

A Brief History of the War of Spain as written by the International War Correspondents that covered it.

(A Compilation made by Prof. Saturnino Aguado, University of Alcalá - Spain)

American journalists Ernest Hemingway, Martha Gellhorn, Virginia Cowles, Edgar Mowrer, George L. Steer, Herbert Matthews, H.R. Knickerbocker, Jay Allen, John T. Whitaker, John Dos Passos, Vincent Sheean, Jim Lardner, George Seldes, Lawrence Fernsworth, Edmond Taylor as well as other foreign correspondents, like Harold G. Cardozo, Vernon Bartlett and Cedric Salter (british), Felix Correia (portuguese), Javier E. Yndart (argentinian), Noel Monks (australian), Geoffrey Cox (new zealander), Pierre van Paassen (dutch), O. D. Gallagher (south african)... covered the Spanish War for their newspapers. Particularly interesting were the reports written by Knickerbocker, Allen, Cowles, Whitaker, Taylor, Monks and Cardozo, as they were allowed to be in Franco`s Spain and follow Franco`s troops in their advance towards Madrid in the summer-autumn of 1936 and in other campaigns.

This is what some of them wrote:

“The tidal wave of Fascism was rushing onward. It was in March 1936, that Hitler took his first important step toward shattering the whole existing structure of Europe, by moving into the Rhineland...

In Spain, Fascism took the form and name of Falangism. Defeated in the February elections, the reactionaries were triumphantly returning by extra-legal, undemocratic methods. When they had created a complete state of chaos, the Army, backed by Italy and Germany, stepped in –and the result was a civil war...

The Italian conquest of Abyssinia, completed on May 5 of that same year, 1936, encouraged Fascists and reactionaries everywhere, and nowhere more than in Spain. Britain and France had been humiliated for the first time; there were to be many other times. Mussolini was, of course, even more encouraged, and his decision to give active help to Franco and the other generals who were linked to the Fascist and Carlist movements was doubtless made then. The Duce was interested in the Mediterranean – *Mare Nostrum*- while Hitler was looking forward to the day of his great conquest of Europe. Moreover, there were material riches, in Spain and Morocco, which Germany coveted.

Fortunately for Spain and for world democracy, the people rose, blindly, desperately, spontaneously, as they had not done in Spain since Napoleon`s hated forces invaded their country. It upset all the Rebel`s calculations, and those of Mussolini and Hitler.

And so the Spanish Civil War began. The mechanism was set in motion on July 17, 1936, in Spanish Morocco when a number of regiments rose to Franco`s call to arms. The revolt spread to the Peninsula the next day. After days and weeks of confusion, a pattern began to shape up, with a majority of the people supporting the Government. But Franco and his Moors, better armed, disciplined, were already getting invaluable support from Germany and Italy. They moved northward toward Madrid, while three other columns moved down from Navarra and Leon.

As an insurrection, the movement had really failed in the first week of the conflict, but as an international conflict it was only beginning. Only a few persons behind the scenes in Rome and in Berlin, and in the high ranks of the Rebels, knew that not only a civil war but a European conflict was beginning. There, in Spain, a door was opened wide to Italian Fascism and German Nazism. All Europe, and, also, we in the United States, were to suffer the consequences.

(From Herbert L. Matthews: The Education of a Correspondent, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1946. Matthews covered the Spanish War for *The New York Times*)

Portela Tells How Franco Tried to Seize Power

“From Prime Minister Señor Portela Valladares I obtained the inside story of how Gil Robles and the Army tried to seize power right after the February elections just held. After I wrote the facts at the time I asked him to sign my report, and his signature on my notes lies before me as this is written. It is of particular interest that this statement implicates Gil Robles, since attempts have been made to picture him as standing apart from the plot that now was nearing a head.

What really happened, as Señor Portela told it to me, was as follows:

“At four o’clock in the morning of the day that followed the elections, that is on Monday, there came to my house a certain Josep Pla who was the Madrid correspondent of *La Veu de Catalunya* at Barcelona.

Pla told me I was wanted at the Ministerio de Gobernación which, as you know, was charged with the maintenance of order. On my arrival I found Gil Robles waiting for me. He said: “The Popular Front has won the elections. We cannot let it take office. I have come to ask you to assume the dictatorship. You will have our support. All I ask is that you associate me with you. Make me a minister, or your secretary or a stenographer, or whatever you like. But it is necessary that I be close to you.”

I told him that this could not be, but that the will of the people must prevail.

At six o’clock the same evening, February 18, I was visited by General Franco in my office. He said, “You must accept the dictatorship.” Once more I refused.”

The rightists, frustrated by Portela’s refusal to betray the Republic, embarked on a policy of making life impossible for it...The fact of the military conspiracy was an open secret...The conspirators needed only an incident –an overt act to serve as an excuse for the uprising. This was provided on July 12 by the assassination of Calvo Sotelo.”

Azaña’s Last Interview

“The Republican government continued its life as the Spanish Constitutional Government in Exile. President Azaña and members of his family had taken up residence in a commodious chalet not far from Geneva, Challonges. Thither I journeyed from Switzerland to see him at his invitation. He died within a matter of months afterward. It was the last interview he ever gave and it has never been published, for at the time he enjoined me to secrecy because, as an exile, he did not wish to make political statements...

I wanted to learn what actually happened on the night of July 17, 1936, which was the night the military rebellion was coming to a head.

“The war came. The forces against us were powerful and I knew they would win in the end. Before the war I had known that Fascist intrigue was rampant in Spain. But it was not supposed that it was so widespread as actually it was. When the Fascist powers – Italy and Germany- began sending their airplanes and ground forces in ever increasing numbers, the outlook indeed began to look dark. When the democracies turned cold

shoulders on us, the black situation seemed almost hopeless. Still we fought on and hoped, for as we Spaniards have a way of saying, one never knows what changes may come with the morrow.”

Azaña the realist turned his eye to the future which he saw with a prophetic clairvoyance.

“The military, with the church, will be uppermost and have a good chance of holding on for a number of years because the people are more accustomed to that kind of combination. The generals and the bishops are again in the saddle – Spain has gone back one hundred years.”

(From Lawrence Fernsworth: Spain's Struggle for Freedom, Boston: Beacon Press, 1957. Fernsworth lived and worked in Spain for ten years as a regular correspondent of *The Times* of London and a special representative of *The New York Times*.)

“ Germany had reoccupied the Rhineland and completed three years of rearmament by the summer of 1936; and Italy, emerging successfully from the Ethiopian war, had bolstered Fascism at home and increased the country`s prestige abroad. The two dictators –increasingly confident as they felt out the weaknesses of the British and French- saw an irresistible opportunity in the internal situation of Spain...

In Spain, the reactionary elements persuaded the professional army officers to create a military dictatorship. Count Romanones, who had been Alfonso XIII`s most wily counselor, spoke frankly to Claude G. Bowers, the American Ambassador. “The rebellion? We planned it the day we lost the election in February 1936”, he said. Having laid their plans, the reactionaries decided, in the first place, to get in touch with the German and Italian governments and, in the second place, to create incidents and spread terrorism which was answered in kind, not by the Popular Front government, but by the more radical elements outside of the government. The right murdered a popular leftist leader and the left retorted in swift reprisal. They strack down Calvo Sotelo, the ablest politician among the rightist plotters. This murder was used to set off the military *coup d` état*. There was a military rising in Morocco on July 16 and it became nationwide on July 18, 1936.

In May of 1939 –three years later- Herman Goering and Galeazzo Ciano revealed that German and Italian specialists, many of them disguised as tourists, went to Spain to aid this revolt from its outset. The Nazis and the fascists had prepared to assist the rebels long before the proclamation of revolt was raised in Morocco. Having denied their complicity through the whole of the “civil war”, the Germans and Italians boasted, once the war was won, that their intervention had been decisive. The official Italian *Informazione Diplomatica* proudly announced that “Italy replied to the first call of Franco on July 27, 1936: first casualties date from that time.” In his own newspaper, *Popolo d`Italia*, Mussolini wrote: “We have intervened from the first to the last.”

I estimated that at one time Italy had not less than 140.000 soldiers in Spain, while the Germans maintained a fixed establishment there of 10.000 technicians and 10.000 troops. These are my own estimates, however, and were not cited by Goering or Ciano...

I can vouch personally for the validity of this record because I was at the various fronts with the German and Italian tank and artillery units serving the Franco cause when we saw the first Russian tanks and airplanes arrive in late October and November...

The rebels never had a chance to win in Spain. Victory was won by the Germans and Italians, who twice rescued Franco from imminent disaster, and by the United States, Great Britain, and France, who denied arms to the Republicans...

It was the invasion of Spain by the Moors, ferried across the straits from Africa by the Italians and Germans, which saved the rebel traitors from the firing squad. Rushed over from Morocco in Italian planes and aided in the field by German planes and arms, these professional mercenaries were superior to such units as the Republicans could fashion out of undrilled men, hastily armed and sent into the field.

Marching with these Moors, I watched them flank, dislodge, and annihilate ten times their numbers in battle after battle. Individual heroism among untrained soldiers is not enough against professionals supported by aircraft. The Republicans used to fight

stubbornly until they could no longer stand under the fragmentation bombs and the artillery fire of the German and Italian “specialists”; then the Moors would charge and dislodge them from the relative security of their trench systems. With no professional officers and no training in the simple tactic of changing front, the beaten republicans would mill into some village, rushing madly for the illusionary protection of stone houses. Then, the German and Italian bombers would go for them. I used to watch the big bombs turning over and falling slowly. When they crashed, hundreds of Republicans died under the blasted masonry...

Having lost the *coup d'état* only to be saved by the Moors and the Italo-German air force, the rebels next lost the “civil war” by their badly conceived and costly assault on Madrid. I stood at the outskirts of Madrid with the Moors and watched General Franco destroy himself and his cause in a frontal attack against that proud city. With their backs to the walls of their capital, the Republicans needed no officers and no tactical knowledge. There was no question of their changing front or being maneuvered into the open. The individual stood where he was until he died. Franco hesitated before the attack long enough for the Republicans to organize their defenses and to take precautions against the fifth column. This phrase was born in that moment. Franco approached Madrid with four fighting columns, but, as general Mola had said, he counted for victory upon the operations of a “fifth column” composed of Franco sympathizers within Madrid...

How the Republicans held Madrid I was to see with my own eyes. I crawled down to the Frenchman's Bridge hoping to be the first correspondent with Franco's army to cross the Manzanares River into the city. The fire was too heavy and I lost my nerve. But through field glasses I watched the Moors clean out the six –and seven- story tenements just across the narrow and bloody little river. A detail of fifty Moors would surround a building, silence the ground-floor defenders, and rush in. Then they would clear the second story with submachine guns and hand grenades. These Moors were calm and tight-lipped, expert workmen. They would clear each building floor by floor. There was one difficulty. By the time the Moors had reached the top floor there were no more Moors left...

The unyielding and unending Republican resistance took the stach out of Franco's troops. In their long triumphant procession from Badajoz through Talavera de la Reina to Toledo, San Martín de Valdeiglesias and Navalcarnero, and hence to Madrid itself, the republicans have never stood against them successfully. Now the Republicans stood like a wall...

I talked with Colonel Castejón, the comander of the fourth of General Franco's columns. He lay wounded, his hip shattered: “We who made this revolt are now beaten” he said. He explained that the reports in Franco's headquarters estimated that of the 60.000 Moors engaged not less than 50.000 were casualties. The falangistas were unfit for front-line duty –cowards who played politics and killed behind the lines- and the Carlists, the bravest soldiers in Spain, were already destroyed. Franco had no army left. Imitating the Fuehrer and the Duce, Franco had assumed the title of Caudillo. But he was a *caudillo* without an army and without a country.

I talked with Captain Roland von Strunk, Hitler's special agent in Spain. “Franco is finished”, said Strunk...

Even Germans, like Strunk, a spy and a killer, said that he was outraged by the methods of the rebels. But the Italians and the Germans agreed that Franco could be saved only by the prompt arrival of foreign troops. While the Republicans dreamed of gathering strength to prepare an offensive, Mussolini sent Franco a mass army of 100,000 Italians. Hitler declined to send the 20,000 Germans for whom Franco had asked through Strunk. He already had that number in Spain, half soldiery, half specialists. Instead of doubling that strength he promised aid in matériel. German and Italian money was given to the penniless Franco so that he was able to bring over 70,000 additional Moors –about 40,000 of them recruited from French Morocco, where there was a famine and where certain French officials were Fascist sympathizers. Once again the foreigners imposed upon the Spanish nation new victories on behalf of a group of conspirators who had failed even to rally an army of Spaniards to their cause.

This Franco, who was never able to raise a Spanish army... Personally I found Franco shrewd but disconcertingly unimpressive. A small man, he is muscular; but his hand is soft as a woman's. Excessively shy as he fancies to understand a caller, his voice is shrill and pitched on a high note which is slightly disturbing since he speaks quietly, almost in a whisper. Although effusively flattering, he gave me no frank answer to any question I put to him. A less straightforward man I never met... This ambitious little man...

Few of the Franco's apologists in Britain, France, and America knew Spanish reactionaries in Spain. The magazine *Life*, scarcely a "red" publication, wrote of the "ruling class" and the "best elements" that they "were probably the world's worst bosses –irresponsible, arrogant, vain, ignorant, shiftless, and incompetent." They were the royalists, the landowners, the generals, and the Catholic hierarchy...

"We have got to kill and kill and kill, you understand." Said one of Franco's chief press officers, over and over again. He was Captain Don Gonzalo Aguilera, Count of Alva de Yeltes. "It's our program, you understand, to exterminate one third of the male population of Spain"... Aguilera began to feel that I was seeing altogether too much of the Franco methods firsthand and he began to doubt my political reliability. Franco's propaganda bureau let in no correspondents unless it felt certain that they were Fascists. They let me in because the Italians during the Ethiopian War had decorated me with the *Croce di Guerra*...

The German Gestapo instructed the falangistas in the technique of terrorism... José Sainz, the leader of the falange for the District of Toledo, I knew well. He showed me a neatly kept notebook. "I jot them down", he said. "I have personally executed 127 red prisoners."

For two months I kept a room at Talavera de la Reina which served as a base camp for trips to the front. I slept there on an average of two nights a week. I never passed a night there without being awakened at dawn by the volleys of the firing squads in the yard of the *Cuartel*. There seemed no end to the killing. They were shooting as many at the end of the second month as in my first days in Talavera. They averaged perhaps thirty a day. I watched the men they took into the *Cuartel*. They were simple peasants and workers, Spanish Milquetoasts. It was sufficient to have carried a trade-union card, to have been a Freemason, to have voted for the Republic. If you were picked up or denounced for any of these charges you were given a summary, two-minute hearing and capital

punishment was formally pronounced. Any man who had held any office under the Republic was, of course, shot out of hand.

I can never forget the first time I saw the mass execution of prisoners. I stood in the main street of Santa Olalla, as seven trucks brought in the militiamen. They were unloaded and herded together. They had that listless, exhausted, beaten look of troops who can no longer stand against the steady pounding of the German bombs. Most of them had a soiled towel or a shirt in their hands –the white flags with which they had signaled their surrender. Two Franco officers passed out cigarettes among them and several Republicans laughed boyishly and self-consciously as they smoked their first cigarette in weeks. Suddenly an officer took me by the arm and said, “It`s time to get out of here.” At the edge of this cluster of prisoners, six hundred-odd men, Moorish troopers were setting up two machine guns. The prisoners saw them as I saw them. The men seemed to tremble in one convulsion, as those in front, speechless with fright, rocked back on their heels, the color draining from their faces, their eyes opening with terror...

Franco`s fixed policy of shooting militiamen brought protests. An Italian general made an issue of the fact that 20.000 Republicans who had surrendered to Italian troops were subsequently executed by Franco...

Such stories of these atrocities as leaked out were categorically denied abroad by the propaganda bureau and its apologists. The executions in the Badajoz bull ring were first reported in America by Jay Allen, in the *Chicago Tribune*. He had been the first correspondent to interview Franco and he had generally proved himself the best informed journalist in Spain. His story was denied and he was vilified by paid speakers from one end of the United States to the other. A typical trick was to deny that Allen has been in Badajoz at the time it was taken. Allen`s dispatch said categorically that he had arrived later, that he was not able to send any eyewitness story but that he was quoting Franco sources. Colonel Yague, who commanded the Franco forces at Badajoz, laughed at these denials.

“Of course we shot them” he said to me. “What do you expect? Was I supposed to take 4.000 reds with me as my column advanced, racing against time? Was I expected to turn them loose in my rear and let them make Badajoz red again?”

The men who commanded them never denied that the Moors killed the wounded in the Republican hospital at Toledo. They boasted of how grenades were thrown in among two hundred screaming and helpless men. They never denied to me that they had promised the Moors white women when they reached Madrid. This practice was not denied by El Mizian, the only Moroccan officer in the Spanish army. I stood at the crossroads outside Navalcarnero with this Moorish major when two Spanish girls, not out of their teens, were brought before him. One had worked in a textile factory in Barcelona and they found a trade-union card in her leather jacket. The other came from Valencia and said she had no politics. After questioning them for military information, El Mizian had them taken into a small schoolhouse where some forty Moorish soldiers were resting. As they reached the doorway an ululating cry rose from the Moors within. I stood horrified in helpless anger. El Mizian smirked when I remonstrated with him. “Oh, they`ll not live more than four hours”, he said. I suppose Franco felt that women had to be given the Moors. They were unpaid. Franco had no funds and I

personally witnessed the payment of Moorish soldiers on one occasion in German marks from the inflation period...

The ruthlessness of the Franco rebels must have stemmed from the Inquisition. They killed their prisoners methodically and without pity –because those men were wrong. They were on the wrong side. Bigotry and fanaticism make murder easy.

On the other side there were murders too. But they were done by individuals and groups that got out of hand. When the government regained control these murders were punished. At no time did the Republic undertake mass executions. There was a very real distinction between “red atrocities” and the Franco “executions” committed with organized discipline as part of a fixed program to purge Spain of reds”.

(From John T. Whitaker (1943): We Cannot Escape History, The MacMillan Company, New York, N. Y., 1943)

“I was the first American correspondent to rush the Franco-Spanish border or, so far as I know, to get into rebel territory anywhere from the outside...

I joined forces in Pamplona with three other correspondents: Harold Cardozo, of the *Daily Mail*, Bertrand de Jouvenel and another Frenchman. We reached Aranda de Duero hours ahead of the Soria column. There we learned that the Burgos column had advanced to the foot of the Somosierra pass, the gateway to Madrid across the Guadarrama Mountains, and were waiting for morning to repeat the exploit of Napoleon's Polish lancers...

By the end of July the insurrection, which had been started by bad generals and idealists, had failed as an insurrection, so they made a war of it, starting with a censorship and ending up with the Germans and Italians.

The censoring at Burgos, which was the base from which most of the correspondents worked until late in September, was chiefly done by a remarkable censor named Captain Aguilera. He had been a cavalry officer in Morocco and a military attaché in Berlin...Sometimes in the evening he would sit and drink with us and analyze the war from an original racist point of view that he had worked out. His theory was that the war was a conflict between Nordic and Oriental ideologies, the Oriental element, represented by the Reds naturally, having been introduced into Spain by the Moors, who in the course of time became the slaves of the northern Spaniards and thus begat the proletariat. The proletariat having been converted to Marxism, an Oriental doctrine which was in their blood anyhow, were now trying to conquer Spain for the Orient and the insurrection was quite literally a second reconquista by the Christian Nordics.

In the matter of killing, Aguilera adhered to the idealistic Spanish point of view...Later, when the battles got bigger and the rebels started taking prisoners in thousands, this high moral feeling wore off, principles were overlooked at times, and prisoners were kept. I think this was partly due to the moderating influence of the Germans and Italians, who are less idealistic than the Spaniards. In my day the decadence had not set in, and after the first few weeks the original idea of killing prisoners as a military necessity or as a joke evolved into this higher moral feeling that I mention. So far as I could tell, the principle seemed to be this:

The enemy was a complex molecule of a spiritual poison called communism for convenience, but liberalism was the most deadly individual element in it and the most hated. Introduced into the human organism, this poison acted like a germ virus; not only incurable, but infectious. Certain men known as the Leaders had perversely inoculated themselves with the poison and, like Stan in Catholic mythology, were deliberately trying to spread the infection as widely as they could. As the incarnation of evil these men deserved punishment. Their victims, who might have been good Spaniards if they had not had the bad luck to be infected by the Leaders, did not merit punishment properly speaking, but they had to be shot in a humane way because they were incurable and might infect others.

Understanding and accepting this theology of the insurrection was one of the principal duties of correspondents in Burgos but, once understood and presumably accepted, it could not be written about. Once I tried to write about something I had seen, and

pointed out to the censor that I was not accusing anyone of an atrocity, but he said it might make a bad impression...

The censors themselves, together with Spanish idealism, were an extenuating circumstance. One day they put up a notice in the pressroom that henceforth the rebels must not be called rebels or insurgents, and they were not all fascists either nor plain nationalists, as we sometimes called them. "Spanish national forces" was the suggested term, I believe. The same notice decreed that the loyalists were not and, although they were Republicans and had a government of sorts, should not be termed republicans or governmentals in dispatches. Reds was all right...

By the time I finally joined Franco's army at Talavera the adventurous period was definitely over, but it was in the drive up the valley of the Tagus to Toledo that I got my first taste of real war.

The Moors and the Tercio were both charming, if you met them on a social basis, but they had carried with them out of Africa a spiritual atmosphere like the stench in the den of a beast of prey, stench of carrion and of the beast. The Moors, many of whom were irregulars recruited in the mountains for the occasion, were simply savage mercenaries fighting for infidels against infidels, and the Sacred Heart scapulars they wore pinned to the burnouses of Islam were the badges of their tragic Berber blood that was always ready to spill itself for alien faiths, accepting only the pessimism in them.

The Legionaries were different: they were not just mercenaries, but also exalted pessimists. They had a kind of praetorian idealism of their own, sympathetic to the totalitarianism of the falangists and to the fanatical father fixation of the Requetes, just as fanatical but distinct. Their theology was a compound of tyrannical devotion to their officers, of the cult of duty, of the cult of killing and the cult of death. The legion was the creation of Millan Astray, a one-armed general who had built strongly and well upon the most sinister layers in the soul of his countrymen –the Spanish Foreign Legion was nearly all Spanish...

The atmosphere of the Foreign Legion in its less agreeable phases was pretty much the atmosphere of the Moors; and in this atmosphere we lived during the Tagus campaign, which was my last in Spain...

There were plenty of spectacular atrocities, on Franco's side and on the other, even when you made allowances for exaggeration and propaganda. I suppose it was an atrocity when they locked up the militia girl, taken near Santa Olalla, in a big room with fifty Moors, or when the legionaries went through the hospital of San Juan, near Toledo, chucking hand grenades into the wards. We had a steady diet of stories like these, supplied more or less at first hand, and they did not make covering the war in Spain any pleasanter...

The worst battlefield I saw was the city of Toledo when I went in with Franco –the broken and defiled tomb of Spain's grandeur, it seemed to me. Most of the bodies had been cleared away, dragged by the heels and piled like logs in the hallways of houses or dropped face down into the big mine craters, but the little puddles of blood in the ruined Plaza Zocodover had not been wiped up and dogs were sniffing at them.

I put the dogs into the lead of my story, which was an odd way to begin a story about the Alcazar and Franco's apotheosis and the new Spain, and perhaps it was bad journalism. Maybe it was not good coverage, but I think I was at least covering the real story, which was not who was winning, but what the battlefield looks like when you start a political crusade. It seemed to me that you can judge the value of an ideal by the kind of battlefields, if any, that it leads to.

It still seems that way to me."

(From Edmond Taylor: "Assignment in Hell", in Frank C. Hanighen (ed.), Nothing But Danger, New York: National Travel Club, 1939. Edmond Taylor covered the Spanish War for the *Chicago Tribune*)

Sevilla, 8 (Atrasado)

Después de atravesar algunos de los esplendorosos salones del Palacio de Yanduri, nos introdujeron en el despacho del general Franco.

Nos hace recordar a otro dictador con quien tuvimos el honor de hablar: Hitler, quien, siendo un sencillo obrero y soldado, ha realizado en su patria una obra idéntica a la que este ilustre general empieza ahora en España.

El general Franco es un hombre de estatura normal, de rostro afeitado y frente alta. Sobre el uniforme lleva una sencilla insignia de San Fernando.

¿Cuáles han sido las causas determinantes de la eclosión del movimiento?

Desde 1931 se venía procediendo a una auténtica operación de desnacionalización y de desmembramiento de España. Se vivía en permanente guerra civil. El ejército venía siendo progresivamente "triturado". Y ahora, en los últimos tiempos, se licenció a casi la mitad de los soldados, siendo cesados o trasladados muchos oficiales de prestigio. Añádase a esto la incitación persistente y consentida a la indisciplina, a la destrucción sostenida de la economía nacional, al descrédito del espíritu patriótico, la aniquilación de España; en fin, ya se verá hasta qué punto era indispensable llevar a cabo este movimiento y ya mismo, porque si es verdad que, de momento, teníamos, y tenemos, la seguridad absoluta de la victoria, eso no lo hubiéramos podido garantizar de aquí a unos meses o a unos días. Porque, con la complicidad y la actuación de los gobiernos, estaba preparada para este mes de agosto la revolución social destructora y sangrienta.

¿Cuáles son los objetivos principales de la revolución?

Salvar la patria del caos y de la vergüenza en la que se encuentra y evitar la hecatombe que se estaba preparando para estos días.

¿Y qué saldrá de esta revolución?

Una dictadura militar que inicie la realización del programa que ha unido a todos los patriotas en este movimiento.

¿Cuál será?

El futuro dirá. En cuanto sea posible, el directorio militar instará a colaborar a los diferentes elementos de la vida nacional, entregando la administración a técnicos y no a políticos y dando a España la organización "española" que necesita.

¿Y que se corresponde con las de Portugal, Italia, Alemania y otros países?

Sí, pero sin copiarlas. En España los problemas son diferentes: no existe la cuestión racista, como en Alemania, igual que no existen otras que hay en Italia, etcétera.

Corrió el rumor de que iría con la gran columna que se está organizando contra Madrid...

No es cierto. Dirigiré desde aquí todo el movimiento militar, que tiene como objetivo principal, en este momento, hacer que Madrid se rinda.

¿De qué forma? ¿Por medio de un ataque violento y fulminante?

No es esa mi intención. Como se trata de una lucha entre españoles, aunque por un lado se encuentren muchos malos patriotas, envenenados por falsas promesas de paraísos imposibles, deben evitarse los grandes combates, como se debe evitar el bombardeo de

la capital, donde tantos cientos de miles de personas están con el alma y con el corazón con nuestro movimiento. Así pues, es preferible estrechar el cerco de tal manera que el hambre, la sed, la rebelión interna, el pánico y la convicción de la derrota inevitable lleven al Gobierno y a sus cómplices a la rendición. Por lo demás, trataremos de castigar severamente sólo a los responsables directos e indirectos de tantos crímenes y abusos, que van desde el destripamiento de mujeres a la quema de personas vivas y al fusilamiento de niños. Los otros, las gentes humildes que han sido y están siendo engañadas, cuando comprendan su trágico error, serán nuestros valiosos e imprescindibles colaboradores en la obra nacional. Quitando a éstos, al gobierno de Madrid sólo lo defienden algunos oficiales indignos y otros cargos que no se sublevarán únicamente para que no los asesinen y que están ansiosos de poder colaborar con el movimiento nacional pasándose a nuestras filas.

Permítame, mi general, que le haga una pregunta: En las regiones sublevadas del Norte ondea la bandera roja y oro. Aquí, en Andalucía, salvo algunas excepciones, la bandera izada es la tricolor. ¿Cuál de ellas quedará como bandera de España?

En los acuerdos que hice con el general Mola y con los otros mandos quedó establecido lo siguiente: el movimiento no es contra el régimen, lo único que pretende es nacionalizarlo y hacer a la nación fuerte, próspera y pacífica. En cuanto a la bandera, no se acordó nada. Será un problema que habrá que resolver después. Hasta entonces, que cada uno use la bandera que quiera, siempre que ésta no tenga una significación antiespañola. De momento, la bandera oficial es la tricolor, como el himno oficial es el de Riego.

(Felix Correia, artículo publicado en *Diario de Lisboa* el 10 de Agosto de 1936)

Salamanca, 11

En su residencia salmantina, el general Franco ha mantenido en la víspera del Día de la Raza una conversación con el corresponsal de LA NACION.

Abierto por usted un nuevo y gran capítulo en la historia de España, ¿cómo contempla el porvenir de la nueva España?

Después de una convulsión como la que ha experimentado España, las naciones se hunden o se engrandecen. Impedir el desastre fue el móvil de la decisión del 17 de Julio de los jefes del ejército y de los innumerables españoles de diversos matices políticos que los secundaron con todo entusiasmo. Tal es el espíritu que nos anima a cuantos trabajamos unidos por salvar a España...

Se acerca el momento de que los españoles, divididos durante tantos años por las luchas políticas, aúnen sus voluntades dentro del amplio cuadro que les ofrece un Estado totalitario nacional en el riguroso sentido de la palabra.

(Javier E. Yndart, artículo publicado en el diario *La Nación* de Buenos Aires el 12 de Octubre de 1936)

“This is the most painful story it has ever been my lot to handle...Four thousand men and women have died at Badajoz since General Francisco Franco`s Rebel Foreign Legionnaires and Moors climbed over the bodies of their own dead through its many times blood-drenched walls...

I have seen shame and indignation in human eyes before, but not like this...

It had been nine days since Badajoz fell on August 14th. Between fifty and one hundred have been shot every day since. The Moors and Foreign Legionnaires are looting...

We drove to the Plaza. Here yesterday there was a ceremonial, symbolical shooting. Seven leading Republicans shot with a band and everything before three thousand people...

They were young, mostly peasants in blue blouses, mechanics in jumpers. “The Reds”. They are still being rounded up. At four o`clock in the morning they are turned out into the ring through the gate by which the initial parade of the bullfight enters. There machine guns await them.

After the first night the blood was supposed to be palm deep on the far side of the lane. I don`t doubt it. Eighteen hundred men –there were women, too- were moved down there in some twelve hours. There is more blood than you would think in eighteen hundred bodies.”

(From the Jay Allen`s dispatch “Blood Flows in Badajoz” as it appeared in the Chicago Tribune, August 26, 1936, reprinted in Marcel Acier (ed.), From Spanish Trenches, New York: Modern Age Books, 1937)

“Trouble was brewing. But not on the Left. It was the Right that would not abide by the decision of the majority of the people. Four days after the elections rightist students in Madrid made an attempt on the life of a Socialist professor, Señor Jiménez de Assua, and accidentally killed a policeman who was accompanying the professor. (The latter had been warned of an impending attempt on his life). A few days thereafter one of the judges who had imposed sentence on the murderous students was shot down in the streets. Then came the celebration of the fifth anniversary of the founding of the Republic when Fascists threw a bomb at the presidential tribuna just at the moment when Señor Azaña, the President, had finished his speech. The deadly engine missed him by a couple of inches. In protest the workers of Madrid decreed a twenty-four hour strike. They did not retaliate by attacking leaders of the Right. They simply demanded that the government immediately dissolve the Fascist leagues –a little matter that had been neglected till that time...

Most of the men I met in the course of my tour in the months of May and June, while happy over the turn of events, entertained grave apprehensions for the future. Don Miguel de Unamuno, whom I visited again, was in a gloomy mood. “Dire events are in the offing”, said the Basque sage, “The Republic has made the enormous mistake of leaving the old generals in charge of the army. For in Spain”, he added, “the real menace is not Bolshevism, as the Right would now have the world believe...Bolshevism theories never made the slightest impression on the Spanish masses...There is no Communism here. I said that in Paris six years ago and I repeat it now. Our greatest danger is the military. We have more officers here in Spain right now than the German Empire had during the Great War. The Republic has not dared to send these fellows packing, for fear that their rancor would cause them to plot. History has shown that our militarists need not be dismissed from the army to become conspirators... They form a pretorian elite which has strong links with the higher clergy and with the financiers. They are nearly aristocrats... They were plotting yesterday. They are plotting today... I do not think they aim at a restoration of the monarchy, for it is they who betrayed the monarchy in its dying hours. They are playing for higher stakes. They want to rule without the monarchy. But such a pretorian republic would be infinitely worse than the regime of Don Alfonso or Primo de Rivera, for I doubt if it could maintain itself without foreign aid”.

These words were spoken in May 1936!

I went from town to town. Life went on in the usual way: everything was as it had been. No, not everything: for one thing there were more bookshops; the labor halls, the so-called People`s Houses, were no longer located in dilapidated slum dwellings. Popular evening classes had been opened, concerts were given, the walls carried announcements of new hospitals and clinics having been made available to the public, the entrance fee to the bullfights had been reduced, and there was an enormous number of meetings being held. But to my amazement I saw young dandies, of the type Parisians call *filis de papa*, come into a popular meeting in Seville and throw a lot of stink bombs...

That was indeed the argument Franco gave the world two months later when he betrayed the republic: Spain had been plunged into chaos by the anarcho-Communist-Socialist coalition and he, Franco, had been chosen by God to be the country`s savior...

Having returned to France after my round trip in May and June, I rushed back to Spain when Franco's revolt, which at first had looked like an insignificant garrison brawl in the Moroccan protectorate, jumped the Straits of Gibraltar to the mainland. Right then the incident of the Italian airplanes made it clear that the Spanish Republic was not confronted with a mere military pronunciamiento of the kind General Sanjurjo had attempted two years earlier, but that Europe was about to witness a brazen looting expedition on the part of Mussolini and Hitler in the Spanish peninsula.

On July 30, three Italian bombing planes, for want of fuel, had been forced to land in French Morocco. Two others crashed in the Oran region of Algeria and a sixth fell forty kilometers from Nemours, near the mouth of the Moulouya river. Every one of these planes had ten machine guns on board. After examining the wrecked planes and interrogating the surviving aviators, who had first pretended to be Spaniards, the French High Commissioner in Rabat informed his government in Paris that the six bombers had left the military airdrome of Milan on the morning of July 27. But, he added, the order to transport the six machines to Spanish Morocco, an order which had been found on the dead bodies of the aviators, had been issued by the Italian military authorities on July 15.

In other words, three days before Franco started his revolt, Italy had begun its war against the Spanish Republic!

When I arrived in the Catalonian capital on July 22, the decision had already been made: Fascism had been extirpated. The workers rushed General Gode's troops. Against his machine guns and artillery they advanced with miserable pistols, butcher knives, muzzle-loaders, old flintlocks and commandeered motor trucks. It was sheer insanity, but within a few hours, at the cost of about a thousand dead in the workers' ranks, feudal Fascism was swept away, and in a few weeks' time the whole of Catalonia was liberated. Whatever the Fascists did subsequently in Spain does not begin to compare with the heroism of the unarmed and militarily unorganized workers of Catalonia. There was nothing heroic about that massacre by the Moors of the thousands in Badajoz whose names were found on the list of subscribers to a local public library in which there may have been some books by Karl Marx and Piotr Kropotkin. Nothing heroic about the crushing of the Catholic Basque Republic by powerful and perfectly equipped foreign armies...

I spent the first weeks of the civil war behind the lines in Catalonia with a column of libertarian partisans. The Catalan labor unions had performed the miracle of beating down Gode and his army of forty thousand men in Barcelona proper. Whatever war equipment was available for the campaign to dislodge the Fascists from the provincial cities in Catalonia and Aragon had been collected from the abandoned stores of the defeated insurgents and from the monasteries and churches in the capital.

Even so, supplies for a campaign in the rural regions were ridiculously inadequate: no artillery, no machine guns, no trucks. When on my first contact with the militia on the outskirts of the town of Sietamo I saw the poverty of their equipment my heart sank in my shoes. How could these men in overalls and canvas slippers expect to halt the drive that would certainly be coming from the direction of Saragossa? Thoughts of Ethiopia flitted through my mind. Men were lying about in all attitudes alongside a rural road, sleeping, eating, discussing what was to be done. Hundreds of farmers from the

surrounding districts had joined them. They wanted to enlist. But there were no rifles to hand out...

With the Fascist rebellion crushed in Catalonia and the Moors halted on the outskirts of Madrid, the republican authorities found time to examine and classify the enormous number of documents which had been found in the homes and clubs of fugitive nobles, ecclesiastics, military men and Fascist leaders as well as in the abandoned offices of the German Nazi sections that flourished all over Spain before July, 1936. These papers established definitely that Hitler and Mussolini had not rushed to the aid of Franco in a spontaneous and disinterested élan of brotherly feeling when he set about “to rid Spain of Marxism”, but that the conspiracy had been hatching a long time. One of the first documents to come to light was a procès-verbal of a conference held in Rome in May, 1934, between Mussolini and the Spanish monarchist leader, Antonio Goicoechea. At this conference the Duce had promised to furnish the rightist parties with two hundred thousand rifles and two thousand machine guns. Another document showed that General Sanjurjo, who was to have been the leader of the revolt, visited Berlin in May, 1936, and came away with a donation of two million pesetas for the work of stirring up trouble in the Republic...

I was permitted to inspect documents which established that the German airplane factories of Junker, Dornier, Krupp and Messerschmidt, whose names were later to figure so often and in so tragic a manner in the dispatches about Guernica and Gijón and Bilbao, had been dickering with Sanjurjo and Juan March, Franco’s banker, a full eighteen months before the rebellion “broke out”...

The last military engagement I witnessed was the siege of the Alcázar fortress in Toledo. In the light of what followed –the horror of hundreds of cities and villages destroyed by “the civilizing action” of German and Italian bombers, the incredible massacres on the road from Almería, the sadistic bacchanalia of the Basqueland and the Asturias, Guernica, Durango, the aerial bombardments of Barcelona and Valencia-Toledo may perhaps be considered mere child’s play. Still there was something so contemptible about the siege of that walled-in complex of medieval buildings that it sticks in my memory as the place where I saw Fascist ignominy sink to its lowest depth. Most of the loyalist defenders of the town withdrew in good order in the direction of Madrid when Franco’s troops entered. Only the prisoners and the sick were killed by the five battalions of Moors who marched in the vanguard of the “Christian” army...

When the Vatican took the side of Franco in the civil war in Spain, there should have been no surprise. Franco attacked the emerging democratic regime with the aid of the Fascists of Germany and Italy and with the intention of turning Spain into a totalitarian state with a totalitarian religion. For today Rome considers the Fascist regime the nearest to its dogmas and interests. We have not merely the Reverend father Coughlin praising Mussolini’s Italy as “a Christian democracy”, but *Civiltà Cattolica*, house organ of the Jesuits, holding that Fascism is the regime that corresponds most closely to the concepts of the Church of Rome...

In the course of the month of April, 1935, two years before Franco hoisted the banner of revolt in Morocco, a series of conferences was held in the Ministry of Economic Affairs in Berlin and in the Adlon Hotel of the same city at which were present, among others, Dr. Alfred Merron, chairman of the board of directors of the Metalgesellschaft, the stell

trust of Frankfort-on-the-Main; Dr. Hjalmar Schacht, Minister Of Economic Affairs in Hitler`s cabinet; Señor Gil Robles, leader of the clerical-Fascist agrarian party of Spain; Señor Juan March, Spanish banker and steamship-line operator; General Sanjurjo, leader of an abortive military *Putsch* against the Spanish republican regime, and Signor Guido Mazolini, chief of the trade division of the Italian foreign office.

These gentlemen were informed by Dr. Merton that with the approval of the Spanish Government, which was then headed by Señor Alejandro Lerroux, an international consortium was about to be formed for the exploitation of the mineral resources of the Iberian peninsula, including Portugal and the Spanish colonial domains in north Morocco. The Italians had been invited to this meeting on the personal suggestion of Hermann Goering...

I have before me the minutes of one meeting held in the Ministry of Economic Affairs on April 21, and also some of the agreements drawn up in the course of that month back in 1935 between the various aforementioned corporations and the Spanish government. These papers are of indisputable authenticity and were supplied by an international banker in Paris who was indirectly represented at the conference in Berlin...

At subsequent meetings of the international industrialists in Berlin the discussion centered on the exploitation of the vast mineral resources of Spanish Morocco. The agreements for an intensive exploitation of all these properties, both on the Spanish mainland and in Africa, the division of exploitation cost and the shares Germany and Italy were to have from the output were finally signed with the owners in the course of the month of January, 1936.

However, in the month of February of that same year, the political parties banded together in the Spanish Frente Popular triumphed at the polls, in spite of the fact, it is to be noted, that Señor Gil Robles, one of the negotiators in Berlin, controlled the election machinery. One of the first reforms to be taken in hand by the new Spanish government was the nationalization of the mines. When the news of the Frente Popular`s victory reached Berlin, plans for the execution of the contracts were dropped for the time being. Indalecio Prieto showed me one day at the Ministry of the Interior in Madrid the files of the correspondence exchanged between the government of Gil Robles and Lerroux on the one hand and the international trusts on the other. Not a single letter had been received after the Frente Popular came into power. The negotiators had known that there was no use in trying to enlist the new democratic government in Madrid in a scheme which aimed at the rearmament of the two most powerful Fascist states in Europe. The incoming government did not have the confidence of Hitler and Mussolini.

Even so, the need for raw materials was pressing. Germany`s war stocks were of the scantiest. Rather than forego the unlimited supply that the mines of Iberia and the Riff offered, Hitler summoned General Sanjurjo from Lisbon (where he was living in banishment) to Berlin in March, 1936, and the plot for a military insurrection against the Republic with the aid of the Fuehrer and Signor Mussolini was hatched. The presence of fifteen Communist deputies in the new Cortes of the Frente Popular (France was to send seventy-three Communists to parliament a few weeks later) was deemed a sufficient peg on which to hang a campaign of international propaganda to the effect that Moscow had designs on Spain – and the trick was turned. Within a week Spanish

Fascists began terrorizing the population; their *agents provocateurs* who had slipped into the labor organizations began setting churches on fire; capitalists exported their valuta abroad to hamper the government in the execution of its financial policy, and kept up the sabotage of the constituted authority until Sanjurjo would be ready. Then the monarchist Sotelo was sacrificed and Franco in indignation moved to the attack in Morocco, Cabanellas in Burgos, Mola in Madrid and Goded in Barcelona. Hitler had justified his terror on the grounds of an impending Communist revolution in Germany; Franco, who succeeded as Generalissimo when Sanjurjo crashed on the way to take command of the insurrection, justified his attack on the Spanish Republic with the same argument.

In December, 1936, Germany had the satisfaction of receiving the first shipments of iron ore from Spanish Morocco and a year later had not only the mines of the Asturias under her control, but had ordered Franco, in exchange for artillery tanks, Junker planes and ammunition, to have one million tons of ore, antimony, tin, copper and lignite in German ports by the end of 1939.

It is not unlikely that if the French government had carried out its first impulse in July, 1936, of sending to Morocco the forty-odd bombing planes which were standing ready for delivery (on an order dating back eighteen months) in the various French aviation factories, Franco's rebellion would have been nipped in the bud. The Generalissimo's equipment at that time was far from impressive. The insurrection had miscarried in such important cities as Madrid, Barcelona, Alicante, Valencia, Cartagena, Murcia, in the entire Basque country and in the Asturias. His military force was restricted to the Tercio (Foreign Legion) and the Moorish regiments in Africa. The bulk of these troops, moreover, were stationed in Africa. He had no navy to transport them to the peninsula. Only Seville and Saragossa of the great Spanish cities had been brought over to his side...

France could have squelched Franco's threat to her friendly sister republic in a week's time had she followed the advice of Edouard Daladier, the War Minister, and Pierre Cot, the Minister of Aviation, both Radicals, in Léon Blum's cabinet. Blum was the one who hesitated the moment the French reactionary press began to protest against delivery of the long-ordered war equipment for which the Spanish government was calling. Léon Blum countermanded not only the order for the dispatch of the bombers, but in panic ordered the Spanish border closed. Subsequently, after Franco had taken Toledo and subjected Madrid to its first bombardments, Léon Blum replied: "My heart bleeds as much as any man's for the people of Spain, but every time we make a move to help the Spanish Republic, we are warned by Downing Street that if we become involved in war with Italy and Germany over Spain, France cannot count on British support"...

In vain did the Left Republicans plead for the opening of the frontier to war supplies, not merely in the interests of the Spanish Republic, but in the interest of France herself...

To every objective observer it seemed incomprehensible that France should adopt a policy of strict neutrality in a situation where her national security was jeopardized to a graver extent even than by Hitler's remilitarization of the Rhineland...

Mussolini would have thought twice to launch his Fascist legions against a French army and Hitler could not, because of his shortage of raw materials, have plunged into war. From whatever angle one looked at it the attitude of France seemed a puzzle. Why did not France prevent the Fascistization of the Spanish peninsula? Why did the French general staff not intervene when Mussolini installed himself on the Balearic Islands and built a submarine base on the Canaries, thus putting under the control of his guns the two sea routes along which France`s colonial armies must be transported? Why did the mighty British Empire permit the erection of naval fortresses at Ceuta and Algeciras opposite Gibraltar, imperiling the freedom of her Mediterranean route to the Near East and India?"

(From Pierre van Paassen (1939): Days of Our Years, New York: Hillman-Curl, Inc., 1939. Van Paassen covered the War of Spain for *Federated Press of America*, *Canadian Central Press* and *Seven Arts Feature Syndicate*)

“Madrid, as the rebels came closer and closer, remained almost alarmingly calm. Even the first air raids did little to shake the city’s calm. As Franco’s columns drew nearer to Madrid on the south he sent bombers over the city regularly several times a day. One raid brought to the heart of Madrid more than a hint of what the future held. On Friday, October 30th, six bombs fell in the Plaza de Colón and nearby, killing sixteen people and wounding sixty. One bomb fell in the midst of a queue of women waiting for milk. The raid was just at dusk, and the aeroplane was not heard. The day before, the air raid had been accompanied by the throwing of light bombs from upper windows. One had landed in front of a trade union doorway when the raiding planes were some distance away. Now that Franco was nearing the city the Fifth Column’s hour seemed at hand.

By Wednesday, the rebels had taken Leganés. The same evening Getafe fell, after severe fighting. On Thursday, fighting had begun in the streets of Carabanchel. The attack on Madrid itself had begun.

On Friday night, in thousand of homes in Madrid families sat round their supper-tables, talking little. The Spaniards are great realists. They do not worry overmuch about dangers to come. But this danger was too close at hand not to be terribly real. “At Badajoz the Fascists shot two thousand people; if they capture Madrid they will shoot half the city”, were the words of a huge poster in the Atocha Square. And in their hearts the people believed them to be true.

The previous afternoon Franco’s aeroplanes had dropped leaflets saying, “For every murder committed on our followers in Madrid ten of your men will be shot. In the capital the twenty-five thousand wounded will be held responsible for your excesses”.

The last threat brought a grim reminder of Toledo, where, after relieving the Alcázar, the rebels had turned to the hospital. They were stopped at the door by a doctor who implored them to spare the wounded. The Moors shot him down in cold blood. Then they went through ward after ward and flung a hand grenade at each bed. Four hundred wounded men had been massacred in this way.

That morning Mrs Leah Manning, the British Socialist ex-M.P., had arrived by plane from Alicante –the last civil plane to reach Madrid. She had gone immediately to see Del Vayo and offer her services in Britain as a propagandist for the saving of the city. She came back with her face grave. “It is no longer a question of saving Madrid”, she said, “but of minimising the slaughter”.

We walked up and down in the hotel discussing what would happen. The rebels were not the only danger. If the defence collapsed, the riff-raff might sack the town before the rebels entered, as had happened in Addis Abeba. The departure of the Government might even be the signal for the outbreak of pillaging.

Even those who were leaving for Valencia by car had no certainty of getting through. The rebels might cut the road. The anarchist guards in the wayside towns, who were opposed to anyone quitting Madrid, might turn them back or even open fire. The next day they actually did stop the members of the Government. Largo caballero alone was allowed to pass the barricades in the anarchist township of Tarancón. Del Vayo and the other Ministers were turned back and forced to make their way by side-roads to Valencia.

Outside, the night was dark, so that the starless sky seemed to come right down into the streets. Guards, with nerves tense, watched every every corner. If a Fifth Column outbreak was to come, tonight might well be the night. Slowly, darkly, the night of November 6th in Madrid moved towards Saturday, November 7th.

Saturday, November 7th. People preferred to stay at home. Franco's broadcast warning, that everyone should stay indoors for forty-eight hours while "order was restored", had passed from mouth to mouth. Private telephones, too, had been cut off. It had been discovered that Fifth Columnists were sending information to Franco by the simple method of dialling a number in the apt of Carbanchel occupied by the rebels, and talking to the soldier who answered the call. From the direction of the Casa de Campo and the Segovia Bridge came the sound of heavy firing. The rebels had gained more than half of the tree-covered park of the Casa de Campo and were approaching the edge of the Manzanares. That night we slept in the British Embassy. It was easy to believe that the last hours of Republican Madrid were at hand. But there was one thing to happen which neither we nor the waiting world anticipated.

The next morning, Sunday, November 8th, I was drinking coffee in the bar of the Gran Vía when I heard shouting and clapping outside. I walked out to the pavement edge. The barman and his assistant followed me. There were few enough customers to be attended to that grey morning. Up the street from the direction of the Ministry of War came a long column of marching men. They wore a kind of khaki corduroy uniform, and loose brown Glengarry caps like those of the British tank corps. The few people who were about lined the road-way, shouting almost hysterically, "Salud!, Salud!". The cars racing along the street stopped and blared their horns. The International Column of Anti-Fascists had arrived in Madrid. We were watching the First Brigade of what was to develop into the most truly international army the world has seen since the Crusades. But Madrid was not worrying who these troops were. They knew that they looked like business, that they were well armed, and that they were on their side. That was enough. The cheering and clapping went on. People rushed up from side-streets, lent out of windows to watch. Even the first British troops arriving in France could not have had a greater reception. The International Column grew out of the foreign volunteers who had gone to Spain to fight for the Government when the civil war broke out. Many of them were political refugees from fascist countries like Germany, Italy, and Poland. Others were individual volunteers of Left Wing sympathies who wanted to join in this fight against Fascism; some were just men out for adventure. From the *emigrè* cafés of the Latin Quarter, from por streets in Switzerland, from offices and even country home in Britain, they made their way to Spain. Some had to beg in the streets of French villages for money enough to reach the frontier. Many walked over the Pyrenees at night, sleeping by the roadside till they could reach the first Spanish village where they could get help to Barcelona. At first they were scattered among the Spanish militia units, fighting side by side with the ordinary Spanish troops. But when the numbers of these volunteers rose to hundreds a new scheme was evolved. The aid given to Franco by Portugal, Italy, and Germany made it clear that the war was going to be lengthy, and waged on modern lines. Instead of spreading these volunteers, many of whom had had valuable military experience and training, among the Spanish regiments where, as individual soldiers, they could do little to balance the inefficiency and inexperience of the hurriedly formed People's Army, it was decided to group them into a unit of their own. They would, it was hoped, form a cadre of shock troops to meet the Moors and

Legionaries and Italian tank sections who formed the real striking force of Franco's army. By early November two brigades, numbering about 3000 men in all, had been formed and equipped.

Part of the first detachment of the International Column, which had marched in on Sunday morning, had gone straight to the front line in the Casa de Campo. The rebels forced their way by nightfall to the river bank, but at no point did they secure a crossing. Others that evening were hurried to the trenches at Villaverde, where the Government line was hard pressed. They were spread out with one man of the Column between every four militiamen. On Monday all sections of the Column were concentrated in the University City. In the early morning the rebels bombarded the University buildings, and pressed forward towards the golf course. Here the Manzanares was no longer a small canal between built-up banks, but a stream with low sandy edges, easily crossed. It was the rebel's most open road to the heart of Madrid. The International Column took up positions across the line of this attack. Throughout the day the rebel advance was held up by heavy rifle and machine-gun fire.

The first week of the attack on Madrid presented an almost unique journalistic spectacle. We could get much of our news simply by standing at the windows of the telefónica Building. Spread out beneath us, as if on a football field, was the greatest battle waged in Europe since the fight for Warsaw in 1920. The air raids never failed to be spectacular. We could count on one or two an afternoon. We never felt much alarm about them.

By Thursday, November 12th, we could send with clear consciences the news that Franco's first attack on Madrid had failed. Tactically, one great reason for this check was that the rebels had not enough men. They were hampered by the essential weakness of the whole Right Wing revolutionary movement –its lack of real support among the Spanish people. Numbers and courage had almost overwhelmed it in the early days. Since then it had depended for its striking force on outside aid. The Moors and the legionaries had been brought over in early August, and the German and Italian pilots and tank drivers, artillerymen and machine-gunners, had poured in steadily ever since. But while these forces had been strong enough to take Badajoz, Irún, Toledo, it was by no means sure that they would enable Franco to capture a city with more than a million inhabitants.

On Saturday, November 14th, a workers' demonstration had been called for eight o'clock in the morning in the Atocha Square. Late on Friday night some officials realised that a crowded square would make an ideal target for a bomb. The meeting was hastily canceled. But hundreds of people, knowing nothing of this, turned up at the fixed time the next morning. At a few minutes past eight three Junkers appeared. The Fifth Column had done its work accurately. Bomb after bomb rained down on the square. People rushing for the underground station were killed as they ran. The open space was littered with bodies. Every window in the big Hotel Nacional was smashed. Craters graped in the roadway. This attack ushered in a new era of the air raids on Madrid. The bombing of the civilian population had begun in earnest. The next afternoon –Sunday- crowds of people in the working-class suburb of Cuatro caminos were taking their customary Sunday afternoon stroll in the Glorieta. The pavements were packed. At three o'clock there was suddenly heard the drone of planes. Before the crowds could get to

safety the bombs were amongst them. The death-roll for the two days went up to sixty, many of them women and children.

On Monday morning the rebels launched another –and their greatest- offensive. This time they fought their way across the Manzanares opposite the University City, where the banks were low and the broken ground gave the Moors good cover. Parties of Moors and Legionaries got as far as the University buildings, and occupied several of them. By nightfall the rebels had established a salient on the city side of the Manzanares.

Not only the air bombardments failed; the rebel attack in the University City had been thwarted. Instead of breaking their way through to the wide north-eastern streets, Franco's troops found themselves held around the University buildings, where an extraordinary type of warfare went on. These big brick buildings, which were the ex-King Alfonso's last project for Spain, and had been carried on by the Republic, were spread over a wide, treeless slope in the approved fashion of an American *campus*. The solidly built blocks forming the separate schools and residential hostels for the students stood apart from each other, making excellent natural fortresses. The Casa de Velazquez, standing on the point from which the famous painter had sketched views of the Guadarrama to form backgrounds to some of his most famous pictures, and intended as a residential home for French students; the School of Agriculture; The cancer research department; and the great, unfinished block of the Clinical Hospital and many others became the scenes of bitter fighting. The first parties of Moors who had crossed the Manzanares secured a footing in the buildings nearest the river. After this began a series of attacks and counter-attacks. Very often there was fighting from floor to floor. Some of the stories of this fighting are as fantastic as only war incidents can be.

The brunt of the the fighting fell on the shoulders of the International Column. Two brigades of the Column –the 11th and 12th Mobile Brigades of the Spanish People's Army- were now on the Madrid front, under the command of General Kleber. Many of them died without ever having more than a glimpse of the city they fell to save. Their losses were heavy. The 11th Brigade of the Column, which had arrived in Madrid on November 8th, lost in dead and wounded a good proportion of its 1,900 men within a month; the second brigade, which arrived on November 17th -1,500 strong- was reduced in the same period to 800.

The British volunteers in the International Column in Madrid numbered by this time over sixty. The first man in International Column uniform, whom I heard talking English at their headquarters near Madrid, might have been the beau ideal of any great public school. He was tall, curly-headed, cheerful. He was a Cambridge graduate, a chemist. There were others like him from the universities and the professions. One was a London student who, of all things, was a specialist in Egyptology. It would be hard to find a body of British men to equal these first volunteers in the International Column. There was G.C. Maclaurin, a mathematician, who was to die on these sun-baked plains of Castille, which were so like the open countryside of the New Zealand from which he had originally come. There was John Cornford, brilliant Cambridge graduate, who had come out to Spain in the long vacation to fight for the Government, gone back to England in October, and returned to Spain when the threat to Madrid became grave. Only twenty-one, he was to meet his death in January, fighting Franco's German and Italian recruits. Esmond Romilly, shy, sincere, nephew of Winston Churchill, was fighting with the Thaelmann Battalion, serving this cause with as much courage as any of

his forbears could have demanded. He was eighteen. Commanding a Lewis-gun section was David Mackenzie, youngest son of Rear-Admiral Mackenzie. Later were to come Wilfred Macartney and Ralph Fox. Fox, scholar of Magdalen, gifted, in the words of *The Times*, with a “full and humorous mind”, was the author of the outstanding biography of Genghis Khan. His time in Spain was tragically short. He was to be killed in action within a few days of his arrival.

On December 1st, listening in at the British Embassy to the BBC news broadcast, we heard the stately tones from Portland Square announce that 3,000 Germans with full equipment had landed at Cadiz. We knew then that a new stage of the battle for Madrid had begun. The first battle had been won by the Government. Without heavy reinforcements or the use of new weapons such as gas, it was clear that Franco could make little further progress. Winter was creeping on. For one moment it looked as if Franco would use gas. But the rebel lines were far too close to the Government positions, and curving too much in and out of them, to make gas a real military possibility. Franco was actually in a hazardous military position. His flanks were long and exposed. It was clear by now that his wild rush to the edge of Madrid was a major tactical blunder. Madrid was not a village out of which the militia could be easily chased. In October, instead of thrusting on and on up the Tagus Valley northwards to Madrid he could have gone east towards Aranjuez, Chinchón, and Albacete. Bit by bit he could have encircled the city, till its food and munitions, and water and electricity supplies were cut off. All this time he would have been in the open field, where his better trained forces would have remained superior. Instead, he made an over-confident frontal attack. Probably a false belief that the people would not fight, and an urgent desire to win Madrid and recognition from the other Governments of Europe, lured him on – to be held up for months before the city. It was no wonder, therefore, that by early December the optimism of the Madrileños began to reassert itself to the full. It was in this atmosphere that we heard the news that Hitler and Mussolini were apparently going to back Franco with the men he needed.

After this almost every day was to bring its report of Italians at Algeciras, of Germans, more Germans, at Cadiz. General Faupel, Hitler’s military adviser, with guise of a Chargé d’Affaires, had been bust at Franco’s headquarters for some three weeks. He had already reported that the number of troops necessary to take Madrid would be at least 30,000 more. The fate of Madrid, more clearly than ever, no longer depended on those unshaven brown-faced men at the barricades, but on the decisions of a nervy excitable figure in a chalet amid the snows of Bavaria, on swift-speaking Frenchmen in conference rooms in Paris, on British Ministers walking under the leafless trees of Chequers. The first fight for Madrid had been won. The city had fought its way towards one freedom.

The Spanish Civil war was henceforward to be merged in another struggle – the invasion of Spain by Italy and Germany.”

(From Sir Geoffrey Cox: Defence of Madrid: An Eyewitness Account from the Spanish Civil War, Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1937. Cox was war correspondent of the *London’s News Chronicle*)

“There has been nothing like the International Column in modern history. I suppose one would have to go back to the Crusades to find a group of men, from all over the known world, fighting purely and simply for an ideal. Many men have given their lives, and many more will do so before the conflict ends –not for home or country or money or because they were drafted and ordered to go, but because of the deep conviction that this world will not be worth living in if Fascism triumphs.

That is the amalgam –anti-Fascism. A man is under no compulsion to come from Kalamazoo or Belgrade to give his life for Spain. His response is idealism of the finest kind, whether one agrees with its object or not. For reasons at whose basis lie profound movements of world politics and thought, virtually all of those men have come to fight on the side of the Spanish Government against the insurgents. The only real volunteers on the other side were the Irish Fascists, who have now gone, having fought in no battle and having lost a handful of men in more or less accidental fashion. As for the Germans and Italians fighting on Franco`s side, only a gullible or dishonest person could consider them “volunteers”, however sincere may be their convictions...

Something has started here which is going to make a deep mark on this earth for generations to come. Never forget that, you who may still be thinking that this is merely a Spanish Civil War...

Recently I had a long talk with an American, Hans Amlie, adjutant of the Washington Battalion, who was lying wounded in a room of the hotel-hospital. Amlie is a mining engineer from Montana. He is not a Communist, noy a Socialist, knows and cares nothing about politics, except that he hates Fascism as much as any human being could hate it. “It was perfectly natural for me to come to Spain”, he told me, “This is the only place in the world where people like me belong at the moment. Anyone who loves liberty and hated Fascism must come here!”.

And then there was Oliver Law, a Texas Negro, and commander of the Lincoln Battalion after Martin Hourihan was promoted to regimental commander. In the same action that Hourihan got his wounds, although a few days later, Law was killed. A Negro commander of 150 white men who were proud to serve under him –does that not convey something of the spirit of the Internationals? Law was in some sense the typical Negro radical. Sensitive and rebellious against the fate of his people in the South, he naturally drifted into the movement. First, however, he received military training in the American Army, which he joined in Texas after the World War (he was only about thirty-three when he was killed).

His service completed, he went to Chicago, where he was when this war started. In the interim he had become a Communist and an important figure in Chicago`s Negro world. A good businessman to boot, he owned a restaurant and other property, which he gave up to come to Spain. And here he died, leading his men in an attack. “We are here to show that Negroes know how to fight Fascists”, he said one day of himself and others of his race in the American battalions...

The driving force, you see, is always the same. Whatever all these people may or may not be, they are anti-Facsists to a man. The one thing to keep in your mind when you read about these Internationals is that they hate Fascism. For the first time since the fascist movement started men are willing to die to crush it. Is that not significant?...

Because in a sense Germany and Italy are fighting Russia on Spanish soil, and because this Civil War is only too likely to lead to another European conflagration, there can be no understanding of what is happening here without a proper conception of foreign intervention. It is not a thrilling subject either to write or read about, and yet it is a vital one. The reason world peace is so gravely endangered at the moment is because Mussolini has not only definitely committed himself to the necessity of a rebel victory, but has a large expeditionary force here which he cannot afford to see lost or defeated. Germany could still draw back with honor; Russia is merely helping the Government –it cannot win the war for the Government and it has no territorial ambitions on the Peninsula. It is only Italy which has asked her national existence on the outcome of the war. There again you have your link with Ethiopia.

In the early months of the war it appeared as if a little judicious help on the part of Germany and Italy would be enough to place Franco in Madrid. Russia was far away, and obviously had no vital interests at stake and no reason to jeopardize her national safety by backing a losing cause. Italian and German planes were at the insurgents' disposal from the first days of the war. German artillery, tanks, technicians, and advisers helped in that sweep up to the capital...

For Hitler, and above all for Mussolini, that called for a grave and daring decision, although, to be logical, there was no choice. Those great forces that had been set in motion when Italian troops crossed the Abyssinian frontier were gathering momentum. The machinery could not be stopped; it had to be fed with more and more fuel...

Franco had already been stopped on the ground; now he was stopped in the air. In order to win, he needed many more troops, many more planes, much more war material. Hitler was dubious and hesitant; Mussolini boldly gave his commands...

Curiously enough, it was the German intervention which seemed more important during the first five months or so. As a matter of fact, the Germans do seem to have sent more troops and technicians to Spain in the first five months than Italy. Reports were all of Reichswehr troops by the thousands being landed at Cadiz or elsewhere. We thought they were used in the Escorial road drives of December and January, and then on the Jarama River in February. In fact, there is reason to believe that some 8,000 or 10,000 German soldiers were landed in Spain.

Everybody spoke of Franco demanding 50,000 troops of Hitler if he was to take Madrid. Certainly, he needed those 50,000 –and more, but it was Italy, not Germany, which has given him those soldiers, and which will have to continue giving him more and more soldiers. The first recorded evidence of the growing importance of Italian intervention came on December 22, when about 6,000 Italian troops were landed at Cadiz. On January 3 another 4,000 arrived. In those days that seemed like a colossal number, for the Internationals hardly totaled 10,000 then, and they were amateurs, not professionals. Actually, that was just the beginning. In the March drive on Guadalajara at least 30,000, and possibly as many as 40,000, Italians started for Madrid. Apparently only 12,000 to 15,000 were used at Malaga, Bilbao and Santander, but in the first and last drives there was no opposition, and in the later the bombing planes did most of the work. In May, Queipo de Llano admitted to our correspondent that 55,000 Italians were in Spain. He could hardly be expected to exaggerate. A more reliable figure would

probably reach double that, while some competent observers place the total now at about 150,000. Moreover, the total, whatever it may be, is growing and must grow.

Mussolini has an expeditionary army here in the true sense of the world. The Italian “volunteers” did not arrive in Spain unarmed and completely unequipped as the Internationals did. They came with all their equipment, with their own general staffs and officers, their own artillery and material of every sort. They planned their campaigns, furnished their transport, and even established their postal system.

That is something worthy of very serious thought. In the first place, the Italian force here represents a good chunk of Italy’s military strength. The country cannot afford to lose it. So in the second place, it must be kept up, reinforced, re-equipped. There is no turning back, and all the less so because Italian prestige suffered a terrible blow in the Battle of Brihuega. The reply to that defeat was necessarily greater intervention; the reply to the offensives which the Government has recently launched at Brunete and Belchite is still greater intervention.

It has always been so. The Loyalists are growing stronger and stronger, primarily through their own efforts, but each time their strength has topped that of the insurgents, Italy and Germany have intervened to swing the balance again in Franco’s favor. It is all very logical and very obvious, but sooner or later it must either stop or be made so overwhelming as to insure a quick victory for Franco. The other alternative is a European war.

Most people seem to be taking the attitude of “Oh, well! The same thing is true of both sides. Germany and Italy are helping the rebels and Russia is helping the Loyalists. Six of one and half a dozen of the other!”

There are two answers to that. In the first place it sweeps aside all questions of legitimacy and international law. After all, this is the established, recognized government of Spain, elected by a majority of the people. According to any conception of international law it is entitled to defend itself against rebellion and to acquire the means to do so. Theoretically, other countries should help it, as Russia alone has done.

However, ethics and international law never have validity in politics and never will, so the argument doubtless can be pushed aside as irrelevant.”

(From Herbert L. Matthews: Two Wars and More to Come, Carrick and Evans, 1938. Matthews was war correspondent of *The New York Times*)

“The month of January 1937 had come to an end, and, after a brief visit to the Riviera on important business, I returned to Spain for the further operations round Madrid in the Jarama sector and on the Guadalajara road.

Unfortunately, there was in reality little chance at this moment of going far forward on any active front. Diplomatic necessity caused a veil to be drawn over all points where any foreign volunteers, and specially Italians, might be found, and so the General Staff did not willingly countenance journalistic expeditions to the front lines...

While I was absent from Spain Malaga had fallen after a whirlwind offensive which had taken the Reds entirely by surprise. Spanish Legion units composed of Italian volunteers, admirably equipped with the latest mechanised models, each unit having its own tanks, accompanying artillery, air squadrons and ample transport, had taken an effective though not predominant share in the campaign. The advent of these new units to the Foreign Legion undoubtedly scared the Reds...

The first thing that went wrong with the offensive on the Guadalajara road was that it was delayed too long and that there was divided leadership. Owing to the fact that the strong and well-equipped foreign, mainly Italian, units, newly incorporated in the Spanish Legion, were to take part for the first time in a major offensive, the military councils were divided. This was negligible when things were going well, but was to prove a considerable drawback the moment there was a hitch, and finally necessitated all the authority of the presence of both Generals Franco and Mola on the scene of battle to impose a unified command...

A deal of nonsense has been spoken and written about the Italian failure on the Guadalajara and also later on another alleged failure at Bermeo during the Bilbao offensive. I can write with impartiality about both. What happened at Guadalajara was that the main Italian column had pushed forward at very great speed, possibly too fast. On the third day of the attack it had hoped to find troops from Brihuega on its right or at least on its rear, but the terrible state of the roads had kept back all forces marching through Brihuega and down the Tajuña valley. This gallant little Italian company then tried to fight its way back to its main body on the Aragon road, and was almost completely wiped out.”

(From Harold G. Cardozo (1937): The March of a Nation: My Year of Spain's Civil War: New York, RobertMcBride,1937. Cardozo was Special Correspondent of the London "Daily Mail" with the Nationalist Forces in Spain)

“After the elections of 1936 the generals had again begun showing their teeth. They defied superior orders and created a scandalous disturbance at the inauguration of the new republican President, Señor Manuel Azaña. At Valencia they had attempted a *golpe* by seizing the radio station and creating other disturbances before they were routed. One of the foremost conspirators, a general named Francisco Franco, had twice called on the transitional Prime Minister just after those elections –as that Prime Minister, Portela Valladares, later told the story to me- with a demand that he deliver the government into the hands of the generals. He refused: the true Republicans stepped in quickly-but in a generous spirit retaliated by exiling the conspirator generals to commands in the Balearic Islands and North Africa. The conspirator Franco went to the Canary Islands. This was the Republic’s worst and fatal mistake. By not awarding to traitors the fate reserved for treason the Republic wrote its own death warrant. The generals, being away from the eyes of the government at Madrid, accelerated their conspiracies, maintaining contacts with Sanjurjo, the pardoned traitor in Portugal, who in turn was making contacts with the agents of Mussolini and Hitler –but of Hitler especially.”

(From Lawrence Fernsworth’s book, Spain’s Struggle for Freedom, Boston: Beacon Press, 1957. Fernsworth lived and worked in Spain for ten years, included the Spanish War years, as a regular correspondent of The Times of London and a special representative of the New York Times.)

“It was in those days that General Sanjurjo was hurrying back from Berlin after urgent talks with Hitler, and General Franco’s emissaries were already on their way back to Marocco from Rome...

Looking back, it would appear obvious that the situation of the men and women who on July 18th rushed to defend themselves and their towns against the army attack was quite hopeless.

It did not occur however to the sleepy and mostly unarmed men who rushed the Montaña barracks in Madrid against all the rifles and machine guns of the biggest garrison in Spain, that by all the laws of war they could never take those barracks. They took them, and when they got inside they saw a line of twenty or thirty officers with big automatic pistols, lined up behind a parapet, green and shaking not with fear only, but with astonishment, at the huge heroism of the people who had thrown themselves against the machine gun emplacements and the riflemen, and broken their way in against odds which were intended to be, and ought to have been, overwhelming. The half-dozen men who held the inside of the telephone building at Barcelona, the three who held the radio station against a whole troop of fascist officers...

The officers who planned the betrayal of Spain thought, and admitted afterwards that they had thought, the thing impossible. They thought they would have a walkover. They had, and they admitted it, no remote notion of the heights of courage and tenacity of which the people, once united in defence of democracy and the most elementary rights of humanity, is capable. It was only days later, when defeat at the hands of the people stared them in the face, that they realised treachery must go further and deeper, and opening the gates of their country wider still to the enemy, called for new reinforcements from Germany, Italy and the Moors...

The monastery school of the Salesian order on Francos Rodriguez street , in Cuatro Caminos, northern working-class suburb of Madrid, is new, ugly, and has no works of art worth mentioning. You will not find it in the guide books. In the history books of the future however it will have its page. For it has been one of the nerve centres of Spain’s fight for democracy, the cradle, the nursery and finally the first training ground of the People’s Army. The Fifth Regiment of Militia was started with two hundred men who had fought in the attack on the Montaña barracks, and fought on the Sierra front in the first days of the fascist rush for Madrid. With difficulty, these two hundred were persuaded to come into the barracks in Francos Rodriguez Street –whence the monks had fled after abandoning a machine-gun nest on the church from which they had sprayed death upon the people of that suburb- and undergo a special course of training. It was considered in those days a long training if you had more than twelve hours of it...

These shock troops swore an oath to one another that they would never retreat except under orders... The men never did retreat. Of the first four hundred of them who went into the line, only eighty returned alive, the majority of them more or less seriously wounded... Then came recruiting on a big scale. By the end of August the Fifth Regiment has already sent no less than 16.000 men to the front.

They say an oath. Here is the text of it:

“I, son of the people, citizen of the Spanish Republic, freely accept service as a militiaman. I promise the Spanish people and the Government of the Republic, elected

as a result of the People`s Front election victory, that I will defend with my life democratic liberty and the cause of peace and progress, and bear honourably the title of militiaman.

“I promise to study military science and take most scrupulous care to keep from deterioration or the possibility of damage war material owned by the nation and entrusted to me. I promise to keep and see that others keep the most rigid discipline, carrying out fully all the orders of my commanders.

“I promise to abstain from all dishonourable acts and prevent them from being committed by others, making every effort to conduct myself correctly on all occasions with my thoughts on the high ideals of the democratic republic. I promise to come to the defence of the democratic Spanish Republic at the first call of the Government, putting all my efforts and my life at the service of the Republican regime and people.

If I fail to keep this promise freely and solemnly given, may the contempt of my comrades fall on me and the implacable hand of the law punish me.”

(From Claud Cockburn`s book, Reporter in Spain, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1936. Cockburn covered the Spanish War for the british Daily Worker.)

“On November 8, 1936, Madrid was in chaos. Its citizens awoke in the cold, predawn morning to the booming of artillery and the harsh noise of loudspeakers and radios crackling out messages announcing total mobilization of the population. There were children in the streets helping to tear up cobblestones and erect barricades, and taxis racing back and forth bearing military officers and messages. The city echoed with the shouted slogans, “*No pasarán*”, and “*Madrid será la tumba del fascismo*”, and everywhere, above the noise and confusion of men preparing for battle, loudspeakers were calling to resist the enemy. At 6:30 A. M., Madrid’s transportation system began to function as usual, and more than one worker on that crisp fall morning kissed his family goodbye and mounted a streetcar as he did everyday. Only on November 8, 1936, he was calmly riding to the front lines and to war.

For the Madrileños were preparing to resist what the outside world had already accepted as inevitable, the fall of the Spanish capital to the armies of the insurgent generals led by Francisco Franco. Newspaper correspondents had flashed dispatches around the globe the night before saying that Madrid was as good as lost. General Franco had already announced that the “liberation” of the capital was near, and Radio Lisbon had broadcast a description of him entering Madrid on a white charger and being greeted by joyous crowds. The preceding day insurgent troops had fought their way into the city, entering the Casa de Campo park on the west of Madrid, capturing the high point named Mount Garabitas.

There was little reason to suppose Madrid would not fall. The African armies of the rebel generals had in three months swept virtually unopposed from Seville north to Madrid, brushing aside the ill-organized Loyalist militia, stopping long enough to raise the siege of the Toledo Alcazar, and then moving easily onward to the outskirts of the Spanish capital.

General Emilio Mola had long since told newspaper reporters who asked which of his four military columns would take Madrid that it was the fifth column of supporters inside the capital that would do the job, and indeed rebel partisans were disrupting the city by firing from hidden windows and by hurling homemade hand grenades into crowds. Unknown to the world, but well known to the rebel generals was the fact that Nazi Germany’s Condor Legion, totalling 100 fighters and bombers, 32 tanks, and 6,000 military men, was almost completely assembled at Seville and ready to go into full-scale action on behalf of the rebels. For the last two weeks, German Junker bombers had flown low-altitude bombing raids over Madrid, which contained no anti-aircraft guns.

(From Robert A. Rosenstone: *Crusade of the Left, The Lincoln Battalion in the Spanish Civil War*, New York: Pegasus, 1969)

“German and Italian flags flew from one end of insurgent Spain to the other. Although it was apparent that the polite exchange of notes between London, Berlin and Rome on non-intervention was a farce, I was not prepared for such an open flaunting of the Fascist alliance. In Salamanca, the quiet old university town, which General Franco had chosen as his headquarters, hotels, bars, and restaurants blazed with swastikas and the colours of Savoy. Shops bore signs that said: ”*Mann spricht Deutsch*” and many of the buildings were scrawled with ”*Viva il Duce*”. The Gran Hotel was decorated with posters of the Dictators, odd in the contrast they offered; Mussolini in a steel helmet with his chin thrust out, was stern and belligerent, while Hitler stared wistfully into space calling on Europe to defend itself against Bolshevism.

The scene of the hotel lobby was a cosmopolitan one. German colonels sat solemnly drinking *café-au-lait* while Spanish general staff-officers, with bright blue sashes tied round their waists, strode importantly across the marble floor. Italians, booted and spurred, usually with a girl on each arm, came jingling down the stairs, and Foreign Legionaries in green shirts, their caps tipped jauntily to one side, argued with the desk clerk for rooms. It was difficult to get rooms at the Gran Hotel as most of the rooms were occupied by the Germans...

Italian forces, and the help of the German Air Force and staff, were indispensable to Franco. Spaniards enjoyed speaking cynically of Italy's fighting ability, but the fact remained that it was Italian and German aircraft that had smashed the iron ring at Bilbao and that three regular Italian army divisions were now pressing the northern campaign to a close...

Franco's northern army totalled about thirty thousand men, the spearhead of which was three Italian divisions (The Black Flames, the Black Arrows, and the Twenty-third of March Division) numbering about eighteen thousand; the rest was made up of two battalions of Moors, two battalions of *Requetes* and six or seven mixed squadrons of Spanish and Moorish cavalry. The bulk of the troops were entering Santander from the south...

Farther on we had a small illustration of Moorish discipline when we detoured into a small town off the main road to find thirty or forty of them looting an abandoned village. They were coming out of the houses, their arms filled with an odd assortment of knick-knacks; one soldier had a kitchen stool over his shoulder and an egg-beater in his pocket; another, a child's doll and an old pair of shoes. Several Moors were sitting on the curb, bending around a packet of playing cards, admiring the brightly-coloured queens and knaves... We finally reached Santander to find that the Italians were holding a victory parade.

Needless to say, the internal affairs of Spain were being carefully manipulated by the Nazis, by tactics that now have become familiar the world over. Although the Italians were playing a more prominent part on the battlefield, there were over ten thousand Germans in Spain, innocuously described as ”technicians”. Their object, under the cloak of anti-Bolshevism, was to build up a Fascist party which would one day fit into Hitler's grandiose scheme for world conquest. Many of these Germans were trained as air pilots, artillery officers and engineers; others directed the railroads, operated the radio and telegraphs and undertook the organization of newly-conquered territory. Most important of all, however, was the German infiltration into almost all departments of State

administration. Through their influence they were able to see that Fascists sympathizers secured important bureaucratic jobs, thus establishing key-men throughout the fabric of the Government.

(From Virginia Cowles: Looking for Trouble, New York: Harper, 1941)

“ Back, from Abyssinia, on my old desk at the *Express*, I found little had changed... Gallagher was back from Abyssinia, too. He had followed the fleeing Emperor to palestina, and there had got an exclusive interview with him...So Gallagher and I found ourselves back “on the bench” together in the big reporters` room at the *Express*...

In London, conflicting reports were being received from Spain. The opposing sides had started off as Loyalists and Insurgents. Now they were being called Reds and rebels. Italian soldiers and german airmen were showing up on Franco`s side. General Franco who, as Commandant in Morocco had pledged 80.000 Moors to the cause, was flown to Spain in a great hurry and took over. His Moors followed, in planes of Germany`s Lufthansa, and it is an established fact that but for the Moor`s early arrival on the scene in Seville, the revolt would have been crushed in a mater of days, and the lives of a million Spaniards would have been saved.

How any Spaniard can look Franco in the face and smile, after what his Moors did to Spain. I saw these dusky infidels in action: saw the terms of their contract, “all the loot you can ship home”, being faithfully carried out; and I saw the mutilated, ravished bodies of Spanish men and women they left in their wake as they went through village and town, picking them clean.

If you wanted to bring fear to the face of a woman or child in Government Spain –and not infrequently on Franco`s side- you just had to whisper “Los Moros”. Many died shrieking it in terror.

Bull-necked General Queipo de Llano broadcast nightly to Madrid from Seville in the foulest language ever to be heard on the air, telling the women of Madrid what they could expect from “Los Moros” when Franco came riding in on his white horse, And, heavens above, what *did* happen? According to my colleague Gallagher, who was there: “The women fell on their necks, brother. They kissed and hugged them; poured wine over them, pelted them with flowers. The most sickening sight I`ve ever seen in my life.”

From what I read, Franco was fighting for the faith in Spain, the faith in which I had been brought up; and my sympathies, I found, sitting in London, were with his forces...

I had hardly sat down at my desk that afternoon when Charles Sutton came over to me, grining from ear to ear. “Monks,” he said, “have you got your passport with you? I want you to get off right away to Spain. Franco`s side.”

Franco`s censorship was so tight that correspondents with his forces were risking their lives smuggling their copy out through the frontier to tell the real story...

Indeed, in the end at least thirty foreign pressmen including myself were expelled from Franco Spain for putting over stories to our newspapers that had not the censorship stamp on them. Some may think it significant that no correspondents were expelled from the Government side for similar reasons. I was to find Madrid censorship most lenient, and in some parts of Government Spain censorship was lifted altogether on some stories...

I little knew, on that cold November day as I drove towards the Madrid front, that within six months I was to be caught up in the most controversial story of the whole Spanish war –the bombing of Guernica by the Germans. Happily, alongside me there were two british correspondents of the highest integrity, although we all three came

under a vicious barrage of denunciation from Franco and his supporters including the Church of Rome, British M.P.s (Tory) and assorted crackpots and “reactionaries”.

Franco's General Mola arrived at the gates of Madrid with four columns of troops, including one Italian and one Moroccan, on 7 November 1936. While his men took up position for the final assault on Madrid, General Mola –the man who was later to order the German raid on Guernica and was, ironically, to be killed himself in a bomber-called the correspondents together. He was assured and expansive. He produced maps and showed the correspondents where his troops were, pointing out the four columns. “AS you see, round me here I have four columns”, he said. “In Madrid, I have a fifth column: -men now in hiding who will rise and support us the moment we march.” So a phrase and an idea passed into history, and into world's nomenclature. But Mola never passed into Madrid, though his Fifth Column did actually take the city –two years and three months later.

Mola, who had once been a Jesuit, was fretting and fuming within a brisk walk of the great city when I met him. One of his columns, the Italian one, had been chewed to pieces by Spanish peasants when it tried to enter Madrid through a “side gate” in the Guadalajara mountains. The Italians had fled away back as far as Talavera de la Reina, where I had encountered them, in great disorder and terror. Mola was waiting for replacements before renewing the assault. My old Abyssinian colleague, H. R. Knickerbocker, wrote: “The Italians fled, lock, stock, and barrel-organ.” It was censored out.

“Señor Monks”, Mola said, when I was taken to him. “just stay here a few days and we will have coffee on the Puerta del Sol.” I used this in my first dispatch from the Madrid front, being careful to attribute it to Mola. It was soon being quoted in Madrid, and a table was laid out by some stout-hearted wag in the besieged city, and coffee was pored daily.

But the coffee got very, very cold.

My first night in front of Madrid was the night of one of the biggest air-raids by Franco's ally, the German Luftwaffe. It was the first air-raid I had ever seen, and as I watched from the balcony of a semi-destroyed villa on the edge of the Casa de Campo, which was the front line, I remember my heart was beating fiercely...

We knew that a number of our colleagues covering the Government side of the war were in the Telefonica and we felt anxious about them...

“If *we* can't get in, the we'll blast *them* out”, one of the press officers said to me at the height of the raid...

All the way on the long drive from the frontier, through Burgos, Salamanca and Talavera to the Madrid front, different Franco press officers who accompanied me worked on me, sounding out my personal feelings in regard to the insurrection that had now become a war. They were gratified to learn I was a Catholic, as though that definitely put me on their side.

The press chief was a Captain Luis Bolín. He had a cruel streak in him that was essentially Spanish. Whenever we saw a pathetic pile of freshly executed “Reds”, their hands tied behind their backs –usually behind a farmhouse in every newly taken village- he used to spit on them and say “Vermin”. Some of them were mere boys in their teens who couldn't possibly have had an appreciation of what was going on.

In Malaga, along the coast from Gibraltar, which we entered together, we came across such a pile of dead, some of them still bleeding. I noticed a pair of rosary beads entwined in the hands of one lad, and I stooped down to look closely at him. Captain Bolín said roughly in his perfect Oxford English: “Don`t be fooled by that, Monks, old boy. Everyone prays when he is scared”.

The day before the final assault on Malaga, I had knelt beside captain Bolín at a field mass, held on top of a hill overlooking the picturesque little seaport. For his altar the padre had an empty ammunition box. A colonel called the responses. For half an hour the killings, the executions, the whole horrible appurtenances of war were halted while we prayed. The, the final benediction having been given, the slaughter continued.

Caught in Malaga was a british correspondent who had stayed behind for his newspaper, the *London News Chronicle*. We heard that he was to be executed as a spy... We made an urgent plea to captain Bolín. “If this correspondent is executed”, we said, “we will tell the story to the world. He was only doing his job in reporting the war”. Captain Bolín acted immediately. The correspondent was later expelled. His name? Arthur Koestler...

On the Madrid front that cold November morning in 1936 following the big air-raid, a handful of us British and American correspondents sat...Patrols coming back from across the Casa de Campo were reporting that an army of “foreigners” was digging trenches on the edge of University City, a group of half-finished buildings yhe Spanish Government had hoped would become a world centre of learning and culture. The “foreigners” that had turned up before Madrid were, of course, the men of the International Brigade; idealistic, impressionable young men who had flocked to the call for help put out in the name of the democratically elected Government of Spain...

It is an historical fact that the men of the International Brigade saved Madrid from Franco`s Moors and the Italians during that far-off November. Of course the Brigade was strongly laced with Spaniards...

Having failed by direct assault, Mola brought in the German bombers, and when they, too, failed tp force Madrid to surrender, Franco massed his artillery, and called in the Luftwaffe. The guns were to stay in their emplacement for nearly two years before Madrid was taken. The German Air Force was to kill hundreds of Spaniards.

I was before Madrid the day the first big salvo went into the silent city, and it is not a day I like to look back on. It all seemed so murderous, so callous, deliberately to destroy a city, the capital of a nation. A few months later, when, expelled from Franco Spain, I was in Madrid, I was on the “recieving end” of those daily shells. They used to whistle past my hotel, the Florida, on the Gran Vía, fired from sites I knew so well and by men I also knew. It was a strange experience. Stranger still that I was never touched...

Towards the end of November, when Franco gave up hope of riding into Madrid on a white horse, the war had become static in that sector and it was freezing cold. I billeted myself with a Spanish family in Talavera. Their eldest son had been shot before their eyes when the Franco forces came into town. His body had lain outside their front door for a week as a warning. In Talavera, because not much was going on at the front, one was fed on a steady diet of atrocity propaganda; the things the Reds did as they fell back

into Madrid. And the strange thing was that the Spanish troops I met –Legionaires, Requetes and falangists- bragged openly to me of what *they`d* done when they took over from the Reds. But they weren`t *atrocities*. Oh no, señor. Not even the locking up of a captured militia girl in a room with twenty Moors. No, señor. That was fun...

Of course both sides committed fiendish atrocities in Spain, as I was to discover. But somehow the ones committed in Franco`s name had a certain dispensation about them, as far as the outside world was concerned, that was not accorded to the Government side...

We were never allowed to mention that Italians and Germans were even in Spain by the censors, so the only thing to do was drive to the frontier and write about them from France, making sure that our offices wouldn`t use our names under them.

Did I say making sure? I should have said “as sure as is humanly possible” for our lives could depend on it. I was given a good Italian story one day. They`d had another defeat before the “side door” to Madrid. I drove to St. Jean de Luz, phoned it to London with the preface: “My name not, repeat not, to be used”.

Captain Bolin`s handsome face was black with anger when the police handed me over to him. “You`ve put your foot in it now, Monks”, he said in that perfect English of his. “Evading censorship is equivalent to spying –and spies get short shrift in this country”. “We know you were at St. Jean de Luz four days ago and that you telephoned London from the Bar Basque. Anyhow, it is all out of my hands. General Franco himself will decide”.

Then, for the first time since I`d come to Spain, I met El Caudillo himself; General Franco, to be described by a British Member of Parliament as “that gallant Christian gentleman”. He was paunchy even then, on this day in March 1937, when I stood before him. He had a newspaper spread out before him –my newspaper, I noticed, with a sinking heart. His stubby fist banged down on the *Daily Express* as he gabbled violently in Spanish. I looked at captain Bolín who said: “General Franco says you will be shot for this”. Franco was going on again, and Luis Bolín moved towards me: “Come on, Monks; the firing squad for you”. I then made my first and only remark throughout the interview. “You can`t shoot me”, I said, “I`m British”. Captain Bolín repeated it in Spanish to Franco, and they both laughed heartily, as well they might, for it was a pretty trite remark. I did feel, though, that I had broken the rules as far as Franco was concerned, and that he and Bolín had every right to be angry with me. But I`d been sent to report a war, and to write about the Spanish Civil war without being able to mention Italians and Germans was making oneself a party to Franco`s hoodwinking the world into believing that his revolt against the democratic Government of Spain was an all-Spanish affair. Some time later, when captain Bolín returned, he thrust a piece of paper in my hand. “Think yourself lucky, Monks. You aren`t to be shot. You are to be expelled. This paper gives you six hours to get out of Spain. You`re a disgrace to the Church”...

I must confess, it was a great relief to be out of Franco Spain –for good. Slowly, inexorably, Franco and his foreign allies were winning the war against the Government the majority of Spaniards had freely elected –a Government that had no contained one Communist member, by the way- but you had to live with a lot of unctuous people who thought only of killing their countrymen to achieve their political ends, but who cloaked their ambitions in religion. My six months in Franco Spain had deeply shocked my

religious sensibilities. And they were to receive further shocks when I went to Government Spain...

In Bilbao there certainly was near-starvation. And there were daily air-raids. But the first thing I noticed was the number of priests and nuns walking about. I stopped in my tracks in sheer unbelief when I saw two priests coming towards me. Had I not been told in Franco Spain that the “Reds” had massacred all the priests and nuns in their territories...?

Down at the docks, scores of nuns were helping distribute food to children, unmindful of the air-raids.

Later I was to attend Mass in Valencia, Barcelona and Madrid, sometimes with members of the “Red” Government, and then I knew just what propaganda can do.

I attended many Masses in Bilbao before it fell to Franco. Some of the priests who said those Masses were taken out and shot when Franco took over. Their crime –celebrating Mass for the “Reds”.

From Bilbao we went to Durango –or what was left of it. A few Sundays previously, German bombers had unloaded four tons of bombs –a lot in those days- on the little town. One bomb shot through the roof of Santa Susana`s Chapel, where twenty nuns were in prayer. Fourteen of them were killed outright. Three others lost legs and arms. Another bomb tore through the Church of the Jesuit Fathers as Father Rafael Billalabeitia was consecrating the Body and Blood of Christ. In an instant, human blood, instead of wine representing that of Christ, was flowing in that little church. Only one person out of fifty was left alive. Then a third bomb crashed onto the Church of Santa Maria and a hundred praying people, including their priest, were so mangled that shovels had to be used to gather their remains. If those people weren`t martyrs, then there never was a Spanish martyr.

As I`m writing this, the Spanish War is over and I have the creeps. The new Pope Pius XII just thanked, in 1939, a delegation of Spanish soldiers to Rome for their “gallantry in freeing their land of their enemies”. Good God! I`m thinking of those mutilated Basque priests and nuns and Catholic worshipers at Durango, killed by German and Italian bombs, at the command of a Spaniard.

There were no foreign correspondents with the Basque forces to send that story out, so it aroused scant interest abroad...

On Monday, 26 April, I was roused from my bed at seven o`clock by the air-raid sirens. It was a beautiful sunny day, and after the chilly winter in Spain, the sunshine in this once-happy land that was now a battlefield was delightful. Later in his denial of the Guernica massacre, Franco was going to say that no planes were up that day owing to fog. That Monday was the sunniest the Basque country had known for a long time.

I went to eight o`clock Mass, then back to the Hotel Arana for breakfast. Staying at the Arana with me was Christopher Holme, one of Reuter`s star men. At another hotel was my old colleague from Abyssinia, George Steer, of *The Times*. Holme, too, has been in

Abyssinia, but with the Italians. We were the only three British staff correspondents in the Basque country.

On the day of Guernica's doom, I passed through Guernica at about 3.30 PM. The time is approximate, based on the fact that I left Bilbao at 2.30. Guernica was busy. It was a market day. We were about eighteen miles east of Guernica when our driver pulled to the side of the road, jammed on the brakes and started shouting. He pointed wildly ahead, and my heart shot into my mouth when I looked. Over the tops of some hills appeared a flock of planes. A dozen or so bombers were flying high. But down much lower, seeming just to skim the treetops were six Heinkel 52 fighters. The bombers flew on towards Guernica. At the foot of the hills leading to Guernica we turned off the main road and took another back to Bilbao. Over to our left, in the direction of Guernica, we could hear the crump of bombs.

At the Presidencia, Steer and Holme were writing dispatches. They asked me to join them at dinner at Steer's hotel. We'd eaten our first course of beans and were waiting for our bully beef when a Government official, tears streaming down his face, burst into the dismal dining-room crying: "Guernica is destroyed. The Germans bombed and bombed and bombed". The time was about 9.30 PM. Five minutes later I was speeding towards Guernica. As we drew near, on both sides of the road, men, women and children were sitting, dazed. I saw a priest in one group. I stopped the car and went up to him. "What happened, Father?" I asked. His face was blackened, his clothes in tatters. He couldn't talk. He just pointed to the flames, still about four miles away, then whispered: "Aviones...Bombas...mucho, mucho".

I was the first correspondent to reach Guernica, and was immediately pressed into service by some Basque soldiers collecting charred bodies that the flames had passed over. Some of the soldiers were sobbing like children. There were flames and smoke and grit, and the smell of burning human flesh was nauseating. Houses were collapsing into the inferno.

In the Plaza, surrounded almost by a wall of fire, were about a hundred refugees. They were wailing and weeping and rocking to and fro. One middle-aged man spoke English. He told me: "At four, before the market closed, many aeroplanes came. They dropped bombs. Some came low and shot bullets into the streets. Father Aronategui was wonderful. He prayed with the people in the Plaza while the bombs fell"...

A sight that haunted me for weeks was the charred bodies of several women and children huddled together in what had been the hearth of a house. It had been a refuge...

Within twenty-four hours, when the grim story was told to the world, Franco was going to brand these shocked, homeless people as liars. So-called British experts were going to come to Guernica, weeks afterwards, when the smell of burnt human flesh had been replaced by petrol dumped here and there among the ruins by Mola's men, and deliver pompous judgements: "Guernica was set on fire wilfully by the Reds"...Rome put the official seal on Franco's denial, and to this day only "bad" Catholics believe that the Germans destroyed Guernica. Though doubtless to-day, after Rotterdam, Coventry, the gas chambers and Belsen, the world doesn't so readily believe that Germans were incapable of pulling off a job like Guernica...

The Guernica affair had shocked me. The fact that priests and nuns were walking about free in Bilbao had shaken my belief in Franco as a crusader for the faith. The presence of ever-increasing numbers of Germans and Italians in Franco Spain, despite the “non-intervention” patrols, which were a joke, disturbed me...

In Madrid, from the Telefonica building, which I had seen enveloped in flames from the ranco lines a few months before, I was able to look right into the front line. Through field glasses I thought I could see the very bungalow from which we used to look into Madrid and were I was nearly killed. I went to retiro park, where several batteries of guns were used solely to make a noise so that the population could feel more secure. Later I met General Miaja. I told him how we had to run the gauntlet to get to Madrid, and he nodded his close-cropped, grey head. “*Sí, Sí*”, he said. “They will cut the road soon now, and we will get no more food. *But we will eat our boots and fight on*”...

Life in Madrid became a dull routine, enlivened, tragically enough, only by the shellings and the air-raids. Food was terribly scarce. The streets were full of hungry people...

Long before my three months’ “watch” was up in Madrid –our editor relieved us every three months- I was sickened of war. Watching a great city slowly die is the most depressing thing I can think of. And yet when my time came for relief, I felt somehow guilty at leaving, as though I were deserting a cause, for one thing my assignment in Madrid taught me was that republic Spain had the greatest cause of all –freedom.

I suffered no religious restrictions in Madrid, and went to Mass as I willed. True, some of the churches were being used as storehouses –but was there a church spire in Normandy and southern Italy that wasn’t used by us as an artillery observation post?

I hated leaving my colleagues behind in Madrid, too.

I have often been asked what would have happened had the republicans won the war. Would Spain have become a “Red” country, dominated by Moscow? I don’t think so. The Government that the Army clique revolted against was a Government composed of Socialists and Liberals. Undoubtedly there would have been at least one Communist member of a victorious Republican Government, but Spain would not have been “Red”. Republican Spain might not have joined us in the last war, as they would still have been cleaning up the mess left by their own war, but they would at least have adopted a “benevolent neutrality” which would have made the lives of hundreds of our chaps who escaped the Huns much happier. And republic Spain would have been a member of the United Nations – which Franco Spain is not...

On my last leave from Spain, I had attended the last Nuremberg Rally ever to be held. I wasn’t liked in Hitler’s Germany for my Guernica story, and it wasn’t long before I had the Gestapo on my heels. Even though I was permitted to meet Hitler, Goering and Hess, I don’t think I was ever far out of sight of the Gestapo...

The Spanish war was still on, though staggering to its end; Japan had begun and was winning a full-scale war in China; Hitler had marched into Austria. And of course, there had been the Munich sell-out to the nazi threats...

The Spanish war ended, for me, in the mountains of Scotland...

Everyone was convinced that World war II was in the making, except, perhaps, those few –and they were mostly in high places- who still clung to the idea that appeasement was best.”

(From Noel Monks: Eyewitness, London: Fredereick Muller Ltd., 1955. Monks was correspondent of the London`s newspaper Daily Express)

“July, 1936, was the rainest summer Paris had known since 1873...

Three days later, the Spanish Army mutinied and shortly thereafter I found myself at the railroad station of Cerbere on the Franco Spanish frontier, trying to reach Madrid and the Spanish Civil War...

For years the Spanish situation has been seething, as I knew in detail from my colleague in Madrid, Jay Allen. The Liberals and Socialists had come to power in February. Certainly, it was a drink which Conservatives refused to swallow. It came as no surprise when, after a series of “Hatfield and McCoy” murders on both sides, the army blew its top and supported by the Catholic hierarchy, the feudal lords, the money barons, and the fascists of the Falange, launched a revolt against the democratic republic...

The military situation was still chaotic. They occupied the southwest, the northwst, and part of the north of the country and were moving to unite their areas in Extremadura. Then they would attack Madrid. But in spite of General Franco`s Moors from Africa (so it was true, then), They would never take Madrid without massive German and Italian help, which they would probably receive...

At a lunch, Foreign Minister Vayo reviewed the situation with me. He had received disturbing news; the British Cabinet was almost openly pro-Franco and France would not help the Republic alone. Yet both knew that Italy and Germany had begun recruiting airmen for the nationalists even before the latter launched the rebellion. It looked bad for the Republic...

When later I reached Paris, I learnt that the French government had issued a declaration of nonintervention in Spain`s war. Nonintervention by France meant not only a probable victory for Franco, but for Hitler and Mussolini as well. What was the matter with Lèon Blum? I got an appointment with him for the following day.

Blum received me in the sunny garden behind the Palais Matignon.

I wasted no words. “Monsieur le Prèsident, this intervention business...what have you done?”

“I hope, my little Edgar, that you are not going to talk to me about the Germans. Tell me about Spain.”

“I *am* going to talk to you about the germans –*in* Spain. There they and the Italians are waging the next European war by proxy. If they win, there will be no holding them.”

For half an hour we argued. Then suddenly he raised his voice: “I am going to tell you something: my political position is not strong enough at home to allow me both to realize my domestic reforms and to intervene in favor of the Spanish Republicans. I have chosen to carry out my reforms. And that`s that.”

It was, indeed.

(From Edgar Ansel Mowrer: Triumph and Turmoil: A Personal History of Our Time, New York: Weybright and Talley, 1968. Mowrer was correspondent of the Chicago Daily News during the Spanish War)

“I was going to Spain for the first time since the outbreak of the war –going with Ernest Hemingway, who had been there a number of times since March 1937, and also, as it turned out, with Jim Lardner.

I did not know Lardner and had no idea he was going to be on the train until half an hour before. Then I was told that he was bound for Barcelona with credentials from the New York *Herald-Tribune*, for which I was also going to write dispatches. He was on his annual holiday from the Paris edition of the paper and was taking it in this way. Beyond this, and that he was the son of the late Ring Lardner, I had no information. Hemingway introduced me to Jim Lardner. “One of you has to decide which is the *chef de bureau*”, he said, “since you`re both from the *Herald-Tribune*”.

Lardner seemed in high spirits. He was a pleasant –looking youth, not particularly robust, with brown hair and eyes protected by horn-rimmed glasses; he had the long legs, the slight awkwardness and the ready laugh which belonged to his age and type. He was twenty-three: Andover, Harvard and the *Herald –Tribune* in New York, followed by a stage on the Paris edition of the same paper. His ideas about the struggle in Spain were exact and his opinions decided. He knew what he was doing.

It was getting dark when we reached Barcelona. We drove first to the Subsecretariat of Press and Propaganda in the Diagonal, the office presided over by Constancia de la Mora, one of the remarkable women of the war. She gave Lardner and me some sort of slip which would admit us to a hotel (the Bristol, near the Telefónica). Hemingway had a reservation at the Majestic Hotel, and went there...

It was sometime along about then –ten days or so after our arrival- that Lardner came into my room and, after various bits of talk about nothing in particular, offered the information that he wanted to join the International Brigades. He did not quite know how it could be done, but he proposed to set about it as soon as possible. “What`s the good of that?”, I asked , amazed at the idea. “It`s pretty late to do that. The internationals may be sent home at any time. And anyhow, if you want to work for the Republic you ought to do it in some way that`s particularly suited to you. From each according to his—. One more rifle doesn`t matter a hell of a lot in the result of the war. You`d probably be more useful doing something else”.

The argument went round and round. At times I produced the opinion that he ought to stick to his own profession and continue to send newspaper dispatches as an American correspondent. “There are too many newspaper correspondents already”, he said. “One more doesn`t make any difference”.

I don`t know at what point he talked to Hemingway; I think it was at about this time; and Hemingway geve him about the same answers. Thereupon Jim began consulting various International Brigades men, and was to be seen engaged in deep secret conferences with them out in the sunny Ramblas or in the corners of the Majestic Hotel.

The I.B. people listed hin for the artillery and sent him to Badalona “for training”...

The Lincoln Battalion was out on the sunny hills behind Mora la Nueva, licking its wounds, filling up with new Spanish levies, training, re-equipping, resting, preparing

for another action which would probably –according to report everywhere in the brigades and in Barcelona- be its last...

Wolff told me I could find Lardner in Company 3, which was quartered about ten minutes up the side road from the clump of houses which served as Estado Mayor for the Battalion. I detected him at last. For one thing, he had no glasses. His feet were in canvas *alpargatas*, sockless. He was so shortsighted that he did not recognize me either at first. How Lardner ever had managed rifle and machine gun without glasses always mystified me, but apparently he had done not too badly...

After early June I was away for some months –in England, Austria, Czechoslovakia, at Paris, at Evian, on the trail of some element of resistance to the system of bluff and blackmail which had hypnotized all Europe outside of Spain. From time to time I heard news of Lardner, and occasionally I passed on a letter or package to him from his relatives in America. He had prospered in the battalion and was now a corporal.

When the offensive over the Ebro was ready, and was launched at last in the early morning hours of July 25, Jim already had his value in the battalion, and this action was to make it solid thereafter.

The offensive across the Ebro was well planned and organized. The other side of the river was not held in force: the main strength of the Fascist army, its Moors, Navarrese and Italians, had been pushing away to the south for some weeks in an attempt to reach Valencia. The Republican force reached the neighborhood of Gandesa before it could be stopped. There, on the hills that they had been unable to hold last spring, the Republicans dug themselves in and stuck. The whole Fascist army turned to dislodge them, and the Italian and German aviation was increased to numbers hitherto unknown, but they stayed where they were. The action was, so to speak, a “defensive offensive”, since its main object was to turn the Fascist attack away from Valencia. In this it succeeded, the push to the south was stopped altogether, and the new front took up all the time, money and effectiveness of the fascist junta until the end of the autumn.

Lardner was wounded in August and sent back of the Ebro for treatment. He had a few days` leave in Barcelona in September, his wounds healed and went back to the front lines as the tide was turning strong and the fascists were pushing the Republican army with all their immensely superior resources. It was also just before the International Brigades were withdrawn from the fronts and mustered to be sent home.

I was in Prague then, and although the thought of Spain was insistent –was almost a necessity of life- in the psychological horror of those weeks, actual news from Spain was scarce. I heard nothing about Lardner until I got back to Paris again in mid-October. My plan was to spend only a few days in Paris and then return to Spain, not for press material or any professional purpose, but for the private aim of reassuring myself as to the existence of men who still had their self-respect.

During those few days in Paris I heard, first, that Lardner had been killed on the Ebro; second, that he had been captured by Moors and then murdered; third, that he had been wounded and captured by Fascist troops and was now in a Fascist prison camp. There seemed no very dependable way of selecting which one of these stories to believe.

The best way to inquire was in Spain. I took the eight-fifteen train to Perpignan again some days later, and drove from Barcelona one day with Herbert Matthews to the encampment of the 15th Brigade at Ripoll in upper Catalonia...

Only one day before my arrival in Barcelona the city had said its farewell to the International Brigades in the most moving ceremony of the war. The internationals had paraded through streets hung with flags and paved with flowers; the girls of Barcelona had broken their lines repeatedly to kiss them; the Spanish units in the parade had marched in full war kit, the internationals unarmed as they had come to Spain. Nothing had been lacking: cheers, tears, speeches...

Ripoll was a crowded little town of steep vertical streets in the lovely foothills of the Pyrenees. Wolff told me exactly what had happened to Lardner.

It was on September 23 at about eleven o'clock at night –the last night the battalion spent in the lines. They were holding Hill 281, at Corbera, and a change had taken place on Hill 376, to the northeast. Lardner was sent with two comrades, one Spanish and one American, to establish contact with the unit that was supposed to be on Hill 376. Lardner instructed Tony Novakowsky, the American with him, to stay at the foot of the hill with the Spanish comrade and wait while he went up to see who was occupying the hill. As he came near the top there was a shout and Lardner challenged in Spanish. The Fascists on the hill, uncertain in the darkness, threw out enough fire to repel an attack. The Spaniard at the foot of the hill was killed. Tony Novakowsky had some cover and was untouched. He remained under cover for a long time –nearly two hours- but Lardner did not return. Lardner's officers, after questioning Novakowsky, had no doubt that he had been instantly killed. On the following evening, September 24, the Lincoln Battalion was withdrawn from the lines and ordered back to Ripoll to prepare to go home. Lardner, the last American to enlist, had been the last to be killed.

Some weeks afterwards I got a letter from Lardner, a cheerful, ordinary sort of letter, the one written on his last day in hospital, full of his determination to return to the front. His papers were sent on to me sometime in December. He wanted to offer his life –that is clear- and if it was taken, merged into the aggregate of all those lives given for Spain, it was his unanswerable contribution to a cause much greater than any single life. All those Lardners did not die for nothing. If the world has a future they have preserved it. They must overcome the Chamberlains in the end, for provinces and nations can be signed away, but youth and honor never."

(From Vincent Sheean: Not Peace But a Sword, New York: Doubleday-Doran, 1939. Sheean and Lardner were correspondents of the New York *Herald-Tribune*)

“I am prejudiced about Spain, for I have spent a few uncomfortable minutes lying on my stomach in the stubble while a three-engined German bomber flew above the neighbouring Madrid-Toledo road on its civilizing mission...I am prejudiced because until the Spanish Civil War broke out it was possible to respect and to understand the declared aims of Fascism...But all went by the board when German and Italian arms and men were poured into Spain. Fascism, Mussolini had said, was not an article for export, he was exporting it as hard as he could. But Hitler was just as bad. National socialism had developed into an attempt to turn a civil war into an international affair in which German soldiers of the Hitler Revolution were fighting on the side of the most reactionary bunch of aristocrats in Europe.

Despite all the arguments about “Reds” and Communists controlling the Spanish Government it could hardly be denied that on one side was the great mass of the Spanish people and on the other a small group of selfish landlords who, with the help of the officers of an army and a priesthood that had become political, had kept the peasants in an ignorance and a poverty that were a disgrace to Western Europe...

Or so I felt until I met the nucleus of the International Brigade and a magnificent fellow called Nat Cohen who had left a tailor`s shop in Whitechapel, had taken his bicycle to Calais, and had peddled to Barcelona to become one of the important military leaders in the Catalan fighting. Nor was he the most spectacular case. Two Belgians had walked all the way across France on their flat feet in order to enlist... these volunteers against Fascism...

When I returned to Madrid in September, 1936, my old hatred gave way to admiration. The siege had not yet begun and Toledo was still the main theatre of war...There was no discipline, for almost all the army and police had deserted to the rebels. Those who had not done so were of course fighting at the front...

On my first evening in Madrid I went to a café where foreign pilots serving with the Spanish Government air force met each evening. There were seven British pilots there at the beginning of the week. At the end of the week three had been killed, two had been wounded and one had gone away on leave. For they were not only flying old machines, but they were flying them for an impossible number of hours a day. I have never met men who cared less about life...

The next morning I saw Indalecio Prieto, the Air Minister, to suggest that I should fly over Talavera in one of his few bombing machines in order to describe for my paper the odds with which the Spanish Government was faced. In the evening I went along to the café to ask my friend for advice about the bomber to choose. He was not there. His number was up. He had crashed behind the rebel lines and his body, horribly mutilated, had, I was told, been dropped that very afternoon at Getafe, the Government airport. I tactfully did not pursue my proposal to fly over the enemy lines.

Toward the end of that week I went reluctantly to the café, for each night I found the bar a little less crowded. They were shot down one by one, these young adventurers, and they died as gallantly as any pilot during the Great War...

The men I met in the International Brigade were not woolly-haired and woolly-minded cranks but in many cases the typical products of our expensive colleges who happened

to have “gone left”. They talked with the same enthusiasm, the same readiness to sacrifice themselves, the same desire to kill as a matter of duty as Englishmen of another day showed in 1914, when we were fighting for the independence of gallant little Belgium, for justice, for freedom, for decency...”

(From Vernon Bartlett (1938): Intermission in Europe: The Life of a Journalist and Broadcaster, New York: Oxford University Press, 1938. Bartlett covered the war of Spain for *The Times* in London)

“Mussolini`s prediction, made years before the Global War broke out in September, 1939, that the entire world was lining up in two camps, Fascism and Democracy, and that it was “Either We or They”, showed itself a matter of fact in the so called civil war in Spain. It was actually a rebellion of the military leadership –which committed wholesale treason by betraying the government to which it had taken an oath of allegiance- armed and paid for by the vested interests.

The “We” consisted of Fascists from all parts of the world, hundreds of thousands of soldiers from Germany, Italy and Portugal, all fascist lands, whereas the “They” of Democracy consisted of some 30,000 men of the International Brigade, not one a conscript soldier as were all on Franco`s side, but every man a volunteer, a man of intelligence, a first fighter against Fascism...

From Madrid early in 1937 this journalist wrote to the *New York Post* that Fascism had made it a class war in Spain. The most enlightening proof of a class war was given in Madrid on the 7th and 8th of November, 1936, when the capital was given up as lost, when the censors in the Telefonica let the newspapermen send out the most pessimistic reports, and the Loyalist militiamen sat around waiting for Franco to arrive and murder them.

On the 8th there was considerable shooting in the streets. It was Franco`s Fifth Column. The Loyalists estimated the snipers at twenty or thirty thousand. Now, when Franco appeared about to enter the city, they boldly appeared in windows and on roofs and around street corners, and began their guerrilla warfare...”

(From George Seldes (1943): Facts and Fascism, New York: In Fact, Inc., 1943. Seldes covered the so called Civil War in Spain for the *New York Post*)

“As the long golden days of the Spanish autumn drew on into winter it became painfully evident that the next big Fascist offensive would be the last. Past experience suggested that this would be in the spring, probably in March...

My guess about March was wrong. The plans of the dictators had gone so well in Central Europe, so much better than even they had dared to hope, that they were eager to press on to the next and more important part of their program –Albania for Italy and Poland for Germany. Before that was possible they wanted the Spanish affair liquidated. Franco received orders not to wait for the spring, but to strike now, at once, so that there would be time to withdraw the German and Italian legions, planes, and material back to their own countries before the summer that was to see the launching of the supreme throw...

A few hours later I was back again in Barcelona...After that day there seemed little object in going to the front, since the front was obviously coming to me. The decision would soon have to be made whether to remain in Barcelona and trust myself to the tender mercies of the Fascists, or whether to flee north to Gerona, whither the Government was already en route, and so on, if necessary, into France...

At noon on Wednesday the 25th, I stood outside the Majestic Hotel and watched William Forrest of the *News Chronicle* and O. D. Gallagher of the *Daily Express*, loading their luggage into the last car. As their car drove away, leaving me standing on the curb, I experienced a nasty sinking feeling in the pit of the stomach. Was I being rather heroic, or merely an outsize in obstinate idiots? To this day I am still uncertain of the answer...

In the early afternoon there was a sudden cessation in the firing, except for the noise of “pacos” –that peculiarly Spanish habit of fifth-columnists firing pistols into the air to induce panic among the defenders. They might have saved their ammunition, since there were no defenders left to panic...

I went down the hill at a trot and noticed groups of people gathering on their rooftops, and hanging out carpets from the balconies, which is the age-old Spanish sign of celebration. They were all staring excitedly toward the south, so obviously the Fascist troops could be seen from here, approaching the center of the town...

Thus at 4:45 PM on Thursday, January 26, 1939, the Spanish Civil war came to an end for me...

Hastily I sorted out my salutes. A thoughtless one of the clenched fist variety might mean a bullet through the head. Remembering the days when, as a small boy at school I had wished “to leave the room”, I raised my arm in that magnificent gesture of the Fascists which will, I fear, forever recall to me a weak bladder rather than a political conviction.

As the troops were marching my way I thought it wiser to march with them, congratulating those nearest me on being the first into the center of the city. It was hours later, when the city was securely in the hands of these men, before the Italians were allowed to appear...

At this moment the representatives of the British and American press with Franco arrived in a fleet of luxurious cars. They looked at me askance, but quickly decided that I was a harmless sort of beachcomber, and got down to the more important business of sending off thousands of words descriptive of their ride into the captured city...

Leaving the well-fed heroes of the Franco press in jubilant control I walked moodily back toward my hotel. From every quarter of the city I could hear the single shots of rifle or revolver which told of "executions". The conquerors had not wasted much time in exacting swift vengeance. Apparently there was not so very much difference between the attitude of mind of these educated followers of the Christian deliverer of Spain and the ignorant scum from the gutters of the city that they had defeated."

(From Cedric Salter: Try-Out in Spain, Harper: London and New York, 1943. Salter covered the War of Spain for *The Daily Telegraph*, *News Chronicle* and *Daily Mail*)

“Driving across the rolling parklands of the old royal hunting preserve shaded by scattered clumps of liveoaks and huge coacktrees the young lieutenant colonel who was taking me to the field headquarters in the foothills near the Escorial, told me about his life. Up to last July he had been a pianist and composer. He had lived a great deal in Paris. So first thing he knew he was in the field as an officer of the Fifth Regiment...

While we were talking the staffcars drove up with General Miaja, General Walter, Colonel Rojo and various functionaries from the Ministry of War. The speeches, some in French and some in Spanish, were translated sentence by sentence. A new phase had come in the history of the International Brigades. They had played a heroic role independently. Now the time had come for them to add their experience and knowledge of the business of war to the fresh cadres of the new Spanish people`s army. They had come as antifascists. They had helped save Madrid. Now they were to help build up a victorious army that would fight for democracy and liberty until the peninsula was cleared of the tyrant and the invader.”

(From John Dos Passos: Travel Books and Other Writings: 1916-1941, The Library of America, 2003. Dos Passos covered the War of Spain for the Magazine *Esquire*)

(Summer of 1936)

I was checking background material for a novel, in the Weltkriegsbibliothek of Stuttgart. The Nazi newspapers began to speak of fighting in Spain. They did not talk of war; the impression I got was of a bloodthirsty rabble, attacking the forces of decency and order. This Spanish rabble, which was the duly elected Republic of Spain, was always referred to as "Red Swine-dogs". The Nazi papers had one solid value: Whatever they were against, you could be for...

I stayed some months in Germany discussing, with anyone who still dared to discuss, the freedom of the mind, the rights of the individual, and the Red Swine-dogs of Spain. Then I went back to America, finished my novel, shoved it forever into a desk drawer, and started to get myself to Spain. I had stopped being a pacifist and become an anti-fascist.

By the winter of 1936, the Western democracies had proclaimed the doctrine of non-intervention, which meant simply that neither people nor supplies could pass freely to the Republican territory of Spain...

I only remember studying a map, taking a train, getting off at a station nearest to the Andorran-Spanish border, walking a short distance from one country to another, and taking a second train – ancient cold little carriages, full of the soldiers of the Spanish Republic who were returning to Barcelona on leave. They hardly looked like soldiers, being dressed however they were able, and obviously this was an army in which you fed yourself, since the government could not attend to that...

The people of the Republic of Spain were the first to suffer the relentless totality of modern war. The men who fought and those who died for the Republic, whatever their nationality and whether they were Communists, anarchists, Socialists, poets, plumbers, middle-class professional men, or the one Abyssinian prince, were brave and disinterested, as there were no rewards in Spain. They were fighting for us all, against the combined force of European fascism. They deserved our thanks and our respect and got neither.

(July 1937)

At first the shells went over: you could hear the thud as they left the Fascists' guns, a sort of groaning cough; then you heard them fluttering toward you. As they came closer the sound went faster and straighter and sharper and then, very fast, you heard the great booming noise when they hit...

There wasn't anything to do, or anywhere to go: you could only wait... It seemed a little crazy to be living in a hotel...

You could only wait. You waited for the shelling to start, and for it to end, and for it to start again. It came from three directions, at any time, without warning and without purpose...

Later, you could see people around Madrid examining the new shell holes with curiosity and wonder. Otherwise they went on with the routine of their lives, as they had been interrupted by a heavy rainstorm but nothing more. In a café which was hit in the morning, where three men were killed sitting at a table reading their morning papers and drinking coffee, the clients came back in the afternoon. You went to Chicote's bar at the

end of the day, walking up the street which was No Man`s Land, where you could hear the shells whistling even when there was silence, and the bar was crowded as always. On the way you had passed a dead horse and a very dead mule, chopped with shell fragments, and you had passed crisscrossing trails of human blood on the pavement...

Women are standing in line, as they do all over Madrid, quiet women, dressed usually in black, with market baskets on their arms, waiting to buy food. A shell falls across the square. They turn their heads to look, and move a little closer to the house, but no one leaves her place in line. After all, they have been waiting there for three hours and the children expect food at home...

I always got a shock from the Palace Hotel. It is the first military hospital of Madrid now. I went around to the operating room, which used to be the reading room. There were bloody stretchers piled in the hall, but it was quiet this afternoon...

(November 1937)

And so, to fill the days, we went visiting at the nearest fronts (ten blocks from the hotel, fifteen blocks, a good brisk walk in the rain, something to circulate your blood). There were always funny people in the trenches, new faces, always something to talk about. So we strolled to University City and Usera, to the Parque del Oeste, to those trenches that are a part of the city and that we knew so well...

How it is going to be possible ever to explain what this is really like? All you can say is, "This happened; that happened; he did this; she did that." But this does not tell of Sanchez and Ausino, and the others with them, those calm young men who were once photographers or doctors or bank clerks or law students, and who now shape and train their troops so that one day they can be citizens instead of soldiers."

(From Martha Gellhorn: The Face of War, Simon and Schuster, 1959)

“Madrid, September 30, 1937.

They say you never hear the one that hits you. That`s true of bullets, because, if you hear them, they are already past. But your correspondent heard the last shell that hit this hotel He heard it start from the battery, then come with a whistling incoming roar like a subway train to crash against the cornice and shower the room with broken glass and plaster. And while the glass still tinkled down and you listened for the next one to start, you realized that now finally you were back in Madrid.

Madrid is quiet now. The crowds are cheerful and the sandbag-fronted cinemas are crowded every afternoon. The nearer one gets to the front, the more optimistic and cheerful the people are.

At this moment, a shell has just alighted on a house up the street from the hotel where I am typing this. A little boy is crying in the street. A militiaman has picked him up and is comforting him. There was no one killed on our street, and the people who started to run slow down and grin nervously. The one who never started to run at all looks at the others in a very superior way, and the town we are living in now is Called Madrid.”

(From William White (ed.): By-Line: Ernest Hemingway, Selected Articles and Dispatches of Four Decades, Scribner, 2003. Hemingway covered the Spanish War for the North American Newspaper Alliance)

“I was to take the one forty-five out of Paris the next afternoon. No baggage was allowed. I was to remove all identification from my clothing. Everything else I had brought with me I left at the Hotel Montana...

The train for Toulouse was late in leaving. It was crowded and hot. At Toulouse I went to a square as per instructions and waited until I saw several men dressed in a certain way. When they gave the expected signal, I followed. Then I noticed others following too. We stopped at a café and waited there for a while. Then we continued to follow the lead men.

The trail led to a big bus. Each had to give the password before being permitted to board the bus. From Perpignan we went to Cerbere on still a different bus. On the way to Cerbere we were warned not to speak with anyone. We were to walk in twos and threes and make ourselves as inconspicuous as possible.

We were told to wait at a small café on one side of the town square. In due time we were given the high sign and followed the leader again. This led us to a big bus. We had to repeat the new password before we could get on board. We circled and circled on the bus until it got dark. We were warned to be ready to get off at a moment's notice. Anyone who got caught would be out of luck. The safety of the entire group couldn't be jeopardized for any one individual. There were thirty-four of us on the bus and we were to meet many more when we started our hike up and over the Pyrenees.

We had to watch for flashlight signals from the fields. When we saw them, the bus jarred to a sudden halt, we rushed out and into the fields, and hid flat on the ground behind a row of hedges. We were warned that we might be fired on by border guards. This wasn't a game. It was very serious business.

After quite a while we were located by the guides who knew every inch of those mountains like the palms of their hands. We followed crouching most of the time. At our first rest spot on the mountainside I counted one hundred and twenty-four men of all ages. We rested for about fifteen minutes and then went on and up again in single file, close together so that we wouldn't lose each other, and as the night wore on we climbed higher and higher...

We came to a river with water a little more than knee deep. Then we came to another river. This one was about eighty feet wide and up to my chin most of the way across. We had to strip and roll our clothes in a bundle to carry on our heads so they wouldn't get wet. The taller fellows helped the shorter ones. It was the middle of the winter and the ground was covered with snow and ice. That's where I caught a cold so severe that I couldn't get rid of it for more than nine months.

A number of times during our climb we had to flatten ourselves on the ground while bullets whistled all around us. Fortunately no one got hit. After what seemed ages we heard a shout and lights suddenly went on. We were finally on the border. We were happy. We had made it.”

From Sidney Franklin (1952): Bullfighter from Brooklyn, Prentice Hall, 1952. Sidney Franklin, American bullfighter, was Hemingway's assistant in Spain for nine months during the Spanish war.

“ I was in bed about eight o`clock one morning and woke up with one word dinning in my ears. “Blanco-blanco-blanco...”

What the hell is that? I asked myself. Blanco-blanco-blanco. The bedside telephone rang. It was Allen. “For God`s sake!” he exclaimed. “Are you still in bed? You`d better get down here as fast as you can. They`ve arrived!”

They weren`t saying blanco-blanco-blanco. I heard them aright by this time. It was Franco-Franco-Franco...

While I ducked out of my nightshirt I wondered if I could make the censorship before the street shooting began. If I didn`t get there before it started I would surely miss the story, the fall of Madrid.

About fourteen kids were playing soldiers on the pavement. There were lots of folk walking about. Smiling. A truck came past. It was filled with young men and girls in blackshirts and waving yellow and red flags. Monarchist flags. They were shouting, “Franco! Franco! Franco!” They gave the outstretched arm salute and everyone on the pavements laughed and did the same to them. So I walked fast but sedately to the Censura. Madrid had fallen without a fight.

Yellow and red colths and flags hung from all windows and balconies. And plenty of white cloths too. Sheets and pillow cases. For the first time all Madrid saw the Fifth Column. They took Madrid. Not Franco`s soldiers. It took the soldiers five hours and more to get in.

I knew when I had written my last word on the subject. It was when my runner came back and returned my last telegram He said: “Italians are in the radio station. They looked at this and said, “Take it away, we don`t want it.””. I packed up the typewriter and began to think of London. My job was finished: I could send no more messages.

Franco`s Fifth Column took the city...Then the Moors arrived.”

(From O. D. Gallagher: “Five Waited for a City to Die” in Frank C. Haninghen (ed.): Nothing But Danger, New York: National Travel Club, 1939. O`Dowd Gallagher, a South African, covered the War of Spain for the London`s *Daily Express*)

Another journalist, this time Spanish, Luis Bolín, played an important role in the War on the Franco`s side. A Correspondent of the Spanish journal ABC in London, Bolín played a vital role in the provision of air transportation to Franco, in order to get to Northern Africa from his post in the Canary Islands, at the beginning of the War. Later, Bolín was sent to Italy to find key help from Mussolini, and became the Chief Press Officer to whom all foreign correspondents reported in Franco`s Spain. His accounts of the Italian and German intervention in the War are illuminating. This is what, almost thirty years after the end of the War, he wrote in his book Spain: The Vital Years, published in 1967 in the US by J.B. Lippincott Co.:

“It was mid-afternoon when I arrived in Rome on a hot, damp, typical summer day -21 July 1936...

Thanks to an influential friend, in a matter of hours the Marqués de Viana arranged a meeting with Count Ciano, the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs. Viana`s optimism and sound judgement, and the fact that he spoke for King Alfonso XIII, were invaluable during the crucial days that followed. Galeazzo Ciano received us in his sumptuous office at the Ministero degli Esteri. He glanced at my credentials while I outlined the purpose that had brought me to Rome. His reaction was enthusiastic and spontaneous. Without hesitating an instant he promised us the necessary aid. “Your Excellency can rest assured that in due course we shall not fail to pay for whatever we might receive”, I said. “Señor Bolín, Señor Bolín”, countered Ciano in a conciliatory tone, “the question of payment has not even entered our minds. This is not a matter of money, but of the tremendous responsibilities involved in action such as you propose”. “In Spain we are fighting Communism; without planes we are lost”, I replied...

Ciano did not keep us waiting long, and this time he received us with a smile. The victory he had scored was as much his triumph as our own. “Everything is settled”, he told us. “My Consul in Tangier has seen General Franco. We are sending you bombers and fighters. In due course we may send more”. “Will they fly straight to Spanish Morocco?”, I inquired. “That is where I understand you want them”, answered Ciano. “In that case I would like to go with the bombers. It might be as well to have one of us on board”.

Two days later I got my embarkment notice. It told me to be ready at the Grand Hotel at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, 29 July. Punctually at the appointed hour a car drove me to the airport at Ostia...At Cagliari, in the course of a brief speech that outlined the purpose of their mission, General Valle presented me to the officers of the twelve Savoia-81 bombers selected to leave next morning for the Tahuima airfield at Nador, near Melilla, our first stop in Spanish Morocco...

It took two days to enroll the crews of the bombers in the Spanish Foreign Legion, which for the first time in its history now boasted a flying detachment. Uniforms for all, smartly cut and handsome, were completed in record time. Officers and men were provided with pistols, Spanish currency, identity papers and identification discs. The same competent Staff officers –Solans, Seguí, Zanón, Gazapo- who had rebelled on 17 July, twenty-four hours before the day appointed for the rising, solved every problem smilingly and smoothed out difficulties for our new friends.

I was appointed liaison officer to the group. My lack of status in the Army was overcome by promoting me to the rank of honorary captain in the Foreign Legion, a distinction which filled me with pride...That same evening I presented my squadron-leader and his officers to General Franco. When the General learnt that the remaining Savoias would arrive from Melilla in a couple of days, preparations for crossing the Strait were set afoot.

Only a man of Franco`s mettle could have attempted the crossing, but the risk he took was a calculated one. He knew that the enemy would be thrown off balance by his initiative. Since their nearest base was Madrid, no Republican planes were likely to be around when the convoy sailed from Ceuta, and because their officers had all been murdered or imprisoned, competent men would not be available to direct the movements or the artillery of any Red ships that might try to intercept it.

On 5 August, at 10 a.m., my bomber was the first off the ground...Shortly after, Franco flew from Tetuán to Seville. The forces he had sent from Morocco numbered six thousand men, all of them combat troops destined to make history in Spain...

Later, Franco spared no effort to bring over the trained reserves available in Morocco. 23,393 men were flown to Jerez and Seville during the summer and autumn of 1936, surely one of the first big airlifts in history. Simultaneously, some 880,000 pounds of supplies were brought from Morocco to Southern Spain by planes which, in their spare time, carried out 475 bombing missions...

In November 1936, the Nationalists had with them a handful of Italian volunteers, in all little more than 200 strong, made up of aviators and of 16 officers and 160 men attached to Italian light tanks and 65-mm. batteries which had been recently disembarked in Spain. The Nationalist High Command at Salamanca, aware that foreign combatants were active on the republican side, allowed Italians to join the Spanish Foreign Legion, which since its creation in 1920 had admitted volunteers of all nationalities into its ranks. It was not until December 1936 that headquarters at Salamanca decided to admit additional Italian volunteers to the ranks of the nationalist Army. Three thousand landed in Cadiz on the 22nd of that month; three thousand more arrived there after a brief interval. On 17 January 1937 these men were drafted into an Italian Volunteer Brigade composed of two regiments with three battalions each, and one with four. Mixed brigades, known as the "Blue Arrows" and "Black Arrows" were also organised shortly afterwards.

One month later, Italian volunteer troops in Spain consisted of 15 battalions, 13 batteries, 3 companies of light tanks, a mechanized company of machine-gunners, three groups of sappers, and other services –in all 18,000 men, who played a part in the taking of Malaga. These units were eventually transferred to the Valladolid-Soria sector, and a corps of 35,000 volunteer troops –"C.T.V."- was established there with four infantry Divisions, a battalion of light tanks, two companies of mechanized machine-gunners, a company of flame-throwers, and artillery, engineers, and auxiliary services.

By the end of November 1937 the C.T.V. consisted of two Italian Divisions, "Littorio" and "XXIIIrd March", and the Blue and Black Arrows. Four months later C.T.V. effectives again totalled 35,000 men. In December 1938, three months before the termination of the war, the C.T.V. had in Spain some 28,000 men.

Even if we include Italian aviators with 8 groups of Savoia 81 bombers, 6 groups of Fiat 32 fighters, and a group of RO 37 reconnaissance planes, all of them attached to the Spanish Foreign Legion, the total Italian contingent on Spanish territory never exceeded 40,000 men.

Early in November 1936 the Italian and German contingents with Franco were evenly balanced as regards numbers. Each had little more than 200 men, counting aviators, gunners, tank specialists and signallers. A German expeditionary volunteer corps was formed under the name of "Condor Legion", members of which recruited from the Luftwaffe, had landed in Spain in mid-November. They were mainly aircraft pilots and mechanics, anti-aircraft gunners, or specialists of various kinds. They numbered 4,500. The Condor legion eventually consisted of one group of combat planes, one group of scouts, a reconnaissance group, four heavy and two light anti-aircraft batteries, two companies of light tanks, and signaling and transport detachments, with instructors for training purposes. At no time did these effectives surpass a total of 5,000 men."