

# SPANISH INFORMATION

## SERVICE *texts* and documents

A WEEKLY RÉSUMÉ OF OUR DAILY "SERVICIO ESPAÑOL DE INFORMACION"

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The Spanish People's Front, the symbol of Spanish Democracy, wish to testify to the people of England their gratitude for the tremendous interest they are taking in our cause.

## Message from the Spanish People's Front to the People of England

The Spanish People's Front, the symbol of Spanish Democracy, wish to testify to the people of England their gratitude for the tremendous interest they are taking in our cause. The Spanish People's Front know very well that the sympathy shown to them by the people of England is little by little opening the eyes of the World to an understanding of the real meaning of our struggle and of the immense responsibility the democratic nations have taken upon themselves by the way in which they have abandoned us. The people of England, like other peoples, are free of blame. It is sufficient for us to know that we have been properly understood by the mass of the English people for our faith to be strengthened and for our enthusiasm to increase. We are very concerned, as is only logical, with the outcome of our struggle. But we are even more concerned that the peoples should uphold our cause, although we regret that, for notorious difficulties, they cannot help us in the necessary degree. We desire victory and we shall struggle for this. But we wish our triumph to have the support of the free peoples and the approval of the democratic masses. Therefore the support of the people of England is more than comforting to us and strengthens our unbending determination to conquer. In view of the fact that we wish to conquer and because we desire that to-morrow our victory may mean brotherhood, confidence and friendship between ourselves and all peoples, the support of these peoples to-day forms a compromise which binds us as strongly as moral ties, which for us are of the greatest value.

It is surprising that the old nations, which by force of hard and cruel struggles have throughout history proved themselves symbols of our civilisation, should not clearly understand why the Spanish Republic, which took upon itself the task of transforming our country by lawful methods, is sustaining this struggle, which was begun by people who wished to prevent Spain from attaining a higher standard of living and which has since been converted into a war of invasion.

Spain was a country where misery alone thrived. All our soldiers have experienced the terrible cruelty of the condition in which they were held. For the majority of them, facing death at the front is far less of a martyrdom than their former way of living. It was harder to win work in order to live than it is to win positions in a battle. The only crime of the Spanish Republic was that it wished Spain to cease being a feudal state and to attain standards of justice which other peoples enjoy. This the people of England achieved centuries ago and so did the people of France at the time of their Revolution. But even in order to achieve such a noble end we did not resort to violence. It was our enemies who resorted to violence. Unable to defeat us, they had to have recourse to other nations and preferred to sell their country rather than to tolerate the fact that it should be made more liveable. There is only one crime, if any, of which the Spanish people may be accused. Namely, that of having waited so many centuries to put an end to their wretched condition. The people of England did not wait so long and for that reason they are to-day in the vanguard of civilisation. Faithful to their traditions, the English people understand us, encourage us and, as far as possible, support us. And this encouragement, which for us is an inducement, is proof of the fact that we are fighting for

justice, that we are sacrificing ourselves for the triumph of Democracy and that we are serving a desire for freedom. Our respect for these ideals is shared not only by the people of England, but by the peoples of the whole world.

We do not wish to say a single word regarding the difference of understanding between the people of England and their Government. On this point our respect is absolute, and it is enough for us that the difference exists. Time will tell who understood this problem with most foresight. If we are to say anything we can say, because it is permissible, that we are more interested in not disappointing the English people than in not disappointing their Government.

The people of England place their trust in our struggle and long for our victory. And we shall fight until we achieve that victory which is so indispensable for us, so advantageous for the permanent interests of England and so necessary for the peace of the world.

We are now undergoing a very grave stage in the fight for our country. Italy and Germany are attempting to defeat us in a decisive manner and have launched an unmasked attack to crush us. They are not only attacking us with troops disguised as volunteers, but also with a tremendous quantity of war material which increases a hundredfold the damage and injury to our independence. In the international robbery organised by fascism it is now Spain's turn to be the booty. They are attacking Spain with the same greed with which they attacked Ethiopia and later Austria. With equal savagery they will to-morrow attack other weak countries in the hope that the turn of the more powerful countries will come. Spain is merely an episode in what is being prepared, and a foretaste of what threatens the world in the future.

But Spain can cease to be an episode and can be made to represent the definite barrier which will put a stop once and for all to this criminal aggression. All the lives of Spanish democrats are subordinated to this goal. There is not a single Spaniard who will not proudly offer his life for the peace of Europe and of the whole world. Happen what may and however difficult the situation may become for us we are determined to fight. Our responsibility obliges us to and we are encouraged in our struggle by the people of England, to whom we express our deepest gratitude.

The message is signed by the following Parties and Trade Union bodies:

Republican Union Party  
Left Republican Party.  
Socialist Party.  
Communist Party.  
General Union of Workers.  
National Confederation of Labour.  
Iberian Anarchist Federation.

Barcelona, April, 2nd. 1938

*All articles and items in this weekly may be reprinted*

Ministry of National Defence

## Number of Children Killed in Bombardments

The following statistics show the number of children who have fallen victims to fascist bombardments from July 1936 to the end of March 1938:

	Killed	Wounded
Madrid (city) . . . . .	879	1,380
Barcelona . . . . .	598	1,010
Valencia . . . . .	329	416
Asturias . . . . .	1,214	2,000
Euzkadi . . . . .	694	1,165
Guadalajara and Madrid Provinces . . . . .	1,879	2,649
Santander and Province . . . . .	1,247	1,899
Jaen and Province . . . . .	211	355
Ciudad Leal, Cuenca and Albacete Provinces . . . . .	2,011	1,974
Catalonia (excluding Barcelona) . . . . .	1,647	2,472
Total . . . . .	10,709	15,320

## Second Negrin Government

### THE MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

A Cabinet meeting was held in the residence of the Prime Minister with the object of handing over the portfolios to the members of the new Government.

At its conclusion the following note was handed to journalists:

«Now that the Government has been reorganised it addresses itself to all those Spaniards, at the front and in the rearguard, as well as in rebel territory, who are struggling against the armies of the invader. The Government proclaims its absolute determination to continue the war for the independence of Spain until it has freed all Spanish soil from those who have attacked and invaded it, assisted by the most monstrous international conspiracy that the world has ever seen.

In this determination, it counts on its People's Army, which on the Centre Front, in Extremadura, in Andalusia and in Levant, is not only holding its positions with invincible firmness, but these days is undeniably proving its strong offensive spirit by enthusiastically coming to the aid of the more threatened sectors.

As regards Catalonia, the heroism with which our soldiers are fighting on the Eastern Front is a sign of their iron-like tenacity, and the German and Italian armies, deceived by the easy successes of their first advance, have as yet no idea of what the war for the freedom of Catalonia will be like.

It remains for Catalonia to move the world with an impetus which will halt the enemy and put a stop to the fascist atrocities, the mass executions, the bombing of

the civilian population and the regime of slavery which makes men into pawns; an enemy which has so outraged Spanish feelings by the foreign «totalitarian methods of war» and which hopes to make this glorious Catalonia a victim of its frenzied hate.

In order to rise to the level of the heroism of our troops and to assure them that none of their sacrifices will be in vain and that they shall be led to victory by men resolved at all costs to win the war, the Government at today's meeting has decided not only to bring about a reconcentration of the Nation's forces, but also to make the entire weight of Republican law fall pitilessly and instantaneously on the traitors and on the cowards.

The Prime Minister, who is also Minister for National Defence, has demanded and obtained from the Cabinet the maximum authority to act both in punishing those who deserve to be punished and in purging the key positions which are essential for victory, with the speed and the energy which the gravity of the circumstances demands.

For the execution of all this the Government feels that it is empowered with supreme authority, which it derives from the elements of which it is composed, i. e. from the fact that it is a true Government of national unity.

In foreign affairs the Cabinet has taken cognizance of the wording of a note addressed to the French and British Governments.

The Government of the Re-

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(Continued from page 1)

public, which is full of confidence in victory and inspired by the idea of a Spain of the future free from all foreign domination, in greeting the combatants of the Army, the Air Force and the Fleet, proudly welcomes those thousands of soldiers of the Army of the East, who, after

crossing into France, demanded a post of honour in the lines of fire. These men are, for those who think only of saving themselves, an example of patriotism which should strengthen the will of all in the land we are defending; while for those abroad, who feign ignorance of the real state of opinion of the Spanish people,

they are a demonstration which equals any plebiscite.

The Government of the Republic, confident of the enthusiastic collaboration of the entire Spanish people, does not plunge into a mass of words, but immediately sets to work and begins from this moment to work as a war Government.

## COMMUNIST PARTY

## Letter from José Díaz to the Editor of "Mundo Obrero"

Dear Comrades,

In the March 23rd number of "Mundo Obrero" there is an article to which it is vitally necessary to call the attention of the entire Party. The article commences with the statement that "Everything which may misdirect the masses must be explained with the greatest care." No one can doubt the correctness of this statement. It was therefore necessary for me to send you this letter, for later in the article the following statement occurs:

"... It cannot be said, as one newspaper has stated, that the only solution of our war is that Spain should be neither fascist nor communist, because France so wishes it."

I do not know the newspaper against which this argument is directed. It is possible that the paper is written by people who are against our Party or who do not understand the problems of the war. But the statement that "The only solution of our war is that Spain should be neither fascist or communist" is absolutely correct and corresponds exactly to the position of our Party.

It is necessary to repeat this once more, in order that there should not be the slightest doubt in the matter. The people of Spain are fighting in this war for their national independence and for the defence of the democratic republic. We are fighting to throw the barbaric German and Italian invaders out of our country. We are fighting because Spain does not wish to be converted into a colony of fascism. We are fighting so that Spain should not be fascist. We are fighting for the defence of the democratic and Republican regime, which is the legitimate regime of our country, and which permits of the most ample social progress.

The Communist Party, which together with the Socialist Party, is the Party of the working class of Spain, has not, and cannot have any objective or interests apart from the rest of the people. Our Party has never thought that the solution of this war would be the establishment of a communist regime. If the masses of the workers, the peasants and the petty bourgeoisie follow us, it is because they know that we are the strongest defenders of national independence, of freedom, and of the Constitutional Republic. This defence is the base, and the very essence of unity and the Popular Front. It would be very serious and inadmissible if in the ranks of our Party there were any lack of clarity on this question, above all at this moment, when the maximum unity of the people is necessary, to oppose the furious attacks of the foreign invaders. There are objective conditions in our country today which demand, in the in-

terest of the whole people, the existence and strengthening of the democratic regime. There do not exist conditions which even permit of thinking of the establishment of a communist regime. To pose this question is to divide the people, because a communist regime cannot be accepted by all the Spanish people and our Party will never do anything which may divide the people. On the contrary it has struggled with all its forces from the very beginning to unite the people, to unite all Spaniards in the struggle for liberty and national independence. I wish to say more. I wish to say that at the present moment, when our task is to mobilise until the last man for a supreme resistance to the enemy offensive — this resistance is the indispensable pre-requisite for our counter-offensives and final victory — in such a situation the unity of the people must be broader and more comprehensive. This unity must include all the most important sections of the population which in fascist territory are beneath the yoke, and perhaps beneath the influence, of fascist propaganda. It must include all those Spaniards who do not wish to be slaves of a barbarous foreign dictatorship.

This is the first point which it is necessary to clear up. But there is something else. In your article there is another point which must be clarified, and that is one which deals with the relations of the democratic peoples of Europe and America with the Spanish people and with our struggle. You affirm that the "Spanish people will conquer despite the opposition of Capitalism". This statement can be interpreted as an expression of faith in the energy of our people. But politically it does not correspond to the position or policy of our Party or of the Communist International. In my report to the November Plenum of our Central Committee we stated:

"There is a basis upon which all the democratic states can unite and act together. That is the basis of the defence of their own existence against the universal aggressor fascism. That is the basis of defence against the war which is threatening us all."

When we spoke of "all the democratic states" we were not thinking only of the Soviet Union, where there exists a socialist democracy. We were also thinking of France, England, Czechoslovakia, the United States, etc., which are democratic countries, although capitalist. We want these states to help us, we think that they would be helping their own interests by helping us and we must exert ourselves to make them understand this and help us. The position that you take up in your article is very different and not correct.

Your error consists in forgetting the international character of our struggle, which is a struggle against fascism, i. e. against the most reactionary part of capitalism, against the provocateurs of a new and terrible world war, against the enemies of peace, against the enemies of the freedom of nations. We know very well that the fascist aggressors are finding in every country groups of the bourgeoisie that are supporting them, such as the English conservatives and the French right-wing elements. But the aggression of fascism is being carried on in such a manner that the national interest itself, in a country like France for example, must convince all men who desire the liberty and independence of their country, of the necessity of opposing this aggression. And there exists no more effective way of opposing fascist aggression to-day than by helping the Spanish people in a concrete manner. Every Frenchman worthy of the name can and must understand that to-day in Spain we are struggling for the independence of France also and that the fate of France is perhaps being decided in the fields of Aragon.

The manner in which you pose the question would once more lead us inevitably to restrict the front of our struggle at a moment when it is vitally necessary to broaden it. The task of organising international aid for Spain at this moment falls principally on the international working class and its organisations. The measures which may be taken, however, to convince other non working class forces of the necessity of this aid, cannot but have our approval.

How is it that "Mundo Obrero" has taken up such a false position on questions of such importance? It may be the result of a mistaken interpretation of the position adopted by our Party during the last week of mobilising all its forces to denounce to the full every attempt at capitulation or compromise and to demand an energetic war policy which corresponds to the gravity of the situation. This struggle must and will continue. But this position of our Party does not mean in any way a change in our attitude as far as the appreciation of the character of our revolution is concerned, or of the international situation and our policy of unity.

On the contrary, everything which we demand is in the interest of the people and of the war. For this, all anti-fascists can and must be in agreement with us. More than this, all Spaniards who wish this war to end with the victory of our country and the defeat of the fascist invader must be with us. The task of the Party consists, since it is based on this condition, in increasing the bonds of unity

## Work of the Valencia Municipal Council

A few months after the war began there were established, in accordance with a Decree issued by the Ministry of the Interior at that time, Municipal Councils in which all the Parties and Trade Union Organisations were to be represented proportionately. In Valencia Domingo Torres, a member of the C. N. T. (National Confederation of Labour, the Anarchist controlled trade-union organisation) was elected Chairman of the new Municipal Council.

In a recent interview with a journalist (March, 1938) Torres outlined the work of the Council since its establishment.

"The first concern of the Municipal Council", said Torres, "was to normalise the economic situation of the Municipality. In the first days of the uprising provoked by the fascists the collection of taxes was abandoned as a result of the confusion existing at the time."

"This disorganisation did not last long. The trade union organisations, which were obliged to take over the elements of production, realised immediately that, in order to enable the Municipality to carry out its social mission, it was necessary for all citizens to pay taxes regularly and to comply with all their other duties as citizens."

"I can state now that no one refused to do his duty. Tax returns improved after July, 1936, as the following figures prove:

### Financial Statement of the Municipality of Valencia at the end of 1937

Income, 23,150,451.28 pesetas; Expenditure, 23,007,662.12 pesetas. Balance in Hand as on Dec. 31, 1937, 142,709.16 pesetas.

"The following figures are of interest:

Receipts in Excess of the Budgetary Estimate, 5,885,468.77 pesetas; Savings effected during the year, 3,017,941.20 pesetas. Total, 8,903,409.97 pesetas.

between all the sectors of anti-fascists. To-day more than ever before nobody can be opposed to unity. We must all be in favour of the broadest and greatest possible unity.

Therefore, comrades of the Editorial Staff of "Mundo Obrero", we must avoid the posing of problems in a false and confused manner, problems which we should have understood a long time ago.

"There was an increase in receipts on the following items over previous years:

Tax on public weighing machines, 110,253.20 pesetas; Tax on stamps, 105,584.15 pesetas; Tax on drinks, 1,825,987.28 pesetas; Tax on betting, 626,201.35.

"The following savings were effected:

Saving on payments to lawyers, owing to absence of municipal litigation, 373,204.73 pesetas; Reduction in lighting expenses, 16,475.05 pesetas; Reduction of mayor's expenses, 55,829.68 pesetas; Saving owing to cancellation of festival, 173,977.45 pesetas; Saving of credits prescribed in accordance with Art. 25 of the Accounting Law, 979,597.13 pesetas.

"Following is some data on cancelled credits: The insurrection created a grave economic situation in the Valencia municipality, largely owing to the crisis existing in the municipality before the war broke out. The following gives an idea of the situation. There was a decrease in receipts, which it was impossible to collect, amounting to 11,860,670.40 pesetas:

Decrease in tax receipts on sale of land, 225,000.00 pesetas; Decrease in receipts for sewage, 344,195.00 pesetas; Decrease because no fair was held, 150,000.00 pesetas; Decrease in automobile licenses, 930,000.00 pesetas; Decrease in corporation taxes, 405,103.36 pesetas.

"Regarding the work of the municipality and the present financial situation, one thing must be emphasised; the Valencia municipality has not created new taxes in order to compensate for the decrease in the receipts caused by the war situation. On the contrary, the Valencia municipality has endeavored not to impose new taxes on the people of Valencia.

"Stress should also be laid on the fact that the Valencia municipality has not been obliged to issue its own currency as the currency of the Central Government was sufficient.

"Despite the difficulties which have been pointed out, the economic situation of the Valencia municipality is good. Its deficit for the fiscal year of 1937 was 2,957,260.43 pesetas. This is a small sum as compared with what it was under the monarchy and what might be expected in the time.

**The "SERVICIO ESPAÑOL DE INFORMACION" is published daily in Spanish and French, and weekly—Monday, Wednesday and Friday respectively—in German, Italian and English.**



## Ministry of National Defence German Intervention

The following note was issued by the Minister of National Defence on March 31, 1938.

«On March 28th. the Minister of National Defence published a note, with proven data regarding the participation of foreign elements in the war in Spain. This note is complemented today by new data which deals exclusively with German intervention.

For the landing of material and personnel, the German Army utilizes a number of ports, which are subdivided according to the importance of the traffic, into the following three categories:

1. Santander, Bilbao, Pasajes.
2. Villagarcia de Arosa, Vigo, Ferrol and Coruña.
3. Seville, Cádiz and Huelva.

The ports of Bilbao and Pasajes, which are the most used in the North, are virtually under the exclusive direction of the Condor Legion, who are helped by members of the Nazi militia of the S. S. and S. A. groups. Pasajes and Bilbao are already two great German bases, not only for war material, but also for all sorts of merchandise, which is distributed in the special lorries of the Condor Legion bearing the swastika sign. These lorries have free passage in all parts and may not be detained by any Spanish control service.

The German planes that have recently arrived are as follows:

- 48 Heinkel chasers.
- 12 Heinkel bombers.
- 52 Messerschmidt chasers.
- 6 Rehrbach ultra-rapid heavy bombers.
- 18 three-engined Junkers bombers.

This powerful and most up-to-date war material was transported by members of the Condor Legion to aerodromes specially fitted for assembling planes in Burgos, Vitoria and Avila.

In Avila the German Aviation Corps occupies an entire barracks, whose sentries are also German. All this personnel comes from the German aerodromes of Berlin-Staaken, Munich-Rosenthal, and Griesheim-Sand near Frankfurt. A large number of pieces of artillery have also arrived, together with the necessary personnel. These come from the following German garrisons: Berlin-Staaken, Karlsruhe, Freiburg, Durlach, Hammelsburg, Breisach, Heuberg, Griesheim bei Darmstadt, Munich, Augsburg, Nürnberg, Aschaffenburg, etc. The ships which transport this material enter port protected by German warships and submarines.

Members of the Condor Legion are very active in strategic points on the Franco-Spanish frontier. In these points, in Guipúzcoa and Navarre, 30 pieces of heavy artillery of the latest type are at the moment being installed. No Spaniards are taking part in these operations. The German officers affirm that these preparations are being made for a future war against France. According to them, Hitler intends to settle the question of Alsace-Lorraine in the French Midi, with the help of the Spanish fascist army if the latter should be victorious.»

## Ministry of Education and Health Care and Rehabilitation of the Insane by the Republic

Prior to July 18 the insane received no assistance from the State. There was not a single State asylum. Where families were unable to pay high fees, mental patients could receive treatment only in a few free or semi-free private institutions, or lie neglected in the ward of an ordinary hospital.

This social problem had never received any attention from the State or from a society which was always indifferent to the fate of the poor. In the only free hospitals available the patients were treated like wild animals. Many poor families preferred to keep their insane relatives at home rather than expose them to this barbarous treatment. This constituted a grave social danger.

In May 1937 there were no state asylums. Five months later «La Abella» (Guadalajara), under the Social Welfare Service, was treat-

ing 300 psychiatric patients. The work progressed rapidly and today 750 more patients are being treated in state asylums. They are distributed as follows: Psychiatric Hospital, Castellon, 150 beds; Orihuela Colony, Alicante, 300 beds; Gilet Colony, Valencia, 300 beds, making a total of 1,050 insane persons cared for by the State in Loyalist territory.

A strict state control had to be established over hospitals for infectious diseases, tuberculosis and psychiatric cases, since these had been the most neglected and least efficiently run in the past. In the Decree of June 12, 1937, it is specified that the mental hospitals or observation centres should be administered by the Ministry of Education and Health. Where this service, financed by municipal or provincial corporations, covers only local necessities, the General

## Paul Robeson, at the Service of the Spanish People

by NICOLAS GUILLEN

In Spain and on every front where men are fighting for democracy, there are representatives of all races and all countries. Sullen Chinese who fire on Germans and Italians with the conviction that it amounts to fighting against the Japanese hordes which are profaning ancient Nanking; gloomy Hindus, who have come from the muddy banks of the Sacred Ganges to the clear waters of the Jarama River; negroes from the southern States of the great North American Union; men from bright and joyful Cuba, from Jamaica and wonderful Brasil...

Who sends them all? No one. They are true and active volunteers widely different from those sent in sorry herds by the ponderous ambition of Mussolini to be unloosed on a land which they do not hate in order to fight against a people that has in no way offended them. Our volunteers come to our ranks perfectly aware of the cause for which they are fighting and of the enemy they will have to face. They ask for nothing better than a place in the firing lines. They are of wonderful use to us. With great unselfishness they either man a machine-gun, keep watch on a parapet or live an almost monastic life within the walls of a hospital helping Science to conquer Death. Each one of them strives within his own scope and ability for the cause of freedom.

Langston Hughes, the great poet of «Mulatto», spent long and hard days in Madrid visiting the trenches in order to carry to men of his race and country the simple popular verse of his blues and spirituals; Cudra, a native of Havana, and the son of an Asturian father and a negro mother, is in command of a machine-gun company in the Central Army; Paul Robeson, the marvellous American negro singer, who is the son of slaves, leaves London behind him to jump with a happy smile of hope into Spain. Paul Robeson? What does Paul

Robeson want in Spain? Wait, wait; he will tell you himself.

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When I arrived at the «Majestic Hotel» where he was staying, I found the famous cinema star surrounded by a multitude who eagerly watched every one of his gestures. Robeson had everybody smiling. Again and again he posed for the photographers and answered questions without the slightest sign of boredom. While people harassed him, I remained an onlooker.

He is an enormous negro, standing out like a mast above the crowd that gathers around him. How old could this mighty man be? His curly hair starts to thin out on top of his head and already shows profuse silver threads at the temples. Forty years old? Perhaps, forty-five? Somewhere near that... Yet, his formidable physical development, the gay and carefree expression on his face, the deep and calm light in his eyes, greatly reduce his age. When he speaks there is warmth in his words emphasized by the gesture of his enormous clenched fists, which he moves with the palms turned towards his broad chest. He dresses well, but with unstudied simplicity. A dark grey suit none too new, a well worn cap, shoes that have paced enough to forget the day they first trod the earth... Nevertheless, there is smartness and ponderous simplicity in him.

From his essential humanity sympathy issues with every gesture, and his behaviour is so rhythmic that it recalls the sporting life of his younger days.

Short, cut sentences of his conversation with the others just reach me, and in them the word «Spain» is often repeated. While he speaks, I watch his wife, an intelligent and keen woman—who has already published a book on her husband—moving about the room attending to all visitors with a pleasing smile. It is she who finally tells me:

— Paul is waiting for you...

The meeting takes place devoid of all formalities.

— I should like to know straight from you — I say — the reason why you have come to Spain.

— My deep respect for democracy — he answers quietly —. As an artist, I believe that it is not honest to try to place oneself above the masses; on the contrary, it is necessary to march side by side with the people, taking part in their hopes and their griefs, for we artists owe everything to the public, from our formation to our welfare. Not only as an artist do I love the cause of the Spanish democracy, but as a negro. I belong to an oppressed race, a race which is discriminated against, which could not live if fascism were to conquer on this earth. My father was a slave and I do not want my children to be slaves... During the last few months, I have acted in London and have sung to collect funds for the Spanish people. And I will continue doing so, not only there but wherever there is an opportunity of doing so.

— I know you have just come

from Madrid — I say —. What are your impressions of what you have seen in that city and in the rest of democratic Spain?

— Magnificent. I have never met a people more gallant and more determined to win. I assure you that I feel happy about this trip to Spain and particularly about my visit to Madrid. The folks there get into immediate contact with visitors and one is soon won over to their side by their open congeniality, their unstudied simplicity and their magnanimous generosity. The same day that I arrived people called me «Pablo»; two days later I was «Pablito» to them. Just imagine! Little Pablo! Me, a man my size. Furthermore, you do not find a single soul there who even thinks of the possibility of defeat. In spite of the countless damage done to the city by the fascist bombs and shells, in spite of the constant peril that the daily bombardment signifies, and regardless of the hardships the people have to bear, there is not a single protest, not a single complaint. It is war. Every one gives the last ounce of human endurance to resist and to win. No; there is no fear in Madrid... One evening, just before my return, I played a game of soccer with a bunch of kids in a place too near the danger zone while shells went howling over us.

Robeson smiles and is silent for a few seconds.

— The «Madrileños» are, besides, exceedingly generous — he proceeds —. Shortly after my arrival, I gave a package of cigarettes to an army captain, because I was aware of the scarcity of tobacco in the capital. Not long afterwards, I went with him to visit one of the military hospitals, where I sang for the wounded boys and I was astonished to see that man distributing the cigarettes amongst the wounded and not keeping a single one for himself. It is the same with every thing else.

I have never seen a Spaniard quarrel for the possession of a thing more or less in the economical order. In many stores, when there is not sufficient change for the note we hand in payment, they return the money to us saying: «It does not matter. You can bring the money some other time. We are not going to be richer or poorer for that amount.»

I remember one day, while strolling along the streets of Madrid with Langston Hughes, the poet, noticing that the sole of one of his shoes had come loose and that he could not walk properly. We went into a small shoemaker's where an old cobbler sat bending over a lady's shoe. He put it aside as soon as Langston explained what he wanted, carefully examined the shoe and in less than ten minutes he had stitched and nailed it in perfect shape. When we asked how much it was, the old fellow replied almost angrily: «How much is it, do you ask? Nothing, sir, not a cent. You only have to order.»

— Yes, Mr. Robeson, you are right: Spanish people are very generous...

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## Paul Robeson, at the Service of the Spanish people

(Continued from page 3)

Our conversation finally turns to film and theatrical life.

— Some years ago — Robeson says —, the negro was a sort of comic-cut on the American stage. When O'Neill's « Emperor Jones » was staged by another negro actor, I grasped the possibilities our race had in the dramatic field: that is why I wanted to act that character, first on the stage and later on the films. I must admit that I considered this as my starting point, just the means to get to deeper and more important parts, for it was necessary in a country like ours to demonstrate that coloured people have artistic feeling and that they set foot on a stage or pose before the spot lights with as much grace as the white race, and at times with a cooler head. That is why, after my first attempt, I impersonated « Othello » and I am preparing the part of « King Lear ». Nevertheless, I am convinced today that the larger British and American film companies are controlled by Capitalism, especially by the steel trusts; and they will never allow me to film a picture as I should like to interpret it. That is also the chief reason why I am not interested in filming now, and least of all, in films dealing with the negro problem. The great producers insist on representing the negro as an absurd character in order to awaken laughter in white audiences; but I am not disposed to play their game...

— From that, I gather — said

I — that you cannot be satisfied with the films in which you have acted up to now...

— I have not even seen those films after they were finished — he replied.

— So, are you determined to quit the studios? — I asked.

— No; not exactly that. What I will never do is work for the large concerns, those managed by men who, if they could, would convert me into their slave, as my father was. I prefer to work for small independent producers in short musical films, until the time comes to do something more important and of greater meaning than up to now. I should like, for instance, to film scenes based on the life of a negro who was commander of the « Lincoln Battalion » in the International Brigades, who died in the trenches, but this theme would certainly be rejected by the great film companies... Yet, I have great hopes of doing something to give the film the heroic feeling I have breathed in Spain and to portray the magnificent part played in the fight by men of my race.

Robeson speaks enthusiastically of Spanish music.

— I was agreeably surprised and pleased by the tremendous similarity existing between some Spanish music and negro tunes. The « flamenco » (Andalusian songs) is negro in rhythm and blue depth. In Madrid, during a concert, I requested the orchestra to play « flamenco ».

They did so gladly, and then I was able to sing a negro song without the musicians having to alter the rhythm, keeping the tempo of the « cante jondo ».

For that reason — he adds —, I want to return to Spain, when things are quieter, when we have won the war. Then I will gather and study many songs like those I have heard here.

— Do you know Cuban music? — I asked. — The negro influence in it is of tremendous richness and the same thing happens in the rest of the West Indies and Brazil.

— Yes, I know it and I have a fancy for it. I also intend to go to Cuba to study her folklore in order to illustrate the characteristics you mention. I believe my visit will prove enormously beneficial for my next film.

Robeson is restless, for there are many visitors still waiting for him and, moreover, he has to leave immediately, so I am informed, for London. From London, Robeson will go to Paris to sing at a meeting in aid of Spain, organized by La Mutualité. My interview has come to an end.

With a smile, the great negro singer offers me his enormous hand, while I say as a parting sentence:

— It would be good for you to go over to Cuba. There are, in that Island, many terrible things to learn too...

(« Nuestra España ». Barcelona, 1938.)

consider unavoidable. It is an undeniable fact that these three nations are directing all their activities to prepare for war and that they are increasing their efforts in order to be ready for war in the near future. It is downright sarcasm to talk about peace under these conditions. Even those countries, which are sincerely striving to avoid a military clash, are involved in this terrible paradox. Rearmament of a peaceful country only means an announcement of war and the acknowledgement of conditions which any politically responsible democrat proclaims will unavoidably lead to war, even if it be provoked by the new imperialism.

Therefore, the problem presents itself with unquestionable clarity and preciseness. In view of the situation which the aggressors have created, the rivalries amongst the leading powers can only be settled in a war. The conclusion is a terrible one, but Bismarck said once that political leaders cannot modify reality, but that they can understand it and face it. The conflict could perhaps be avoided at the beginning by imposing severe sanctions on the aggressors. Perhaps it would not be too late even today if cases such as that of Abyssinia, China and Spain, which constitute a glaring violation of International Law, as well as a shameful moral abuse, were revised by a determined stand of the democratic countries, provided that they were willing to take joint action. This would intimidate the fascist powers, and they would be compelled to a rapid retreat. But this united action on the part of the democratic countries seems to be impossible at this time. The world is heading straight for war. To attempt to hide this fatal truth today would be a sign of defeat. For this reason, at this critical point, it is a question only of deciding whether war is to be made by the method chosen by the dictators, that of indirect war, or by a method which best suits the really powerful, that of direct attack.

The people hesitate, and Governments hesitate for the same reasons. But the people always opposed to war, although they may at times be roused by patriotic fervour by propaganda and flag waving and made follow their tyrants. If a German mother or an Italian soldier is asked, out of the reach of the lice, if they approved of Hitler or Mussolini's warlike speech, the answer would certainly be that they hate the miseries of war. But the masses, gripped by fear as they are today, do not count. Wars are made against the wishes of those who lose their life in them. In the circumstances an able statesman is one who prepares with more probabilities of success and a minimum of risk for his own country.

It is by no means impossible that the democratic countries have to make war to defend peace. In that case they will have wasted time and energy looking for independent solutions to conflicts created by the totalitarian powers. The fascist powers possess huge amounts of weapons of the most modern type; they lack economic resources, raw materials to carry out a campaign. « Starving people cannot carry out a successful war », Blomberg paid for this phrase with his dismissal and death. Are the countries whose vital organs are already being attacked going to wait until the fascist powers occupy the best strategic positions and until the attack directed against them under the most favorable conditions for totalitarian States? Or can it be that there is still somebody in the delusion that a split between Germany and Italy can be brought about. These countries are not united by their own volition, but for an instant, linking together of an ideological death. They are making peace in order to mislead their potential opponents. It will be madness to give them time to allow them to choose the most favorable moment for their strike.

### Critical Moments

## Words of Peace and Acts of Violence

by J. DIAZ FERNANDEZ

At what price are the democratic countries willing to maintain peace? Is not that olive branch, which statesmen wave at each speech they make, already faded and stained by the blood of the victims? Everybody talks of defending peace while they are in fact making war or at least condoning it. Hitler declares before his purging squad that Germany will carry out her program peacefully and blames the League of Nations — that unfortunate discredited institution — for fostering war. Mussolini presents himself to the world as a champion of peace and world security. Prime Minister Hirota does not hesitate to tell those powers who have interests in the Far East that Japan is also striving to promote peace. It is true that Hitler has thousands of technicians and troops engaged in the Spanish war and that his army has invaded Austria. Mussolini's troops are occupying Abyssinia and more of Mussolini's troops are waging a war of invasion against our country, and Japan is at war with China. But as neither Italy nor Germany nor Japan have declared war on Abyssinia, Spain, Austria and China, the dictators can take liberties with their rhetoric, which the democracies accept as truth, although their complacency is causing the death of thousands and thousands of human beings.

Chamberlain also speaks of peace, and Blum utters the word with a sort of religious conviction. But undoubtedly peace, as

Sir Neville Chamberlain and M. Blum understand it, has a different meaning. The booming of guns on the Spanish fronts, the explosions of bombs dropped by warplanes on Spanish and Chinese towns and the goose-stepping of German troops on the streets of Vienna cannot be heard either in Paris or in London; but at the Quai d'Orsay and at the Foreign Office they know that these things are a reality. When these men speak about peace, does this only mean the peace of France and Britain? If this is the case, peace has not yet been broken. There are no foreign troops on French and British soil. No, not yet. But up to the present we were under the impression that in a world where the interests of all countries are interlaced, where the balance of power is of paramount importance, any war in which a great power intervened would represent a crisis for the whole system. « Peace is indivisible », said Litvinoff at Geneva without anyone attaching to the phrase the deep prophetic meaning it contained. This argument can be automatically proved. Is there anybody who believes that two great powers can wage a war against one another without involving the rest of the world?

It is universally believed that a war would promptly become general. Then for the same reasons peace cannot be fractionally maintained without disturbing the whole system of collective security.

Italy, Germany, and Japan have chosen a novel system of making war without declaring it, in order to occupy strategic positions for a war which we all

### MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

## Further Proof of Italian Intervention in Spain

The Minister of National defence on 1 April, 1938, issued the following note:

« The Italian aviator Gino Poggi, who was taken prisoner near Caspe on March 28th has made the following declarations:

« After obtaining his certificate as a civil pilot in June, 1935, he entered the Foggia Military School, where he became a Second Lieutenant. In April, 1936, he received his military pilot's licence, which bears the endorsement of Mussolini. He was attached to the 8th Regiment at Bologna, composed of the bombing groups Nos. 27 and 29, commanded by Colonel Rossanigo. The Colonel commanding the Regiment summoned the entire personnel and read to them an order of General Valle. The order stated that there was a war in Spain which concerned Italy, and that was why all soldiers were being invited to participate. The Colonel replied that the entire Regiment was ready to go to Spain. In view of this, they received the order to go to Rome,

where they were to await instructions for the journey to Spain. Two complete squadrons left for Spain in August, 1937, and were followed shortly after by another.

« On December 24th, Poggi's group left by plane for Palma, flying over Sardinia at a height of over 12,000 feet. Before reaching Majorca they came down to 900 feet, and first touched the island at Port Cristo. On the aerodrome were two squadrons of « Savoia » 81 planes, and some 20 « Fiat » planes, one of which was always in the air. The Italian air force which operates from Palma is commanded by General Vellani, who goes by the name of Velarde in Spain.

« From Palma they left by air for Seville, where they were given uniforms. From Seville they went to Logroño, but came down in Soria owing to an accident. In Soria he saw the aviation workshops. All the workers there were Italians from the « Romeo » factory.

« When they left Italy, a new Regiment was formed to replace the 8th, which had gone to Spain.

Part of this new unit is at moment in Palma, and the remainder waiting for them in Logroño. In the aerodromes occupied by the Italian air force in Spain, the Italian flag is hoisted every morning, with honours for the entire personnel on parade. They never receive orders from Spaniards. Orders are given by their General, Vellani, who goes by the name of Velarde.

« The Spanish aviators who were brought down by Italian planes remain at the disposal of the Italian Command. If they are old aviators, or if there is indication that they belong to the left, they are shot immediately. Amongst the German and Italian Franco is not an outstanding figure. German and Italians take orders from commanders of their respective nationality. Franco himself has almost no air force.

« The aviator knows that no Mussolini was a month and a half in May. During this time he participated in a number of the bombardments against Barcelona and Valencia.