathized with the Spanish Fascists. They openly showed their pleasure at the aid given them by Italy and Germany.¹

"I am but awaiting the time when they finally send enough Germans to finish the war." So stated the British Ambassador to Spain, Sir Henry Chilton, who managed to reside in Hendaye, France, rather than on Spanish soil.²

Sir Anthony Eden declared openly in a conversation with his opposite, Yvon Delbos, that, "England preferred a Rebel victory to a Republican victory."³

Aside from the prodigious mass of rhetoric by "Castle" historians—to explain British collaboration with the Fascist Powers as but an effort to avert W.W.II—two absolute facts emerge from those times. One: That a wave of reaction and Rightist terror had begun with the rise of Pilsudski in Poland, Mussolini in Italy, Adolf Hitler in Germany, and the defeat of the famed Socialist *Schutzbund* in Vienna in 1934 by the Fascist *Stahlhelm*. In France, itself, the *Cogoulards* and the *Crois de Feu* met in their tens of thousands. They burned fiery crosses, aping their mentors overseas, and shouted for the blood of the Jews, free-masons, and members of the *Front Populaire*. In England the cobbled streets of Coventry and London served the Black Shirt columns of Sir Oswald Mosley, a gentleman who would align England with anyone who would guarantee the continuance of Britain intact, sovereign, imperial—and Fascist! Two: That this terror was being met by an aroused working class in every country, and by the popular masses, generally. The Popular Front governments of Spain and France were but a manifestation of the growing unity of all Left and Center forces to confront their enemy and destroy him.

Thus, aid by England, i.e., appeasement of Italy and Germany with healthy chunks of other people's territory in the hopes that they would become fat, satiated and satisfied, was not simply to prevent W.W.II. Rather, the development of Left unity against Fascism was

1 *Ambasador Dodd's Diary*, New York, 1941, W.E. Dodd, Jr., pp. 374-413

2 *Foreign Relations U.S. Diplomatic Papers*, Vol. 1., 1937, p. 225

3 *Ibid.* p. 369

deemed as much a threat to the power of England's ruling class, as it was to the Fascist powers, themselves.

In retrospect the quite obvious goal of British Foreign Policy was simply a Europe free of any Socialist threat that could effectively challenge the hegemony of the existing ruling classes. And if that Europe “free of any Socialist threat” was *Fascist*, well that was all right too, as long as England, France, etc., were in actual control, and not the budding Axis of Italy and Germany.

Simplistics? True. But that's what it was all about, despite the previously mentioned reams of rhetoric. That their Axis “Frankenstein” would get out of hand, as it were, and to get the idea that *it* and not the London-Paris Axis was destined to rule for the stated “thousand years,” was a risk that had to be taken.

Spain's Fascist-Military had lost. England knew it. The polling of the thirty English Consulates in Spain had revealed this all too clearly, and British espionage had no doubt spelled out the defeat in detail. That same service had also spelled out the exact kinds, numbers and delivery dates of German and Italian war materiel going to the Rebels. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the imposition of a situation in which the Spanish Republic would be denied arms in the face of the coming holocaust constituted a direct, conscious, and most heinous intervention on the part of England and its allies in the affairs of the Spanish Republic.

So there was then constituted in London an apparatus without precedent in the international life of the times. It was called the “Committee for the Application of the Accords of Non-Intervention in the Affairs of Spain.”

This Committee was made up of the Ambassadors of the countries of Europe in London—more or less permanent—and presided over by a high functionary of the British Foreign Office, Lord Plymouth.

The first session of the Committee took place on September 9, 1936, hardly a month after the opening guns of the rising. Represented were Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Holland, Greece, Nazi Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Rumania, Turkey, Yugoslavia—and the Soviet Union.

On the twenty-eighth of September the Portuguese Ambassador joined the charade.

An interesting point concerning the various conclusions of this committee, is that even today, after the passing of more than three decades, the English Ministry of Foreign Affairs considers the acts of this committee to still be in the category of “secret.” This is no accident. The British ruling class prefers that its hypocrisy, in documented testimony, not

be made known to the world. That which we have is derived from American copies of German copies captured after the war.⁴

The first task of the Committee was to register, compare and classify the laws and decrees of the different governments referring to the interdiction of, or the sale of arms to Spain.

On September 14 a sub-committee was created, composed of the Ambassadors of France, England, Germany, Italy, the Soviet Union, Belgium, Sweden and Czechoslovakia. These, ostensibly, were to handle the greater part of the business. In reality discussions were conducted exclusively by the Great Powers.

This bureaucratic procedure, once adopted, a still further effort was made to limit the powers of the Committee as a whole; to make of it a purely formal one of the rubber-stamp variety. For in fact, and in truth, it had nothing to do—and lacked the power to do anything.

The objectives of London and Paris were obvious: First to make no serious move to obstruct Italian and German intervention. Second: to confuse world public opinion with the illusion that an organization existed to guarantee that “non-intervention” would be strictly complied with. The overall objective was to withdraw the Spanish problem from the League of Nations, where, logically, it should have been debated as a case of open aggression, and a menace to the peace of the world.⁵

The Pact of the League, upholding the principles of International Law and the sovereignty of nations, had been moist solemnly proclaimed. Aggressors were to be condemned, sanctions applied. In terms of the “principles,” it would have been impossible to force the suffocating blockade of nonintervention upon the Spanish Republic. To the contrary, the laws of the League of Nations would *demand* that the Republic of Spain be granted the means with which to defend itself, since it was the victim. It is therefore easy to understand why the London-Paris Axis severed the matter from its “proper day in court,” before the League of Nations.

Once the Committee had been constituted it was then but a simple matter, whenever the Spanish question was brought up within the League, for England and France to immediately argue that an institution, especially created to handle this problem, already existed; evading thereby the League's handling of the problem itself.

Another reason why England preferred that the Spanish question not be brought before the League, was the composition of that organization. At Geneva, the Spanish-Fascist-Military were not represented; the Spanish Republic, being the legal government, was.

4 Thomas, p. 292. Notes

5 *Guerra y Revolución*, pp. 243-244

And no one dared question this legitimacy within that body. In the London Committee, to the contrary, neither the Republic nor the Rebels were represented. Thus the Committee in practice placed the two factions on the same plane; facilitating in this manner the imperialist policy of negating the international rights of Spain's legal government.

Moreover, neither Nazi-Germany nor the Government of Fascist-Italy participated in the sessions of the League of Nations, but *both* were represented by their ambassadors within the London Committee. Even to the most obtuse it was obvious that a most propitious “arena” had been created by Anglo-French policy for co-mingling with the Fascist Powers at the expense of the Republic of Spain.

England and France, as an inducement to the remainder of Western Europe to accept the accords of “non-intervention,” pledged that Germany and Italy would also abide by the accords. The “pledge” notwithstanding, no single effort was ever made to challenge the Fascist intervention. From the first moment, Germany and Italy, as members, acted with absolute cynicism. For many weeks, for example, on one or another pretext, they forced a prolongation of negotiations relating to the very circumstances in which they would agree to participate—All the while sending ever more massive shipments of war materiel to the rebels.

To create the most favorable conditions for Italy and Germany, Lord Plymouth established the following norms: “no denunciation of a failure to abide by the accords shall be taken into consideration by the Committee if said denunciation does not originate from a government represented therein . . .”⁶

This negated all denunciations put forth by the Spanish Republic itself; the one Government who could present proof of exactly how the intervention was taking place.

The British maneuver, however, failed.

The presence of the Ambassador to England from the Soviet Union put a crimp in Lord Plymouth's plans. For the Spanish Republic had in the Committee both a defender and a lawyer of no mean accomplishments. The Ambassadors of the USSR in London, first Kahan, then Maisky, persisted in presenting to the Committee irrefutable proof of the continuing intervention of Italy and Germany.

Upon which both England and France gave the world the final proof of their abject complicity in the destruction of the Spanish Republic. They closed their eyes to all data; admitted nothing; agreed to nothing.

The conscious opthalmia signified not jus the desire to overlook the aid of Italy and

6 Ibid. p. 245

Germany to Franco; but to the contrary, to stimulate it. They were, in effect, saying: "Continue your intervention in any way you choose. We will not oppose you."

Hitler's Ambassador to Paris, in a confidential memo to his government, stated: "It is to our interests that these two sane and honorable men (Blum and Delbos) remain in power. We should aid them in every way."⁷

Not limiting itself to a simple stimulus of military intervention within the system of non-intervention, England's *Chargé de'Affairs* in Rome, Ingraham, spoke secretly to Count Ciano on September 12, 1936. He exacted Italy's promise: "That the status of the western Mediterranean would not be altered as a result of the war in Spain."⁸

The question here would be: did this signify a discussion with Italy as to the territorial disposal of Spanish Mediterranean islands, at the same time fix a limit to possible Italian expansion? The British had established a specie of tacit agreements with Italy as early as September 1, 1936, in which Italy promised not to convert the Spanish Balearics into Italian territory—if England presented no obstacle to the intervention of the Rome-Berlin Axis in Spain—this to be formalized at a later date: and while opthalmia reigned supreme in London.

This totally deceitful British policy was reflected directly in the London Committee; in the Council of which the Foreign Office had a determining influence. The policy of the Committee, therefore, was already regulated to do what it had been designed to do; not to work to secure the accords of non-intervention, but to facilitate that intervention.

The fact that the Committee then went to extremes in myopia is, historically, less cynical than frightful. In the final days of October the concept of the Rome-Berlin Axis was formalized in Berlin, parallel with the decision to rapidly increase all military intervention in Spain.

"The Duce had commanded me," wrote Count Ciano, "to inform the Führer that he proposed to have a military force, a decisive force, to aid in the defeat of the Government of Madrid . . . inclusive of new squadrons of aviation and supporting units; and to send sufficient submarines to free the seas of Red forces."⁹

Germany and Italy then agreed that this would be a common military force, and that they would recognize Franco as soon as Madrid was taken.¹⁰

7 Ibid. p. 246

8 Ibid.

9 Ciano, p. 50

10 Ibid. pp. 50-54

In this same period, the 23rd to the 28th of October, debates resumed in-re accusations presented by the Soviet Union; causing Lord Plymouth to proclaim solemnly that, “Save the Soviet Ambassador, the Committee of Non-Intervention *has agreed unanimously that no proof exists of Italo-German violation of the accords of the Agreement of Non-Intervention.*”¹¹

Many historians, inclusive of some of the “castle” type, have been forced to recognize that the British ploy of nonintervention was one of the principal forms for actual intervention against the Spanish Republic—and was one of the major causes of its destruction.

“Each movement of the Non-Intervention Committee,” according to the American Ambassador, Bowers, “has been made to serve the cause of the Rebellion.” And further, “This Committee was the most cynical and lamentably dishonest group that history has known.”¹²

Referring more concretely to English responsibility, the great Liberal, Lloyd George, declared that: “If Democracy is defeated in this battle; if Fascism is triumphant, His Majesty's Government can claim the victory for themselves.”¹³

The North American writer, John F. Whitaker, defines Non-Intervention, saying: “Non-Intervention was converted into an instrument of Fascist victory. Franco alone could never have won in Spain. The war was won for him by Italy and Germany—by the policy of Non-Intervention; and by the American policy of denying arms to the Republic.”¹⁴

And finally the eminent American historian and scholar, Robert G. Colodny, writes that: “The ultimate decision over the fate of the war was made in London, Paris and Washington.”¹⁵

11 *Actas del Comité de “No-Intervención”* Archivo de la Política Exterior de la U.R.S.S., documents de Inglaterra. Vol. 1., folios 52 and 90

12 *Foreign Relations U.S. Diplomatic Papers*, Vol. II., 1936. p. 604

13 Broue, p. 293

14 Whitaker, pp. 103-112

15 *The Struggle for Madrid: The Central Epic of the Spanish Conflict (1936-1937)*, New York, Paine-Whitman, 1958. p. 145. Robert G. Colodny.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: PARTY TO BETRAYAL

The illusion of America as “Camelot”—the “land of the free,” staunch bastion of justice and the “rights of man,” was exposed for all time by its role in the Spanish War, long before the tragedy of U.S. aggression in Vietnam. The more tragic, then, however, for the simple reason that though this writer has assiduously culled the literature of that day, nowhere has a *Left* condemnation of that perfidy been found to equal its support of the Republic itself.

That the Liberals of the Roosevelt era would allow themselves to be blinded to the facts of the times in the interest of some sort of unity on the home front, is one thing; that the American Left, the Communists, the Socialists, etc., played down, or deliberately ignored America's outright aid to Spanish Fascism, is something else again.

For neutrality, as most still believe, for lack of data that only the Left could have given them, was not the total crime of the United States against the Spanish Republic. Indeed, its sins were much greater. As is quite obvious now, the U.S., too, has its financial oligarchy—its “power elite”—probably one of the most skillfully rapacious of all times. To it the role of Government seems to be but the ordered façade behind which it can best operate. In-re Spain, on paper and in the halls of Congress the U.S. was neutral. In all the meaningful areas of the application of its wealth, materiel, and power, it was the opposite!

A Gallup Poll of that far time reveals that 76% of the American public favored a victory of the Republic over Spanish Fascism.

But polls, like massive electoral victories, (Johnson's “anti-war” campaign against Goldwater in 1964) as has been seen, are no mandate for action, if that action is contrary to the supposed needs of the U.S. Financial Oligarchy.

On August 11, 1936, just three weeks after the rising against the Republic, the U.S. State Department saw fit to announce a “moral” embargo against the shipping of arms to either side in the Spanish War But this embargo had already been applied in that every U.S. Consulate in Spain had received an official circular on August 7 asking that U.S. citizens follow the example of their government in abstaining from any interference in the Spanish struggle. The same circular made reference to the Neutrality Law, voted by Congress in 1935, which prohibited Americans from selling arms to countries at war. In this case, however, it was pointed out that the law was not applicable to the situation in Spain, since Spain's war was an internal matter. In effect, there existed no legal base to interrupt or modify the free exchange of goods of all kinds, between the legal Government of Spain and the United States.

If things had remained that way, there would, indeed, have been an authentic non-interference in the affairs of Spain. But such was not the case.

The refusal of the American Company, Vacuum Oil, to service ships of the Republican Navy at Tangiers, as per contract, has already been noted. This act, however, was only the beginning. In fact, two days prior to this, *in the very first hours of the revolt*, five oil tankers, associated with Standard Oil, were on the high-seas en-route to Spain, fulfilling a contractual agreement between TEXACO and Spain's CAMPSA. The director of Texaco, Captain Thorkild Rieber, sent a radiogram ordering all ships to change routes and to sail to a port occupied by the rebelling Fascist-Military. Once there, they were to unload their gasoline, with all necessary credits immediately extended to the Rebels.¹ One hardly need suggest that this was closer to an act of war than to one of neutrality.

On August 10, 1936, the U.S. State Department contacted the Glen L. Martin Company regarding the completion of an old contract with the Spanish Government involving the sale of eight planes. This company was informed that, "The sale of airplanes . . . does not correspond with the spirit of the policy of the Government."² Thereafter, *any* company that sought to sell war materiel to the Spanish Republic was approached by the State Department and asked to cease and desist, despite the fact that it was still absolutely legal to do so.

In the closing days of December, 1936, an independent businessman, Mr. Robert Cuse of the Vilament Company, concluded a contract with the Republic to furnish airplane engines. At which point, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, himself, with the then, Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, saw fit to force the legalization of an "Arms Embargo," and brought all the power at their disposal to insure a favorable vote on this measure in the House and Senate.³

On January 8, 1937, a joint resolution of Congress banning shipments of war materiel to Spain was enacted into law. Though the enactment of this embargo met, seemingly, with strenuous opposition in debate—the final vote for 406 for, 1 against, and 22 abstaining. The single negative vote was cast by Congressman John Bernard, Farmer-Laborite from Minnesota.

Senator Gerald Nye, Republican of North Dakota, deplored a situation in which American policy had been tied to that of Great Britain; saying on the floor of the Senate:

"Mr. President. If this action this afternoon is to be conceived, as I am am going to conceive it, in the light of an effort to keep the hands of the United States clean and removed from the danger of being drawn quickly into that war or strife in Europe, I am quite willing that it shall be done; but I hope it is not going to be

1 Feis, p. 269

2 Foreign Relations of U.S. Diplomatic Papers, Vol. II., 1936. p. 471

3 Upon which Franco was said to have declared that: "President Roosevelt has conducted himself like a true gentleman." *The United States and the Spanish Civil War*. N.Y., 1956, F.J. Taylor. p. 81

done in the same of neutrality, for, strictly speaking, neutrality it is not.”⁴

Representative Maury Maverick, Democrat from the State of Texas, stated bluntly: “We are now reversing a policy of 150 years by *not* being neutral, by refraining from sending munitions to the duly authorized Government of Spain.”⁵

Meanwhile, a cargo of airplane motors sailed from New York harbor aboard the Spanish Mediterranean, *Mar Cantabrico*, hour before the Embargo Act became law. But the route of the ship was announced in such a way that it was intercepted just a few miles from the Spanish coast by a Franco destroyer; its cargo was captured, and a greater part of its Republican crew summarily executed.⁶

The U.S. State Department did not limit itself to the intimidation of those within the U.S. who would aid the Republic; but extended this pressure to other countries. In December of 1936, for example, a Mexican Company acquired a number of strictly civilian plane from the U.S. which it proposed to sell to the Republic. To prevent this the U.S. Ambassador, violating all diplomatic norms, by-passed the Mexican Foreign Ministry and, going directly to the Palace of the President of the Republic, demanded that immediate steps be taken to stop the sale of these planes.⁷

The Government of the Republic was thus denied even civilian planes; and in this particular operation also lost the converted currency involved. Those brutal pressures—and they can be described in no other way—forced the Mexican Government, normally disposed to aid the Spanish Republic, to reduce its help to a bare minimum.

And this was the policy of *neutrality* as practiced by the United States of America. It was comparable with that of Great Britain and in some cases it was worse.

Taking its cue from this policy of cynicism and deceit, an ad appeared in the *New York Times* just one month later, March 2, 1937, to the effect that the American Export Lines was now resuming cargo service to Franco's Mediterranean ports.

From the first hours of the war when the five oil tankers were diverted to Fascist ports, the Rebel armies never lacked for U.S. oil, gasoline, and petroleum products. Charles Foltz writes the following:

“The Spanish Oligarchy was getting all the planes and other equipment it needed from Germany and Italy, but neither could supply the gasoline and motor transport vital to the army. *The United States saw to that* . . . An American oil company took a long gamble on a Rebel victory by supplying great quantities of aviation

4 Puzzo, p. 156

5 Ibid. p. 157

6 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 227

7 Foreign Relations U.S. Diplomatic Papers. Vol. II, p. 626

gasoline, ordinary gasoline, and motor oil on credit. It was a successful business venture. The German planes which bombed Guernica, the first blitzed city of history; the Italian planes which mowed down hundreds of refugees on the road to Mataro beyond Barcelona; the Axis air power which smashed the resistance of weary Republican forces on a dozen fronts—all of these planes were powered by American fuel Knowing this, it is easy to understand why I found it difficult to suppress a shudder when José María Doussinague, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry, told me in 1945, when the *Family* was shifting its policy toward the victors of the Second World War: 'You must understand that we do not hate the United States. Without American trucks and American credits we could never have won the Civil War!'"⁸

During the three years of the war it is estimated that more than 1,866,000 metric tons of fuel were delivered to Franco, enough to take care of all exigencies. Herbert Feis, economic adviser to the American Embassy in Madrid in the years 1941-42, has published the following data—referring exclusively to just the sales of Texaco:

1936	344,00 tons
1937	420,000 tons
1938	478,000 tons
1939	624,000 tons ⁹

As to the second great aid—motor transport—given Franco, Mr. J.R. Hubbard relates that whereas the Rebel Army received but 1,700 trucks from Italy, and 1,800 from Germany, it received better than 12,000 from the United States; these from the General Motors Corporation; from Ford and from Studebaker. Neither fuel nor trucks were sold to the Republic.¹⁰

About these trucks, Foltz tells us: "Some were driven from American owned assembly plants in Antwerp to the Irún frontier. They were of great importance to a small army with a lot of territory to cover. Frequently in 1937, I saw new American trucks carrying Italian troops to the front during the campaign against the Basques, those Catholic enemies so embarrassing to the Spanish Oligarchy."¹¹

The U.S. State Department also "allowed" the sale of arms and ammunition *directly* to Italy and Germany, which were thereupon and *immediately* delivered to Franco's Spain. Reports covering bomb shipments of the Atlas Power Company (Dupont-Nemours) from its plant at Carney's Point, New Jersey, show the following: On January 12, 1938, the German freighter *Kallerwald*, sailed from there with 20,000 bombs. All these marked "for transshipment to an undisclosed destination."¹²

8 Foltz, pp. 51-52

9 Feis, p. 69

10 Hubbard, p. 404

11 Foltz, p. 52

12 Labor Fact Book, pp. 211-212

At a press conference held by Franklin Delano Roosevelt on April 21, 1938, at a time when Republican cities were being brutally bombed, the President stated: "We have heard that bombs of American make have been sold to the German Government, or a German company, and then re-exported. It is all perfectly legal."¹³

And, to insure efficiency of delivery of all this materiel of war, American Consulates were maintained throughout Rebel territory, despite continued recognition of the Republic as the only legitimate government of Spain. An American Consulate was established at the port city of Málaga, just two weeks after its capture by troops of the Regular Italian Army. Robert D. Longyear, former Consul-General at Marseilles was placed in charge. Mr. George Graves, Consul in the same city under the Republic, was transferred to Franco's port city of Vigo. This, perhaps, to avoid embarrassment inherent in this protocol of "musical chairs."

As stated: Franco received everything from the United States, the Republic, nothing—with this exception: American workers, students, liberals accepted the cause of the Spanish Republic as their own. Across the years significant sums of money were collected in union halls and meetings, along with great quantities of clothing and foodstuffs. Nor is the name of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade forgotten, and the fact that its American volunteers fought courageously in almost every major battle of the Spanish War. To the Spanish people these were the true representatives of America, not the president of Texaco, or the board of General Motors—or the representatives of the Oligarchy in the State Department.

Sufficient funds were raised at one time for two shiploads of wheat for Spain. A third American ship, *Nantucket Chief*, flying the American flag on the high-seas, was captured by Franco's destroyers and forced to put in at the Italian-held Island of Mallorca in the Spanish Balearics, as a prize of war! The captain of the ship was jailed to await trial on—as the American Ambassador put it: "some charge not indicated." A week later, this act of pure piracy having been given a low-key treatment by American authorities, the ship and its captain were released. The news of its seizure hardly made the "B" section of the daily papers. A far cry, indeed, from the more recent incident of the *Pueblo*; certainly a far cry from the lie of the Tonkin Gulf. One is entitled to wonder just what would have happened had the ship been a Texaco tanker; the destroyer of the Republican Navy; the port—Barcelona?¹⁴

13 *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*. London, 1941. p. 285

14 Bowers, p. 373

WAR AND INVASION!

There now began that war that would leave the mark of *Cain* upon the brow and conscience of mankind. The Spanish people, untrained civilians, workers and peasants, were to find themselves alone, armed only with rifles and little else, against the juggernaut of mercenary and Moor; Fascist and Requeté, and the highly trained cadres of Hitler and Mussolini.

As if to a tattoo of a thousand kettledrums, the *tabors* and *banderas* of the *Regulares* and *Tercio* of the Army of Africa deployed upon the soil of Spain. Fourteen thousands in the first days; forty thousand in the first month. This according to the General of the rebel army, Varela.

These joined with the rebelling Civil Guards, the units of the Peninsular army and the para-military Falangists whose ranks were now swollen with the militants of the J.A.P., and the *Señoritos*, the sons of the great landowners of Andalucía and Estremadura. They spread over all the roads, under the first canopies of bombers and fighters; preceded by the new weapons of tanks and machine guns and mobile artillery, replete with the cadres of their Fascist mentors.

Unequal and bloody fighting raged. In the south the towns of Morón, Baena, Carmona and many more changed hands a number of times until finally relinquished by the shattered militia.

Of Carmona, the rebel, Queipo Llano, had this to say over Radio-Seville: "Tonight we entered Carmona; we liquidated 1,500 Reds; we left no single 'seed' alive."¹

And so the pattern was established.

Huelva, the provincial capital, fell with the ensuing slaughter of its inhabitants. All roads to Córdoba and Granada were cleared. And tens of villages were cleared too—of their inhabitants. And there was then amassed those columns of troops and *materiel* that would turn to the north, toward the final goal, Madrid!

In Aragón and Levante, to the north and west of the four provinces of Catalonia, fighting had already all but ceased; with but here and there a sporadic struggle for a cross-roads or a village. The original intent of the F.A.I., to take Zaragoza, had died a-borning.

In every other part of Spain, however, the fight never ceased for a single hour. The northern armies of General Mola had received ammunition, arms, fresh troops and supplies from Seville via Portugal. And from Portugal, too, came the first contingents of

¹ *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 281

the *Legión de Viriato* to the aid of Franco. Mola launched himself anew against the capital.

Simultaneously with this a drive began against the northern enclave of Asturias, and the Basque provinces of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa. The objective, strategically, was to separate this whole area from the French frontier, and thus deny the entry of Republican arms by that route.

The full strength of Mola's forces, however, was being thrown against Madrid. Battles raged before Somosierra; in the Guadarramas, and in the Gredos mountains to the west.

It is suggested at this point, to those who truly wish an understanding of the Spanish War, that rhetoric give way to a viewing, in continuity, of the military-political struggle as a panoramic whole; one part not isolated from the other; indeed, dependent upon the other.

At this stage of the war, for example, when the Army of Africa had launched itself with total ferocity upon the workers and peasants of Andalucía and Extremadura, preparatory to its drive on Madrid: at this time when Madrid itself was locked in battle with Mola's armies, as were the Basque and Asturian militiamen—it is reiterated that a most important section of the Republican front had become, essentially, *inactive*.

The Aragón front, stretching from Jaca on the Pyrenean frontier with France; west to the city of Huesca; through the citadel of Zaragoza, then south of Teruel, only ninety miles above Valencia, would at no time come under serious attack by the armies of the Fascist-Military.

Indeed, a look at the map detailing the opening phase of the war will reveal that the front established in Aragón, with a minimum of fighting—and this too must be stressed—was to remain exactly as it was for well over a year. Until that time in late August of 1937, when Madrid center armies would finally arrive to activate it.

In effect the question of Aragón and Anarchist inactivity was to seriously, if not decisively, influence the course of the fast-developing “people's war.” The bone-deep tragedy here was that it need not have been so. For the fascist forces in Aragón were inferior holding units of a few thousands of men; allowing for the complete use of the cords of the highly trained Navarrese Requetés against the Basque country and Madrid.

The official Franco historian, Manuel Aznar, writes that, “In Aragón the Nationalist Command had absolutely nothing; neither artillery nor aviation; nor even machine guns in sufficient quantities to secure the most threatened points.”²

The Fascist-Military obviously knew of the confused thinking or worse—of the F.A.I.

2 Aznar, (1940 ed.) p. 334

leadership, and for this reason rightfully concluded that there would be no danger to themselves in Aragón. How else could a front of more than 300 kilometers been left so weekly garrisoned? How else could they have been so contemptuous of the industrial might and the potential of the great reservoir of manpower in Catalonia?

On July 25, four army battalions, four companies of Requetés, three companies of Falangists, a number of cavalry squadrons and twenty-four pieces of artillery were thrown into an assault on Somosierra, defended by a few hundred militiamen. After bitter fighting, in which reinforcements were brought up by both sides, the militia fell back through Rebregordo to positions in the area of Buitrago.

Vicious, no-quarter fighting continued around the periphery of the northern front from Sigüenza north of Guadalajara, to before Avila to the south and west of Madrid. Villages changed hands; strong points fell or were captured by both sides. And, as the days became weeks the raw militia volunteers of the unions and the political parties became hardened and disciplined in the crucible of battle.

The romance of the first days, when units would leave their particular headquarters for the front, by truck or bus, fire a few shots “just to get the feel of it,” and then return to their H.Q. in the evening, was over. The war had become deadly serious. And, too, rumors trickled through of the first victories of the Army of Africa; the advance of the *Regulares* beneath waves of Junker and Caproni bombers, preceded by newly arrived Italian Ansaldo tanks and swarms of Moorish cavalry.

On the center and southern fronts, at least, Socialist, Communist, Republican and Anarchist volunteers had established a minimal unity not found in the rearguard—and certainly not found in Catalonia.

And it was, without a doubt, in this very time in which the Communist Party of Spain laid the groundwork for its later successes and achievements as organizers and commanders of the peoples' army—*El Ejército Popular!*

THE FIFTH REGIMENT:

For those who still cling to the falsehood of Communist strength growing “in direct proportion to the arrival of Soviet arms,” the following should be an eye-opener. Approximately three full months would pass from the day of the rising until the time when the first Soviet rifle would fire on Spanish soil. Indeed, the fact that the Soviet Union did *not* come to the immediate aid of the Republic was cause for much criticism by the Anarchists and ultras of Spain's P.O.U.M. Hugh Thomas writes that: “Already Largo Caballero felt special bitterness towards Russia, who appeared interested only in not jeopardizing the French-Soviet Pact”¹ Jesús Hernández of the P.C.E. reputedly suggested to the Soviet Military Attaché, General Berzin, that a failure to supply arms would make it difficult for the Spanish Communists.²

All-in-all, if the popularity of Spain's Communist Party had been dependent solely upon their “connection” with the Comintern, the reverse of this deliberately popularized conclusion would be true: they would most assuredly have lost the confidence and respect of the Spanish people during those critical and desperate months. The fact that their ranks grew still further in precisely this period was because they had proven in the shortest possible time that they were among the staunchest fighters; the most dependable—and that they were also capable of the kind of organization and discipline that could win!

Without a doubt the heart and soul of the new People's Army, the famed 5th, 15th and 18th Army Corps, led by such men as Modesto, Lister, Tagueña, Galán, and a host of others, was born initially of the almost mythical “Fifth Regiment”—*El Quinto Regimiento*

Manuel Azcárate, who himself rose from the ranks of the Fifth, writes of this first military achievement of the P.C.E.

“With a realistic approach to the needs of the struggle, the Spanish Communist Party had begun to organize the masses for resistance against aggression from the very start of the insurrection. As early as July, in the courtyard of a Madrid Monastery, the Communist Party formed the Fifth Regiment, heroic forerunner and cornerstone of the future People's Army of the Republic . . . The Fifth Regiment was not exclusively Communist. It was Anti-Fascist. Its ranks were open to all working people who were willing to fight. This was shown by its political and social composition. Half of its members were Communists or members of the United Socialist Youth; a quarter were Socialists; 15% were Republicans, and the remainder were Anti-Fascists with no political affiliations.”³

Commander Enrique Lister, who also came from the ranks of the *Quinto Regimiento*, gives

1 Thomas, p. 294

2 Jesús Hernández, p. 42

3 Azcárate, p. 66

the following table of recruitment of volunteers for the first months.

July 7,900 men
August 14,000 men
September 24,800 men
October 11,300 men
November 10,800 men ⁴

These figures were doubly interesting in that a quick summation will show that a preponderance of recruits flocked to the banners of the Fifth Regiment during those very months when Soviet aid had not yet begun—almost 50,000 to be exact, and this on the Madrid front alone.

Belying the rhetoric of the dissimulators and the liars, the *Compañías de Acero* (the original steel companies of the Fifth), were found at the forefront of every battle. Men therefore did not join to seek refuge from battle. They joined for the simple reason that they wanted to fight the enemy, and they wanted to win! And they were well aware, considering the nature of the enemy, that this could only be done with those who knew how to do the job.

Azcárate writes further that: “It was no accident that the Fifth Regiment attracted such support. The militia were ready to give their lives; but they demanded a capable, responsible leadership, organization and discipline. *That* was what drew them to the Fifth Regiment. The workers wanted the improvisation of the early days to come to an end. They turned to those who showed them that they knew how the war should be waged, to those who with their own daily example were striving for the unification of the confused patchwork of militia groups and columns belonging to the various organizations and political parties, each acting according to its own whim As well as combatant units, the Fifth went on to form others. Since there was nothing and everything had to be created from scratch, it formed its own transport, communications, medical and supply services. It organized hospitals, convalescent homes, sanatoriums, homes for war orphans, child welfare services, schools to abolish illiteracy”

“Young peasants who, before July, had handled only farm implements, left the Fifth Regiment's training schools as pilots, tankmen and gunners.”⁵

The Fifth Regiment⁶ therefore, was a name, not a Regiment. IT was simply the training center of those who would accept Communist discipline, self-sacrifice and organization in

⁴ Lister, p. 62

⁵ Azcárate, pp. 66-67

⁶ The four regiments of the Regular Army had risen against the people in Madrid. The Fifth Regiment, therefore, was to be formed as a “regiment of the people.”

order to win the war. The famed column of the equally famed Republican Colonel, Julio Mangada, who had denied the passes of the Guardarramas and the western slopes of the Gredos to Mola's army, was composed, for example, of peasants from El Tiemblo and other villages of the area—and nine hastily organized battalions of the J.S.U. of the Fifth Regiment; among them being the “Sargento Vásquez,” “Capitán Condez,” “Asturias,” “Aid Lafuente,” “Largo Caballero,” and “Pueblo Nuevo de las Ventas.”⁷

The fact that one of those battalions bore the name of the Socialist leader, Largo Caballero, pin-points the crux of the wide base of the Fifth. And, as stated, men joined the Fifth Regiment, not because they had a surfeit of weapons—the opposite was the case at this time; but because it dared to fight instead of posture. And it substituted revolutionary deeds for “revolutionary” rhetoric.

It hardly need be pointed out that this same road of organization and sacrifice lay open to others. But to follow this road required a dedication to the needs of the people and not to dogma; to the policies of unity as expressed in the Committees of the *Frente Popular*, and not to the sectarian wasteland of rule or ruin as practiced by the theoreticians of the F.A.I. and the *Ultras*.

7 *Guerra y Revolución*, pp. 296-306

BADAJOS:

On August 6, while bloody fighting continued in Andalucía, three motorized columns of the Army of Africa, under the command of the Colonels' Ascencio Castejón and Tella—all at the immediate orders of the Fascist Colonel, Yagüe, set their faces toward Madrid. Estremadura, the first zone of penetration, was an area of great ranches and landowners; a dry and arid land, sparsely populated and with few towns and centers of control. Organized militia in this sector were few indeed.

Flanked by the Portuguese border, where it could count upon the aid and complicity of the Dictatorship of Salazar; accompanied from the aid by flights of Italian and German bombers, the Army of Africa had launched itself upon the road that twelve centuries before had witnessed the Arab invasions. In all justice to fact, this was a *new* Arab (Moorish) invasion; though Franco chose to call the Army of Morocco and the mercenaries of the Legion—"The National Army."

In its initial advance this "army" applied, invariably, the totalitarian tactics of terrorism to town and village. Each would be subjected to ground and air bombardment; though nowhere did there exist a single military work, or armed force other than a peasant patrol with antiquated fowling pieces.

The "civilized" western concept of "free fire zones" was thus established long before the Nazi Wehrmacht brought terror to occupied lands, or the American armed forces seized upon this inhuman rationale for the extermination of defenseless people.

In this manner the weak defenses of the peasants in the towns of Zafra and Almendralejo were crushed on August 6 and 7. On the 10th, the columns arrived before Mérida. Here they met their first, serious resistance. Some hundreds of milicianos from the Socialist peasant unions held the Moors and the Tercio to the south bank of the Guadiana by counter-attacking repeatedly. Only after a last concentrated bombing and shelling did they give up the town.¹

The city of Badajoz, to the west, was then left in a perilous position. The road and railroad to Madrid had been cut so that reinforcement from the capital was now impossible. In the days of Ferdinand and Isabella Badajoz had been a watering place for Kings. In the more recent past it was a resort town for the wealthy of Andalucía and Estremadura.

Planes of the Fascist-Military now subjected it to incessant bombardment; some flew from the *Luso de Caia* airfield in nearby Portugal to do this.² On August 12 twenty Junker 52's; five fighter plane and seven Caproni's—according to a reporter of the French *Le Temps*,

1 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 285

2 *Loc-cit*, p. 285

“made their first great raid against the city of Badajoz.”³

On the 13th the city was completely encircled, without electricity, and without the possibility of any aid from outside.

The Giral government had failed to understand the strategic importance of Badajoz. No defense had been organized. In fact, just a few days prior to the launching of the offensive by the Army of Africa, Madrid had *withdrawn* certain forces from that section of Estremadura.⁴ A column of milicianos belatedly sent on the 12th, were themselves almost destroyed by a concentrated bombing and a series of pitched battle with the enemy.⁵

On the afternoon of the 13th, after a bombardment that lasted all morning, the column of Castejón moved to the assault against two points of entry to the city, the Puerta del Pilar, and the Fuerte de la Pardelara. They were thrown back in fierce fighting by milicianos under the command of the Socialist Commander, Alfonso. Simultaneously with this attack the Civil Guard rose within the city proper. They were put down with bloody losses.⁶

Fighting continued on the 14th with redoubled ferocity. From early morning until evening enemy aviation and artillery made an inferno of Republican positions. The “Old Wall,” dating from the time of Carlos III, became a mountain of rubble. Behind its ruins 800 soldiers of the 16th infantry regiment, led by Lt. Colonel, Antonio Palacios, a handful of artillery men commanded by the loyal Colonel, Cantero—they had but two antique artillery pieces—and as many as 3,000 milicianos, mostly Socialists, of which only half had arms, repelled repeated attacks by the enemy.⁷

At 11:00 a.m. five Ansaldo tanks of the column of Ascencio penetrated the gate of the Puerta de la Trinidad. But the militia threw back the attacking infantry. Only at 4:00 p.m. were the assaulting troops able to make a breach. From that moment fighting moved to the interior of the city; became bloody and terrible. The attackers assaulted each redoubt with tanks and armored cars.

The last bastion of resistance was the Cathedral, where fifty militiamen held out for an additional twenty-four hours, until all ammunition was spent. The greater part of them, reputedly, preferred suicide to surrender.⁸

The established pattern was imposed upon the city. Its defenders and populace were subjected to the usual inhuman reprisals. Moors and Legionnaires, urged on by their officers, shot and bayonnetted anyone they found in their path. Accredited photographs

3 “*Le Temps*,” August 14, 1936

4 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 285

5 Loc-cit, p. 285

6 Loc-cit, p. 285

7 Ibid. p. 285-286

8 Loc-cit, p. 286

revealed by Hitler authorities with the Franco army, show mutilations and atrocities to hundreds of milicianos. The Fascist historian, Brasillach, relates that many cadavers could be seen with sexual organs removed and with the “cross” cut into the breast.⁹

A correspondent of *Le Temps*, moving to the front from the old city of Elvas in Portugal, sent this communication, dated August 15, 1936:

“As of this moment some two thousand two hundred men have been executed, accused of armed resistance and other 'crimes.' I have seen the pavement in front of the *Commandancia Militar* covered with blood. Caps and personal articles are strewn about. Two militiamen, captured in the choir-loft of the Cathedral, were shot before the high altar The mass detentions and executions in the Bull Ring continue.”¹⁰

A *Le Temps* dispatch on August 17 relates that: “The executions continue in Badajoz.”¹¹ The correspondent also tells of 380 political prisoners who were released, safe and sane. But these, of course, were Fascist prisoners whom the Republic had treated humanely.¹²

Ten days after the Fascist entry, the American journalist, Jay Allen, who also went to the city from Portugal, sent the following details of the massacre to the world:

“They were young, mostly peasants in blue blouses, mechanics in jumpers, 'The Reds.' They are still being rounded up. At four o'clock in the morning they are turned out into the ring through the gate by which the initial parade of the bullfight enters. There machine guns await them.

After the first night the blood was supposed to be palm deep in the far side of the lane. I don't doubt it. Eighteen hundred men—women too—were mowed down there in some twelve hours. There is more blood than you would think in eighteen hundred bodies.”¹³

Recent decades have seen the Franco regime make every effort to hide the facts of this massacre and a thousand others like it. Even the former Republican sympathizer, now Franco apologist, James A. Michener, in his new work, *Iberia*, has been led to state unctuously that “perhaps it didn't happen at all.”

But it did happen.

The crimes were confirmed by none other than the Fascist Commander of the attacking columns, Colonel Yagüe. Another American journalist, John Whitaker, informed by his compatriot, Jay Allen, of the slaughter, approached Yagüe directly and asked him if the information was true. He writes that Yagüe replied bluntly: “Certainly we shot them.”¹⁴

9 Brasillach, p. 127

10 “*Le Temps*,” August 17, 1936

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid. August 18, 1936

13 Jay Allen: Correspondent for the *Daily News* and the *Chicago Tribune*—the cited materiel also appearing in the Spanish Left-Socialist journal, *Claridad*, September 18, 1936

14 Whitaker, p. 106

This same military “gentleman,” while being interviewed by the official German Information Bureau on the fall of Badajoz, declared: “The fact that in conquering Spain the Army was forced to move slowly had certain advantages. For in this way we were able to cleanse—purify, radically, the country of all the red elements.”¹⁵

¹⁵ *Spanish Testament*, Arthur Koestler, p. 81

MADRID IS MENACED!

The fall of Mérida and Badajoz placed the Republic in grave danger. The Fascist south was now united with the north. Simultaneously with this a strong base had been created for an advance on Madrid. The rear, Portugal, was secure. And the steady stream of armaments passing through that country could now be through directly against the capital.

Mola's armies were reinforced with fresh units of the Army of Africa. And the Republican Mangada column was immediately attacked at Navalperal by Moorish Regulares. The attack was repulsed. On August 29 the 1st Tabor of the 4th regiment of *Regulares de Larache*, aided by a force of the Civil Guard and Requetés from Pamplona, swept through the weakly held pass of Boquerón to fall upon the town of Pequerinos. The Moors sacked the town and committed the usual atrocities.

Colonel Juan Modesto, commanding two companies of the Fifth Regiment, a company of the Largo Caballero battalion and a company of Republican Assault Guards, counter-attacked. The fighting was no-quarter. The Tabors were totally annihilated. The Guadarrama front was re-established.¹

The Moroccans were moved once again to confront the gallant miners attempting the reduction of Oviedo, and the 2nd Bandera of the Foreign Legion joined in the assault on Irún. Indeed, both conscripts and mercenaries now moved against the entire front of Asturias and *Euzkadi*. They would prevent any joining of those republican forces with the embattled Madrileños, and would create the circumstances for a further reduction of the enclave.

The tragedy of the north was, that though the workers and peasants, especially those of Asturias, were strong in their sentiments for the government of the Popular Front, the Basque country remained what it was—Nationalist and Catholic. To effectively organize the people against the developing menace required more than the bourgeois Basque leaders of the Separatist State were willing to give.

The objective of the Army of Africa was not just the fusion of the rebel north and south, but the capture of Madrid, and an end to the war in Franco's favor. Here again was tragedy, in that the Giral government had taken no single measure to prevent this. Nothing existed to deny the broad valley of the Tajo river to the advancing rebel columns. And there were few if any natural obstacles.

When the Moors and Legionnaires actually entered the valley all doubts as to their intentions were immediately dispelled. But still the Giral government procrastinated.

¹ *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 278

The column of Colonel Tella, advancing from captured Trujillo, occupied Navalmoral de la Mata on August 23. He had covered half the distance from Badajoz to Madrid in less than a week. A second rebel column paralleled Tella's along the Tajo to the east. Defending militia units, taking advantage of the terrain of the region of the Montes de Guadalupe, offered some resistance. The scarcity of Republican forces in this region, however, required that aid be sent, and quickly, from Madrid—and from other parts of Spain.²

On the 17th, armed peasant units of the villages of Barcelona, Almendralejo and Salvaleón; all in the Socialist, *Pedro Rubio* battalion, confronted a Fascist column attempting to open a path directly west from Mérida toward Don Benito. At Medellín they were ambushed and defeated, and abandoned trucks, arms and wounded on the field. To the north-east, meanwhile, a Valencian volunteer column under the command of the Republican Captain, Uribarri, recaptured the town of Alia from the advancing Tercio.³

Despite these minor victories the ever-growing Rebel juggernaut continued its advance towards Talavera de la Reina, on the road to Madrid. The center of gravity for the entire war had now shifted to the valley of the Tajo.

In the Oropesa sector, key point on the road to Talavera, J.S.U. battalions arrived from the Sierras. They threw themselves instantly into battle, defending Oropesa to the last cartridge. A number of the young Socialist commanders, then captured, were shot on the spot. Then, with every village and town in the valley under aerial and artillery bombardment, units of the newly created Madrid Army were thrown in the path of the rebels. New J.S.U. companies arrived in Maqueda on September 5, plus other units commanded by the Communists, Modesto, Lister, and Trifon Medrano.⁴

They arrived at the previously selected H.Q. base only to be told that the city of Talavera de la Reina, some fifty kilometers distant, had been evacuated without a fight by the Commander of the sector, Lt. Colonel Salafraña, an appointee of Giral.

Lister's men, ignoring Salafraña, swept through his positions at Santa Ollala, and back to the very outskirts of Talavera where minimal defenses were set up. Within hours of Talavera's fall, Irún, in the north was also overrun by the troops of Mola, and sixty strategic kilometers of the French frontier were lost to the Basque Separatists.⁵

Álvarez del Vayo writes that, "Only when the city was devoured by flames did Irún fall . . . the ever lessening group of men who held out within its wall fought to the last moment in

2 Apparently this was done. But again it was far too little and too late.

3 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 289

4 Loc-cit, p. 289. Also: The writer, John T. Whitaker, traveling with the Franco Army, resided a number of weeks in Talavera. "Each dawn," he writes, "without exception, there was an absolute minimum of thirty shootings of men and women." p. 102

5 Abad de Santillán

the hope that Government ammunition trucks detained by French authorities, in plain sight a mile or so away, would be released and sent to their destination.”⁶

The following day Líster was driven back from Talavera in bitter fighting and rumors of betrayal, incompetence and treason began to sweep Madrid.

6 Del Vayo, FB., pp. 30-31

THE CABALLERO GOVERNMENT:

Formed in the first days of the rising, the Giral Government could no longer lay claim to being “representative,” or to reflect the profound changes produced by the ensuing successful defeat of the Fascist-Military.

Made conscious of this reality by the looming pressures on every side, both Giral and Azaña were driven to widen the base of the Government; to incorporate within its structures, other representatives of Left parties. Álvarez del Vayo was finally asked by Giral to transmit to Largo Caballero the proposal that he join the cabinet.¹

The suggestion, however, was insufficient to the need. To widen the base, and then to create an army of the unorganized militia, an army which would have the support of the people, it was necessary to go much further.

Caballero remained the idolized leader of the U.G.T. and a portion of the J.S.U. Indalecio Prieto, aware of Caballero's strength, insisted in a back-stabbing way that “though Caballero had not the abilities of the Chief of State—still, he was the one acceptable candidate at this moment in history.”²

The Communists, though seemingly worried about Caballero's infantile leftism, were still willing to go along. The Anarchists, though opposed to participation in the government, accepted Largo as the one leader of national stature with whom they could cooperate. And, to square the circle further, many Left Republicans had shared prison cells with Largo in 1917 and in 1930, and had known him as a colleague in the previous Azaña Cabinet.

Certain historians have suggested that it was Largo's intent to form an all labor government. Others deny this, saying: “He was wise enough to know that to ignore the right-wing of his own party was to create an irreversible split in it; to ignore the other political parties of the left, the broad masses of the republican voters, would be to split the Popular Front itself. Indeed, it was primarily Araquistáin and Baraibar who had agitated for this idea; to, in effect, establish a workers dictatorship, or a syndicalist government adopting in some ways the concepts of the F.A.I. and the P.O.U.M.”³

Even if Caballero had wanted such a government, the C.N.T. was not yet disposed to join it. The syndicalist organization would not give up its “independent prerogatives” to enter, what they considered, a “bourgeois government.”

1 Del Vayo, p. 202

2 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 46. Vol. II

3 Ibid. pp. 45-46

On September 4, a new government was formed with Largo Caballero as Prime Minister *and* Minister of War. Its Cabinet was composed of six Socialists, four Republicans, two Communists, and one representative each of the Catalan and Basque Separatists States.

Caballero had insisted, as a condition of his forming a new government—that the Communist Party of Spain be represented in it. In a situation, obviously charged with extreme danger, he insisted that the Communists, too, accept the responsibilities of power.⁴

This fact should destroy completely the lies of the anti-communists, “that the P.C.E. had made every effort to infiltrate the government to seize positions of command.”

The truth of the matter, according to the P.C.E., was that the Communists had never asked for, nor even offered to participate in any proposed Largo Caballero Government. Indeed, no Communist Party had ever accepted positions in a bourgeois government. And the idea of doing so was something they approached quite gingerly, to say the least.

Mr. Hugh Thomas informs us, however, that “Moscow gave instructions to join and Largo Caballero formed his government on the basis of collaboration with the Communist Party.”⁵ What Mr. Thomas fails to include in this most damning revelation, is a single source other than his own self-serving conjecture, that Moscow had anything to do with it.

P.C.E. archives tell us that: “The Communists could, even without participating in it (Caballero's government) give it full aid. The P.C.E.'s position was that any government which would energetically place the question of the war as *the* top priority would receive their support. In the view of the Caballero offer, however, the Political Bureau of the P.C.E., considering the necessity of leadership to the militia and to the people as a fundamental, accepted.”⁶

For the first time then in the history of Spain there existed a government presided over by a Socialist Prime Minister. For the first time, two, the *two major working class parties* had a majority in the cabinet of a government. In those historic moments the Socialists and Communists had, in essence, been called upon to assume the leadership of the democratic forces of Spain.

In retrospect the tragedy is easily seen. For within this left leadership the divisions were such that it would never exercise its full potential. The internal divisions within the Socialist Party alone had yet to be resolved. And the ensuing counter-productive struggles between the followers of Besteiro, Prieto, Caballero, and Juan Negrín, the last and most

4 Ibid. p. 47

5 Thomas, p. 269

6 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 47. Vol. II

capable Premier, would continue throughout the length of the long war.

Guerra y Revolución, the still unfinished Communist history of the war, states that: "The entry of the P.C.E. into the Government was the first time that such a party had ever participated in a coalition government, together with a Socialist Party and with other, smaller *petit bourgeois* parties. It was the first time, too, that Communists and Catholics formed a part of the same government. In the international arena there existed no precedent. From the point of view of the practical revolutionary, the P.C.E. was marching audaciously onto virgin soil."⁷

More: "The presence of the P.C.E. in the Government of the Republic constituted a highly positive experience. It contributed to the adoption of methods of military organization, without which the Republic would have been defeated in a short time. It helped apply the breaks to the pseudo-revolutionary spirit of adventurism, and assured the realization of the basic democratic reforms in the realm of agriculture, banking and industry. It contributed powerfully too, to the maintenance of a wide unity of all anti-fascist forces."

"Nevertheless, the activities of the P.C.E. within the Caballero Cabinet was carried out under the most extraordinary difficulties. The government reflected not solely an alliance of diverse forces in a common fight against Fascism, but also contradictions between diverse classes and social strata. The P.C.E. was forced to fight against the vacillations and errors of these strata and tendencies, to achieve a meaningful war policy, while simultaneously reinforcing anti-fascist unity. If the first was essential, then the second was no less so, for without unity resistance was impossible."⁸

7 Ibid. p. 49

8 Ibid. pp. 49-50

CABALLERO APPROACHES THE C.N.T.

In putting together his government, Caballero had also approached the syndicalist leaders of the C.N.T.; negotiating in this case with David Antona, of the Secretariat of the National Committee. Referring to these negotiations, Caballero declared before the Cortes on October 1, 1936, that the C.N.T. had, "accepted representation in the government in the beginning but that C.N.T. 'superior organs' had afterward canceled the accords."¹

According to a press release by Antona on Sept. 5: "At an unpublicized meeting of the C.N.T. on September 3, we agreed that we could not abandon the 'insurreccional' line of our confederated organization."²

In the final exchange between Antona and Caballero, there was a shift in the C.N.T. criteria toward participation. But intransigence remained; not so much in terms of the principles of participation, but rather in the number of ministries asked for. They demanded equality with the Socialists, or six ministers.

"The major difficulty," wrote Caballero, "consisted in the problem of quantity. They asked for six posts, a claim to which I could not accede."³

In these negotiations the C.N.T. proposed a formula, rejected in its totality by the larger units of the U.G.T., and unanimously by all other organizations, inclusive of the Socialist Party. Specifically, they asked that all government ministries be assigned a *Junta* to be composed of two representatives of the C.N.T., two of the U.G.T., and two from the Popular Front National Committee—thus placing the government in the hands of the Syndicates.⁴

On September 18 a regional meeting of the C.N.T. presented publicly the following proposals:

1. To create a "Council for National Defense" which would substitute itself for the Government. Its President to be Largo Caballero; its composition to be the following: 5 members of the C.N.T., 5 members of the U.G.T., and four members from the Republican parties. (The President of the Republic would have been reduced to a figurehead, as would the four representatives of the Republican parties.)
2. In the total administrative structure of the country the legal organs were to be substituted by a "federalist system" based on "Councils of Defense," local and provincial, and with a composition like that of the suggested, National Council.

1 "El Sol," October 2, 1936

2 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 50. Vol. II

3 *Mis Recuerdos*, Largo Caballero, p. 183

4 "El Liberal de Bilbao," Sept. 6, 1936. Article by David Antona

Additional measures were proposed by the C.N.T., such as the control of militias by “Committees of Workers and Militias”; the profits of the syndicates in the areas of socialized-production to be used for the “free experimentation of the people.”

The C.N.T. and F.A.I. then organized four large meetings in Republican territory (Valencia, Madrid, Málaga and Barcelona) to make known these proposals and, hopefully, to create a strong movement which could force their acceptance.⁵

What apparently escaped them was that these highly debatable issues were being recklessly presented while the greater part of the Republic was fighting for its very life.

Seen in its proper perspective, timewise, the above total transformation of the structure and content of the government was being asked while the armies of Franco were racing toward Madrid; while hundreds of villages and towns in Andalucía and Extremadura, and in Asturias and the Basque country were being subjected to mass slaughter and pillage; and when the whole of the militia and volunteers from all parties were locked in a brutal, no-quarter, struggle from San Sebastián to Córdoba. It was being done too, while in Aragón and Levante, and in all of Catalonia, the areas accepted as generally being under the control of the proponents of the above, hardly a bullet was being fired in the defense of the Republic.

Essentially, other than to enforce an ensuing predominance of the C.N.T.-F.A.I. leadership over the Spanish people, the objective of the proposals was also to reduce—or better yet annul, all the Republican and Communist influence. Indeed, in a subsequent visit to the P.C.E. by C.N.T. delegates, they attempted to play down the above by saying that, “Communists within the U.G.T. could participate within the Councils of Defense.”⁶

The cutting edge of this anti-communist position appeared clearly as early as September 20, 1936, as a C.N.T. meeting in Madrid. Juan López, F.A.I. leader, openly attacked the Spanish Communists at this meeting, accusing them of wanting to monopolize the “revolution.”⁷

It is again notable that all this took place prior to any Soviet support, and should therefore be solidly indicative of the real strength of the P.C.E. . . . Caballero sought its participation in the Government; the Anarchists thought it sufficiently strong to pose the threat of “monopolizing the war.”

“The proposals of the C.N.T.,” according to *Guerra y Revolución*, “in spite of all their negative aspects, were nevertheless interesting, and in a certain way, new. For the first time the *Cenetistas* publically recognized the need for a unified organ to direct the war

5 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 52. Vol. II

6 Loc-Cit, p. 52. Vol. II

7 Loc-Cit, p. 52. Vol. II

against Fascism. These C.N.T. proposals made on September 18 were, in their totality, the results of a summation of the leading circles of Anarchist thinking. It was a step forward by those who would collaborate with the other democratic and working class forces.”⁸

José Peirats, who reflected the more extreme sector of the F.A.I. and A.I.T., viewed the whole affair with a jaundiced eye. He wrote simply that: “The C.N.T. leadership experienced strong vacillations, a prelude to capitulation of a more or less short-term nature.”⁹

The P.C.E., conscious of this new reality, not only refrained from giving a negative reply to the new public initiative of the Anarcho-Syndicalists, but saluted the unity perspectives that were now possible. Concretely, they proposed that a conference be convened of all anti-fascist parties and organizations in order to examine the possibilities for an understanding.¹⁰ On September 30, however, the Anarchists held their own conference. They wished to first examine the results of their campaign in favor of a National Council of Defense. They had received but one favorable reply—and that from the small, Federal Party.

But a more interesting anomaly had appeared, in that during the interim the C.N.T. of Catalonia had, on September 24, agreed to dissolve the Committees of Militias, and to enter the Catalan Government. This change in their role in Catalonia was then announced as a change in their basic concepts of a “National Council.” In its resolution on September 30, therefore, it declared that Spain and its affairs could not be conducted by a policy of a party, but only by the national bloc of all those who fought at the front and in the rearguard. It insisted that the strength of the C.N.T. could not now be discounted, and it asked for posts within the government proportionate to its participation in the fight.¹¹

Quite obviously, other than the F.A.I. ideologues, the idea of C.N.T. participation in the government of Caballero had met with considerable support among the rank-and-file. Among many honest militants it was thought that to be outside the government was to be left with but a marginal leadership in the fight. On October 20, therefore, at a meeting of the Popular Front of Valencia, the leader of the dock-workers, Domingo Torres, said that the *Cenetistas* would now participate in the leadership organ of the struggle—“the so-called government.”¹²

And so, if parenthetically the creation of the policy of non-intervention by England was the first crisis of support in terms of what the Western Democracies should have done and didn't, this new decision of the Anarcho-Syndicalists—to participate in the government—

8 Ibid. p. 52-53. Vol. II

9 Peirats, p. 212

10 “*Mundo Obrero*,” Sept. 29, 1936

11 *Guerra y Revolución*, pp. 53-54. Vol. II

12 Loc-cit, p. 54. Vol. II

was the second. For these were those of the F.A.I. who would bitterly oppose his move; even to the point of sabotage.

One thing is certain to all who have attempted an analysis: Since it had been Left leadership alone (primarily Communist and Socialist) that had rallied and united the anti-fascist forces, inclusive of the great ass of the Republican voters whose own leadership had failed them, it was absolutely incumbent upon Left leadership to create an iron unity within its ranks. If any one of three tendencies, Socialist, Communist, or Anarchist, faulted that unity, then indeed would the cause of the Republic be in grave danger.

That the Anarchists had irresponsibly, openly, and without thought as to the consequences, stated that the Communists were seeking to monopolize the war—and this on the very eve of their entering the unity government—was tragically indicative of their continued lack of concern or understanding of the need for this unity. The need was most definitely recognized by a majority of the Communists and Socialists. But, as will be shown, their recognition was not enough.

A wave of enthusiasm and confidence on the part of the ordinary worker and militiaman, greeted the new Caballero Government. There was no question as to the genuine support it engendered. But far too much time had been wasted, and the gathering storm loomed ominously in the Gredos and in the valley of the Tajo.

On the center front the Army of Africa smashed through Santa Olalla; raced on to Maqueda. In the south, the Andalucian Bastion of Rhonda fell to the rebel armies on September 16. In the north, San Sebastián was seized by the armies of Mola and the Basques fell back upon Bilbao. In Asturias, Falangists and Regulares, setting out from Burgos and La Coruña to the relief of Oviedo, drove the militia before them while clouds of Junkers and Capronis swept the cities of the Cantabrian littoral with shrapnel.

A newly equipped rebel column led by Colonel Delgado Serrano drove north from Talavera to join with Colonel Monasterio's cavalry column at Arenas de San Pedro in the Gredos Mountains—and the Madrid army was now confronted with a solid front. Delgado's juncture with Mola effectively cut off a section of Republican territory to the west Then Maqueda fell, upon which the rebels moved instantly to the relief of the Alcázar at Toledo.

Tactically, the argument advanced by Franco, that he could not march upon Madrid while Toledo continued to threaten his flank, was correct. A more important factor, however, was that Franco had still not been designed Chief of the Rebel Armies and of the State. In order to guarantee that he would be named to these posts it was necessary that his position be strengthened still further. And this was the prime objective of his drive to Toledo.

The English historian, Jellinek, attributes to General Varela the opinion that “the moral victory of Toledo was necessary for Franco to achieve supremacy over Mola, Cabanellas, and Queipo de Llano.”¹³ The fact that Franco utilized the effect of his capture of Toledo to immediately convoke a second reunion of the “Generals” at an airdrome in Salamanca, is indicative of the correctness of Varela's observation—especially since he was at once nominated for the positions mentioned.

The loss of Toledo was a bitter blow to the Republic. The principal responsibility for the investment of the fortress of Alcázar had been in Anarchist hands. Their militias had been the ones to occupy the city. They had, in fact, established a “canton” in Toledo, in which a regional C.N.T. committee for defense was all-powerful. In the C.N.T. book, *Rojo y Negro*, published in 1938, the chronicler, Eduard de Guzmán, wrote briefly that, “Only the C.N.T. fought at the fortress of the Alcázar.”¹⁴

For the record no *serious* attempt was ever made to take the fortress. And though Toledo was Anarchist held the responsibility for this grave error lay in the lap of the Madrid Government. The Anarchists considered Toledo, not so much as a trench from which to fight, but rather as a conquered city (though there had been no fighting there) in which to practice its ideas of “libertarian communism.” Eduardo Guzmán writes further that, “on many occasions groups of C.N.T. militia went to Toledo from Madrid to participate in ‘attacks’ on the Alcázar. These would return the same night, by orders of the C.N.T.”¹⁵

The defects of the Anarchist militia were many. The British writer, Brokenau, describing his *second* trip to Toledo under fire, writes that nothing had changed; that things were exactly as they had been before, and that, “not the slightest attempt is being made to hasten the siege, which, it seems, consists in a simple encircling of the Alcázar, without any serious actions being planned by the militia.”¹⁶

Neither Giral nor Caballero would intervene in the affair of Toledo. It began and ended as a tragicomic opera scene in which those flaunting the red and black neckerchief seemed themselves besieged behind stacked mattresses in *calles* surrounding the fortress, while taking turns firing small-arms at walls of massive stone.

Now, with the crisis growing stronger by the hour, José Díaz, Secretary of the P.C.E., and others of his constituents met with Caballero and asked that he give the mission of reducing the Alcázar to units of the Fifth Regiment—and now! Before it was too late!

13 Jellinek, pp. 429-430

14 *Madrid, Rojo y Negro*, Madrid, 1938. Eduardo Guzmán, p. 86

15 Ibid. p. 129

16 Brokenau, p. 61

Caballero, fearful of the Anarchist reaction, refused.¹⁷

Only when Monasterio's cavalry and Tella's Regulares were at the very gates of Toledo did he allow a single battalion commanded by Enrique Lister to move to the defense of the city. This was on September 25. And it was *indeed* too late.

Upon arrival at the Anarchist *Estado Mayor*, Lister found the Republican Colonel, Burillo—also sent by Caballero—attempting to take command from the Anarchist, Torres; facing the drawn pistols of Torres' aides, who refused to surrender it. Upon sight of Lister's first machine gun company the guns were reholstered.

By the morning of the 27th the Anarchist militia had generally fled, having failed even to blow up the munitions and small-arms factory in their haste.

Lister and Burillo, holding only a small section of the city, were forced back past the bull-ring and the cemetery, and then street by street to the crossings of the Tajo, evacuating as many of the wounded, hospitalized from various fronts, as they could. And thus, as Lister put it, fell Toledo, the shame of which could be placed at the door of the Ministry of War; of the Republican General and close friend of Caballero, Asencio Torrado, and of the Giral and Caballero Cabinets.¹⁸

The true story of Alcázar is yet to be written. And when it is it will in no way bear resemblance to the nonsense disseminated in tourist pamphlets by present day guides to that edifice.

On October 4, General Francisco Franco y Bahamonde was named Head of State of Fascist Spain, with the Army of Africa remaining under his personal command. And now, too, under the leadership of General José Varela, the columns of Lt. Colonel Ascencio, Lt. Colonel Barrón, Lt. Colonel Delgado Serrano, and the Commander, Castejón, plus the cavalry columns of Colonel Monasterio, and to the north the Aviel division of General Valdes Cabanellas—All began the final drive for Madrid!

The distance now, even from fallen Toledo, was but seventy kilometers. The Franco armies faced a broken, demoralized and almost unarmed mass of retreating militiamen. Except for the Socialist-Republican columns of Urribari, Bayo and Mangada, and the Communist battalions of the Fifth Regiment, they were also lacking in training and any kind of discipline.

To add to this total inequality of forces, the psychology of the Fascist-Military in terms of what it would do to win; what it had already done, was forever in the minds of the

¹⁷ *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 61. Vol. II

¹⁸ Lister, pp. 58-59

militiamen. The historian, Robert G. Colodny, writes that, “During the advance to Madrid which carried the small Army of Africa through provinces whose population had voted overwhelmingly for the parties of the *Frente Popular*, the plan of operations outlined in the Rebel *Instrucción Reservada Número 1* was carried out to the letter.”¹⁹

General Queipo de Llano, discussing the question of Madrid before a group of foreign journalists, stated: “Mola, Franco and Cabanellas agree with me that it is a stupidity to want to save the lives of three or four hundred thousand persons, because if that number dies in Madrid it will be all over. Our plans have been worked out in accord with Germany and Italy. The Spaniards who will have to die for our final triumph approximate three or four millions, and if these do not die fighting upon the battlefields, upon my honor, they will die shot or mutilated by our Legionnaires and Moors. If we do not do this, we will fail to carry out the promise we have made to our brothers, the Germans and Italians. *And we are men of honor!*” (My italics)²⁰

But even now, though belated, and certainly in no way comparing to the massive aid sent by the Fascist Powers—and it never would be—help was on the way.

19 Colodny, pp. 14-15

20 Jellinek, p. 286

SPAIN AND THE SOVIET UNION:

A phenomenon of the Western World in terms of its chroniclers and historians is that the pervasive power of its media will allow for almost any kind of rhetorical expression, in the sly knowledge that anything contrary to the status quo can be neutralized or made to appear the opposite by a simple shift in focus and emphasis. In this way wrong becomes right, and the peasant freedom-fighter who dares defend himself against his oppressor, is named an aggressor. Especially is this true in the United States today where the art of sophistry has long been a major political weapon.

The question of Soviet aid to the embattled Spanish Republic; its overall effect upon the course of the war; the “ups” and “downs” of the political tendencies inside Spain itself, and finally, its contributions to the development of an all-European united front against international fascism has, and one would suggest, deliberately, been presented as the most mixed up *potpourri* of Machiavellian evil that one could imagine The so-called insidious maneuverings of the Satanic Soviet Union and its “creature” the *Comintern*, has been dealt with in at least a hundred books now on the shelves of all major libraries. The reader is welcome to them. But when he is finished; when his credulity is stretched to the utmost by those who have no other purpose but to distort history, he will find that the facts contained in the following chapters pertaining to the role of the Soviet Union in Spain, will remain to give the lie.

Among the more salient denunciations are the following: That military aid to Spain came too late and too little; that a large part of the arms were obsolete; that they were given only to communist-led units; that the arms were fed, piece-meal, as it were, to the Governments of Caballero and Negrín in direct proportion to reciprocal controls and influence purportedly granted the Soviets; that the Soviets limited their aid to appease Britain and France; that as early as Autumn, 1937, the Soviet Union “gave-up” on the Spanish Revolution and ceased all arms shipments

And so on, and so on.

The tragedy of the above is that a great part of this quite malicious and self-serving, right-wing propaganda was put forth by both capitulationists and ultras alike. This was done in the midst of the war years, contributing largely to whatever demoralization would arise in the Republican camp. The word “malicious” is apropos in this case, since each and every point can be easily proven a skilfully perpetrated lie.

The purpose of this work, however, is not to dissect the mountainous volumes of nonsense already written on the Soviet Union and Spain. Nor will it be concerned with the “second thoughts” of Azaña and Prieto, the trouble nobleness of Neville Chamberlain —“though he did make some mistakes,” and the sorrow of Roosevelt and Harold Ickes

after they had aided the Spanish Fascist-Military to enslave the Spanish people and sent three hundred thousand Spaniards to their executioners.

It will be concerned with what actually happened, and that is all. The answers to the accusations of the right and the left will therefore be found in the simple continuity of the contents of the following pages.

On September 14, 1936, the Pope broke his silence on the Spanish war. Speaking before 600 Franco sympathizers at Castelgandolfo, he accused the Republicans of possessing a “truly Satanic hatred of God.”¹

The following day, September 15, the new Minister of State, Sr. Álvarez del Vayo sent an energetic note to all ambassadors in Spain of the countries participating in the London Committee of Non-Intervention. The note contained detailed proof of the violation of the accords of the Committee by Italy and Germany.

“Things have come to a point,” the note stated, “in which the Constitutional Government of Spain must direct itself to the English Government, as a signer of the accords of non-intervention, and to ask if it has taken into account that the embargo against the sale of arms to a legitimate government, and the tolerance of direct intervention by Italy and Germany in favor of Spanish Fascism, is creating a precedent of extreme gravity within existing concepts of international order. We demand the lifting of the arms embargo against the Spanish Republic; the rigorous prohibitions of all war materiel to the Franco rebels, and the dissolution of the Committee of Non-Intervention.”²

Álvarez del Vayo, Left Socialist and strong supporter of the Popular Front, repeated the charges before the League of Nations when that world body met in Geneva. He forcefully denounced the “monstrosity of non-intervention,” stating that in practice it “was turned into an effective, positive and direct intervention in favor of the rebels.”

“The bloody fields of Spain,” he continued, “are already and in fact the battlefield of a second world war. This fight, once begun, has been transformed into an international question. But the struggle would already be decided in its greatest scope,” he added, “if for the reasons we have indicated the Spanish people had not been forced to face the second aggression of greater intensity.”

“Moreover, of the facts that I have referred to; of the existence and continuation of aggression, each day brings new proof sealed with our blood, of the entry into action of an immense weight of foreign war materiel that the Rebels *did not* possess at the moment they rose in rebellion.”

1 Thomas, p. 81

2 *La “No-Intervención” en los Asuntos de España*. Documents of the Spanish Republic. p. 8

“Each defender of the Republic and of liberty that falls at the front by the fire of those imported arms . . . is an irrefutable demonstration of the crimes committed against the Spanish people.”³

Immediately after Álvarez del Vayo's speech, Maxim Litvinov, Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, arose to reiterate his country's solidarity with the Spanish Republic, and to ask that action be taken now in support of the legal government and against the Fascist cabal. But Del Vayo and Litvinov stood alone. Great Britain and its shadow, France, again insisted that the League was no longer the place for discussion of the issue. And, though the insidious “taboo” against discussion was broken by the ensuing polemics of both the Spanish and Soviet delegates, they were unable to force the Spanish question to the agenda, nor was a single resolution ever recognized or voted upon.

For two months the Spanish Republic had sought by every means to secure arms from capitalist countries only—to no avail. With the constitution of the Caballero government, however, a shift in foreign policy tactics was immediate. Despite a continued and almost paralytic weakness before the criminal policies of England and France, Caballero, nevertheless had the courage to turn to the only Socialist Government in existence at that time, the Soviet Union. A letter was sent directly to the highest organ of government of the U.S.S.R., asking for immediate aid in war materiel, technicians and military advisers.

Western observers have consistently distorted this first approach of the two countries, so that the final picture is one of the Soviet Union approaching the Republic with an offer of arms for the sole purpose of intervention in the affairs of the Iberian Peninsula.

The following reply by the leaders of the U.S.S.R. to the petition of the Spanish Government will speak for itself. It is notable that all reference to kinds and quantities of military aid have been deleted:

“Comrade Caballero:

Our plenipotentiary and representative, Comrade Rosenberg, has forwarded to us your expressions of fraternal sentiments. He has also advised us that you are unalterably disposed to nothing short of absolute victory for the Spanish people over their Fascist adversaries. Permit us to extend our thanks for these sentiments which signify that we are participants of our confidence in victory.

We have judged and continue to do so that it is our duty, within the limits of our possibilities, to assist the Republican Government which leads the fight of all working people against the Fascist-Military *Camarilla*, subsidized by the forces of International Fascism. The Spanish revolution has opened roads that differ in many ways from that of the U.S.S.R. This is determined by premises of social order, both historic and geographic, and the exigencies of the international situation as distinct from those existing prior to the Russian revolution. It is quite possible, therefore, that the parliamentary road will result in the development of more efficient revolutionary procedures in Spain than they did in Russia. Withal, we believe that our experiences—above all those of our civil war—as applied to the particular conditions of

3 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 100, Vol. II.

the Spanish revolution, can have a determining value for Spain. Because of this fact, and because of your requests submitted through our Comrade Rosenberg, we agree to place at your disposal some military specialists who will act as military advisers to officials designated by your government We would suggest, however, in terms of the Soviet specialists, that being foreigners in Spain they cannot be truly useful except on the condition of restricting themselves rigorously to the function of an adviser—and only an adviser. We believe that only in this way can our military comrades be used. We ask too that you specify the exact circumstances in which our comrades can be expected to fulfill the missions with which you will entrust them; assuming too, that only if you judge their activities worthwhile will they continue to serve in Spain”⁴

Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov 1936 (N 7.812)

Specifically, in the light of all developments of the greater part of the decade of the “thirties,” Soviet policy seems to have been one of creating an anti-fascist coalition; the main facet of which was shattered on the rock of Italo-German intervention in Spain and the aid given that intervention by the very powers with which the Soviets sought alliance.

“The lack of success of Russian foreign policy in forging an anti-fascist West-Soviet coalition,” writes Dante A. Puzzo, “ultimately proved disastrous for the Republic.”⁵ That the policy was generally a correct one, however, is hardly debatable. For generally it became the vehicle for the rallying of the anti-fascist sentiments of mankind against the burgeoning power of the Axis, while simultaneously exposing leaders of the Western Power Elites as being, essentially, cut from the same cloth. World War Two was the ultimate judge and the ultimate trap to which opposition to this policy inevitably led. Indeed, the only possible censure that could be made against this policy of the Soviet Union was that it may have impeded the quick shipment of Russian arms to Spain. But even this is simply not the case.

A first understanding of Soviet-Spanish relations begins with the fact that the recognition of the U.S.S.R. by the Spanish Republic was only granted a month after the war began, on the same day upon which the accords of Non-Intervention were agreed upon—August 23, 1936.

The Second Republic had intended recognizing the Soviet Union in 1933, but the Rightist victory interfered with this. Then, an exchange of ambassadors was planned immediately after the February victory of the Popular Front. But that too was delayed for reasons unknown.

But even without Soviet recognition the support and response of the Soviet people to the plight of Spain had been manifest in the very first days. As early as August 3, 1936, a mass meeting in the Red Square had attracted over 200,000 people, and workers in dozens of factories had pledged their money and their labor in support of the Republic.

⁴ Ibid. pp. 101-102

⁵ Puzzo, p. 148

The first Russian ambassador assigned to Madrid was Marcel Rosenberg. He reached the capital on August 27, bringing a staff which included General Jan Berzin, a former head of Soviet Military Intelligence. He would be known in Spain as General Goriev, (Hemingway's General Golz in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*)⁶ Simultaneously with Rosenberg's appointment, Antonov Ovseenko, he who had led the Red Guard in the storming of the Winter Palace in Petrograd in 1917, was appointed Consul General in Barcelona.

On August 26, an article appeared in the Russian journal, *Izvestia*, stating its position on the accords of non-intervention:

"It must be stated frankly that a declaration of neutrality in connection with events which are taking place in Spain is not our idea, but a special type of innovation in international theory and practice. Up to the present time there has been no precedent whereby the government of any country elected in accordance with its laws and recognized by all powers is put on a level both judicially and in practice with rebels fighting it. There has never been a case wherein the fulfillment of orders of such a government and the supplying of it has been considered as intervention in internal affairs."⁷

All data indicates that from the first moment the Soviet Union had announced itself as against the principles of non-intervention as proposed by France and England. But it could not ignore these proposals. It must be remembered that the concept of non-intervention was supposedly the idea of a French government headed by the "Socialist," Leon Blum, and *sustained by a majority of the Popular Front parties of that country, and by the European socialist parties and all the important sections of western liberalism.*

In the eyes of the world therefore, the idea of non-intervention *was* a method whereby a world war could be averted and a wall erected to *prevent* military aid to the rebels by the great Fascist Powers.

They had yet to be convinced of the lie.

And too, the Spanish Republican Government itself had, in the first days, accepted the premises of non-intervention. The result of all this was that a political situation had been created in which a flat refusal of the Soviet Union to abide by the French proposals would actually have been unfavorable to the cause of the Republic—at that time.

In effect, if the Soviet Government in that precise historical moment had chosen to unilaterally reject the proposals, it would have instantly been subjected, not just to the abuse of Rightists and Fascists, but also to that of the Socialist parties of every country, plus the tremendously influential blocs of liberal and progressive "elitists." It would be the Soviet Union who would then be accused of wanting to intervene in Spain against the wishes of the Republican Government. All this could have had but one result: aid,

⁶ Thomas, p. 262

⁷ "*Izvestia*," August 26, 1937

amounting to a justification of the intervention of Hitler and Mussolini on the side of the rebels. More. In having frustrated a “peace plan” originating with Blum—i.e., the destruction in embryo of the non-intervention concept—then the cry, from Socialist to Fascist would have been, “*Prevent Soviet intervention in the affairs of Spain.*”

Unlike the parallel of the U.S. aggression in Indochina today, wherein the Vietnamese have a common border with the People's Republic of China and the Socialist World, such was not the case in 1936.

In that far time the Soviet Union was the only Socialist Country. Geographically and logistically it was situated quite far from the embattled Spanish Republic which, itself, was surrounded by openly hostile forces. Therefore it was also not enough to simply decide “to send war materiel to Spain.” It was also mandatory that every means, diplomatic, etc., be used to create the minimum conditions so that those arms would arrive at their destination.

According to the P.C.E.'s *Guerra y Revolución*, the U.S.S.R. had accepted the concepts of non-intervention—but in a conditional form. It would abide by the accords in the exact way that Italy and Germany did. In this way it could work within the London Committee alongside France and England, and could say to the Fascist Powers more or less the following: If you gentlemen will cease all shipments of war materiel to the Rebels, we will not send arms to the Republic. If you do not, we will.

If this quite flexible position was then accepted by the French Socialists—within the conditions of non-intervention as defined by them—a totally new set of possibilities could then be injected into the scene. First: the possibility of forcing the retreat of the Fascist Powers. And historically, if one is cognizant of the exact circumstances of the times, this was by no means an irrational goal.⁸ Second: a reversal of the commitment of the major powers not to sell arms to the legal government could perhaps be achieved based upon continued German and Italian sabotage of the accords. If either one or the other of these changes had been effected, the Spanish Republic would have triumphed quickly—and easily.

The policy of the U.S.S.R. within the London Committee then was to insist that the accords be carried out to the letter, and to put to the proof the real intentions of England and France in terms of their own policies of non-intervention. It would force their real and actual position before the people of all countries so that they would know that Blum and Whitehall lied in their teeth when they said that the London Committee of Non-Intervention had been created to bring an end to foreign aid to the Spanish rebels.

In pursuance of the above, S. Kagan, the Soviet delegate to the Committee, had stubbornly,

⁸ German documents of the time generally agree with this summation.

since its inception, argued all facts as put forth by the Spanish Republic; consistently championing the Republic's cause and denouncing the open intervention of the Fascist Powers.

On September 28, Lord Plymouth, an aristocrat and something of a religious mystic succeeded W.S. Morrison as British representative to the Committee. The Russians were appalled; mainly by the infantile arrogance of this man—this “*haut* landlord.” *Pravda* called him an appraiser of horses and a member of the “beefsteak club.”⁹

Chronologically, Lord Plymouth's appointment came at a time when the offensive against Madrid had resumed with unparalleled fury. Colonel Yagüe had recovered from an illness. And the Army, under Franco, was now led by a Falangist. The first heavy bombings of Madrid began. General Mola announced that by October 12 he would be taking his coffee in the Gran Vía, and Queipo de Llano, in the south, for the first time ceased to cry. “Viva la República!” after each broadcast. There was now no more time for maneuvering.

On October 6, Kagan sent a letter to Lord Plymouth, President of the Committee, denouncing anew the activity of Portugal and demanded that a commission be sent to the Spanish-Portuguese border.¹⁰

The following day he sent a new note, with still more proof of intervention. The note also contained the following declaration of the Government of the Soviet Union:

“The Government of the U.S.S.R. can no longer accept that the accords of non-intervention be used as a smoke-screen behind which military aid is given the rebels against the legal government of the Spanish Republic, by certain participants of the Committee. The Soviet Government is therefore obliged to declare that if the violations of the accords of non-intervention do not cease immediately, that the Soviet Government will then consider itself free of any obligations originating from the accords.”¹¹

The very next day, writes Hugh Thomas, “A Soviet diplomat told the American *Chargé* that, unless the Committee did show itself determined to bring about an immediate end to violations, the Soviet Union would withdraw, considering itself free to aid Spain with military equipment.”¹² It is notable at this point, that whereas the British Foreign Office was furious, the British Labour Party, meeting in a conference, supported the Soviet decision and demanded in an unanimous resolution to Whitehall that an investigation be made, and immediately, of the violations of neutrality by Germany, Italy and Portugal. The scales were beginning to fall from the eyes of the West's Social Democrats.¹³

9 Thomas, p. 285

10 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 108, Vol. II

11 Acts of the Committee of Non-Intervention: Folios 35 to 51

12 Thomas, p. 292

13 Loc-cit, p. 292

But the violations did not cease. And the U.S.S.R. which had accepted the accords of non-intervention on the condition that they put an end to the intervention of Italy and Germany, now felt free to reply to the previous request of the Caballero Government soliciting arms.

On October 12, Kagan sent a new note urging again the establishment of controls over the coast of Portugal. He stated that without these minimum measures the accords of non-intervention would be meaningless. Lord Plymouth responded almost contemptuously; refused to convene the Committee to discuss the Soviet proposal, and alleged that no new proofs had been presented Amongst the data was the following report from the German *chargé d'affaires* in Spain, Hans Voelkers, dated Alicante, October 16, 1936, which said in part that:

"As for England, we have made the interesting observation that she is supplying the Whites (i.e. the rebels) with ammunition via Gibraltar, and that the British cruiser commander here has recently been supplying us with information on Russian arms deliveries to the Red Government (i.e. the Loyalists), which he certainly *would not do without instructions*."¹⁴

Then on October 23, with the rebel armies pounding toward the gates of Madrid and the disorganized militia holding to the roads and thereby being decimated by the professionals of the Army of Africa and forced to retreat in confusion, the Soviet Ambassador to England, Ivan Maisky, spoke before the London Committee. The following remarks clearly established the new road the U.S.S.R. would follow:

"In adopting, along with the other states, the 'accords' of Non-Intervention in the affairs of Spain, the Government of the Soviet Union assumed that these accords would be accepted seriously by all participants, and that as a consequence the duration of the war would be shortened and the victims fewer.

Time has shown these accords to have been systematically violated by a number of states; the rebels being supplied with all arms with impunity. One participant, Portugal, has been converted into the principal supply base for the rebel armies, while the legal government of Spain has been subjected to a boycott and deprived of its rights to buy arms outside its territory to defend itself and its people. In this manner, as a direct result of the violations, a privileged situation has been created for the rebels. . . .

As a result of this privileged situation the civil war in Spain has been prolonged and the number of victims increased.

The attempts of the representatives of the Soviet Union to put an end to these violations have received neither aid nor response from this Committee. The last proposition of the representative of the U.S.S.R.—the question of the control of the ports of Portugal—has not only found no response in this Committee, but has not even been put on the agenda as an order of business for today's meeting.

And so in precisely this manner the accords have been systematically converted into useless paper, and in fact do not exist.

14 D.G.F.P. Vol III (Eng. Ed.) pp. 111-113

Not desiring to involuntarily lend itself to an unjust cause, the Government of the Soviet Union sees only one way out of this situation: to return to the legal government of Spain its right to purchase arms from all other countries, and to permit the participants of the accords to sell arms, or not to sell arms, to the legal government.

In whichever case, the Soviet Government, not desiring to bear the weight of the situation created—in every light an unjust one—against the legal government of Spain and the Spanish people, sees the necessity to declare today that, in relation to its note of the 7th of October, it no longer considers itself bound by the accords of non-intervention—*any more than the other participants of this Committee*.”¹⁵

On the 28th of October another debate took place, in the course of which Maisky stated anew the policy of the U.S.S.R. “A victory for the rebels,” he explained, “would constitute a stimulus for all those forces who would bring hatred and destruction to Europe, the consequence of which could be a total disruption of this part of the world followed, in the near future, by a terrible, military catastrophe.”¹⁶

The Soviet representative reiterated that the deeds of the Committee to date had clearly demonstrated that no guarantee existed against the continuation of the delivery of arms to the Spanish Fascist-rebels, and that for this reason: “Those governments that consider the supplying of the legitimate government of Spain with arms as conforming to all the tenets of international law and justice, have the right to no longer consider themselves bound by the accords of non-intervention—any more than those governments who today supply the rebels with materiel of war, despite the accords.”¹⁷

The deeds of the U.S.S.R. were to correspond with its words. For even while Maisky spoke, Soviet tanks and plane were en route from the port of Cartagena to the Madrid front, menaced directly now by the rapid advance of the rebel armies.

The first shipment of Soviet goods to Spain left the port of Odessa on September 19. IT was the *Neva*. It carried 2,000 tons of foodstuffs—butter, canned goods, sugar, etc. Its destination was Alicante. Then the *Turksib* and the *Sirianin* sailed, also with food and other goods; and, according to Dolores Ibárruri, some armament.¹⁸ After that, and between October 1 and October 24, a number of ships passed through the Bosphorus, destination: Spain. Among these were the *Georgi Dimitrov*, the *Bolshevik*, the *Transbalt*, the *Komsomol* and the *Neva*, making a second trip. Spanish ships too made the Black Sea run; the first to do this being the *Ciudad de Barcelona*,¹⁹ the *Campeche* and the *Lavamendi*, all bringing some hundreds of trucks and armored cars, and as many as a hundred each of planes, tanks, artillery pieces and anti-aircraft guns. Russian tankmen, aviators, and

15 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 109. Also, “*Pravda*,” Oct. 24, 1936

16 Acts of the Committee of Non-Intervention: Folios 52 to 68

17 Ibid. Folios 52 to 68

18 D. Ibárruri, p. 263

19 The City of Barcelona was sunk in early 1937, while transporting International Volunteers from France. The loss of life was heavy, including twelve Americans. (See Landis: *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, p. 175).

instructors accompanied the weapons. It is accepted, however, even by the most rabid anti-communist that actual Soviet participation in terms of personnel in the Spanish war was severely limited. Some say 500. The complete tally should be somewhere in the neighborhood of 1,000. They drove the first tanks; they flew the first planes. But they assiduously and tirelessly trained young Spaniards to take their places at the earliest possible moment.²⁰

But if complete regiments of the Soviet Army were lacking in Spain, the commanders of that army were not. Some of the greatest names to come out of the Second World War were at one time or another advisers and observers of the Spanish War. Among these were Jacob Schutckievitch, a Commander in the Russian Airforce; the tank general, Pavlov; the future Marshals of the Soviet Union, Rokossovsky, Konev and Malinovsky. N. Voronov, future Marshal of Artillery; N. Kusnetsov, Commander of the Soviet Fleet; General of the Army, P. Batov; Col-General of the Army, A. Rodimtsev; Lt. Col. of volunteer tankists of the army, S. Krivoshein, and General of the Red Airforce, M. Yakushin. All of these men have written of their experiences in Spain. And the data is quite candid and informative. They tell openly of what they did; who they did it with, and the circumstances and locations of their specific assignments. There is no mystery here as some would have us believe.²¹

Other than the arms shipments from the Soviet Union, the Comintern, reputedly, aided the Republic in purchasing arms outside the Soviet Union. These were purchased in the name of dummy companies with a listed destination as being something other than a Spanish port. In this manner the Republic became the possessor of some of the cast-off equipment of the world's armies, in most cases useless against the modern equipment given the Franco armies. An interesting point in terms of these obsolete arms is that other than the tanks, planes and artillery from the Soviet Union, which were the best of their day, the greater part of the struggle for Madrid, the gigantic battles of Jarama and Guadalajara, were fought with these obsolete arms.

With the arrival, for example, of the American Major, Allan Johnson, to the command of the 15th International (Abraham Lincoln) Brigade on the Jarama front in the early days of the war, the following circumstances prevailed. He discovered, he says, about seventeen different kinds of infantry rifles and five different kinds of machine guns in the brigade armory. The Americans and English in the Brigade had trained with the Austrian Steyr and the Canadian Ross, both of which invariable jammed after every shot and were considered unacceptable. According to Lt. William Carroll, small arms instructor of the 15th Brigade base at Tarazona, they even had a Japanese *Arisaka*. Again, in terms of modern armament, the standard infantry rifle of the International Brigades was the U.S.

20 Hugh Thomas writes that the number of Russians in Spain was "certainly under 2,000, and probably never exceeded 500." p. 637

21 *Bajo la Bandera de la España Republicana*, Editorial Progreso, Moscow

Remington, sold in large quantities to the Tsarist Government in World War I.²²

There is no exact listing of war materiel shipped from the Soviet Union to Spain. Mr. Hugh Thomas, utilizing Mr. D.C. Watt's analysis in the *Slavonic & East European Review* of June, 1960, in-re data collected by the German Military Attaché in Turkey during the war years, gives the following list of shipments and cargo: A total of 164 ships passed through the Bosphorus as of January-March, 1938. These carried 242 aircrafts; 703 cannons; 27 AA guns; 731 tanks; 1,386 trucks; 69,000 tons of war materiel, and 29,125 tons of ammunition.²³

To all those who fault the U.S.S.R. for not having sent sufficient arms to the Republic the following data should be interesting. The Franco Admiral, Francisco Bastarreche, at a conference in Zaragoza in 1960 stated that, "The Nationalist Navy sank during the period of our war 53 merchant ships with a total of 129,000 tons; captured on the high seas were another 324 ships of some 484,000 tons. Twenty-four foreign ships were also seized, and as many as 1,000 detained on the high seas for examination and later released."²⁴

Interesting, isn't it? Among the known Russian ships sunk were the *Komsomol*, *Timiriazev* and the *Blagoev*, all in the Autumn of 1936. A number of others were torpedoed in 1937, as were many Spanish ships of the Republican fleet. British merchant ships were torpedoed within sight of "Her Majesty's Navy," which stood by and did nothing. For after all the ships were bound for Republican ports. Thomas tells us that, "French and other neutral ships, as well as Spanish vessels, were attacked in the Mediterranean by Italian submarines and by Italian aircraft operating out of Mallorca."²⁵ A brief tally of this piracy reveals that in the month of August, 1937, alone, the following took place. A British and French merchant ship were bombed on August 6 near Algiers. On August 7 a Greek ship was bombed. On the 11th, the 13th and 15th, ships of the Republic were torpedoed. On the 12th a Danish cargo vessel was sunk. On the 26th a British merchantman was bombed off Barcelona. On the 29th a Spanish ship was hit by a torpedo off the French coast. On the 30th the Soviet ship, *Tuniyaev*, was sunk at Algiers, the British merchantman, *Woodford*, was sunk near Valencia, and the British destroyer, *Havock*, was itself attacked by the Italian submarine, *Iride*.²⁶

The fact that should be obvious here is that contrary to all past precedent relating to piracy and acts of war on the high seas, the British, French and all other navies of the Western World *allowed* the Italian navy and airforce to operate with impunity against their own ships, insofar as those ships were servicing a Spanish Republican port. Also, if the statements of the Franco Admiral, Francisco Bastarreche, are true—the halting and

22 *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, Arthur H. Landis, Citadel Press, N.Y., 1967. pp. 110-174

23 Thomas, pp. 636-643

24 Lister, p. 77

25 Thomas, p. 468

26 Ibid. pp. 468-475

searching of one thousand merchantman on the high seas—then indeed was there collusion. It could not have been otherwise.

As for the period of March, '38, through January of '39, the last year of the war in which the “hollow men” have said that the Soviets ceased their aid entirely—it is not so Spain's Foreign Minister, Álvarez del Vayo, writes that during that time the following arms arrived in French ports, destination, Spain: Approximately 500 pieces of artillery; 10,000 machine guns, over 400 fighter aircraft and bombers, 24 torpedo boats and all related ammunition and shells plus thousands of trucks and the parts for them.²⁷ That the greater part of this materiel remained on French soil during the final days of the death of the Spanish Republic is certainly no fault of the Soviet Union.

In terms of total Soviet expenditures in military and all other aid the following figures are given and seem to be more or less correct. As of October 27, 1936, the Soviet Union announced that 47,395,318 rubles had been collected from Soviet citizens, as donations for Spain. Later, in 1956, the Soviet Government declared that on and above the monetary gold reserve of sixty-three million pounds sent them by the Spanish Government in 1936 as payment for arms, etc., the Republic still owed them fifty million dollars. The total here then, other than the rubles raised by the Russian workers as an outright gift, was approximately 88 million pounds, or 440 million dollars—quite a bit in that far time of 1936.²⁸

The evidence then is more than sufficient to conclude that despite the tremendous losses of men, ships and materiel along the thousand-mile, submarine-infested run from the Black Sea to Spain, the Soviets had never faltered in their aid to Spain.

Indeed, with 53 merchant ships loaded with Russian arms for Spain torpedoed and set to the bottom of the Mediterranean, the Soviets have a right to suggest to their unconscionable attackers of the ultra-left, and others, that they not be so hasty with their quite self-serving accusations.

27 Del Vayo, pp. 273-274

28 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 105. Vol. II

MADRID

The war continued in all its fury. With the assumption by Franco of the supreme office of Chief of State, the army was divided into two parts: that of the north commanded by Mola, and that of the south by Queipo de Llano. Those attacking Madrid were incorporated into the Army of the North, under the leadership of the Generals Varela and Yagüe.

The mass of the “National” forces advancing upon Madrid from the line, Toledo-Maqueda, was composed of four large columns of infantry, considerable cavalry, artillery, tanks and aviation. The infantry, with the exception of one battalion organized in Seville with Spanish cadres, was made up totally of Banderas of the Foreign Legion and Tercios of the *Regulares* of Morocco. The cavalry too was Moroccan; the tanks, artillery and aviation, Italian and German.

The great body of the militia, untrained, with little discipline, no leadership to speak of, and armed with rifles and little else fell back in disarray through town after town. Robert Garland Colodny, whose study, “The Struggle for Madrid,” is by far the most scholarly and factual work to date on the subject, writes that:

“The forward defenses of the capital were swept away at the rate of twenty kilometers a day, as the militia, plentifully supplied with courage, but lacking every other attribute of a modern army, was unable to parry the mechanized thrusts of Varela. Thousands of the luckless Republicans were trapped in pockets as cavalry columns of Monasterio and the motorized troops of Castejón, Barrón, Asencio and Delgado Serrano raced along the network of highways, concentrating their forces where resistance developed, isolating the Republican units that clung to fortified towns, while the German and Italian bombers hammered unceasingly at the supply lines running back to Madrid. In the Sierra, where tanks and transport could not operate, where the terrain was too close for the effective use of bombers, the Republicans held their own against Mola's troops. In the flat valley of the Tagus, removed from the supply depots of the capital, the militia was no match for the African Army. In the mountains, Spain faced Spain; in the valley of Tagus, along the seventy kilometer road from Toledo to Madrid, Spain faced Africa armed by Europe.”¹

An understanding of this disastrous retreat is best seen through the eyes of the Franco historian, Harold Cardoza, an eye witness to the events.

“The work,” he writes, “was carried out entirely by Legionnaires and by the Moroccan *Regulares*. In open country it was possible to follow every incident of the fight. Machine gun posts could be seen pushing out to a flank, taking advantage of every bit of cover, and proceeding in that slow deliberate fashion which is the mark of a good soldier. The Militia bunched in redoubts on the main or side roads, while good positions on hill slopes were

¹ Colodny, p. 21

left unguarded. The Foreign Legion and the Moors never failed to take advantage of such gaps to infiltrate the Red lines and place their guns time after time to enfilade those positions. For that was the terrible error the Red militia always made. They stuck to the roads, whereas any man of experience would have known that the best line to fall back on was the open country, avoiding the roads like the plague.”

“But they had been brought from the rear to occupy their lines in lorries. And at the moment of panic they knew that the lorries were in the nearest village over the crest and they always streamed back on the road. Whole lines of them would immediately come under the first flat trajectory of the machine guns firing from a distance of eight hundred yards, and not a man in twenty go away.”²

On October 7, a flight of JU 52's again appeared over the capital. This time along with the bombs they dropped leaflets ordering an evacuation of the populace. They spoke of occupying the city on October 12—the date General Mola had said he would be having coffee on the Gran Vía.

The air attacks continued, and the Government moved to send its gold supply to Cartagena to safeguard it against possible seizure by the rebels—or other elements.³

The commanders of the Fifth Regiment and the P.C.E. had long insisted that the Caballero government create a belt of fortifications with which to defend Madrid should the occasion arise. Now they demanded it. But Largo Caballero, showing the “ultra” tendency that was to plague his thinking during the remaining months of his tenure, refused to mobilize the building trades unions. Among his many excuses were: that he had no shovels and no barbed wire; that the Socialist U.G.T. workers would be won over to the rival Anarchist unions if ordered from civilians jobs;⁴ that “Madrid is being defended in the Tagus valley,” and that, “Spaniards might fight from behind trees, but never from trenches.”⁵

In defining those critical days, Colodny suggests that: “To a large measure, the lack of vigor in the military activity of the Republic was directly the result of the policies and personality of Francisco Largo Caballero He quarreled bitterly with his colleagues in the Socialist Party, particularly with Prieto. He supported incompetent or disloyal regular officers against the militia leaders who enjoyed the confidence of the troops, and yet he delayed the formation of a regular army. The Soviet organ, *Pravda*, had first referred to him as the ‘Spanish Lenin,’ and this role Caballero was determined to play despite his sixty-seven years and his total lack of knowledge of military affairs. The confusion at the

2 Ibid. p. 20

3 Del Vayo, L.O., pp. 283-287

4 Colodny, p. 24

5 Ibid. p. 26

fronts in October of 1936 had its origins in the office of the War Ministry, where Caballero, who went to bed at 10:00 p.m. and left orders not to be disturbed until 8:00 a.m., would sign papers only between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.”⁶

Elaborating upon this contradiction—the support of incompetent and disloyal regular officers against the popular militia leaders—Manuel Azcárate further informs us that Caballero insisted that “. . . The Republic did not need a regular army, that its defense could be left to the militia, operating a guerrilla-type resistance struggle such as existed in the National war against Napoleon, with no Supreme Command, no headquarters staffs, no discipline and no organization.”⁷

But the Rebels, having seized Chapinería, Esquivias, Seseña, Illescas and Santa Cruz de Retamar, had created a situation where the other, more responsible members of the Government could no longer indulge Largo's thinking. On October 10, after a hasty meeting of the Cabinet, an order was issued ending the independence of the militias. From that point on they were subject to the orders of the Central (Madrid) General Staff. A War Commissariat was also established together with a system of political commissars to be attached to all units—a part of their job being, as in the October Revolution and its aftermath, to keep constant check the supposed “loyal” professional officers attached to each major unit. Álvarez del Vayo was placed at the head of this Commissariat.⁸ The first six “mixed brigades” to be organized on the Madrid front then, in effect, became the core of the new Peoples Army.

It would, unfortunately, be quite some time before any meaningful implementation of the decree came about. But a start had been made.

Trying to blunt the onward drive of the Army of Africa, Caballero's General, Asencio, threw thousands of raw militia volunteers into a counter-attack at Chapinería. They broke the rebel lines and surrounded the town, but were again outflanked and forced to withdraw. On the 24th, Asencio tried it again, utilizing three militia columns commanded respectively by Juan Modesto of the Fifth Regiment, and the loyal professional officers Col. Vicente Rojo, and Col. Mena. They attacked this time in the direction of Illescas. Again, the rebel lines were broken; the town surrounded. But the lack of artillery; of any kind of meaningful coordination, plus the masses of aviation thrown against them forced a retreat.

Upon which General Asencio was branded as “the organizer of defeat” and removed from his post. He was “kicked upstairs”; made Under Secretary of War to Caballero. His command was taken by an equally incompetent but loyal Republican, General Sebastián

6 Ibid. pp. 23-24

7 Azcárate, pp. 64-65

8 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 126. Vol. II

Pozas.

One last attack was planned against Seseña and Esquivias to the south of Madrid. But this time a company of fifteen Russian tanks had been rushed from Cartagena, right off the boat, as it were, to spearhead the attack. Russian staff officers had agreed with the Madrid Command that the situation warranted any gamble.

Caballero, who was also Minister of War, enthusiastic over the arrival of Russian arms and hoping to elevate the morale of the militia went on air on the evening of October 28. In a most eloquent speech to the mass of volunteers of the Center "Army," he not only informed the enemy of the arrival of Soviet equipment—exaggerating its importance—but simultaneously warned them of the attack.

"*Camaradas*," he said, "at this moment the Fascists as a result of their difficult march to Madrid, have dispersed their energy. The time has come to deliver a death blow. Our power of taking the offensive is growing unceasingly. We have at our disposal a formidable mechanized armament. We have tanks and powerful airplanes. To them you must add your revolutionary determination. You must never yield the reconquered positions. Listen, Comrades! *Today at dawn* our artillery and armored trains will open fire. Immediately our aircraft will attack. Tanks will advance on the enemy in his most vulnerable point, creating panic in his ranks."⁹

And at dawn, with the rebel armies forewarned by this incredible act of Caballero, the first Soviet planes and tanks roared into action. The Rebel front between Seseña and Esquivias was broken.¹⁰ The tanks advanced twelve kilometers; fighting in both the above mentioned towns against Italian Ansaldo tanks, Regulares and Moorish cavalry. They were finally forced to retire, however, the Republican infantry having been unable to follow them in the breakthrough.

Though strategically a failure, this first attempt of Soviet arms on the front south of Madrid masked the area's true weakness. And the renewed rebel drive two days later went straight for the capital making no attempt at the logical flanking move.

The defense of Madrid has long been the subject of song and sage wherever free people are cognizant of human values. The great battles of the months of November, December and January of 1936 and 1937 are history and have been so written in a thousand archives.¹¹ The Nazi General Sperrle, who commanded the Condor Legion, wrote in his journal *Die Wehrmacht*: "Our bombers had the task of opening up the way to Madrid and

9 Ibid. p. 134. Vol. II

10 Colodny, p. 29

11 The best definitive history by far, of the struggle for Madrid—from the writer's point of view—is the book by that title, written by Robert Garland Colodny. No work to date approaches it in detailed information and scholarly evaluation of the opposing forces.

demoralizing the city so that Franco's troops could enter. But it was not possible to get the troops to take the route we showed them."¹²

In mid-October the Condor Legion and the heavy bombers of the Italian AirCorps at the service of Spain's Fascist-Military, began the terror bombing of Madrid's population. Junkers, Heinkels, Savoias and Capronis rained death upon the densely populated working class districts of Tetuán de las Victorias, Embajadores, Atocha and Cuatro Caminos; nor were hospitals, museums or libraries and schools spared. The Carmen market was burned to the ground in a raid on November 17 that began at 9:00 p.m. and lasted until 2:00 a.m.

Over a thousand dead and countless wounded was the partial result of this sustained bombing. And the streets were filled with homeless families carrying their pathetic belongings.

But if Sperrle sought the demoralization of the Madrid populace, he failed. Only those who had always lacked faith in the ability of the people to fight were inclined toward surrender. President Azaña, for example, had long been absent from the Oriente Palace. He had been, in fact, for some weeks in Barcelona. One Cabinet Minister actually suggested, "that Madrid should be evacuated with a view to recapturing it later."¹³ And, although this preposterous proposal was instantly rejected, the government decided then and there to withdraw to Valencia.

This decision, in terms of freedom of movement, was undoubtedly necessary. The disorderly and precipitate manner in which it was carried out, however, was not.

The Fascist General, Varela, in some of the bloodiest fighting of the war, had driven his four columns to the very outskirts of the city. There was a "fifteen column," Queipo de Llano proclaimed, which would aid the Franco armies. And it was in Madrid itself.

On the 4th of November Varela called all foreign correspondents to his post of command at Leganes and asked them to inform their newspapers that Madrid would soon be taken. At this Rebel headquarters the members of the foreign press received six typewritten sheets of paper describing the fall of Madrid; with certain blank spaces "for the details" which would be filled in later.¹⁴

The *Chargé d'Affairs* of the embassies of France and England cabled their superiors that the entry of Franco's troops in Madrid was but a matter of hours.

In London, Winston Churchill, speaking to the Russian Ambassador, Maisky, on November

¹² Azcárate, p. 70

¹³ Ibid. p. 72

¹⁴ *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 146. Vol. II

5, told him that, "Within a week this disagreeable Spanish question will have disappeared from the scene. Have you read the papers today? Within one or two days Franco will enter Madrid, and after that who will remember the Spanish Republic?"¹⁵

On November 6, America's Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, telegraphed the American Ambassador to Spain, Claude Bowers, asking for all information about the new government that would be formed in Madrid upon the entry of Franco.¹⁶

In the proximity of the capital the Franco forces had concentrated detachments of the *Guardia Civil* and police, with fleets of automobiles and maps and data on the districts within the city to which they had been assigned. A Junta, complete with a Fascist mayor, was prepared to follow behind the Moors and the Legionnaires of Franco.

All was ready: to such a degree that the American millionaire, Sosthenes Behn, director of the International Telephone and Telegraph Company—the company that owned the Spanish telephone network outright—was preparing a great banquet in the hall of fiestas in the *Telefónica*, Madrid's tallest structure, to honor Francisco Franco.

Numerous telegrams arrived in Madrid extending felicitations to the "*Caudillo*" on his victory. One of these ended with the words, "*Ave Caesar Imperator*."¹⁷

Franco announced that he would enter Madrid and hear mass on the 7th of November. And Radio Lisbon, along with a number of French newspapers, announced that he had already done just that.

On November 5, the usual flights of German JU 52's appeared over the city. But on this day a new factor was introduced to upset the planned bombing runs. A squadron of small green fighter planes with the republican colors of red, yellow and purple on their wing tips, appeared to challenge them. These were the famed Soviet, Polykarpov 115, called *Chatos*, snub-noses, by the Spaniards as an expression of endearment such as one would name a small boy. Until the time of the arrival of the Messerschmidt 109 in July of 1937, the Chato was to be the fastest and most maneuverable of the fighter aircraft of either side. On this day and in the sight of tens of thousands of Madrileños in the streets and on all the rooftops of the city, six of the great JU 52's were shot down and the remainder fled. To the populace it seemed an omen. The word had spread to Enrique Lister, now commanding the four hard-pressed battalions, *Paris Commune*, *Leningrad*, *Kronstadt* and *Madrid Commune*, had told the Soviet Correspondents that the Madrid workers would hold, despite all odds, until the arrival of the International Brigades. But Getafe, Carabanchel and Villaverde had fallen, and there was nothing now between the city and the armies of Franco but the bodies of its defenders and their willingness to die for that

15 Loc-cit. p. 146. Vol. II

16 Loc-cit. p. 146. Vol. II

17 *Defense of Madrid*, C. Cox, London, 1937. p. 71

which was theirs.

THE INTERNATIONAL BRIGADES:

The “International Brigades,” other than the Popular Front government itself, was the second most important phenomenon of the Spanish war. For though the Governments of the Western World had refused aid to the Republic and endorsed the criminal hypocrisy of “non-intervention,” their citizens did not. Volunteers from every country came forward to join the ranks of the heroic Spanish militia; their declared aim, to stop the onslaught of world Fascism in Spain and thus prevent the ominous encroachment of World War II.

Though some had already fought with militia columns at Irún in the Basque country and in Aragón, the majority were even now being organized into battalions and brigades in the base town of Albacete. Located in the southeast section of the body of Republican Spain, it was ideally situated for the purposes of the volunteers. IT was at least 100 miles from the nearest battlefield. And all around the city, like the terminals of uneven spokes on a wheel, were the little villages which would house the training bases of the various national groups. The village of Madrigueras was first taken over by the Italians, then by the British. Villanueva de la Jara, by the French, then by the Americans, Canadians and British; Mahora by the German anti-Nazis.

These volunteers, who would serve in what was to be known, historically, as the *International Brigades*, reflected the politics of their respective countries. They came from political prisons and concentration camps, from across oceans and borders bristling with bayonets. They were workers, intellectuals, professionals—escapees from Mussolini's *La Spezia*, and the original Dachau. A few had been elected to the legislature of their countries. Others were teachers, writers, students, trade-unionists, and ex-army men. Among the many things they had in common were a love of liberty and a hatred of Fascism and all it stood for. It has been estimated by reliable sources that some forty thousand men in all, volunteered to serve in the International Brigades of the Spanish Republican Army, though there were never more than 17,000 in Spain at any one time, and no more than 6,000 involved in any single campaign.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the Spanish Republican Government welcomed any aid, organized or otherwise from any source. While not allowing Spain to purchase arms, England, France, the United States—any country of goodwill—could have extended aid in any form, including support of the already existing first units of the International Brigades. Indeed, any organized forces of progressives or liberals who cared (or dared) to take on the burden of leadership, could have done so. The powerful Socialist International could have done this. Considering the historical fact that the Spanish Republic was neither Socialist nor Communist, and that she was fighting alone against the bloodiest kind of tyranny, it was their moral and human duty to offer this help and leadership. But they did not. And it therefore follows that the spokesmen for the “liberal,” “progressive,” and “socialist” world have been forever compromised by their failure to give meaningful

assistance to the Second Republic in her hour of trial.

It also follows that if the Communist parties of the various countries of the world (together with the Spanish Government) created the vehicle and the means whereby volunteers could fight in defense of the Spanish Republic—and again the main body of these volunteers were by no means Communist—it is to their credit, regardless of variously imputed motives. No one can deny the fact that in Spain's darkest hour they, and they alone, had the human decency and the courage to come to the aid of the Spanish people. This fact will explain, perhaps more than anything else, why so many of the International Volunteers joined the Communist Party, or chose, in the absence of any other, to accept its leadership at that time.

There were five brigades in all. Ernest Hemingway writes of the 11th, the *Thälmann Brigade*: “The Eleventh was German. They had nearly all had military training or had fought in the first World War. They were all anti-Nazis. Most of them were Communists and they marched like the Reichswehr. They also sang songs that would break your heart and the last of them died on the *Muela de Teruel*, which was a position they sold as dearly as any position was sold in any war.”¹

The 12th Brigade was originally composed of Italian, German and French anti-Fascists. They adopted the name *Garibaldi*, the first liberator and fighter for the freedom and the unity of Italy. The myth of Fascist invincibility was to be shattered forever on the plains of Guadalajara by these same anti-Fascist Italians. For it would be there in the holocaust of Brihuega, and in the bloody ruins of the Ibarra castle that they met head'on and contributed to the ignominious defeat of four divisions of Mussolini's prized Black Arrow and Littorio contingents. The 13th Brigade was an all-Slavic-speaking unit made up of Poles, Czechs, and East Europeans. They called themselves proudly the *Dombrowsk Brigade*, honoring an outstanding hero of Poland's struggle against the tyranny of the Czars. The 14th Brigade was French and Belgian. Its banners like its songs, blazed with the names of the French Revolution, of the French Commune, and of the more contemporary victories of the French and Belgian proletariat. It was said seriously—after the winter days—that when one walked in the International Brigade cemetery in Madrid, “it looked like a street in Paris.”

The last, the 15th Brigade, was English-speaking. Except for the heroic days of early November, 1936, and the defense of Madrid, there was no major battlefield in all Spain on which the flags and banners of the 15th did not appear. Like the other Brigades, the composition of the 15th varied at the beginning, having attached to it—when first organized for the great battle of the Jarama River Valley—a Slavic battalion, *Dimitrov*, and a French battalion, *Sixth of February*. Its final makeup, however, consisted of four battalions and their auxiliaries, three of them English-speaking, one of them Spanish. First

1 Landis, p. xvi

was the British *Saklatvala Battalion*, named for an Indian member of Parliament from the London district; second, the Canadian *Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion*, named for publisher-politician William Lyon Mackenzie, who, with Louis Papineau, led a revolt against corrupt politicians and speculators in that Crown Colony in 1837; third, the 24th (or 59th) *Spanish Battalion*,² made up of volunteers from Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico and other South American countries. The fourth battalion was the *Abraham Lincoln Battalion*, composed of volunteers from the United States of America.

Other than their deeds in Spain, which are legend today, it is a matter of record that the volunteers who survived remained consistent in that they were among the outstanding heroes of World War II. Their names, too, are legend. *General Swierczewski*, known in Spain as General “Walter” and who commanded the 35th Division of the Spanish Republican Army, became the Commander of the Polish Army that liberated Warsaw. *Colonel Rol Tanguy*, a former Commissar of the 14th Franco-Belge Brigade, was in command of the Free French Forces that liberated Paris. *Andre Malraux*, author of such world renowned works as *La Condition Humaine* (*Man's Fate*), *The Royal Road*, and *L'Espoir* (*Man's Hope*), was the organizer of the First International Aid Squadron in Spain. This squadron flew against the best units of the Italian airforce and the German Condor Legion, long before the arrival of any Russian aircraft. Malraux was a Captain of the French Underground in the F.F.I., and has been a minister of cabinet rank in the French Government. *Randolfo Pacciardi* was a Commander of the Garibaldi (12th) International Brigade. He was also a Republican Party member and was in the first postwar Italian government under Premier Alcide De Gasperi. Competing with him for votes and leadership were two other outstanding members of the Garibaldi Brigade: *Pietro Nenni*, leader of the Italian Socialist Party, and *Luigi Longo* (*El Gallo*), The Rooter, Communist. Longo was a one time commander of the Albacete Base and later led the Italian Partisan Movement in the north of Italy against the Germans. The list is endless. It includes *Marshal Tito* of Yugoslavia, *Sabi Dimitroff*, partisan hero of Bulgaria, and *Doctor Norman Bethune*, the Canadian originator of the blood bank system. Bethune served in Spain and later worked in China with the guerrilla medical service of the 8th Route Army. He died of septicemia for lack of penicillin.³

The list is endless inclusive of America's *Herman Bottcher*, the “one-man army of Buna and Leyte,” in the South Pacific, and a host of others.

The First Internationals, training at Albacete, had hoped to have sufficient time to field at least one complete division. But this was not to be. Madrid was in deadly peril, and on November 5 and 6 they entrained for the defense of the capital.

2 Ibid. p. xvii

3 Ibid. p. xiv

NO PASARÁN!

With the final shaping up and the lines of heavy guns of the German Condor Legion already emplaced on Monte Garabitas overlooking the city, the Government of Largo Caballero fled precipitately to Valencia. On November 6, at 6:00 p.m., General Asensio called the Generals' Maja and Pozas to the War Ministry. He gave them two sealed envelopes with the order that they were not to be opened until the following day. He too then left for Valencia.

Whatever other faults they may have had, the two Republican generals were astute enough to check their orders immediately. The sheer insanity of even suggesting that they wait, what with the crash of artillery and the thousand sounds of rifles and machine guns over the city, was little short of treason. This idiocy extended still further when it was found that Miaja had received Pozas' letter, and Pozas, Miajas'. One wonder what would have happened if they had gone their separate ways that night . . . Yet Caballero, Asensio and others of the Cabinet were all honest men.

The unimaginative and somewhat pedestrian general of the Army, Miaja, received the following "orders":

"In order to be able to carry out its principal duty, the defense of the Republican Cause, the Government has decided to leave Madrid. It charges your Excellency with the duty of defending the capital at all costs.

In order that you be aided in such a transcendental task, there is constituted a Junta of Defense of Madrid which will act alongside the present administrative organs, which will continue to function. The Junta of Defense will be made up of representatives of all political parties which make up the government and in the same proportion which they have in the Government. The presidency of the Junta will be held by your Excellency. In it, your Excellency will hold the delegated powers of the Government in order to coordinate all the actions necessary for the defense of Madrid, which defense will have to be carried out to the extreme limits. If, in spite of all efforts, it is necessary to abandon the capital, the Junta will be charged with the duty of saving all war supplies and anything else that may be of use to the enemy. In the event of such misfortune your forces will retreat in the direction of Cuenca in order to establish a defensive line in a place which will be designated by the Commanding General of the Center Army with whom your Excellency will be in contact and to whom you will be subordinate . . .

The Headquarters of the Junta of Defense of Madrid will be established in the War Ministry, and the General Staff of the Junta will be that of the Ministry of War, except such elements of the latter as the Government is obliged to take with it."

Madrid, November 6, 1936—Largo Caballero¹

But no instructions had been given as to just how the Junta was to be formed, or just who was empowered to appoint its members. Indeed, so many government functionaries had fled the city—along with a great number of party leaders and syndicalist chieftains,

1 (The citation does not appear on this page due an error committed by Landis, but it is noted in the Notes section of the book. I assume it belongs here. – Transcriber) Colodny, p. 46

inclusive of Galarza, head of the Office of Internal Security—²that Madrid could truly be described as a city with no single apparatus, nor governmental control at all on that eve of November 6. And, too, those functionaries fleeing Madrid had also taken the greater part of the files of the War Ministry, and all vital data pertaining to the disposition of the armed units of both the enemy and the militia.

General Miaja is described as having sat down at Caballero's desk in the deserted War Ministry: "On it was a switchboard with lines connecting to the various dependencies of the Ministry. He rang the bells, waited, but no one came to the office. He took up the telephone and attempted to contact officers of the General Staff at their homes. Few answered. Some laughed and hung up when informed that General Miaja, President of the Madrid Defense Junta, was calling. He contacted the headquarters of the Fifth Regiment. Here, Antonio Mije, on behalf of the Communist Party, placed the Fifth Regiment and its entire staff at the disposition of Miaja and informed the General that the Communists were resolved to defend Madrid street by street, house by house, and would abandon only the smoking ruins of the city to the enemy; that the Communists had established a military apparatus to function parallel with that of the Madrid Junta and had proceeded to set up sector headquarters for the city and a system of internal security to crush any attempted uprising on the part of the Fifth Column. As plenipotentiary of the Communist Party, Mije appointed Pedro Checa, the secretary of the party central committee. Checa, through the local party secretaries, began the organization of the civilian population on a block to block basis, and in cooperation with other political leaders in the city, mapped plans for the total mobilization of Madrid."³

By 11:00 p.m. that evening Miaja had successfully put together a staff. It was composed, primarily, of local officers who, until the governments' departure, had occupied only minor posts. But these were the men who, along with the officers of the Fifth Regiment, and under the guidance of the Soviet advisers, Gorief, Konev and Malinosky (Malino), were to successfully organize the defense of Madrid.

The remaining leaders of all political parties and unions having been called in—by dawn of November 7 a Junta of Defense had been constituted. Its formation coincided with the opening guns of Franco's great offensive to seize the city. The composition of the Junta is interesting, if for no other reason than that this was the second time in which that precious item—unity on the left—was given a chance to show its strength and courage. The first time, of course, was that heroic period of the eight days in which Spanish Fascism was defeated in the greater part of the country by the united efforts of the Spanish people.

The Junta of Defense covered the broadest strata of the syndicates and of the Left political parties:

² Ibid. p. 47

³ Loc-cit, p. 47

President—General José Miaja
Secretary—Fernando Frade
Alternate—Máximo de Dios (Socialist)
Delegate for War—Antonio Mije (Communist)
Alternate—Isidoro Diéguez (Communist)
Delegate for Public Order—Santiago Carrillo (Socialist Youth)
Alternate—José Cazorla (Socialist Youth)
Delegate for Industry—Amor Nuño (Anarchist Youth)
Alternate—Enrique García (Anarchist Youth)
Delegate for Supply—Pablo Yagüe (Socialist)
Alternate—Luis Nieto (Socialist Youth)
Delegate for Communications—José Carreño (Republican)
Alternate—Gerardo Saura (Republican)
Delegate for Finance—Enrique Jiménez (Republican)
Alternate—Luis Ruiz Huidobro (Republican)
Delegate for Information—Hariano García (Anarchist)
Alternate—Antonio Oñate (Anarchist)
Delegate for Evacuation—Francisco Caminero (C.N.T.)
Alternate—Antonio Prexes (C.N.T.)⁴

In the brutal two-year battle for the capital of Spain, history has recorded three decisive days. These were November 7, 8, and 9, 1936. For it was in these three days that the people of Madrid created a wall of themselves, literally, against which the Fascist-Military were smashed.

The Italian Colonel, Faldella, serving as a Franco advisor at the time, lamented that, “Three days were sufficient to completely transform the situation.”⁵

By late afternoon on the 6th, the Army of Africa had occupied a line passing through Cerro de Los Angeles, Villaverde, Carabanchel Alto, Cuatro Vientos, the approaches to the Casa de Campo and the road to Boadilla del Monte. The Order of Military Operations of the Franco Command described as its objectives: “The total occupation of Madrid in three phases; each to be completed within a maximum time of *one day*.”⁶

Nine columns would take part in the assault.

It is notable, however, that the plan to seize the city precluded a penetration through the workingclass barrios of Vallecas, Tetuán, and Cuatro Caminos; this with the sure

4 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 155. Vol. II

5 *Ibid.* p. 157

6 *Ibid.* pp. 157-159

knowledge that fierce resistance would be encountered there. “To occupy Vallecas, and to penetrate from that point into Madrid,” wrote the Franco historian, López Muñiz, “the troops would have to pass through the barrio of the same name—a confused conglomerate of many apartment dwellings heavily seeded with Communist workers. And if the Manzanares were attempted in the sectors’ Cuatro Caminos or Tetuán, the situation would hardly have been different.”⁷

One part of the Rebel plan for the dawn of the 7th was the following: “To attack and ‘fix’ the enemy in the sector between the Segovia Bridge and the Andalucia Bridge in the southwest area of the city.”⁸

The column, of *Regulares* under Colonel Barrón, would seize Carabanchel Bajo and advance to the Segovia Bridge. Colonel Tella's column would simultaneously attack in the direction of the Toledo Bridge. The essential mission of both these operations, as stated, was to attract the maximum of Madrid's defenders from the area in which the main attack would be launched. This would be, through the Casa de Campo, University City, the Frenchman's Bridge, Parque de Argüelles, a middle-class suburb where, according to one source, they even expected some help from the 5th Column.

A mass of infantry of the foreign Legion and the Regulares, plus Moorish cavalry and a swarm of Italian Ansaldo tanks, had moved into position for this principal assault. These were all under the direct command of Colonel Yagüe. Colonel Castejón would attack through the Casa de Campo, cross the Manzanares over the New Bridge and seize the University City complex.⁹ He would then place his H.Q. in the Hospital Clinico; all this by the night of November 7.

The column of Asensio Cabanillas—also under Yagüe—would thrust forward from his base toward the conjunction of buildings along the Paseo de Rosales, the Calle Marqués de Urquijo and the Calle de la Princesa. By the night of the 7th he was to occupy the Model Prison within the city, plus the Cuartel del Infante Don Juan where his command post would then be located.

The column of Colonel Delgado Serrano was to occupy the Calle Feraz, the great *Montaña Barracks* (where it all began), and the Calle de la Princesa. The orders specified that his column, once across the Manzanares River, was to then seize the Carmelite Church in the Plaza de España and all surrounding buildings.

From these he would dominate the Gran Vía and the Royal Palace with machine gun and cannon fire.

7 Muñiz, p. 28

8 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 158. Vol. II

9 The name, University City, is derived from the fact that the many great buildings of the University complex did constitute a “city” on the outskirts of Madrid.

With all these objectives obtained the Fascist Military were convinced that they could then rapidly advance to the vital centers of the capital.

In the Republican camp, the general confusion and disorder in the War Ministry was such that six headquarters officers, with the Chief of Operations Section at their head managed to desert to the enemy with no one marking their absence. The Republican General of Artillery, Francisco Matz, he was also the head of the Ammunition Commission, was abandoned by his personnel—nine chief and officers deserting to the enemy.

General Miaja's staff, however, had been generally cleansed of its traitors. It consisted of the following men under the Chief of Staff, Lt. Colonel Vicente Rojo: the professional officers, Commanders' Muedra, Arnaldo Fernández, Fontán, García Vidal, Colonel Manuel Matallana and Lt. Colonel Ortega, Chief of the Service Section of the Central General Staff.

They were faced with almost insuperable difficulties. Everything had to be improvised. General Pozas, having handed his command to Miaja before retiring to his base at Tarancón, could not even say where his forces were, or even if they still existed. Lt. Colonel Rojo writes the following: "The front had practically ceased to exist. The columns sent to contain the enemy on the Toledo and Estremadura highways were almost destroyed. Some, supposedly having as many as 3,500 men, in reality had less than 300."¹⁰

The militia companies had mainly fallen back upon the city and were operating on their own. This was especially true of the tank unit under the Russian Commander, S. Krivoshein (a Lt. General in W.W.II). Having lost contact with the War Ministry he had set up an independent command; acted as mobile artillery throughout the night of the 6th, and had, actually, at the request of certain republican officers in the sector Casa de Campo and Carabanchel, launched a series of local counter-attacks.¹¹

Rojo, Miaja and the Soviet advisers—who stayed astutely in the background—finally achieved some order from the chaos. The situation, however, remained desperate. Brigades were mined, gaps were filled with reorganized units, and other, hastily improvised companies of militia with commanders as untried as themselves were sent to the areas of greatest danger.

They streamed forth, these volunteers, from the Casas del Pueblo of the U.G.T., the quarters of the Communist Party, the J.S.U., and the Anarchist and Republican Centers. All were contingents of workers, white-collar and otherwise, intellectuals, students and young men and girls. Indeed, it cannot be reiterated often enough that the population of Madrid, itself, was disposed to defend its city.

¹⁰ *España Heroica*, Vicente Rojo. Editorial América, Buenos Aires, 1942. p. 49

¹¹ Colodny, p. 48

“And,” according to Colodny, “another, smaller army of civilians equipped with the oldest weapons, moved not toward the front but into the central areas of the city and the suburbs thought to be the objectives of the rebel offensive. These were Checa's security guards, hunting the Fifth Column, storming buildings where snipers had been reported, and shooting on the spot any suspicious person found with arms.”¹²

Poignant and dramatic calls were made to the people over Radio Madrid. Mobilization orders were issued directly by radio—and these orders were monitored by the *Estado Mayor* of General Mola at Avila. The Fifth Regiment issued the following, fighting declaration to the populace:

“MEN AND WOMEN OF MADRID!

The historic hour of decisive battle has come. Thousands of Milicianos are fighting the invaders, the Moors and the Foreign Legionnaires who wish to enslave us. The salvation of Madrid will now be resolved.

Madrid, city of Anti-Fascists; of the strongest workers unions is now gravely menaced. It has been said during many days now that 'Madrid will be the tomb of Fascism.' The moment has come in which this slogan must be made a reality.

MADRILEÑOS! The whole world is watching!

The page of history in which we now live must terminate in our victory.

The cannon now sound at our gates. We have felt the bombs in the streets of our city. We call every man and woman of Madrid to arms. Cost what it may we are disposed to win or to die!

ANTI-FASCISTS! All to your posts. Each man; each woman a combatant. To the Fascist *canaille* who wish to crush us and enslave our city we say in the words of our first historic moments: NO PASARÁN! (They shall not pass!) And they will not pass if each Madrileño holds in his heart the fervent desire for victory and freedom.

One last effort and we will win. Madrid will be saved. ALL UNITED IN THIS FINAL CONFLICT!

VIVA MADRID, HEROIC AND ANTI-FASCIST!

ALL FOR OUR VICTORY!

ALL FOR THE WAR!

TO BATTLE, MADRILEÑOS!”¹³

La Comandancia del 50 Regimiento.

Simultaneously the 50 gave practical directions to the populace to make each house a fortress, a barricade of national independence and liberty. Here are the instructions issued on the eve of battle.

¹² Ibid. p. 50

¹³ *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 161. Vol. II

"1. In the barrios . . . the militia must construct barricades, make tank traps and create rifle pits. Obstacles must be erected to impede and prevent the tanks from entering.

2. Occupy the most important houses and buildings of each block. Defend them; organize this defense from the windows. A tank can do nothing against men who are on the first or second floor of a building, whereas the defenders can drop bombs on the tanks, destroy the cavalry and force the infantry to defeat.

DO NOT FORGET THAT STREET FIGHTING IN A CITY HAS A TOTALLY DIFFERENT CHARACTER THAN THE FIGHT IN AN OPEN FIELD.

3. A vigilance service must be organized to control the streets. But the milicianos charged with this responsibility must know, in case of danger, in which house they can seek refuge for attack and defense. Also, militiamen charged with the defense of trenches parapets and strong points or barricades must know, in case of retreat—just where to retreat . . ."¹⁴

The question arises: what is there left to say of the struggle for Madrid that has not been said? The answer to that, perhaps, lies in that future of open archives and a Spain free of Fascism. But a great part of it is known, and has been said. And who, indeed, among the friends of Spain, or those who fought for the Republic, can ever forget the terrible weeks of unceasing battle, the seemingly interminable days and nights and the pitiful lines of defense that held, and held against an avalanche of steel and weaponry.

On the night of November 6, 1936, there were but ten rounds of ammunition for each of the remaining twenty thousand rifles of the militia—and not one artillery shell in the entire city.¹⁵

The Fascist generals', Yagüe, Varela, Orgaz and the German generals' Von Thoma and Sperrle had announced their certain entry on the morrow.

Who can think of that time without seeing in his mind's eye the commanders and men of a living saga. Enrique Lister with the 1st Brigade of the 50 Regiment below Villaverde; Lt. Colonel Bueno before Vallecas. Colonel Prada at the bridge of the Little Princess over the Manzanares. Rovira with another Brigade of the 50 Regiment before Carabanchel. Escobar at the Estremadura highway. Enciso in the Casa de Campo; Galán in the Casa de Campo.¹⁶

The names are legend. The battles are legend. The men are legend—and so is the city. It will always be legend. And it is important, too, to remember that although their titles were military, the fighters, generally, were civilians. They stood alone against the armed might of an implacable enemy—behind which was the total power of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany.

14 Ibid. p. 162

15 Colodny, p. 48

16 Landis, p. 9

On the 7th, in the first hours of a cold and cloudy dawn, the streets of the capital were deserted. The only transport was that serving the front. Telephone lines were down, preventing the Fifth Column from communicating with the enemy and with each other. From balconies and across the streets in every quarter the painted canvasses with their defiant slogans snapped in the cold wind—“*En pie, valientes!*” “*Pueblo de Madrid! Es mejor morir de pie que vivir de rodillas!*” “*Madrid sera la Tumba del Fascismo!*”

And the whole world was indeed watching.

The mass assault of the Army of Africa, beneath waves of Junkers and Capronis and tens of Italian Ansaldo tanks was met by a wall of flesh in every sector—from Villaverde and Usera, to Carabanchel and the Casa de Campo.

At Villaverde the legions of Africa broke against Lister's 1st Brigade; occupying at the end of the day but a few buildings, and this at the cost of great losses. In the Usera sector the militia commanded by Colonel Prada fought for each building, each small habitation. By mid-morning they had beaten off three assault waves, and the fighting continued. Lacking hand grenades, the militiamen used dynamite against the tanks, the handling of which they had developed a fine art.

A battalion of volunteers from Andalucía and another from Extremadura had joined with Lister and Prada at Villaverde-Usera. These were commanded, respectively, by a Captain Montero and a dock worker from Málaga named Ruiz. Also at Usera, alongside a small group of Assault Guards, was the Barzana battalion whose leader, César Lombardía, headed the Madrid Teachers Union. In the ranks were the *maestros*, Jesús Saiz, Germán Alonza and others who had exchanged the blackboard and the voices of children for the gun.

A reinforcing battalion sent to Lister in the early afternoon was appropriately named, “*Frente de la Juventud*” Composed of boys who had hardly changed their short pants for the blue *mono* of the militiamen, it was commanded by Eduardo García of the J.S.U., slated to be the youngest colonel of a brigade in the Republican Army. There was also a battalion composed completely of athletes in the Usera sector. For obvious reasons it was entitled the “Sports Battalion.” It had been but recently withdrawn from the Sierra and had in its chain of command such outstanding aces of the Spanish soccer world such as García de la Puerta for the “Gallos” and Emiliano Iglesias of the “Ligeros.” Madrid's champion swimmer, Juan Borrego, was also in the ranks, as was another outstanding Spanish athlete, José Ibañez.¹⁷

In the late afternoon Colonel Prada was surrounded and cut off from his troops by a tank attack. The commander of militia in the Boadilla del Monte sector, Justo López, was then

¹⁷ *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 163. Vol. II

sent to take charge in the Usera sector. The principal attack had now shifted toward the Bridge of the Little Princess fronting the Legazpi barrio. Its objective was to penetrate to the Paseo de las Delicias, and to reach the Atocha Station in the southern section of the city. Bloody, no-quarter fighting erupted in Basurero, Casa Derruida (named for the man who headed the defense of the position), and the first houses of the barrio. The final Fascist attack of the day was stopped dead.

Reinforcing the Usera sector on the evening of the 7th were two “Steel” companies of the 5th Regiment, commanded by Joaquín Ansina, and two companies of the old regular army, Regiment No. 20.

Furious fighting swept Carabanchel. There, at the critically important gateway to Madrid, the militia were decimated. The remains of two militia battalions together with a handful of Asaltos and Carabineros fought a foot by foot, rearguard action; leaving only their dead to the enemy. Though it had seemed impossible at first to contain the avalanche of rebel steel, by nightfall the miracle had been achieved there too. Indeed, at no point in the above sectors had the enemy even reached the river. The commands of Trifón Medrano and Manuel Fernández Cortinas had received new levies in the mist of battle. And these combatants, though poorly armed and with but a few hours training, drove back the advancing Moorish cavalry and established new lines. Houses were converted into fortresses, and each was fought for. And the path was closed to the Moors in Carabanchel.

At the fall of darkness in that cold night of November 7, it was clear to the Madrid Republican Command that the Franco troops had achieved no major objective. And they had captured no bridge from which to force an entry into Madrid.

In the Casa de Campo, to the north-west, three enemy columns with the mission to assist the principal blow and to enter the city from that point had encountered furious resistance. The militia fought for each tree, each rock. The Fascist-Military could not reach the river bank, let alone across it.

Manuel Aznar, the Franco historian, writes that:

“During the 7th and 8th it was not possible to occupy all of the Casa de Campo. The order to cross the Manzanares could not be met. There arose in Nationalist files a certain disillusion The first assault had been thrown back. The idea of taking the Casa de Campo, the Manzanares River and University City in a period of hours was a *Chimera*, which the circumstances had well demonstrated.”¹⁸

In the first hours of that historic night of the 7th there arrived in the H.Q. of Lt. Colonel Rojo a document of some importance. On the Extremadura road a tank had been blown up by the militia. In it was the Commander of Varela's armored units, and on his person was a

18 Aznar, p. 461. Also: G.Y.R., p. 165. Vol. II

packet of official documents. These turned out to be Operational Order Number 15, General Varela's plan of attack for the 7th. And, it was noted by Rojo's staff that since the objectives for the 7th had not been achieved, the plan had been put back exactly twenty-four hours—it remained the same for November 8. The Republican Command now knew the principal direction of the Rebel attack; from where it would come, and that the Casa de Campo, the Parque del Oeste, the Frenchman's Bridge and University City were indeed the objectives which they hoped would open the gates to Madrid.

On the night of the 7th and 8th no one slept in the H.Q. of the Madrid Command, or in that of the 50 Regiment. Troops were shifted to threatened areas; the strongest battalions and militia units. The republican artillery, for which there were now some shells, was shifted to the north-west sector as was the tank and armored car units. Knowing the disposition of the troops of the Army of Africa, Miaja, Rojo, Matallana, and the Soviet advisors could even think of local counter attacks.

But the peril remained. And though in the space of twenty four hours the defending forces of Madrid had been reorganized under a command that believed in victory, the situation was still one of blood and flesh against an unlimited supply of artillery, mortars, bombs and bullets. Without arms, organization, trained battalions or officers who understood the art of war, the defenders of Madrid possessed but a superabundance of morale—an exalted morale.

The Madrid Radio continued to transmit its appeals to the people. A young Republican deputy to the Cortes spoke eloquently and in “apocalyptic sentences” calling for more volunteers to the front.

The commissars, imbued with the spirit of Madrid, and conscious of the reality of the juggernaut they confronted, addressed those who were moving up to the lines: “You are going to die. There is no possibility that you will come back. But posterity, thankful, will remember you, and classify you amongst those who generously gave their lives that Spain might live.”²⁰

November 7 had been converted into a date of victory for the Republic.

At dawn on November 8, in the hopes of reversing the disaster of the previous day, the columns of the Army of Africa moved to the attack. This time, however, the Republican militia didn't just resist In a number of areas they mounted strong counter-attacks.²¹

Massive resistance in the Casa de Campo instantly blunted Yagüe's drive. And the areas of deepest penetration, mapped out with the thoroughness of Von Thoma and Sperrle were

20 (Footnote #19 is missing from the page, though in notes it's Colodny, p. 66 – Ed.) Ibid. p. 54

21 Muñiz, p. 35

paths of death for the Franco troops. For all that the Madrid army had was now concentrated directly at the points through which they sought to pass. General Varela, Yagüe's superior, called for more artillery; more tanks, hoping, according to Colodny, "that the continuous barrage would open the way, that the morale of the defenders would dissolve in the drum-fire of the German batteries. The planes of the Condor Legion entered the battle, concentrating their cargoes on University City whose magnificent buildings began to crumble."²²

The militia were decimated, but did not retreat. Even those unarmed volunteers who waited immediately to the rear to take up the guns of the fallen suffered heavily from the winnowing shrapnel. At the Frenchman's Bridge—renamed the Bridge of the Madrileños—hand to hand fighting raged between the Regulares and a few hundreds of men commanded by Matín Leal of the J.S.U. Most of these volunteers were of the U.G.T., the Porters Union, the Barbers Union, the Tailors Union and of the Society of Public Spectacles. The commanders and union delegates under Leal, were the designated chiefs, Puntero, Casado, González, Marín and Díaz.²³

A Railroad Workers battalion also fought on this front, as did the "Commune of Paris" battalion of the 50 Regiment and a battalion of artists entitled simply, the "Arts and Graphics" battalion. All fought tenaciously to prevent the enemy from reaching the Manzanares. By the day's end fewer than half had survived the holocaust. But their lines had held.

Fighting raged too at Villaverde, Vallecas and Usera. The Fascist Colonel, Delgado Serrano, in a desperate effort to break through the city, demanded and got a tremendous concentration of artillery beneath which the Moroccan troops of the 1st and 2nd Tabors of the Regulares of Alhucemas charged. They smashed through the militia lines, taking tremendous losses. They crossed the Manzanares and headed toward their objective—the Model Prison.

Receiving this news at the War Ministry, Miaja and his entire staff rushed to the area of the breach And it was here that General Miaja joined the defenders of Madrid in fact and in spirit in that he drew his pistol, stumbled through the mounds of shattered masonry to confront the troops that had left their trenches: "Cowards!" he cried, still advancing. "Cowards! Die in your trenches! Die with your General Miaja!"²⁴

The trenches were recaptured and the Moroccans killed to the last man, while Miaja was literally dragged back to the War Ministry.

22 Colodny, p. 64

23 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 166. Vol. II

24 Colodny, p. 65

Madrid was bleeding to death but reinforcements were arriving. In the late afternoon of that most decisive of days, the first of the International Brigades, the 11th, Thälmann, Brigade entered Madrid and moved immediately to one of the most threatened sectors, the Casa de Campo. The following day the 12th International Brigade received its baptism of fire in the southern sector of the Cerro de Los Angeles. Colodny writes of their coming: "Sunday, November 8, the vanguard of the 11th International Brigade marched up the Grand Vía of Madrid. Dressed in corduroy uniforms, with blue berets, carrying rifles, steel helmets hanging from their belts, the tramp of their boots sounding in perfect unison, the volunteers of the *Edgar André*, *Dombrowski* and *Commune de Paris* battalions moved toward the front.

"Each section was preceded by its officers, carrying swords and revolvers. Behind rolled a small convoy of trucks loaded with machine guns and ammunition. AT the rear trotted two squadrons of French cavalry.

"The commands cracked out in the clipped Prussian voice of Colonel 'Hans' and were repeated in French and Polish. To the Madrileños watching from the sidewalk the promises of the commissars had come true. The *Russians* had arrived, and they greeted the foreigners in their streets with shouts of '*Vivan los Rusos! Salud! Salud!*' The Internationale rang out in various languages and the shout in Spanish: '*Uníos Hermanos Proletarios!*' Unite Proletarian Brothers! Madrid was ignorant of the origin of the battalions that marched up the Gran Vía. But that help had come, that the city no longer fought alone—this Madrid knew. The radio broadcast the news across the city, the voice of Dolores Ibárruri carrying the information to Mola's headquarters: 'Resist, because from Valencia to Catalonia, legions of fighters are coming to aid us.' 'We have the effective aid of Russia!'"²⁵

By nightfall, the *Dombrowski* battalion of the 11th Brigade was in line at Villaverde, the machine gun section of the *Edgar André* was in position in the Hall of Philosophy and Letters in University City, the rest of the Germans and the *Commune de Paris* Battalion in the Casa de Campo.

"In the Casa de Campo where the fighting was most severe, the volunteers were spread out among the militia, one International Brigade soldier to four Spaniards. This was more than an injection of enthusiasm to raise morale. The militia followed the example of the foreigners, digging foxholes, firing their machine guns in short bursts, seeking the natural cover of the park's rolling, wooded terrain. The chorus of Republican guns rose, more certain, more accurate. And the tired, thinning columns of Varela felt for the first time the deadly cutting edge of machine guns expertly managed in open country. Puzzled, but resolved to obey their General's orders, the Army of Africa returned again and again to the charge, but in the Casa de Campo they encountered a line that would not budge. Each

25 Ibid. p. 67

outflanking move was countered by another on the part of the Republicans. In the early afternoon, the columns of Asensio and Castejón were forced to yield ground to Galán's 3rd Brigade and the 11th International Brigade.

"The Command of the northern sector of Madrod, Casa de Campo and University City, passed into the hands of General Kléber, who set up his headquarters in the very center of the battle."²⁶

General Kléber²⁷ immediately sent the following message to the people of Madrid in the name of the 11th International Brigade: "Madrileños, we have come to defend your capital with the same enthusiasm as if it were the capital of each one of us. Your honor is our honor. Your fight is our fight."²⁸

On November 9, the battle was renewed with all the ferocity of the previous two days. And it is singularly interesting that on that day couriers from General Pozas' Center Army H.Q. at Tarancón, but sixty kilometers from the capital, arrived in Madrid to ascertain *who held the city*. Notably interesting too, in that it defines the thinking of the Caballero Government, and of the man himself, another courier arrived from Valencia. He brought no message of congratulations on the defense of the city at the cost of rivers of the peoples blood; nor was there a time-table for the arrival of the much needed food, ammunition and men. Instead there was a request directed to Miaja: that Caballero's messenger be given the tableware left behind by the Prime Minister's staff on the night of November 6. Miaja's reply was blunt and to the point. "Tell the Minister from me that we who have remained in Madrid are still eating."²⁹

Twice on the morning of the 9th Moroccan Tabors broke through the thinning militia line before the Toledo Bridge and the Princess Bridge, only to be driven back with severe losses. Russian bombers appeared over the Casa de Campo to catch in the open a column of advancing Ansaldo tanks. By nightfall, however, Varela's troops had seized all of Monte Garabitas and the greater part of the Casa de Campo, while all along the line and in every sector the relentless pressure continued.

It was then that General Kléber (the Hungarian, Manfred Stern) showed his mettle and his ability. He ordered the International battalions to attack after regrouping them, together with some Spanish support troops, in the north-east section of the Casa de Campo.

Spearheaded by the volunteers of the *Edgar André* battalion, the Internationals pushed south, south-west, in a flanking maneuver. Simultaneously with their advance, General

26 Loc-cit, p. 67

27 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 169. Vol. II

28 Ibid. p. 169.

29 Colodny, p. 70

Varela resumed his own attack beneath a rolling artillery barrage.

As dusk fell and the stars came out in that wintry night, International and Moor met beneath the ilex trees. Fighters from the mines and factories of France, and the concentration camps of the “new Germany,” charged with the *arma blanca*, the bayonet, into the ranks of the Army of Africa—and the Army of Africa turned and ran!

And the machine guns of the anti-fascist Germans cut into them. And the bayonets of the anti-fascist French and Slavs and Italians caught up with them. And the supporting troops of the 50 Regiment saw with exhilaration the Tabors of Morocco and the Banderas of the Foreign Legion melt away in confusion before the intrepid advance of the Internationals.

“Ridge after ridge of the great park was cleared,” Colodny writes, “as the battle went on throughout the night and most of the next morning. Varela’s troops fell back slowly, leaving their mounds of dead under the ilex trees, leaving prisoners, carrying their wounded, but cheated of the coveted city that lay beyond the Manzanares River; robbed of the prize that would have meant glory to their commander, victory for the rebellion, loot beyond the wildest dreams of the African tribesmen, who had been promised the gold of the Bank of Spain in exchange for the German Reichmarks of 1923 with which their pockets were crammed.”³⁰

The battle, however, continued in all its fury with the offensive still in the hands of Varela and Yagüe. It has been said on good authority that had the reinforcements that arrived each day in Madrid been massed for a concerted counter-offensive—following the advice of Soviet officers—the troops of the Fascist-Military might have been kept off balance and driven back from the first houses of Madrid. But such was not the case. They were, instead, used piece-meal, in line with the defensive fears of Miaja and Rojo. Thus attrition used them up at a tremendous rate. Indeed, the one major attack planned for the 15th ended disastrously, as we shall see.

And in terms of the Soviet advisers, far from “controlling the Madrid armies,” their advice was listened to but seldom, if at all. Marshal of the Red Army and two times “Hero of the Soviet Union,” Rodion Malinovsky—known in Spain as Colonel Malino—writes the following in his memoirs:

“But the achievements of the government troops could have been far greater if there had not been such disorganization in the War Ministry. At each step they were faced with a lack of coordination of arms and the pitfalls of antiquated traditions.” He goes on to show a series of examples and continues: “In general it can be said that the Spanish Republican Army lacked commanding officers who were both capable and loyal until the end of the war. Fundamentally, those in command were generals of the old Monarchist Army, where

30 Ibid. p. 73

passivity frequently reflected treason and military incapacity, with utter ignorance of tactics and strategy.”

“How often the spirit and enthusiasm of the people as destroyed by the dullness and, on the occasion, the *premeditated passivity of inaction of their military commanders*. In essence, the years, 1936-1939, were a tragic repetition of the Spanish Revolution of 1856, about which Marx wrote: 'There was on one hand a well equipped army manipulated with ease by the wires of the generals; and on the other, idle leaders forced ahead by the impetus of poorly armed people.' Commanding the Center Front was General Pozas, a man quite old. He would never arise until the morning was well along; at his toilette and breakfast he would spend several hours. After that he would receive the Chief of the Headquarters Staff, a man as old as himself. A few flatteries would be exchanged and the audience would be over. In justice to truth, it must be said that Pozas was an absolutely loyal Republican, a circumstance significantly important. But the tradition of the old caste-system was for him the weight of a millstone.”

“And it must be said too, that all direct commands of the Center Front were assumed by the Commander, Garijo, Chief of Operations. On the surface Garijo was both energetic and loyal. In reality he was a Franco agent; one of the fundamental cogs in the wheel of the Fifth Column in which the Fascists placed so much hope.”

“In February of '37, General Pozas command was taken over by General Miaja, until then commander of the Madrid Front, alone. Miaja, from the point of view of military knowledge, was the prototype of military backwardness. At the time of the revolt he commanded a division, half ending with the rebels and half with the republic. But, since the headquarters of the division remained with the republic, Miaja was considered a leader of a large military unit.

“It can be said that Miaja was the 'grand original.' He literally 'collected' the membership cards of every Party of the Popular Front. And despite his age, he even joined the United Socialist Youth.

“I recall with what pomp and ceremony the simple act of Miaja's commuting from one place to another became. Preceding his automobile would be a detachment of motorcyclists; one of which blew his lungs out on a bulge to clear the way, or to advertise Miaja's presence. In front and in back of Miaja were a few armored cars, to guarantee freedom of the road. Such was the impression of haughtiness and ambition produced by this commander in those who had relations with him. And if the front commanded by him maintained an unbreakable defense during the winter and spring of 1936-1937, it most definitely had nothing to do with Miaja.”³¹

31 *Bajo la Bandera de la Republica Española*. pp. 20-21

THE DEATH OF DURRUTI:

Between November 8 and 15 nine republican units came to the defense of Madrid—a Catalan brigade formed by the Socialist Unity Party of Catalonia; a Socialist Brigade from Valencia; the 2nd Brigade (Martínez de Aragón), the 4th (Arellano), the 5th (Sabio), and the 6th (Gallo), and others inclusive, on the 14th, of the Anarcho-Syndicalist column, 3,000 strong, of Buenaventura Durruti from the Aragón Front.

Durruti had long been known as the one strong personality within the Anarchist movement to advocate the cooperation of all Left parties, a unified command within the military; and this within a regular army. He had, at the time of the February elections for the Popular Front, urged all members of the F.A.I. and the C.N.T. to go to the polls and vote.

Durruti was, without a doubt, one of the most romantic figures of the Spanish Left. In his early youth he had fought on the barricades in Barcelona; been sentenced to death in Spain, Chile and Argentina, and deported from at least eight countries. The Soviet correspondent, Koltsov, writes: "His Anarchist blunders and delusions notwithstanding, he was beyond a doubt one of the most remarkable figures in Catalonia and of the whole Spanish working class movement."¹

Durruti's men, following the pattern of the International Brigades, paraded down the Grand Vía in Madrid. They were well armed, wore new green uniforms, and seemed delighted with their own martial display.

García Oliver, the Anarchist Minister of Justice, accompanied Durruti to the War Ministry where the Anarchist chieftains demanded that they be given an independent section of the front "so that their achievements could not then be claimed by other units."²

"We will save Madrid," Durruti declared with a certain confident arrogance, "and then return to the walls of Zaragoza."³

Miaja and Rojo agreed to the Anarchist request. Durruti's men were assigned to the key sector of the Casa de Campo.

On November 15 Durruti stated to the Madrid General Staff that his men were now disposed to attack and drive the rebels from the areas they still held in the Park. He demanded all the aviation and artillery support in the besieged city for his assault. This was granted him. The artillery was concentrated and the few tactical planes at Miaja's disposal bombed and machine gunned the enemy before Durruti's positions. But despite

1 *Soviet Life*, July 1968. Article by Yegor Yakolev.

2 Colodny, pp. 74-75

3 Loc-cit, pp. 74-75

all this, heavy machine gun fire from the Fascist trenches so demoralized the Anarchists that they absolutely refused to attack.⁴

Durruti, angry and shamed, returned to the War Ministry to tell Miaja and Rojo that the attack would be attempted again the next morning. The President of the Madrid Junta, taking him at his word, then made the supreme blunder of leaving the Anarchist troops in the Casa de Campo, in an area directly in front of the University City.

On the following day, before Durruti's staff could agree as to whether they would carry out this last commitment, Colonel Yagüe sent his assault forces, backed by great masses of artillery and aviation, into the attack. The Anarchists were directly in the path of their advance—and they broke and ran, leaving that critical gateway, with the Frenchman's Bridge intact, open to the enemy.

Within minutes two Tabors of the Regulares of Tetuán and the 6th Bandera of the Foreign Legion had charged through the breach, and over the now empty republican trenches. They crossed the river in one dash seizing many buildings inclusive of the Hall of Philosophy and the School of Architecture in the heart of University City. More fascist battalions streamed into the breach. And now from their new vantage point the Fascist-Military could actually look down upon the broad avenues leading to the heart of the capital.

General Kléber, in desperation, threw in the depleted and exhausted battalions of the International Brigades and the 50 Regiment. The advance was halted, but not before a critical portion of University City had been captured. In the ensuing brutal, hand-to-hand no-quarter fighting Kléber's men did, however, win back the Instituto del Rubio, the María Cristina Asylum; a wing of the Clinical Hospital and a part of the Casa de Velásquez.

Varela's assault marked the deepest penetration of rebel forces into Madrid. And though they held but a single brigade across the Manzanares, it would remain that way for two long years, until that time when the treacherous Casado-Besteiro Junta did what the Franco armies could not do—open the gates of Madrid to the enemy.

Buenaventura Durruti again appeared at the War Ministry, asking this time that his men be withdrawn from all fighting.

Enrique Lister, soldier of the 50 Regiment, lieutenant, captain, colonel, general—commander of the 5th Army Corps of the People's Army, writes that: "I saw Durruti on November 18 and 19, and at the time of his death. I met him at Miaja's *Estado Mayor* at a meeting of Chiefs of military units and sectors. It was there that commanders, among these, myself, suggested that it was lamentable that a force had to be no more than three days in the lines, now asked to be withdrawn. The immense majority of the volunteers

⁴ Ibid. p. 75

(inclusive of Madrid's anarchists) had been fighting since the first hour without rest, and continued to fight with no thought of being 'relieved.' I said then, however, that if they wanted to leave, let them leave. We would defend Madrid without them just as we had always defended it."

"Durruti tried to explain about the nature and the character of his men, of their customs, their ideas about discipline and the practice of 'command,' etc And, as I listened, I began to understand the internal tragedy of this man who was both strong and good, a combatant of courage; a victim now of the very ideas that he had scattered. We left together in friendly spirit."⁵

Upon Durruti's arrival at the War Ministry on the 14th, he asked that a Soviet advisor be assigned to his unit. And while this was apparently never done in the truest sense, still the Russian officer known as Xsanti in Spain (In WWII he was Colonel-General Haji-Umar Giorovich Mamsurov. He was also a friend of Hemingway and, since he commanded guerrilla units in Spain, was the model of the Russian partisan advisor in *For Whom the Bells Toll*) met with Durruti many times. During the few short days they knew each other they became fast friends.

Mamsurov states that he was told by Roman Karmen, another Soviet volunteer and writer, about Durruti's decision. Upon which he immediately went to Durruti's headquarters.

Karmen accompanied him and writes the following: "Durruti was dictating to a typist. Once seeing Haji he jumped to his feet and walked briskly toward him, gripping his hand in a long clasp as though he hated to let it go. Although Haji had known him only a few days, Durruti, it seemed, could not bear to be parted from him. He had taken to Haji at once, admiring his courage, stamina and frankness.

"'Is it a fact, Durruti, that you are pulling back your brigade from the front line?' inquired Haji. 'You know that we are short of reserves and that you are therefore imperiling the most vital sector of the front.'"

"'Yes, I am pulling the brigades back,' Durruti shouted. 'The men are tired, tired of the bombing and the shelling.'"

"'But you've been in the lines only three days! You know how much the people appreciate the fact that the Anarchists have come to fight in Madrid! Have you thought about the effect the withdrawal of the brigade will have on them? Why are you doing it?'"

"Durruti dropped his head, pressed his hands to his temples and said in an undertone: 'I know, but *they* insist.'"

5 Lister, pp. 88-89

“He pronounced the word 'they' with rancor, jumped to his feet and began to pace the carpeted floor.”

“‘I'm going to the brigade now,' he said suddenly.”

“‘I'll go with you,' Haji proposed.”

“‘No!' Durruti said, 'No!'”

“Haji and I then drove off to the staff headquarters of Madrid's defense, and Durruti went to his brigade.”⁶

The Anarchist, Peirats, theorist and Secretary-General of the *Movimiento Libertario* (Anarchist movement) in exile, writes that Durruti “drove to his sector of the front—an area before the Model prison. He spotted a large group of his men who had again left the trenches. He commanded that his vehicle be halted, and he got out and approached those he assumed were abandoning their positions. At that very moment shots rang out and Durruti, still but a few paces from his automobile, fell dead without saying a single word.”⁷

Julián Zugazagoitia, a member of the Socialist Party Executive and a man close to Caballero—he supposedly played some part in the investigation of Durruti's death—writes that: “Durruti left the car with a pistol in each hand. He was shouting 'To your posts, cowards! To your posts! You are disgracing the name of the F.A.I.'”⁸

Then the shots rang out and Durruti fell. The official explanation—to allow the Anarchists to save face—was that he was killed by a sniper. But a Catalan member of the F.A.I., dining sometime later with Señora Durruti, a Frenchwoman, asked simply: “How did he die? Surely you must know the truth.”

She replied, “Yes, I know it.”

“Then what happened?”

She looked straight at me.

“Until the day I die,” she said, “I will accept the official version 'that he was shot by a Civil Guard from an upper window.'”

6 *U.S.S.R. Today*, July 1968. Article by Roman Karman, p. 52

7 Peirats, p. 245

8 Zugazagoitia, J., p. 216

Then in a lower voice she said: "But I know he was killed by one of those standing beside him. It was an act of vengeance."⁹

Despite these documented, historical facts of the defense of Madrid and the role of the Anarchist column led by Durruti, the Trotskyist, Felix Morrow, wrote the following:

"The Stalinists were even so desperate as to welcome the triumphal entry into Madrid of the picked troops of the C.N.T. Aragón front columns, whose heroic conduct destroyed the slanderous myth, already being propagated by the Stalinists, about the Aragón militias. Shortly after bringing these troops, however, the greatest military figure produced by the war, the anarchist Durruti, was killed and the spotlight was turned on Miaja."¹⁰

The above should shed some light on the man, Morrow, his work and his supporters, though other than this quite iniquitous example of lies and deceit with which the Spanish people were forced to contend, it will shed no light at all on the realities of the Spanish struggle.

The Durruti column was relived, for it was now considered to be more of a danger to the Madrid front than an asset. The greater part of it was also disarmed. It was then allowed to go back to the areas of the Aragón and Levante fronts.¹¹

9 Payne, Robert, p. 125

10 Morrow, p. 179

11 Lister, p. 89

DECEMBER, 1936, TO MAY, 1937

The repercussions of the Madrid victory by the Mija Junta were to have their effect upon both the Fascist-Military and the Caballero government. For Franco the immediate result was the embarking for Spain of an entire Italian Army Corps to join with the tankists, artillerymen and pilots already serving the rebel army. The Condor Legion too was to be augmented in strength, though in numbers its total cadre would in no way compare with those from Italy.

For Largo Caballero, the victory was something else. After all, he had not only fled—which, under the circumstances, was understandable—but he had, in effect, written the city off. And even as the city refused to die, all Spain knew it. There had been no retreat to Tarancón; to Albacete. Indeed, for all intents and purposes the military and moral prowess of the Madrid Army now exceeded any other in Republican territory. That this same army could have exercised effective control over the other diverse sections of Spain, however, is something else. And there, too, perhaps, was a part of the tragedy of the Second Republic.

The fighting before Madrid did not cease. But now, for the Franco Armies, it had become one of attrition, preparatory to the arrival of new arms and new cannon-fodder.

The Northern front, Oviedo, and the Basque country, was for the moment, quiescent. This was also true of Aragón and the Levante. Only in the Center and South of Spain did the enemy continue his all-out action. Indeed, other than the initial fighting for Irún and San Sebastián, in Euzkadi, it had been that way from the first weeks of the war. Along the 300 kilometers front in Aragón there had never been a serious attack by either side.

The one salient and lasting feature of the victory of the Madrid populace over the Army of Africa was the emergence of the Spanish Communist Party as the dominant party, on the Left. It had proven itself the most capable, not only of sacrifice, but of knowing how to organize for victory. With the P.C.E. there was simply no play-acting or “revolutionary” posturing. There was only the dogged determination to win the war against fascism—the number one point on the Spanish agenda.¹

The thinking of the Communist Party of Spain in those days is best understood by the following program broadcast over Radio Madrid by Dolores Ibárruri in early January. It is a summation of the measures the Communists considered necessary for victory:

1. “A government, such as the present one, composed of the representatives of all the forces expressing the opinions of our popular masses, must have full authority. Everyone, individuals and organizations, must respect and obey it, carry out its decisions, and those of its officials.

1 An interesting example of Communist strength is seen in that on Nov. 7, 1936, at the time of the toughest fighting in Madrid, the strength of the P.C.E. had grown to 23,000 in the city alone; of which 21,000 were at the front in one capacity or other. *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 153. Vol. II

2. Military conscription should be started immediately as the only rapid way to create a giant people's army, duly organized and disciplined to ensure military effectiveness. This army should have both civilian and military commanders, loyal to the Republic and its people. The army and its commanders must be respected and their orders obeyed without discussion. We must create a general staff and a single command for the armies operating on the different fronts. This general staff and general command should be composed of the best and ablest soldiers, as well as the best representatives of those parties and trade-union organizations that enjoy the confidence of the people. Their orders must be obeyed without discussion.
3. The strictest discipline in the rear-guard to be achieved by means of an educational campaign on the nature of this war, to end the simplistic and dangerous idea that the war concerns only those regions in which it is fought rather than the people in every region of the country. The sacrifices and shortages due to the war should be shared by all the inhabitants of loyalist Spain.
4. Our basic industries should be reorganized and nationalized, primarily the war industries, in order to satisfy the needs of our combatants and civilians. All the trade unions, political parties and individuals loyal to the popular cause, should strive to impress upon the population the importance of one single concern and goal, that of producing more goods of better quality in order to speed our triumph.
5. A coordinating board should be created to regulate industry and the general economy. Board members should be the representatives of all the technicians and specialists of the Popular Front to insure that this important state agency may guide and direct production. Their decisions must be carried out by all.
6. Production should be controlled by the workers, but the organisms entrusted with applying this control must act in accordance with the plans outlined by the coordinating board.
7. Our agricultural zones should provide all that is necessary for the battle and home fronts. This should be achieved on the basis of a plan established by the representatives of the peasants associations and Popular Front organizations and parties. The peasants should be assured the ownership of their produce whether it be produced individually or collectively. Agricultural producers should be guaranteed national and international markets and a fair price for their products.
8. Agricultural production should be coordinated with that of industry and both should have the same objective: To win the war.

We must end the war rapidly. Let us show the people who are suffering under fascist tyranny that fascism is not invincible, that we can fight against fascism, that we can triumph over fascism.”²

Approximately four months had passed since Caballero had assumed power, formed his government, and taken the posts of Premier and War Minister. General José Asensio Torrado, having been “kicked upstairs” to the post of Under-Secretary of War, was now Caballero's adviser in all military affairs.

It is suggested that even for a man experienced in politics, the direction of a government such as the Popular Front in a land torn by war, and with a number of contending ideologies, would have been a most difficult task. The problems were those which could only be resolved by the participation and cooperation of all the forces represented in the government.

2 D. Ibárruri, pp. 270-271

Largo Caballero, jealous of the growing strength of the Communists; fearful too of the Anarchists in Catalonia, as opposed to his Socialist-Republican base, and badly advised by persons with ulterior motives and questionable convictions, failed to overcome those difficulties. During the moments in which the fate of Spain was being decided, he had by his side only one military adviser, General Asensio, whose incompetence and total lack of rapport with the combatants of the Republic had become more than obvious. The political advisers who surrounded Largo, the irresponsibles of the Right and Left, such as Baraibar (connected with the Moroccan debacle), Aguirre, Araquistáin and Llopi: all pushed him toward a precipice of an insensate, subjective policy, bringing him into conflict not only with his own party, but with all the other parties of the Popular Front. His program now, if allowed to continue, could end in disaster for the Republic.

The ensuing great battles that swept the Iberian Peninsula across the span of two long years—battles which saw untrained militia units become battalions, brigades, divisions and Army Corps of the new People's Army—will now be dealt with but sparingly, though with an attempt to show the facts as they were.

The war continued. In the north where a massive Rebel offensive was being prepared against Bilbao, the capital of the Basque autonomous republic, preliminary and continued bombings were terrorizing a people already subjected to the miseries of hunger imposed by a blockade of the Rebel fleet.

On the Madrid, Guadalajara and Jarama fronts the government decree ending the unwieldy militia system had been met with enthusiasm. The need for a united and cohesive command had long been recognized. The existence of purely political units, owing allegiance to no one excepting their immediate superiors of the Anarchist, Socialist, and Communist parties, was a luxury that had, all too often, been paid for in blood and lives. It was a situation that could no longer be endured if the war was to be won.

Unfortunately, however, the Anarchists were not aware of this. Therefore, on the Aragón, Levante and Estremadura fronts the situation remained disorganized, and chaotic.

The first days of January, as a continuation of the battle for Madrid, had seen bloody fighting at Boadilla del Monte, Pozu la, and Las Rozas.

On January 16, a drive was launched against the southern coastal city of Málaga by a full division of the Italian C.T.V. (*Corpo Truppi Volontari*) commanded by the Italian General Mario Roatta, together with rebel troops under Queipo de Llano. Largo Caballero, at the advice of Asensio, had refused the plea of the War Commissar for Málaga, Bolívar, for arms and aid. Asensio had told him that Málaga had more than enough arms for its defense.

According to one source Asensio was deliberately lying. The facts were that Málaga

possessed but six antiquated field pieces and the few rifles in the hands of the militia of the area.³

The results of the attack were predictable. Málaga was bombed incessantly from the sea and air; Franco's cruisers, the *Canarias* and the *Baleares*, lay in the roadstead, giving the city salvo after salvo. On February 8 the city fell. Refugees clogged the single coast road that followed the sea to Almería. Still there was no support from Valencia. The Polish 13th International Brigade, decimated after the fighting at Madrid, and at rest in Murcia, petitioned to be sent to the defense of those who were attempting to flee the Málaga trap. Their request was refused.⁴

Simultaneously with the drive on Málaga was a second offensive launched south of Madrid and in the direction of Alcalá de Henares. The objective was to sever the Madrid-Valencia road and to isolate the capital; this in preparation for a planned Italian offensive, in the direction of Guadalajara, which would seal the city's fate. The offensive south of Madrid was also ignored by the Valencia government.

The reasons for the refusal of Caballero and Asensio Torrado to recognize the twin dangers of Málaga and Jarama will be discussed by historians and polemicists for many a year to come. It is said, for instance, that Caballero was much too engrossed in plans for an offensive of his own, designed to break the siege of Madrid, to pay attention to the massing of the reinforced units of the Army of Africa. When he did move it was too late. And the Jarama valley, south of the capital, was engulfed in a sea of fire and shrapnel from the first onslaught of the Fascist-Military.

The Jarama campaign, as apart from the attack against Málaga, was the result of the failure of Varela to take Madrid by frontal assault in the months of November, and December and January. The heavy casualties suffered at Las Rozas, Majadahonda, and El Pardo against the reorganized forces of Miaja and the International Brigades had been decisive. But the Franco High Command had not altered its strategy. Varela and Orgaz, under the direction of Von Thoma, Faupel and Sperrle, had decided on a massive flanking attack due east from rebel positions in a direct line south of Madrid. This line was based on the towns of Valdemoro, Pinto, Seseña and Getafe. The attack would be on a twenty kilometer front, striking first for the city of Arganda in the Jarama-Tajuña triangle. Then, basing their left flank on the Jarama-Henares rivers, they would cut north-east to the city of Alcalá de Henares. The road from Madrid to Guadalajara would then be severed as would that to Valencia. Madrid would be effectively isolated.

Some forty thousand troops were deployed for the initial assault. These were in five columns with a reserve of four battalions of Carlist *Requetés* plus two battalions of the

3 Ibid. p. 273

4 Landis, p. 37

Foreign Legion and six Tabors of *Regulares*. Also, operating under an independent command, there were two battalions of German machine gunners in the uniform of the *Tercio*, two companies of tanks, German led and manned, and a company of armored cars. The major forces of the Condor Legion were shifted close to the projected theatre of action. Italian air strength would operate jointly with the German air-arm. Since the original date set by the Frano command for the attack, January 23, had been canceled because of heavy rains, the new date was February 6, 1937. The attack on that date was to coincide with the expected Italian victory at Málaga.

The Republican lines were completely unfortified, lightly held, and criminally unprepared for the massive blow that was to be launched against them—criminally in this case, because this need not have been.⁵

On February 5, on the Jarama perimeter, the Rebel brigade of Colonel Escámez overran the town of Ciempozuelos in a surprise attack. The defending 18th Brigade was annihilated; reputedly it left 1,300 dead on the field. The main assault was launched on February 6, and Colonel Rada, advancing from Pinto, seized Cabeza Fuerte and the heights of La Marañosa, where two defending Republican battalions were destroyed to a man.⁶ In the center the Buruaga Brigade advanced from Valdemoro. Its cavalry squadrons captured Gozques de Arriba, but were repulsed at San Martín de la Vega by a solid and effective Republican resistance.

On February 7, Colonel Rada was stopped at Corbeteras by the Republican 19th Brigade, defending the road north to Vacia-Madrid. At this point, Colonel Barrón came up from Pinto and the two brigades together stormed Coberteras. A great mass of German and Italian guns were then placed on the heights of La Marañosa, effectively dominating the terrain and allowing Rada to advance to the heights west of Vaciamadrid, and bring the Madrid-Valencia highway under artillery fire.⁷

In approximately forty-eight hours, the Fascists had advanced to a depth of eight kilometers on a 20-kilometer front. By the 8th, Orgaz' intentions were clear. The main blow would be directed across the Jarama to Arganda; not directly north to Madrid. Madrid units were dispatched to the aid of General Pozas. The brigades of Líster, Durán, and Valentin Gonzáles ("*El Campesino*") moved south. The 12th International Brigade (Garibaldi) was at Arganda with two *carabinero* battalions, and the decimated Thälmann Brigade, entrained for the front from its brief rest in the city of Murcia. The 14th (Franco-Belge) Brigade, also not up to full strength, was put on alert and the newly formed 15th (Abraham Lincoln Brigade) was ordered to prepare for action.

5 Ibid. p. 51

6 Muñiz, p. 84. Also: Zugazagoitia, p. 213

7 Colodny, p. 112

On February 9, General Pozas created the Arganda Military Group. The 12th International Brigade was attached to this group, as was the 14th Brigade—all under the command of Colonel Mena of the Valencia staff. The André Marty and Dombrowski battalions were thrown immediately into a counter-attack against Corbeteras. The attack failed and torrential rains began, followed by icy sleet. It was not until the night of the 10th that the Rebel Colonel Barrón moved his troops toward the Pindoque brigade, southeast of the captured heights of La Marañosa.

The bridge was defended by a detachment of the André Marty Battalion. Moroccan units, taking advantage of the cloudfilled, moonless skies, crept through the dense woods on the west bank of the Jarama. They surprised and knifed the sentries on the bridge, then proceeded to wipe out the rest of the company of some seventy men who were sleeping in slit trenches. The alarm was raised and the bridge ordered destroyed. The explosives were to be set off electrically from the village of Pajaros, but they were improperly placed and the bridge scarcely lifted into the air before settling back on its foundations. By dawn of the next day the Moroccans had crossed the bridge in great strength, and squadron after squadron of Cavalry deployed upon the plain.

The French fought back desperately, retreating finally to the first small range of hills where they held the cavalry at bay.

The Garibaldis were thrown in immediately, to strike at the growing forces of Barrón, and to bring the Pindoque bridge under fire again. By this time the Moroccans had already seized a height to the north of the French which dominated the bridge. They had also brought up a score of mountain guns. The Garibaldis, nevertheless, fought their way through a hail of bullets and shrapnel, rolled Barrón's infantry back and created an almost suicidal line across a section of the plain; there they placed their guns and brought the bridge under fire. Under their Commander, Pacciardi, they held this exposed position for three days, forcing the cavalry and infantry to swing completely around them.

Barrón attacked north-east, trying for Arganda. The bridge by this time had been repaired and infantry and tanks were crossing in great numbers, despite heavy casualties from the guns of the Italian anti-fascists. At this point, there appeared a number of Republican tanks from the command of the Soviet General, Pavlov.⁸ And these, assisted by the first flights of Republican planes, destroyed some of the fascist artillery and tanks and drove the rest back across the river. The Republican tanks, in turn, were given a drum-fire barrage from the massed guns on La Marañosa, and were forced to retreat.

Again Barrón, heavily reinforced, resumed his advance.

The full force of the squadrons of cavalry now turned southeast toward the depleted ranks

⁸ Muñiz, p. 91. Also: Aznar, Vol. I, p. 360

of the André Marty Battalion. The French had just four machineguns left, with approximately two belts per gun. Artillery fire from La Marañosa ranged their line too, falling upon flank and rear. They knew they were effectively cut off from any help. They knew too what had happened to the defenders of the Pindoque bridge.

The first charge of some sixteen hundred sabers was driven back by the machine guns and the Battalion's remaining companies of riflemen. Then the French fell back to the next range of hills, taking their wounded with them. They placed their guns as expertly as they could, knowing that there could be no further retreat.

The cavalry in the valley below had meanwhile been reinforced; when they charged again they numbered well over two thousands. The guns of the André Marty Battalion cut down the charging horsemen in swaths, causing terrible losses until finally their ammunition was exhausted. They were then overrun by one last attempt by the cavalry, and by a swarm of Moorish infantry that had come up the Chinchón road from the rear.

The Poles of the Dombrowski Battalion, thrown into the breach, arrived in time to see the last of the French wounded being butchered before the Moroccans continued their advance.

The Poles fought for each line of hills. Again the casualties among the Moroccans, both infantry and cavalry, were terrible. The Franco historian, Manuel Aznar, writes of situations in which one sergeant with perhaps two men would be left of whole sections.⁹

But the assault continued. It ceased only in the first hours of darkness, when Spanish Republican battalions finally arrived on the scene. These, with a handful of tanks and the remnants of the Polish Battalions—the Poles had sustained over 500 casualties of their original total of 1,000 men—held the last line of hills before the Arganda road.¹⁰

Dawn of the next day found the Rebel commander Asensio Cabanillas storming the town of San Martín de la Vega, some ten kilometers to the south of the Pindoque bridge, and wiping out its Spanish defenders. They had, at first, prevented the Rebel crossing of the Jarama by a hail of fire. But Asensio, taking a page from the book of Barrón, sent Moroccans to the bridge under cover of darkness to massacre the Spanish guards. This was done by the 3rd Tabor of Regulares of Tetuán.¹¹ By noon the next day, Asensio had crossed the Jarama in force and seized the dominating height of Pingarrón, another critical height, which, according to Colodny, was “left strangely undefended by the Republican Command.”¹²

9 Aznar, pp. 82-83. Vol. II

10 Colodny, p. 118

11 Loc-cit, p. 117

12 Aznar, p. 86. Vol. II

The situation the 12th of February was one of continuous attack and maneuver. Rebel commanders Buruaga and Rada were being held before Vaciamadrid, where the Fascists had crossed the Manzanares. Barrón had been brought to a halt before Arganda. Asensio and certain of Barrón's units now lay across the road leading to Morata de Tajuña. And to the south, Escámez made no attempt to advance farther after his capture of Ciempouzelos.

The developing process of maneuver involved bloody fighting. On this day alone, General Orgaz committed some twenty-five thousand men to the attack; the Republican General Pozas, likewise. At 10:00 a.m., Republican artillery, appearing for the first time, brought the Pindoque bridge under fire and, according to Aznar, thirty-two Russian tanks repeated the performance of the previous day.¹³ They broke across the plain against all opposition and stormed across the bridge; once again they began wiping out rebel artillery positions in the hills. The Fascist tanks, German and Italian, were powerless before the strength of the Russian armor. Indeed, Rebel positions on the periphery of the Pindoque bridge were held only because of the massive concentrations of artillery on La Marañosa. The Republican tanks, lacking any kind of coordinated infantry support, were forced to retreat again by these same guns.

The Rebel field commander, Varela, then called for even heavier air support in view of the tank action, and because of the *elan* of the defending Spanish and International infantry. It was then, while squadrons of Junkers and Heinkels carried out their usual bombing runs, that some forty Republican fighter-planes appeared at the bridge. The Fascist planes were quickly driven off, and for the first time in the war the Republic had achieved mastery of the air on a single sector of a single front. On this day, with the aid of the tanks and planes, sufficiently strong defensive positions were established on the northern flank of the Jarama so that all action against Vaciamadrid and Madrid proper was contained.

Varela then shifted the direction of the drive toward Morata de Tajuña on the Chinchón-Arganda highway. This town was connected to San Martín de la Vega by a road through the hills from the Tajuña river valley to that of the Jarama. The 15th International (Lincoln) Brigade, then moved into action—minus, for the moment, the American Battalion, still in Albacete. The Hungarian International Commander, Colonel Gal, had at first planned a counter-attack, using both the 15th and the 11th Thälmann Brigade. But the Fascist seizure of the heights of Pingarrón precluded this action. Instead, Gal was forced to deploy his men in defensive positions on the hills before Morata.

On the morning of the 12th, the British Battalion of the 15th moved into the fields before the positions of Asensio. They settled on a knoll to the south of the road to San Martín. And “it was the defense of this position for the first seven hours of the day that masked the weakness of the Republican front and prevented the Rebel command from discovering

13 Colodny, p. 118

that for a space of three miles south of the British positions there was an absolute gap in the Republican lines.”¹⁴

The British stood firm against repeated charges of the Moroccans. The 6th of February Battalion fought on a line to the north of the British. On their right flank, still further north, were the eight hundred men of the Dimitrov Battalion. By noon of that day the 6th of February Battalion had its first two companies decimated by artillery and machinegun fire. It was forced to retreat, its antiquated Colts jammed and out of action. This exposed the British on their knoll. A few tanks were rushed up and the French advanced again, only to be driven back once more. The tanks were also forced to retire, leaving the British, the French and the Slavs of the Dimitrov Battalion to defend themselves against Fascist tanks and artillery, and complete batteries of machineguns with nothing but bolt-action rifles. There was not one hand grenade in the entire Brigade.¹⁵

The Germans of the 11th suffered also. While the 15th fought off the assaults of Asensio, the 11th attempted to storm a position known as the Casa Blanca. They were beaten back with heavy losses. The Dimitrovs, receiving the full force of the Moroccan Tabors deflected by the British and French, were driven from their positions in the olive groves five times—and five times, at bayonet point, they retrieved them.¹⁶

Few indeed are the battles of World War II that equaled in ferocity the clash of opposing forces on these few square kilometers of earth. Company after company, battalion after battalion, brigade after brigade, were hurled into the battle from both sides.¹⁷

The unceasing, fantastic action of attack, movement and maneuver exacted a toll upon both Rebel and Republican that can only be described as horrible. The Rebel General Varela lost two thirds of his effectives; the Republican General Pozas, the same. But Varela and Orgaz knew that given another two days, reinforcements rushed to Republican lines could be decisive. Varela decided, therefore, to mount one last attack on February 14.

It began at daylight with the usual barrage. Barrón, on the right, was stopped cold by Spanish Republican troops. Asensio, after terrible losses, linked up with Buruaga and shattered the entire Republican left flank. Enrique Lister's men were forced back, as were the remnants of the 15th Brigade. The 180 survivors of the British Battalion—it had originally numbered 600—retreated toward Morata. On a sunken road they were met by Colonel Gal, who explained that they *must* return; that there were no other troops; and that a gap had been created which had to be filled or the road to Arganda and Henares would be lost.¹⁸

14 Ibid. p. 119

15 Book of the 15th International Brigade. Diana Publishers, Madrid, 1937. p. 46

16 Loc-cit, p. 46

17 Colodny, pp. 121-123. Also: Thomas Wintringham, *English Captain*, p. 75. Faber & Faber, London, 1939

18 *Britons in Spain*, William Rust, Int. Pub., N.Y., 1939. pp. 52-53

The battalions of the 15th rallied and smashed Asensio's center. Then, together with the forces of Lister, it drove the Moorish Tabors and a battalion of German heavy machinegunners all the way back to the positions they had held on the 12th.

The battle was equally bitter on Buruaga's front. His attack toward the Arganda-Colmenar road reached its peak in intensity simultaneously with the retreat of the 15th Brigade. "The Rebel column drove a wedge between the 12th International Brigade and the 11th, and under the cover of withering fire from 150 guns, the tabors of Larache and the banderas of the Legion drove the *Edger André* from the hills, forced its retreat and thus virtually isolated the 11th Brigade."¹⁹ At that point the tank commander, Pavlov, deployed his tanks against the Moroccan flank. Fifty of them roared at top speed through the olive groves with cannons and machine guns firing into the ranks of the Moors. They fell back; at first in order, then in wild retreat. The 11th Brigade and the Dimitrov Battalion advanced simultaneously, smashing Buruaga's front and driving his forces back toward the Jarama.

That night the 14th International Brigade arrived and the next morning launched an attack that cleared the entire road between Morata and Arganda. Four International Brigades were now in line, holding the center front. The 5th, and last, the 13th Brigade had been sent, finally, to Motril, to help stop the Italians moving up from captured Málaga.²⁰

On February 15, an order of the Ministry of War extended General Miaja's Madrid Command to the Jarama sector—something that should have been done as soon as the direction of the attack became known. Madrid troops struck immediately rolling Barrón's cavalry back from the Arganda-Madrid highway to the north, while tank-led Spanish units recrossed the Manzanares River to the very slopes of La Marañosa. Only massive intervention of the Nazi air-arm prevented their breaking the entire northern complex of the Rebel advance. The front then began to stabilize and, like Madrid, the lines became veritable fortresses where the power of both sides was, for the moment, immobilized in fixed positions.

The one last, suicidal attack to take place on the Jarama front was, strangely enough, spearheaded by the newly arrived American unit, the Abraham Lincoln Battalion. Robert Colodny describes it as an act of "monumental stupidity" organized by General Gal, in which the Americans attacked the heights of Pingarrón with no artillery; no planes; only their rifles. They were met by a triple-line of interlaced machine guns, through whose curtain of fire they tried to advance. By day's end there were but 100 survivors of 450. One hundred and twenty-seven were dead in the olive groves and the remainder wounded.

19 Colodny, p. 124

20 Thomas, p. 379

Without a doubt the fighting on the Jarama was not only a victory for the Republic, but had proven quite conclusively that given anything approaching parity in arms and men, even though those on the side of the republic were anything but professionals—yet, the Republic would win. “The newly organized Republican Army,” Hugh Thomas writes, “with the International Brigades as models, had for the first time held the Nationalists in open country.”²¹

Throughout Republican Spain there seemed to be a sense of euphoria. A campaign was launched for volunteers for the new army. It was carried out to the very heartland of Anarchist control, Barcelona. The President of Catalonia, Luis Companys, together with Azaña and Largo Caballero, appeared before a gigantic multitude in the Plaza de Catalonia, asking for volunteers, Companys asked for an “act of devotion” from the people there assembled. “Catalans,” he cried, “Do you promise for the honor of your regiments, to endure every sacrifice, and put forth every effort, in order to conquer Fascism?” The gathering roared “Si!” as one body. “Catalans!” Companys continued, “your promise has ascended into the infinite, has been heard throughout the world and by generations to come. Remember this! *Visca la Libertat*.”²²

Only the F.A.I. and certain elements of the C.N.T. and P.O.U.M. held back. The defeats of the Franco armies was seen as more of a threat to themselves than a victory for the Popular Front. Indeed, at their annual conference in mid-February, the F.A.I. threatened to withdraw their Ministers from the Government unless the Aragón Front was supplied, and quickly, with arms.²³ Some had been sent. But the F.A.I. deemed them insufficient to mount an offensive. That arms from the Soviet Union had not begun to match the weaponry sent to Franco, and that these arms were desperately needed at the points of greatest contact, appears to have escaped Anarchist reasoning. This was really not the case, however. Indeed the reality was far more serious than that.

21 Ibid. p. 381

22 Loc-cit, p. 381

23

GUADALAJARA!

On March 8, 1937, just ten short days after the *Lincoln* disaster at Jarama, the long heralded Italian offensive to capture Madrid was launched.

The ease of the almost all-Italian victory at Málaga, had apparently convinced the forces of the Italian C.T.V. that Madrid would fall in like manner. Franco historians maintain that because of this Italian thinking, previous grandiose plans for the shifting of the center of operations from the Madrid front to the area of Levante had been abandoned. Those plans too had called for the use of Italian divisions, using the fortress city of Teruel as a base. An armored wave of Italian and Spanish troops were to strike south from that citadel to join with additional Blackshirt Divisions to be landed at Sagunto above Valencia beneath the protection of the Italian fleet. Republican Spain would thus have been cut in half and hopefully, for Franco, its doom sealed.¹

The flaw in the plan, of course, was that Italian intervention in such a glaring and obvious manner might just force the hand of Britain and France. The farce of non-intervention could cease abruptly, and aid to the Republic might be forthcoming.

Madrid would be the quicker victory, so reasoned Mussolini's generals. And the Italian Army would achieve in a matter of days what Franco's forces had failed to do.

The new plan, initiated with both German and Italian approval, called for a strike at Madrid through the Tajuña, Badiel and Henares valleys. Guadalajara would be the first major objective. Simultaneously, reinforced brigades from the south, under Orgaz, would once again renew the attack on the Jarama. They would smash through the Alcalá de Henares to join with the force of Italian Legionnaires coming down from "conquered Guadalajara."²

The plan held the definite possibility of bringing an early end to the war—if successful. Madrid, with the greater part of the Republic's best units, would be cut off, with little hope of further resistance. However, two errors in judgment were being made by the Fascist-Military. No. 1. The Republican Madrid armies—in the short space of six months, were something to contend with. In no way could they now be compared to the poorly armed and poorly led militia of Málaga. No. 2. Winter still hung heavily over the land. The air-arm of the Fascist divisions, except for Orgaz' Jarama corps, operated from fields to the north of the Guadarramas. Each flight, therefore, had first to hurdle the snow crests before attaining the open roads and valleys beyond. If the weather turned bad—and it was to do exactly that—the situation could be disastrous. The Republican airforce, though numerically inferior, could operate from the all-weather fields of Madrid and Barajas, in

1 Aznar, pp. 97-98. Vol. II

2 Ibid. p. 95

the environs of Guadalajara.

Each new Fascist offensive had committed a more massive and complex force to the field of battle. The attack to encircle Madrid was no exception. It began with a massing of sixty thousand troops and their auxiliaries. The right wing of this force, attacking from Atienza, was the Soria Division commanded by General Ituarte Moscardó, the Rebel defender of the Alcázar. This division, numbering some twenty-thousand men, was composed of *banderas* of the Foreign Legion, Moroccan *tabors*, cavalry, and a few regiments of *Requetés*.

The Italian General, Roatta Mancini, commanded the main forces, consisting of four complete Italian divisions. They were the Blackshirts of General Rossi, the Black Flames of General Coppi, the Black Arrows of General Novalari, and the Littorio Division of General Bergonzoli. This Italian corps alone had the armored support of 250 tanks and 180 varied pieces of mobile artillery. In addition, the Fifth Division (The Black and Blue Arrows), composed of a mixed brigade of Italian-German infantry, and four companies of motorized machine-gunners, was placed at the disposal of Mancini.³ Air support consisted of three groups of Italian planes and three groups from the Condor Legion, with 12 planes to a group.

On March 3, as Mancini brought his divisions into line, he issued the following order of the day:

"I have the honor to communicate to the commands and troops of all the units under my orders the resolution adopted by the Fascist Grand Council on March 2, 1937.

The Fascist Grand Council expresses its solidarity with National Spain and greets the armed forces of Franco, whose victory will mark the end of all bolshevik designs on the West and a beginning of a new period of power and social justice for the Spanish people, which is bound to the Italian people by ancient ties of language, religion and history.

The Fascist Grand Council in sending its greetings to the armed forces acting under the orders of his Excellency, Generalissimo Franco, has in mind, above all, the 50,000 comrades who are fighting on Spanish soil under the Fascist emblems and for their glory.

Officers! Volunteers! The greetings which come to us from the Mother Country through the Fascist Grand Council, the highest spokesmen of the nation, fill us with pride and emotion while fresh victories await us.

Let us be worthy of such honor, and with the gratitude and determination let us utter the cry which is the symbol of our faith and our aspirations to victory.

Hail to the Duce! A *NOI!* Signed—MANCINI"⁴

The opening hours of the attack on the 8th revealed a tactical surprise, fully achieved.

3 Rojo, p. 84

4 Colodny, p. 130

General Vicente Rojo of the staff of the Madrid Army, to which all units of the Guadalajara, Guadarrama, and Jarama sectors were now attached, writes: "Though the preparations for this offensive were known, the extent and the forces massed for the offensive were not; at least not in the quantity which appeared on the first day of commitment."⁵ Rojo further states that after visiting the two Republican divisions defending the breakthrough sector of the front—they were the newly organized 10th and 2nd divisions composed of ten thousand men and twenty-two guns—their officers had assured him that there was no sign of offensive activity; and that they were actually planning a limited action of their own.⁶

Within three hours of Mancini's opening barrage, the massed tanks and armored cars of General Coppi's Second (Black Flames) Division were streaming through the first breach in the lines. On the right flank, Moscardó enveloped Castilblanco and drove toward Cogoludo. In mid-morning, however, the temperature dropped and the first rain turned to sleet and ice. Thus, while the Fascist planes were unable to leave their impoverished runways, the Republican airforce attacked the advancing armored columns. In the words of Hugh Thomas, this same vile weather, "as well as the fatigue of the men, prevented Orgaz from embarking on his attack in the Jarama valley."⁷

Thomas' statement is somewhat misleading, since it is known that Generals' Orgaz and Varela had already carried out a series of attacks on the Jarama at the request of the Italian High Command. United Press dispatches, dated Madrid, March 2, refer to heavy fighting in the Jarama sector.⁸

Though the entire Republican front above Guadalajara had become unhinged in a matter of hours on the first day, the one thing that became instantly clear was the nature of the Italian plan. This had not been true of the first days of Jarama. General Mancini's main blow was being directed down the Zaragoza-Madrid highway. Guadalajara lay squarely in the way. And because of the scarcity of any road network in this section of the barren, Castilian plateau, there would be few if any alternatives. A combat headquarters staffed by Madrid officers, was set up at once in Guadalajara, and a new military group came into being. Listed as the 4th Army Corps, it was placed under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Jurado, who immediately effected a redeployment of the Madrid and International Brigades in the vicinity.

The Fascist advance continued. On the ninth, the mechanized units poured through every gap in the Republican lines. Almadrones fell; Alaminos fell; Brihuega and Trijueque were enveloped and threatened by the divisions of Coppi and Nuvolari on the right flank. On the

5 Rojo, p. 79

6 Ibid.

7 Thomas, p. 384

8 U.P. Dispatch: Madrid, March 2, 1937

left, the town of Cogolludo was captured by the Soria Division. The ease with which the Fascists had broken the front proved deceptive to the Italian High Command. Robert Colodny writes of their progress and of their mistaken optimism:

“Their (Italian) over-confidence grew with every kilometer.... They mocked the Spanish officers attached to their staffs.... 'Why so many months to conquer a defenseless city?' they asked on the morning and in the afternoon of March 9, as their spearheads reached points thirty kilometers from the jumping-off place. By evening of the second day, the Italians had the answer to their taunting questions: the 11th International Brigade of Colonel Hans; the 12th of General Lukács; the brigades of Líster's 11th Division; the picked Anarchist battalions of Cipriano Mera's 14th Division; and El Campesino's veteran guerrilla battalions had passed through Guadalajara and dug in along the roads running to Guadalajara from Brihuega and Trijueque By the morning of the third day, the front had been reorganized by General Rojo and the 4th Army Corps headquarters Guadalajara, had been reconstituted.”⁹

In the early hours of March 10, Brihuega fell to the Black Flames and Black Arrow divisions. The advance then continued in the direction of Torija and the Guadalajara-Madrid road. General Bergonzoli's Littorio Divisions followed close behind as a reserve. On the right flank, Moscardó's Soria Division reached Jadraque on the banks of the Henares.

Hugh Thomas gives the following description of the first confrontation of the forces of Líster, El Campesino, and the 11th and 12th International Brigades with the Corps of General Roatta Mancini:

“About noon, the Garibaldi Battalion advanced along the road from Torija towards Brihuega. They had no idea that Coppi and Nuvolari had already taken that town. Reaching the so-called Palace of Don Luis, they advanced on foot accompanied by a motorcyclist patrol. Five kilometers short of Brihuega, this patrol encountered a motorcyclist from Coppi's Black Flames who, hearing the Italian voices of the Garibaldi Battalion, asked if he was right in supposing he was on the Torija road. The Garibaldi motorcyclist said that he was. Both groups now went back to their headquarters. Coppi assumed that the Garibaldi scouts were a part of Nuvolari's division. He therefore continued to advance. Ilse Barontini, the Commissar and acting Commander of the Garibaldi Battalion, continued also. He placed his men in woods to the left of the road, where they made contact with the similarly far advanced 11th International Brigade. Coppi's tanks now appeared. They were attacked by machine guns of the Garibaldi's. The Black Flames infantry was sent into the attack. Two patrols of the opposing forces met. The Black Flame Commander asked why the other Italians had fired on him. '*Noi siamo Italiani de Garibaldi*,' came the answer. The Black Flame patrol then surrendered. But for the rest of the day the Italians fought a civil war of their own around a country house known as the Ibarra Palace. Vidali, Luigi Longo and Pietro Nenni¹⁰ meantime arranged a propaganda machine. Loudspeakers called out through the woods: 'Brothers, why have you come to a foreign land to murder workers?' Republican aircraft dropped pamphlets promising safe conduct to all Italian deserters from the Nationalists, with a reward of fifty pesetas. One hundred pesetas were pledged if they came with arms.

Meantime in Rome, Count Ciano was assuring the German Ambassador, Von Hassel, that Guadalajara was going well. 'Our opponents,' he added, 'are principally Russian.' The next day, the 11th, the battle began

⁹ Colodny, p. 132

¹⁰ Three commanders and commissars of the Italian, anti-fascist, “Garibaldi” Brigade

again. The Italian Fascist commanders were favored by an order of the day from General Roatta Mancini instructing them to keep their men in a state of great exaltation. 'This is an easy matter,' went on Roatta, 'if they are frequently spoken to with political allusions, and are always reminded of the Duce, who has willed this conflict.' The Black Arrows on this day broke the front of Lister's 11th Division, capturing Trijueque, and began to drive fast in their armored cars along the road to Torija. The Thälmann Brigade suffered heavy casualties and complete defeat was only prevented by the personal will-power of Ludwig Renn, the new Chief of Staff of the Brigade. Rallying, it held the road to Torija from Trijueque. The road to Trijueque from Brihuega was also held all day by the Garibaldi Battalion.

On the 12th a storm permitted the Republican bombers, rising from their permanent runways, to pound away unmolested at the Italian mechanized columns. Among the casualties was General Luizzi, Mancini's Chief of Staff, killed by an incendiary bomb. Lister then ordered his division to counter attack. General Pavlov's tanks attacked first, to be followed by the infantry. Trijueque was recaptured at bayonet point by the Thälmann and Capesino Brigades. Many Italians surrendered. The Republican attack continued along the road to Brihuega. The Garibaldi Battalion stormed their compatriots in the Ibarra castle and captured it at nightfall. The following day, March 13, the Republican Government telegraphed the League of Nations that documents and statements by Italian prisoners clearly proved 'the presence of regular military units of the Italian Army in Spain' in defiance of Article 10 of the Covenant

General Mancini now dispatched his other two divisions, Rossi's Blackshirts and the Littorio Division under Bergonzoli. Both attacks were beaten off. On the 14th, Pavlov's tanks drove up the road beyond Trijueque towards the Cathedral city of Sigüenza, captured a great deal of materiel, and might have even taken Sigüenza itself had they been supported by mobile infantry. There was a pause in the battle for three days on March 15, 16 and 17. Mancini issued orders of the day, but made few preparations, preferring to complain of the continued inactivity of Orgaz on the Jarama."¹¹

On March 18, the Republican forces launched an attack along the entire front above Guadalajara. The tanks of Pavlov; the Spanish troops of Lister, of El Campesino, and of the Anarchist, Cipriano Mera; the Volunteers of the 11th and 12th International Brigades; and the Republican airforce under Hidalgo de Cisneros, swung to the offensive. By the end of the day the entire Italian Army was in wild flight up the Aragón highway. The Franco General, Moscardó, hard pressed on the left flank, also retreated.

The town of Brihuega fell. Masegoso, Cogollor, Utande, Hita; village after village was reconquered by the advancing Republicans. The great attack that had started short days before to win Madrid and end the war with a Franco victory had met total disaster.

Captured materiel lined the highways. Trucks, guns, shells, all the paraphernalia of modern war, were still being inventoried in Madrid two weeks after the final stabilization of the line. Ernest Hemingway, who was on the scene, wrote of "mountains" of ammunition, shells, grenades, and provisions.¹² More than two hundred heavy machineguns alone were listed in the booty of the first days. Reports of the casualties suffered by the Italian Army Corps are varied. Franco apologists say that only three hundred prisoners were taken and that there were but two thousand dead and three

¹¹ Thomas, pp. 385-387

¹² "Fact," Article: *The Spanish War* by Ernest Hemingway, London, July 30, 1937

thousand wounded.¹³ These figures appear in most of the pro-Franco dissertations on the Spanish War. But, since the figures do not agree with even the captured data from German and Italian archives during WWII, the reports from the men on the scene seem more consistently valid. It is quite indicative, for instance, that the Italian ambassador to Fascist Spain, Roberto Cantalupo, refers to the Italian dead in terms of “several thousands.”¹⁴ A final consensus of the more conservative Republican figures lists the Italian losses as approximately 3,000 dead; 6,000 wounded, and upwards of two thousand prisoners. The casualties of the Soria Division were much lighter.¹⁵

This particular battle, Guadalajara, has taken its place among the great struggles of history, though its singular importance could not be exploited. It has been likened by historians to the Italian defeat at Caporetto in World War I, and was an invaluable yardstick for Allied measuring of the fighting capacity of Mussolini's armies in World War II. It was certainly the most astounding victory of Republican arms since the opening guns of the Fascist rising. Herbert Matthews (*The New York Times*), Ernest Hemingway, Mikhail Koltsov (*Pravda*), and most of the Spanish Republican leaders viewed the defeat as decisive, and as perhaps the turning point of the war.

Republican Spain had been strengthened considerably by the arms shipments from the Soviet Union. Now, the proof that these arms could be used to defeat a superior enemy, instilled in the new, developing, People's Army, a heightened sense of confidence. And too, the absolute proof of German and Italian intervention (through prisoners, documents, etc.) could no longer be denied by the sanctimonious appeasers of the Non-Intervention Committee. So reasoned the leaders and friends of the Spanish Republic. But even they were not aware of the depths of iniquity to which the western creators of the pattern of betrayal would sink. For even after the exhibiting of the first hundreds of Italian prisoners in Madrid, the parading of the many captured Ansaldo tanks and other war materiel; the presentation of the mountain of captured documents—after all that, the British Foreign Office could still announce with a straight face that “there was no official confirmation of the *rumor* of Italian troops on the Madrid front.”¹⁶

The inability of the Republic to exploit the victory of Guadalajara was a part of that bitter frustration and defeat with which she was constantly met. A student of those times will clearly see how the path to *Münich* followed an almost hypnotic and preordained pattern.

13 Colodny, p. 237

14 *Fu La Spagna*, Roberto Cantalupo, Milan, 1948, p. 200

15 Fernández, p. 315

16 Colodny, p. 236. (Notes) Also: almost simultaneous with the British denial of existing evidence to support the fact of massive German-Italo intervention on the side of Franco, the following U.P. Dispatch was released . . .

“ROME: U.P. March 23, 1937. While he (Mussolini) berated the British his Ambassador to London, dapper Dino Grandi, informed the International Non-Intervention Committee 'that Italy refuses absolutely to discuss recall of Italian Volunteers fighting with Rebel armies in Spain.' Grandi, whose announcement burst open the neutrality committee with the shock of an explosion, said it was his personal opinion that not a single Italian soldier will leave Spain until the Civil War is ended. The number of Italians serving with the Insurgents has been estimated at between 60,000 and 8,000.”

All the world knew that elements of the regular German and Italian armies fought in Spain. All the world knew that the preponderance of arms from those same countries was the only thing that kept the forces of Franco in the field. All the world knew these things Only the chancelleries of State, of the Quai d'Orsay, of No. 10 Downing Street, of the White House in Washington, did not. So they said! And the tragedy was that those who fought and died for the life of the Spanish Republic, were forced, of necessity, to continue the charade of pleading for justice from their supposed "friends" who, for their own reasons, were as implacably opposed to the Republic as the most fanatic of Fascists.

The real tragedy lay in the fact that those who fought for the Republic knew this even then. And knowing, still fought with a tenacity and a courage that sometimes seemed of another world.

THE NORTH:

The defeat of the Franco armies at Jarama, followed by the rout of the Italians at Guadalajara, engendered an almost precipitate change in the strategy of the Franco-Italian-German high command. They decided, at the risk of stabilizing the Republican Front, to concentrate all their efforts on the subjugation of the Basque and Asturian autonomous republics on the Viscayan coast. These sectors comprised an enclave of some five thousand square miles in the body of Fascist Spain. A major consideration of this strategy seems to have been the need for quick access to the industrial complex of Bilbao, and the coal of Asturias—plus complete control of the northern coast.

The fast growing Nazi war machine needed this raw materiel at once, and it needed it without hindrance. Certain economic requirements would now be given priority over a quick victory.

Mola was placed in command of the operation. He was given upwards of fifty thousand assault troops, in addition to the troops of the line. Fifty batteries of assorted artillery were assembled, plus a huge concentration of air-power. German and Italian tanks were present in quantity.

The Basque Army of the Autonomous Republic had an estimated 45,000 volunteers in twenty battalions *without machine guns*. It possessed twenty-five obsolete aircraft, twenty equally obsolete guns and twelve tanks and that was it. The Basque commanding general was pessimistic in the extreme as to his chances against the superiority of Mola. He made no effort to hide his defeatism.¹

As at Málaga, the Caballero government responded only weakly to the peril in the north. Its actions everywhere were becoming inept and futile, apparently helpless in the face of the multiplicity of adverse conditions with which it thought itself confronted.

The offensive in the north began on March 31, 1937. The planes of the Condor Legion dive-bombed without mercy every village in the proximity of the front lines, and laid waste the town of Durango. By April 4, the Basque militia had begun a retreat before furious aerial and artillery attacks. They surrendered a string of fortified mountain tops and the town of Ochandia. Heavy rains then interrupted the offensive; it was not until April 20 that it got underway again.

The indecision of the Caballero Government was equaled by its counterpart in the north. For despite the fact that the Republic had been subjected to war and invasion for almost a year now, and that during that year the autonomous areas of the north had in no way suffered the horrors of total war, as had central Spain, there still existed no unified

¹ Thomas, p. 402

command in either the civilian or military area of the territory of Asturias and Euzkadi. The laissez-faire attitude was evident in the incompetence of the critical section of the Basque Command before the arms of Mola and newly arrived divisions of the Italian *Corpo Truppi Volontari*.

On April 26, at four-thirty on a Monday afternoon, the Basque “holy city” of Guernica was bombed by continuous waves of Heinkel 111's and Junker 52's. The greater part of the town was totally destroyed and civilian casualties were listed at 1,654 dead, 889 wounded.² The new German theory of *Blitzkrieg*, lightning war, was being fully applied in Hitler's chosen training area.

The Basque militiamen, the individual volunteers of the Socialist and C.N.T. unions, were as courageous as their counterparts in the south. The militia units of all parties fought well, in most cases heroically, against the might of Mola's Army. The lack of weapons against the attack of tanks and planes was a serious obstacle. The lack of competent and principled leadership was a disaster. By May 1, the line of defense had been forced back to within fifteen miles of Bilbao,³ and the final retreat to the *Cinturón*, the ring of fortifications around the city, was on the order of the day.⁴

And it was precisely at this moment that the political leadership of the P.O.U.M. and the “special groups” of the F.A.I. chose to challenge the power of the Spanish Republic in the streets of Barcelona.

2 Ibid. pp. 419-421. Also: Del Vayo, pp. 201-202.

3 Azcárate, pp. 106-107

4 Ibid. p. 107

BOOK FOUR:
The Death
of the
Spanish Republic

THE ANARCHISTS!

Essentially there were four contributing factors to the defeat of the Popular Front of the Spanish Republic. The first was the open intervention of Italy and Germany. The second, which when combined with the first, was the *major* factor, was the betrayal of Spain by the “Western Democracies.” The third was the series of Governments, prior to that of Premier Juan Negrín, which placed the authority and the safety of the State in the hands of the military incompetents who had nothing in common with the needs and the suffering of the Spanish people Many, as has been proven, were out and out Fascist agents whose sole purpose within the government was to bring it down. Last, was the utter failure of the Spanish Left to resolve its differences in the face of the overwhelming challenge of Fascism. The principle struggle here was between the Left-Socialists and Communists on one hand, and the Anarchists of the F.A.I. on the other. And it hardly need be said to any objective student of Spanish affairs, that the principal blame for this disunity lay squarely in the lap of the F.A.I.

Across the intervening thirty-odd years since the triumph of the Fascist-Military, the propaganda of the F.A.I. has generally prevailed. Not that they have been the disseminators of this propaganda. Indeed, there has been little in print of Anarchist theory in practice on the Spanish War anywhere in the world. Others have done this job for them; with a simple blanket endorsement bereft of any attempt at meaningful analysis. This, it would seem, was “a job agreed upon” by both the Right and the Ultra-Left, for the simple and quite obtrusive reason that it was the one way to negate the lessons of the war, and thereby deny them to future generations in their time of crises.

History is a continuity of events derived of the developing social and economic conditions of mankind. If there are those, who, for self-serving reasons, tamper with it so that a fact becomes its opposite, and the whole course of a quite positive struggle for progress is channeled into the blind alleys of sophistry and infantile polemics, then quite obviously the truths of that struggle are denied and become as nothing—or worse, are so warped as to present the wrong answers to those who would use them as a matrix for solutions to contemporary problems.

The ultra-left—echoed in chorus by establishment supporters—have told us across the years that the Anarchists alone seized Catalonia from the Fascist-Military.

Not only is this untrue but it is a fact that Barcelona, alone among the major cities of the Peninsula, was the only one in which battalions of Civil Guards, Assault Guards, and Carabineros remained loyal to the Republic. They moved into the streets, as has been shown, and into battle with the Fascist-Military before ever the militants of *any* part of the

Left had fired their first shot—thus laying the ground work for the people's victory.

Franz Borkenau writes: “The Catalans alone, in 1934, had mostly ran. The Catalans, united with the C.N.T. in 1936, fought heroically. The *Guardia Civil*, which in the rest of Spain had gone over to the insurgents wherever it could, held firm in Barcelona. So did the two Republican police formations, the *Asaltos* and the *Mozos de Esquadra*; so did the airforce. The police formations gave the untrained workers a backing and competent leadership; both together in two days if fighting put down the revolt.”¹

Granted that it was the presence of the people that won the final battle. But the people were not the F.A.I. and even they did not win it alone. And it is a perversion of history to say otherwise.

There are those among the loyal Spanish military who write in their memoirs that Barcelona and all of Catalonia could easily have been held for the Republic *without* the aid of the Anarchists. Colonel Jesús Pérez Salas whose men fought the Fascist-Military in the streets of Barcelona from the first hours, writes that: “The direct intervention of the F.A.I. simply led to more bloodshed, with no benefits at all for the Republic. Until that moment the forces at the side of the Republic were already well on their way to complete victory over the rebellion against the Constitution of the State.”²

Be that as it may, a direct, and in the immediate sense of that time, tragic result of the Anarchist participation was that *all* military units, loyal or otherwise, were then caught up in the euphoria of the moment so that they ceased to be companies, battalions, artillery units, etc., and instead became wholly undisciplined bodies of men with no commanders; no Tables of Organization—nothing. All arms were surrendered to the Anarchists and the military, seemingly, just melted away. The “force” that then set out for Zaragoza and Aragón bore no resemblance to even the early militias of Extremadura and the Central Front, for those, at least, sought some kind of efficiency and discipline, whereas the F.A.I. wanted only to destroy these very attributes.

And let us examine this advance to the North. Unlike the veritable blood-baths literally drenching the south, central and northern fronts as a result of the no-quarter fighting between the Republican militia and the Army of Africa—no such condition existed in Aragón. Indeed, the Fascists boast that they held Zaragoza, Huesca, Jaca and all of Aragón with a handful of nothing. The Franco historian, Manuel Aznar, writes: “In Aragón the Nationalist Command had nothing: Neither artillery nor aviation; nor even machineguns in sufficient quantity or strength to defend the most threatened point.”³

1 *The Spanish Cockpit*, Franz Borkenau, Faber & Faber, London, 1937. p. 63. My italics.

2 *Guerra en España*, Col. Jesús Pérez Salas, Mexico, D.F., 1947. p. 100.

3 Aznar, (1940 ed.) p. 334.

It is absolute fact that the only major city to offer resistance to the advancing Anarchist columns was Caspe; upon which the Anarchists promptly retreated. It was left to two hastily organized companies, a machinegun section of the Lérida Regiment, and volunteers from the J.S.U. To march on Caspe. Once there this small unit of the regular Spanish army and its supporters, commanded by the Republican Captain Zamora, defeated the companies of the Civil Guard, sent them to Barcelona under arms and, itself, continued all the way to the outskirts of Belchite, meeting but small resistance along the way.⁴

To the north and east of Zamora's unit, battalions of the regular army, based on Seo de Urgel and Barbastro, and under the command of the loyal Colonel Villalba, advanced to the gates of Huesca and Jaca where they were joined, first, not by the F.A.I., but by a reorganized company of *Asaltos*. Even the city of Alcaniz, soon to be occupied by a column of the Anarchist, Ortiz, was first seized from a small unit of the enemy by a battalion of regulars from a regiment stationed in Tarragona.⁵

If a majority of the military units that had remained loyal to the Republic in Catalonia—some 20,000 men—had been thrown against Zaragoza in the first days, the city could easily have been captured. This is the consensus of all those familiar with the Spanish War; including the Fascists.

As it was, even those small reorganized contingents that had marched to Zaragoza and Huesca, when finally joined by the Anarchist columns, fell rapidly under the contagion of the pseudo-revolutionary virus. The companies of Lérida and the battalions of Tarragona and Seo de Urgel were then absorbed into the F.A.I. units to become but a part of the disorganized militia.

One has the right to ask: “Just where *did* the F.A.I. and the P.O.U.M. do battle?” The answer is that until they reached the line *chosen by the enemy*, Belchite, Zaragoza, Huesca, Jaca—they didn't. Skirmishes, yes! Fire-fights, yes! But no battle! Certainly not the great heralded offensive. Indeed, there is no example of a *major* attack by Anarchist units anywhere in Aragón.

And if the Anarchists chose not to attack, well that was perfectly all right with the Fascist-Military. For all that they had, all that the governments of Italy and Germany had given them, was committed to the destruction of the Republican forces on the center front, and to the drive on Madrid.

Was the F.A.I. capable of an offensive of the size to capture Zaragoza—Jaca—Huesca? *The answer is yes!* Just as the regular forces referred to by Colonel Pérez Salas, would have

4 Salas, p. 105

5 Ibid, pp. 105-6-7

been capable, had they not been broken up and destroyed as effective units.

For what the F.A.I. lacked in organization, they made up for in arms and men. There is this to remember: the arms of nine regiments from the zone of Barcelona alone, plus those of Tarragona, Lérida, Gerona, Seo de Urgel and Barbastro; plus the arsenals of these cities, inclusive of over a hundred heavy guns from the artillery park of San Andrés alone, were in the hands of the F.A.I.⁶

In the July and September days of 1936, there was no shortage of weapons in Catalonia. The rest of Spain may have been fighting desperately and against insuperable odds—*but there was no shortage of weapons in Catalonia!*

An offensive in Aragón in the first weeks of the war could, even if it failed, have saved Madrid and the entire valley of the Tajo, including Toledo. If successful, the course of the war itself, without a doubt, would have been changed.

Manuel Aznar writes quite candidly as to what the Fascist-Military thought of such a contingency: “Who would doubt,” he asks, “that an entrance of the Catalan militia into Zaragoza would have had incalculable results, consequences profoundly affecting the entire course of the war.”⁷

The question then is: “Why didn't the Anarchists unleash their offensive on the Aragón Front?”

And the answer to that is to paraphrase the “gloomy prince” in that something “was indeed rotten in the State of Catalonia.”

The disparity between the thinking of the Socialists/Communists and the Anarchists has been described by some as an unbridgeable abyss. And so it seems to have been. The first was idealistic in the most infantile sense; the second Marxist. Spanish Anarchism, since its inception, had fought every aspect of Marxism, deeming those who espoused that materielist philosophy as being equally the enemy along with the State in all its guises, be they Feudal, Bourgeois-Capitalist or Corporate-Fascist. No matter to the F.A.I. that the simple peasant and worker may have preferred to the Republic with its faults to the alternatives of Franco's firing squads and a return to the dark ages. To the theorists of the F.A.I. there was only one way—their way. And if it was not to be done that way, then they would bring it all down.

Diego Abad de Santillán, Anarchist ideologue, theorist and member of the F.A.I. executive, writes that: “For we who were in the Spanish social vanguard, whether Negrín triumphed with his communist cohorts, or if Franco won, with his Italians and Germans, *the results*

⁶ Ibid. p. 107

⁷ Aznar (1940 ed.) p. 240

would be the same"⁸

⁸ Abad de Santillán, p. 14

TO OPPOSE THE REPUBLIC!

With the fighting in Barcelona ended, the Anarchist leaders seized the opportunity for the implementation of a long conceived plan. This was no less than the seizure of political, social and economic power throughout Catalonia, and its further extension to wherever possible.

Resorting to direct terrorist methods, including the use of weapons against the workers of other organizations, the Anarchists took over the principal commercial and public buildings of Barcelona. The black and red banner and the letters F.A.I. and C.N.T. dominated the city.

Contrary to much that has been written by western historians peculiarly interested in exalting Anarchist activities, that which allowed them this domination was, above all else, the circumstances existing immediately after the defeat of the insurgency.

At that precise historical moment there was no single force capable of opposing their plans short of the instigation of civil war.

And their theories had yet to be disproved in practice—the hard way. The legal authority of the Catalan Government, the *Generalitat*, gave them free rein. And all other political and workers parties were numerically weak.

The Catalan section of the Socialist Party, the Catalan Communists, the Socialist Union of Catalonia and the Catalan Proletarian Party, had already created a liaison committee with the idea of creating a unified Marxist Party. This committee now demanded of President Companys that he convene a meeting of the Popular Front of Catalonia to prepare for a widening of the *Generalitat*, and to allow entrance to it of the different parties. Companys agreed. The meeting was held on July 21, 1936. The Socialists Vidiella, Comerera, Valdes and Sese were present for the U.G.T. and the above mentioned workers parties. Terradellas and Aiguadé for the Catalan Esquerra; Tassis and Marca for Catalan Republican Action, and representatives of parties such as the Izquierda Republicana and the newly formed Partido Obrero Unificado Marxista, or P.O.U.M. Attended.

The atmosphere of the meeting was one of unity. The idea of creating a Catalan Government of the Popular Front was looked upon favorably even by the P.O.U.M. The decision was adopted to set up Popular Militias and methods of procedure were discussed.

There then appeared quite suddenly in the conference room a large group of Anarchist leaders. These were García Oliver, Buenaventura Durruti, Vázquez, Abad de Santillán, Eroles, Portela; all with Sam-Brown belts and pistols; some even with rifles. They had

shunned Popular Front meetings before like the plague. Now they had come to present an ultimatum to the assembled delegates. They could do this because unknown to the others they had already met in private with Companys and he had agreed to their demands, saying: "You have won and all is in your hands. If you no longer need me, or do not wish me to continue as President of Catalonia, tell me and I shall become but one soldier more in the fight against Fascism. If, on the contrary, you think that in this post, in which I would die before I would allow Fascism to triumph, that I, with the men of my party, my name and my prestige can still be utilized in the fight that is ending today in the city, then you can count on me. I am a man convinced that today the past is dead and that Catalonia should march at the head of the most advanced countries in the world."¹

With García Oliver as spokesman the Anarchists insisted upon the immediate creation of a "Central Committee of Militias" of Catalonia. Since they would surely dominate such a Committee the act of constituting such a body as a control organ was tantamount to giving them power. Their interests were, so they said, "to lead the revolution," "to cleanse the rear" and "to organize and send militias for the seizure of Zaragoza." No one could argue with that; nor would one want to. The composition of the Committee would be unitarian, that is to say, representative. AT the side of the delegates of the F.A.I. and the C.N.T. would be delegates of the U.G.T., another from the Esquerra, and another in the name of the four parties to be united in the P.S.U.C.

Companys and the bourgeois Catalan parties accepted. They had little choice. In the discussion the Anarchist leaders were disposed to tolerate the President of the Generalitat in the knowledge that his would be but a formal and decorative position. After some modifications the Committee was "officially" agreed upon.

The Committee of Militia, wrote the *Faista*, Santillán, "was a Ministry of War in time of war; a Ministry of Interior and a Ministry of Foreign Relations all at the same time—inspiring similar organs for the areas of economy and agriculture."²

In each of these departments representatives of diverse tendencies were present. But in reality their presence had no importance. For the key posts were in the hands of the F.A.I. Oliver and Santillán controlled the War Department; Aurelio Fernández y Asens, Public Order; Vallejo, War Industry, and the Secretary General of the Committee itself was Jaime Miravittles, formerly of the Esquerra, now acting under the dictates of the F.A.I.³

The military officers who worked with the Committees had all been selected for their identification with the F.A.I. and C.N.T.

1 *Guerra y Revolución en Cataluña*, Manuel D. Benavides, Mexico, D.F., 1946. p. 186.

2 Santillán, p. 170

3 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 9. Vol. II

The representatives of the U.G.T. and P.S.U.C. (now formed) Rafael Vidiella and José Miret, respectively, were effectively isolated and could do little.

The Committee created a corps of milicianos which took the name of "Control Patrols." These too were heavily weighted with members of the F.A.I.

Thinking themselves the rulers of Catalonia the *Faistas* aspired to extend their "revolution" to the rest of the country. But in loyal Spain the correlation of forces were altogether different. "Catalonia," observed a C.N.T./F.A.I. bulletin issued August 2, 1936, "could be rightly called but an oasis within the Peninsula."⁴

In no way discouraged by this state of affairs the F.A.I. began agitated discussions in the first days within the leadership of the Libertarian organizations in Barcelona about the tactics that should be followed. The more extremist wished to impose an exclusively Anarchist "dictatorship"⁵ without delay, and this despite any possible rupture or consequent armed confrontation that might result with other parties of the Left. One might add, and despite the need for unity in the face of the already visible intervention on the part of the Fascist Powers. But the thinking of the more realistic leaders such as García Oliver and Durruti prevailed. These pointed out the position of inferiority of the F.A.I. in the rest of the country; saying that organs such as the Committee, despite the participation of other groups, still permitted Anarchist hegemony.

F.A.I. conduct in these first weeks of the war also allowed for the distinguishing within the executive of the leadership two groups whose political positions were sufficiently different as to be in opposition with each other. The history of the Anarchist movement had consistently produced this anomaly.

The first consisted of those who considered as fundamental the tasking of winning the war against Fascism. They clashed with the principal ideologues such as Peirats, Santillán, Vallejo and Portela. They then vacillated and were finally forced to accept the imperatives of the main group of F.A.I. theorists. Tragically it was they who represented the mass of the C.N.T., and who in all areas but Catalonia fought willingly at the side of their Socialist, Communist and Republican brothers. Their principal representative was Durruti. García Oliver was also a partisan of this thinking, as were Ángel Pestaña and Mariano Vázquez, Secretary of the National C.N.T.

The second, predominant group, was composed of those who considered their principal mission to be the creation of a purely Anarchist revolution. They would seek by force of arms to implant the concepts of Libertarian Communism wherever possible, and to capture Zaragoza as a first step upon the road to complete control of Spain itself. Concepts

⁴ Ibid. p. 10

⁵ Ibid. p. 7

of unity in the face of the real enemy were alien to their thinking. These *Jefes* or Chiefs, considered the various bourgeois democratic and republican parties as well as the Socialists and the U.G.T.—and above all the Communists—not as allies, but as their principal enemies. *More so even, than the Fascist-Military.*

And *this* was the general line and policy of the F.A.I.

An essential key to its success, so they thought, was the accumulation of arms in the rear, with the long term view to the armed struggle that would inevitably develop between themselves and the other anti-fascist parties throughout Spain. Added to the weapons taken from the army garrisons was a steady stream of small arms from across the French border. Some purchased by the Government in the first days; some purchased by the Anarchists themselves through their international, the A.I.T.⁶

Among the fighting cadres of this second group were men who had little in common with the Spanish worker. These were declassed elements, adventurers, professional pistoleros, in certain areas they constituted the bulk of the F.A.I. cadres. They also formed a high percentage of the so-called *Specific Nucleus*, or “Special Forces,” those that imposed F.A.I. laws upon the rank and file of the C.N.T. They agreed upon policy of allowing only F.A.I. members to occupy posts of trusts within the C.N.T. paid off in power far beyond the membership of the political organization.⁷ A resultant tactic of this kind of cadre was that terror was frequently resorted to. In those rare periods when national C.N.T. leadership favored some modicum of unity in the common struggle, the Special Forces resisted, demanding in the name of the F.A.I. that the principal fight be constantly directed toward those very forces—the Socialists and Communists—toward which the C.N.T. should be leaning.

Other than the two groups indicated, and independent of the various negative and positive values defined by ideological and political characteristics, it was difficult to distinguish between Anarchist ideologues and the many camouflaged Fascists who had infiltrated the F.A.I. groups. The objective of these last was quite simple: first to hide to escape imprisonment; second, to create disturbances, impede the coordination of military actions; use the influence of the C.N.T. within the workers movement to weaken unity and resistance; compromise the mass of the C.N.T. in actions which could disfigure the character of the war, and push the peasantry toward being enemies of the Republic, where they would then become obstacles to resistance.

Infiltration by these enemy elements was not difficult. All one needed for entry was an anti-communist, anti-socialist vocabulary and a familiarity with ultra-left rhetoric. In Barcelona infiltration was further aided by the existence of diverse Anarchist currents from different European countries, among which were not a few agents of distinct

⁶ Jackson, p. 304

⁷ Borkenau, p. 37

imperialist groups. José Bertrán y Musitu, in his work dedicated to Franco espionage—he directed the secret service of the Fascist-Military in Barcelona for almost two years—writes of his contacts within the Anarchist movement as having “found preferred places with full knowledge of how to maintain themselves there.”⁸

The fact of F.A.I. penetration by Fascist agents has been recorded by not a few bourgeois historians. D.T. Cattell writes: “Many rebels chose to join the syndicates of the C.N.T., awaiting the day of liberation while they fomented whatever difficulties they could from that base against the Republic.”⁹

A rather strange testimonial was written by the F.A.I. ideologue, D. Abad de Santillán, in which he lauds the idea of “spiritual kinship” with José Antonio (the young leader of the Falange), and laments that José's intent, “to establish political bonds with the F.A.I.,” had not prospered.

“Despite the differences that separated us,” writes Santillán, “we can understand this 'spiritual kinship' with José Antonio, who after all was a fighter and a patriot in search of solutions for his country Spaniards of his stature, patriots such as he are not dangerous. *They are not our enemy*. As for changing the destiny of Spain, there had been before July, 1936, diverse attempts to align with us. If an accord had been tactically feasible, it would have been according to the desires of his father, Primo de Rivera.”¹⁰

One can begin to see what the rank and file of the C.N.T., as well as the masses of Catalonia and the rest of Spain were burdened with.

8 Bertran & Musitu, p. 66

9 Cattell, p. 133

10 Santillán, pp. 20-21. (notes)

The P.S.U.C.

On July 22, the day following a meeting of the Catalan Popular Front, representatives of the four parties met in the headquarters of the Socialist Union of Catalonia, on the Calle, Primero de Mayo.

Their objective was to unite and thereby present a revolutionary alternative to the F.A.I. in Catalonia. This was done, and on the 23rd the existence of the new organization, the Partido Socialista Unificado de Catalonia (Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia), P.S.U.C. came into being.

The P.S.U.C. affirmed that its ideological base would be the principles of Marxism-Leninism, and proclaimed its adhesion to the Communist International. Despite the objective of “unity,” however, there were still diverse opinions among the leadership. They had yet to agree, for instance, that the working classes of the separatist areas (Catalan, Basque, Gallegan) within the Spanish State were but one working class with the same enemies and the same interests, necessitating a tactic and a policy of common direction.

The first Secretary-General was Juan Comorera, a former head of the Socialist Union. His prestige in Catalonia was equal to that of Companys in that he had been Councilor of the Generalitat and had been sentenced to death together with Companys in October of 1934. The announcement of the creation of the P.S.U.C. coincided with the victory celebrations in Barcelona, and was received with interest and wide acclaim.

There were also international repercussions, in that this was the first time, historically, that Socialists and Communists had united in one party with a Marxist-Leninist base.¹

The P.S.U.C. directed its activities immediately to organizing the fight at the front, establishing anti-fascist order in the rear, and the developing of both industry and agriculture on a war footing.

From the moment of its creation, it was faced with a terrorist offensive, particularly its union cadres, by the *special forces* of the F.A.I. Antonio López Raimundo, Communist and President of the U.G.T. Union of Bank Clerks, was assassinated in the town of Zaiden where he was preparing to go to Aragón. On July 24, the leader of the Figols Miners, Prieto, was assassinated by the *Faistas*. On the same day Desidurio Trillas, Secretary of the Waterfront Workers of the U.G.T., was shot down by F.A.I. *pistoleros*. In the ensuing weeks the Special Forces killed over 200 Communists and Socialists, principally in the Transport Workers union where they had considerable strength. The F.A.I. then took over all urban Barcelona Transport. In the Hispano Suiza Works, where the U.G.T. predominated, the *Faistas*, led by the Anarchist, Vallejo, imposed their domination by terror. The leader of the union, Hueget

1 *Guerra y Revolución*, pp. 14-15, Vol. II

and two of his Socialist associated were gunned down in the streets.²

This criminal activity evoked the blackest days of the F.A.I. *pistoleros*—reminiscent of the period of 1919-1923—and very shortly provoked the profound indignation of the Barcelona working class.³ One can say, in fact, that it was precisely in this period, and in part for this reason, that Spanish Anarchism began its slow decline.

In a remarkably short period of time the P.S.U.C./U.G.T. truly became the alternative to the F.A.I. in Catalonia.

In-re the U.G.T., a process of union unification went parallel with the political unification of the four parties. The *Unión General de Sindicatos Obreros de Cataluna* (U.G.S.O.C.), controlled by the Socialist Union of Catalonia, for example, returned to the U.G.T. which it had left in 1934. On August 2 at a meeting in Barcelona of the *Centras Autonomistas de Dependientes de Comercio e Industria* (C.A.D.C.I.), whose leadership had been that of the Catalan Proletarian Party, the membership voted to enter the U.G.T. block.

Various other autonomous unions came forward to merge with the U.G.T., plus the *Federación Obrera de Unificación* (F.O.U.S.), controlled by the P.O.U.M. The Anarchists, in their drive for power, had even been disarming Poumist militia units.⁴ Some of the quasi-Trotskyist leaders of the F.O.U.S., however, were subsequently expelled from the U.G.T., though the mass of the workers remained.⁵

The characteristics of the Catalan U.G.T., too, were somewhat different then in the rest of Spain. Communists, for example, occupied positions of leadership in many of the principal unions such as metallurgy, construction, transport, produce, etc.⁶

And so the lines were drawn.

For the C.N.T., a decline would take place similar to that of the F.A.I. Old syndicates, comprising at one time the political heart of the C.N.T., had not returned since the break in 1934, when they had supported the Socialist rising as opposed to the F.A.I.'s refusal. In strategically important cities such as Sabadell and Manresa these syndicates controlled the workers movement.

2 Ibid. p. 16.

3 Loc-cit, p. 16, Vol. II. Also: Brenan writes (pp. 250-253) of this period—1919—that: “One peculiarity of Spanish Anarchism, which comes increasingly noticeable from now on, was the inclusion within its ranks of professional criminals—thieves and gunmen who certainly would not have been accepted by any other working class party . . . at Barcelona, dozens of pure *pistoleros* entered their ranks . . . the inclusion of so many men of criminal instincts could not fail to have a demoralizing effect upon the Anarchist organization.”

4 Borkenau, p. 91

5 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 17, Vol. 2

6 Ibid. p. 16, Vol. 4

A general meeting of the Federation was convened in Sabadell. García Oliver, speaking for the F.A.I., asked that they reaffiliate with the C.N.T. Vidiella of the P.S.U.C. asked that they now affiliate with the U.G.T. A secret ballot gave a vote for 70 percent to the U.G.T. And in other cities such as Manresa the same thing happened.⁷

On August 11 the F.A.I. was obligated by the force of facts to recognize the burgeoning influence of the P.S.U.C. A committee of liaison, established between the two groups, was charged with finding areas of agreement and mutual assistance. A first point of the P.S.U.C./U.G.T., was the right of free association by the workers of any union—this to put an end to the terror. The F.A.I. agreed. But the agreement remained on paper. The Special Forces continued their terrorism and it was to be a long time before agreements of any kind could be enforced.

7 Ibid. p. 17. Vol I

THE CASANOVAS GOVERNMENT:

Obligated to accept the Anarchist sponsored Central Committee of Militias in Catalonia, the P.S.U.C. then attempted to counter the influence of the F.A.I. in the Committee. Its objective was to regenerate strength within the Government of the Generalitat, itself, which it recognized as the proper apparatus for the expression of the Catalanian Popular Front. It saw in the Generalitat the only force to mobilize the energies of *all* Catalonia for the war against Fascism which, and we cannot reiterate this enough, still raged on every other Spanish front while Catalonia essentially did nothing. For this reason the P.S.U.C. accepted the proposal of the Catalan Esquerra (equivalent to the Left Republicans of Azaña), that it participate in a new Catalan Government.

On the 2nd of August the new Government of the Generalitat of Catalonia was duly constituted. President Companys withdrew from the political arena, designating as his Chief of Government the *Esquerrista*, Juan Casanovas.

The composition of the new government was the following:

Justice José Quero Morales (Esquerra)
Government José María España (Esquerra)
Finance Martí Esteve (Acción Catalana República)
Culture Ventura Gassol (Esquerra)
Economy Juan Comorera (P.S.U.C.)
Public Service José Terradelles (Esquerra)
Public Works Pedro Mestres (Esquerra)
Provisioning Ruiz Poinsetti (P.S.U.C.)
Agriculture José Calvet (Rabassaires)
Communication Rafael Vidiella (P.S.U.C.)
Defense José Sandino (Without affiliation, military)

When the composition of the Casanovas Government became known the F.A.I. reacted violently. For it feared above all that the P.S.U.C. would now seek to represent the workers and the syndicates within the Generalitat. A F.A.I. delegation went to Companys, demanding the new government's instant liquidation. In the course of the meeting they accepted a continuation of the government with the proviso *that the P.S.U.C. would be excluded*. They saw no opportunism in this total lack of any pretense at democratic procedure (they had refused to participate in the government themselves)—and indeed preferred a completely bourgeois government to the exclusion of any socialist or workers group other than themselves.

Companys delivered the F.A.I. ultimatum to the Cabinet. Fearful of an open break with the Anarchists the Esquerra then voted to oust the P.S.U.C. In the Press it was simply said that

Vidiella and Comerera had left on an official visit to Madrid.¹

To placate the Anarchists still further Casanovas submitted the list of the new government, prior to its being made public, directly to Mariano Vázquez, Secretary of the Catalan C.N.T., and that was that The political will of the entire Catalan people had thus been subjected to the censure of one man. He gave his approval.

The policy of the Esquerra in this period was determined by diverse factors. Among these was a desire for national unity in the fight against the Fascist-Military as expressed by their electorate. For this reason the majority of the leadership was generally against the developing chaos created by the F.A.I. and looked with sympathy toward the P.S.U.C. In contrast, another important section of the leadership pursued a different course. Juan Casanovas was one of these. In better days his associates had been foreign reactionaries and such elements as Reverter y Torres Ricard, secretary to the crypto-fascist, Dencás, who had fled to Italy after the 1934 defeat in Barcelona.

The idea of the Casanovas group was to impede the development of any strong workers movement which was truly revolutionary and independent. Anarchism preoccupied their thinking not at all. For with the Anarchists they could always play games. They always had and, historically, they had always won!

The period of the Government of Casanovas—the 2nd of August to the 26th of September, was both decisive and critical for the whole of Spain. It was also the period of maximum domination by the Anarchists of the affairs of Catalonia.

Here were two powers that essentially regarded each other with mutual abhorrence. The one, the Casanovas Government, being the legal and formal power; the other, the Committee of Militias, being the real power.

The principal point of unspoken agreement between the two of them was the struggle against the Madrid Government, and the fight to prevent the creation of a unified central organ which could head all the people of Spain against the Fascist-Military. The F.A.I. sought power to extend its hegemony and to realize its social experiments. Casanovas and others like him within the Esquerra, wished to separate Catalonia from Madrid, place it within the imperialist orbit of Western Democracies—and then obtain a separate peace with Franco. In this way both the Anarchists and Catalonia would be given the benevolent protection of England and France. The thinking was pure fantasy. But it was a time of fantasy—except for those who were pouring out their blood on the plains of Castile.

The Fascist-Military, on the other hand, though wholly rejecting any idea of “national rights” for the separatists of Catalonia, Euzkadi and Galicia, still stimulated these

¹ *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 19. Vol. II

separatist tendencies, at this time, for the sole purpose of breaking, or at least weakening the unity for the battle of the Popular Front of all Spain.

An important nucleus facilitating the ties between the Catalan Nationalists and the F.A.I. was, oddly enough, the Spanish section of the International Masonic Order. For within this powerful organization were many bourgeois Catalan leaders and such men of the F.A.I. as Manuel Escorza de Val, member of the executive of the F.A.I. Peninsular Committee.² An additional point of contact between the Nationalists and the F.A.I. was that both groups maintained liaison with certain circles of French imperialism. An internal document of the *Comité Peninsular de la F.A.I.* for October of 1937, records that in the first months of the fight in the summer of 1936, the F.A.I. established liaison with “high officials of the French Army,” who were their councilors in the acquisition and use of military equipment. And it is extremely interesting that these same French officials “saw in the militias—when well organized and equipped—the best instrument of triumph,” and extorted the Anarchists, “to repulse the idea of a regular army.”³

The marriage, F.A.I.-Casanovas, created the first of many difficult situations for Catalonia and Spain. On paper the Generalitat had taken upon itself certain functions belonging to the Madrid Government—such as control of the frontiers. The reality, however, was that neither the Madrid Government nor the Generalitat exercised this power, for it too lay exclusively in the hands of the Anarchists.

The *Faistas*, Aurelio Fernández, Chief of the Department of Public Order of the Committee of Militias, and his second in command, José Asens, Chief of the “Control Patrols,” were empowered to authorize or reject permission for anyone to pass the frontier to France. Many illegal detentions were made. In theory, valuables requisitioned by the F.A.I. from those “captured while trying to escape into France,” should have been turned over to the Generalitat. In fact, the F.A.I. was the only one to benefit. Few of those detained ever appeared before tribunals. The P.S.U.C. made every effort to put an end to arbitrary detentions and jailings in private places.⁴

The Casanovas Government also legalized the chaos which the F.A.I. had introduced into the Palace of Justice. A decree was issued on August 17 creating a “Juridical Office” to be headed by the F.A.I. lawyer, Eduardo Barriober. On the 25th of August another decree setting up popular tribunals similar to those in the rest of Spain partly canceled the power of Barriober. But the questionable activities of the Juridical Office prevailed over the tribunals until the end of 1936.

The power of the *Comité de Milicias de Barcelona* extended to all Catalan provinces.

2 Ibid. p. 20.

3 Santillán, p. 163, as quoted in *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 20

4 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 21. Vol. II

Puigcerda and all other frontier cities also came under Anarchist control, as did, in the month of August, Seo de Urgel, Barbastro, Caspe and tens of Aragonese towns and villages. In Lérida (a P.O.U.M. Stronghold), the P.O.U.M. and the F.A.I. together closed all centers of the Esquerra and other Republican parties, treating them as enemies of the people—this until a later date when the correlation of forces was altered, thanks mainly to the new strength of the P.S.U.C. and the Rabassaires.

This situation considerably reduced the proportionate aid that these areas would then give to the common struggle in that most critical period. The Army of Africa had just seized Badajoz, and the great offensive toward Madrid had begun.

From the beginning, the P.S.U.C. had announced to a receptive Catalan populace, that there was but one war, whether it be in Madrid, Catalonia, Andalucía, Estremadura or the North, and that Catalonia should mobilize its maximum resources for this total struggle. It refused to equivocate in its demands that a unified command be established and that Catalan forces be sent where they could best be used in the common struggle.

The slogans of the P.S.U.C. were: "All for the Front!" and "All for the War!" And as the enormity and peril of the fast developing situation became clear they raised the banner throughout the north-east zone of "Aid to Madrid!"

The Anarchist position continued to be quite different.

ZARAGOZA!

On July 24, the F.A.I.-sponsored Committee of Militias organized the first volunteer column to leave for Aragón. IT numbered 3,000 men and was under the command of Buenaventura Durruti. The euphoria was such that to the F.A.I. the taking of Zaragoza at that moment was looked upon as but a military "*paseo*."¹ They even envisioned a march to the Asturias for a link with the C.N.T. in Oviedo and Santander; upon which a firm base for the extension of F.A.I. power to the rest of Spain would then be complete.

They advanced with little difficulty to the regions already defined. And after brief encounters with small enemy detachments the Durruti column was established in the area, Quinto-Azaila-Pina. The front, as of that moment, and generally for the rest of the war, was to consist of observation points, patrols and a few shallow trenches and fortified hills—on the Republican side, that is. On the Fascist side there were heavy fortifications, deep bunkers and well engineered strong points.

Other than the personal courage of Durruti and many of his men, the F.A.I. conception of organization seriously reduced the efficiency of the column. And slogans pertaining to the advantages of "disciplined indiscipline" were no help. Indeed, Anarchist excesses in almost every area provided no recruit for the attack on Zaragoza and created a situation in which hatred against themselves was generated among the populace of the villages.²

Franz Borkenau who spent precisely this period with the Anarchist columns in Aragón writes that: "The policy of the Durruti column was really unpleasant. It seems that amidst the general enthusiasm of the peasants for the Republican cause that they have found the strange secret of how to make themselves hated. They had to leave the village of Pina for no other reason but the silent resistance of the peasants, which they were unable to overcome. It seems that they had been ruthless, both in requisitions for the militia and in executions of both real and pretended 'fascists,' that they had very nearly provoked a rebellion. Neither had the executions yet stopped. They are, it is said, a more or less regular feature of the activities of Durruti's men"³

Borkenau then writes of the inactivity that developed; of the divisive, irresponsible and totally mendacious charges of the P.O.U.M. that the "Madrid Government was handicapping the operations." Of the real reasons for the failure to capture Zaragoza, he says: "It is quite obvious that nothing of the sort will happen, not because of treason in high quarters (the Poumist charge), but from sheer inefficiency and incompetence all along the line."⁴

1 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 23

2 *Ibid.* p. 24. Vol. II

3 Borkenau, p. 108

4 *Ibid.* p. 109

Would that it had been only incompetence that prevented the fall of Zaragoza: for there *was* treason. But not from the embattled Madrid Government. The Anarchist cadres, plus those of the P.O.U.M., being by far the majority of troops in Aragón were responsible for this new inactivity—a situation which allowed the enemy to do as he pleased on other fronts with no threat to his rear.

Why the reason for the new switch? Why, since all F.A.I. propaganda had been focused on the city's capture, had they suddenly reversed themselves? Borkenau writes, according to information given him, that, "As long as Zaragoza is in the hands of the insurgents, they (the F.A.I.) have obviously no intention of attempting a change of regime; as soon as Zaragoza is taken, it will make all the difference."⁵

The citadel of Zaragoza, with a population of 200,000 had been an Anarchist stronghold prior to July of 1936. And its strength could in no way be compared to that of the Franco armies in any other sector.

"The loss of the garrisons of Barbastro and Lérida," writes Manuel Aznar, "had placed Zaragoza in a most delicate position. It left open to the Catalan militia the best zones for the invasion of Aragón. Nor was this the sole reason that Zaragoza was now engulfed in grave difficulties. Of even those forces still at our disposal—some had, of necessity, to be sent to Madrid. Our effectives, of which a goodly part were on paper only, were the following:

Jaca Reg. No. 19 two battalions

Huesca Reg. No. 20 two battalions

Zaragoza Reg. No. 17 one and ½ battalions

Reg. No. 18 two battalions

Tanks one battalion with five tanks (Renault)

Reg. Cav. Five squadrons of sabers one section of automatic arms

Reg. Artillery two groups of two batteries each: 7.5 (Schneider)

Anti-air two batteries of 5.35 (Skoda)

Sappers three companies

Reg. Engineers a battalion

Quartermaster Service

Sanitary Service

(Medical)

Calatayud. 10th Artillery Reg. Two batteries of 105 (Vickers)"⁶

This was a total of perhaps 15,000 men to cover a front of approximately 300 kilometers. In ensuing months these were reinforced by volunteers from Navarre and Zaragoza itself. But only after the fact of the storming of Madrid.

⁵ Ibid. p. 87

⁶ Aznar, pp. 246-248. Vol. II

Other than the seemingly sudden F.A.I. realization of its own inadequacies in terms of offensive action against a small but disciplined enemy—inadequacies that could easily have been overcome—they were now faced with another moment of truth.

In direct proportion to the growing enthusiasm for the generally correct policies of the Socialists and Communists of the Center Front, and the P.S.U.C./U.G.T. in Catalonia and Aragón, *Anarchist strength was waning*. They could recoup a certain amount of popularity, perhaps, by capturing Zaragoza. But they might also be seriously weakened in the process—and at the expense of strengthening their enemy, i.e., the Government of the Spanish Republic.⁷

Ergo, hold the line. Do nothing. And wait! *But wait for what?* Anarchist private documents and books written after the war give some indication of this problem, and of the grave responsibility of the F.A.I. in what can be described as nothing short of treason to the Spanish people and the Government of the Popular Front.

Referring to the situation, Santillán states candidly that, “We can no longer conceal the fact that while at the front itself, we had but 30,000 rifles (and perhaps as many as 24 batteries, 100 heavy guns) in the rear, in the power of the organizations, we had an additional 60,000 rifles with more ammunition than was ever in the proximity of the enemy.”⁸

From this same fountain of information—the most authoritative in this case—we read that the F.A.I./C.N.T. had decided that their principle cadres were *not* to go to the front to organize and direct the fight. Rather, they were to be held in the rear, conserved, as it were, for the use against the other parties after the war had been won.⁹

“If the leaders of the Libertarian organizations,” writes Santillán, “had ever *seriously* resolved to send all their armament, their war materiel and their best men to the front—the war would easily have been over in a few months.”¹⁰

This same ideologue, in an attempt to explain the F.A.I. position at a later date, wrote: “We realized that if France and England would not promise effective aid, then the war would have to be ‘liquidated.’ There existed the possibility of loopholes (ways out), but the continuation of the slaughter and destruction, to us, was an unpardonable transgression. . . .”¹¹

7 — (this is the footnote... seriously. - Ed.)

8 Santillán, p. 68

9 Ibid. p. 69

10 Ibid. pp. 67-68

11 Ibid. p. 16

And finally the explanation of treason—if such can be explained—in the following words, “To understand what was done in March of 1939, in Madrid and Levante (when the Anarchist troops of Mera attacked the Communists and Socialists at the requests of the Casado-Besteiro Junta and opened the front to Franco), we must return to what was done in Catalonia in March of 1938 (when the Aragón front was broken with little or no Anarchist resistance), if not to May and June of 1937 (the rising in Barcelona against the Government). We had to free ourselves of any responsibility within the government; though the F.A.I. alone could not cause rebellion against the government, since that was not in harmony with the C.N.T.”¹²

Information from a bulletin of the Peninsular Committee of the F.A.I. reveals both the confusion within the F.A.I. as to tactics and strategy and, in a sense, the *opposition* to the thinking of such men as Santillán:

“We have paid dearly,” the bulletin states, “for our fidelity to our ideas. Could it have been possible for the Fascists to march from Seville to Badajoz, and from Badajoz to the gates of Madrid if we had *really* opposed them throughout the bloody period; if we had organized the kind of army necessary to fight the enemy? Our disorganized militias which held discussions and meetings before agreeing to any opposition; who discussed every order, and who on many occasions refused the orders, could create no real opposition to the formidable military apparatus of the rebels, created in part by the Italians and the Germans. Durruti was the first to understand this and the first to say: ‘We must organize an Army; War is made with Soldiers, not with Anarchists.’ When will we decide to do this? When will the movement agree. It has been months already that this has been documented by the Socialists and Communists. And they act without the motives which we raise on high.”¹³

¹² Ibid, p. 144; *my italics

¹³ Listed in P.C.E. archives (G.&R.), p. 25, Vol. II

LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM:

If offensive action by the Anarchists was non-existent, activity in the rear was at bedlam level.

With the aid of the armed *centurias* in Aragón, the Anarchist leaders moved into all villages and towns. They closed and proscribed many of the local headquarters of other worker and republican parties under the pretext that these “had already completed their historic mission.” They then took into their own hands the leadership of the political and economic life of the areas.

The mass application of Libertarian Communism was all pervasive. Everything was collectivized down to the last hoe and cart. To legalize these acts (after the fact, as it were) the Regional C.N.T. Committee of Aragón called a conference in Binefer (Huesca), for the 12th and 13th of August to treat with a plan of Libertarian Communism, and to put together an organization to implement this plan.¹

The conference ratified the proclamation of Libertarian Communism in Aragón; creating the *Comité de Nueva Estructuración Social de Aragón, Rioja y Navarra*, as the vehicle for implementation.

In each village thereafter Anarchist power was incorporated into a committee of the above organization. These “committees” took over the lands, the goods and animals of the peasantry—even from the poor. The peasants were then forced to work for a salary —“equal for everybody,” and all submitted to the vigilance of the armed groups of the F.A.I.

In most cases money was done away with. The committees issued vouchers to be used only in the villages where issued. In this way the interlocking economy of town and village was destroyed—a forced return to a primitive economy, in which each village was thrust back upon its own resources. All silver and hard money was given over to the F.A.I. committee in exchange. Little of this “loot,” for it can only be defined as that, was ever seen again.

Juan Peró, one of the outstanding leaders of the C.N.T., and F.A.I., refers to the disillusion and resultant apathy of the peasantry as a result of these acts. “Does anyone believe,” he writes, “that through acts of violence an interest in or a desire for socialization can be awakened in the minds of our peasantry? Or perhaps by terrorizing it in this fashion it can be won over to the revolutionary spirit prevailing in our cities?”

“The gravity of the mischief that is being done compels me to speak clearly. Many revolutionaries from different parts of Catalonia . . . after conquering their respective

¹ *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 29, Vol. II

towns have tried to conquer the countryside, the peasantry. Have they tried to achieve this by informing the peasantry that their hour of emancipation from the social exploitation to which it had been subjected year after year had arrived? No! Or have they tried to accomplish this by carrying to the countryside, to the consciousness of the peasant, the spirit and the moral standards of the revolution? No, they have not done that either. When they have gone into the countryside, carrying with them the torch of the revolution, the first thing they have done has been to take away from the peasant all means of self-defense . . . and having achieved this, they have robbed him even of his shirt.”

“If today you should go to different parts of Catalonia to speak to the peasant of the revolution, he will tell you that he does not trust you, he will tell you that the standard-bearers of the revolution have already passed through the countryside. In order to liberate it? No! They have passed through the countryside in order to rob those who throughout the years have been robbed by the very persons who have just been defeated by the revolution.”²

Though forced collectivization was general in all zones of Aragón controlled by the F.A.I., in Catalonia proper, a great part of the peasantry was saved from this fever of Libertarian Communism, principally by the efforts of the P.S.U.C./U.G.T. and the Rabassaires.

For, paradoxically, though Catalonia was the heartland of F.A.I. control, its influence did not extend to the Catalan peasantry. Gerald Brenan, reflecting upon this phenomenon, writes that, “The Anarchists stood for a system of collectivization of agricultural workers which was well suited to conditions in Andalucia. But the greater part of Andalucia fell at once into Nationalist hands, and when the Anarchists of the large industrial towns attempted to impose collectivization upon the Andalucian peasants and Valencian rice growers, they met with strong opposition. The peasants, looking around for someone who would defend them against this unwanted 'revolution,' found their champion in the Communists.”³

On the other hand there can be no doubt that in many areas, towns and villages, the idea of Libertarian Communism was met with enthusiasm and support. And under the guidance of concerned and honest leadership, actually worked and worked well. The valley of the Llobregat would be an example of this limited success.⁴ The point is, however, *these these were the exception and not the norm.*

Historically, forced collectivization has always been detrimental to the goals of the revolutionary regime that tried it. And the tragedy of Spain was that the Anarchist forced collectivization, whole provinces were driven from support of the Republic to either total

2 “*Libertat*,” Catalan Anarchist journal. Article by Juan Peiró, Sept. 29, 1936

3 Brenan, p. 186. Also see Boloten, Speech of José Díaz, pp. 178-179

4 See Bolloten’s chapter on Revolution in the Countryside, pp. 55 through 76. Also: Peirats, pp. 147-171

despair and passivity, or to out and out support of the Franco victory.

And it need not have been that way.

The problem of Spain was the problem of mankind across centuries of struggle for progress and a better life. *It was the problem of the land.* And though it was as old as time and its solution complex, any serious study of the land in terms of future social eruptions can only refer to the past four decades.

In Poland today, for example, 80 percent of the land remains in private ownership, and this in a “socialist” country. In Czechoslovakia the collectives predominate; the same in Hungary. In Yugoslavia, as in Poland, private holdings prevail. In Bulgaria, as in the Soviet Union, all land other than the sometimes rather extensive private plots, has been collectivized. In China too the question of the land has not been simple. And in China too, after the excesses of the “great leap forward,” a return to some private holdings has been underway. And lastly, in Cuba, whole areas of the countryside are still in the hands of the individual farmer, and there is no coercion at the point of a gun to make him do otherwise.

The point here is a simple one: the question of the solution to the problem of the land in Spain—in the midst of one of the bloodiest social confrontations in this century—was one of priorities: how best to win the people to the fight against fascism; maintain an economy to support the war, and create the conditions for social and economic change once that war had been won. And one must remember again when examining this problem, that the Socialist-Communist-Anarchist bloc of the people was still, and at best, but one third of the populace. They had neither the right, nor the self-serving, ultra-authoritarian “duty” to *impose* their economic experiments and “solutions” upon anyone.

Dare one ask how long the Viet Minh or the Viet Cong would have lasted, first against the French, and then the U.S.A., the greatest military power in the history of the world, across twenty years of battle, if they had had to contend simultaneously with a F.A.I. plus a combination of quasi-Trotskyists such as the P.O.U.M. The answer to that should be obvious.

The agriculture of both Catalonia and Aragón, beneath the dictates of the F.A.I., suffered to the point of ruin. Surface areas of regions under tillage fell between 20 to 30 percent within the first year. Agricultural products diminished proportionally so that a zone which in the past had been completely self-supporting, was now forced to import foodstuffs to live. Simultaneously with this the corresponding and interrelated economy of the areas—concomitant with the provisioning of the cities—was almost totally destroyed.⁵

In this insane climate of arbitrariness and corruption there now flowered speculation,

5 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 30. Vol. II

monopolies and illegal traffic in all kinds of goods, at prohibitive prices for the masses of the population.

Within two weeks of the total application of Libertarian Communism in Aragón, collectivized businesses became vacuums of empty stores and warehouses, creating a serious supply problems. The textile industry, the produce industry and in general, all light industry in Catalonia, also collectivized by the Anarchists, refused to accept the vouchers and other paper money given out by the “Committees” in Aragón. *They demanded that they be paid in the coin of the Republic.*⁶

In reply the Committees of Aragón threatened the National Committee of the C.N.T. with cutting off the electric power that serviced the greater part of the industries of Catalonia, plus the central electrical system itself, if clothes and supplies were not sent to the “liberated areas.”⁷

In reply to the gravity of this threat the National Committee of the C.N.T. ordered the Military Chief of the Anarchist forces in Aragón to execute the leaders of the Committees if they persisted in their attitude.⁸

While the contradictions within the F.A.I./C.N.T. leadership grew ever sharper, the dominion which they continued to exercise over the peasantry of Aragón and Catalonia presented grave consequences for the war as a whole. Economically, these areas which had held such a wonderful potential for the Republic, were fast becoming wastelands. Politically, tens of thousands of peasants were losing all interest in the war; some had been actually forced into minor revolts against their persecutors.⁹

In Catalonia the situation grew worse. At the end of August the Casanovas Government issued a decree that imposed the obligatory syndicalization of all peasants into one union —*The Federación de Sindicatos Agrícolas de Cataluña* (F.E.S.A.C.).

It is notable that Anarchist collectives were not touched by this decree. It applied only to individual producers, the Rabassaires and such, who still constituted the majority of the Catalan peasantry. They were obligated to join the new syndicates where the selling of all crops would be regulated as well as all personal purchases. The syndicate would control the prices, security and credits. The system took from the peasants all freedom to handle their own products, buying and selling, and in the long run, destroyed any stimulus to produce anything beyond their personal needs.

6 Loc-cit, p. 30. Vol. II

7 Loc-cit, p. 30. Vol. II

8 Loc-cit, p. 30. Vol. II. Also: Most of this information has been based upon the report of Ismael Sin, U.G.T. representative to the *Comité de Nueva Estructuración Social de Aragón*.

9 Ibid. p. 31. Vol. II. Also: see Lister, p. 156

With an abysmal lack of knowledge of economic laws, the Anarchists also set out to reorganize Catalan industries, basing their concepts upon infantile solutions that had been declared as “utopian” by all Marxists as early as the 19th century. Applied to the 20th century, only catastrophe could result.

In the factories, though the greater part of the workers committees were of the C.N.T. or the U.G.T., in that first period they were considered as being totally in the hands of the F.A.I.

A first result of the takeover was the refusal by the F.A.I. to recognize the priorities of the fronts—this, when the war against Fascism was a question of life and death for the whole of Spain. All stimulus was killed. “Equal” salaries were imposed for all categories; from engineers and technicians to the lowliest worker.

And whereas this may have seemed admirable from the Ultra point of view, from the realist point of view which recognizes different levels of social development and understanding, it was a disaster.

The Anarchists forgot, or never knew, the simple, elemental reality, that production is the decisive aspect of any active economy; if you do not produce there is nothing to distribute. They put down the problems of production, concentrating solely, in their demagoguery, upon their programs for “equal distribution.” In fact this highly touted “equality” didn't apply either, since salaries differed from one factory to another. The workers collected according to the fortunes and the reserves of their particular factory, and were continually subjected to the caprices of the omnipotent Committees. When the reserves were spent the F.A.I. then went to the State to ask that it subsidize the payrolls.

This process of applied *egalitarianism* went to such extremes that actors and entertainers collected the same as the cleaning woman in the theater. And if this sound inspiring to “Women's Liberation,” know this: equality stopped with the differentiation between the sexes. The F.A.I. maintained the principle that the wages of woman workers would continue to be inferior to those of men, though they did the same work.¹⁰

Their aberrations led even to the syndicalizing of the houses of prostitution in Barcelona. And these were then exploited for the benefit of the F.A.I. Committees.¹¹

This reckless takeover of business enterprises, Anarchist style, was not a step toward the establishment of social property as the means of production, but rather the substitution of old owners for new ones—the Committees, which acted in the name of the leading organs of the F.A.I.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 32.

¹¹ Loc-cit, p. 32. Vol. II

In the name of “economic federalism” the Anarchists pushed a chaotic decentralization of industry, sowing confusion and disorder. There was no coordination of any kind. In not a few cases different factories of the same industry, those that would complement each other, fell into the hands of different committees. Economic relationships were destroyed and production suffered.

Goods generally produced were not the goods so desperately needed at the front, but rather that which could be sold quickest and with the highest margin of profit. Indeed an almost artificially created anxiety for increased benefits surged in many factories inflaming conflicts of interests between one factory and another, and one committee and another. In a resolution of the *C.N.T. Catalana* it was actually recorded that the “collective enterprises” are dedicated to raising benefits without paying debts, provoking a total imbalance of the finances of other enterprises. “In considering each collective as a particular property,” said this C.N.T. resolution, “they have made an abstraction of the interests of the rest of the collective.”¹²

Deprecating the absolutely desperate war needs of the country, the F.A.I. did little or nothing to create a meaningful war industry. The immense possibilities existing in this area were almost totally disavowed or ignored. One is reminded of the Chinese 8th Route Army and its “war industry” located in the caves of Yen-an, where thousands of rifles were manufactured almost by hand during China's long struggle against the Japanese and the Kuomintang. One is reminded too of the “arms industry” of the early Viet Minh located in the jungles of Vietnam, and producing excellent weapons with nothing but the will and the heart and the patience of a people intent on winning their fight against imperialism.

The industrial might of Catalonia, with a metallurgical and chemical industry equal to that of some of the most advanced countries, was sufficient to have provided all the small arms—rifles, machine guns, mortars and cartridges, plus all manner of artillery shells, that the Republic needed.

The Anarchists, who for the first critical year of the war, controlled this industry, and in effect sabotaged its potential for the war, will forever share the guilt along with the capitulationists and the defeatists, for the final Franco victory.

D. Santillán boasts that at the end of three months they were producing approximately 4,000 shells per month. This is at less than 150 per day; less than the total potential of any medium sized machine shop. He also boasts of 1,000 kilos of T.N.T. being produced per day, after one year, and 600,000 fuses for shells and grenades during that year. And this was done, he writes, with approximately 150,000 workers in the war industry.¹³ If his

¹² Broue, p. 145

¹³ Santillán, p. 114

production figures reveal nothing more than the total waste of manpower here, one will have some idea of the tragedy of the Spanish Republic. Where were the rifles and the small arms so desperately needed? There is no mention anywhere of this kind of production in Catalonia. Any applied statistics will show that the zone was capable of producing these weapons in the tens, if not in the hundreds of thousands. But this was not done, so that in the end, when Catalonia fell, Álvarez del Vayo could say that the remnants of the Peoples Army in its retreat across the French frontier, had but 30,000 rifles to defend itself against a Franco army—in Catalonia alone—of over 350,000 men inclusive of five complete Italian divisions.¹⁴

Absolving themselves of any guilt in the matter by simply hiding the facts from the world—and they had plenty of help in this—they then, in what can only be described as an act of supreme arrogance, denounced the Central Government of the Popular Front for not issuing Soviet arms to their units in Aragón—this, while the Madrid militia battalions were bleeding to death before the guns of the Army of Africa and the bombs of the Condor Legion; while Málaga fell, and while the Fascist onslaught in the valley of the Jarama and before Guadalajara was being desperately contained. “It is obvious,” they announced pontifically, and ignoring any vestige of reality, “that these arms are being given only to the Communist led units to enhance the prestige and power of the P.C.E.”

Again, this is hardly the truth.

Since the disciplined units of the 5th Regiment, and others officered by Communists, proved so capable in every battle, it is perhaps lamentable that this was *not* the case. The Republic might have been better served. The facts were, however, that generally the meager arms went where the fighting was. It was as simple as that. The arms were not given to Communist units only. Precious materiel was actually, in many cases, wasted in the hands of green, untrained troops, and lost in the retreats of poorly led—or worse—units. Many hundreds of artillery pieces were sent the Republic. A large part of this arsenal was scattered and wasted over areas of the front that saw little or no action for the greater part of the war. No single Republican offensive ever began with over a hundred guns, yet the island of Minorca alone had defensive batteries to this amount which were never used—and let us not forget the hundred or more heavy guns that the F.A.I. admits to having. The same could be said of other types of Soviet arms such as anti-tank weapons and machine guns: The greater part found its way to the best Government divisions, whether Socialist, Communist, Anarchist (Cipriano Mera's divisions did not march on Madrid at a later date with sling-shots), or Republican; a decisive and important quantity, however were wasted. The International Brigades, certainly units under largely Communist leadership, fought the greater part of their battles with a minimum support of any kind. It was deemed on occasion that their elan was such that they could do this; therefore the supporting materiel would be used elsewhere, *if at all*.

14 Del Vayo, p. 276

The famed Abraham Lincoln Brigade, though it fought in seven of the major campaigns of the Spanish War, seldom if ever had any kind of artillery or air support. And the same is true of the other International Brigades. One is entitled to ask: "Where was the artillery or air support or even machine guns, during the Great Retreats, when 'Communist' led troops bore the brunt of the entire onslaught?" There was then still a small amount of this equipment on hand—but apparently *none* for those who supposedly "controlled" it.

materiel shipped from France at the time of the reopening of the border (March, 1938) went, almost in its entirety, to the center front. It was used by the heroic divisions of Menéndez and Ibarrola—certainly not "communist" led—for the defense of Valencia and the Levante. These arms were being rushed to Menéndez at the very hour when the divisions of Líster and the 11th, 14th, and 15th International Brigades were holding shut the passage to the sea with their bodies and little else. Even the handful of fighter planes available had been given to the remnants of the 26th Anarchist division and the 46th division of El Campesino defending Lérida.

One is reminded of Orwell's complaint—that the Poumist and Anarchist troops had but one machine gun to fifty men,¹⁵ and that there were but a half a dozen artillery pieces in his area. To those who accept this as proof of some sort of dastardly discrimination against the Anarchists et-al by the Communists and the Socialists, know this: The 35th Division, composed of three International Brigades of some 12,000 men, crossed the Ebro River in the great Republican offensive of July 24, 1938, with but 6,000 rifles, 162 light machine guns and 69 heavy machine guns¹⁶—the same fifty to one ratio about which Orwell complained. They did this with *no* artillery support and *no* air support for the first four days. And they penetrated to a depth of twenty-five kilometers, seized the towns of Fatarella, Corbera, Asco, Villalba de los Arcos and a number of others, plus upwards of 2,500 prisoners.¹⁷

One is compelled to suggest that if the F.A.I. and the Poumists had only fought while they talked instead of sitting on their hands and lending themselves to divisive treason, their complaints would be given more credence. . . .

Implacable with small and middle factory owners the Anarchists demonstrated an extraordinary flexibility with certain representatives of big monopoly capital. The F.A.I./C.N.T., in accord with the British Consulate in Barcelona, published a list of 87 important enterprises, *that were not to be disturbed*. Similar accommodations were made with other foreign-owned factories.¹⁸ In a whole series of cases agents of big capitalists

15 *Homage to Catalonia*, George Orwell, Beacon Press, Boston, 1967. p. 30

16 Landis, p. 517

17 *Peirats*, p. 177. Vol. I

18 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 33. Vol. II

obtained the right to remain in quasi-control of factories (in the directorate) at the side of the Anarchist Committees. The role of these agents was simply to place obstacles in the way of a full utilization of the plant's facilities; create further disorder and chaos, while waiting the return of the "rightful owners."

In the *Compañía de Tranvías de Barcelona*, the *Faistas* placed at liberty the former chief councilor of the enterprise. This was the lawyer, Creisler, who had previously been detained for his Fascist activities. He then became councilor to the F.A.I.—prior to his escape to Franco territory. One well known and quite reactionary aristocrat, Lt. Colonel Rojo, cousin of the Marqués de Forondo, was, throughout the war, the "right arm" of Sánchez, who directed the *Compañía de Tranvías* in the name of the F.A.I.¹⁹

New "captains of industry" were created within this new Anarchist economy. Committees in the leadership of enterprises were almost instantly surrounded by a bureaucracy of fantastic size. The apparatus of leadership and administration were inflated beyond measure.

And so on, and so on. . . .

"Our revolution must have but one single article, one preamble," said the F.A.I. This was: "THE ABOLISHMENT OF PRIVATE PROPERTY!"²⁰ But the spirit of private property, far from disappearing, became instead installed in the very heart of the Anarchist revolution. Referring to this reality, Santillán writes: "In the place of the old proprietors, we now had those whom we had given power and authority who looked upon the factory or the enterprise as their property, with the added inconvenience that they didn't always know how to organize a proper administration. . . ." ²¹

In a resolution approved by a C.N.T. commission, it was recorded that, "The desire to collectivize everything, especially the factories with monetary reserves, has awakened the utilitarian spirit of the small bourgeois."²²

Within a very short time the monetary reserves of these confiscated enterprises, as well as the reserves of raw materiel were exhausted. Production declined, and in some factories simply ceased altogether.²³

In an effort to save the situation, the Casanovas Government granted credits to the C.N.T.

19 Ibid. p. 33

20 "Solidaridad Obrera," Anarchist Journal. September 10, 1936

21 *After the Revolution*, D. Abad de Santillán. N.Y., 1937. p. 121

22 Broue, p. 145

23 (Footnote not mentioned on page but noted in Notes. I assume it belongs here. - Ed.) *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 35. Vol. II. Also: Peirats, p. 361. Vol. I

through a newly created “Office for the regulation of payment of wages.”²⁴ In this way the Committees could receive funds with which to pay the workers.

The *Faistas* moved to extend their economic activities to the foreign market, and opened commercial offices in Marseilles, Paris and other cities. A whole series of Committees then presented products for export such as oil, wine, almonds, saffron, etc. The circumstances continued to be so chaotic, however, that they even entered into competition with each other; the sole result being a falling off in prices.²⁵

In the middle of August, 1936, and again at the demands of the C.N.T., the Casanovas Government created the Economic Council, “*Consejo de Economía*” of Catalonia as the leading organ of the economic life of the State; a preponderant control of the Council was given the F.A.I., specifically to the Señors' J.P. Fábregas and Diego Abad de Santillán. This act was the equivalent of the legalization of Anarchist control of the economy of Catalonia.²⁶

24 *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 35. Vol. II

25 Loc-cit, p. 35. Vol. II

26 Loc-cit, p. 35. Also: *La politique financière de la Generalitat pendant la révolution et la guerre, 19 juillet, 19 novembre de 1936.* p. 11

CONFLICT: MADRID-BARCELONA!

From the first days of the war one of the most insidious preoccupations of F.A.I. theorists was “how to avail themselves of the gold of the bank of Spain.” If they could but get their hands on it—so they reasoned—they would most definitely be able to consolidate their “libertarian revolution.”

In August, Abad de Santillán made a hurried trip to Madrid to meet with Giral and with Azaña. He offered a proposal, which some say was almost an ultimatum, that the gold be transported immediately to Barcelona, arguing that it would be far more secure there than on the banks of the Manzanares.¹

Both Giral and Azaña were in violent opposition to this proposal. Simultaneously with this F.A.I. pressure, the Casanovas Government demanded of the Government of the Republic great quantities of foreign exchange with which Catalonia could further her development of foreign trade, independent of the rest of Spain.

These demands were quite obviously contrary to the interests of the State as a whole, and certainly so in time of war. The Giral Government refused the demands of Juan Casanovas; the result being the first open conflict between the Generalitat and the Government of the Republic.

Giral and Azaña, however, were completely inflexible, refusing to recognize the changed conditions in Catalonia. In discussions, in-re the economic situation in Catalonia their attitude was almost as intransigent as that of Casanovas and the Right-Separatists, creating further irritation.

On the 27th of August the financial conflict Barcelona/Madrid moved into the public domain. Faced with a counter order from the Giral Government, to send all gold and silver in Catalonia to Madrid, the Generalitat responded by prohibiting compliance with this order, and thereby established—in open violation of the laws of the State—the intervention of the Catalan Government in the affairs of all branches of the Bank of Spain in Catalonia.

This was the first step toward the creation of a monetary and financial system independent of the rest of Spain. Negotiations were entered into; trips were made by various government delegates from Barcelona and Madrid, but the conflict remained unresolved. The separatist currents within the Esquerra irritated it still further by publishing copies of “official” tracts in French dedicated to their belief that the economic and financial difficulties in Catalonia were a direct result of the injustices perpetrated by

¹ Santillán, p. 105

the Central Government.²

In this Madrid/Barcelona conflict, the Anarchists, needless to say, threw all their weight behind the Casanovas Government.

In an article entitled “The economic and social problems of Catalonia,” the *Faista*, Federica Montseny appealed to the proletariat of all Spain! “We ask,” she wrote, “for your aid to Catalonia before the reprehensible acts of the Government of Socialists and Republicans in Madrid, who refuse to give the *Consejo de Economía* of Catalonia the gold it so desperately needs.”³ She went on to threaten the Government, in the name of the F.A.I., with a possible total break between it and the Generalitat of Catalonia.

And the Foreign Legionnaires of Varela and the Moorish Cavalry of Monasterio were, at that very moment, smashing their way over the bodies of the Madrid militia—toward Toledo!

Divorced from all meaningful reality as to the *real* needs of the Spanish people in those desperate hours, the Casanovas Government and the Anarchists continued their pressures against the Republic to turn over the gold and other foreign exchange for use by Catalonia.

The F.A.I., however, true to its “idealism” decided to go one step further and act on its own. The Anarchists actually prepared, as Santillán has confessed, an armed assault on the Bank of Spain in Madrid. Three thousand militants were mobilized and sent on their way—not to defend the city, as other Catalan units organized by the P.S.U.C., were prepared to do, but to rob its major banks. The preparations for this assault were well advanced, but the C.N.T. Executive intervened and the F.A.I. was forced to call a halt at the last moment.⁴

² *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 36. Vol. II

³ “*Solidaridad Obrera*,” Sept. 13, 1936

⁴ Santillán, p. 113

THE ANARCHISTS—THE CASANOVAS GOVERNMENT/THE ANARCHISTS ENTER THE GENERALITAT

As a result of the events of September, a serious crisis developed in Catalonia. The Peninsular Committee of the F.A.I. reported to its international organ that, "The month of September was for us one of great resolutions. In successive plenums of the organization fundamental modification of actions were decided upon."¹

The causes for these modifications were, in the first place, the shift in the correlation of forces. The P.S.U.C. had massively increased its influence, both at the front and in the rear, and the F.A.I. knew it.

P.S.U.C. forces in Aragón had been strengthened considerably. By taking the initiative in sending a military unit to the aid of Madrid, it had also demonstrated its political maturity and showed that it was a truly united Catalan organization that clearly understood both the duties and the obligations that the war had imposed upon all working class and democratic forces.

On the 9th of September the P.S.U.C./U.G.T. made public a joint manifesto in which they courageously criticized the excesses of the Anarchists. They spoke boldly, too, against the separatist plots of Casanovas, stating that, "It is not for us to organize Catalonia's war against Fascism. Our war is the war of the Democratic Republic against Fascism. And there will be no victors nor victims in one zone without there being victors or victims in the other."²

The P.S.U.C. also now dared to demand the liquidation of the *Comité de Milicias*. Faced with an impossible situation characterized by the existence of a myriad of authorities, of committees, of trials, of inarticulate collectives, the P.S.U.C. Pronounced for a government that governed—A Government of the Popular Front, in which both the C.N.T. and U.G.T. would participate in absolute coordination with the authority of the Republic.

In the manifesto they also asked for the creation of a People's Army; of a war industry that produced weapons of war, and for a program directed toward the mobilization of all resources in the fight against Fascism.

The P.S.U.C./U.G.T. document produced a strong reaction within the Catalan body-politic. On the 11th of September the traditional act of commemoration of Rafael de Casanova took place in the streets of Barcelona.³ It was quickly converted into a great political

1 Peninsular Committee of the F.A.I. to the International Libertarian Movement—as per the archives of the P.C.E., *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 38

2 Ibid. p. 38. Vol. II

3 Last President: *Consejo de Ciento de Barcelona*, who defended his post against the troops of Felipe V.

demonstration; a clear expression of the desire of the people of Barcelona to finish with chaos and the methods of the F.A.I. Great masses of the C.N.T. participated with their leaders, and the P.S.U.C. was acclaimed with wide enthusiasm.

On the 14th of September the Esquerra too, dared to ask for the first time at a public meeting that “all terrorism cease.”

The fracas of Anarchist experiments were becoming patently clear, aggravating contradictions within the C.N.T. The Anarchist leaders had encountered that for which they had no remedy. On the 24th of September, at a meeting of the direct Committees of the C.N.T., J.P. Fábregas of the *Consejo de Economía*, painted a bleak picture of the economy. “If we do not receive help from the State,” he said, “I do not know how we can be saved.”⁴

The Anarchists had wished to destroy the State; for the negation of the State was basic to all Anarchist theory. And now, in order to continue their experiments in Libertarian Communism, and to retain in their hands the factories and industries, they were, perforce, forced to go to that very State for help. From the theoretical point of view this was catastrophe, pure and simple. Their illusions had gone up in smoke, their plans were in disarray.

Nor could any terror any longer prevent the decline of their political influence, for men who had bent before the “Special Forces” now stood against them.

But still, though a decline in Anarchist strength had begun, it was just that—a beginning. The entrenches cadres of the F.A.I. were still powerful; especially when linked with the dissidents, the capitulationists and the Ultras of that time.

A determining factor, central to the entry of the C.N.T./F.A.I. into the Generalitat (and shortly into the Government of the Republic) was precisely this: They intended to *use* this State which they had previously held in contempt and sought to destroy. With the ministerial posts given them they could maintain and consolidate their economic position in Catalonia and retain in their hands the hundreds of confiscated factories and enterprises. It was no accident that the C.N.T. asked for and got the posts of Economy, Industry and Commerce in the Catalan and Republican Governments.

Because the C.N.T./F.A.I. had “modified its positions” President Luis Companys called for a new government in which both the C.N.T. and P.S.U.C. would serve. The Anarchists, with their new “modified positions,” accepted the dissolution of the Central Committee of Militias. The Catalan *Consejo de Economía*, with the *Faista* still at its head, was integrated into the Government, and the Government itself took the new name of “*Consejo de la*

4 “*Solidaridad Obrera*,” Sept. 25, 1936

Generalitat”...⁵

The new Government was composed of the following:

Finance José Terradellas (Esquerra)
Culture Ventura Gassol (Esquerra)
Interior-Security Artemio Aiguadé (Esquerra)
Public Service Juan Comorera (P.S.U.C.)
Work Miguel Valdés (P.S.U.C.)
Economy Juan Fábregas (C.N.T.)
Supplies J.J. Domenech (C.N.T.)
Sanitation A.G. Birlan (C.N.T.)
Justice Andrés Nin (P.O.U.M.)
Agriculture José Calvet (Rabassaires)
Defense Colonel Sandino (Military)
Without portfolio Rafael Closas (Acción Catalana)

The constitution of this Government had certain positive aspects. It represented a turn toward anti-fascist unity and the negation of the Anarchist dictatorship of the Committee of Militias. The separatist, Casanovas was eliminated, with a victory for left tendencies within the Esquerra.

But there were also negative aspects. The *Consejo de Economía* continued in the hands of Fábregas. And, since the ultras of the P.O.U.M. had also entered the government, Poumists and Anarchists carried a great deal of weight in the establishment of policy which could, and did, mitigate to the detriment of war.

5 Peninsular Committee of the F.A.I. to the International Libertarian Movement—as per the archives of the P.C.E., *Guerra y Revolución*, p. 41—for Sept., 1937

THE ANARCHISTS AS FIGHTERS:

It would be unjust to those tens of thousands of volunteers for the C.N.T./F.A.I. militia not to point up their individual courage and dedication. For on every front on which they fought they were no more or no less courageous than their counterparts of the other political parties.

The shortcomings of the Anarchist rank and file; the inactivity on the Aragón front; the lack of any meaningful fortifications in the face of the enemy peril;¹ the retreats—all can be laid at the feet of the F.A.I. *leadership*.

On the other hand, when given proper leadership, C.N.T. and F.A.I. troops proved themselves, generally, both loyal and capable.

C.N.T. troops, for example, fought on the Madrid front long before the arrival of Durruti's men. And though they in no way compared to the cadres of the 5th Regiment, they were no worse of no better than the average untrained miliciano of the other parties. They fought well at Talavera and in the Sierras. Where *their* leadership was in absolute control—such as Toledo—the results, as we have seen, were disastrous. Colodny recalls that before Carabanchel in the last week of November, 1936, an “Anarchist unit mutinied, killed its officers and fled.”²

Franz Borkenau describes incidents in which the appearance of a single plane on a bombing run was sufficient to cause a general retreat from certain villages occupied by C.N.T. troops.³ This was unfortunately true of other units too, however. To a Spanish peasant volunteer who in some cases had never been more than ten kilometers from his own village in his lifetime, who had never seen a truck, let alone a three-motored Caproni bomber, this was understandable. But here, again, it was but a question of training and leadership.

Marshal of the Soviet Union, Malinovsky, writes in his memoirs that: “In justice to truth I must say that in the fighting for *Pingarrón* (Jarama) the 70th Anarchist Brigade fought very well. The Russian tank commander, Petrov, sub-chief of the tank brigade, was with them. He had been assigned as their military adviser. And when he appeared with rifle in hand as just one more soldier to their ranks, he was greeted with friendship, and the feeling of

1 The reasons given by the Anarchists for this constant lack of fortification are generally absurd: “That to create trenches would be to invite defeat; to destroy the offensive spirit; that the Spaniard is essentially a guerrilla fighter . . .” Abad de Santillán gives us an utterly weird dissertation as to how Anarchists should fight. (pp. 145 through 176). Whatever. One of the tragedies of the Spanish War was this lack of any kind of fortifications in Aragón or the Levante fronts.

2 Colodny, p. 36. Also: A *London Times* dispatch for April 3, 1937, which deals with the events leading to the flight of the Government to Valencia on Nov. 6, 1936

3 Borkenau, pp. 158

mutual respect was evident.”⁴

The Abraham Lincoln Brigade records in its archives that elements of this same 70th Brigade fought on its right flank on the terrible day of February 27, 1937, which saw the Lincolns assault *Pingarrón* in an all day battle which cost them 127 dead and 300 wounded. The 70th Anarchists at that time under the command of the loyal Major Eusebio Sanz, also suffered grievous losses.⁵

On two occasions, on the Córdoba front in the south and in Aragón in the north, Lincoln Brigaders witnessed Anarchist chieftains harangue their troops prior to entry into battle. On both occasions the troops fought well.⁶

Other experiences by Lincoln-Brigaders were not so positive. Time after time in the “second round” in Aragón, in the days of the great retreats of March 10, 1938, full battalions of Anarchist troops would retreat without orders, leaving the Lincolns and other Internationals of the 35th Division to face alone the oncoming masses of the Italian Army, the Tercio and the Regulares of Morocco. Time after time, when a line had been established at a cost of terrible losses, Anarchist troops on either flank would melt away, giving as their reason that their officers had left them—that they had been ordered to retreat in the direction of such and such a town. If this way principally, because of this desertion⁷ of elements of the Anarchist leadership, remnants of the Anarchist 6th Brigade and the 153rd Brigade attached themselves to the 15th International (Lincoln) Brigade until such a time as they were reorganized under new leadership of the Peoples Army.

If there had been, on the highest levels, an understanding of the need for absolute unity in the struggle against the Fascist-Military, the differences and suspicions between the opposing factors on the Left may well have reconciled. But this was not to be. And, as stated, the principal blame for this disunity lay squarely in the lap of the F.A.I.

4 Malinovsky, (*Bajo la Bandera*—) p. 28

5 Landis, p. 89. Listed in this work as the 17th Brigade though it is actually the 70th.

6 A Lincoln Brigade veteran, Maury Colow, tells of a situation in the Córdoba front where he served with the 86th (mixed) Brigade. He witnessed an Anarchist unit in a frontal attack, after this unit had first heard a most eloquent speech by its commanding officer. Their courage was superb, their organization complete chaos, and the resultant slaughter, terrible. Also: Fred Keller, Commissar of the Lincoln Battalion at the time of the fighting at Fuentes del Ebro in Aragón, records a similar situation. This time the Anarchist troops of the 6th Brigade attacked through the Lincoln lines. These too failed, but not for lack of élan.

7 Approximately eight months after the above incident (Keller) the 15th (Lincoln) was caught in the maelstrom of the great Fascist offensive of March 9, 1938. The remnants of that same Anarchist 6th Brigade (whose officers had fled) fought with them for a while, as did other Anarchist rank-and-file cadres who attached themselves to the Americans. In all cases of massive Anarchist desertions recorded by the Lincolns and other International troops—their officers had first deserted them, sometimes with a final word that they too should leave the front.

THE DAYS OF MAY 1937: THE FALL OF CABALLERO:

On April 17, 1937, amid the opening guns of the Franco campaign to seize Bilbao and all the north, Republican Carabineros under the orders of the Minister of Finance, the Socialist, Juan Negrín, moved to occupy the French border in the name of the Central Government at Valencia. A number of clashes took place with F.A.I. troops, and a few were killed on either side. Among these was the Anarchist Mayor of Puigcerdá, described by one source as, “an admittedly notorious brigand who had insisted on the total collectivisation of all products and goods (of the peasants) while retaining his own holdings plus his cattle.”¹

On April 25, the P.S.U.C. trade union leader, Roldán Cortada, was shot down in the streets of Molins de Llobregat, a F.A.I. stronghold. The following day a massive demonstration was organized by the P.S.U.C. to protest his assassination. It was supported by the reorganized forces of the Generalitat and a significant section of the Barcelona working class.²

The strengthening of the forces of the P.S.U.C./U.G.T. had progressed considerably since the dissolving of the Committee of Militias and the P.S.U.C.'s entry into the Government. The concomitant lessening of F.A.I./C.N.T. influence, though they remained powerful, was a cause of great concern among F.A.I. leaders.

So much as this true that an open break between the F.A.I., on the one hand and the Government/P.S.U.C. on the other had become a distinct and ominous possibility. The fact that the F.A.I. would have less chance for success now than before gave its leaders some pause.

This was hardly the case, however, with the Ultras of the *Partido Obrero Unificado Marxista*, or P.O.U.M. In the words of dogma they “had little to lose and a world to win.”

The P.O.U.M., the Party of Nin, Andrade, Gorkín and Maurín was, like the P.S.U.C., an amalgam of a number of small Left parties. Its political base was supposedly Marxist; a significant part of its leadership, however, leaned toward Trotskyism.

To the P.O.U.M. and similar groups—to the delight of the Fascist-Military and establishment historians across the years—all who were not POUMIST or ANARCHIST were COMMUNIST and STALINIST. The Government of Caballero was Stalinist controlled, as was the new “People's Army” and all other armed forces of the Republic. George Orwell, in the jargon of his “sources,” even refers to the Assault Guards as “Stalinist troops.” The program of the Stalinists, according to the P.O.U.M., was to destroy all true Marxists such as themselves, annihilate their hoped-for associates in counter-revolution, the Anarchists,

1 Thomas, p. 424

2 D. Ibárruri, p. 285

and either create a totalitarian police state of the Stalinist variety, or return the hard-won gains of the July “revolution” to the Spanish bourgeoisie—who were also “Stalinist controlled.”

To them the war seems to have been but an unreal shadow “happening.” Something which they preferred not to discuss seriously or in its proper context, such as what its loss would mean to *all* the Spanish people. Indeed, the simplistics of their position suggests that they were incapable of lifting their polemics above the level of dogma—lest this negate pat conclusions which only had meaning if the war itself had no meaning.

Poumist or *Faista* thinking: that all not derived of themselves was essentially counter-revolutionary, and therefore to be fought more bitterly than they ever fought the real enemy, seems to have ignored the very perilous possibility of a Fascist victory over every segment of the Left, plus the Spanish people as a whole. Forcing the question: “Would not that ‘Bourgeois Republic’ with all its faults, the one to which the Left-Socialists and Communists had supposedly sold out; the one that had won the electoral victory in February by a quite narrow margin—would not it still be preferable to the Spanish people than the horror of a Fascist victory?”

Apparently not, to the Extremists of the F.A.I. and the P.O.U.M., that is. Indeed they were willing to risk this possibility, ignoring all referendums past or present. For to them both Fascism and the Popular Front Government of the Spanish Republic were but two sides of the same coin.

Despite their hostility, however, and in terms of referendums and the “rights of representation,” it is recorded that no one within the Government or without had ever denied either the P.O.U.M. or the F.A.I. the right of participation. To the contrary, they had been encouraged to come into the Government by both the Communists and the Socialists. Yet the F.A.I., to be followed by the P.O.U.M., was the first to demand that a brother party of the Left, the P.S.U.C., not be allowed to serve in the Generalitat of Catalonia. And just as the F.A.I. and P.O.U.M. together had used the despicable tactics of closing the headquarters of Republican, Socialist and other workers organizations in Lérida, Aragón and Catalonia, they would shortly demand that the P.S.U.C. be driven from the Government of Catalonia, or the Government would face civil war. They would simultaneously demand, for themselves, and with not the slightest hint of any kind of referendum, the Ministries of War, Industry, Transportation, Trade, Finance, Agriculture; the posts of Chief of Police, Police Commissar of Barcelona, and all other important posts, in addition to the participation of Anarchists and Poumists as undersecretaries in those ministries left to other parties, and half of all subordinate posts in all ministries.³

There are two points worthy of emphasis here: One. It was the F.A.I. and the P.O.U.M.

3 Ibid. p. 281

which first sought control of the Government by demanding, under the threat of civil war, the removal of the P.S.U.C. from the Catalan Government. Two. Their reasoning was that if such a *coup* could be achieved in Catalonia, then it could also be achieved in the rest of Spain. That the Government of the People's Front, with a mandate to represent all the people, would submit to this ultra, minority blackmail was unthinkable.

At the time of the P.O.U.M.'s creation it numbered perhaps 6,000 cadres. In the first months, according to the Trotskyist, Felix Morrow, it quadrupled its membership, having as many as ten thousand militia under its banner.⁴ A majority of these seem to have been with the P.O.U.M. purely by accident, since they controlled the recruiting center of the Lenin Barracks. And in the first weeks volunteers flocked to any barracks in Barcelona that had room for them. The Anarchists were usually full up; the P.S.U.C./U.G.T. had all the volunteers it had weapons for. And, in terms of foreign volunteers, it would be a number of months before International Brigade headquarters would be set up in Albacete. John Cornford, the young English Communist and poet, was with the P.O.U.M. for a number of months, until he left them to fight in the defense of Madrid with the German 11th Brigade.⁵ George Orwell confesses that, "The revolutionary atmosphere of Barcelona attracted me deeply, but I made no attempt to understand it. As for the kaleidoscope of political parties, with their tiresome names—they merely exasperated me. I knew that I was serving in something called the P.O.U.M., but I did not realize that there were serious differences between the political parties."⁶

He writes of the Lenin Barracks as being in "a state of filth and chaos," and that, "There was a frightful wastage of food, especially bread. From my barrack-room alone a basketful of bread was thrown away at every meal—a disgraceful thing when the civilian population was short of it."⁷

George Orwell, a self-admitted idealist with little real understanding of the complexities of the Spanish War, and therefore an easy victim of *Poumist* simplistics to the point of echoing their anti-communism, still wrote from the depths of a native honesty. "The whole tendency of the Communist policy," he writes, "was to reduce the war to an ordinary, non-revolutionary war in which the Government was heavily handicapped. For a war of that kind has got to be won by mechanical means, i.e. ultimately, by limitless supplies of weapons; and the Government's chief donor of weapons, the U.S.S.R., was at a great disadvantage, geographically, compared with Italy and Germany."⁸

Orwell seems to have been naïve indeed, for the contradiction was blatantly clear at the time of which he wrote to even the most unlettered peasant. For, specifically, it was those

4 Morrow, p. 45

5 (More on Cornford) Thomas, p. 192. Borkenau, pp. 93-74

6 Orwell, p. 47

7 Ibid. p. 7

8 Ibid. p. 70

very “non-revolutionary,” communist-led battalions that, with a minimum of weapons, had smashed the Army of Africa before Madrid, torn its very guts out at Jarama, and sent 60,000 crack troops of the Italian Regular Army into a retreat that rivaled the disaster of Caporetto in World War I. And these cadres short months before, had been simple workers and peasants, as were their newly trained commanders. Conversely, where was the “revolutionary army” of which Orwell writes? *Ten months had gone by on the Aragón front*: ten months in which with a “revolutionary” leadership such as that supposedly possessed by the F.A.I. and the P.O.U.M., certainly, but now, such an army should be in existence. These “revolutionaries” had a population of five million to draw upon, plus the only important industrial base within the Republic. And, again, they had ten months of *peace* in which to organize Where indeed were the revolutionary brigades and divisions that under any other leadership *but* the P.O.U.M. and the F.A.I. would have, as of that moment, been fighting in the streets of Burgos and Oviedo.

The lie, born of dogma, and presented as some “revolutionary” panacea by those who neither fought nor served should be laid to rest once and for all.

But even Orwell seems to have glimpsed the contradiction through the welter of ultra rhetoric, for he writes further: “I have given my reasons for thinking that the communist anti-revolutionary policy was mistaken, but so far as its effect upon the war goes I do not hope that my judgment was right. A thousand times I hope that it is wrong. *I would wish to see that war won by any means whatever* (my italics) In February, 1937, I did not see things quite in this light. I was sick of the inaction on the Aragón front and chiefly conscious that I had not done my fair share of the fighting. And of course I wanted to go to Madrid. Everyone in the Army, whatever their political opinions, always wanted to go to Madrid.”⁹

Apparently “going to Madrid” was not really so difficult. As stated, John Cornford, the communist and poet who had also served with the P.O.U.M., went there—and died there.

Unlike the days of the split within the P.C.E. In 1931, in which the Left “Communists” of Nin, Maurín, Andrade and Gorkín had preferred to affiliate with the C.N.T. as opposed to their Marxist cohorts of the U.G.T., in July 1936, the P.O.U.M. with their F.O.U.S. unions shifted to join with the weaker Catalanian U.G.T., thus earning the opprobrium of the Trotskyists who felt that they could have won over large sections of the Anarchists by re-infiltrating the C.N.T. instead. Andrés Nin, the major P.O.U.M. leader (Maurín was a captive in Franco territory where he would later be given his freedom), remained close to the C.N.T. leadership, though he refused to contend for power within it. He insisted too that the P.O.U.M. create its own militia rather than send its militants to the F.A.I.—another cause for Trotskyist dissent within the P.O.U.M.

9 Loc-cit, p. 70

Unsuccessful in proselytizing within either C.N.T. or the U.G.T., a failure too in the exercising of any serious influence on F.A.I. leadership—indeed there were more cases of fratricidal fighting in the first days than there were of cooperation between them—and failing utterly to build the kind of organization that would have won them acclaim at the front, they were essentially a pathetic and impotent organization.

In summation, they did have a certain value—to Franco. It was a nuisance value; a catalyst, as it were, for the sinking of the Anarchist thorn a bit deeper into the bleeding side of the Spanish Republic.

The Central Government had continued its slow drive to restore authority in Catalonia and Aragón. In Valencia, at a mass demonstration of some 250,000 people, the Communists, J.S.U. and the P.S.U.C. had jointly called for an alliance of all “healthy” social forces in Spain against Franco, the “Trotskyites” and the “uncontrollables.”¹⁰

The campaign for the organization of a regular army had largely been won by the government. Though the greater part of the reorganization remained on paper an essential abyss had been crossed. Militia columns were now given brigade and battalion numbers and attached to the overall commands of corps areas. It remained to be seen whether in Aragón the Anarchists would grant the new apparatus authority or aid. F.A.I. propaganda had generally followed the line that: “We do not accept militarization because it would lead to an obvious danger. We do not recognize military formations because that is the negation of Anarchism. Winning the war does not mean winning the revolution.”¹¹

Anarchist thinking on the matter went even deeper. To them the creation of a “People's Army” seemed but a method whereby “class-conscious revolutionary workers (themselves) would be disarmed and their organizations repressed.” In effect, though some of the wiser heads had agreed to the idea of the People's Army, the extremists had accepted its form, but not the authority of the Republic.

By the end of April tensions everywhere were at such a peak that the Generalitat canceled the May Day demonstrations in Barcelona on the pretext that the front would be best served by continued factory production.

On the 1st and 2nd of May, F.A.I. special forces attempted to interfere with the rail, telegraph, and telephone communications to Barcelona. The Telephone building was one of the many public services still in the hands of the F.A.I. This control allowed for the monitoring of any government or army communique between Valencia and the Generalitat and the frontier. In effect it posed an impossible situation for the Government.

10 D. Ibárruri, p. 278

11 Ibid. p. 285

On May 2, as if to add to the gathering storm, the Anarchist organ, *Solidaridad Obrera*, pronounced against the forces of the Generalitat which had been stopping men on the street and disarming them. "The guarantee of the revolution is the proletariat in arms!" headlined the Anarchist daily, and went on to say that no one had the right to disarm the "workers."¹²

The U.G.T. came out against this demagogic appeal, saying that, "the guarantee of the revolution was that all arms be sent to the front where they could best fight fascism."

On the morning of the 3rd, Rodríguez Salas, P.S.U.C. Councilor for Public Order in the Generalitat, accompanied by the Generalitat representative on the *Telefónica* committee went to the Censors Department on the first floor of the Telephone building. C.N.T. workers on the second floor, awakening from a "late lunch," began to fire down the stair under the misapprehension that the Government had come "to take over." Salas phoned for help. A company of *Asaltos* arrived together with the moderate F.A.I. leader, Dionisio Eroles. Eroles persuaded the C.N.T. workers to surrender their arms.¹³

But the gunfire had been noted across the city. And in certain areas, as if on signal, Anarchist and *Poumist* cadres opened fire. By late afternoon the F.A.I. Special Forces had seized the Alpine Barracks, and other units were attempting to storm the P.S.U.C. headquarters located off the Plaza de Catalonia. These were met by heavy fire and driven back with substantial losses. But the streets and major buildings of the city were again under siege as in the days of July.

The immediate and organized response of the F.A.I. Special Forces casts serious doubt as to any claimed "spontaneity of the occasion." And the C.N.T. while doing little to pacify the situation, was not averse to taking advantage of it. For on that same afternoon of May 3, their delegates went to the Catalan Premier, Tarradellas, and the Home Secretary, Ayguades, and extracted the promise that the *Asaltos* would be removed from the *Telefónica*. It should have ended there, but it didn't. For their demands went further than the question of the *Telefónica*. They asked for the immediate dismissal of all P.S.U.C. Ministers.

It is to their credit that Tarradellas and Ayguade refused.

On the 4th of May moderate C.N.T. Ministers in the Valencia Government, among them García Oliver and Federica Montseny, took to the air-waves, calling on their followers in Barcelona to lay down their arms and return to work. They then left for Barcelona together with Mariano Vázquez, Secretary of the National Committee of the C.N.T.: their objective, to bring pressure of the Barcelona F.A.I./C.N.T. for a cease fire.

¹² "*Solidaridad Obrera*," May 2, 1937

¹³ Thomas, p. 425. Also: Jackson, p. 369

This was not to be easily achieved, however. Extremists within the C.N.T., calling themselves the “Friends of Durruti,” together with sections of the F.A.I. Libertarian Youth, had further inflamed the situation and refused all mediation. The P.O.U.M., hoping to capitalize on the fast deteriorating situation, lined up solidly with the extremists. In its newspaper, *La Batalla*, it called for an “awakening of the spirit of July 19.” That this was the Republic of the Popular Front they were coming out against, rather than the Fascist-Military of July 19, seems not to have modified their demagoguery in the least.¹⁴

Luis Companys had at first backed Tarradellas in refusing to dismiss the P.S.U.C. Ministers. But on May 5 he agreed to the resignation of the Catalan Government and the naming of a Provisional Committee in its place. The P.S.U.C., needless to say, would be denied any place on the Committee, though all other parties, the Rabassaires, the Esquerra and the Anarchists would be represented. At the last moment it was agreed that the respected General Secretary of the Catalan U.G.T., Antonio Sesé, would be given a place on the Committee.

The Friends of Durruti, however, chose to ignore all efforts at any kind of resolution of the situation. They announced that a new “Revolutionary Junta” would be formed; that “all responsible for the ‘attack’ on the *Telefónica* would be shot; that all *Asaltos* would be disarmed, and that the P.O.U.M. was to be given its rightful place in the Junta.” The P.O.U.M. dutifully published the “Friends” statement in their paper, *La Batalla*.¹⁵

Fighting then continued throughout the day of the 6th. And in the early afternoon, Antonio Sesé, the single friend of the P.S.U.C./U.G.T. in the new Provisional Committee was shot down in the streets while making his way to the Presidential Palace.

At that point neither the Valencia Government nor the Catalan P.S.U.C. were disposed to bow further to the uncontrollables of the F.A.I. and the P.O.U.M. For though the P.S.U.C., the Esquerra, and the forces of the Generalitat were outnumbered in terms of military strength, they had held their own, whilst the F.A.I. extremists had failed utterly to enlist the support of the people.

The time had come to deny them the possibility of accomplishing with methods of terror what they could not win otherwise.

On the following day two Republican cruisers accompanied by the battleship, *Jaime I*, entered the harbor of Barcelona. And simultaneously with the arrival of the C.N.T. Ministers of the Central Government for new talks with the Generalitat, the Barcelona C.N.T., and the P.S.U.C., two battalions from Ascaso's (26th Anarchist) division in Aragón and a P.O.U.M. battalion were ordered to leave the front for Barcelona. Forty-five buses

14 D. Ibárruri, p. 285. Thomas, p. 427

15 Ibid. p. 428

were placed at their disposal for the trip.¹⁶

Commander Reyes of the Republican Airforce, alerted to what was happening, intercepted their column with a squadron of planes. They were ordered to return or be bombed for deserting the front. They did an about-face. Only a handful of militia continued on to Barcelona, arriving in time to witness the ignominious end of their “revolutionary” pretensions.

At a quarter to five on the morning of May 7 the C.N.T. broadcast an appeal for a cease-fire. Four thousand *Asaltos* then arrived from Valencia, having come through the F.A.I. strongholds of Tarragona and Reus with little or no resistance.

The fighting in Barcelona was over.

One additional factor pertinent in the outbreak of the fighting was the part played by Franco agents-provocateurs It has been suggested “that the following evidence simply cannot be ignored.”¹⁷

The General Staff of the Fascist-Military could hardly be expected to sit quietly while such a ripe possibility for disruption, or worse, of the Republic presented itself. Indeed, they were ready for the occasion. Wilhelm von Faupel, Hitler's Ambassador to Franco Spain, and a close associate of Franco, sent the following communique to Berchtesgaden, May 11, 1937:

“Concerning the disorders in Barcelona, Franco has told me that the street fighting was provoked by his agents. Nicholas Franco has confirmed this report, informing me that they have a total of thirteen agents in Barcelona. Some time ago one of them had reported that the tension between the Anarchists and Communists was so great that it could well end in street fighting. Te Generalissimo told me that at first he doubted this agent's report, but later they were confirmed by other agents. Originally he didn't intend to take advantage of this possibility until military operations had been established in Catalonia. But since the Reds had recently attacked Teruel to aid the Government of Euzkadi, he thought the time was ripe for the outbreak of disorder in Barcelona. In fact, a few days after he had received the order, the agent in question, with three or four of his men, succeeded in provoking shooting in the streets which later led to the desired results.”¹⁸

16 D. Ibárruri, p. 286

17 Thomas, p. 426

18 Ibid. p. 426. Also: D. Ibárruri, p. 282

CABALLERO:

From Ultra to Rightist it has been said in a thousand different ways that the Spanish Communist Party's sole objective during this trying period was the absolute control of the Popular Front Government and the People's Army. The dismissal of Largo Caballero was, supposedly, necessary to further these plans, since he now stood solidly in their path.

Actually Caballero had thoroughly isolated himself from the people; from the realities of the war itself, and from the mainstream of his own party, the Left-Socialists, Juan Negrín and Álvarez del Vayo and the Right-Socialists, Indalecio Prieto and Julián Zugazagoitia. To place the Communists as his only opponents is to deny the intelligence and abilities of all Spanish leadership to the right of the F.A.I. For the confused policies of Caballero were simply not conducive to the winning of the war, and it was as simple as that.

Aware of his waning influence he had moved closer to the C.N.T., and was beginning to push the Anarchist idea of a "Trade Union Government" to be formed of the U.G.T., whose executive he largely controlled, and the F.A.I.-led C.N.T. It goes without saying that if such a government came into being the Popular Front Government would first have to be destroyed and the Communists removed. Moreover, all Democratic, Republican, and Separatist Parties would be totally disenfranchised. In effect, such a move would not only mean the destruction of the People's Front but also an end to the unity of action of Spain's working class: a death blow to the revolution and the winning of the war.

The lack of any meaningful military strategy had shown itself in the surrender of Málaga. And the Communists were not the only one who laid the blame for that squarely in Caballero's lap. He was also supporting a plan for an offensive in Extremadura as drawn up by the Republican officers, Colonel Segismundo Casado, General Martínez Cabrera and General José Asensio. Asensio was responsible for the loss of Málaga. Casado and Cabrera were to lead the Junta that surrendered to the Republic of Franco.

The plan was to strike toward Mérida and the Portuguese border through lightly held Fascist lines, and thus cut the territory of Fascist Spain in two. They would concentrate 75,000 men for this purpose. It had one flaw which its proponents to this day refuse to mention. Cold facts had proven (remember Badajoz) that the Fascist-Military would *not* be cut in half at the Portuguese border, since all of Portugal itself was but an extension of the hinterland of the Fascist-Military in terms of the movement of troops and all the materiel of war.

In contrast to this the Soviet military advisers, backed by Generals Miaja and Pozas, had proposed to an attack to the west of Madrid, where they would strike in a pincers movement from the Coruña road to the north and the Extremadura road to the south and thus relieve Madrid by cutting off all rebel troops in the Casa de Campo, University City

and Garabitas.

Even such a Russo-phobe as Hugh Thomas was forced to write of the plans that, "Whatever the shortcomings of the Brunete plan (Madrid), it was certainly more practicable than the fanciful Esremadura scheme."¹⁹

As for the opposition of the P.C.E. to the Caballero Government, Dolores Ibárruri (La Pasionaria) has written the following: "Ten months of war and eight months of the Largo Caballero government had convinced us of the impossibility of continuing along the same path. We had no intention of forcing Largo, who represented the Socialist Party, to resign; instead we wanted to make an attempt to discuss collectively the problems relating to the war, within the framework of the government. It was quite obvious that if the Republic were defeated as a result of the government's policy, the blame would be shared equally by all whether or not they had participated in drawing up war plans and governing their country.

"The Communist Party made public its disagreements with the conduct of the war at this time because the situation in Euzkadi was extremely grave. By this action we hoped to turn the wheel in the right direction, with all the means at the government's disposal, to aid the Basque combatants and those in Asturias and Santander, already under the threat of a direct enemy attack. To continue on the road we had started in Sept., 1936, was to dissipate the heroism and fighting spirit of our people, it was to march toward an inevitable defeat, despite our partial victories.

"José Díaz' speech (at a mass meeting held in Valencia to openly discuss the P.C.E.'s position and to denounce the attempt at counter-revolution in Barcelona), evoked an extraordinary response from the people, although he discussed the urgent problems of military and political leadership with the utmost discretion. If the people had been kept in ignorance of what was happening behind government doors, it was they who had suffered the consequences of an erroneous, negative policy in their own flesh.

"A cabinet meeting was held the day after the Díaz speech (the 13th of May). As if nothing had occurred, Largo Caballero presented the meeting's agenda, in which, as always, questions relating to the war were conspicuous by their absence. One of the Communist Ministers rose to say that the party representatives did not approve the agenda. Our ministers demanded that the military and political situation be discussed and that the President state what he intended to do to aid the North.

"Largo Caballero refused, declaring that it was he who drew up the agenda and not the Communists. The Communist Ministers replied: 'You can keep on making the agenda and rule personally if you like, but not with the complicity of the Communist Party. We

¹⁹ Thomas, p. 430

withdraw from the government as of this moment.'

"'Then we'll go on without you,' coldly answered Largo.

"Indalecio Prieto then arose and resolutely told Largo Caballero that without the participation of the Communist Party there could be no government. Largo then held a series of consultative meetings in which his sole supporters were the Anarchists, whom he had rescued from ignominy after the May putsch. The Anarchists agreed to form a syndicalist government if they were given ministries and time—in other words, if the political sense and instinct for self-preservation of the Republican forces would disappear long enough to accept such an extreme proposal."²⁰

At that point it was apparent to Caballero that he had no choice but to dissolve his government. But even then, in discussions with Azaña regarding the formation of a new government, the Communists, not wishing to be blamed for Caballero's fall, suggested that they would be willing to work with him if he but relinquished his position as War Minister to Prieto. But Caballero, still engrossed in his personal feud with Prieto, and a victim, perhaps, of one of the "seven deadly sins," could accept no such solution. It is to his credit that he resigned quietly, making no effort at further fanfare which could only lead to further divisiveness and a weakening of the Republican cause.

The New Government was headed by Juan Negrín, Socialist, as Premier, two Communists, two left-wing Republicans, a representative from Catalonia and another from the Basque country, plus three Socialists and Indalecio Prieto, Socialist, as War Minister.

The Anarchists were not represented. They had not been "driven out" as they had sought to do with the P.S.U.C. in Catalonia. Indeed, they had been asked to stay. But with a total inability to evaluate the situation—they believed that any government formed without them was bound to fail—they refused. In their arrogance they had forgotten that May of 1937 was not July of 1936, and the immediate moves of Negrín; his determination to wage a war that would defeat the Fascist-Military, soon captured the imagination and respect of the Spanish masses.

And so the government went on without the Anarchists, until such time as they asked to be taken back. But then they were not given the four ministries that they held under Caballero—they were given but one.²¹ (See note)

20 D. Ibárruri, pp. 287-288. See Brennan on the fall of Caballero, p. 327

21 An inordinate interest has been placed upon the Communists; insistence, at the cabinet meeting, that the P.O.U.M. be outlawed and their press banned. The real issue, the question of the organization of the war effort and how this was being sabotaged, delicately or otherwise, has been relegated to a minor position in the debate. But the opposite was true. For the P.C.E. was consistent in that for them the winning of the war was the first and only priority. That they would so debase themselves by threatening to leave the government of the P.O.U.M. were not outlawed is so totally inconsistent with the facts, that all establishment historians who play upon this theme show

their own lack of objectivity in the matter.

TO THE AID OF THE NORTH:

One of the first acts of the Negrín Government was to dispatch a military staff to the aid of Bilbao. Its chief was General Gamir Ulibarri, a regular, who had once been director of the Infantry School at Toledo. He had commanded Republican forces at Teruel since the first days of the war.

The plan conceived in late March—the attack west of Madrid—was pushed ahead since the brigades of the Center Army were exhausted, bled white by the incessant fighting at Madrid, Jarama and Guadalajara. They were in no condition to launch an offensive of the size needed to draw troops and planes from the North.

Nevertheless, the midst of reorganization, Negrín attempted two limited offensives to do just that. The first was against Huesca in Aragón. It failed. The second was made by the International Brigade Commander, General Walter¹ against Segovia to the west of Madrid. The attack began on May 31. Using the 14th (French) International Brigade as a shock force, he smashed the Rebel lines at San Ildefonso, and reached La Granja (portrayed in Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*) before he was stopped by General Varela.²

At La Granja, reserves were nonexistent and now follow-up could be attempted. In the fighting at Huesca the means used in terms of weaponry fell far short of those required to storm such a bastion. Organization was still in its infancy. In this respect it must be stated that had the Republican government been able to take full advantage of the few months of grace following the Italian defeat at Guadalajara, the very course of the war might have been changed. But the political disunity of the Caballero period; the lack of any real military, civilian and industrial centralized authority as a result of this chaos—plus the open intrigues of pro-Fascist elements, as well as the F.A.I.—had in the long run proved disastrous.

The new government made every effort to create a strongly centralized control. But for Bilbao, capital of the North, it was too late. On June 11, 1937 (after the mysterious death of the Rebel general, Mola, in an air crash),³ General Davila ordered the Rebel army of the north to renew the attack. The preliminary artillery barrage from some 150 guns was the greatest since World War I. Along the entire line of Basque fortifications, the waves of Junkers, Heinkels, and Capronis followed the bombing patterns of Guernica and Durango. The Basque militia fell back, decimated. They fought on, but in the end they suffered the fate of San Sebastián and Málaga. The remnants retreated toward Santander and Gijón. These were to be the final redoubts of the Republic in the north.

1 Landis, p. 181.

2 Loc-cit, p. 181.

3 Thomas, p. 444.

In the last days of June every weapon in the Republican arsenal was secretly concentrated in the Madrid area. Republican brigades were to drive to the south and rear of the Rebel forces containing the city.

This “Brunete offensive” as it was later called, was the first general offensive by the Government since the beginning of the insurrection. It began on July 5 and lasted until July 28. And it was in part successful. Several hundred square kilometers of territory were recovered, and masses of Rebel planes, tanks, artillery, and men were withdrawn from the north, rushed to the Madrid front, and thrown into a holocaust that exceeded anything that had gone before. The North was given a full two month respite. In addition, the Republican army, created from the raw materiel of Spanish workers and peasants, lacking competent and trained leadership for the job, and without anything approaching parity in armament, proved it was now capable of an offensive using modern techniques.

Indeed, a quick look at the map will show that the plan lacked neither audacity nor wisdom. In the light of today it seems obvious that if it had succeeded, it could have produced a miniature Stalingrad long before the need for a Stalingrad had arisen. The farthestmost points of the Rebel advance on Madrid—the Casa de Campo, University City, the Manzanares River—would have been cut off; would have become the anvil, as it were, upon which some of the finest Franco troops, faced with a situation devoid of reinforcements in either men or materiel, would have been smashed by the armies of Modesto and Miaja.

But though Líster, Jurado, and Walter had driven south to a depth of 15 kilometers—to the very outskirts of Boadilla del Monte⁴ and Sevilla de la Nueva, the southern part of the pincers, the 2nd Army Corps under Romero had met with complete failure. The Republican General Rojo writes: “The 2nd Corps realized the initial attack with success too, being able to get its forces all the way to the Toledo road. *But a panic provoked in the evening within the advanced elements, caused a retreat back to their original positions.*”⁵ (my ital.)

Even this limited Republican victory, however, was sufficient to provoke frenzied action by England and France. The original English policy had envisioned a quick victory for Franco's cause, but with a hoped for exclusion of German and Italian influence. This now gave way to almost abject support for the aspirations of Mussolini. In this respect, British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, actually told his counterpart in the French Cabinet, Yvonne Delbos, that he hoped Franco would win, since he thought he could reach agreement on an eventual German and Italian withdrawal. The premiership of Stanley Baldwin was succeeded by that of Neville Chamberlain. The British Government then sought, according to Hugh Thomas, “to appease Hitler and Mussolini more vigorously than they had ever done under Baldwin. The change of emphasis (though not of policy) was

⁴ Landis, p. 184.

⁵ Rojo, p. 106.

seen in the olive branch sent in the form of a private letter suggesting 'talks' from Chamberlain to Mussolini on July 29.”⁶

The logical result of this new appeasement was an emboldened Axis. While Neville Chamberlain slavishly pursued his *rapprochement* with Italy and Germany they, in turn, escalated their aid to Franco to direct participation at all levels. The German pocket-battleship *Deutschland* had shelled the Republican city of Almería. Now, Italian planes bombed neutral ships with immunity.

“England and France,” according to the American Ambassador, Bowers, “learned quite soon what Franco meant by 'liberation of the Mediterranean. . . .' Our 'Common Civilization' was now menaced by piracy on the sea, with mysterious submarines attacking merchant ships all the way from Turkey to Barcelona. They were not Franco submarines. That they were German and Italian was perfectly understood.”⁷

More meetings were held in the West, demanding a break with the cynical policy of non-intervention. The Administration of Franklin Roosevelt protested the shelling of Almería by the *Deutschland*. Demonstrations of massive proportions were mounted in every major city of the western hemisphere, but no major change of policy was effected. Only the belated appearance in Barcelona and Madrid of Louis de Brouckère, president of the Socialist International, gave any indication that the weight of public opinion was having some effect. Brouckère was feted and given V.I.P. treatment. He, in turn, spoke of solidarity, unity, and of aid. But those he spoke to and with had had enough of words. They applauded politely, maintained the strictest protocol, and awaited some concrete proof of this “unity” from the “hollow men” beyond the Pyrenees. The proof came in the dismissal of de Brouckère from his position in the Socialist International.

The Italian divisions of Mancini that had lain quiescent during the Brunete offensive now moved to the attack. They were joined by Navarrese divisions and new levies of Moroccans and Foreign Legionnaires. Batteries of German and Italian guns utterly destroyed the Basque and Asturian positions. The reinforced Condor Legion struck with all its massive potential. The pattern of Bilbao was repeated. The militia of the Republican general Ulibarri fell back toward the city of Santander.

It was all too obvious that the respite granted by the Brunete offensive had achieved little, since no reorganization or military skill could compensate for the lack of weapons in the north. The efforts of the Negrín Government to get the war materiel to the embattled Basques had been openly sabotaged by the London Committee.

The utter cynicism of the moment was embodied in a telegram sent by Benito Mussolini to

⁶ Thomas, p. 467.

⁷ Bowers, p. 363.

Franco after the fall of Santander. "While the brave Legionnaires (Italian) enter Santander in intimate collaboration with the Nationalist troops, obtaining in the name of Western Civilization one of the most brilliant victories of the war against Asiatic barbarity, I am gratified to be able to testify to your Excellency my pride at having these troops under my command, and my sincere admiration of their fearlessness and capacity in realizing such a rapid (*sic*) victory."⁸ To which the Generalissimo replied: "I am particularly proud that Italian Legionnaires have, during the ten days of fighting, contributed mightily to the splendid victory of Santander, and that their contribution received coveted recognition in your telegram. . . ."⁹

Mussolini then announced to the world the names of *ten Italian Generals who had led the armies on Santander*.¹⁰ While the London Committee announced to the world that there was *still no proof of foreign intervention on the side of Franco*.

Euzkadi, the Basque country had fallen. And it would be but the tragic prelude to the fall of Asturias.

There would, however, be one more diversionary move to save Gijón and the Asturian enclave.

8 Landis, p. 241. Also: Bowers, pp. 361-362.

9 Bowers, pp. 361-362.

10 Landis, p. 241.

ARAGÓN: QUINTO-BELCHITE!:

Whatever plans the F.A.I. had for an offensive against Zaragoza had long been tabled. Indeed it is doubtful that such “plans” had ever been committed to paper. The new General Staff had its own plans, drawn up by Col. Antonio Cordón, a professional soldier and an member of Spain's Communist Party. He had been appointed Chief of Staff of the Eastern Army. A series of operations were to begin with Zaragoza as the ultimate objective, and utilizing Madrid troops, since those of the F.A.I. were considered totally unreliable in such an important operation.

A problem existed here in that the Aragón front was still under Anarchist control, as was Aragón itself; operating with an almost independent government calling itself the Council of Aragón.

The story of the dissolution, liquidation, or whatever of the Council of Aragón has, like the banishment of the P.O.U.M., been laid squarely at the door of the Communists—but with far less reason. True, the Communists had at no time ceased to denounce the situation in Aragón and Catalonia as one that gave absolute aid and comfort to the enemy. But it was not they who either instigated or planned the demise of the F.A.I. infra-structure.

The man supposedly responsible for this act—and the stories about the event rank with the best of fiction—was Enrique Lister, at that time, Communist Commander of the 11th Division.

What he has to say about it in his work, *Nuestra Guerra*, bears repeating, since it comes from the horse's mouth, as it were, and further, as he himself puts it, “perhaps it is best after twenty-five years of listening in silence to the falsehoods and calumnies of the Anarchists, that I give my view.”¹

To summarize, Lister states that on August 4, after the withdrawal of his division from the Brunete cauldron, he received an order from General Rojo of the Madrid Command to meet with him in Valencia. Lister did this and was told that the Minister of War, Indalecio Prieto, wished to see him. “There was an ante-room in the Ministry,” Lister writes, “filled with perhaps thirty people. But when the orderly informed Prieto of our arrival he came out to greet us immediately. Smiling broadly he gave me his hand, while at the same time telling Rojo that he could retire. Then, placing his arm around my shoulder, he led me into his office. I confess, I felt like the fly in the proverbial spider's parlour, and my suspicions were all too quickly confirmed.

“He told me that the Government had decided to dissolve the Council of Aragón, but feared the Anarchists would refuse to recognize the Government's authority, for in

1 Lister, p. 151

addition to the police forces of the Council they now had three army divisions. He (Prieto) had proposed to the Council of Ministers of the Republic, and they had agreed, that a military force be sent there capable of assuring that the Government's decision would be carried out.

“He then told me that there would be no single written order nor follow-up messages from the Ministry; that we were dealing with a secret—between the Government and myself—that we would liquidate without contemplation or bureaucratic formalities all that was convenient to do so, and that in back of me stood the Government of the Republic.

“The seriousness of the situation was quite clear to me. The national shame, as represented by the Council of Aragón, had to be dealt with. I knew this. But even then I did not know it in all its naked tragedy—what had happened to the peasants and the Aragonese people in those thirteen months of Libertarian Communism. I would see it all in the immediate days ahead. And I would also see just how far Indalecio Prieto would go in *his* perfidy.”

After leaving the War Ministry, Líster checked with the Communist Party headquarters in Valencia. He told them of Prieto's proposal. They knew nothing of the plan, though it was supposedly derived of the Cabinet itself. Obviously the two Communist members of the Cabinet had not been privy to this particular meeting. To make the situation still more complicated, the machinery had already been set in motion. Prieto had informed Líster that even as he was on his way to Valencia, Rojo had issued orders putting the 11th Division on the march for Caspe, the Anarchist headquarters. On the surface they would be going there for rest and reorganization. “But,” according to Líster, “when I had taken all measures to insure the accomplishment of the task assigned me, I was to communicate with General Pozas, Chief of the Army of the East. I was to tell him, cryptically that ‘my forces were quartered.’ He in turn would give me the date upon which the decree would be put into effect—by saying cryptically, ‘*Mañana sale eso.*’ Once the deed was done, Prieto informed me, the Government decree would *then*, on the following day, be published in all the papers.”

The problem for Líster and the Communists here was a difficult one. For they had been the first to demand a disciplined army, responsible only to the General Staff as designated by the Spanish Republican Government. That Communist units were to be used in precisely this way—to do the dirty work for the others of the Socialist Party and the Left Republicans—was something else again. But to refuse the orders would be tantamount to treason and would precipitate the very crisis which the P.C.E. wished to avoid. Prieto had managed very well. Whatever happened now, the P.C.E. in the immediate future could only suffer. Líster was told to comply with the orders but to move with all caution. Which he proposed to do, for the simple reason that he had never trusted Prieto. At a previous

meeting of the Cabinet it had been proposed that he be given an Army Corps, upon which, Prieto voted against it saying that Lister employed the bandit methods of Pancho Villa.

Units of the 11th Division arrived at Caspe, including tanks, and were quartered some four kilometers from the city in a Command Post set up in the Palacio de Chacón. Lister commenced to prepare to attack and occupy Caspe, if that became necessary, and to repulse the attacks of the Anarchist units, if that happened.

The 11th Division, officially, was now attached to the 12th Army Corps of Colonel Sánchez Plaza at Alcañiz.

On August 7, Lister visited General Pozas, informed him of the measures taken to insure the success of his mission, and asked Pozas' opinion about them. Pozas (claimed by ultra and rightist alike to have been a card-carrying communist—which he was not) replied “with an angelical candor,” according to Lister, “that he didn't know that I was in Aragón with any other purpose than to organize my forces and to give them a well-earned rest. I responded that that was the public explanation, but not the true one as I understood it. He insisted that he knew nothing of the mission. The interview took place on the terrace of the headquarters building, and when the conversation reached this point, he left to return with a Russian adviser and a bottle of champagne. This Soviet Colonel asked me how things had gone—in Russian. I told him what Pozas told me, that he knew nothing. The 'adviser' then told me that the General was fully informed of everything.”

At that point, with the realization that no one, from Prime Minister Negrín, through Prieto, the General Staff and the Commanding General of the Zone, would admit to anything, thus leaving the Communists completely responsible but with no way out short of a breaking of what unity there existed within the Popular Front, Lister returned to Caspe.

At 11 p.m. on August 10, Lister was called to the telephone. It was General Pozas and he limited his remarks to “*Mañana sale eso!*” But Lister didn't leave it at that. He answered clearly and distinctly: “My General, you can communicate to the Minister of Defense that all measures have been taken. The artillery is emplaced and the tanks and infantry are in position: if anything moves it will be crushed.” General Pozas used Lister's brief pause to say, “Bueno, bueno, good luck,” and hung up.

Enrique Lister, aware that since the communications system was in Anarchist hands, and that they would undoubtedly get the message, had, himself, killed two birds with one stone. He had announced who was really responsible for what was about to happen, and had simultaneously drawn a line under the kind of psychological warfare he had been practising for the last few days. . . . For the 11th Division had not been idle. Indeed troops had been maneuvering on the outskirts of Caspe; tanks had rolled through the streets with cannons pointing ominously, and motorized infantry had passed back and forth

along the highways.

Though warned, only Ascaso managed to flee to Valencia. All other F.A.I. leaders and chieftains of the Council of Aragón were either captured trying to flee, or were taken in their homes or headquarters. Nowhere was there any resistance; no fighting of any kind despite the lurid tales spread by the international press. The Ultra, Trotskyist press of that day gave forth with column upon column of horror tales replete with executions *ad-infinitum*. Every rumor became fact. And each specious tale was given full credence and enlarged upon.

On August 11, the Government Decree for the dissolution of the Council of Aragón was released and published in all Spanish papers; though the Council had already ceased to exist.

Among the hundred-odd *Faistas* and members of the Council—many more had already been released—were four members of the National Committee of the C.N.T.

On the 12th, Líster was again called to Valencia; this time to be met by a furious Idalecio Prieto. Gone was all pretense of good-will or friendship. Gone too was the “secretiveness” of the first visit. Before a large number of people in the ante room of the War Ministry, Prieto literally shouted at Líster:

“What,” he cried, “have you done in Aragón? You have killed the Anarchist leaders and now they are asking for your head—and I would give it to them if it would not lead to another civil war.”

“I let him continue his comedy,” Líster writes, “and when he stopped to take a breath I said, ‘Señor Minister, I must ask your pardon for not having complied with your orders regarding *the shooting of the Anarchist Jefes*. Things developed in such a way that I found it unnecessary to take such extreme measures. I have simply detained a hundred or so. You can try them or free them as you see fit.’”

Prieto, still playing to his audience, and holding a trump card, so he thought, with which to place the entire blame for the affair upon Líster and the Communists, continued to shout: “Señor Zugazagoitia (a Cabinet Minister) has just informed me that a delegation of the National Committee of the C.N.T. is with him. They say that four members of the National Committee have been assassinated by you, and that their bodies are on the Caspe-Alcañiz highway. They are in the act of declaring a general strike.”

Upon which, according to Líster, he himself called Zugazagoitia with the information that the owners of the bodies on the Caspe-Alcañiz highway were very much alive. And that was the end of it.

Just as it was also the ignominious end of the Council of Aragón. Deserted by its own military, ignored by the C.N.T., it simply ceased to exist.

Líster sums up by stating that Prieto was a “defeatist,” with a policy essentially tied to that of England and France; that he hated the Communists as much as he hated the Anarchists. If *his* plan regarding the Council of Aragón had succeeded, he would indeed have killed two birds with one stone. Fighting would have been precipitated between the Communists and the *Cenetistas* with a subsequent chaos and a possible ending of the war. Prieto, Líster suggests, was in practice but the precursor of Casado.²

The Aragón offensive which began on August 24, 1937, assumed tactical and strategic objectives easily discernible to the military analyst. Tactically, the seizure of the city of Zaragoza, the breaking of the entire front protecting that stronghold, and the isolation of Huesca and Jaca to the north would open the way for further advance and a reduction of the Teruel salient. Strategically, the bringing to a halt of the war in the north would once again guarantee the maintenance of that section of Spain for the Republic: Also, the activating of the Aragón front under the command of the central government would lay the basis for military unit without which the war could not be won.

The forces massed for the offensive were equal to those of Brunete. A singular difference, however, was that, whereas at Brunete they were concentrated on a front of no more than fifteen kilometers, in Aragón the front would extend from eighty to one hundred kilometers.

The fighting developed swiftly. To the north of Zaragoza and the Ebro River, the 27th P.S.U.C. division drove fifteen kilometers to cross the Gállego River and take the town of Zuera. To the south of the Ebro, the 25th Anarchist division, the 11th division of Líster and the 35th International division, seized Quinto, Belchite, Mediana, Codo and a number of other villages, and then, as at Brunete, were stopped by the swift arrival of the best divisions of the Army of Franco.

The results of the offensive, in terms of bringing relief to the north, were a complete failure.

Indeed, Rebel historians make no attempt to hide the facts of the enormous weight of arms and materiel thrown against the meager Republican forces of the north. They state bluntly that upwards of 300 guns, 250 tanks, 300 planes, and 106 battalions of troops, in addition to the Italian Army Corps, were used.³

On August 25, the Basque government capitulated. This left only Asturias to continue the

2 Ibid. pp. 151 through 162. *my italics

3 Landis, p. 275

war in the north. Juan de Axuriaguerra, premier of the Basque Republic, negotiated the surrender terms *with the Italian command*.

The Republican offensive continued. Additional gains were made. At one point they drove to within three kilometers of the outskirts of Zaragoza. To the north of Huesca and along the length of the Teruel salient a few additional towns and villages were taken in local drives. But that was all. Two months later, October 21, all action ceased. The fantastic preponderance of Rebel arms had proven itself sufficient to counter any Republican effort and still continue the drive along the Cantabrian coast.

On October 22, the mixed Italian and Spanish divisions of the Rebel General Solchaga seized Gijón, the Asturian capital and the last redoubt in the north was lost.

The words of Lloyd George, which thundered in the House of Commons against the cynicism of Chamberlain and Eden and the defeatist policies of England, sum up the reasons:

“Bilbao, Santander, the Asturias, were all defended by as brave men, as ever went into battle—traditionally so, and racially so. But they had no munitions; they had no guns. Who is responsible for that? Nonintervention. Who is responsible for keeping nonintervention alive? His Majesty's Government. If democracy is defeated in this battle, if Fascism is triumphant, *His Majesty's Government can claim the victory for themselves*.”⁴ (my italics)

4 Ibid. p. 323

TERUEL:

Other than the disunity within the ranks of the Republic itself—the right-capitulationists of the Besteiro-Azaña-Prieto faction, and the left-sectarians of the F.A.I. and the P.O.U.M.—it has been said that the war was lost for the Republic, not on the battlefields of the north, nor at Madrid, Teruel or the Ebro, but rather in the chancelleries of Europe. The first and most deadly blow was that of nonintervention. The last was to be the tragedy of Munich.

Between these two acts of insouciant cynicism, however, was the one positive gesture to be made by the governments of England and France. This was the conference of Nyon, initiated September 10, 1937, for the express purpose of “putting an end to the acts of piracy and aggression in the Mediterranean.”¹ Germany and Italy refused to attend. The conference, as a result, was highly successful. Piracy slowed to a halt under the threat of instant reprisal by the French and British navies. For a month or two there were no bombings of neutral ships and no torpedoings by “ghost” submarines.²

This almost indecent retreat of Germany and Italy in the face of the assertive unity of the European signatories to the Pact of Nyon could well have signaled the end of appeasement. This, however, was not to be. The virus of nonintervention had produced malignancy in the form of an illusory needed for a *modus vivendi* with German and Italian Fascism The whole thing, perhaps, had been but a threat by the Western Powers to force their junior partners into line. The perspective of anti-fascist resistance raised by Nyon was immediately sacrificed in pursuit of a new *rapprochement*. The Pact of Munich was born on the day that the positive results of the Nyon conference were ignored.

Actually, though Nyon had brought a temporary halt to the bombing and sinking of ships bound for the Republic, the tremendous losses prior to this date had already slowed the movement of such ships to a standstill—though some were coming through the north sea to French ports in the hopes that the materiel would be allowed to cross the Pyrenees.

Statistics kept by the Nazi-Germany Military Attaché in Ankara, Turkey, show that, whereas the eight months of January through September, 1937, had seen approximately sixty-eight ships of various nationalities pass through the Bosphorus bound for Republican ports, the four critical months of September through December saw *exactly five*. Their combined holds carried, according to this same intelligence, six planes, twenty-seven trucks, and as little as two thousand tons of war materiel. During that same period many hundreds of planes and tanks and tens of thousands of tons of war materiel reached the Spanish Fascist ports of Cádiz, Vigo and Bilbao.³

1 Thomas, pp. 475-476

2 During this period few ships attempted to sail to Republican ports. But, in the Fascist-held port of Vigo, alone, over 30,000 tons of war materiel was delivered in the month of December, 1937

3 Del Vayo, p. 272

And is it not interesting that England, having made her new deal with Italy, now ignored the Pact of Nyon. In the first days of January, when ships again started for the ports of the Republic, they were bombed and torpedoed without mercy, and without the intervention of the British and French fleets. An example would be that in one week—January 12 through 19—the Dutch ship *Hannah* was torpedoed and sunk; the British freighter *Clercian* was torpedoed and sunk with a loss of fourteen lives; a number of food ships were attacked on the high seas by Italian bombers operating out of the island of Mallorca; and the American tanker *Nantucket Chief* was seized by two Rebel destroyers and taken to Mallorca, while two French destroyers of the nonintervention patrol stood by and did nothing.⁴

With the fall of the north the Franco armies now had a most excellent potential. By their own admission, they possessed 650 battalions of infantry, a division of cavalry, approximately 1,000 artillery pieces—more than 900 planes, and a total of 600,000 men. In addition to all this there were, from the listed reserve, another 200 battalions, 210 guns, and between 60,000 and 80,000 troops of the Italian Expeditionary Corps, the C.T.V., *with all their equipment*. The tank strength was at approximately 500.

This same Rebel source, the historian, Manuel Aznar, lists the Republican forces at approximately 450,000 men, and speaks of these “lesser forces of the Republic” as being “organized into some 640 battalions on paper, with each battalion having *far fewer effectives than those of the Nationalists*.” (Italics added). Again, and still according to Rebel figures, the Republic supposedly possessed some 350 aircraft, 235 batteries and as many as 200 tanks.⁵

It is unfortunate that no figures exist from Republican sources to cover this period. Suffice it to say, that estimates from captured W.W.II German and Italian archives point to a far greater disparity. U.S. reports conclude that an honest summation of the relative strength of the opposing forces would show a ratio of at least four to one in favor of Spanish Fascism.⁶

An ominous quiet reigned along the 1,800 kilometers of trench and redoubt. There were even those in Madrid, in those early days of November, American newsmen among them, who spoke of the expected Rebel offensive as being delayed until Spring of 1938. But rumors, illusions, and the postulates of pundits faded before the brutal realities of the Spanish scene. The offensive *would* come. The mouthings of Radio Salamanca and the General Queipo de Llano in Seville promised it. The council of Republican high command was sure of it; and it prepared accordingly.

4 Thomas, p. 513

5 Aznar, p. 344. Vol. II

6 Section One: p. 152. Lecture Series 6-1, War Orientation Course, Lowry Field. Colorado, Nov. 13, 1944

Rebel documents stress that there were three select choices open to Franco. 1. To break the Republican lines between Zaragoza and Jaca, and strike for the heart of Catalonia. 2. Drive down from the Teruel salient, cut Spain in half and destroy both sections piece-meal. 3. Repeat the attempt against Madrid that had brought disaster to the Italians some ten months previously.

The choice was Madrid "It remained," according to Manuel Aznar, "the supreme objective, politically, morally, militarily, and psychologically."⁷ This time, however, the assault would be mounted with five times the strength used by the Italians in the month of March. In all, some sixteen divisions with their auxiliary units of tank, artillery, transport, were to effect the initial breakthrough. They would be supported by the combined air force of three sections: 1. The Condor Legion (German); 2. The Legionnaires (Italian); and 3. the Rebel air arm (Spanish). The objective was the capital of Madrid, plus the destruction of the newly formed Republican army of maneuver. December 1, 1937, was "D" day. But the Rebels advanced that date to December 16 because of adverse weather conditions.⁸

That the Republic was alert to this enormous massing of troops goes without saying. That it would sit idly by and allow the Fascist-Military to choose when and where they would fight was another matter. November drew to a close. Rain, high winds, and snowstorms blanketed all central Spain, and blizzards raged over the arid hills and valleys of Aragón.

And it was precisely then that the People's Army struck at the salient of Teruel. And their gamble succeeded. The attack took the form of a pincers movement, in which two divisions advanced above Teruel from east and west. This was done in the first hours of the morning of December 15. And it was done without artillery or aviation, *and through heavily falling snow*. By 7:00 p.m. they had closed the pincers at the village of San Blas. On the evening of the 18th, three days later, the advance could claim six towns stormed in rapid succession, one thousand square kilometers seized from the enemy, peripheral forts that had been in existence since the beginning of the war blasted to rubble—with their garrisons slain or captured and five thousand crack troops of the Teruel sector commander, Lieutenant Colonel Ray d'Harcourt, driven back into strongholds within the city itself.

But on the 18th, the first masses of Italian and German aviation began to appear over Republican lines, unleashing hundreds of tons of bombs and establishing the pattern of absolute aerial domination that would hold until the end of the war.

Since the Rebel offensive against Madrid had been slated for the 16/17, the scope of the

⁷ Aznar, p. 562. Vol. II

⁸ Ibid. p. 353

Republican gamble is easily discerned. The Fascist-Military was stunned by its brilliance. They were now off-balance; fixed in position, as it were, as the bull is fixed by the skilled use of the cape. The gamble had indeed succeeded! All Spain was aroused, as was the world, by the audacity and the courage of the Republican maneuver. Teruel was the first provincial capital to be captured by the soldiers of the People's Army, proving decisively that it had graduated from the undisciplined units who had fled before the tanks and cavalry of the Army of Africa. And unlike Brunete and Aragón, the victory had been achieved without the aid of a single International Brigade. The victory was wholly a Spanish one. It announced to the world who indeed represented the people of Spain.

And then the true fighting began. Division after picked Rebel division was hurled against every sector of the Republican perimeter. The battle raged unabated, unsurpassed by anything that had gone before. Italian guns, German tanks, and complete mortar battalions added their weight to the crescendo of fury, and the drum-fire barrages could be heard in Valencia some seventy miles away.

Associated Press dispatches from Hendaye (French-Spanish border) quoted Rebel sources as saying that they had launched a major offensive under the conqueror of Oviedo, General Miguel Aranda, and that they were committing 150,000 troops to the battle.⁹ Republican forces in the area were estimated at about 80,000.¹⁰

The battle raged for a full two months until finally Teruel was lost to the Republic. Casualties and general attrition had been by far the most brutal since the opening guns of the Spanish War. From December, 1937, to February 22, 1938, tens of thousands on both sides were killed, wounded, or taken prisoner. materiel losses were enormous. For the Republic they were disastrous. The greater part of all they had accumulated in the summer of 1937 had been used up. The fighter-planes and artillery were worn out; mobile equipment, trucks, tanks and armored cars, destroyed. Even the loss of automatic weapons, machineguns, and so on, to the rain of shells and bombs, was such that never again would the Republican Army possess even the limited fire power it could once lay claim to.

Teruel, like Guadalajara, Brunete and Aragón, had been a victor. The victor, however, was bled white, whereas the defeated, like the gabled Antaeus, arose more powerful than he had ever been.

Reference materiel on the plans of the Republican War Ministry in the face of what they *knew* was coming is sketchy and incomplete. Indeed, Rebel sources say that on the day following their capture of Teruel, a Government communique asked that all officers remain firm, reminding them "In the adversities of war is forged the temper of the true

⁹ AP/dispatch: December 30, 1937

¹⁰ Ibid. Dec. 31, 1937

combatant,” and adding that, “Whereas the Army of Franco has wasted its strength . . . the principal Republican Army of Maneuver is virtually intact.”¹¹

Nothing could have been further from the truth. In fact, this completely unreal evaluation of the strength of the opposing forces by the Republican War Ministry could only spell disaster.

The Fascist-Military, too, had suffered tremendous losses. But the constant flow of new weapons and men had not only canceled out these losses, but allowed a simultaneous concentration of Rebel armor and troops surpassing all that had gone before. Just as the Italian Army Corps had lain quiescent in the area of Segura de los Baños throughout the Teruel campaign, so were other corps and divisions moving into line along the entire length of front from Teruel to the Pyrenees. Reason would suggest that the War Ministry of the Republic knew quite well what was happening, but was powerless to do other than maneuver its limited forces, and hope that time could again be brought to alert the rearguard, get weapons from somewhere, and create a line of defense.

The French border was closed. Planes, trucks, guns and ammunitions in the thousands of tons, purchased from the Soviet Union and elsewhere, were even now on French soil, denied passage to their rightful owners.¹²

And one major Republican weakness must still be emphasized: The Achilles heel of the early militia units was their inability to understand the value of fortifications. Especially was this true of all areas still under Anarchist control. Tens of kilometers of the crucial Aragón and Levante sectors were but open terrain, with here and there an observation post, a half-dozen rifle pits, and a machine gun nest minus its gun. The troops for these positions would be quartered to the rear in the nearest village; supposedly they would form a line in case of attack.

The picture, in essence, after the bitter loss of Teruel, was that of a frozen, ill-equipped and hungry remnant of an army, which clung but feebly to the positions assigned them by the Republican generals, Menéndez, Sarabia, Pozas and Rojo. The atmosphere was again that of November—ominous and foreboding.

On the positive side was the fact that the authority of Premier Juan Negrín had been consolidated. F.A.I. opposition continued dangerous through divisiveness and sullen apathy. But the C.N.T., generally, accepted the fact that differences had to be put aside until Fascism had been defeated. The one political necessity demanded of the Negrín regime—that it build an effective army—had been done. The battles of Brunete, Aragón and Teruel

11 Aznar, p. 16. Vol. II

12 Much of this was the cargo of ships driven by the activity of pirate submarines to French ports where it was then impounded.

had proven beyond all doubt the efficiency of the new Army, and, with the exception of treason in high places, the capabilities of its creators.

Simultaneously with the apathy of the F.A.I., an eroding opposition from the Right also existed. The constant weakening effect on morale of the disparity in arms; the loss of the north and of Teruel, and the known power of the coming offensive, gave grist to the mill of the defeatists and capitulators.

Three groupings of political and military power had evolved, each harboring a potential for destruction or victory. The first was that of the Socialist Premier, Juan Negrín, based upon a majority of the Socialist Party, the U.G.T., some Left Republicans, Basque and Catalan Nationalists, and the powerful Spanish Communist Party. The second, as we have seen, was that of the Anarchist federation of the C.N.T., F.A.I. led and influenced, and having it sown strong civil following in all of Spain. As stated, as of that moment its opposition lay purely in the fact that it existed—a leaden mass, negative, heel-dragging, divisive, a millstone of death around the neck of the Republic The third group was that conglomerate of Besteiro-Caballero-Baraibar-Socialists who now rallied to their dissident banner the bourgeois leaders of the Center, such as Azaña and all other who sought an axis of opposition.¹³ These last elements, as apart from Caballero, had been defeatist from the beginning. When they saw they would not be supported by their constituents in England and France, they had given up. From that point on their personal fear and their absolute lack of faith in the ability of the Spanish people to withstand the onslaught of rebellion and invasion had been quite apparent. During the process of the war they had become a center for surrender; provided a voice, as it were, for those who served no interests but their own ambitions, and who in some cases preferred a Franco victory.

To this last group was now joined the strident voice of the Minister of War, Indalecio Prieto.

Prieto's loudly expressed pessimism—to anyone who would listen—was the talk of the accredited embassies in Barcelona.¹⁴ He had, according to one source, sought to use the capture of Teruel only for the purpose of arranging an armistice from a position of strength. That the city had been taken at all was no feather in the cap of Prieto, but rather the result of the organization, the courage and the fighting skill of those who opposed him.¹⁵

And now, in addition to the trials and the rivers of blood that lay ahead, would be this final burden—a minister of war who would, in effect, sabotage his own ministry and his government.¹⁶

13 Indalecio Prieto could also now be added to the Besteiro-Caballero-Baraibar group.

14 Thomas, p. 526

15 It is a fact that the attempted eradication of the commissar system by Prieto created areas of serious demoralization and suspicion of the High Command among many of the militia units of Levante and Aragón.

16 Puzzo, p. 187. For an analysis of Prieto's position.

On the international front, both Germany and Italy spoke cynically of Prieto's dreams of a negotiated peace. And, bolstered by the advance of Spanish Fascism, they boasted of the new Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis and said that Austria would soon be another Spain.¹⁷

A British plan for the granting of belligerent rights to the Franco government, subject to a withdrawal of a substantial number of Italian and German troops—which the Nonintervention Committee still refused to admit were there—was finally rejected. On February 10, Sir Anthony Eden, who had fought hard for this particular “way out of a dilemma,” resigned in protest from the British Foreign Ministry. At that point, Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister of England, was ready for new arrangements with Mussolini.¹⁸

Rebel archives state that “In the first days of March, 1938, the reorganization of the Northern Army was completed.”¹⁹ The Aragón front was now effectively covered by five complete army corps.

All was indeed ready for the coming onslaught.

In the interests of history and perspective, the relative strength of the opposing forces are given in the following brief, the statistics being mostly from rebel military sources:

The breakthrough area was to be an enormous one. In its initial stages it would spread over 100 kilometers, from the Ebro River at Fuentes to Pancrudo below Vivel del Río. Its objective was the shattering of the entire Republican front, followed by an immediate, massive drive to the Mediterranean. If successful, Republican Spain would be cut in half, her armies destroyed, and a possibility of a swift end to the war *excellent*.

The Corps of Galicia with four divisions of approximately 40,000 men would strike east from Pancrudo and Vivel.²⁰

The Italian Army, comprising the Littorio Division, and the Black, Green, and Blue Arrow divisions, approximating 50,000 men, motorized and armored, were to attack directly east from Fonbria and Badenas, in the direction Rudilla-Cortez de Aragón.²¹

The Corps of Morocco, under the command of General Yagüe, approximating 40,000 men of which 30,000 were Moorish levies and Foreign Legionnaires, would strike from the

17 Thomas, p. 517. A quotation from Churchill, in which Schuschnigg, the Austrian Chancellor, was supposedly told by Hitler that if he did not yield to German demands, Austria “would become another Spain.”

18 Ibid., p. 514.

19 Aznar, p. 18. Vol. III

20 Thus refers to the period, December 17-30, 1937

21 Aznar, pp. 5759. Vol. III

Zaragoza-Teruel highway toward the Ebro River at Azaila.²²

The 108th Division and the 5th Division would also be given to the Corps of Morocco, while an additional division, the 15th, would be given the Corps of Galicia.²³

To this must be added the Italian air squadrons of the C.T.V., comprising no less than 350 planes; the Condor Legion of 300 planes, and the Spanish Rebel Airforce with an additional 300 planes. The Italian Corps reputedly possessed no fewer than 250 Fiat/Ansaldo tanks—likewise the Corps of Morocco and Galicia.²⁴

In addition, they were given the use of the German tank corps under Colonel Ritter Wilhelm von Thoma,²⁵ of approximately 180 PZKI tanks, plus thirty German anti-tank companies servicing 180 anti-tank guns.²⁶

Added to all the above—as if it were not enough—were engineer battalions, Monasterio's cavalry divisions, anti-air units and transport battalions—*replete with fleets of the newest in American trucks*.²⁷

The Corps of Navarre under General Solchaga, and the Corps of Aragón, under General Moscardó, in all an additional 80,000 men, would remain in reserve.²⁸

To suggest that this was by far the most formidable array of armament ever amassed for battle in any war until that time would be true. For though there were far greater concentrations of guns in World War I, in over-all-fire-power and the massive mobility of all arms, inclusive of a thousand planes to darken the skies, this was a first in the annals of military history.

Unfortunately for those who wish to play military games in sandboxes, dedicated to the perpetuation of insanity, little skill need to be had here to predict the results of the campaign.

For the Spanish Republic there were but *sixty* available planes. At best, there was but an equal number of tanks. If a hundred guns of all calibers remained on the eastern front after the attrition of Teruel, their location was not known to the commanders of the

22 Ibid. pp. 19-22.

23 Ibid. Loc-cit, pp. 19-22. Vol. III

24 Loc-cit, pp. 19-22. Vol. III

25 *The other side of the Hill*, B.V. Liddell Hart, Rev. Ed., p. 123

26 Ibid. p. 123

27 We refer here to the shipping of American transport to the Rebel armies during the course of the war. See: Azcárate and Sandoval, p. 48

28 Aznar, p. 18. Vol. III

Republican armies.²⁹

Facing four-fifths of the above three Army Corps of the Fascist-Military was a single Republican Army Corps of the line, the 12th, composed primarily of Anarchist units. Reserves in the area of the 12th Corps consisted of nine brigades, garrisoned, so to speak, almost fifty kilometers to the rear. The only other effective forces—and *this will forever be a cause for deep conjecture*—were the 11th and 15th International Brigades of the 35th Division of the 5th Army. In the first three days of decisive battle this meager force of less than 35,000 men were to face alone the motorized onslaught of well over 150,000 superbly trained and well equipped troops.³⁰

To all who viewed the scene objectively the situation was now quite clear. The pattern for defeat was established. The *troika* of Capitulationist-F.A.I. Ideologue—and hidden Fascist, had begun to do their work more openly; if not in direct liaison, then by complementary action.

How else explain that the Republican High Command, functioning with such men as Indalecio Prieto as War Minister, plus General Cabrera, Colonel Segismundo Casado and others; joined too by the vacillating General Miaja, could assign but one Anarchist Corps, with little or no training or discipline, and three International Brigades to confront the entire mass of the enemy. Surely they knew, as any competent leader of the loyal military or left knew then, that the one, the 12th Corps, would abandon the front—which it did; while the other, the International Brigades, would be destroyed—which they were.

And the front would be open to the onrushing armies of Franco.

The Capitulationists deliberately protected the hidden Fascists. The F.A.I. Ideologues cynically and deliberately impeded all attempts by the mass of the C.N.T. and its moderate leaders toward a desperately needed unity. And all three tendencies decried “Russian control of the Army,” and the supposed machinations of the P.C.E. toward a drive for power.

The P.C.E.'s only *drive*, as of that moment, was to stop the onslaught with the lifeblood of many thousands of its best cadres. The Russian advisers that the *Troika* and at a later date the establishment historians described as “directing the Communist-led armies of the Republic,” were shunted to one side, their voices silenced and censored . . . Marshal of the Soviet Union, Malinovsky, writes of how all pleas for aid from the General Staff were ignored. How the Center Army Command insisted until the last that the Fascist attack would again be directed to Guadalajara and Madrid, though all evidence showed the

29 There were, of course, additional guns in the area of the Center and Southern fronts.

30 Any error in these figures—since they are the figures compiled from the Rebel's own statistics—would show that fewer rebel troops were shown than had actually been used.

massing of troops in Aragón and not in the areas of the Center. Prieto, when called by the Commander of the Republican Army of Maneuver, Colonel Menéndez (One of the best of the Regulars) was either not available, or had nothing to say. And so the tragedy moved to its ordained conclusion.³¹

The maelstrom of battle throughout the months of March and April are history—the heroism, the courage—*the treason*; the fighting retreat to the arc of Ebro and the sea.³²

The European Center and Social Democratic reaction to what can only be described as a Republican disaster was consternation and, finally, panic. This last was augmented by the fact that on March 13, while Spaniards sought to stem the tide of steel with their lives and their blood, *Hitler entered Vienna*. France and Britain did nothing to oppose this. Moreover, Britain was at that very moment negotiating an agreement with Italy whereby the intervention of Italian troops on the side of Franco would be “legalized.” Their evacuation to take place *only* after Franco's victory.³³

With this new bit of English cynicism and perfidy, press circles in Washington, London, and Paris announced that the Spanish Republic would be finished in a fortnight. In France, however, the panic and the mounting dread of Nazi Germany produced the first really positive reactions. On the eve of Hitler's proclamation of the “unity of Austria with Germany,” the outraged Socialists of the French body-politic demanded the dissolution of the Cabinet. The Chautemps government fell and Leon Blum, “Socialist,” once again set out to form a “popular front government.” This time, however, he did himself one better in appeasement—he chose to do it without the Communists. It lasted less than a month, giving way to the Daladier-Bonnet team, which was but an extension of the British Foreign Office.³⁴

Premier Juan Negrín had, in the meantime, flown to Paris to plead again for arms for Spain. His plea was granted. On March 17, the French Cabinet, fearful and confused, vacillated first in one direction, then the other, but finally agreed to open the frontier. No French arms would be sold; nothing as morally courageous as all that. But all that had been purchased from the Soviet Union; all that had been stored and impounded on French soil began to flow across the French-Spanish Border.

Only a part of it would reach the Republic before the hand of England and the power elites of the Western World intervened.³⁵

31 *Bajo La Bandera de la España Republicana*, Malinofsky: p. 45

32 Landis, pp. 401 through 470

33 Thomas, p. 530

34 The anomaly of a “Popular Front Government” without the participation of its originators is indicative of the political bankruptcy of the Socialist Party of Leon Blum—at that time.

35 The frontier remained open for less than a month.

In the Republic itself, as if to bring to naught this welcome transfusion of arms, that which was feared happened. Indalecio Prieto's defeatist tendencies came strongly to the surface. He declared openly that defeat was but a matter of days. Álvarez del Vayo, writes of Prieto as the "fountainhead of defeatism in the highest official circles." And further: "To anyone who would listen, ministers and deputies, military men, Spanish or foreign journalists, in fact anybody who visited him—he could not live without his entourage—the Minister of Defense, stretched in his armchair, would hand out news that was often as exaggerated as it was horrifying, describing as captured positions that were still in Loyalist hands. From time to time he would exclaim with the air of a victor, 'We are lost!'"³⁶

It is a fact that almost before Negrín returned to Barcelona the French government was being told—by Prieto and others—that all war materiel being sent to Catalonia would most likely end in the hands of Franco and in the arsenals of Hitler and Mussolini.³⁷

The situation in the rear was as desperate as that at the front. A Cabinet meeting fraught with tension was held, at which Negrín, achieving his greatest moment as a war leader, defined the policies of resistance of which he was to become a symbol.³⁸ He rallied all the support he could to fight the capitulationists, explaining that Franco's conditions were well known—unconditional surrender with freedom to exterminate the absolute enemy. This last was a phrase used by Serrano Suñer³⁹ to describe every facet of left-wing opinion from Liberal to Anarchist.⁴⁰

It was at this point that the Communist Party of Spain, as in the darkest days of the defense of Madrid, again reached its finest hour. In joint action with the P.S.U.C. and with the J.S.U., it called upon the people—the masses, the armed forces—to save the Republic. The Socialist Party was persuaded, along with the U.G.T. and the C.N.T., to join in organizing a great demonstration, which took to the streets of Barcelona on March 16. A quarter of a million people marched to the Pedralba Palace, where the Government of Spain was now situated. They demanded that resistance be continued, and that those ministers who had lost faith in the struggle be replaced. Their banners read: "Down with the Treacherous Ministers!" and "Down with the Minister of National Defense!"⁴¹

Indalecio Prieto, the man who had occupied and rendered useless the most vital post of his country's government during one of its darkest hours, was forced from his office on April 5, 1938.

36 Del Vayo, L.O., pp. 301-302

37 Ibid. p. 301

38 Ibid. p. 302

39 Thomas, p. 527

40 Ramón Serrano Suñer, leading Falangist and brother-in-law of Franco; he was propaganda chief and Minister of the Interior in the Franco Government, 1938

41 Landis, p. 437

In response to the demonstration, if not in support of the pretenses of Prieto, air raids of a size never before experienced by a civilized western state were visited upon the open city of Barcelona There were seventeen such raids within a period of three days. The American Ambassador, Bowers, wrote that: "Nothing on such an appalling scale *involving the white race* (Italics added) had ever been seen before."⁴² In that brief span of time two thousand were killed and three to four thousand injured.

The greater portion of the arms from France were hurried along the Mediterranean coast to Valencia and central Spain. And on April 15, 1938, the Franco armies reached the sea at Vinaroz.

⁴² Bowers, p. 375. My italics

MUNICH!

The last and historically final phase of the Spanish War was now at hand. In continuity, since the opposing forces both in and outside Spain remained the same, there would be little change in the rate of expansion of the might of the Rebel armies, nor in the rate of depletion of those of the Republic. This is not to say that the Republic's leaders, knowing this, still moved mindlessly toward some preordained *Götterdämmerung*. The very opposite was true.

It would appear by the absolute evidence of history that within the non-communist world the leaders of the Spanish Republic, civilian and military, stood alone in their awareness of the true menace of the Axis powers.

Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany were at war now! Not just on the battlefields of Spain, or with open piracy in the Mediterranean, but in the seizure of Ethiopia, the Saar, Austria; and in arrogant demands on Danzig, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and France. These demands could lead only to servile surrender of sovereignty—or to war. The expressed Axis positions seemingly allowed for no alternatives.

Other than being politically astute in this most critical area, the responsible leadership of the Republic was both patriotic and realistic. In the first phase of the rebellion they had fought their military and civilian traitors and won. In the second phase, that of the massive introduction of foreign armies and foreign arms, they had held grimly to a full half of Spain. The third phase witnessed a limited infusion of Soviet weapons, and the creation of an army.

In the very process of this army's creation, however, the last and final phase took form and substance. The Axis program for world conquest involved one basic truth: A Republican victory in Spain would not only endanger their basic plans, but could also be the catalyst for their own collapse and destruction. Therefore, whatever the cost they would supply the arms and men necessary for its defeat.¹

The Republican position was also simple. They reasoned that appeasement of the Fascist Powers by the governments of Britain, France and the United States was being perpetuated without the consent of the peoples of those countries, also that pressures to reverse these policies were mounting by the day. Their perspective, therefore, had been, and continued to be, to hold and fight for every inch of Spanish earth until such a time as a reversal of policy would take place.

They had yet to experience the absolute depths of betrayal to which the machinations of

1 It is notable that the Axis at no time made any attempt to conceal their aims. It was the policy of the "Western Democracies" to obscure these facts.

Britain would sink. They had yet to witness the barbarity of “class-alignment” stripped of all pretense of support of “international law.”

Among the myriad examples of the denial—and of the betrayal—is a statement made by Sir Henry Chilton, British Ambassador to Spain, to Hershel V. Johnson, of the American Embassy in London. Sir Henry, according to Mr. Johnson, “expressed the conviction that a Franco victory was necessary for peace in Spain; that there was not the slightest chance that Italy and/or Germany would dominate Spain; and that even if it were possible for the Spanish Government to win he was convinced that a victory for Franco would be better for Great Britain.”²

Just one day after General Alonzo Vega's “4th Navarese Division” reached the sea at Vinaroz, cutting Republican Spain in half, the Anglo-Italian Mediterranean Pact was signed. This, rather than the later Pact of Munich, was the crowning achievement of Sir Neville Chamberlain. A more despicable act of perfidy would be difficult to imagine, unless it be the U.S.'s genocide in Indochina without even the benefit of a Congressional “Declaration of War.”

A salient point of this pact was a supposed “sharing” of the defense of the Mediterranean by the navies of the two powers.

It is history that in the six weeks following its signing, beginning April 17—hardly before the ink was dry—tens of ships of the Western powers, including twenty-two of the British merchant marine, were attacked on the high seas. The attackers were Italian submarines and German and Italian bombers based on the islands of Sicily and Mallorca. Eleven British ships were sunk and some two dozen British sailors were drowned—as were a half-dozen trusting observers for the “Nonintervention Committee.” To the shame of all England, some of these ships were sunk within cruising radius of the British Navy. No orders, however, were received from the Admiralty, either to attack or rescue.³

The pressures to reverse these avowed pro-Fascist policies mounted. There was no city, town, or village in France that did not see its pro-Republican demonstrations. The participants were in the millions. Likewise, there was no city in England that did not have its massive pro-Republican rallies. Voices in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords gave evidence in swelling cadence of where true English sympathy lay. And it is forever to the credit of Sir Winston Churchill that he was among those who denounced both the pact, as “a complete triumph for Mussolini,” and the entire appeasement policy of the Chamberlain Government.⁴

2 Foreign Relations of the U.S., 1938. Wash., D.C.

3 Thomas, p. 531

4 Ibid. p. 539

Still no reversal of policy was effected.

Sympathy for Spain in the United States paralleled that of Western Europe. Across the country a chorus of millions of voices demanded that the arms embargo be lifted. Unions, Democratic clubs, Masonic lodges, churches, and political independents—all demanded that U.S. policy be reversed; that the Spanish Republic be given arms for its defense. A message of greeting was sent the opening session of the Spanish Cortes by more than sixty members of the U.S. Senate and House. Here too the time was ripe for a change in policy But no such change took place.

In Spain, the guns were finally silent along the entire Catalan periphery of the Ebro and Segre rivers. The full weight of the Rebel drive was now directed toward Valencia. New arms and new masses of troops were committed to the offensive, inclusive of the Corps of Galicia, the Corps of Navarre, the Corps of Castille, and the Italian C.T.V.

It is notable that General Vicente Rojo lists the campaign on the Levante front as a most definite victory for the Republic. Under the command of the Republican Colonel Menéndez, the 12th, 17th, 21st and 22nd Corps, under Commanders Gallego, Vallejo, Cristobal, and Ibarrola, respectively, put up an absolutely magnificent defense in depth. None of these men were identified with the clique of capitulationists in the High Command; nor were they identified as “lackeys of the Communist Party.” They were what they were, loyal Republican officers of the new People's armyThe retreats of Aragón were simply *not* repeated. And the Rebel armies paid with rivers of blood for each foot of terrain.

What had begun in March as an “end-the-war offensive” had been contained. The absence of victory was noted in the morale of the Rebel body-politic. In many newly constituted units young Rebel officers were actually disaffected. The terrain they entered was a desert of abandoned villages, from which the people had fled before them. Stories had also reached the Rebel zone of the heavy casualties suffered in Republican cities by German and Italian bombings. The stories evoked smoldering anger, directed toward the “foreigner.” Officers of the national units on many occasions fought in the barrooms and streets of rear-line garrison towns. Simultaneously with this state of affairs the Falange General Yagüe, impressed by the Republic's stubborn defense, openly praised their courage and abilities. At a Falange dinner in Burgos commemorating the anniversary of the United Carlist-Falangist Party, he denounced the Germans and Italians as “beasts of prey.”⁵ Moreover, he suggested that it was time for the Falange to extend the hand of reconciliation to the “Reds.” Yagüe was summarily dismissed from his command by the Generalissimo himself. And he was not to be reinstated until the Ebro campaign.

While the troops of Colonel Leopold Menéndez held back the avalanche before Castellón de la Plana, Premier Juan Negrín set out to create a “Government of National Unity.” He

5 Ibid. p. 534

would build on the renewed dedication of the people to resist, and upon the slowly developing policies of conciliation between the U.G.T., the C.N.T., and the P.C.E.

A united action pact had been agreed upon as early as March 13. Its stated aims were to “strengthen the Army, reorganize the war industry, *nationalize* all heavy industry and the banks,⁶ and insure that the trade-union movement, in all spheres, would make a greater contribution to the anti-Fascist struggle.”⁷

On April 2, both the U.G.T. and C.N.T. officially entered the People's Front coalition, which until that time the Anarchists of the C.N.T. had refused to do.⁸

On April 6, the Government itself was reorganized and broadened to include representatives of the above groups. González Peña was named for the U.G.T. and Segundo Blanco for the C.N.T. Paradoxically, the P.C.E., supposedly involved in a “drive for power,” voluntarily reduced its representation within the Cabinet to just one—allowing for the entry of the C.N.T. representative. Juan Negrín then assumed the posts of both premier and war minister.⁹

The aim of the Negrín policy of national unity, subscribed to by all of those within the People's Front, was formalized in the issuance of a program on April 20, 1938, entitled “The Thirteen Points.” They defined the main objectives of the struggle of the Spanish people. They were:

1. The absolute independence and integrity of Spain.
2. The liberation of Spanish territory from foreign occupation and foreign influence.
3. A people's republic.
4. The organization when the war ended of a plebiscite on the form of government.
5. Respect for the national liberties of the people of Spain, compatible with Spanish unity.
6. Full social and civil rights for every Spaniard, including freedom of religious worship and conscience.
7. Protection of private property and the elements of production, but also the prevention of such accumulations of wealth as might result in the exploitation of citizens.
8. Complete agrarian reform.
9. Social legislation guaranteeing workers' rights.
10. The cultural, physical, and moral improvement of the nation.
11. A non-political army as an instrument for the defense of the people.

6 Azcárate, p. 117

7 Ibid. pp. 117-118

8 Ibid.

9 Loc-cit, p. 118

12. Renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy, and fidelity to the League of Nations.
13. Amnesty for all Spaniards who proved they desired to cooperate in the work of reconstruction (the amnesty to include common soldiers of the Rebel army)¹⁰

The Socialist, Juan Negrín, was the very heart of those unifying forces working to maintain the military front and to recreate the conditions for victory. While reaffirming his country's endorsement of the League of Nations, he warned the Western Powers of their own fate should the Spanish Republic be destroyed. "Faith in victory, Spaniards!" was his cry to the Spanish people. He also told them:

"Spain will not allow herself to be devoured. Spain will not surrender, and a people who do not surrender cannot be conquered. The conduct of Spain is an example for all the world. And in all parts it is already known that on Spain's fate depends the fate of all the free and peaceful countries which are threatened by the greed of Fascism. Let certain countries not forget that if the battles which the Spanish people are today fighting were adverse to us in their final results, they would have at their back an army of a million men ready to attack them."¹¹

Gabriel Jackson describes the phenomenon of Negrín in the following passages:

"In Republican Spain the sheer will-power of Prime Minister Negrín had staved off panic in the first days of April. Arms, oil and food, pouring over the reopened French border and rapidly delivered to the Army, enabled it to mount increasingly stiff resistance to the Nationalists in the last days of the month. The Republican Navy convoyed supply ships between Barcelona and Valencia, and serious air-raid preparations were made in the coastal cities. The arms workers of Sagunto stayed on the job despite repeated heavy bombings of the City. The Prime Minister visited the front constantly, infusing the troops with his own renewed energy and optimism. No occupations were more highly respected by Spanish workingmen than those of doctor and professor. Juan Negrín was both, and in addition, a man whose warm personality inspired the individual loyalty of both troops and officers. The soldiers referred to themselves proudly as *hijos de Negrín* (sons of Negrín) . . . and to his thirteen point political program as *puntos de Negrín*. For the majority of men not committed to a particular political line, his image effaced those of Azaña, Prieto, and Largo Caballero."¹²

10 Ibid. p. 120

11 *Volunteer for Liberty*. Special supplement, Vol. II. No. 14, p. 14

12 Jackson, p. 452

THE IMMORTAL EBRO:

The cumulative effects of war weariness were such that in the months of June and July a wave of sentiment swept Rebel Spain for an end to the war. The confidence of the days of March was gone. The German Ambassador, Stohrer, warned Hitler: "Voices are being raised in favor of ending the war. Even in the higher ranks of the Army strong objections have been made."¹ Fascist reprisals were severe, and a further note from Stohrer stated that "the terror practiced at present in the Nationalist zone, by Martínez Anido, is unbearable even to the Falange."²

Dolores Ibárruri seized the moment to denounce foreign control of the fate of Spain. Even as she spoke, additional artillery battalions (German) armed with improved 88mm cannon, so respected by the Allies in W.W.II were landing in Spanish ports. *La Pasionaria* asked that "all proud of being Spaniards on the other side of the battle lines, drive out the invader and struggle for the 'Thirteen Points' as the basis for a new Spain."³

Negrín, acutely aware of the contradictions at work in the Fascist zone, addressed a meeting in Madrid on June 18, stating that "not one more second of war could be tolerated if Spain's existence as a free country is to be preserved."⁴

Negrín also seized the moment to attempt a *principled* negotiation of an end to the war. It is reported on good authority that he met a number of times with the German Ambassador in Paris, Count Welczeck, to no avail. It is said too that he attempted other contacts through a relative of Serrano Suñer, but failed there too.⁵

Having created the "Thirteen Points" as a basis for discussion of the path to a united Spain, and having made prodigious efforts to get these discussions going, it is understandable that Negrín deemed total rejection by the Rebels as suggesting no alternative to unconditional surrender. He knew full well what that meant. The almost two hundred thousand summary executions already listed in Fascist Spain were clearly indicative of the future.

A decisive factor in the imposition of a solution to the war in which the Republic would have a voice was the restoration of a strong military front. The Republic needed to demonstrate again its ability to attack as well as defend. A victory would help silence the defeatists and give strength to the rising clamor for peace in the Rebel ranks.

Plans had been readied for just such a need. The time was now and, despite the usual

1 Azcárate, p. 121

2 Thomas, p. 541

3 Ibid. p. 535

4 Azcárate, p. 121

5 Thomas, p. 535

shortage of weapons, the urgency of the situation demanded that they proceed immediately.

General Vicente Rojo was the originator of the plan.

“We had arrived,” Rojo informs us, “at a moment of military crises. Our troops had retreated to the line chosen and organized by the general staff of the group of armies defending Valencia and Sagunto. The last reserves from the fronts of Madrid, Andalusia, and Extremadura had been placed in this line. If they failed in their mission of defense, Valencia and Sagunto would be lost. They were the last reserves. And if the Valencian region fell—it was the richest, agriculturally, in all Spain, the most highly industrialized, and was the first port of the center—we would indeed have no choice but to regard the war as in the process of being lost, and to assume we had reached its decisive phase.

We were given that rare and strategic opportunity, however, of indirectly aiding a menaced front by acting offensively in a theater far from it. This aid had been prepared from the first days of June. We had been unable to put it into effect, however, because of a shortage of materiel, namely, pontoon brigades. These had to be created by Catalan industry, since none could be purchased abroad.

“When the enemy was smashed before Viver and the fortifications that covered Valencia . . . at the moment when all their attacks of the 21st, 22nd, 23rd of July were brought to bloody defeat, they paused to rest, to regroup, and to prepare for renewed battle with fresh troops and greater masses of equipment. At that precise moment we launched our offensive on the Ebro.

“It was an offensive designed to radically change the entire military situation.”⁶

The Republican “Army of Ebro” was composed of those units that had already played a central and magnificent role in all previous campaigns; excepting, of course, the heroic forces of the North, Madrid and of the Levante.

It is history that the Army of the Ebro crossed the river at one o'clock in the morning, July 24, 1938, on a front of forty kilometers. Within three days they had penetrated to a depth of twenty-five kilometers, seized eleven towns and villages, captured more than 6,000 prisoners and war materiel—equal to that taken at Guadalajara—and stopped dead the Rebel attack on Valencia.

But just as the crossing of the Ebro would be the Republic's greatest attempt for victory and stability, so would the now monstrous juggernaut of the Rebel Army, in its response, be unparalleled in its commitment of arms and men. For three long months the mass of the two armies would be locked in a maelstrom of destruction. The Army of the Ebro was to hold against a force of more than 300,000 men,⁷ 1,300 planes, complete battalions of artillery with more than 1,000 guns, a myriad of tanks and a weight of metal and

⁶ Rojo. pp. 168-169

⁷ General consensus of both Rebel and Republican sources. Actually these were the figures for a given moment. They are much higher for the total participation of the Internationals, ninety days, and the five months of fighting for the People's Army.

explosives to the amount of tens of thousands of bombs and 1,250,000 shells.⁸ Europe would note this harbinger of its own destruction with trepidation. The world would watch, stunned and aghast; transfixed by the indecision of fear and the paralysis of that final and decisive weapon, the Hitlerian lie of anti-Communism.

The gigantic battle would earn for itself the name of “The Spanish Verdun.” General Vicente Rojo later described it as “an unequal and terrible struggle of men against machines, of fortifications against all the elements of destruction, of the media of the air against those of the earth, and of abundance against poverty.”⁹

By September 3, 1938, the battle which had never ceased, reached new heights of ferocity and carnage. The full weight of all that the armies of Franco possessed was hurled into the melee. A measure of this commitment is seen in that an attack against the heights of Gaeta used innumerable guns, one hundred and fifty tanks, and three hundred planes in a single assault—all of which were beaten back.¹⁰

García Valino of the Rebel Command records that on October 30 there was concentrated in the Sierra Caballas, and on a front of but 1,627 yards, some 200 guns with calibers ranging from 75 to 260mm, plus additional mountain guns of the Italian C.T.V.—and this together with massive overflights of bombers in one assault on one position.¹¹

On the evening of September 3, correspondents of Western newspapers filed copy in Barcelona to the effect that the opening guns of the Rebel offensive against the position of Gironeses could be heard in Barcelona.¹²

To describe the ensuing weeks as anything but a monstrous, hour-by-hour holocaust of steel and explosives would be to deny reality. A statement by Hugh Thomas to the effect that each day saw the dropping of ten thousand fascist bombs¹³ will suggest the picture of the inferno within the “arc of the Ebro.” General Rojo writes that there was no “art” to it (the Rebel offensive) in terms of skill of maneuver or of positioning of forces; what there was, was actually the application of the new “military science” of *aplastamiento*—the total crushing, or smothering, of an enemy by a weight of steel and explosives—and under conditions in which he in turn cannot reply.¹⁴

The parallel here of the role of the Axis armies in Spain and those of the United States in south-east Asia should be quite clear—except for the difference, as quoted in another

8 Mikshe, p. 41

9 Rojo, pp. 181-182

10 Mikshe, p. 41

11 Aznar, p. 251. Vol. III

12 On occasion the barrages could be heard in Valencia at a distance of two hundred kilometers.

13 Thomas, p. 549

14 Rojo, p. 187

chapter, that Spain had no border with a friendly or Socialist country, from which to draw support.

With the slogan *Resistir es vencer* (To resist is to win), the Republican Army of the Ebro dug in rapidly and desperately in a race against time. Lines of trenches were constructed in depth on every hill and in every valley. Thousands of machinegun nests were created—whether there were guns for them or not. There was to be no “breakthrough” in the accepted sense. If a line was lost there would be another 100 meters to the rear—and behind that another, and another and another. The enemy would advance only after the total destruction of the positions and at a fantastic cost in lives and blood. Hills and trenches were to change hands as many as four times in a single day.

September was the crucial month, as well shall see. But until the final battle in mid-November, the enemy, for all his weight of steel and power, would have advanced in ninety days just *two* kilometers in the direction of Pinell from Bot, *eight* in the direction of Camposinos from Gandesa, and *four* in the direction of Fatarella from Villalba. The two flanks of the Canaletas River in the south and the towns of Pobla de Masaluca and Fayon in the north remained intact.¹⁵

In the skies, above this ever shifting cauldron of flame and ear-splitting cadenzas, the young Spanish pilots (they were all Spanish, now) of the Republican Air Force, would also go freely and courageously to this most unequal of struggles. The little green Chatos and Moscas would dip their stubby wings, tipped with the colors of the Republic, over the embattled trenches. They would do this to give their men heart and courage. Then they would rise in their coveys of sixes and twelves to pit their diminishing strength against the swarms of Fiats and Heinkels and the Messerschmidts. Their prowess was such that they would fight the enemy and they would win; all valid statistics give a ratio of losses of 3 to 1 in the Republic's favor. But, like their comrades on the ground, their victory would be hollow, for the Fiats would be replaced on the morrow—the Chatos never.

15 Ibid. p. 188

THE FINAL TREASON:

The Rebel offensive that began in September of 1938 was a thing of strange paradox in that the accompanying crises which had been world-wide in potential became world-wide in *fact*. The offensive, in effect, was on *two* fronts, in the arc of the Ebro and in the chancelleries of Europe. Spain's and the world's fate would hang in the balance.

While British diplomacy planned its game of betrayal in these same chancelleries, Premier Juan Negrín faced one more political crisis; due to his proposals to place the war industries under government control rather than that of the *Generalitat*. Negrín survived. His position and program had been so strengthened by the success of the Army of the Ebro—even President Azaña was speaking of the turn of the tide in favor of the Republic—that he then felt confident to journey outside Spain to Switzerland. He would supposedly attend an international medical conference. Actually, he met with a Franco agent, the Duke of Alba, for one last attempt at mediation of an honorable peace—and again he failed. Negrín returned to Spain, to face *the crisis of Munich*.

Fascism was aggressive. Fascism was dynamic. Fascism, perhaps, was the answer: the force to bring back the preferred darkness; the armed power to control the burgeoning European masses who asked only for a rightful place in the sun, and who refused to accept the hunger and misery of the Europe of 1938 as “the best of all worlds.” So reasoned important sections of Europe's power elite.¹

This being true it is therefore patently wrong to suggest acts of “appeasement” by this same elite, for *Fascism* in all its phases, was first created, then nurtured by them. It was no accident that German and Italian rearmament went unopposed, for it had, indeed, been underwritten by the banking interests of Europe—and the United States! The facts exist for honest inquiry. It is known, for instance, that the banking house of Morgan (U.S.A.) advanced loans totaling more than one hundred million dollars to the government of Mussolini; Dillon Read and Co. and the Chase National Bank of New York, did as much and more for Fritz Thyssen in the financing of the Hitler regime—and so on.²

Every pact born of the League of Nations, from Versailles to Locarno, was now in shreds. And the creation of new military machines and “blocs” was almost instantly followed by the incorporation of the Saar into the body of Nazi Germany; the invasion and seizure of Ethiopia; the annexation of Austria; the military moves against Danzig and the Polish Corridor, and the open invasion of the territory of the Spanish Republic by divisions of the Italian and German armies.

The crisis now was that fresh Nazi demands calling for a ceding of the Sudeten areas of

1 Landis, p. 562

2 “*In Fact*,” George Seldes, excerpted from *FACTS AND FASCISM*, In Fact, Inc: N.Y., 1943, pp. 155-156

Czechoslovakia to the Third Reich had met with resistance. The Czechs were adamant. They would not surrender. As early as May 30, 1938, Hitler ordered the Wehrmacht to prepare for war against Czechoslovakia. Now one and a half million Nazi troops were marching on the Czech and French frontiers. Paris responded by sending men to the Maginot line. Forty Czech divisions, the finest in Central Europe, moved into position. Simultaneously, and this is of extreme importance, the question arose again, and strongly, of an immediate reopening of the French-Spanish border.

Inasmuch as negotiations between the Nazis and Czech premier, Milan Hodza, had broken completely, the question of support to Czechoslovakia would now seem academic; this was not so, however. Patterns of the immediate past were indicative of further betrayal. Would France and England be true to their commitments to Czechoslovakia—to the remaining “free” countries of the Western World. Or would they persevere in their “aid” of the Axis Powers and thus bring all Europe to its knees?

If these governments acquiesced to the final demands of their “Frankenstein monsters,” they would be signing their own death warrants. Worse, the architects of disaster, the Chamberlains and Daladiers and their camp followers, would go free, would even be rewarded. The peoples of Europe, shorn of the armies of Czechoslovakia and the Spanish Republic, would then be faced with a most unpleasant choice: total submission to a Nazi-Fascist Europe, or *guerre á outrance*, war to the death, and under circumstances infinitely more difficult.

It was at this point that the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, chose to dispatch Lord Runciman on a mission of declared mediation to Czechoslovakia.³

Refusing Runciman's “advice,” Beneš, the Czech President, threw down the gauntlet to Germany. Karl Heinlein, führer to the Sudetens, then fled the country while Beneš outlawed the Nazi Party and declared martial law in the border provinces.

Upon which the British Prime Minister himself flew to Berchtesgaden.

On September 16, President Beneš was simply *ordered* by Britain and France to surrender unconditionally all of the Sudeten areas with their mountain defenses. Beneš, having been told that he could expect no help from Britain and France if he chose to ignore their demands, bowed to their will and accepted the ultimatum.

On September 22, Neville Chamberlain, again summoned by Adolf Hitler, met hastily at Godesberg. Hitler was demanding more Czech territory for Germany, and that other sections of the country be given to Hungary and Poland. The following day the Czech President defied England and France and called for a general mobilization.

3 Encyclopedia Britannica, pp. 960-962. Vol. 6

Spain watched with intense emotion.

Alarmed at the Czech will to battle and its preparations to do exactly that, Chamberlain and Mussolini arranged a last meeting at *Munich* with Daladier and Hitler—from which both the Czechs and the Soviet Union were excluded. Within an embarrassingly few hours the total destruction of Czechoslovakia was agreed upon.

Beneš again acquiesced. And Jan Masaryk, Czech Foreign Minister, when given the ultimatum by Chamberlain and Lord Halifax, said quietly: “If you have sacrificed my nation to preserve the peace of the world, I will be the first to applaud you But if not, gentlemen, God help your souls.”⁴

The Spanish War which had endured for over two years of blood and horror would continue for another six months. For those addicted to “body counts” and the like, its tally was 1,000,000 dead. How, then, when one mentions *Munich*, can one in all honesty fail to mention Spain? How can one fail to mention the saga of a people who stood alone on the field of battle, and in absolute confrontation with European Fascism—while Austria was surrendered; while Czechoslovakia was surrendered; and while the first of the Italian *Bersaglieri* were landing on the coasts of Albania.

Yet it has been done.

The relegation of the essence of Munich to the category of non-history is found in U.S. State Department publication, No. 1853. A single evasive page is devoted to the question of Munich *sans* Spain.⁵ This tactic is repeated in British documents. Such eminent “historians” as Sir Winston Churchill, Sir John Wheeler Bennett, and the famed Spaniard, Salvador de Madariaga, manage dissertations of thousands of words on that most tragic decade with never a hint at the vital relationship between the Pact of Munich and the Spanish War. Yet the constantly escalating struggle of the power elites of Western Europe against the life of the Spanish Republic and, essentially, against the new, Socialist State of the Soviet Union, was the central epic of the decade of the thirties, and the central cause of World War Two.

Spain, not Munich, is our Rosetta Stone *Munich in fact and in history was but the final tactic to “the Spanish problem.”*

Separated from the Soviet Union by the continent of Europe, and from small Mexico by a great ocean, the Spanish Republic was now truly alone. A note from the diary of Wm. L. Shirer, written at a time of the final climactic battles on Spanish soil, tells us the following:

⁴ “Spain and Munich: Windows to Vietnam,” Arthur H. Landis, p. 16

⁵ This is a document of some 70,000 words and 150 pages.

"The League of Nations has met again and Bonnet and Halifax are here to see that there is no more nonsense to delay Franco's victory . . . Del Vayo made a dignified speech before the Council, and Halifax, to show his colors, got up in the midst of it and ostentatiously strode out."⁶

Georgi Dimitrov, chief defendant in the infamous Reichstag trial, and a Marxist hero of that day, wrote too of Spain. His statement is doubly interesting in that it is quite appropriate of this new time of Vietnam:

"It must be plainly stated," he wrote, "that during these three years the Spanish people have done more to defend the cause of world peace and progress than all that has been done to date by the working people in the capitalist countries in support of the Spanish people."

The key to the reasons for Munich is seen in the simple question: What would have happened if the Czechs had been allowed to fight?" The answer exposes the crime perpetrated upon the world in the name of "peace in our time."

Defense of the sovereign state of Czechoslovakia meant immediate arms for embattled Spain. It could not have been otherwise. Moreover, it meant either a swift and ignominious retreat for World Fascism—or was under the most favorable circumstances for those who opposed Fascism. In either case there could be no doubt of the outcome. And let this be clear: The results of victory for Spain and Czechoslovakia would have strengthened the now all but destroyed *Front Populaire* of France, given guts and heart to the British Labor Movement, and produced such a tide of hope within the citizenry of the dictatorships of Europe, that Pilsudski in Poland, Metaxas in Greece, Horthy in Hungary, Salazar in Portugal: *all* may well have crumbled before the onslaught.

And it was to prevent this and this alone that the Pact of Munich came into being.

The calculated risk of an ultimate World War II was as nothing to this fact. For, the Elites reasoned, if additional war came after the defeat of Spain and Czechoslovakia, plus the destruction of the Soviet Union as the "main event"—the aftermath would then be simply the game of "musical chairs," in which none of *theirs* ever really won, or really lost.

A final point for future dragon seed. When the peoples of the Western World demanded in their overwhelming majority that aid be given Spain and Czechoslovakia, their governments decreed the opposite. It was *the* test of the democratic process within the confine of the capitalist system. The failure was conclusive. Majority opinion not backed up by concrete actions suffered the ultimate cynicism of power elites having more in common with the barbarity of European and World Fascism, than with their people.

On September 21, 1938, on the eve of that greatest of all betrayals, Premier Juan Negrín

6 *Berlin Diary*, William Shirer

announced before a full session of the League of Nations, the Spanish Government's decision to withdraw all foreign volunteers (The International Brigades) from the areas of combat, and to repatriate them to the countries of their origin. Thus Spaniards would be left to fight Spain's last battles alone.

There was no withdrawal on Franco's side, indeed more Italian reinforcements in division strength arrived.

A high point in the departure of the International Volunteers was the Republic's farewell to the Brigades in Barcelona. The date was October 29, 1938, at 4:30 p.m. The line of march was down the length of the wide Diagonal to the reviewing stand, on which stood Premier Juan Negrín and his War Cabinet. Planes flew overhead to guard against attack. Hundreds of thousands of people jammed the curbs and side lines. There never was, or has been, according to authoritative sources, a parade in Barcelona that elicited the cheers, the warmth, the tears, and the plaudits of so many of that city's people.

The entire foreign press was there, as well as newsreel cameramen from some of the world's most important news agencies of the times—Matthews of *The New York Times*, Okin of the Associated Press, Weldon James of the United Press, and many more. Vincent Sheehan reports:

"I saw a lot of photographs of it afterwards: Capa, Buckly, Matthews, and others had kept their cameras busy. You never saw so many weeping people all at once as there were in those photographs. Malraux told me about it a day or so later. '*C'était toute la Revolution qui s'en allait*,' he said. Perhaps that was why the people wept. These boys—all these Lardners, their average age about twenty-three—had come to Spain to help save the Republic. The impulse which had sent all these Lardners to Spain had been a reflex of the conscience of the world."⁷

7 *Not Peace But a Sword*, Vincent Sheehan. Doubleday & Co., N.Y., 1939. pp. 226-267

THE DEATH OF THE SPANISH REPUBLIC:

On December 23, 1938, 350,000 Fascist troops were hurled against the four Republican provinces of Catalonia. They were spearheaded by the Italian Army of General Gambara, composed of six full divisions and the equivalent of a seventh. Two Republican armies with a total strength of 100,000 men defended Catalonia. The proportions of arms favoring the Rebels were as follows: Aviation, fifteen to one. Tanks, thirty to one. Small arms and automatic weapons, ten to one. Light artillery, twenty to one. Heavily artillery: for Franco an abundance, for the Republic *none*.¹

Within one week the Republican defenses of the Ebro and Segre rivers were overrun and destroyed. What few weapons there had been were lost, so that the Catalan Army falling back upon Barcelona then possessed but 39,000 rifles On French soil, at that very moment—and this materiel had been there for quite some time—were 500 pieces of artillery, ten thousand machineguns, close to 500 aircraft and two dozen ultra-rapid torpedo boats; this equipment previously referred to by Spain's last Foreign Minister, Sr. Álvarez del Vayo.²

Catalonia fell. The world then witnessed the tragic exodus of 500,000 refugees: women, children, old men, and the wounded and sick from hospitals. All braved the bitter heights and raging snows of the Pyrenees, seeking the now questionable freedom of a reluctant France.

The remnants of the Army of the Ebro fought a hundred isolated rear-guard actions to make this exodus possible. They shielded the path of the refugees with their bodies and little else. Then they too passed into France.

The Pact of Munich had, indeed, strengthened the hand of the capitulationists and traitors within Spain. The General Staff of the Central Army in Madrid was now under the direction of the “Commander-in-Chief” of the Army, Colonel Segismundo Casado, Miaja having been relegated to the role of a rather pathetic figurehead. Working closely with Casado were the two General Staff Chiefs, Muedra and Garijo—*both agents of Franco from the first hours of the war*.³

Examples of the misdirection of energies and the wanton waste of manpower—if not absolute treason by the above; Casado in this case, since both Garijo and Muedra are known traitors—are myriad.

Throughout the terrible battles of the Ebro and the final holocaust of the fall of Catalonia,

1 Azcárate, p. 128

2 Del Vayo, pp. 274-277. Also: See Azcárate, pp. 128-29.

3 D. Ibárruri, p. 321. Malinovsky (*Bajo la Bandera*) pp. 20-21

when the Army of the Ebro was forced to withstand the weight of the entire war machine of the Fascist-Military, the central-southern front had remained idle. For seven months at least four hundred thousand men, under the command of Casado, did nothing except to stand and watch the enemy tear their comrades in arms to pieces.

Knowing that once the arc of the Ebro was lost, that the Rebel armies would then advance on Barcelona, plans had been made to divert some of this strength. *All were sabotaged!*

A major offensive was to have been mounted in Estremadura, to coincide with another in which troops, protected by the Republican fleet, would land to the south of Motril and thrust inland to create a beachhead. The troopships from Cartagena, on one pretext or another, simply never left the port. The attack in Estremadura was fixed for December 18, 1938. But at the very moment of assault, the Central General Staff, insisting upon a change of plans, moved the entire concentration of divisions to positions before Granada, where they again suspended all operations. They then informed the Central-South General Staff, in a most cavalier fashion, that they could now do whatever they thought most effective.⁴

The army was moved again; but in total disarray. And too, the element of surprise was gone. Despite this, when the attack was launched on January 5, 1939, it tore a hole of the size of the gains of Teruel into the Fascists' southern front. A little more and both Seville and Badajoz would have been threatened. *It was precisely at this point that the attacking troops were ordered to return to their bases. And the offensive was called off.*⁵

And finally, as if to create the greatest demoralization possible in the ranks of the People's Army, Republican brigades were thrown against the well-entrenched troops of the Fascist-Military before Brunete, on the Madrid front. Azcárate writes: "Even more fantastic was the outcome of the operation started on January 15 in the Brunete sector. At 8 o'clock on that cold, rainy morning, the Republican soldiers went into the attack against the enemy positions. When the operation was called off at 5:00 p.m., they had not even been able to breach the enemy's barbed-wire defenses. Deadly fire from the Fascists, who had been aware of every last detail of the plan of attack, had own down the Republican ranks. Nine hundred of the people's soldiers paid for this monstrous treachery with their lives. What Casado seems to have planned was not an operation to break through the enemies' positions but a mass slaughter of Republican soldiers."⁶

The subsequent atmosphere of helplessness and despair could only spread.

On February 9, 1939, the Government of the Republic met in Toulouse, France, upon which, Negrín, Álvarez del Vayo and the greater part of the Cortes, flew to Central Spain—

4 Ibid. p. 320

5 Loc-cit, p. 320

6 Azcárate, p. 131

minus, of course, the President, Manuel Azaña, who elected to remain in France out of harm's way.

On that same day, as if in reply to the various Republican peace efforts now underway—to secure the best possible conditions against reprisals—the Franco regime issued its “Law of Political Responsibilities,” which proscribed all the political and social groups of the Popular Front, declaring them “outside the law.”

Despite this decree, which could only lead—and did—to the mass slaughter of Spaniards, Great Britain and France, on February 27, 1939, recognized the Fascist Government of Francisco Franco as being the legitimate Government of the Spanish people. Relations were broken, accordingly, with the Republic.

Major Clement Attlee, leader of the British Labor Party at that time, stated that, “We see in this action a gross betrayal of democracy, the consummation of two and a half years of the hypocritical pretense of nonintervention and a connivance all the same at aggression.”⁷

But all the words of the “liberals” and “leftists” of the Western Democracies were exactly that—words! Their weight in the conflict was of no consequence. For whereas they had limited themselves always to “words,” the fascists and reactionaries of the power elites had acted.

A final act—and the Republic had not yet fallen was that a part of the deal for recognition was that the French Government undertook to return all Spanish property in France claimed by the new Spanish government. This included eight million pounds in gold which had been kept as security for a loan made in 1931. This loan had been repaid, but France had refused to return the gold to the Republic. Also, *all of the arms purchased from the Soviet Union, now on French soil, arms which were denied to their rightful owner in her hour of deadly peril and on the very eve of the Pact of Munich, plus the Spanish Republican Navy which would flee Cartagena, March 4, for the French North African port of Bizerte, were to be turned over to the Fascist-Military.*⁸

Premier Juan Negrín still believed at the end of February, 1939, that the Republic could resist for between four to seven months; that changing factors on the international scene would in the long run be favorable for the cause of the Republic. A significant section of the Spanish loyal military, in addition to the Communist leaders, also believed this to be possible.

But the weight of the capitulationists and fascists had grown ominously. The Communists demanded that Negrín, in the interest of national security, remove Casado and the other

⁷ Thomas, p. 584

⁸ Ibid. p. 583

traitors from their positions of authority. But Negrín, like Caballero before him in the case of General Asensio, was fearful of the reaction of the Anarchists on one hand—Casado was now their man in the War Department—and the Right Socialists and capitulationists on the other. Regarding the former, at a meeting of the coordinating committee of the F.A.I. and the C.N.T., held on February 11, 1939, a resolution was passed praising Casado as “the leader most deserving of confidence.”⁹

The position of the P.C.E. seems to have been quite simple. It was the same as that of Asturias in 1934. Resist until victory—or until guarantees are given against all reprisals. There is no other way. Siding with the loyal military such as Menéndez, Ibarrola, Recalde, Jurado and many others who had fought hard and well, plus those Communist military leaders who were now returning from France such as Líster, Modesto and Cerdón, they sought to counter the defeatist propaganda; saying that resistance was not only possible—but was the only way to reach an honorable and humane peace between Spaniards.¹⁰

It has been pointed out by the Negrín government that it still possessed in the central southern zone, a large territory of ten provinces, a population of as many as nine millions, and such important cities as Madrid, the unconquered capital, Valencia, Alicante, Almería, and Cartagena, Spain's most important naval base.

It also had an army of some 400,000 men, and a navy of three cruisers, 13 destroyers, seven submarines and a dozen torpedo boats.

In their manifesto of February 23, 1939, the P.C.E. Stated that: “The International situation has never been more unstable than it is today. Resistance is not only necessary but possible. We maintain that our resistance—as has happened on other occasions when many thought all was lost (November, 1936, March and April, 1938)—can once again change the situation, allow new factors to develop in our favor both in Spain and in the international sphere, and thus open the prospect of victory.”¹¹ The reasons for this thinking are based upon quite solid ground. Though the appeasers within the power elites of Western Europe had had their way, there were those within those very elites who were now fearful of what they had wrought. The voice of Churchill in England was now joined by that former instigator of nonintervention, Anthony Eden, in denouncing the British position. Elements within France were stirring, and some of these were high in the French military.

“In England and France, Del Vayo wrote, “everybody has suddenly realized the tremendous mistake which has been made in allowing Germany and Italy to convert Spain into their zone of influence.”

9 Azcárate, p. 136

10 Ibid. p. 137

11 Ibid. p. 138

And in America, President Roosevelt stated in a message to Congress that, "We are convinced that our Law of Neutrality has most likely aided the aggressor and prevented aid from reaching the victims of aggression."

The situation was indeed changing. And if the contradictions between the Rome-Berlin-Axis and the Western Democracies were becoming sharper, and if those countries the supporters of a firmer policy towards Axis aggression were winning, then the Republic could soon find support where before there had been only enmity.

On March 1 the Republican Council of Ministers met, announced the resignation of Manuel Azaña as President. On March 2 Martínez Barrio conditionally accepted the post; the condition being that Negrín do everything possible for an honorable peace. On that same day changes were made in the military command which, if they had been made sooner, may well have changed the direction of the war. Miaja was relieved of his functions as Supreme Chief of the Armed Forces, and named Inspector General of the Land, Sea and Air Forces, with the traitor, Garijo under his command. The two Communist Corps Commanders, Modesto and Cerdón, were made full generals, while Lister, Galán and Marqués were made Colonels. Casado too was elevated to the rank of general, and continued in his command, while traitor number two, Colonel Muedra, became Under-Secretary of the Land Army. The maintenance of Casado and Muedra in these last two positions was a fatal mistake.

On March 4 the Fascists revolted in Cartagena. A division of the People's Army quickly defeated the attack of the capitulationists and Fascists. The *Castillo de Olite*, a Franco troopship, responding to the *Los Dolores* radio station which the Rebels had seized, was sunk with 2,300 men on board.¹²

But simultaneously with this minor victory, a last and bitter blow was dealt the Republic. The fleet, under its defeatist commanders and against the wishes of the majority of its crews, sailed for North Africa; thus depriving the Government of even this last protection should it be needed to guard the escape route of those who would be executed with a Franco victory. And simultaneously with the sailing of the fleet, the long-rumored *coup d'état* was carried out in Madrid. At the stroke of midnight on March 5, 1939, the radio announced the formation of a new "National Junta of Defense." It consisted of Casado, Julián Besteiro, and Mera the Anarchist, commander of the Fourth Army on the Somosierra front

Though Popular Front Committees had been functioning smoothly at the town and village level, the National Committees of the various parties (excepting the F.A.I.) were not estranged, but neither were they in close liaison. This too was a sign that the influence of

¹² Ibid. p. 143

the capitulators and defeatists had grown immeasurably.

As early as August, 1938, open anti-communists had reasserted their power within the Socialist National Committee; becoming members of the Executive Council. Both Caballero and Prieto had finally found a basis for unity after a struggle of thirty years. And too, the reformist Julián Besteiro had made his comeback. His position was made quite clear to the Executive on November 15, 1938. From the beginning of the war he had counseled surrender to reaction. Now he told the Executive that without the participation of the Communists the war would be lost; with their participation it might be won, but in that case the Communists would gain greater support and prestige. Faced with this alternative, he, for one, preferred surrender to Fascism.

Within his own party, of course, Negrín was supported by such men as Álvarez del Vayo, González Peña of the U.G.T., Julián Zugazagoitia, Minister of the Interior, and many others. Despite his majority support, however, the rumor “that he was a captive of the Communists,” their tool, as it were, continued to spread and to be augmented by those who now sought protection for themselves within the dubious “anti-communist” defeatist camp.

The fact that essentially the P.C.E. had made far greater headway during the period of Largo Caballero, in terms of organizational strength in both the political and military spheres seems to go unnoted. Russian advisers could burst in on Largo at any time—they called him “Comrade.” Whereas with Negrín they were relegated to their exact position—as advisers. They could seek contact with Negrín by appointment only, and most of the time not at all.

The tragedy of Negrín was that he had come too late upon the scene. He was the Premier of a people who remained steadfast in the face of Fascist aggression. But he, like the people, was also the victim of the predominant left-liberal-ultra-bourgeois leadership who, guilty of every kind of ego-trip; constantly engaged in a wasting campaign of mutual sabotage in the interests of some infantile point of dogma; engaged too in the power struggle of Socialist against Anarchist, Anarchist against Communist and Socialist, etc., etc.—were, in themselves, the “Fifth Horseman” of Spain's Apocalypse.

Whatever the faults of the Spanish Communist Party, they, from the first hours, had staunchly held to a program of unity. They had set an example of how the enemy had to be fought by being, physically, in the very heart of every major battle of the Spanish War.

If Negrín chose to use them in the interests of the Republic, it may well be that it was for the simple reason that the capitulationists, the cowards and the polemicists left him no choice. But even that was not the case. For a significant part of the populace and the armed forces were by no means convinced that surrender was necessary—or that an

illegally constituted “junta” could conclude the best peace with Franco. In fact all indications, even at that late date, were that if a strong and revitalized Republican government, under Negrín, moved swiftly to establish itself in the center zone, they would support it. Conversely, if Negrín or Martínez Barrio, the new President, still did nothing, they would then make their peace with Casado.

Juan Negrín had been in the fact of doing exactly the above. He had established himself and the government at Elda near Madrid. And each day political and military leaders, released from internment in France, were concentrating in the area. Indeed, concomitant with the previously listed promotions, the Commanders' Etelvino Vega, Curto, and Mendiola—Communists, or strongly pro-Negrín—had been shifted to command the important bases of Albacete, Murcia and Alicante. And other adjustments were rapidly being made.

It was against *this* growing and renewed strength that the Casado Junta struck. And, it is said, that if Negrín had but reacted positively and immediately, the outcome of the Junta's attempt might well have been different. As it was, he did nothing. Physically exhausted after one and one half years of personal wartime leadership, deserted on all sides by those who linked the words “socialism” and “libertarian communism” with an “honorable peace,” while simultaneously offering the country to Franco as the price, in many cases, of their own freedom, *he did nothing*.

There are conflicting stories of how the Communists had planned to seize power; this, supposedly, forcing the Junta to act all the more swiftly. And, there are many polemicists who, across the years have castigated the Spanish C.P. for *not* seizing power in that critical moment. These are the same sophists who undoubtedly would have denounced them most strongly if they had.

However, since the question has been asked repeatedly, the Communists have a right to answer. Dolores Ibárruri writes: “Who, if he were not an imbecile, could believe that the Communists were going to take power, when the cream of its ranks were prisoners in French concentration camps? And at a time when the Central army was riddled with treachery? How could the Communists be planning to seize power in 1939 and have refrained from doing so in 1937 when circumstances were favorable, when weariness had not yet dampened popular enthusiasm and when a major part of the combatants were party supporters?”

“We were not ignorant of our strength and influence among the popular masses. Neither were we oblivious of the fact that if the resistance had been maintained for three years it was thanks to the Popular Front, with all its shortcomings, and the enormous political and organizational work of all democratic forces, in particular the Communist Party. The Party had borne the weight of the resistance all during the war, both politically and militarily,

becoming the enemy's prime target, since it was the only solid force of Republican resistance. The Communist Party was the driving force of the Republic, a constant pressure acting upon a sometimes negative, sometimes positive entity, but unfortunately it was not the determining factor in spite of its importance."

"... *At no moment during the war did the Communist Party propose taking power in Spain.* Those who like to compare the situation in Spain with that of Russia in October, 1917, and who arrive at the conclusion that we could have made a revolution, are gravely mistaken. Russia was bleeding to death from an imperialist war which was hated by all its people. Spain was fighting a national revolutionary war against fascism with the participation of not only the working class, but also, preponderantly, the peasants, as well as the petty and big bourgeoisie."

"If at a given moment of the war, for example, in 1937, when the Largo Caballero government was in crisis, certain conditions existed which would have permitted the seizure of power, the Communists did not do so (although many of our combatants desired it) for a basic reason: Neither the national nor international situation was favorable to such a change."

"Communists do not play at revolution, because the lives of the workers and the fate of a country are far too precious for them to be hurled into a revolutionary adventure without a good chance of succeeding. It would have been nothing but criminal adventurism had the Communist Party attempted to seize power in a Spain divided by civil war of such a special nature, and in the midst of a capitalist world pandering to Hitler and preparing for World War II. We would have had to push aside all our allies in the Popular Front, thus clearing the way for the Fascist Powers and international reactionary circles to intervene openly in Spain."

"It should also be remembered that the Spanish working class was divided and that neither the Socialist Party nor the Anarchists would have sat back peacefully before a change of this nature . . . (and) why should the Communists have impetuously sought to grab power, forsaking all their allies, if truly revolutionary transformations were already taking place in the country during the course of the war? The Communist Party's main interest was the defeat of the Rebels and into the task it puts its heart and soul. Defeat of the insurgents was the key to the consolidation of popular victories and the development of a democratic revolution in Spain."¹³

In Paris, Franco's Ambassador, Quiñones de León, told American Ambassador Bullitt, that in his opinion the Junta, after purely formal negotiations, would rapidly hand over power to Franco.¹⁴

¹³ D. Ibárruri, pp. 333-334

¹⁴ Azcárate, p. 143

The Italian *Giornale d'Italia* almost euphorically announced that: "It seems that Colonel Casado has been in contact with Franco for some time in order to discuss the terms of surrender. From the first moment, Franco let him know that he would accept nothing less than *complete and unconditional surrender*."¹⁵

Yet but three days earlier, Casado, speaking to Hidalgo de Cisneros, Commander of the Republican Airforce, told him that: "Only we Generals can get Spain out of the war. I give you my word that I can get more out of Franco than Negrín's Government ever can."¹⁶

And that was, essentially, the promise that Casado and the Junta made to a war weary country: that they could make a peace *with no reprisals*, such as Premier Juan Negrín and his "Communist supporters" could never make—This was the bait.

Throughout the entire period of maneuver and secret meetings for the purpose of organizing the Junta, Casado had been in constant contact with British agents and with the English Consulate offices in Madrid. "We do what England tells us to do," a tired and apathetic Miaja said to the delegate, Montoliu, who visited him in General Staff headquarters *after* the formation of the Junta. And there is no doubt that the British had impressed this possibility of no reprisals upon Casado, though they knew at the time that there wasn't the slightest chance of such a condition.

Indeed, other than Neville Chamberlain's recognition of Franco, coupled with the declaration—before the House of Commons—that *thenceforward the Negrín government had no legal standing*,¹⁷ there is no more despicable statement than that of Lord Halifax before the House of Lords, in which he said, "That no country outside Spain could judge whether any Spaniard was guilty or not of any crime. And that British help in the evacuation of the Republicans would prejudice her reconciliation with the victors."¹⁸

England had not only created the lie with which Casado could bait the trap for Republican capitulation, but had simultaneously given Franco the green light to do as he wished with the Spanish populace once that capitulation had been achieved.

On March 6, Casado and his clique moved swiftly to secure the arrest of the Government and Negrín. At the Dakar airbase, Juan Negrín, Álvarez del Vayo, Moix and a number of others awaited the results of a phone call put through to Casado by Hidalgo de Cisneros. The message was a last plea for the Junta to settle its differences with Negrín before it was too late. They waited until three that evening. Then, with no reply, their Douglas transport

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 143-144

¹⁶ Thomas, p. 590

¹⁷ Azcárate, p. 141

¹⁸ Thomas, p. 597

flew them to France.

In Madrid, Communists everywhere were being arrested and Party buildings entered and taken over. Within a period of two days over twelve thousand were imprisoned, many later being turned over to Franco.

But there were those who reasoned that it was still not too late for the cause of continued resistance. In the early dawn of the next day the Communist Commander of the 8th Division, Ascanio, marched on Madrid. At the same time the Communist Colonel, Barceló, moved to close all the entrances to the Capital. Col's Buena and Ortega sent troops from the 2nd and 3rd Corps to support Barceló. By late evening the greater part of the center of the city had passed into the hands of these loyal troops. Indeed they had pushed to the Plaza de Cibeles, but a short distance from the *edificio* of the Ministry of Finance, where Julián Besteiro, Segismundo Casado and others of their henchmen were hiding in the cellars, "fearing that the end of their venture was at hand."¹⁹

And it was precisely at this moment that Generalissimo Franco, attuned to the needs of the Casado Junta, initiated an offensive along the entire periphery of the Madrid front. Barceló was forced to send men to reinforce the lines. He would now have to defend Madrid on two fronts—from the Fascist-Military, and from the new "Fifth Column." And, as if that were not enough, the military staff of the Junta sent urgent orders to the Anarchist Commander Cipriano Mera's 4th Army headquarters to send his 14th division into the streets of Madrid against the Communists—opening up another sector of the front to the armies of Franco.

Keeping his movements secret, Casado seized the opportunity to propose a truce; to, as he put it, "resist the Fascist attack."

The Communists accepted. For, as they explain it, "their entire struggle had been inspired by the desire to prevent surrender and the collapse of resistance."²⁰ They sent a delegation proposing a "cease-fire" and its cessation of further fratricidal bloodshed, if the Junta for its part would stop arresting Communists and continue resistance.

Casado, however, played only for time. With the arrival of the Anarchist 14th Division and the ever increasing assaults in the Casa de Campo and Carabanchel, Barceló, Ascanio and the others of the loyal, Communist, military were assailed from all sides. They were forced to relinquish many strongpoints inclusive of the headquarters of the 2nd Army Corps and the Ministries in the Castellana.

On Saturday, March 11, a cease-fire was finally agreed upon. Both sides were to lay down

¹⁹ Azcárate, p. 144

²⁰ Ibid.

their arms. Military units were to return to their original positions. Prisoners arrested by both sides were to be set free. And lastly, there were to be no reprisals.

But Casado had no intention of living up to the agreements of the cease-fire. Some Communists were released but others were arrested and some re-arrested and eventually handed over to Franco for execution; among these being the commanders, Girón, Ascanio, Gazorla, Mesón and many others. The Commander of the 1st Army Corps, Barceló, and his Commissar, Conesa, were summarily executed on Casado's orders.

For the Republic the war was now irretrievably lost.

What followed was a sick charade in which “negotiations” were ostensibly carried on between representatives of the Casado-Besteiro-Mera Junta, and Franco as to the “conditions” of surrender. All this took place while a massive shifting of units of the fascist-military, tank divisions, cavalry divisions—all directed toward a general advance on all fronts, took place. On March 26, Franco announced contemptuously to a befuddled and pathetic Segismundo Casado, who had called him in Burgos to inform him as to how *he*, Casado, proposed surrendering *his* airforce, that all negotiations as of that moment, were ended; that the Nationalist Armies were about to advance on all fronts.

The defenders of the Republic, betrayed unto death by their leaders, simply left the trenches. Soldiers, peasants, workers, all melted into the hinterland; going home to prepare for what was coming; to the seacoast for the ships that were no longer there to take them to safety; to the mountains for whatever short lease on life their protection would afford.

On Tuesday, March 28, 1939, at 11:00 a.m., Fascist troops entered Madrid. That same afternoon Italian divisions marched through the Toledo Gate. There was no welcome; no laurel wreaths. For Madrid had fallen, not in battle, *but to the vilest of treachery*. By the end of the month of April the whole of Republican Spain was occupied by the armies of Franco.

Julián Besteiro had broadcast to the Madrid populace that “Juan Negrín had been guilty of deceiving the people with false hopes of new armament, and of a world war which would merge the Spanish struggle into a victorious war against the Fascist powers.”²¹ Besteiro had further urged that the people obey the Casado Junta, and that they “show their valor by the manner in which they accept defeat.”²²

Within five short months, while the execution squads of the Franco armies raged through every town and village in Spain—allowing those so murdered to “show their valor”—the

21 Jackson, p. 472

22 Loc-cit, p. 472

sovereign state of Poland was invaded and the anti-Fascist war about which Negrín had “deceived the people” was an historical fact.

Hitler had already seized the whole of Czechoslovakia. On March 23, he occupied Memel. On April 7, Mussolini attacked Albania. On September 1, 1939, *the Second World War began.*

For the Spanish Republic, the price of surrender was the internment in the infamous camps of Argeles-sur-Mer, Les Haras and Prats de Molla in southern France, of over 500,000 Spanish exiles, Many of these were at a later date returned by the Vichy government to Franco's execution squads.

Inside Spain upwards of 1,000,000 Spaniards were imprisoned in make-shift concentration camps; the jails of the land were filled to bursting. Over 200,000 were executed. And these, when added to the already horrendous total of those murdered during the war years, give a final tally of 400,000—equal to all those killed on the battlefronts.

The notes of Count Ciano tell us—and he was there—that two months after the war's end, “The firing squads are kept terribly busy; in Madrid alone there were between 200 and 250 executions a day; in Barcelona, 150.”

Mr. Abel Plenn, an American government press officer attached to the U.S. Embassy in Madrid, writes in 1944 that even then, *five years after the war's end*, the killing continued. His notes contain the following:

“July 6, 1944: Executions continuing, especially at Ocaña. More arrests and shootings on account of upcoming July 18th anniversary of Franco uprising. July 18th: 94 shot this afternoon. August 2: Growing repression and new executions in the past few days. August 16: Yesterday our Seventh Army landed on the south coast of France. Executions (here) being stepped up. August 18: 150 prisoners shot here in the past week. August 23: Stepped up executions—many intellectuals and professional people who have been in jail for two and three years, JS told of body bouncing out of truck leaving Carabanchel jail. 60 killed two days ago. August 26: 360 shot last week. New Cemetery being built at Carabanchel, where many political prisoners are held. Sept. 2: 60 more shot. September 3: 30 more prisoners have been executed at Ocaña and 25 at Carabanchel. September 8: *450 in Madrid shot night before last. 300 odd scheduled for last night.* October 20. Executions now at about two daily in Madrid, but increasing in Barcelona”²³

Still, despite the unparalleled terror and repression across the years, the internal struggle of the Spanish people against their oppressors has never ceased. Spaniards continued to fight. In W.W.II, there was no Allied front that did not have its Spanish Republican contingents. The very tanks that led the French 1st Army into Paris were manned by Spaniards, and were emblazoned with the battleflags of *Madrid, Jarama, Guadalajara*, the

23 *Wind in the Oliver Trees*, Abel Plenn, Boni & Grey, New York, 1946; pp. 121-122

Ebro and *Teruel*. For these men assumed, and rightly so, that Fascist-Spain would not outlive its guarantors of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. A substantiation of this view appeared at the United Nations first meeting in San Francisco, 1946. A resolution calling upon all member nations to withdraw their ambassadors from Madrid was endorsed and promptly complied with.

Within months of this first move against the Franco dictatorship, however, a new guarantor was found—*the government of the United States of America*. Ensuing years have seen America replace with its armament the weapons of the Axis powers; replace with its economic support the support of Hitler and Mussolini. And the world has watched the U.S. effectively campaign to *revoke* the resolution of political and economic quarantine as instituted by the United Nations. This act of perfidy was then hurriedly implemented by the American *Pact of Madrid* (1953), drawn up over the heads of the American people and the American Congress. This “Pact” has subsidized the Government of Franco with billions of dollars in military and economic aid in exchange for naval and air bases on Spanish soil—where American units have actually engaged in joint maneuvers with the Spanish Army in preparation against the appearance of any new internal “disorder.”

In 1955 U.S. pressure propelled the iniquitous junior partner of the Rome-Berlin Axis into membership in the United Nations; thereby granting it the legality associated with that organization.

And so it has been.

But as stated, the internal struggle has never ceased and the war is not over. The youth of Spain are again on the march, as are the leading “Workers Council” of the great underground trade unions. Even Spanish Catholicism in its first national assembly of the Roman Catholic Bishops and Priests of Spain has issued a manifesto calling for freedom and social and economic justice in Spain. This assembly also voted by a majority to ask for pardon from the peoples of Spain for its support of the Fascist-Military during the Civil War.

The apology states: “We humbly recognize and ask pardon because we failed at the proper time to be ministers of reconciliation in the midst of our people, divided by a war between brothers.” The vote was 137 in favor, 78 against and 19 approving with reservations.²⁴

Whatever the form of the coming struggle, however, it would appear as of this date, March 1, 1972, that generally, with the exception of the Anarchists who have little strength in Spain today, the forces are the same: on the one hand the Fascist-Military, and the on the other, the people.

24 “*Herald Tribune*,” Paris Edition, Sept. 17, 1971

A social studies firm, ODESSA, retained by the Franco government to determine the actual sentiments of the Spanish people, if they were allowed to express themselves in open elections, gives the following report for 1971: Communists and Left-Socialists 40.9%; Christian Democrats, 40.5; Liberals, 13%; Social Democrats, 4.0%.²⁵

The results of this poll were, of course, suppressed by Spanish political censorship.

THE END

ABC

²⁵ “*National Guardian*,” April 16, 1971

- A In-re Brennan's statement as to an F.A.I. membership of but 10,000—1933-1936—Santillán claims that at the end of 1937 their count stood at 154,000. “Far less,” as he puts it, “than before the war began.” p. 297
- B According to José Peirats, the Anarchist Libertarian Youth membership was, in February, 1937, 82,221. pp. 312-313
- C The question has often been asked whether the Spanish Communist Party could have seized power during the war—and exactly how does the Spanish Party view itself and its role in terms of Spanish socialism.

Santiago Carrillo, General Secretary of the P.C.E., in an interview with the Paris, *Le Monde*, November 11, 1970, said the following:

“He said they would work with all those who favor the establishment of democratic liberties, even if their aims are opposed to ours, even if they have supported the Franco regime in the past.

“Our first task,” the Party Secretary continued, “is to eliminate Fascism and to do that we're prepared to work with the devil himself.

“When the French Communists had to fight Nazism, they didn't hesitate to join forces with De Gaulle. We need the help of the bourgeois opposition groups, and you only have to read the Spanish press to see that they exist.

“The question of social change after Franco leaves the scene raises enormous problems. Spain can't jump from Fascism to Socialism in one single bound. There will have to be a stepping stone.

“But obviously we are aiming at socialism, an independent democratic form of socialism in which the role of the Communist Party would be that of a guide, not a ruler . . . That's even a question of history; during the Civil War the Communist Party could have seized power—it had the men, tanks and planes to do it—but it refused to take that course . . . What's our position on the Church? The Spanish Church has been extremely conservative and reactionary, and Franco's main support. But the attitude is changing and today it is slowly and hesitantly backing away from the regime . . . You know, we've often said that Spanish Socialism would advance with the hammer and sickle in one hand and the cross in the other.”