



The VOLUNTEER FOR LIBERTY

organ of the international brigades



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THE BACKGROUND OF CHINESE UNITY

One of the most outstanding features of the Sino-Japanese conflict in recent weeks has been the growth and consolidation of the Chinese national front. And this has not sprung up mushroom-fashion. For years Chiang Kai-Shek's main efforts were spent in a futile struggle to annihilate Communism in China, the Chinese Soviet areas, and the Chinese Red Army. China's interests as a nation were sacrificed right and left in the pursuance of this aim. It is only the pressure of the Chinese people, the hard patient work of the real friends of China, and the ever more blatant pressure of Japanese aggression which have led to a reversal in the policy of Nanking.

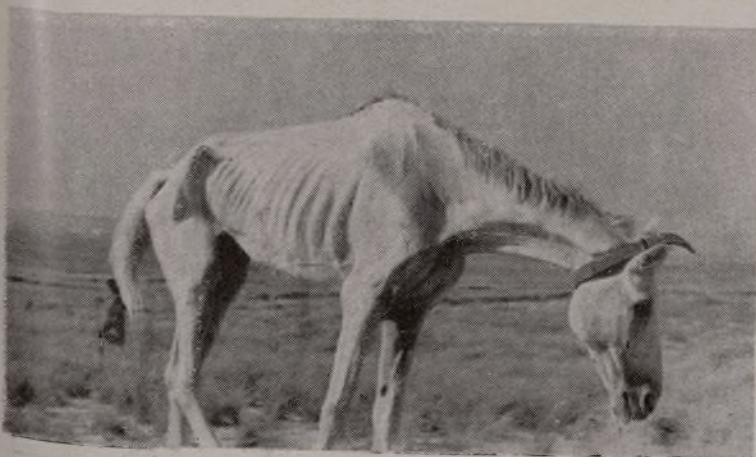
Already in July 1936 the formation of a National Defence Council, with representatives of the provincial governments, was a tentative step in the direction of national unity. At this time Chiang Kai-Shek declared that the hour for final sacrifice would come if an attempt were made to

force China to recognise the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo, or if her territorial sovereignty were again violated. This was followed by an increasingly firm attitude on the part of the Chinese authorities to the various Japanese provocations, but national unity was still far from complete, as was shown by the fact that as late as February this year the Central Executive Committee of the Koumintang published a manifesto containing the statement that the cardinal policy of the central authorities should be to root out the Communists by every means at their disposal.

THE SIANFU INCIDENT

One of the key stones in the complicated structure of Chinese unity was laid by the correct policy of the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese Red Army in the Sianfu incident, when Chiang Kai-Shek was kidnapped by Chang Hsueh Liang. It is certain that at

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THE WHITE HORSE on which Franco was going to ride triumphantly into Madrid. But that was a year ago. Meanwhile, look what's happened to the poor horse, which we found grazing weakly in the fields when we took y Belchite. Franco is still fat, however but not for long.

A STRUGGLE AHEAD SO MUCH THE BETTER

BY ALEXIS TOLSTOI

The days of sumptuous conferences, of elegant meetings of the different Committees, the days of France and England's ostrich policy, of unparalleled meanness and cowardice—those days are ended.

The Pirate Flag is hoisted openly in the Mediterranean. France finds herself cut off from Northern Africa, and England from the Suez Canal. The Fascist programme has been published. The second Roman Empire and the third German Empire between them are directing Europe, including, naturally, England—and old Roman colony.

This is the final announcement. The lion-tamer must now grasp his whip and go into the jackals' cage. That is our proposal to all the constitutional powers and Republics of Europe.

For our part, we have taken careful note of the fact that two of our merchant vessels have been sunk by the Italian fascist submarines. Ours is a serious-minded people, and it considers seriously its historic undertakings. We shall do what we have decided to do, whatever may stand in our road.

We shall answer the news of the torpedoing of our ships in such a manner that Mussolini will have no time to confess his crimes. Our forces and our means are inexhaustable. Inexhaustably vast. Naturally it is more agreeable to devote ourselves to building universities and sports stadiums than warships. But world fascism has forced us to build a great Soviet Navy, and it shall be built. The Soviet Navy will be the strongest in the world; and that is as true as the fact that in ten years we have caught up with European heavy industry, and passed it.

That is not the most wonderful side. The wonderful thing is that at the same time we shall go on building universities and stadiums. We shall not divide our forces, we shall double them. Our task consists in forcing the world to follow a road which avoids imperialist war, and this is possible if we become stronger than the whole imperialist world.

This task can be accomplished. It lies in the realm of reality. We are very near to accomplishing it. The idea must be driven like a nail into everyone's brain that we are living in a great and terrible epoch. It is and will have to be the duty of each one of us to know how to organise our efforts, our ability, in a Stakhanovite manner, to know how to subordinate our life and our creative activity.

The greatest happiness in life lies in feeling ones own strength, and we are masters of our own strength when "every muscle is brought into play", when all our mental energy is directed to achievements each day renewed.

Before us—the struggle. Then so much the better!

WE VISIT A STEEL FOUNDRY IN MADRID

What attracted the attention of our delegation of five from the International Brigades as we filed into the office—reminiscent of many factory offices in the States—was a red, yellow and purple certificate on the grey wall, which read in Spanish as follows:

Republica, Commercial de Hierros (Irons), incautado por el Estado en virtud del decreto de agosto, 1936. (Taken over by the State in virtue of the decree of August 2, 1936).

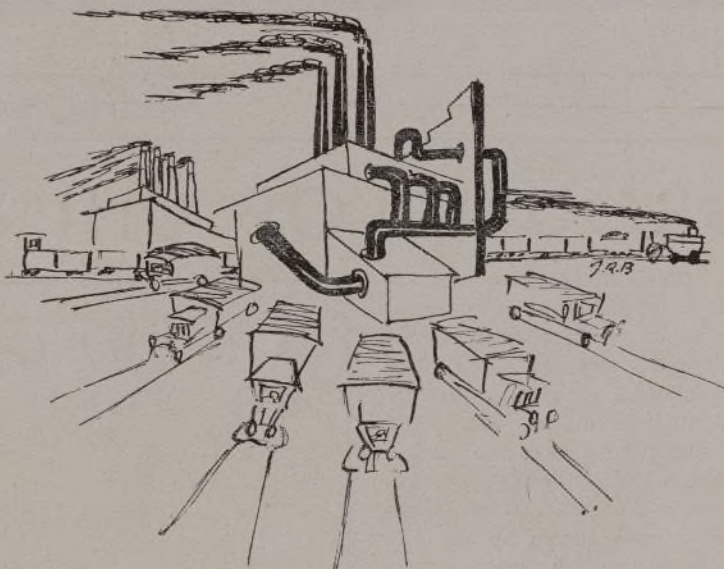
The President of the Factory Committee, working at his desk in blue overalls, was not expecting visitors, but he welcomed us cordially. At that moment a sudden burst of machine gun fire, followed by several grenade explosions, came as sharp and clear as the clang of the steel sledge hammers being wielded by workmen in the mill yard. The President, catching our inquisitive look, climbed out of his swivel chair and strolled to the window a few feet away. Pointing southward he said, "See, comrades, that house between two lone trees on the brow of that hill? Well, that's where the fascists are! They can see us, and we can see them."

Before the civil war broke out in July, 1936, this mill was in the hands of the absentee capitalists who extracted their profits through representatives that conducted the operation of the factory. As soon as the war started, the Government took over the mill; the representatives didn't lose time in scrambling from the country. By driving out the fascist-minded, the workers were able to start production of war materials.

PRODUCING FOR WAR

However, up to this time the mill had been used only for the production of iron-construction materials for buildings. Consequently, for it to be turned into a war factory required many changes in machinery and methods of production which proved difficult, but were finally accomplished with skilful ingenuity. In November, when the fascists were threatening to enter Madrid on the morrow, all the workers of the mill as one man marched to the front. It was impossible to work in the mill at the time because of the heavy concentration of fire

EVEN WOMEN SWING SLEDGE HAMMERS TO FORGE BETTER LIFE FOR FUTURE



on it from the approaching invaders. Airplane bombardments directed against the plant was a daily feature.

Normally the mill employs 500 to 600 men. Now because most of their young men have gone to the fronts, there are only 320 workers, most of them above 40 years of age. The workers are represented by the U. G. T. and the C. N. T. The Factory Committee, whose function is equivalent to that of an executive committee of any organization, is composed of 11 men—a president, secretary, and 9 delegates—all elected by the workers of the plant. Each member of the committee takes part in the production as well as in the administration of the plant. In addition there is one representative, also elected, from each working unit throughout the mill who serves as liaison man between the factory committee and the men. He can be said to be his section political commissar. The factory has in its administrative staff a government official who assists in coordinating the work between the government and the factory.

BIG WAGE INCREASE

Wages range from 14 pesetas a day on up, according to qualifications; and an 8 hour day and a 6 day week. This is a 40 per-

cent increase in pay from that which they received under the old regime. There is no night work because electric lights would make a perfect target for enemy artillery.

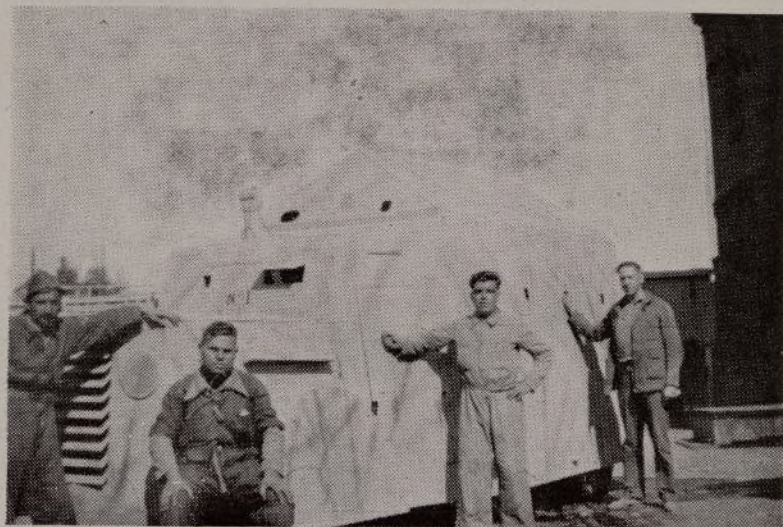
In the early days of the war they made armoured-cars and machine guns, to the surprise of other steel mills in the vicinity that immediately followed the example. It is true that these balloon tire armoured-cars they made were unable to cope with the powerful modern German and

NEW INVENTIONS

Whereas under the old regime the workers had none or very little incentive to improve the speed of their work, that is now changed. By intensive and enthusiastic application they have invented many devices that speed up production. For instance, during the early days they used to fill machine gun belts with cartridges by hand, often ripping the belt. Now, by having invented a simple machine, they are able to insert as many cartridges in a belt in ten minutes as, formerly, it took two hours to do. They have modeled a machine-gun-rifle disc that holds more bullets and works better than other types. Many of the food cans which the comrades use at the front to keep their food hot were originated here. Another interesting contraption they've invented is a machine that has eliminated hours of useless labor. Formerly, men hammered all day long straightening out wire and cutting required lengths by hand. Now this can be done by automatic machinery, straightening and cutting the wire more accurately and a 1000 percent more rapidly. These same workers have also made a huge loudspeaker, which is used at the front to propagandize the fascists.

A collective kitchen, where the workers of the mill can eat for

(Continued on page 6.)



STEEL FACTORY WORKERS next to one of their earliest productions—one of the hastily-built armored cars used by our army during the first months of the war.

José Colom - People's Captain

From the Spanish of Manuel Altolaquire

Under your wings the winds are strong,
And a song of scorn for the tyrant's chain
You hear at your ear in the motor's roar—
"For the Land, the People, for Spain, for Spain!"
O People's Captain, lone in the sky,
Your eye is wet as you look below—
Scorner of fears, you gaze through tears
On the hills you love and the land you know.
What harvest is this in the peasant's field?—
What yield of death where the vineyard stood?
See! Treason's hand has ravaged the land,
The rivers are red with the People's blood!
O Jose Colom, look down, look down,
O cloud-cloaked captain, now mark you well
The muster of Roman, Goth and Moor,
The Court of Judas, the Camp of Hell!

But turn, Jose, to the rising sun,
Unbowed behold us for whom you fly:
In vale and village, from town and tillage,
The People muster with banners high.
The People, the People!—their vow is spoken,
Spain is not broken nor bowed in fear—
Before death claims you and history names you,
The People's answer, O Captain, hear!

Under your wings the winds have failed.
Hailed by death you were swift to go.
Your plane, yourself, were your only weapons,
We saw you crash as you dashed the foe.
Ah People's Captain, Jose Colom,
No sad nor solemn dirge is mine:
Your name and fame I fling as a flame
To summon the brave to the firing-line!
By the light of your deeds we dig our trenches,
And swear the vengeance that is your due—
When the Moor is dead and the Goth's forgotten,
When the Roman's fled and the traitor's rotten,
The People, the People, will sing of you!

SHAEMAS O'SHEEL

10,000 Babies in Madrid Less Than Year Old

There are ten thousand babies in Madrid today under one year of age. The mothers of these children are unable to feed them at the breast.

Even in normal times in Madrid, ten percent of the children born died before they were a year old. If this was the average in peace time, it is tragic to imagine what might have occurred in war. But the slogan of the people of Madrid has been "children first".

Ignorance of scientific methods brought about the high infant mortality. Convinced that its duties towards the babies cannot be fulfilled simply by handing mothers a little fresh or condensed milk, the Council has opened centers for baby care all over Madrid. There every mother brings her child. The child is weighed and examined at the center, and a careful record made. A diet list is made out, the mother is given the exact formula for mixing the child's milk and all the necessary instructions for looking after her baby. She is also supplied with powdered milk, sugar, and other necessities. If the infant fails to gain weight the formula is changed.

Every month the Madrid mothers are supplied with 40,000 kilograms of powdered milk, 6,000 of sugar, and 3,000 of flour.

In the near future it is hoped to extend the service to babies over one year as well.

Anthology of Poetry by Volunteers is Planned

Volunteers are urged to send original poems, in English, to the Volunteer for Liberty, both for use in the magazine and for publication in an anthology of verse by English-speaking comrades in Spain. Please write your own name and address on every manuscript submitted.

Stories, articles, letters and other contributions to these pages are always welcome. Address: The Volunteer for Liberty, S. R. I., 63E, Albacete.

In the Rebel Zone

A recent radio talk by Queipo de Llano is particularly interesting. In his jests he continues to insist on the morality campaign and the edicts of the governors on this subject. He proposes, in his clownish way, that men and women should be dressed in sacks showing only their eyes, on which they should wear dark spectacles.

★

"A B C" de Seville, pronounced an exhortation apropos of the "lack of respect" of the public when they hear the "National Hymn".

★

Franco has announced that every spent cartridge which is brought in to the civil governors, staff headquarters or barracks, will be rewarded with one centimo.



ARAGON BATTLE SCENE: Our men, entrenched on a hilltop, watch the planes speeding off after bombing the enemy terrain.

Ayuntamiento de Madrid

AMERICAN HOSPITALS THROW A CHILDREN'S PARTY

They marched down the road from the American Hospital of Saelices, by the ruins of the Convent castle of Castillejo towards the clearing in the woods, by the creek.

More than 300 of them. Girls first, boys after, singing the International, shouting the Young Guard, happy, untrammelled. The Spanish girls working at the Hospital led the parade, the old folks came at the end. The day was bright. They are always bright, the days in Spain. But brighter than the day were the thoughts engendered by such a sight.

On that road, old, narrow and stony, travelled for centuries by insolent monks and men in armor, the passing peasant was a mere beast of burden only a few years ago. In the building which houses the American Hospital, Maria Cristina de Borbon reigned with an iron hand, and stories are often told of her avarice, of her meanness, of her insolence. There is no kindness or joy in the face of the peasant women when they talk of her. And now, with feudalism



HOSPITAL CHIEF: Dr. Irving Busch, snapped while watching the festivities.

in all its brutality and ignorance still a recent experience in the lives even of the young ones, the whole population of Saelices, all their organizations, in a living united front were holding a picnic for the children, in co-operation with the American Hospital staff, with an orchestra furnis-

hed by the Cuenca Branch of the Socorro Rojo Internacional, which was represented at the picnic by its president, Comrade Julian Lopez.

This picnic, not many miles from the front, in the midst of war and revolution, kept throwing one's mind back years and generations. Everything conspired in that direction. Not only the setting. What was more evident was the great enthusiasm among the younger generation in singing the Joven Guardia, often greater than in singing the International. And why not? Why sing only

Arise ye prisoners of starvation.
Arise ye wretched of the earth.

when a whole nation has arisen, when for hundreds of kilometers on a front from the Pyrenees to the Mediterranean, through mountains and deserted fields, hundreds of thousands of peasants, muleteers, factory workers professional people and even storekeepers are holding back and pushing back the forces which



CLIMBING THE GREASED POLE. One of Spanish kids at the picnic, tackling a new, imported sport.

would restore the power of the clergy, return the palace of Maria Cristina to the royal house... How appropriate the lines:

Somos la Joven Guardia
que va forjando el porvenir.

And the children of Saelices instinctively knew it. The International was a song learned and loved, but the Joven Guardia was felt and lived.

There wasn't the slightest doubt among the boys, trying, not very successfully, to climb the pole, that the earth was theirs. When from a corner of the field someone started to sing their song, down came the human column which was cooperatively trying to climb the too damn-well greased pole, and they all joined the chorus, fists raised.

Nor did they stop at the end of the first verse. After the refrain:

Es la lucha final que comienza
la revancha de los que ansían pan;
en la revolución que está en marcha
los esclavos el triunfo alcanzarán.

sung with meaningful severity, came the second verse, reminiscent and full of promise:

Hijos de la miseria

Más hambre no hemos de sufrir
Nuestras las fábricas serán.



HOSPITAL PICNIC SCENES. The children salute, drink leche, play and pose for our photographer.



PEASANT GIRL, photographed at the hospital picnic.

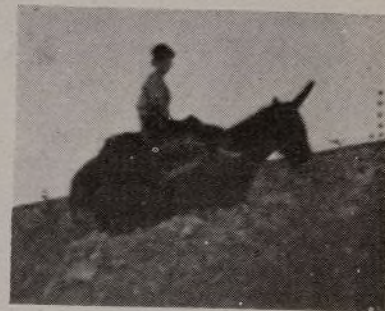
The woods were echoing their strong and vibrant voices. In the faces of the parents was reflected the joy over the victory against fascism and feudalism, but mingled with sadness and bitterness evoked by losses and past sufferings. Not so for the children. Theirs was the fiesta and theirs the world. They knew that:

*Mañana por las calles
masas en triunfo marcharán;
ante la Guardia Roja
los poderosos temblarán.*

Doctor Irving Busch, Commander of the American Hospitals in Spain, was as pleased and happy as any of the children. The nurses distributed toys (one for every child) the cakes, the sandwiches. Al Stone Political Commissar of the base, busy as a brood hen corraling ducklings, was everywhere, and when evening came and Comrade Julian Lopez expressed the wish that such affairs be held

often and regularly, it was amusing to watch the startled expression of Stone who had just wiped the perspiration from his forehead after shipping the last ambulance-load of children back to Saelices.

After supper the nurses, the whole hospital staff, many of the wounded, now convalescing, the delegations of the the workers or-



HOMEWARD BOUND. Riding the burro home, after a day of fun.



"THEY MARCHED down the road, more than 300 of them, singing..."

ganizations of Saelices and Cuenca, danced. In the library room of the Infanta Maria Cristina de Borbon, with the old painting still hanging, the room festooned with colored paper, joy reigned. And when the dance came to an end, and that only because of exhaustion, Stone found his way to his room and under the rich woolen spread on which the Infanta had her name and crown richly embroidered, no doubt thought of bigger and better picnics for the children of Saelices.

H. A.

THE BACKGROUND OF CHINESE UNITY

(Continued from page 1.)

this time, had the Red Army so wished, it could have marched through Shensi and considerably increased its strength, at the same time settling various old scores. It is equally certain that such action would have plunged China into a sharp civil war which would have been an immense asset to Japan. The Chinese Soviet Government and the Chinese Red Army did not take the bait. On the contrary, they played a leading part in securing Chiang Kai-Shek's release, frustrated the plans of the Japanese agents, and helped the Chinese people to realize more clearly where some of China's best friends were to be found.

In connection with Chiang's release, Chou En-Lai, Vice Chairman of the Red Army's Military Council, flew to Nanking and from there to Nanking.

Negotiations between the Chinese Soviet leaders and the Nank-

ing Government began shortly after the Sianfu affair, and at long last the Nanking Government has made the following official statement:

"China's Government at Nanking and the Communist Army have been fighting for ten years. The struggle is now over."

Previous to this, Mao Tse-tung, Chairman of the Chinese Soviet Government, and Chuh-teh, Commander in Chief of the Red Army, had been in Nanking for discussions with the Kuomintang Military Council.

The Chinese Red Army has now become the 8th Route Army of the Central Government Army of China, and Chuh-teh has been officially gazetted as its commander-in-chief. The Army is defending the key sectors of Nankow and Chahar on the Northern Front.

The Central Chinese Government has released hundreds of political prisoners.

In a war which will probably be of a very mobile character, and in which the policy of the Chinese forces will be to avoid big decisive battles in the early stages, a war of sudden attacks followed by withdrawal, swift concentration and dispersal, the Chinese Red Army, with its long experience of guerilla warfare and rapid movement, with its complete reliability founded on the political understanding of its soldiers, will be of inestimable value in China's struggle against Japan.

JAPAN'S DIFFICULTIES BEGINNING

At the same time as China is uniting all her forces, there are the first signs of military and political difficulties facing Japan. The Japanese Prime Minister has announced that the situation is one of "particular gravity" and

has uttered a warning against "premature optimism". Coming from the Japanese authorities, who at the beginning of their aggression showed just such premature optimism in their estimation of China's capacity for resistance, such a declaration can only have one meaning.

There is no doubt that the growth of mass unrest in Japan, corresponding to a difficult economic situation, has been one of the factors which decided the military-fascist ruling clique to launch their new attack at this time, in the hope of balancing Japanese economy with the cotton and the cattle, the metals and the coal of the Northern provinces. But their object will scarcely be secured if the war is prolonged, with the consequent strain on Japanese resources, and this is precisely what appears to be happening.

A. M. E.

GREAT BRITAIN AND THE FASCIST PIRATES

Fascism grows ever more desperate.

When German and Italian fascism, with the aid, of the traitor generals, attacked the Spanish people a year ago, it anticipated that within a few weeks it would be in control of the whole of the Spanish peninsula. And an impartial observer, marking the circumstances under which the invasion took place, might well be forgiven for agreeing with the fascist estimate. But what fascism had failed to take into account was the indomitable courage of the Spanish people and the active sympathy of the progressive forces of the whole world with the Republic in its struggle.

When it became evident that the easy victory it had anticipated would not be achieved, fascism still thought that by reason of its tremendously superior technical equipment and trained forces, it would achieve victory within a year of the commencement of the war. And for a time it also looked as if this estimate might be true. The untrained militia was being forced back at every point, despite the desperate courage it always displayed.

But a year has come and gone. Far from having achieved victory, fascism has been fought to a standstill and the growing power of the Spanish People's Army, with its increasingly better technical equipment, is steadily throwing back the fascist invaders.

PIRATICAL ATTACKS

In its utter desperation, fascism resorts to ever more reckless methods. On August 31st, the British destroyer, "Havock", was attacked by an unknown submarine. This attack was the culmination of a long series of piratical attacks on Mediterranean shipping.

The piracy commenced with the sinking of Spanish and Russian ships proceeding to or from Spain. Encouraged by the lack of concerted action by the Powers, it gradually extended to all shipping, of whatever nationality (excepting, of course, fascist shipping), that might be passing through the Middle Sea, whether its destination might be loyalist Spain or not. Spanish, Russian, French, Greek, Danish, Panaman and British vessels have all been attacked by aeroplanes, submarines and destroyers.

The surreptitious help and support that the British "National" Government has been lending to the designs of the fascists is being repaid with true fascist reciprocity. Not content with the control it has achieved over the Imperial British trade routes, fascism insists on *showing* its control in order to force further help.

MEDITERRANEAN PARLEY

With mixed motives, the British Government, assented to the calling of a conference of the Mediterranean Powers to deal with the question of the pirates, the "unknown pirates", as it called them with delightful naïveté.

It attended the conference with three objects:

1. To attempt to uphold the last traces of its prestige, which its constant withdrawals before fascist aggressions have brought lower than at any time in British history.

2. To protect that of its shipping not engaged in transporting food and supplies to loyalist Spain.

3. And to do all in its power, as far as it was consistent with the foregoing, to court fascist favour by giving it the particular kind of assistance that only the "National" Government can give.

PLANS RUDELY UPSET

But during the conference its plans were rudely upset. There

was at least one Power in Europe which was not at all disposed to tolerate the fog of diplomatic mumbo jumbo with which it was intended to surround the conference and cover a further betrayal of the fight against fascist aggression in Europe.

The representative of the USSR, did not bother to keep up the polite fiction that no one knew who the pirates were. To the horror of the British delegation, he stated in unmistakable terms who the pirates were and demanded their suppression.

After a long fight, the British plan, by which it was intended open the way to the giving of belligerent rights to Franco, was discarded. The plan which was eventually adopted is by no means a perfect instrument for the suppression of the pirates, but it will make their task considerably more difficult.

It would be over-optimistic to expect the British Government to fully implement the plan, yet there are signs that the antifascist forces (and even among the Governments own supporters, there are strong elements which disagree radically with its policy) are gathering strength and will compel a conducting of foreign affairs very different from the past. A letter to the "Times" by Mr. Wickham Steed, a past editor of the same paper, makes very interesting reading. Here is a short extract.

"If our policy induces a belief among other peoples, which like ourselves, hate war and love freedom, that we shall not raise a finger to help them should they be exposed to foreign aggression, we may foster this aggression and help to bring on a major war. Or our policy may drive these peoples to make terms with potential aggressors and thus leave us in a moral and political situation the reverse of splendid."

Its reckless attempts to extend war, fascism is opening the eyes of more and more of the British people as to what is its real significance, and we can visualise a time when the "National" Government will no longer be able to maintain its precarious balance and offer the aggressors the aid it has given them in the past five years.

J. T.

O. C. G.



WE VISIT A STEEL FOUNDRY

(Continued from Page 2.)

1 peseta 75 centimos a day, is located in what was formerly a long blue-print office. War posters decorate the neatly painted walls. A sign near the entrance of the kitchen says; "Comrades, the state of this dinning-hall will indicate the degree of our culture. Another sign, significantly displayed, emphasises: "Unity will bring us Victory. Fascism is the culture of barbarism."

They have their wall-paper, and they issue an attractive monthly magazine called "Hoy" (Today).

Classes in the technical processes of production are conducted after work hours. Recently 21 women attended these classes regularly. These women are now ready and anxious to take the places

of their men if these men are called to the front. Yes, women in the steel mills, swinging sledge hammers to forge a better life for the future.

To keep contact with the rear-guard "El Campesino" Division has adopted this factory. Festivals have already been held between the two groups. The fighters of the "Campesino" Division have visited the factory and in turn the Mill workers have gone to the Division to join them in their sports events and other festivities.

The unity between the front and the rear is the tremendous horse-power that is propelling us to ultimate victory against fascism.