

SPAIN'S  
WAR  
*OF*  
INDEPENDENCE

*PRESIDENT AZAÑA; PREMIER NEGRIN;  
DEFENSE MINISTER PRIETO; ALVAREZ  
DEL VAYO, DELEGATE TO THE LEAGUE  
OF NATIONS; MARTINEZ BARRIO,  
PRESIDENT OF THE CORTES, AND  
PORTELA VALLADARES, LEADER OF  
THE CENTRIST PARTY, PUT THE CASE  
OF THE SPANISH REPUBLIC BEFORE  
THE WORLD*

SPANISH EMBASSY

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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Ayuntamiento de Madrid

THE NEW "HOLY ALLIANCE"

WHAT does the present movement of the Spanish rebels really mean? It involves the same alignment of forces that we find directing the political life of Spain in the sixteenth century: intolerance, absolute control over freedom of conscience, and the preservation of a social-economic structure through absolutism and terror.

The rebels thought that the hour was historically propitious, and in fact it was. For, just as in 1823, the Holy Alliance of the absolutist powers resolved to send an army to Spain to crush the liberal movement, now a new "Holy Alliance," composed of the totalitarian states, has resolved to help the absolutist cause in Spain, and it has been able to do so because of the inactivity of the shrinking, frightened and disunited democracies.

FERNANDO DE LOS RIOS

Spanish Ambassador to the United States.

*(From an address delivered before the Council of Foreign Relations, Washington, D. C., on November 15, 1936.)*

THE NEW HOLY ALLIANCE

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The words themselves that the Pope was historically pronounced and in fact it was not until 1823, the Holy Alliance of the absolutist powers resolved to send an army to Spain to reach the liberal movement, now a new "Holy Alliance" composed of the totalitarian states has resolved to help the absolutist cause in Spain and it has been this to do so because of the intensity of the striking, right and the hundred democratic.

Fernando de los Rios  
Spanish Ambassador to the United States  
From an address delivered before the  
Council of Foreign Relations, Washington  
on D. C., on November 12, 1930.

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*The following address was made by His Excellency the President of the Spanish Republic, Señor Don Manuel Azaña, on January 21, 1937, at a reception given in his honor by the Municipal Government of Valencia.*

MR. MAYOR, GENTLEMEN:

I HAVE heard with an emotion difficult to suppress, the welcome which the legitimate representatives of Valencian democracy have addressed to me. On any occasion, in any corner of Spain, such a greeting would have remained graven on my heart. But in the present circumstances, and coming as it does from the genuine expression of Valencian democracy, it means more than that. Valencia holds in her history the glorious title of having been one of the first and one of the strongest centers of Spanish republicanism, defender of those social, economic and political conditions thanks to which the tree of democracy has grown. Valencia in peace was a jewel of the Spanish Republic, and in time of war she has abundantly fulfilled her obligations. Many sons of Valencia have lost their lives fighting at the front for the salvation of all their brothers in Spain. We know what Valencians have done on the field of battle. Praise be to them all! Let them know that all of us are grateful for their courage. We know also the other services that Valencia has rendered in helping and supporting the towns besieged by the enemy.

I am glad, too, that it is Valencia which gives me the opportunity of saying, after six months of war, some words drawn from past experience, and which permits us to consider seriously, but with the serene and reasonable optimism which we all possess, the immediate problems of the future. Six months of war, a long time of suffering, gentlemen; a length of time which would have seemed incredible to us in July, when the future was hidden behind time's curtain. In these six months the principal problems before us have not changed in their essentials.

What were the facts of the rebellion? It was for us, and we would have wished it to remain so, an internal problem of Spanish politics. The facts are well known. A great part of the armed forces of the country, in connivance with and acting for political parties which were opposed to the established regime, rose against the Republican Government with the intention of overthrowing by force what the nation freely and by universal suffrage had chosen for itself. These are the facts, and in the face of them the State and its representatives knew their duty and performed it without a second's hesitation.

What was their duty? To oppose in every way the military rebellion. There is no compromising with disobedience when power is worthily held, and those who represent a state cannot and must not ever compromise with rebellion. Dignity, duty and what they owe to the nation would not permit it, however terrible the results of warlike action may be, and the State fulfilled its obligations. But, gentlemen, the greater part of the defensive forces at the disposal of the Government were either in the rebellion, or had been cut off by it, or had been dissolved or weakened in their effectiveness as a result of the rebellion.

And then the miracle happened: the Spanish surprise which those who favored the rebellion had not even foreseen. The entire people came forward to substitute themselves for those bodies in the State which had become useless or joined the rebellion; the entire people, in close union with their Government, took up arms to defend their liberty and their Republic. Then our problem was how to take advantage of the enthusiasm, the loyalty, the spirit of sacrifice of the people, to organize and canalize all these moral forces so that they should constitute new bodies in place of the old, so that, with the least waste, the least effort, the least loss of time and energy, and with the least sacrifice, the Government of the Republic might carry out its duty, which was to re-establish peace in Spain and to restore the Republic where it had been temporarily suppressed.

This outline of the situation has a demonstrative value for all of us and for the whole world. When a war is begun, and a war is always an evil, always abominable and more so when it is between fellow-countrymen, there must needs be a moral justification of the highest kind, above all attack, beyond all discussion. And from the facts which I have outlined, and the data for them all are irrefutable, it will be seen that our position is indeed above all attack, that we are at peace with our own personal conscience and with the future of history.

### A Serious International Problem

We are waging a terrible war on the body of our own country; but we are waging this war because it has been started against us. We have been attacked. We are completely justified before the most exacting tribunal in the world.

Let the whole world know this, and let all Spaniards know, those who fight on one side and those who fight on the other: we are waging this war because it is our duty, and in the performance of our duty we are ready to persist with whatever tenacity is necessary to achieve our ends.

That was what I meant, gentlemen, when I said that the problem as it first presented itself was one of national internal order, and such we would have wished it to remain; that is, to restore the observance of the law, a great problem of public order. Unhappily it has not been so; the Spanish military rebellion, from the moment of its outbreak, possessed the character of the most serious international problem, for we are all convinced that if it had not been preceded by international machinations, the Spanish military rebellion would not have broken out.

As I see it, there are two ways by which the military rebellion in Spain has come to be a grave international problem. On the one hand, because the rebellion arose in the Spanish zone in Morocco, and the rebels have used that zone as a base of operations; on the other hand, because of the help in war material and armed men given by certain foreign powers to the rebel movement at its origin and at the present time.

As for the first aspect, I will confess that the Governments of the Republic, since the outbreak of the rebellion, have given it their most careful attention, much more attention than public opinion in general has given it. The facts are very clear: in the zone of the Spanish Protectorate in Morocco the military entrusted with the task of protecting the zone and of helping the Government of the Protectorate in its functions rebelled against the legitimate Government of the protector nation, and not content with coming them-

selves to fight in the Peninsula have brought native forces in addition to the Peninsular troops which were stationed there. They have recruited soldiers among the Moors in that zone, and converted what was an expansion of Spain's political activity, and the fulfilment of an international agreement, into a base of operations against the legitimate Government of the Republic.

These are the facts. Compare them with the other aspect of the situation. Morocco is a foreign state for us; the sovereignty of Morocco belongs to the Sultan; the Sultan has in our zone a Caliph, who, as his name expresses, is his delegate or emanation in things political and religious; decrees are issued in his name, assisted by a high commission of Spain, and all the forces, which Spain pays for there, or subsidizes through the Majzen, are troops which are under the orders of the Protectorate, for the ends of the Protectorate and for nothing else. The fact that the troops of the Protectorate, that Moroccan subjects who are not Spaniards, and the fact that the Caliph, representative of the Sultan, who has never placed in question the legitimacy of the Spanish Government, consents to this, is not only contrary to Spanish laws, but also to the international pacts and treaties by reason of which Spain is in Morocco. Spain is in Morocco because of the Agreement of Algeciras and the pacts and treaties complementary to that. This is not the time to examine the reasons for her being there: but she is there because of that and to fulfil that mission, and the fact that, either by consent or permission or dissimulation, the authorities of the Majzen silently approve the transport of Moroccan troops to Spain is an aggression against international treaties, a violation of the pacts which keep us in

Morocco, besides being an attack on the Government of the Republic.

### A Foreign Invasion of Spain

The other aspect of the question which, as I said before, has lifted this military rebellion to an international plane, is the help given to the rebels by certain European countries. When the Moroccan forces, which are also foreign, were not sufficient to achieve the military aims of the rebellion, or when they lost their military efficacy, there began an invasion into Spain of armed forces from other countries. And that changed to a certain extent the moral situation created by the rebellion, for it is no longer a matter of danger solely to the Republic, it is no longer simply a matter of civil war between Spaniards. Let us say it quite clearly: we are undergoing a foreign invasion of Spain, and what is endangered is not only the political regime, but the real independence of our country.

Months ago, some time last July, when I first spoke to the public after the rebellion had begun, I said that the war which was starting was a new War of Independence, and that, moreover, it threatened to be the first act of a European war which had not yet been declared. There were some who thought the terms of that declaration exaggerated. But we are now seeing for ourselves that this *is* a War of Independence, not only in the fact that the Spanish people are going into battle to recover their rights, which is a manner of being independent, but also in the more concrete and less disputable fact that there are foreign movements on Spanish soil, forces armed against us, whose victory would mean the absolute suppression of Spanish independence.

This is the reality: a war of invasion, a direct attack on the independence of Spain.

It is no effort for me to be generous towards our enemies—it never has been an effort, and I do not repent of it—and I can believe that in the rebel ranks there are many blinded by political passion, by party fanaticism, by misguided obedience, by a feeling of fellowship which has been carried to harmful and pernicious extremes. However, it is difficult for me to believe that among the rebel troops there are not many who have blushed with shame as Spaniards when their rebellion has been used to open the national territory to foreign armies. It is difficult for me to believe that among the military rebels, criminals as they are against the State, rebels against the regime, forgetful of discipline, there are not many who are repelled and horrified by their crime against the living essence of our native land. To rebel against a government, to rebel against the legitimate State, I find that illegal, but human. What is completely unnatural is to help the invasion of one's own native land. This is the moral problem created for the rebels by their action in bringing foreign armies into Spain.

And another problem of the same type is raised for many Spaniards who have not wanted to take part in the civil strife, who say that they are neutral, who for many reasons, some respectable, some contemptible, think themselves superior to the conflict which is ravaging our country. I say to all these Spaniards, high or low, known or unknown, wherever they are: I allow, I tolerate, I admit that the Republic matters not at all to you, but—does Spain mean nothing to you! Does the independence of Spain mean nothing to you! Can you believe that it is right for you

to continue being neutral when Spain is invaded, and in danger of passing under the domination of foreign countries? I cannot believe it. Such neutrality is equivalent to treason. We must make them see light, for the Republican flag has become the flag of Spanish independence, and whoever will not gather around it and give the help which is in his power to give, fails in his duty as a Spaniard.

It seemed to us that the military rebellion in Spain, for the reasons of which I have spoken, might be the first act of a general war which had not yet been declared. That was what I said. Now almost everyone agrees with me that the peril exists. Why? Let us leave on one side those preoccupations of the past months, when the problem of bringing war material to the legitimate Government of Spain and the rebels first arose, and there was a fear that competition in supplying both sides might lead to an act of war between certain countries. The danger exists now because the invasion of Spain and the dispute over the possession of Spain means the breakdown of the balance of the western European system. This breakdown is against the interests of the powers which until now, trusting in the friendship of Spain, have been able to look without disquiet on the situation in the west of Europe.

I know well, as you all know, that the political importance of Spain in the world is inferior to her geographical size. Our small or even non-existent military power lessens the importance of Spain in Europe. Besides, the Spanish people is opposed to international adventures and wars, and the only thing on which all we Spaniards of the last generations have agreed is always to support a neutral policy. But within these characteristics the presence of Spain in the western European system had an extraordinary



value, from her geographical position, her balconies on two seas, her position in the Straits, her strategic island possessions in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, her natural resources and, above all, her unarmed frontiers on land and sea. The latter, above all, for the military weaknesses of Spain and her will to neutrality have been a fundamental part of the organization of the system of the balance of power in western Europe.

With reference to Morocco, you know well that in spite of all Spain's historic rights, or whatever ambitions our country may have had with regard to Africa, the only reason that we have been or are in Morocco was none of these, but simply so that none of the others should be there, and that the balance of power should be preserved. The balance is broken, but we are not the main objective of the rupture. The possession by foreign powers of the natural riches of Spain, of her ports and her bases, aims at a higher objective, one which we have always safeguarded by our pacific and unarmed situation. And that is the danger of war.

#### A Loyal and Sincere Warning to Other Powers

Naturally, the Government of the Republic, and I suppose public opinion, has never been childish enough to believe that other peoples would postpone their national interests for ours. The national interests of each country are sacred for that country and it has never occurred to the Government of the Republic to commit the sublime impertinence of telling other countries where their national interests lie. But without such impertinence, it is enough for us to point to the map, to indicate the events that have taken place, and let them draw their own conclusions.

If the balance of western Europe is to be upset, then, gentlemen, we must ask ourselves if it would not be worth while, ultimately, for it to be upset in our favor.

I remember this system to which I have referred as essential in the balance of western Europe, was once played very advantageously for peace and then in 1914 very advantageously for war. Could it not be played again? If Spain had undertaken the adventure of forming herself into a military power, then by that very act, which would have entailed enormous economic sacrifices on her part, the balance would have been broken, even if we had placed our military power at the disposition of the system to which we have always been faithful.

Can the balance be broken in another way? I am afraid that it can, but I only fear it, and I hope that the wisdom of those who govern and direct the destinies of Europe will realize that the loyalty, fidelity and disarmament of the Spanish nation have their worth, but that the rearmament of Spain may have a different importance.

These dangers of war—of a general war, for *we* already have enough of it—have made many suppose that it would be an advantage if the Spanish war should be converted into a European war, thinking that in the turmoil of encounters between the great countries the cause of Spain, the just cause which we represent, would more easily come to the surface. I do not think so, nor does the Government think so. First, because war in itself is always a catastrophe, and it is not right to seek war. Secondly, because a general war, if it should break out, would submerge Spanish aspirations and the just cause of Spain beneath the great conflicts which would be waged in Europe. We should be in danger that our just cause, even supposing we won our war,

would be decided by motives or conditions other than those which appeal to us as Spaniards and republicans.

No! We must keep clearly before us the national meaning of our cause, and not involve it in any other cause, making it worth while on its own merits and not using it as an international factor in disputes which do not concern us.

For these reasons the Republic and the Governments of the Republics have done nothing to favor or to bring about a general conflagration. On the contrary, they have done everything in their power to avoid a European war.

Now there is talk of limiting and extinguishing the war. To limit it, if I am not mistaken, means that the armed conflict shall not pass beyond the frontiers of Spain, and that the Spanish civil war shall not become a general conflagration. To extinguish the war is to end it, and to re-establish peace in Spain.

There is no action that we can take towards limiting the war. If the danger of war arises from the fact that other peoples bring their armies to Spain with aims that exceed the Spanish cause itself, we have no natural means to prevent such conduct. It is for others to limit the war; it is for others to restore the observance of International Law which has been so scandalously violated on our soil. It is for others to take the necessary precautions to prevent the spread of these war dangers, which do harm to the cause of Spain.

But to extinguish the war—there we have only one method which we must take, and that is to continue it. All that we have to do in order to extinguish the war is to defeat the rebels. Once we have done that we shall see how the hesitating, the most realistic and the most reactionary will admit that we are right.

In order to limit the war the Government of the Republic has made the sacrifices which are its duty to make, as you well know; even the sacrifice of allowing the inspection or control of the sending of arms into Spain. We have always maintained the integrity of the right of a legitimate state, of a legitimate government, to traffic with other countries. We maintain the principle. But we have been told: international peace would be helped by a certain amount of tolerance. And we have shown that tolerance. The responsible Government has shown it in principle, with the reservations and conditions which I think are publicly known.

But, neither to limit the war nor to end the war, by any method which may be devised, are we ready to admit the slightest doubt, the slightest suspicion of the authority of the Republic, of the legality of the regime, of the authority of the Government which embodies it, or of any one of the representatives of the official State of Spain. Never will we admit that. We would sooner die.

I wish it to be noted, though perhaps it does not need saying, that my presence here signifies and indicates the continuity of the legitimate Republican State, which finds in the President of the Republic, in the responsible Government and in the Cortes the supreme bodies of its representative expression and its command. These are the representatives of the Republic, and so long as I am here, with this Government and public opinion, there shall be no blot upon them.

But we—and when I say “we” I mean the Spanish State and the Spanish people—are not fighting merely for this formal conception of the right of the State. No! There is a passionate, pathetic, heartfelt object in the struggle; we are fighting for the essential unity of Spain. We are fighting

for the integrity of the national territory. We are fighting for the independence of our native land and for the right of the Spanish people to decide freely their own destinies.

### The Republic Has Made No Pacts Whatsoever

*I hear it said by biased sources of propaganda, although for my mental health I refrain from listening to these daily, that we are fighting for communism. That is utter jolly, if it were not wickedness. If we were fighting for communism, only the communists would be fighting; if we were fighting for syndicalism, only the syndicalists would be fighting; if we were for left or center or right wing republicanism, then only the republicans would be fighting. That is not the case; we are all fighting, the worker and the intellectual, the professor and the bourgeois, the syndicates and the political parties. All we Spaniards who are gathered under the Republican flag, are fighting for the independence of Spain and for the liberty of Spaniards, and our native land.*

We are the objects of a defamatory campaign in political spheres outside Spain and in Spain. Gentlemen, we do not export politics. I know that we are not in a condition to do so! We have no intention of exporting Spanish politics anywhere; neither do we import politics, nor admit their importation to us. No one has asked us to do so, nobody proposes or desires that we should do so. And by my office I am authorized to declare that the Spanish Republic has made no sort of political agreement with any country in the world.

Is it so difficult to understand the national impulse of a people who do not want to wear the chains of slavery? Has the concept of liberty and human dignity, and of national dignity become so strange to Spaniards that it should seem

incredible for them to fight for anything other than class interests or party ideology? The self esteem of the free man and the reward of being a Spaniard, are not these enough to make one face death in the trenches?

I hear talk of a nationalist movement, which is the term used I believe by the rebels in speaking of their action. A nationalist movement! Can it exist if it begins by imprisoning the nation's liberty? I think that a nationalist movement would be irresistible whatever its direction, if it were really nationalist. But the first necessity of a nationalist movement is free nationalists. And a political movement supported by arms proclaiming itself nationalist need only submit itself to the test of allowing its subjects, its slaves, to say what they think and what they wish. If they say that they want a military dictatorship then I agree that that is what they want. But I am sure that few Spaniards would vote in its favor.

The real nationalist movement is here, where it is sustaining a free people assisting the legitimate Government of the Republic in its tremendous task. I have seen no weakening. No one has been forced to fight, no one has been forced to follow the Republican flag. Can the same be said of those who claim the name *nationalist movement*? I think not. This great coalition of the political and social forces of the Government for the defense of Spain is founded on the union of the Spanish people in defense of the essential liberties of man, and the liberties and independence of their country. I think that this coalition and this union must persist at least until we achieve victory and peace. And I could wish that they might persist longer, for when the war is finished, we must all perforce give attention to many problems which are for the moment latent.

But meanwhile, you will allow me to say that we need a war policy, both on the battlefield and behind the lines. A war policy which has only one expression: discipline and obedience to the responsible Government of the Republic. That is the sum total of the matter.

#### Reconstruction—Moral, Liberal, Political, Social

The War of Independence—of which I often think when I am talking of this war—sheltered and protected the birth of a Spanish political movement, the first in which the Spanish nation became conscious of its own existence and began its fight for political independence. That political movement, under the terrible protection of the war, failed, as you know better than I, and it failed for this among others reasons, that it lacked political leaders who could see clearly enough the moral and political consequences which were bound up with the triumph of the movement. I hope that this time it will not be so, and that the Spanish people, more experienced and more aware of their position and their rights than the Spanish people of that day, may know how to find the path to their moral, political and social reconstruction.

Peace will come, and victory will come; the victory of the law, of the people and of the Republic. Victory will be impersonal, for it will not be the triumph of any one of us, or of any particular party or organization. It will not be a personal triumph, for when there is such grief as I bear in my Spanish heart, there can be no personal triumph over one's fellow countrymen. It will be the triumph of democracy, the triumph of the rights of the people.

*Address of His Excellency the  
President of the Spanish Republic,  
Señor Don Manuel Azaña, at the  
Assembly Hall of the University  
of Valencia, on July 18, 1937, the  
first anniversary of the military  
rebellion in Spain.*

THE government has thought it fitting that I should today address the people on the present situation, since the President of the Republic represents and denotes a continuity which is above the changes of governments and the shifting tides of politics. I do so gladly, as always, though the gravity of the circumstances, and the tremendous memories evoked, cannot be absent from my mind.

We, who represent the Spanish Republic, and those who with their blood and energy support and defend that Republic, formulated from the first day, the 18th of July, 1936, a certain number of irrefutable truths. These are the truths of our right, of our justice. Against them have come armed force and violence, trying to destroy those who defend these truths; they have been met by the contempt of those who will not listen; it does not matter. Fortune may play her tricks; men may fail or succeed in their plans; governments may entangle themselves in subterfuges; the peoples of the earth may let themselves be dragged once more into bloody conflict; peace may be consolidated, the League of Nations may wake from its lethargy



into a new vigilant zeal, or it may continue as it has been up to the present. I do not know. But in any one of these eventualities, a code of absolute truths will persist, truths indelibly graven, with which the Republic will appear before history, as she appears today, before the judgment of the world, calm and confident of her right.

This is not a small thing, for the possession of truth, which authorized us to take up arms, today forbids us to lay them down. Besides, the case is important for other peoples since any international understanding is founded on respect for justice, and there exists not only the moral obligation, but the pledged legal obligation to recognize it and proclaim it wherever it is found, and to adjust our conduct to this recognition and proclamation. Because this was not done, what began as an internal conflict in Spain has turned into a European struggle.

#### Without the Help Given by Foreign Powers the Rebellion Would Have Been Suppressed at the Beginning

In the month of July, 1936, a legitimate political regime existed in Spain, recognized by all the powers of the world, and living on terms of peace and friendship with all of them. No one can have forgotten that, and no one can deny it. This situation expressed, on the part of the Spanish people, the exercise of their right, which none can dispute, to rule themselves freely in their politics according to the will of the majority of the nation.

In this situation, on July 18, 1936, a rebellion broke out in Spain. A political party, or various political groups, which were not in agreement with the Republican policy or with the Republic itself, resolved to overthrow the Republic and to change the national policy by force. They

then together with a major part of the Spanish Army rebelled against the Republican regime. This incident, as it appeared in its form, its aim and its authors, presented for the Spanish State a most serious disturbance of public order, a formidable problem of internal peace, but nothing more than that.

We passed through those critical days, critical because it was not certain whether the easy plan of surprising the government, and of seizing, also by surprise, all the resources of power of the state, would prosper or not. Some days went by, and the rebellion, overcome in Madrid, overcome in Barcelona, Valencia and other regions, including the North, was morally and almost materially defeated. If this disturbance of public order in Spain had possessed only the elements, the strength, and the aims which it revealed on the first and the following days, it would have been over a few weeks after it had begun.

At the present distance from the origin of the trouble, I do not believe that anyone in the world with any knowledge of Spanish affairs can deny that, had it not been for the help afforded by foreign powers, the Spanish military rebellion would have failed.

It is therefore an evident truth that if the war in Spain has now lasted a year, it is no longer a movement of repression against an internal rebellion, but an act of war from without, an invasion. The war is entirely and exclusively maintained, not by the military rebels, but by the foreign powers which are making a clandestine invasion of the Spanish Republic.

In the very month of July, and of August, 1936, we were quick to inform Spanish opinion and world opinion that the problem was rapidly changing character, that there were

already symptoms and indications that a foreign invasion of Spain was being prepared. I have the impression that we were not believed. Perhaps it was thought that we were intending to win world sympathy in an internal conflict which we were unable to settle. Months passed, and the world finally yielded to the evidence; Spain was being invaded by three powers: Portugal, Italy and Germany.

In the course of little more than two centuries our country has been invaded four times, on each occasion without any provocation from the government then in office. Once, under the cover of dynastic litigation between European families, to dispute, on Spanish soil, the plunder of the Spanish empire in its decadence; a second time, taking in pledge the independence of Spain and its geographical position in surety, to convert the country into a battlefield for the rivalry of Bonaparte's continental imperialism and the growing British empire; a third time, under a show and pretense of war, to force on the Spanish people by the decision of foreign congresses, a political regime which the country had not voted (the invasion of the Hundred Thousand Sons of Saint Louis, god-children of Ferdinand VII, had this character); and the fourth invasion is that which began in 1936 and which has not yet ended.

### The Real Motives of the German-Italian Invasion of Spain

What are the motives of this invasion which we are now suffering? Why this clandestine war? Injuries done by Spain to the powers which are invading her? I do not know of any. Spain has always lived in peace and friendship with Germany. Since she had been neutral in the Great War, Spain did not sign the Treaty of Versailles, the root of so much bitter feeling in Europe. Nor have we had

any share in the policies which have been carried out along the Rhine. We have only seen with surprise and grief the overthrow of the German Republic. With Italy, for centuries past, we have had no motive for quarrel. When, in 1935, a Spanish government (a Rightist government) supporting the policy of the League of Nations, joined with 52 nations in declaring sanctions in a effort to impose respect for law, Spain only adhered to the obligatory policy of the League of Nations.

What, then, are the motives of this invasion? Rivalries or competition in the world? Spain has none of these. Not even in the Mediterranean, contrary to what Nature would suppose and our interests claim, has Spain played the role which these two motives would have forced on her. What, then, are the motives of this threefold invasion? We said already last year that it was not aimed at overthrowing the Republic. The internal political regime of Spain does not matter greatly to the invaders, and even if it mattered would not justify the invasion. No. They have come for our mines, for our raw materials, they have come for harbors, for the straits, for naval bases in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. Why is all this? To check the Western powers who are interested in maintaining the present balance and in whose international political orbit Spain has moved for many decades. To check both the British power and the French. That is the reason of the invasion of Spain. And once again it is on our soil that grievances are fought out, grievances in which Spain has no part, and which she has not provoked.

### Why We Went to the League of Nations

Faced with this clearly proven invasion, what did the

Republic do? We found ourselves, in 1936, in a world which was differently organized from that in which the other invasions had occurred: in 1936, in Europe and in the whole world, as a consequence of the terrible lesson of the Great War, a type of common organization had been tentatively outlined. We had been taught, and we believed, that the League of Nations was the juridical expression of a system of rights and obligations, on which henceforward international relationships would be based. So the Republic went to the League; not to ask—there was no need—for the League of Nations to solve the internal problem of the Spanish government, which fell entirely within its own domain, and was easily resolvable by it. We went to the League of Nations so that that assembly of justice, that fortress of peace and guardian of the rights of the peoples, should know that a nation member of the League was being invaded by other nations, at least two of which are also members of the League. We went, and went again, and shall continue to go, for we did not think then, nor have we come to think now, that in order to be heard in the temple of peace one must go in with the noise of war. We did not believe, nor have we come to believe, that in order to receive justice in the assembly of justice, one need enter there with threats of take what is his right by force, if his claim is not admitted; we did not believe, nor have we come to believe, that the League of Nations has been converted into a sort of Congress of Vienna, worked behind the scenes by two or three powers, in which the small countries take the part of walkers-on.

We went to the League of Nations because we believed, and still believe, that the weaker countries, the states of second rank—who are, moreover, the majority—have a role

to play there, which does not consist in counting the hours before they themselves will suffer the same fate as Spain is suffering now. No one will deny that our faith was robust. For when Spain first went with her problem, the League of Nations was not informed that Spain was invaded by other state members of the League: the League did not know. After all, if the League did not know, what could it do? The invasion was quite likely an invention of the reds; there was nothing to do except to find out what was happening. Months have passed and at last the League has discovered that a state member has been invaded by the armies of other states. It has been irrefutably proved, and the League of Nations, after taking note in a solemn resolution that in Spain there are foreign troops making war on the legitimate government, decided to pass the matter on to the Non-Intervention Committee which functions in London. Faced with all this our faith is certainly robust.

#### What Is the Purpose of the London Committee?

And what is this London Committee? What is its purpose?

From the first day on which this Committee saw the light, I have always entertained certain personal reservations with regard to its real aims; reservations which, as the word implies, I have kept to myself and which I still do not judge it opportune to publish. I will keep to the official side of the matter: the London Committee was set up to save peace, by preventing the Spanish conflict from spreading to the whole of Europe, and the way in which the spread of the conflict is to be prevented is by means of a solemn undertaking, a strict and efficacious pledge that all the countries present on the Non-Intervention Committee will not send to Spain either troops, or arms, or technicians, or any

element of war, or abet the war in any manner whatsoever.

Actually, the London Committee is founded on a false idea and acts on an equivocation: hence its results. A false idea, because in the task of safeguarding peace, which can only consist in enforcing respect for right, the London Committee can neither substitute nor replace the League of Nations, for it is not an emanation of that body, it has not the powers of that body, it is not in conformity (and has no reason to be so) with the principles which the Covenant sets forth, it does not apply the League's methods, and it does not have the moral authority which the League of Nations could and does possess. It functions on an equivocation because there are two methods of intervention in a conflict like ours. There is the armed, bellicose, provocative and rapacious intervention of the invading nations, which the League of Nations could always have condemned and prohibited. And there is another method of intervention, juridical and peace-making intervention, through the instruments at the disposal of the League and by its own ways of action, and this intervention is not only licit and permissible, but obligatory and necessary. Such juridical and pacific intervention only the League of Nations could carry out. So that the London Non-Intervention Committee, a substitute for the League of Nations, is not really substituting for it or replacing it, but is drugging and suppressing it. And though the London Committee was set up so that no one should intervene in the Spanish conflict, the only non-intervention which the Committee has secured has been that of the League of Nations.

Those who expect from the London Committee resolutions founded on principles, statements of a general character drawn from juridical principles, are making a grave mis-

take, for the London Committee, by its origin, its composition and its function is not established in the field of International Law and jurisdiction, but rather in the field of politics and government. The London Committee is an instrument formed by delegates of Governments which watch each other, which fear each other, and in it Spain has no voice, and the Spanish conflict is not examined in the light of law and reason and international treaties, but as a question of fact, and in so far as its consequences may affect for better or worse the interests of the five great European powers which are playing the game we all recognize. That is the reality of the situation.

#### Consequences of the Committee's Activities

Naturally, I do not doubt that it is a legitimate thing to take precautions against a possible war. Who could question it? Nor would I wish to doubt the efficacy of this precaution, but since the system is vicious in its origin because it starts from a false idea and functions on an equivocation, the consequences are lamentable. Let us see rapidly what they are.

The London Committee functions. The consequences of this, utterly contrary to the rights of the Spanish Republic, are:

*First.* The Spanish Government is deprived to a large degree of the exercise of its legitimate rights in the sphere of foreign trade.

*Second.* Certain governments, bound by their word, strictly keep not only the pledges which they have made in London, but also those which they were going to make, while others break with effrontery the conven-

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tions and pacts solemnly undertaken in the meetings of the Committee, with the knowledge and forbearance of the rest of the members.

*Third.* A plan to keep watch, which they call a Control Plan, is agreed upon or established, and, in order to annoy no one, they kindly exclude aviation materials from this plan.

*Fourth.* The Control Plan is established, but its operation is delayed week after week, month after month, in order to give time to bring troops, munitions and arms enough (or what they judge to be enough) to overthrow the Government and the Republic.

*Fifth.* The Naval Control begins to function exactly when it is reasonably expected that there are already in Spain as many divisions and planes and tanks and all the other material which the rebels might need in order to win the war.

*Sixth.* The Naval Control comes into operation, and after a few weeks it is discovered with astonishment that all those elements of war, which had been so calmly landed before the Control functioned, are not sufficient to rout us, and that moreover—miraculously—the scheme, contrary to expectation, has not proved a stranglehold on us. And immediately this conviction, founded on a terrible experience, has been reached, the incidents in the Mediterranean begin to happen; and these incidents have no other aim or object save to break down the Naval Control. The Naval Control is broken down by means of the scandalous barbarian act of the bombardment of Almeria, which has gone unpunished, save for the condemnation which the free and justice-loving conscience of the watching world has uttered

against it. But now the world knows also that any fleet can destroy any coast town without suffering any consequences, a living experience which will certainly bring its results.

### Between Right and Force There Is No Compromise Possible

Naval Control is broken up as soon as it is clearly seen that its effects are not sufficient to defeat us, and faced with two positions which seem irreducible on the field of diplomatic action of the London Committee, a scheme of compromise is suggested. We, with our Southern mentality—or, as they used formerly to call it abusively, “Latin,” meaning a mind formed in the court of logic, with an intellectual honesty which would not allow it to admit that two and two make sixteen—we, with that intellectual formation, think that settlements and compromises are possible; that they are even, on occasion, recommended by prudence and good sense as a way between rights which are equal but in conflict with legitimate interests which are in disagreement and which must be reconciled. But settlements and compromises between right and the force which violates that right, between the aggressor and the victim, are not possible. And so there must be one of two solutions: either the right must remain violated, or force must be disposed. There is no compromise.

And in effect, in the plan now submitted to the London Committee there is no compromise or settlement. Justice is trampled on, and force is to a certain extent satisfied. What is proposed is the recognition of belligerent rights to the Spanish Government—for which many thanks!—and to the rebels. And I assert that since the beginning of the war no act of intervention in favor of the rebels has been more

audacious than this proposal to grant belligerent rights. It is not only a distortion of the principles of justice, but, in the political and military spheres, the most effective help which the rebels could hope to receive. And, as a result of the activities of the London Committee, it has come about that twenty or thirty states, the majority of whose governments had never thought of granting belligerent rights to the rebels, now feel themselves gently compelled to make this recognition in common with each other, as if, because they are many, this act of recognition would appear more just, or the terrible aggression which it implies against the justice and the rights of the Republic of Spain might fail in its effect. So this Committee, set up so that no one should interfere in Spain, provokes the intervention of thirty states in favor of the rebels; it brings about the most shameless and decisive intervention which has taken place in the Spanish war until now.

This is the functioning of the London Committee. That is why, from the start, I had so many reservations respecting its aims. I see the course of its operations, which is very evident: first, the Spanish conflict is withdrawn from the cognizance and jurisdiction of the League of Nations, the only body which in the sphere of justice could intervene in it. Once the conflict has been withdrawn from the League and placed on the slippery ground of diplomacy and governmental and political interests, the London Committee, which has been created to refrain from intervention, and which had no right to intervene, intervenes completely and fully. The game is obvious. I think that without wronging anyone and without casting any doubt on the good faith of almost all the members of the London Committee, we may be allowed to say that in London there has been an abuse

of empiricism which has shocked us deeply, and the result is that, although attacking rights, they have not even saved interests.

The agreements which the Non-Intervention Committee has reached in the past, and may reach in the future, are of two kinds. The first are those which refer exclusively to the signatory powers in the agreement, or the proviso or guaranty which they give mutually among themselves in order to set their minds at rest on what they have promised in the fulfilment of their pledged obligations. Since Spain has had no part in the Committee and has pledged nothing, a certain number of agreements of this kind affect neither the activities nor the rights nor the position of the Spanish Government.

#### The Proposal to Give Belligerent Rights to Franco

There is another series of agreements reached in the London Committee which reacts, directly or indirectly, on the position, the rights and the activities of the Government.

One of the chief of these is the proposal to recognize the rebels as belligerents, which recognition is to be compensated for—and this is indeed strange—by the plan of excluding from the Spanish conflict all foreigners. Here we must look for explanations. When the London Committee studies or proposes the removal from Spanish territory of all combatants who are not Spanish nationals, then it is fulfilling its mission. For if the Committee was formed to prevent other peoples from intervening in Spain, it is only natural that its labors should be extended to diminish the results of that invasion if it has already taken place.

And if the Committee is there to prevent more Italians landing in Spain, or more Germans, to prevent more Por-

tuguese crossing the frontier, then it must also see that those who came in by land or sea withdraw in the same way. That is its field of action. But we must know what is meant when they speak of the withdrawal of foreigners.

The term "volunteers" has been adopted. Let the word pass: we all know that it is not a question of volunteers. For us, in connection with the problem of which I am speaking, all those men in Spain are foreigners who, in the month of July, 1936, were not Spanish citizens. The expression cannot be more clear, more final, or more just. The person who in July, 1936, was not a Spanish citizen is included in this repatriation of foreigners. Very well: in the plan which is being studied in the London Committee, if I have read it correctly, it is said that all those will be withdrawn from the Spanish war who are the subjects of any power signatory to the Non-Intervention Agreement. That is good, but it is not enough. It is not enough, for a reason which has already occurred to you. The Sultan of Morocco has not signed the Non-Intervention Agreement, and the subjects of the Sultan of Morocco, whether they live in the French zone or the Spanish zone, are foreigners in Spain. These must be included in the plan of withdrawal of foreigners. If this meets with opposition, then it will be necessary for the European powers who exercise protectorate authority in Africa, or outside of Africa, to admit, solemnly and officially, that the natives of the lands under their protectorates are citizens of the Protector State.

Once the European powers which hold protectorates will say this in a solemn and official manner, with all the consequences which it would imply, then I shall be ready to admit that the Moroccans of the Spanish zone are not foreigners in Spain. But until they say it, no.

What we cannot permit is that this plan of the withdrawal of foreigners should be linked with the recognition of belligerency. The Spanish Government would and will make a sacrifice, diminishing its fighting powers, allowing the fate of those who really came voluntarily to fight under the flag of the Spanish Republic to be equalled with that of the men who came to the other side at the bidding of their governments. Ours are certainly volunteers, for no one called upon them, no one compelled them to come and fight beside us: they obeyed only their own political sentiments.

Those on the other side are not in the same conditions. Yet the Spanish Government is ready to make this sacrifice, provided only that this withdrawal of foreigners shall be scrupulously conducted, with impartiality and truth on all sides. But we cannot tolerate a new farce, a new comedy, a new fiction such as the Control Plan, in this matter of the withdrawal of foreigners.

#### Peace Can Only Be Consolidated by the Re-establishment of Juridical Procedure

The motto of the London Committee is—to preserve peace. An excellent motto. We, too, are ready to adopt it. But it is necessary to know, first, how to estimate correctly the dangers which threaten peace, and how real they are. And to see that among concrete dangers we do not mix fantasies and bogies which simulate a non-existent threat to peace, and, nevertheless, help to give free entry and excuse to doubtful policies. Moreover, we must make it clear that the Republic and all the governments of the Republic desire peace, not only in Spain, but throughout Europe. It is a stupidity to say or believe, and rascality to say it with-

out believing it, that in the Spanish Republic, either the President, or the governments, or the Parliaments or the parties or anybody, have the slightest intention or the slightest interest that the Spanish strife should spread to all Europe. No one in our country could ever have had such a thought, in the first place because of principles and humanity, and in the second place because of our national interest. For the generalization of our struggle throughout Europe would submerge the Spanish cause in a conflict so much wider and vaster, that the resolution of our problem would not be dependent on the facts of right and the political history which we have just explained, but on the general facts of the European conflict.

No, not war, but peace. But we are convinced that the means of consolidating peace can only lie in the re-establishment of juridical procedure, and by leaving on one side the diplomatic empiricism and the obscure treaties or contracts between governments, which up to the present have only served to harm us or to aggravate the situation.

### **We Face the Decoys of Diplomacy with the Armed Force of the Republic**

Meanwhile the havoc of the war in Spain goes on. War is a monster which attaches itself like a parasite to the body of the nation, and once attached it is a hard struggle to get rid of it; of its own account it will not go until it has sucked the last drop of blood from the victim in its grip. The war continues to lay waste our land. But there is a thing which is worse than the war, and that is the moral scandal which is being created by the clandestine warfare other peoples are waging against the Spanish people, which all the world knows and permits. A crime whose parallel

it is hard to find; there has been no political act so criminal since the partition of Poland in the eighteenth century. But I am persuaded, in fact, I have proof of it, that the clear evidence of our cause is being revealed to the world. I am not referring merely—though that would be no small thing—to the friendships which we have in Europe and America, to which we remain faithful and for which we are sincerely grateful. No, I am referring to the free opinion of the world, which, without commitments of any kind, swayed only by the impulses of personal sentiments and the duty of its conscience, has at last discovered the truth of the situation in Spain, and where right and wrong lie. That is already quite an accomplishment.

There is something better yet, which makes up for much lack of understanding abroad and for all the decoys which conflicting interests may place across our path.

What, then? League of Nations? The London Committee? Diplomatic pacts? Propaganda? Good: all this is admirable; but the Army of the Republic, and its determination to bring victory and liberty in Spain, is worth more than all of it. The Army of our Republic!

### The Miracle of the Creation of an Army

At the end of one year, and through much bitterness, injustice, and failure, one thing is certain: the Spanish people and the governments of the Republic, with their helpers, have achieved this miracle: they have brought into being a real Army. We must recognize what this task meant in order to admire it in its true aspects: for on July 16th, 1936, we—that is, the Spanish people—found ourselves deprived of all our forces of action, even attacked by these same forces. We had to undertake our defense against the



enemy within and the enemy without, starting without arms, or leaders or discipline. And from this chaos in one year, in less than one year, has emerged a formidable Army, vast in numbers, well equipped and armed, disciplined and well officered, endowed with the high courage of heroes, which has shown that it can stand up to the enemy and defeat him.

When I hear talk of war plans, of political plans, of diplomatic steps, I know that there are more than half a million Spaniards with bayonets in the trenches, who will not let these hosts pass over them.

To these soldiers of the Republic, to these soldiers of Spain, go our admiration, our gratitude and the assurance that the country counts them her dearest sons. These are they whose task it is to maintain the Republic now at war, to make clear to the world the right of the Republic, and on the day when our Army wins, we shall see how the just cause of the Spanish Republic will shine like the sun of Madrid.

We have been compelled to abandon the pacific political paths which the Republic followed, opening in Spain a road of liberty and of the free interplay of opinions, revealing us to the world as men of peace and friends to our friends. We have been compelled to abandon these paths and resort to force. Force? Then what a force is ours . . . !

The miracle of creating an army does not consist merely in issuing a few decrees, in making plans and establishing grades, or in drilling, or finding guns and munitions. All that has to be done, but that is not the making of an army. The miracle of making an army is inspiring it with a morale, inspiring it with a spirit of calm abnegation, capable of voluntarily laying aside all personal interests in the trenches in anonymous sacrifice. This real and true

miracle will be active not only during the war, but in the times of peace. And therefore, the creation of this moral army of defense of the Republic, with its discipline, its conception of duty, its terrible discovery that life is a very serious thing—this creation and this discovery which the Spanish people has made and stamped with the seal of its own blood, will operate not only in the trenches and during the war, but in peace as well.

### The Morale of the Rear-Guard

If in the trenches and during the war the Spanish people can do this, it will do it also behind the lines. The moral unity of the Army which is fighting for the Republic must transcend and impose itself upon the rear-guard, where there are also many who work and struggle for the Republic. I am not exaggerating when I say that there are still too many frogs croaking in the ponds of the rear-guard, and I think that rather than suppress the frogs it is better to suppress the ponds, so that the frogs have nowhere to live.

But this is the duty of the Government. An example to those behind the lines is offered by the spiritual attitude of the fighters who know, first, what the decision of the war means in itself, as a military problem, and, secondly, the political effects of the war itself and of victory, and they know how to unite the two things perfectly, which is not true of every one behind the lines.

To an enormous extent the morale of the Army of the Republic is not only a schooling for the war, and for the rear-guard during the war, but for the time when the war is over and we are at peace. Do not think that I am planning a policy based on arms, or that we are going to militarize-

the country. No. The great virtue of popular armies is that they are swept along by the patriotic ideals which they are defending in the trenches, and when this ideal has triumphed they lay down their guns and take up their tools or their books and return to the workshop or the workroom, to become once more the peaceful citizens they had always been.

Naturally I am not beguiled by the idea, so frequently held during the Great War, that peace will bring us a kind of Arcadia, that human conditions will be totally changed. There will be, more or less, the same people as before, except for those who have died; but the civic type will emerge from this experience magnificent and purified.

### National Unity

Our nation is not formed (as we might think from certain terrible doctrines and practices of the rebel camp) around any dogmatic issue, whether religious, political, social or economic. Such a concept would be proper only to a fanatical people, who can worship the cross or the crescent, but who cast into outer darkness all who cannot share their belief.

No. I speak of my nation, which is the nation of each one of you, and of our country which is Spain. whose five letters ring in our soul today as a battle cry and tomorrow will ring with jubilation and peace. When I speak of our nation of Spain, I am thinking of all her being, physical and moral, of her fertile and her arid soil, her moving and her quiet landscapes, of her plateaux, her gardens, her orchards, of her different tongues and local traditions and personalities.

I think of all these things, all joined together by the same glorious history. All this constitutes a living moral

being which we call Spain, for which we fight. The war goes on in our land, and all of us, whichever of all the languages in the Peninsula we may speak, are within this national movement. Our aim here, with victory, peace, the broadening of the Republic, and the enlargement of Spanish society, is to raise the name of Spain so high that when a Spaniard leaves his own country he may proudly boast: "We have won liberty and justice for all men."

I have dwelt thus on the national idea, for we are not fighting for abstractions, nor is our war, as they say abroad, one between two conflicting ideologies.

I do not know what the ideology of our adversaries may be. But we are fighting because we wish to continue to be Spaniards, free and respected everywhere. Is that a dangerous ideology? Are we not aiming at the elementary rights of humanity translated into Spanish terms? That is what we are fighting for.

And I end on the hope that here and away from here, in the trenches and in the workshops, in the fields, in the streets, the three-fold shout may be raised, that victorious cry which is translated into the three colors of our national flag: "Long live Liberty! Long live the Republic! Long live Spain!"

*Radio Appeal of National Defense  
Minister Indalecio Prieto to the  
Army, Air and Navy forces on  
July 18, 1937.*

ON THE first anniversary of the military rebellion, the Minister of National Defense desires to address those who are fighting to end this bloody revolt.

The responsibility of those who provoked it is a tremendous one. The thought of what has already happened during these last twelve months should be sufficient to make them repent. Perhaps not because of their disloyalty to a people's political regime which they had sworn to protect and serve, but because of the untold misery which the rebellion has brought to Spain.

They made a big mistake in thinking that there would be a repetition of what happened in September of 1923, and that the rebellious attitude of the army would be sufficient to bring a military dictatorship. Perhaps they thought that they would be able to dominate the popular will by terrorism. That is the reason, no doubt, why the rebels from the beginning committed so many monstrous crimes, without respect to age, sex or number.

They were mistaken. They did not count on the heroic resistance of the people. Two mistakes were made simultaneously during the period when the revolt was being prepared: first, the plotters planned it on the basis of obtaining a quick victory; second, the misjudgment of those who would not believe that the plot was being hatched and

who when forced to give it credence, proclaimed the opinion that the movement would be easy to quell. The cruel year that has just ended clearly shows the significance of those two mistakes, which together have been the determining factors of the terrible situation through which Spain is passing.

With a more realistic conception, the plotters would have been more careful before undergoing such a hazardous venture, and we would have done everything in our power to frustrate it. Thus the fear of failure would have diminished the desire for starting the rebellion and necessary precautions would have ended it before it started or before it acquired enough vitality to continue.

Those of us, who are fighting the rebels in this horrible fight, exercise the legitimate right of self defense. We are not only defending the Republican institutions and the rights of liberty for which they stand, but our own lives, since our enemies, guided by vengeance and cruelty, seek the extermination of those who will not accept their tyrannical ideas.

If we are right from the juridical standpoint, then from the human angle our indomitable resistance has been fully justified.

It can be said that the entire army rose against the nation. Only a handful of army officers remained loyal to the people. The others either betrayed us beforehand or deserted us later, when the fortunes of war gave them the opportunity.

What the people have accomplished during these last twelve months is amazing. They have created out of nothing an army of hundreds of thousands of men, something almost miraculous. It is an army which fights with

no other aid than its formidable will, its magnificent firmness and its complete faith in victory.

On the other hand the rebels, notwithstanding the support of a great part of the army and almost all its leaders, have been forced to ask for foreign aid. The rebel leaders have since taken a secondary place. They take orders from the German and Italian military staffs. The troops of Hitler and Mussolini invade our country, aiding a revolt which at first claimed to be for the independence of Spain. The same irony applies when Moorish troops are brought to defend the Catholic Church with new forms of intolerance and fanaticism.

The rebels have stopped at nothing. They have been cruel to their countrymen, and they have opened the gates of Spain to invaders who for a long time have sought her natural resources, the very resources which can serve as a foundation for the independence of Spain.

Those loyal to the republic are fighting not only rebel Spaniards, but also their Fascist allies, Portugal, Italy and Germany. Thus the war, which started as one for liberty, has turned into a war of independence. We aspire to be independent and free. Liberty is impossible without independence. We shall not be slaves.

In the present struggle, we are the genuine representatives of Spain as against those who have sold her sovereignty. In their anxiety to defeat us, they did not hesitate to sell the nation to Italy and Germany.

Only through our triumph will it be possible to drive Italy and Germany from Spanish soil. Were we to be defeated, the greed of those two countries would turn Spain into a foreign colony. A rebel victory would mean foreclosing the mortgage Italy and Germany already have on

our land. Tyranny, which is always to be despised, becomes a thousand times more hateful when exercised by a foreign power. It is in direct opposition to the spirit of Spain, the mother of nations. The madness of a few Spaniards has placed us in danger of suffering such an insult. But you, our land, sea and air forces will not permit such a humiliation. You are ready to stop Spanish tyranny, despicable as all tyrannies. You will fight to prevent an even more ignominious tyranny . . . the tyranny of Italian and German militarism, which, if successful, would force oppression on Spaniards of both sides alike. Their contempt would be even greater for those who for personal vanity forgot their duty of maintaining the collective and perpetual glory of Spain, which can only be founded on its independence.

War is bitter, war is hard. Resistance, just resistance on our part, means victory. We must have faith in our triumph. We must speed our victory, so as to bring peace. History has placed a heavy load on our shoulders. We fight alone against international fascism, against cowardly indifference, plus the hypocritical complicity of other nations, who have every reason to help us. But what of it? The more hazardous the enterprise, the greater the glory.

Land, sea and air forces: yours will be the glory—win it. You are not fighting for the rights of a dynasty nor for the privileges of a social order. You are fighting for liberty and equality. See that they are established here. See that they gain a foothold in Spain, so that after they have been rooted in Spanish soil, they will be spread throughout the world.

Soldiers of the Republic: The whole world is watching you. History awaits you. Soldiers of the Republic: Forward! Long live free and independent Spain!



*Address of Prime Minister Juan  
Negrin before the League of Na-  
tions Assembly, Sept. 18, 1937.*

MR. PRESIDENT.

THE report by the Secretary-General which we are discussing devotes well-deserved attention to the international repercussions of the struggle in Spain. Allow me today, frankly and sincerely, to lay before the Assembly the opinions of the Spanish Government on this matter.

A military rebellion broke out in Spain exactly fourteen months ago today. It was a purely internal problem. It did not concern, nor does it now concern, the League of Nations.

It was known to us, indeed, that the rebel leaders were in contact with official circles in Germany and Italy. Later, we had overwhelming proof of this, when documents belonging to the political parties involved in the rebellion fell into our hands and gave us the key to the whole conspiracy. But as long as the internal military rebellion was not openly assisted by foreign intervention, the Spanish government had no reason to attempt to interest the world in a problem for which it alone had to find a solution. For the purpose of arriving rapidly at that solution, it relied upon the backing of the whole Spanish people which had just voiced its feelings at a general election held with the object of strangling democratic opinion. In spite of the conditions—so unfavorable to ourselves—in which that election was held (it was controlled by a government openly hostile to the political development that resulted from it), and indeed

on that very account, the new parliamentary majority emerged with an authority far greater than that conferred by a mere superiority of numbers. That fact should be borne in mind. But for foreign intervention, the rebellion would have been crushed in a few weeks. Everyone knows that so well that it has been generally overlooked.

### The Material Help of Germany, Italy and Portugal

Intervention began as soon as surprise tactics had failed. In view of the inability of the rebels to triumph at a single blow over the unexpected resistance of the Republic, Germany and Italy passed from political support of the rebels to armed assistance. No doubt, those countries wished to prove that, for once at least, they knew how to fulfil their international undertakings. Shipments of German and Italian war material were made with ever-increasing frequency. Portugal, having no other assistance to offer, from the outset generously gave the unlimited cooperation of her ports and frontiers, in order, as far as possible, to reduce transport difficulties.

When Spain came to the Assembly last September, the military rebellion was already no longer an exclusively Spanish problem. The Non-Intervention Agreement, which had just been signed, proved that the conflict was of an international nature. Spain came to this platform, not to discuss her internal struggle, but to carry out her duty loyally to the League by frankly proclaiming the existence of a state of war in Europe. "The blood-stained soil of Spain is already, in fact, the battlefield of a world war" were the words used by the representative of my country on that occasion. Everything that has happened since then has proved only too tragically the truth of these words.

### The Injustice of Non-Intervention

In itself, the Non-Intervention Agreement not only constitutes a flagrant infringement of the rights of a sovereign nation but is in flat contradiction to the most elementary rules of International Law.

Moreover, it represents the first concession made, in the case of Spain, to the policy of the *fait accompli*, which has been practiced so successfully by the so-called totalitarian states, thanks to the tolerance of the others.

I am far from denying the exalted motive which led the governments of the Western democracies to take a decision intended to spare Europe the disaster of a general war. On this aspect of the question, as it has repeatedly acknowledged, the Spanish Government fully understands their action.

The Non-Intervention Agreement, however, concluded as it was when the designs of those powers which instigated and associated themselves with the rebellion were already clear—those same powers which withheld their signature until they were certain that the last consignment of their airplanes had reached its destination—merely legalized the *fait accompli* of German and Italian intervention in Spanish affairs. At that time, this intervention had assumed only such proportions as the rebel command then considered sufficient.

From its inception, non-intervention was marred by that stigma. Its defectiveness during the painful existence of the Non-Intervention Committee was responsible for numberless other faults. Unintentionally, its high-minded promoters enhanced the effect of Italian and German intervention by another form of intervention, which consisted in tying the Spanish Government's hands and preventing it from

obtaining freely the war materials necessary to put down and crush the rebellion.

For fourteen months, Europe has been watching the progress of a new form of war which, without even being declared, spreads its horrors over the coveted territory, and this experience has profoundly stirred the masses in every land where temporizing with the aggressor has not destroyed their capacity to react against violations of justice and right. The experience of Spain has sufficed to show every peace-loving country that it is not enough to live without hostile intentions towards any other people, without territorial ambitions or a policy of adventure likely to provoke widespread complications. Such a country knows, too, that to live as a nation desiring liberty and freedom for itself and for others is not enough to shelter it from brutal attacks from those which have raised the cult of violence into a philosophy of government.

#### Our Foreign Policy of Security and Peace

In his memorable speech on July 18 last, President Azaña asked in what way Spain had injured the powers which are invading her. Those powers have had no grounds for complaint in the past. Germany cannot reproach us with being a signatory of the Treaties of Peace. As for Italy, although Spain was one of the fifty nations which supported the Geneva resolutions during the Italo-Ethiopian conflict, the composition and obvious pro-Italian sympathies of the Government in power at that time did not inspire it with any very keen desire to see the covenant very rigorously applied. In support of her belief that she had nothing to fear from foreign invasion, Spain could point to her traditional policy of maintaining the best possible relations with all countries.

When the new regime was established, this attitude found expression in an active and constructive foreign policy based on collective security and peace, as was exemplified by the incorporation of the fundamental charter of the League in the Constitution of the Spanish Republic.

### Foreign Greed

Spain's chances of escaping aggression were lessened through her possession of the Balearic Islands, so much coveted during the Great War as an ideal base for submarine activity; of Ceuta, where well-placed artillery of large caliber, though sufficiently well-camouflaged to escape the notice of visitors, can cover Gibraltar; of the Pyrenean frontier, along which the crushing of the heroic and hard-working Basque people can be combined with the adoption of certain measures in respect to France, which will prove useful for the future; of naval and air bases of the greatest strategic value, together with immense mineral wealth and unsuspected industrial potentialities, adequate to feed the furnaces of war.

Europe has been a witness of this terrible outrage on her civilization and her honor, which Spain has suffered on her own hearth. The blood of those who have fallen in defense of a cause common to all free peoples cries out at this late hour that the nations should make reparation for the errors of a policy which, born of the best intentions in some cases and of the most contemptible in others, has itself been responsible for the present situation. We have reached a point where to persist in maintaining the fiction of non-intervention means to work, consciously or unconsciously, for the prolongation of the war.

## The League of Nations Must Find the Solution

No one can say that the Republican Government, in its endeavor to localize the conflict, has not made wholly unsurpassed sacrifices in the international sphere. Every effort to prevent an extension of the war has met with our most sincere collaboration.

Spain has consistently adhered to the attitude she adopted from the first: she sees in the League the sole system of rights and obligations upon which peace can be founded. She has frequently come before you in the Council and the Assembly, and has invariably made only one request: that the League, when confronted with facts which, if once they were allowed to pass unchallenged, would threaten the very life of this great association, should be saved from the overwhelming moral discredit and collapse that may engulf it at any moment. With this in view, we must all try to find a remedy for the situation, and to prevent the League from following the evil counsellors who believe that the best way of serving it is to close our eyes to the difficulties of the situation.

At its session last May, the Council adopted a resolution which, if carried out, might have constituted a great advance towards making non-intervention effective. I refer to the withdrawal of the non-Spanish combatants. Some months before, the Republican Government had declared itself in favor of that measure, which was merely a logical consequence of non-intervention. Moreover, the withdrawal of the non-Spanish combatants would have brought the war to a speedy end.

For more than six months, the original rebel army has ceased to be of any concern to the Spanish Republic. Talk is heard of telegrams received from abroad announcing,

for example, the departure from Italian ports of fresh military contingents, but nothing is heard of the rebel command or the new recruits obtained by the insurgents. A simple Spanish peasant in loyalist territory is more likely to be heard making a more or less successful attempt to pronounce the names of the Italian generals commanding the army in the North than mentioning those of the former Spanish generals who now take orders from them.

The war of invasion has overshadowed the civil war. It is a truly moving sight to witness the feelings of joy, so typical of the sensitive Spanish nature, shown by the deserters from rebel territory, who are reaching our trenches in ever-increasing numbers. It is as if they were returning to their native country from a foreign land. Their hatred of the invader is generally the motive which prompts them to risk all rather than remain slaves to those who have seized their country on the pretext of freeing them from evils they themselves had never known.

In that, the deserters are not alone. Hundreds of prisoners frequently ask to fight under the Republican flag. While some of them may at first be ignorant of the facts, a few weeks spent among us are enough to convince them that so-called "Red Spain" does not bear the slightest resemblance to the hell which had been described to them. Their impressions are exactly the same as those received by the Duchess of Atholl and the Dean of Canterbury during their visit. In these circumstances, and in view of the Spanish Government's policy, which always aims, not at destroying the Spaniards on the other side, even if they are in the firing-line, but at bringing them over into our midst and winning them to the cause of Spain, the withdrawal of non-Spanish combatants would unquestionably have brought the war to an end within a couple of months.

The resolution passed by the Council in May aroused a feeling of satisfaction and optimism but, within forty-eight hours, the interventionist states had found a means of torpedoing it. The *Deutschland* incident and the subsequent bombardment of Almeria absorbed the attention of those who, in the face of each new act of aggression, thought of nothing but how they could best calm the fury of its perpetrators. The unspeakable infamy of the destruction of Almeria produced the desired effect. In its impatience to secure the consent of the aggressor states to take part in a new system of control, the London Committee allowed the question of the withdrawal of volunteers to slip through its fingers.

These volunteers are such only in name, being, in point of fact, non-Spanish combatants, though attempts have often been made to include them erroneously with the genuine volunteers under a common term. The only volunteers are those fighting in our ranks. Driven from home, as most of them have been, by the fascist terror, and convinced that the cause of Spain is that of world freedom, their true worth was apparent from the day when they found that they needed all their enthusiasm and determination to overcome the innumerable obstacles which were placed in the way of their departure and of their arrival in our midst.

Facing them are the Italian divisions, the German artillerymen, aviators and tank drivers, and the Moorish contingents, all of whom have been ordered to Spain or recruited through hunger or compulsion from the Protectorate zone.

There you have the distinction between the two types of assistance. Simple-minded persons, who, when the support given to the rebels by Germany and Italy was denounced,



remarked that the Republican Government also had its friends, forgot only one thing, namely, the different character of the two kinds of friendship.

### An Italo-German Pact

The friendship of Germany and Italy for the rebels is simply the outcome of a pact of occupation. In exchange for German and Italian assistance, the rebels have surrendered their country. Germany and Italy come to Spain not to help the rebels but to stay here. Only the incorrigible credulity of those who refuse to understand what Spain means to Germany and Italy in their plan of aggression in Europe can maintain the illusion that, even if the rebels were victorious, it would be possible, by solving their financial difficulties, to snatch them from the clutches of their masters or to seduce the latter by the promise of some other compensation.

### The Humanization of War

By way of contrast with its complaints of the international treatment it has received, the Government of the Republic wishes to take this opportunity of expressing its profound and sincere gratitude to all the governments and private persons who have helped in one form or another to lessen the sufferings which foreign aggression has imposed upon the Spanish people. In its anxiety to make its own contribution to humanize the war the Government of the Republic, although not bound by any international undertaking to observe the right of asylum, has respected it in practice. Particularly appreciative as it is of the ties uniting it with the American Republics, the Spanish Govern-

ment now reiterates its intention, in addition to the facilities already granted, of finding a speedy solution, such as will satisfy all for the problem of the refugees in embassies and legations.

### The Non-Recognition of Occupation by Force

Our faith in the League is evident and as unshakable as the resistance of our people. Every manifestation of the will to peace finds in us a sure and enthusiastic ally. With the pride of an elder sister, Spain greeted the declaration made by the South American Republics on August 3, 1932, in connection with the Chaco dispute. This declaration ratified the decision taken by the Assembly in March of that year, and lent new power to Article 10 of the Covenant. Both it and the Saavedra Lamas Pact, the second article of which repudiates "the validity of the occupation or acquisition of territory obtained by force of arms" are evidence of the complete and happy agreement existing between us and the sister Republics of America as regards our attitude to international relations.

### The Failure of "Non-Intervention"

It was my especial intention once again to review the situation as a whole and to explain the attitude taken by Spain as a Member of the League from the time when the Spanish conflict became an international problem owing to foreign intervention. This I wished to do before pointing out to the Assembly where its true responsibility lies.

It would be difficult for the Assembly not to admit one fact which overshadows the present situation as a whole and which the Assembly itself can hardly ignore—the complete failure of non-intervention.

That policy arose out of the *false hypothesis that, if the Spanish Government were allowed to exercise its unquestionable right to buy arms, this would lead to war. All the mistakes of non-intervention are to be traced to that perverted conception.* The Spanish Government has never believed that a policy based upon respect for treaties and international obligations could lead to war. We have always considered that the greatest risk of the Spanish Civil War becoming a European conflagration lay, and still lies, in the fact that International Law, instead of being applied, has been sacrificed to the demands of those who have made blackmail by war an instrument of their foreign policy.

The fact that the Spanish Government was deprived of its elementary right to buy arms and ammunition in order to defend itself against rebels did not prevent non-intervention from being an ironical fiction, nor did it diminish the risk of an extension of the war. On the contrary, that risk has been greatly increased. A civil war which could have been rapidly brought to an end has become a defensive war to protect the territorial integrity and the political independence of Spain.

This is no time to ask us for "irrefutable" proofs, apart from those we have mentioned and those we intend to mention. The fact of invasion is admitted and proclaimed with the utmost cynicism by those who have themselves violated international order.

#### The Attitude of Hitler and Mussolini

If anyone is still so naive as to be misled, let him recall Herr Hitler's speech at Nuremberg, in which he said: "Great Britain may or may not care whether Spain becomes a desert, but for us Germans who have no overseas pos-

sessions, Spain is one of the principal conditions of our existence. . . . France and Great Britain are alarmed lest Spain be conquered by Italy or Germany. We, on the other hand, are concerned lest she may be conquered by communism."

These words are sufficiently enlightening, as also is the fact that, when the Italian divisions entered Santander, the rebel leader sent a message to the Duce, expressing "the sincerest admiration for their courage and ability in the battle, in which they made a rapid advance," and that the Duce replied: "I am particularly happy that the Legionary troops, during ten days' hard fighting, have had their part in the splendid victory of Santander, and that the help they rendered has received the desired recognition in your telegram of today. This close brotherhood in arms is the guarantee of final victory, when Spain and the Mediterranean will be freed from every menace to our common civilization." If still more direct, though less weighty, proofs are called for, one need only glance at the articles published in the Italian press openly exulting in the participation of Italian troops in the military operations in the North of Spain.

For example in the *Popolo d'Italia*, Signor Mussolini's organ, we read of "the Italian generals who led the Legionary troops to victory in Spain, North of Santander." In another newspaper, we may read of those on the Aragon front. Similar cases occur every day.

Every cinema in Geneva gives Italian newsreels showing those same troops singing "*Giovinetta*" as they enter the towns of Northern Spain.

No one can seriously believe that the victory or defeat of communism is at stake in Spain. True to her character, the

essence of her constitution and the unshakable determination of her people and Government, Spain, once victory is achieved, will march along the path marked out by her independent and sovereign will.

### The London Committee

I do not wish on this occasion to criticize the London Committee. We foresaw that it was doomed to failure through the activities of those states that had joined it merely to wreck its decisions and reduce it to impotence. That it has now, for all practical purposes, ceased to exist is proved by the fact that throughout the month of August, when Italian aggression in the Mediterranean became most barefaced, the Committee did not consider it necessary to hold a single meeting. Non-intervention is dead indeed, but its unburied corpse is responsible for an artificial atmosphere in international circles. It may be that yesterday's announcement of the withdrawal of the Anglo-French naval patrol from the Spanish coasts will constitute the last step but one in its official burial.

### New Contingents of Italians for Spain

The forces of aggression, protected as they have been by this fiction, are preparing to strike at Spain what they consider must be the final blow. On many occasions in the past, we have prophesied the departure of fresh Italian contingents before this actually took place. Today, speaking with a full sense of responsibility, we say that Italy is at this moment transporting to Spanish territory an army twice as large as that which she at present maintains there. Let none plead ignorance on this point in the future! Due warning has now been given.

## Our Position

Our position in regard to the London Committee and the Nyon Conference is clear. We are not opposed to regional pacts, provided they embrace all the countries interested. The first place, however, we give to the Covenant. Our repeated requests to the League have been based upon our belief that it is the League's duty to ensure that every country should fulfil its international obligations arising out of the Covenant.

### The Principles That the Spanish Government Affirms

Now that the Assembly knows the facts of the present situation, it cannot this time fail to consider the problem fully and to take up a definite attitude.

The Government of the Republic considers that it has the right to make the following requests:

1. That the aggression of Germany and Italy in Spain be recognized as such.
2. That, in consequence of this recognition, the League examine as rapidly as possible the means by which that aggression may be brought to an end.
3. That full rights once more be given to the Spanish Government freely to acquire all the war material it may consider necessary.
4. That the non-Spanish combatants be withdrawn from Spanish territory.
5. That the measures to be adopted for security in the Mediterranean be extended to Spain, and that Spain be granted her legitimate share of them.

For this reason, and in view of the fact that the Sixth

Committee will be called upon to examine this question, we request the Assembly to adopt the following resolution:

“The Assembly,

“Decides to refer to the Sixth Committee the chapter of the report on the work of the League of Nations relating to the situation in Spain and cognate questions.”

The Spanish people are closely watching today to see what decision the Assembly will take; and the whole world is watching too.

*Extract from Alvarez del Vayo's  
appeal to the Assembly of the  
League of Nations, September 27,  
1937, as published by the League  
of Nations Journal of September  
28, 1937.*

**M** ALVAREZ DEL VAYO (Spain) reminded the Committee that in his speech to the Assembly the head of the Spanish Government had formulated certain proposals which he desired to be referred to the Sixth Committee for their consideration. Those proposals were to the effect that:

1. There should be a formal recognition of the fact that Spain had been the object of aggression on the part of Germany and Italy.

2. That, in virtue of such recognition, the League should forthwith consider what means should be employed to put an end to the aggression.

3. That the right of the Spanish Government to acquire such war material as it might deem necessary should be restored completely.

4. That combatants other than Spanish nationals should be withdrawn from Spanish territory.

5. That any safety measures that might be adopted in the Mediterranean should be extended to Spain and that Spain should have the share in those precautionary measures to which she was entitled.

The first of these proposals went to the heart of the



problem; which was the fact that a State Member of the League was the victim of aggression on the part of two other states, one of which was also a Member of the League.

The speaker reminded the Committee that as long ago as September, 1936, the Spanish Government had established beyond doubt the fact that it was the victim of aggression—in a note addressed on September 15, 1936, to the Powers signatory to the Non-Intervention Agreement. In that note the Spanish Government had denounced a number of happenings which “taken together were evidence of the existence of armed assistance to the rebels and which were incompatible with the rules of International Law as well as the obligations incumbent upon States Members under the Covenant of the League.”

Having described in that communication a state of affairs which meant that the Non-Intervention Agreement amounted in practice to a blockade of the legitimate Government, the Spanish Government had asked that the embargo on the export of arms and munitions to its territory should be raised, while the supplying of any war material to the rebels should be strictly prohibited.

More than a year had passed since then. In the course of those twelve months the aggression had been intensified. On November 18, 1936, Germany and Italy had announced the recognition of the rebels. Thus a State Member of the League (Italy) had created a precedent the importance of which could not be exaggerated: recognition as the legitimate Government, in another country which was also a Member of the League, of a handful of traitors who had been themselves supplied by Italy with all the arms and airplanes considered to be necessary for the success of their undertaking.

When the heroic resistance of Madrid upset the calculations of the German and Italian general staffs—which had now replaced the military rebels in the command of the war operations—and when armed assistance on land and in the air had shown itself to be insufficient, the aid they supplied began to extend to the naval sphere.

M. del Vayo called to mind the attack on the Spanish cruiser *Cervantes* on November 22, 1936, by a submarine “of unknown nationality,” and also acts of aggression against the merchant vessel *Soton* and the detention of two ships, *Aragon* and *Maria Junquera*, by German warships. All these facts had been duly established and placed on record in a telegram forwarded on January 6, 1937, by the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Secretary-General of the League.

There were hundreds of Italian and German aircraft operating regularly over Spanish territory, and to these were added squadrons dispatched from their countries of origin to bring about the destruction of Spanish cities. Once they had fulfilled their task of aggression, these airplanes would return home.

But, if that were not enough, you had then open invasion, in the matter of Guadalajara.

More than two thousand official documents belonging to Italian units operating on that front had fallen into the hands of the Spanish Government. These documents were assembled in the White Book, and the substance of them was reproduced in the Special Supplement No. 165 of the *Official Journal*. They constituted a complete proof of aggression and one which, in the opinion of the Spanish Government, should have sufficed to make it clear that, if the League committed itself to a pronouncement following

the Spanish Government's demand for a declaration that there had been aggression, it was not taking any unconsidered step.

The Spanish Government had sent another note on January 8, 1937, through the United Kingdom Government as its intermediary with the Non-Intervention Committee. In that note, the Spanish Government had given a warning that the period of weeks between their acceptance in principle of the control scheme and its application would be utilized for the creation of a condition of *fait accompli*.

On the basis of information from reliable sources, the head of the Spanish Government had announced in the Assembly that Italy was making preparations in these very days to dispatch yet another army corps to Spain in order to overcome the wonderful resistance of the Asturian troops. Subsequent impressions had only confirmed these reports.

The speaker recognized that the Council's resolution of May 29 on the withdrawal of volunteers had been in itself an admirable thing, and if it had been carried into effect it would have led without any doubt to an early conclusion of hostilities. The one vital condition, however, was that the States concerned should not be allowed to hold things up by a policy of delay. The Council itself had manifestly appreciated that this was the fundamental condition in saying that it "expressed the firm hope that its action would be followed up at once by steps which would assure the speediest possible application of the principle of withdrawal from the struggle of all non-Spanish combatants." Essential words in that resolution were "the speediest possible application." But reality had demonstrated that it was not exactly the speed of its actions which had brought the London Committee off the rails.

One fatal error had been committed by the London Committee and by many other people as well. It was a mistake to which they had frequently called attention. The fact that it persisted made it necessary to strip it once and for all of any appearance of justification. What M. de Vayo was referring to was the practice, when dealing with the Spanish question, of talking of "the two sides," Valencia and Burgos—or Salamanca—as if they were synonymous expressions for capital cities of equal standing, under the sway of two governments, neither of which should ever be given unilateral satisfaction because of the risk that the other one would be indignant.

M. del Vayo declared that, for a State Member of the League, there could be no other Government in Spain but that which he represented, on pain of assuming responsibility for similar violation of International Law and the Covenant to that which had been committed by the states that had recognized the rebels. He felt that this was established beyond any question. And they would all understand one another very much better if, instead of speaking of Valencia and Salamanca—or Burgos—they spoke of Spain, Germany and Italy.

M. del Vayo then cited German and Italian sources of information constituting conclusive proof of aggression against Spain.

The speaker then went on to assert that neither Germany nor Italy nor the two of them combined would dare to start a European war today if the common determination of democratic countries resolved to maintain peace were demonstrated betimes. In a year or two, it would be too late, and those who knew this best were, of course, the trouble-makers themselves. That was why they were redoubling their

efforts to intimidate those in other countries who would never have tolerated so much temporizing on the part of their governments if they were not afraid that a more virile policy might not force them to go into the firing-line themselves.

But if they left things to take their course as they had been doing up to now, public opinion in the pacific and democratic countries would one day rise up in anger against those who had brought upon them that state of impotent humiliation, for lack of the clear-sightedness or the courage to discern behind the threat of a general war, which was constantly exploited by the so-called totalitarian states—which was indeed the pivotal factor of their whole foreign policy—the most colossal piece of blackmail that history had ever known.

In the case of those regimes, there could be no going into a European war with soldiers who detested the very system of government and society for the glory of which they were asked to face death.

M. del Vayo said he thought there was only one means of checking the disturbers of peace in their mad course. That was to put an end to this policy of temporizing with the aggressor and to get back resolutely to the *terrain* of International Law. Such a suggestion might perhaps be regarded by some of them as the height of folly, but there were members of the League who were anxious to continue their faith in it, who were now coming to feel that they had practically expended their capacity for faith in the attempts to appease and conciliate the enemy when they should have placed their faith in the service of their common obligations. There were some states who in melancholy mood seemed to regard the Covenant as a sort of

breviary of collective security which did not belong to this world, and with a sort of Christian resignation they seemed to imagine that, since there was nothing to be done against the aggressor, they had much better fraternize with him.

M. del Vayo said he was sorry but he could not share this feeling of rapt ecstasy. Spain would never be among those who could approve of or acquiesce in the League slipping into the abyss towards which its enemies were pushing it or, indeed, those among its friends who, keeping their tender feeling for its impotence, were not prepared to do anything useful to strengthen its authority. If the hopes that had been cherished in early days, the hopes that some of them still cherished, that through the League the defense of peace was going to become a profound reality, had been disappointed so far—for reasons with which they were all familiar—at least let them avoid the opprobrium of the League appearing before the world as a cloak for the aggressor.

The identification of the aggressor, the definition of the aggressor, that was, they should remember, one of the principal objects of the League in happier times. But there you had a case, the case of Spain, where the aggressor defined himself.

Faced by the incontestable facts of aggression, the least that the Assembly could do, after having duly substantiated the fact of aggression, was to terminate a situation in which the aggressor had a free hand for the perpetration of his crime, while the action of the other party in the way of legitimate defense was obstructed by obstacles and difficulties on every side.

If the League of Nations was not in a position to afford the state victim of aggression that active assistance to which it was entitled under the Covenant, let it not commit, at any

rate, the iniquity of preventing that state from acquiring the means of providing for its own defense.

M. del Vayo asked the Committee to consider what had been the outcome during the Covenant and International Law? The result had been total failure; and not only that—however cruel and unfair what he was going to say might seem to those whose intentions had really been through that policy to ensure peace—the non-intervention policy had actually placed a premium upon aggression. It had meant the prolongation of the civil war.

The Spanish Government had no desire to persist in these strictures on the non-intervention policy which might indeed appear superfluous since that policy had been overtaken by events. After the speeches on the platform of the Assembly by the delegates of France and the United Kingdom about non-intervention, it might have been thought that they should say no more, if they had not reason to fear that in certain quarters a desperate effort was being made to blend with the funeral music sounds which seemed to suggest hopes of the resurrection of the corpse. The new line of policy which had made its appearance now seemed to be threatened. Since, then, there were some people who still claimed that non-intervention had preserved peace, the speaker added, he was obliged once again to repeat the Spanish Government's point of view: the fulfilment of the obligations of the Covenant would not only have avoided the perpetual perils of a long period of international irresponsibility during which States were continually on the edge of the precipice and none, except the aggressor states, seemed to realize where they were being led, but also it would have made it possible for the Spanish war to have been brought to an end in less than two months.

Obviously a statement like this would be of no more value than any other, if he could not invoke on its behalf the rivers of blood that had been shed in Spain as a direct result of that fatal policy; the continuous chain of violations of agreements reached outside the Covenant of which he had only given a few examples, but of which he had on that table, ready to meet any objections, a collection of conclusive proofs; the accumulation on such a scale of outrages and attacks in the Mediterranean that the protagonists of non-intervention, when their own vital interests were directly threatened, were forced to return to the path of collective security, even if only in an unsatisfactory and incomplete manner and with the manifest injustice of excluding the Mediterranean power which was suffering the most from the attacks of Italian ships, and finally a mood of aggressiveness on all sides rapidly extending from one continent to another in a sort of frantic race to see which of them could go further, in the Far East or in Europe, in the application of the doctrine of might is right.

A year of non-intervention had in fact gone a long way towards creating a situation so admirably defined by President Roosevelt in a recent speech: "Fear stalks all over the world; the fear of aggression, invasion, revolution and death casts its shadow over the whole earth."

M. del Vayo said he realized that it would be no easy thing for those who had honestly hoped for results from the non-intervention policy now to abandon it; it might be hard also for those who, without being concerned as to whether it was likely to be effective or not in avoiding war, had welcomed it because of its appearance of impartiality between two ideologies; not to take sides would no doubt be an admirable attitude if there were not, in the present



instance, something which ruled neutrality out of court.

In the presence of the Covenant neutrality was impossible. Either the Covenant was to be accepted and obeyed or it was to be ignored and betrayed. Every Member of the League was perfectly entitled to seek to stay outside the conflict between two ideologies, even though, as had been sufficiently demonstrated in the case of Spain, the ideological formula was nothing more than a screen, and a transparent screen it was, behind which the aggressor went ahead with his nefarious plans. There was one ideology, however, common to all of them represented there—the ideology of the Covenant.

Did not the obligations of the Covenant exist for the States represented in that Committee, which maintained normal relations with the Spanish State? Could anyone deny that the sending of arms, munitions and indeed entire divisions to the rebels constituted a scandalous violation of International Law, and the repeated public declaration of the Italian and German Governments on their policy in Spain constituted a threat to the territorial integrity and political independence of Spain? And did that not mean that in the circumstances for states to continue to prevent the Spanish Government from exercising its indisputable right of buying arms and munitions to meet the invasion was, willy-nilly, to constitute themselves aiders and abettors of the aggression committed by Germany and Italy and, moreover, completely incompatible with the obligations to which they were committed under Article 10 of the Covenant?

In the discussion on the Report of the Secretary-General, some speakers had at last decided to call a spade a spade. The enemies of peace had been unmasked. Now that the Assembly was called upon to take a decision on the question

put to it by the Spanish delegation, surely the Assembly would not cloak the aggressors, be an accomplice in their mischief. If it did so, the damage to its prestige would be irreparable.

M. del Vayo said he would like to put the following concrete question, addressing himself particularly to two Governments which had taken the initiative for non-intervention; in view of the extent and gravity of the continual violation of the Non-Intervention Agreement—how serious a violation might be seen from the fact that in spite of the agreement there had been a real Italian army of occupation in Spain—did the French and United Kingdom Governments consider that the Non-Intervention Agreement should continue to be the International Law applicable to the situation in Spain?

All that he had said was an indication of the attitude taken up by the Spanish delegation. His country maintained the five proposals set forth in the speech by M. Negrin, first delegate of Spain to the Assembly; these constituted essential elements for the solution of the problem. And those five proposals might be reduced to one single demand: that it was necessary and urgent, once the so-called non-intervention system had perished from inanition, to return to International Law.

What the Assembly could not fail to do, unless Members were to close their eyes to the evidence and indeed imperil the very *raison d'être* of the League, was to recognize and admit that the exceptional legal regime established under the name of non-intervention had been, and was today, entirely ineffectual, and therefore to proclaim that Members of the League were bound in their relations with the Spanish Government to cleave to "the firm establishment of the

understandings of International Law as the actual rule of conduct among Governments"—in the words of the Preamble to the Covenant.

The Spanish Government did not think there was any need to ask for more than this, but it would not and could not be satisfied with less.

Either the Assembly was going to identify itself with the attitude of the aggressor states who held their aggression, apparently, to be compatible with the system of non-intervention and of the Covenant, or else the Assembly must acknowledge that non-intervention was a mere fiction, and in that case it must logically recommend the restoration, to the benefit of Spain, of the "understandings of International Law" and the prescriptions of the Covenant itself.

That was in a word the dilemma with which they had been put face to face by the proposals of the first delegate of Spain to the Assembly. The Spanish Government and the Spanish people, which were undergoing such tremendous sacrifices, would await with confidence the decisions of the Assembly. But let no one be under any illusion: the decisions which the Assembly would take were likely to affect fundamentally the vital interests of the League of Nations as a whole, and consequently might well determine the fate of the supreme moral values of humanity and the future of the peace of the world.

*Address of Diego Martinez Barrio,  
President of the Cortes, at the  
opening of the session on October  
1, 1937.*

DEPUTIES:

**A**T THE OPENING of the Cortes, let us first salute our land, sea and air forces, which are heroically defending the Spanish Republic and our national independence.

The entire nation is watching with emotion the supreme effort of a people who are showing, as previously in their history, the greatness of their heritage, their capacity for sacrifice, and their indomitable will to defend their independence.

This greeting of Parliament to our brave fighters is also the greeting of the whole nation, for in it is represented every faction found in democratic states . . . all Spain is here. Even those organizations whose numerical representation does not correspond with their actual strength have the opportunity to be heard.

The essential characteristic of representative government is the opportunity for bringing out differences of opinion through debate. But I know I am not deceiving myself when I say that whatever our differences may be, even the most serious, they will be forgotten when we consider these two historic facts: that we are fighting for the independence of our country, and for the maintenance of Spain's right to guide her own destiny.

Let us not forget that we are not only deputies, but also Spaniards, and that we must equal the heroism of our militia. They are building with their lives the new Spain. The least they can ask of us—yes, demand of us—is that we do nothing to interfere with their efforts.

*Abstract of an address by Manuel Portela Valladares, leader of the Centrist Party, before the Cortes at Valencia, October 1, 1937.*

DEPUTIES:

THESE are grave and solemn moments, so solemn and grave that we cannot help but be stirred by them. That is why I will speak to your hearts.

This Parliament is the symbol of the Republic, it is Spain's legal title to life. My first duty to you and to the world is *to confirm the legitimacy of your powers*. I possess two qualifications entitling me to this: I was defeated in the elections and I presided over the government under which they were held. That is my testimony so that it will be written in the Parliamentary Record and remain there as irrefutable evidence in the history of Spain.

Of course, upon reviewing what happened at that time, I want to say something which was not necessary to say then. *I handed the government to the Popular Front, because I was convinced—as were the Rightists—of its victory. The members of my Cabinet agreed with me that it was our duty to hand over our powers immediately, so we resigned on February 19.*

In a democracy, a government which lacks the confidence of Parliament has no right to exist, and when the people speak as they spoke then, they and only they are right. To remain in power, it would have been necessary for me to

declare martial law. *To have declared martial law at the time would have meant the first step in treacherously opening the door to an illegal government.*

There may be ranging shades of political ideologies, but I want to have recorded here my support and allegiance to the Government. In similar circumstances I would always give my support to the Government in power. Among other reasons, because it represents the General Staff—our country in a state of war.

I have faith in the future. I came to fulfil my duty, confident of the nobility and generosity of the Spanish people. I have not been mistaken, and as I stand before you, I wish to state that the conviction is growing abroad that the Republican Government is going to win. Without the Republic there can be no Spain. I also want to tell you that I have been amazed and astounded by the activity and enthusiasm I have observed among you.

I feel that in the international situation a great change is taking place favorable to the cause of the Republic. We are on the eve of an evolution. We cannot ask foreign governments to change overnight. I believe that the noble and generous closing remarks of Premier Negrin will add to a better international understanding. Peace for all Spaniards, and peace for the new Spain that will arise from this Parliament.

It has given me a great and profound satisfaction to have been with you today and to see our beloved Spain on the verge of a serious and real reconstruction.

## APPENDIX

THE FIGURES given below are taken from the Record of the Spanish Cortes, January-February, 1936, issue (*Boletín de Información Bibliográfica y Parlamentaria*, Num. 19). The figures cover the period up to February 25, 1936, and do not include the elections in Cuenca and Granada, originally cancelled as illegal, or the result of the official recount. That is to say, the Popular Front and Government Parties are credited with less votes than shown in the final tabulation:

*Electoral Census: 13,700,000*

*Rightist Parties:*

Right Parties .....	3,423,450	
Catalonian Lliga .....	487,920	3,911,370
	_____	

*Parties Supporting the Government:*

Left Parties .....	4,255,550	
Center .....	363,620	
Basque Nationalists .....	132,270	4,751,440
	_____	_____

Total votes polled .....	8,662,810	
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*Number of Deputies Elected to Parliament  
and Their Affiliations*

*Leftist Parties:*

Socialists .....	89	
Left Republicans .....	83	
Union Republicans .....	34	
Left Catalonians .....	22	
Communists .....	14	
Others .....	18	
Various Center Parties .....	66	326

*Rightist Parties:*

Spanish Confederation of Autono- mous Right Parties (CEDA) .....	96	
Catalonian Lliga .....	12	
Monarchists .....	14	
Nationalists .....	2	
Others .....	23	147
Total .....		473

NOTE: At the October 1, 1937, session of the Cortes, Manuel Portela Valladares, head of the Centrist Party, as well as the Conservative Republican leaders, Miguel Maura and Sola Canizares, were among those who joined in giving the Negrin government a vote of confidence. Taking part in this expression also, were Guerra del Rio, one of the leaders of the Lerroux Radical Republican Party, and Florensa, of the Catalonian Lliga, deputy from the Province of Lerida, whose respective parties are classed in the above list with the Rightists, thus showing that the Loyalist Government is receiving support from some members of that group.

