

The

CNT

in the
Spanish Revolution

Volume 3



Grupo DAS

José Peirats

Edited and revised by Chris Ealham



Exile!, Helios Gómez (www.tvhastingschristiebooks.com)

THE CNT IN THE SPANISH REVOLUTION

VOLUME 3

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The Cañada Blanch Centre
for Contemporary Spanish Studies

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by José Peirats Valls

Edited by Chris Ealham

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It is now over fifty years since the third volume of Peirats' *History of the CNT in the Spanish Revolution* was first published in 1953.

This year, 2006, is also the 70th anniversary of beginning of the

Spanish Civil War, a year of homage to all the victims of

Francoism. We dedicate the third and final volume of this first

English-language edition to the memory of José Peirats Valls

(1908-1989), and to the selfless men and women who dedicated themselves and their lives to the furtherance of the anarchist ideal.

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The New World Resettlement Fund' was entirely due to the novelist John Dos Passos. Veterans of the US Abraham Lincoln Brigade were *not* involved.



¡TRABAJADORES!
aparecerá en

En breve
MADRID

“CNT”

Organo de la CONFEDERACION NACIONAL DEL TRABAJO
GRAN DIARIO PROLETARIO DE LA CIUDAD Y EL CAMPO



'We do not make war just for the sake of making war. Were our movement compelled to be encapsulated by one blunt adjective that adjective would not be "warlike", but "revolutionary".'

There is yet time for us to express ourselves in the most readily understood form possible. Definite facts and definite ideas must be given their proper names. There must be an end to this mistake of double entendres which complicate the dictionary. And the fact is that frequently a play on words is followed up by the *fait accompli*. "War" has been so loudly trumpeted as a synonym for "revolution" that we have been induced to invest in this war with all of the bellicose accoutrements that were always odious to us: the regular army and discipline. The same thing has happened with discipline in the proper sense. There have been comrades aplenty who, despite their *bona fides*, have flirted with the term and spoken to us of discipline while painting this in colours diametrically opposed to freedom.

This, far from rendering discipline more humane, is a bestialisation of freedom. It is not so very long ago that an attempt was made in our circles to peddle a version of discipline implying order and responsibility comparable with anarchy. Such an endeavour always called to our minds the idea of "good government" or "tutelary authority", as opposed to despotic or blatantly authoritarian government. And just as it has not been possible to sort governments into good ones and bad ones — since in fact there are, rather, only bad ones and worse ones — we have come to learn with the passage of time that all discipline is a tributary of regimentation.

We aver that all wars are inauspicious. Were it our belief that we are making a war, we should be the first to desert. The fact is that war never erupts to the advantage of those who inflict and suffer its ravages.

We are not fighting here to advance anyone's private interests, though there will be no shortage of bigwigs who will seek to commandeer the fruits of our struggle and gamble on the ups and downs of our successes and our reverses, turning our rearguard into a stockjobbers' lot.

Our fight is against privilege and not for the nation, a fight for liberty and not for the fatherland, a fight for anarchy and not for the Republic. We risk our lives for the collective good and not for a privileged caste. While one of us remains standing, the social revolution, which is the driving force behind our liberation movement, will never want for defenders and combatants, whether they use pen, fist, word or rifle.

We do not make war; war is always made for the purposes of someone else, and fought out between the brethren who are poor in spirit. We make revolution for the benefit of all human beings and against the cliques who are hangovers from parasitism and self-centredness. And as we are making revolution, not one square metre of reconquered ground must be subtracted from the process of transformation, despite the froglike croaking of those whose lack of spirit and mettle inclines them to dabble in the stagnant waters of politicking.'

— Editorial from *Acracia* (Lleida), 1936-7

Contents

Glossary of organisations

Spanish anarchism in the English language i

1: The Valencia Economic Forum 1
Catalan agricultural issues. The land redistribution decree. A national plenum with an economic focus. Creation of a labour inspectorate. Remuneration arrangements. Establishment of a Trade Union Bank. The Trade Union Insurance Agency. Confederal publications. Intensification of consumer cooperatives. Administrative centralisation on a mixed footing. The Confederal Economic Council. Federations of Industry and general labour regulations. The Spanish stock-breeding question.

2: The New Trade Union Platform 26
Take-over of public entertainments in Catalonia. The collectivists respond with a general strike. A typical compromise arrangement. Clarification of the 'collectivisation decree'. Towards a new trade union unity platform. The UGT's proposals. The CNT's counter-proposals. 'Marx and Bakunin would embrace one another'. Francoist military pressure a factor in the agreement. The 2nd FIJL national Congress. Autonomy and centralism. The new Peninsular Committee. Basis of the Anti-fascist Youth Alliance (AJA)

3: From Victory in Teruel to Disaster in Aragon 55

The build-up to the offensive. The capture and loss of Teruel. A critique of the operation. The collapse of the eastern front. The offensive grinds to a standstill. Another week of tragedy in Barcelona. The workers desert the factories under furious air raids. The responses from the trade union organisations and Popular Front. Cabinet reshuffle. The volunteer battalions. The Executive Committee of the Libertarian Movement. Sanctions on militants. Sub-committees in the central zone. A manifesto from the CNT's national sub-committee. The Catalan CNT and UGT sign up to a new agreement. Tracking the disaster in the east. Generalities.

4: The Crisis Within the Libertarian Movement 76

The Geneva life-belt. The alleged disintegration of the enemy rearguard. The miracle of the Marne invoked. Operations in the Alt Segre. Nostalgia for guerrilla warfare. The oppressive shadow of hunger. Doctor Negrin's 13 Points. The FAI's reaction. The CNT enraptured. The poisonous impact of defective reasoning. The FAI lowers its flag. The crisis within the Libertarian Movement.

5: The August Crisis and the Battle of the Ebro 95

Plenum of the Libertarian Movement in Catalonia. National Plenum of the CNT regional committees. The political truce called off. Recuperation and state take-over of the revolution's gains. The August crisis. State take-over of the war industries in Catalonia. Silence from the CNT and objections from the FAI. The 'reform' of the Commissariat. The political crisis resolved. The SIM, Negrin's political skeleton key. The offensive grinds to a halt in Catalonia. The battle of Levante. The Ebro gambit. A war of attrition. The retreat. A critical report from the FAI's military secretariat.

6: Francoist Policy 116

Italy and Germany critical of their military suggestions being ignored. Signs of guerrilla activity in the North. The threat of French intervention. Sketch of the Francoist rearguard. The Anglo-Italian agreement or the Republic stabbed in the back. The Czechoslovak crisis and the threat of world war. Franco assures France that he will remain neutral. The volunteers withdrawn. Fresh urgent demands for war materials. Forceful economic pressure from Germany. The mining legislation of 9 October. Goering's wrath or the gun to Franco's breast. The draft German-Spanish treaty. The evasive twists and turns of Francoist policy. The mining compensation legislation.

7: The State Take-Over of the War Industries 146

The phases of and pretext for the take-over. Conversations in Valencia and in Barcelona. The Russian advisors bring about failure. Regarding the 11 August decree. The committees cave in and the workers stand firm. The resistance in Madrid. The resistance in Valencia. The War Industry Council, the final redoubt. The UGT switches sides. Situation of the war industries in the Centre-South-Levante zone. Factories turned into penal colonies. The take-over process in Catalonia. The aircraft plants in Sabadell. The Elizalde and Hispano-Suiza works. Managerial chaos and the blight of bureaucracy. Falling productivity levels. The Catalan metalworkers stand their ground. More on the dark chapter of the Purchasing Commissions abroad.

8: Libertarians and Communists in the War 180

Loss of morale as a factor in the defeat. The need for fresh officers. The hundred

thousand sons of Negrín. The nascent military caste. Nonsensical and partisan discipline. Hunger in the rearguard. 'Resist! Resist!' The Soviet high command in Alcalá de Henares. The Under Secretariat of Land Forces, a recruitment machine. The file on Antonio Córdón. A flurry of admissions to the War School. A tailor-made army for Modesto. Promotions, dismissals and other monopolies. A political map of the army. The work of the cells. The International Brigades seen from within. The 43rd Division's 'heroics'

9: Terror in the Front Lines 203

Murders in the front lines reported to the Defence Minister. Minutes of a gathering of communist servicemen at which the decision was made to exterminate political adversaries. From words to deeds. Several cases of murder. The craven murder of Turón. An official document on this collective criminality. A further series of killings. The case of José Meca, Juan Hervás and Jaime Trepát. The terror policy in the army health corps. Mysterious deaths in field hospitals. Towards 'conquest' of the 153rd Brigade. A systematic campaign of murder. The 26th Division's 'Durruti' groups make common cause with their downtrodden brethren. The final 'conquest' of the brigade.

10: Terror in the Rearguard 228

The SIM, the new Spanish Inquisition. The cheka in the former convent of Santa Ursula. Evolution of the police. The SIM commanders and their advisors. Their immorality and criminality. The impact abroad of these crimes. Fact-finding teams in Spain. The communist press counter-attacks. The 'comrades from special services'. The GPU frames the POUM. How Andreu Nin was done to death. 'No more 'being taken for a ride''! The POUM on trial. The accused, the witnesses and the verdict. 'We must, and do convict.'

11: From the October Plenum to the Loss of Catalonia 245

The national plenum of the Libertarian Movement's regional committees. Proceedings, stances and resolutions. A glimpse of the Negrinist Byzantium. The CNT's fatalism and snorts of orthodoxy from

the FAI. The third part to the discord. Sounding the alarm and the blackmail to which it gave rise. The meeting in Pedralbes. Crumbs for the Basque government and Generalitat. The CNT rumpus. A flood of literary heroics. Confronting the awful truth. A short military assessment. The forecasts of the central high command. 'Bring on the bull!' The final push against Catalonia. The Army of the Ebro collapses. Valiant resistance from the 26th Division. The fall of Barcelona. Negrín's bombast. The 'Republic of El Cadí'. Exodus.

12: The Last Bulwark 245

The position in the Central Zone in the wake of the loss of Catalonia. General mobilisation. Declaration of a state of war. The libertarians deploy their defences. Criticism of the offensive operation in Extremadura. Arrival of Negrín. The government of 'resistance' begins to wind things down. Report on the loss of Barcelona. Watchwords from the committees now in France. What it was like to talk to Negrín 'as an equal'. Cipriano Mera's indiscipline. Britain and France recognise Franco. Azaña resigns. The 'political issue'. Friction between the FAI and the CNT. Minister Segundo Blanco's eccentricities. Measures to counter an imminent pro-Negrín coup d'état.

13: *Vae Victis!* 245

The communist high command in the Centre-South Zone. The meeting between Casado and Negrín. The meeting at the Los Llanos aerodrome. Two competitors racing against time. 'The first strike has double the effect'. The Negrinist play frustrated. Proclamation of the National Defence Council. The government's craven flight. Events in Cartagena. The fleet absconds. The communist revolt against the Defence Council. Move the 14th Division up to Madrid! Moscow's henchmen surrender. The Libertarian Movement's national committee. Negotiating with the enemy. Unconditional surrender! Negotiations break down. The enemy onslaught and the collapse of the front lines. A soldier's peace. Evacuation arrangements. Negrín's revenge. Humanitarian appeals to the democracies go unheeded. Two exhibits for the prosecution. Alicante. *Vae victis!*

Glossary of organisations

- BOC** Bloc Obrer i Camperol/Worker-Peasant Block; an anti-Stalinist communist party
- CADCI** Centre Autonomista de Dependents del Comerç i de la Indústria/Autonomist Centre for Shop and White-Collar Workers; a Catalan white-collar and shop workers' union, the leading union in this sector
- CEDA** Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas/Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Rightists; the main rightist party in the 1930s, of quasi-fascist persuasion
- CGT** Confédération Générale du Travail/General Confederation of Labour; Europe's leading anarcho-syndicalist union before World War One, it later fell under socialist and communist influence
- CGTU** Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire/Unitary General Confederation of Labour; formed by communists and allied to the RILU
- CNT** Confederación Nacional del Trabajo/National Confederation of Labour
- CRT** Confederación Regional del Trabajo/Regional Confederation of Labour; the regional bodies that made up the CNT
- ERC** Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya/Republican Left of Catalonia; a middle class republican party
- FAI** Federación Anarquista Ibérica/Iberian Anarchist Federation; the pan-Iberian federation of anarchist affinity groups
- FIJL** Federación Ibérica de Juventudes Libertarias/Iberian Federation of Young Libertarians; the anarchist youth movement
- FJS** Federación de Juventudes Socialistas/Socialist Youth Federation; the youth movement of the PSOE
- FNTT** Federación Nacional de Trabajadores de la Tierra/National Federation of Land Labourers; the UGT agrarian workers' union
- FOUS** Federación Obrera de Unificación Sindical/Workers' Federation of Trade Union Unity; a dissident communist union federation close to the POUm
- FSL** Federación Sindicalista Libertaria/Libertarian Syndicalist Federation; a moderate anarcho-syndicalist answer to the FAI formed during the power struggles in the CNT prior to the civil war
- ICE** Izquierda Comunista de España/Communist Left of Spain; a small Trotskyist grouping which helped form the POUm in 1935
- IWA** International Workingmen's Association; the world organisation of anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist groups
- JCI** Juventud Comunista Ibérica/Iberian Communist Youth; the PCE youth movement
- JJ.LL** Juventudes Libertarias/Young Libertarians; the Catalan association of young anarchists
- JSU** Juventudes Socialistas Unificadas/Unified Socialist Youth; an amalgamation of the JSU and the JCI under Stalinist hegemony
- PCC** Partit Comunista Català/Catalan Communist Party; a dissident communist group which helped form the BOC in 1930
- PCE** Partido Comunista de España/Communist Party of Spain; the official pro-Moscow communist party
- POUm** Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista/Workers' Party of Marxist Unification; a dissident communist, anti-Stalinist party
- PSOE** Partido Socialista Obrero Español/Spanish Socialist Workers' Party; the Spanish social-democratic party
- PSUC** Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya/Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia; the Catalan Communist Party formed at the start of the civil war in order to rival the power of the revolutionary CNT-FAI and the POUm

- RILU Red International of Labour Unions; Comintern union federation
SS.OO Sindicatos de la Oposición/Opposition Unions; made up of anti-FAL anarcho-syndicalists
UGT Unión General de Trabajadores/General Workers' Union; the PSOE-affiliated union movement
USC Unió Socialista de Catalunya/Socialist Union of Catalonia; a quasi-Fabian-socialist party which split from the PSOE due to the latter's centralist stance on the national question. Very close to the ERC before the civil war, it later joined the PSUC.
U. de R. Unió de Rabassaires/Union of Sharecroppers; a Catalan tenant farmers' union close to the ERC



The history of Spanish anarchism in the English language ⁽¹⁾

The CNT in the Spanish Revolution, as we indicated in the introduction to Volume 1, and as hopefully by now those of you reading this introduction will concur, is a seminal work in the historiography of the Iberian anarchist movement. This essay seeks to locate Peirats's work more generally within the context of the English language literature on Spanish anarchism. For an overarching view of the Spanish workers' movement in all its guises and the position of the anarchists in relation to other factions, see Benjamin Martin (1990). Prior to plunging into the detail offered by Martin, it is well worth consulting the excellent interpretive essay by Paul Heywood (1989), which constitutes a wonderful starting point for any consideration of the appeal of anarchism. Heywood's contention that the success of anarchism cannot be entirely understood without appreciating the inherent weaknesses of the socialist movement is underscored in his penetrating study of the failure of Marxism to take root in Spain (1990).

Beginnings: Millenarianism versus Rationalism

During the long winter of Francoism, when the regime endeavoured to impose an intellectual *cordon sanitaire* around Spain, it fell to historians and writers working beyond the reach of the censor of the dictatorship, principally from the Anglo-Saxon world, to produce illuminating and independent studies that ensured that Spain did not become *terra incognita*. One such pioneering study of the 1930s political crisis in Spain was the beautifully written book by Bloomsbury Group historian Gerald Brenan (1943). Having moved to Andalusia in the 1920s, Brenan was very much concerned with the nature of agrarian anarchism and perhaps as a result overplays the rural dimensions of the movement. In essence, Brenan saw anarchism as a chiliastic, millenarian, movement that functioned as a substitute religion for the masses: in a corrupt and wretched society in which the organised Church had allied with the rich and the powerful, the appeal of anarchism was its prophecy of a totally new beginning for an oppressed humanity. Brenan's perspective was greatly influenced by Juan Díaz del Moral's 1928 *Historia de las agitaciones campesinas andaluzas*, a study written by a centre-left lawyer and mason from the south of Spain. Besides stressing what he saw as the moralistic nature of anarchist belief, Díaz del Moral also invoked the hoary myth of national idiosyncrasy to explain anarchism's popularity. For a more detailed discussion of Brenan, see Marie Louise Berneri (1961), and for a critique of the stress on national characteristics, see Chris Ealham (1994).

Eric Hobsbawm (1959), the celebrated British social historian, followed the approach of Brenan (and indeed that of Díaz del Moral), while taking their analysis in a more critical and anti-anarchist direction and defining the movement as a form of 'primitive rebellion', harnessing elemental agrarian social strata and capable of nothing more than periodic, dramatic but essentially doomed insurrections. Deploying a range of *a priori* assumptions and a teleology that one might expect of a scholar who was, at this time, close to the British communist party, Hobsbawm described the movement as a millenarian and irrational form of pre-industrial revolt that was destined to fail by virtue of its own internal contradictions whereupon it would be replaced by a more modern and coherent, urban-based Marxist-led social movement. While in the latter part of the nineteenth century sections of the southern branch of the anarchist movement were periodically enveloped in a cycle of insurrectionary violence, Hobsbawm's polemical certainties nevertheless ignore the regional variations of the movement and cannot account for the process whereby anarchism became the dominant creed among the working class in Barcelona, Spain's most important and advanced industrial city. Moreover, there is considerable evidence that many people came to anarchism after a lengthy period of reflection and experience and that anarchist activists were anything but 'primitive', as has been demonstrated by Mercedes Vilanova (1992).

1) I am very grateful to Paul Preston for his comments on an earlier draft of this chapter

The millenarian perspective came under sustained attack from and was eventually laid to rest by a later generation of scholars, such as Clara Lida (1969) and Temma Kaplan (1977), who interpreted anarchism as a 'rational' response to the oppression and exclusion of certain social groups during a specific set of historical circumstances. In particular, Kaplan, who anchors her study in a socio-economic analysis of Cádiz province, the very area which the supporters of the millenarian thesis believed was most central to their argument, goes on to study the anarchist movement in its local context, demonstrating that anarchist and anarcho-sindicalist militants pursued a realistic and credible set of protest tactics that was firmly rooted in the everyday life of the social constituencies to which they appealed and whose interests they set about defending. Based on a much more exhaustive consideration of source materials than Hobsbawm and Brennan put together, Kaplan explodes the myths and mechanistic logic underpinning the millenarian thesis. For a detailed discussion of this debate, see Martha Grace Duncan (1988) and Chris Ealham (1996a).

The late Murray Bookchin's *The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years* (1977) appeared the same year as Kaplan's study. This highly readable introductory survey is essential for the early history of the movement, although it is not entirely without inaccuracy. Written with considerable brio and passion, and based on ten years' research, which included many interviews with exiled anarchist militants, Bookchin explores the formation and consolidation of the movement across the full range of its activities (agrarian, educational, trade union). One of the main merits of Bookchin's survey is that he locates the growth of anarchism within both the contours of international working class politics during the 1860s and 1870s and the repressive political, economic and cultural context in Spain, emphasising the effect of the weak bourgeois-liberal sphere. Bookchin's treatment of the issue of anarchist 'propaganda by the deed' in the 1890s is especially sensitive and represented a significant advance upon the traditional view discussed above. Of special importance is Bookchin's examination of the movement's internal culture and the everyday hopes and aspirations of its supporters; these themes are developed through a series of vivid and compelling biographical sketches of key figures in the history of Iberian libertarianism, ranging from founding fathers like Anselmo Lorenzo, Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia and Fermin Salvochea, to prominent activists from the inter-war years, such as Salvador Seguí and Buenaventura Durruti. While the scope of Bookchin's study is quite breathtaking, his attention is directed mainly at the pre-history of the CNT, which means that the dense and convoluted politics of the pre-revolutionary, pre-civil war republican years are treated very briefly indeed.

For an impressive scholarly treatment of the early years of the anarchist movement up until the birth of anarcho-sindicalism, see the work of George Esenwein (1989). This study is especially significant given the dearth of material in English on the ideological evolution of early anarchism. As far as the later development of anarcho-sindicalism is concerned, Antonio Bar (1981) covers very well the formative years of the CNT through to the massification of the unions during World War One, basing his analysis on a vast range of primary materials. Less impressive is the rather dated work by Gerald Meaker (1974). See also Chris Ealham (2001), for a study of the impact of the war on the CNT in its Barcelona stronghold. Meanwhile, for the period thereafter see the important study by Pere Gabriel (2002), one of the leading experts on the Spanish labour movement.

When it comes to the crisis years of the 1930s, John Brademas (1953) produced the first English language study of the CNT and the anarchist movement while studying at Oxford University in the early 1950s. A conventional political and institutional history of the CNT in the republican period and the revolution, its treatment of the history of the pre-war Republic is rather uneven but there is good information on the formation of the FAI and its relationship with the wider movement. In what is a wonderfully documented survey, the focus is firmly on the split within the CNT and the 'revolutionary gymnastics' of the early 1930s and the unprecedented wartime decision of anarchists to enter a bourgeois government.

Brademas's study has recently been superseded by Julián Casanova (2004), whose excellent monograph offers an overarching analysis of the CNT over the entire republican

era. Benefiting from a theoretical approach grounded in recent theoretical innovations in the study of social movements, Casanova's study is vital to any understanding of the radicalisation of the anarcho-sindicalist and anarchist movements prior to the revolution and, indeed, to the relationship between the two. Casanova's work also renders earlier works, such as the unreliable tome by Robert Kern (1979), not to mention the detailed but ultimately incoherent and error prone study by Robert Alexander (1999), redundant.

The exclusively anarchist FAI still awaits a thorough treatment. Beyond the somewhat unsatisfactory translation of Juan Gómez Casas's largely uncritical study (1986), we have the more recent but all-too brief critical study by Stuart Christie (2000). Chris Ealham (2005) offers an appraisal of the radicalisation of the FAI and the split within the CNT in Barcelona and arrives at conclusions that are sharply at variance with Antonio Bar (1990), who seemingly ignores the membership haemorrhage and split in the CNT in the early thirties, and maintains that the unions were always strongest when the anarchist presence was greatest.

Places

The regional bastions of the anarchist and anarcho-sindicalist movements have received a somewhat uneven treatment. Of the 'revolutionary triangle' formed by Aragon, Catalonia and Andalusia, the last, despite being the classic centre of rural anarchism, and notwithstanding the aforementioned work of Lida and Kaplan, is undoubtedly in need of further research. Of note is the wonderful local ethnographic study by Jerome K. Mintz (1982) of Casas Viejas, a village that acquired national attention in 1933 following the repression of a short-lived anarchist insurrection. Divided into three parts — the genesis of the rising, the insurrection itself and its aftermath — this book is based largely on written and oral sources, including many interviews with villagers. This is all synthesised into a compelling vision of the cultural universe of the landless *braceros* and the attempt by anarchists to create a revolutionary culture among one of the most desperate social classes in twentieth century Europe. A more recent ethnography by J. R. Corbin (1993) is a frustrating, sometimes inaccurate and methodologically confused study that is based on a highly restricted bibliography.

Anarchism in rural Aragon, a centre of the 1936 Revolution, has, understandably, received far greater coverage than other regions. An excellent starting point is the comprehensive survey by Graham Kelsey (1991) of the republican era and early part of the revolution. We have two important eye-witness accounts of the collectivisation process from Gaston Leval (1975) and Augustin Souchy (1982), as well as the critical survey by Julián Casanova (1987).

The final point of the 'revolutionary triangle' — Catalonia — has received most attention. Joan Connelly Ullman (1968) offers a wonderful vision of the Barcelona workers' movement and its anti-clerical, anti-militarist traditions in the period leading up to the creation of the CNT. Anyone wishing to explore the development of 'Red Barcelona' must consult the work of Nick Rider. Of special mention is his remarkable, and regrettably unpublished, doctoral dissertation (1987), which is an astounding and breathtaking survey of the myriad social, cultural, economic and political factors that gave rise to the interplay between anarchism, urbanisation and mass mobilisation in Barcelona over the period from the rise of anarchism in the nineteenth century through to the first year of the Second Republic. Two articles have been extracted from Rider's dissertation: the first (1989) is a case study of an anarchist-led rent strike that electrified the Barcelona region in 1931, the second (2002) is a penetrating survey of the growth of anarchism in the Catalan capital in the early 1930s. Chris Ealham (2005) follows in the footsteps of Rider by locating the revolutionary period in the 1930s in the context of Barcelona's earlier urban development, resulting in a far-reaching analysis of the struggle for the city, the conflictive relationship between the Barcelona anarchist and anarcho-sindicalist movements and the state and, moreover, social and urban relations in the Catalan capital. Also valuable are the various studies by Angel Smith (1997 and 1999), for their analysis of the relationship between anarchism and nationalism, or for the role of anarcho-sindicalism within the local labour movement (1997a and 2002). Smith develops these themes at length in his

study of the period 1898-1923 (2006). Worth avoiding (although it does contain some very eye-catching graphic material) is the fundamentally disappointing work by Temma Kaplan (1992). Doubtless such a suggestive title as *Red City/Blue Period* is highly attractive to a publisher yet in practice the 'red' and 'blue' sections of the book diverge rather than dovetail. Moreover, the chronological coverage is very patchy (far too little on the late 1920s and the crucial 1930s) and the empirical basis is pretty flimsy at times.

There are some important studies that shine light on the orientation of the CNT in areas where it was less hegemonic and/or where it was obliged to co-exist with the socialist movement. Adrian Shubert (1984) provides an impressive social history of the origins of the Asturian workers' movement in terms of the labour culture and camaraderie in the mines of the region. Another pioneering and innovative survey of the Asturian CNT in action is that of Pamela Radcliff (1997), a stimulating and suggestive social history of cultural and political polarisation in Gijón based around the thesis that between 1900 and 1937 Spain witnessed a latent cultural war between rival élite, republican and proletarian hegemonic projects. Rather than resorting to grand and unsustainable theories such as the 'millenarian' approach, Radcliff's appraisal of anarchist strength in Gijón relies on the primacy of local conditions and the configuration of the local labour movement. For the tensions generated within the city and the labour movement by the emergence of an anarchist movement in the traditional socialist stronghold of Madrid, see Santos Juliá (1986), who explains how 1920s urban development in the Spanish capital generated a new, predominantly unskilled, working class that could not easily be accommodated within a socialist movement that was dominated by a rather stuffy, craft-centred ethos. For studies with a clearer geographical sensibility and which analyse the interaction between place and social movements and other spatial dimensions, see Myrna Margulies Breitbart (1979 and 1980), Pamela Radcliff (2005) and Chris Ealham (2001; 2005a and 2005b).

Revolution

Beyond doubt the most voluminous literature relates to issues arising from the revolution and the civil war, when the CNT came to the centre of national political life. There is a translation of Peirats's synthesis of his 3 volume *magnum opus* (1990) which, although based on the material that went into this study, reveals a sharper, more defined critique of the wartime 'democratic collaboration' of the CNT leadership. Yet the classic and most full-blooded critique of the CNT during the war is that of Vernon Richards (1972), who attributed the entrance into government of CNT-FAI leaders to the deficiencies of their ideological formation. The views of some other foreign anarchists on the 1930s crisis and the 'governmentalism' of the CNT-FAI leaders can be consulted in Emma Goldman (1983) and Rudolf Rocker (1937), while there is a collection of some of the best articles from the London-based journal *Spain and the World*, see Various authors (1990). For an academic discussion of the entrance of anarchists into government, see the short piece by Burnett Bolloten and George Esenwein (1990).

While the anarchist leadership managed, for the most part, to contain opposition to its 'line', it was inevitable that the rebellion of the grassroots should find expression. One famous example was the *Columna de hierro* (Iron Column), a legendary Valencia-based anarchist militia unit which was determined to pursue a revolutionary war against fascism. Abel Paz (2006) outlines the hostility of the Iron Column to all compromise over the revolution and its hostility to the entry of the CNT into government, in an engaging account that highlights the fight against militarisation during the civil war.

Yet it was the *Amigos de Durruti* (Friends of Durruti), a small but energetic group that provided most focus for the reaction of a section of the grassroots of the anarchist movement to the wartime Popular Frontism of the leadership. In his lucid and penetrating case study of the Friends of Durruti, Agustín Guillamón (1996) begins by outlining the reasons for anarchist collaboration with the republican state after the July revolution. In a clear rejoinder to Richards, Guillamón postulates that it was precisely because of anarchist principles — especially the rejection of a programme for the creation of an armed revolutionary power — that the CNT-FAI hierarchy proved unable to respond to the fundamental challenges posed by the revolutionary dynamics of the thirties. The true

merit of Guillamón's study is that it locates the Friends of Durruti within the wider context of the crisis in the development of Spanish anarchism. According to the Friends of Durruti, the theoretical basis of Iberian anarchism was undernourished: 'The CNT was utterly devoid of revolutionary theory. We did not have a concrete programme. We had no idea where we were going.' It is worth remembering, therefore, that for all its many supporters and activists, the Spanish movement failed to produce a major anarchist theoretician and remained highly dependent on the *oeuvre* of foreign ideologues for its inspiration. Accordingly, while the years before 1936 might be considered 'heroic', to borrow Bookchin's adjective, in the sense that the anarchists fought a determined campaign to endure periods of clandestinity and semi-legality in order to preserve their space within society, this rearguard struggle for organisational survival conditioned the development of their movement, endowing it with an essentially defensive remit that paved the way for compromise and defeat after the 1936 Revolution. Indeed, by 1936 large sections of the CNT-FAI were dominated by a ghetto mentality that prioritised the primacy of action over theoretical reflection. In practical terms this dulled the conceptual and tactical acumen of the anarchist leadership, which had a poor grasp of the wider political context. It was these shortcomings — clearly in evidence from the 1920s onwards — which culminated in the political crisis of the movement during 1936-39.

Guillamón is mainly concerned with the Friends of Durruti's attempt to transcend the tactical and theoretical deficits of the CNT-FAI: the absence of a coherent revolutionary theory and practice. Therein the most significant element of the politics of the Friends of Durruti was their appreciation of the role of some form of revolutionary power; it was precisely this issue that was ignored by the official anarchist leadership and which led to the paradox of 'anarchist' ministers sitting in bourgeois governments in Barcelona and Madrid. Unlike many anarchists, the Friends of Durruti were ready to kill several sacred cows following the retreat from revolution after July 1936 and in this sense the group represented a watershed in the development of libertarian thought in Spain. Thus, they upheld a new revolutionary praxis, calling for an exclusive proletarian power (a workers', peasants' and soldiers' assembly) and a revolutionary *junta* that would physically contain its political and social enemies through sweeping repressive measures. As such, the Friends of Durruti Group manifesto (1978) is of immense interest for those concerned with the evolution of anarchism during the civil war.

Another classic intervention in the polemic surrounding the revolution and its treatment, or rather lack of coverage, in liberal histories of the civil war was made by Noam Chomsky (1969). The revolution and its eclipse is certainly the abiding concern of the polemical work of Burnett Bolloten (1961, 1979 and 1991). When working in Spain as a journalist covering the civil war for the North American press, Bolloten collected a wealth of newspapers and books which later formed the basis of his work on the social revolution and the internal politics of the republican zone. Bolloten's unwavering emphasis on the machinations of the communists has invited criticisms that he had a Cold War agenda. To be sure, while the communists increased their power massively within the republican state, particularly in the military and police apparatus, we should not also lose sight of the counter-revolutionary mobilisation of other groups within the republican zone. All the same, the final version of Bolloten's study (1991) is a monumental work that deserves a careful and critical reading.

A far more rounded and nuanced discussion of the issues surrounding war and revolution can be found in Ronald Fraser (1984). Indeed, Fraser's monumental oral history (1979) is one of the masterpieces of civil war history. Based on some 300 interviews with protagonists, including several CNT-FAI people and grassroots participants in the collectivisation process, this book is critical of and yet sympathetic to the anarchists. Of special interest is one of the appendices that analyses the orientation of the anarchist movement in the prelude to the civil war. When it comes to the final confrontation between revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces during the so-called 'May Days' in Barcelona, see the conflicting yet equally essential accounts in Helen Graham (1999) and Augustin Souchy et. al. (1987).

2) Los Amigos de Durruti, *Hacia la nueva revolución*, Barcelona, n.p., 1937, p.15.

As we have already seen, Spanish anarchism has attracted commentaries that have ranged from the apposite to the outright bizarre. Perhaps the most outlandish approach of all is the inchoate and confused article by Juan McIver (n.d.), in which the author asks: 'Was there a social revolution in Spain in 1936-39?' Well, clearly there was a revolution and a revolutionary process, albeit was cut short by a civil war that was quickly internationalised, after which the creation of universal felicity in Spain was always going to prove problematic. Guided by a Tolstoyan-pacifist perspective, all McIver can see is the nastiness that accompanied the civil war, including 'executions without the slightest semblance of a trial' (n.d.: 64). While one imagines McIver gazing at the violence with his hands partially covering his eyes, he is confident enough to tell us that republican terror equalled that of Franco. And within this 'terror', in McIver's view, we find the rough justice of the revolutionary groups that drowned their dreams of social change in blood.

Another curious study, although better documented than McIver, is that by Michael Seidman (1991), who, following extensive archival research, spent four hundred pages explaining that workers do not necessarily enjoy working, something many young people discover shortly after taking on their first paper round. Yet Seidman goes further than this: his study is interspersed with various critiques of labour history, the validity of class as a category and the 'productivist' utopia of the left. In sum, he concludes that many workers were hostile to 'the values of the Spanish Revolution, which glorified the development of modern productive forces and production itself...' (1991: 169).

Anyone seeking a more conventional discussion of the collectivisation during the 1930s should see Sam Dolgoff (1974) and Gaston Leval (1975). A marvellous and sensitive eye-witness account of the collectives and the revolution by an independent Marxist and sociologist was left by Franz Borkenau (1937). Later studies of revolutionary Barcelona include those by Antoni Castells Duran (2002) and Chris Ealham (2005a). Martha Ackelsberg (1993) offers a gendered perspective on the 1936 revolution. Ackelsberg has also produced a series of important studies of *Mujeres Libres*, the anarcho-feminist group that emerged during the civil war (1984; 1985; 1991; 2000). For surveys of the literature on the revolution, see Walther Bernecker (1980) and Chris Ealham (1996b).

Exile and resistance

For the CNT in exile, José Peirats (1993) is essential reading, while Sharif Gemie (2006) touches upon some areas of interest in a suggestive article. For a poignant autobiography of an exiled anarchist activist see Miguel García (1972). A veteran of the civil war anarchist militias, García was part of a resistance group that smuggled Allied airmen and Jews from France into Spain during World War Two. With the war's end, he maintained the resistance struggle against the regime until being captured in 1949 and sentenced to death, a punishment later commuted to 20 years imprisonment. For anarchist resistance during the Franco years, see also the life and writings of Antonio Tellez Solà, who emerged from the resistance struggle to become its historian. Among his works in English see his fascinating study of Francisco Ponzán Vidal (1997), a fearless anarchist guerrilla and lynchpin of the trans-Pyrenean group to which García belonged. Also available are his brief study of an audacious attempt to assassinate Franco from the air (2006), a study of Francesc Sabater, the most celebrated of all the anti-Francoist guerrillas (1985), and a more general survey of the resistance to Franco (2002).

After the collapse of Francoism, the CNT was never to regain its former strength, its decline conditioned by a complex array of factors, such as the changed industrial and social structures, the transition from subsistence to consumer capitalism, the spread of welfarism and educational provision, and so on. More work needs to be done in this area. Meanwhile, Lester Golden (1979) offers a valuable assessment of the CNT in the immediate aftermath of Franco's death, as do Andrew Giles-Peters (1978) and Albert Meltzer (1978). Meanwhile, Maggie Torres (1998) discusses the emergence of 'autonomous' groups that owed a significant debt to their anarchist predecessors.

Themes

There is a rich array of studies dealing with specific themes and aspects relating to the anarchist and anarcho-sindicalist movements. Recent analysis has moved towards a consideration of the internal dynamics of the CNT. The innovative work by Mercedes Vilanova has been little translated but there is an article (1992) that shows how anarchist activists had a higher level of general culture than the average worker. Chris Ealham (2001 and 2002) explores the distinct levels of militancy across activists and sympathisers within revolutionary unions. Several studies have dealt with the issue of violence, such as Julian Casanova (2005), Chris Ealham (1993 and 1995) and Walther Bernecker (1982). Carolyn Boyd (1976) has written on the educational mission of the anarchists that was so central to their practice. Richard Cleminson has dealt extensively with health issues (1994, 1995, 1995a) and offers a full commentary on anarchism and sexology (2000 and 2000a). Martha Ackselberg (1985 and 1993) and Shirley Fredericks (1981) have examined anarchist attitudes toward feminism. Fredericks focuses on Federica Montseny, who became Spain's first female Minister in 1936, and who warrants further research. Chris Ealham (2000a) analyses anarchist strategies relating to unemployment.

Anarchist lives

One of the most striking aspects of anarchist history in Spain is the incredible commitment and selflessness of activists and the remarkable lives they lived in their struggle against tyranny. Equally striking is the rich autobiographical current within the anarchist movement, with prominent figures such as Anselmo Lorenzo and Angel Pestaña through to Peirats, all favouring the genre and penning autobiographical works. Sadly, only one such autobiography has, to date, been translated into English, that of Baltasar Porcel (1999), which provides a wonderful vision of the rich cultural world of a grassroots activist that was preserved in the face of systematic harassment from the authorities, spells in jail, police beatings and brutalising work experiences.

An abridged and rather poorly translated version of Abel Paz's biography of Buenaventura Durruti (1976), arguably the most famous of all Spanish anarchists, has now been superseded by a new translation of the last and revised Spanish edition (2006). Durruti's life history is especially poignant, not least because he was expelled from UGT for practising direct action during a strike, an episode that underscores the entirely inappropriate nature of socialist tactics to Spanish labour disputes. For a critical survey of rank-and-file anarchist life histories, see Chris Ealham (2001). We can be certain that the titanic struggles of the Spanish anarchist movement will continue to inspire more such studies. The great pity is that the pen of José Peirats is now still.

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Chapter One:

The Valencia Economic Forum

By mid-1938 the economic activities of the CNT unions were exceptionally substantial. For one thing, a new Regional Peasant Congress was held in Catalonia. It sat down to business on 8 January. A report from the Regional Peasant Committee dealt with the following topics:

- (a) A Higher Agricultural Council
- (b) The decree on land redistribution
- (c) Collectives
- (d) Agricultural unions.

The chapter headings of the report covered virtually every item on the congress agenda.

The Higher Agricultural Council was the supervisory and arbitration agency in disputes arising out of the labyrinthine accumulated agrarian legislation. It comprised representatives from every trade union and political camp in Catalonia and thus had a political complexion at odds with its technical nature. As a result, the Council was criticised for being a hindrance rather than the solution to the problems in Catalan agriculture.

Congress agreed to amend the structure of the Council, namely, to exclude the representation awarded to non-peasant groups, an exception being made of the representative from the Generalitat's Agriculture department. The latter would chair the Council and have a casting vote in case of deadlock. Also, as many experts or assessors as might be deemed advisable could be seconded to the Council, without any rights to participate or cast any votes in its deliberations.

A decree had been promulgated, dealing, supposedly, with 'land redistribution'. In this 'redistribution' the decree awarded preferential status to individual cultivators who had occupied land. Given that in many villages lands had been snatched away from the collectives because their possession of them had been deemed at odds with the law, the congress resolved, by way of a pre-requisite for acceptance of the decree, that collectivists be acknowledged in their right to occupy lands in the possession of individual cultivators, and that the lands wrested from them be returned to their possession. This redistribution was to take place without paying the compensation that the decree recommended to the former owners.

As for the thorny question of the Agricultural Unions, the outlook was still that the make-up of their juntas was not proportionate with the relative numerical strength of the factions involved. The congress took the line that the holding of fresh general elections so that these juntas could be fairly composed was a matter of urgency. It also criticised the shortcomings and abuses of the Agricultural Unions' juntas, many of whose members were accused of having indulged in 'shameful speculation' and 'scandalous dealings' to the advantage of 'favoured friends' and to the detriment of the peasants and the consumer. The retort of many individualist peasants to this political favouritism was to refuse to hand over their surplus produce to the appropriate Agricultural Union and to enter, directly or indirectly into black market deals with the consumers.

The Agricultural Unions represented a sort of cooperative institution, traditional in Catalonia as well as in most other countries, for the procurement of fertilisers, insecticides and tools, and for the better administration of the marketable portion of harvests. Unscrupulous dealings had turned them into instruments of the usual political parasites.

Since May 1936 and the CNT's last Extraordinary National Congress, there had been no comprehensive consultation with its unions. The wartime circumstances continued to prevent that. Half of Spain under enemy occupation was a serious drawback to any thought of a new, regular congress. Three important areas of CNT strength — Aragón, Andalusia and Galicia — were completely or partly under enemy occupation. In the

North, the Asturian, Santander and Basque redoubts had been virtually cut off since the outbreak of hostilities. Upwards of one third of the Confederation's membership had been rendered *hors de combat* in July 1936. The outlook was rendered even more dismal by military setbacks suffered in Andalusia and the complete loss of the North.

Against this backdrop, the idea of an extended national economic plenum was mooted at the end of 1937. Scheduled for 1 January 1938, it was not able to proceed until 15 January.

What was proposed was the most comprehensive possible consultation regarding problems of an economic nature falling within the strict purview of the confederation. Some statements by the CNT's general secretary confirmed this intent.¹ The plenum would tackle certain fundamental issues; it aimed to demonstrate the maturity acquired by the CNT over 18 months of constructive experimentation in the various facets of the economy (production, technology and administration) and resolve these very problems 'in a detailed, clear and positive way'. Another aim was to show that the workers had it in them to find solutions to the problems created by the situation, facing up to the requisite sacrifices and surmounting what shortcomings there were: to grapple with the problems basically pertinent to it, in pursuit of the collective interest of the labouring people. This would be achieved by studying the economy in its entirety and devising the most appropriate and rational solution 'quite removed from the war and politicking'.

An editorial in *Solidaridad Obrera* a few days prior to the gathering declared:

'The plenum to be held on Saturday in Valencia specifically proposes to make this correction. What are the fundamental flaws in need of elimination? The corporative selfishness of certain undertakings and collectives, the absence of planned production, an unwarranted disparity in terms of wages, the existence of industries which can be regarded as redundant and the existence of other necessary ones whose survival is precarious, whilst there are tremendously prosperous undertakings, administrative dispersion, falling productivity levels, etc. All of these faults, largely attributable to the circumstances indicated above, are covered by the plenum's agenda and have been the subject of conscientious scrutiny by unions and Industrial Federations, and there are motions framed offering solutions to specific problems...'

There is no comprehensive memorandum concerning the course of this important get together. What we know of the proceedings has come in the form of the all too fragmentary reports in the CNT press and a pamphlet issued by the National Committee, setting out the resolutions passed.² Those resolutions were taken in the name of 1,700,000 members. *Solidaridad Obrera* of 18 January reports that more than 800 delegates took part in the debates. The plenum, held in Valencia's Serrano Theatre, was, in the organisational jargon, a National Plenum of Local and Area Federations. And it is understood that those Local Federations that were, for various reasons, unable to attend, were represented by their respective Area Committees. Thus, the unions were not directly represented. As is *de rigueur* at events of this sort, the Regional Committees and the National Committee were in attendance. The Regional Committees of Catalonia, the Centre, Andalusia, Levante, Extremadura and Aragón were there, as were the National Federations of Industry.

According to the digest mentioned earlier, only three votes were held during the 21 sittings of the plenum. The first was on Item 4 ('Creation of Work Inspectors') when 516 votes were cast for the motion, 120 against and 82 abstained: the second concerned Item 6 ('Advisability of the Establishment of a Trade Union Bank') — 581 votes for, 60 against, with 74 abstentions; and the third vote was on Item 12, which dealt with a revamping of the Federations of Industry. On this item voting was on the proposition (from the National Committee) and on a separate motion. The outcome was as follows: votes in favour of the separate motion, 352; in favour of the proposition, 226. There were 115

1. *Solidaridad Obrera*, 9 January 1938

2. *Solidaridad Obrera*, 13 January 1938

3. CNT, *Acuerdos del Peno Económico Nacional Ampliado*, Barcelona, n.d.

abstentions. The remaining propositions were carried unanimously. The procedure adopted was so-called proportional voting. Due to rigid application of the majority principle (x many members = x many votes), village unions, having smaller membership numbers, were being swamped at congresses and in referenda by the bigger trade union battalions. The Extraordinary Congress held in 1931, out of consideration for the minorities, had introduced the so-called proportional method of voting (one vote for each specified number of members, on a sliding scale).

The extended plenum adopted this practice at the 1931 Conservatorio Congress, but stipulated that it would not obtain in subsequent plenums. This is how the arrangement worked out in practice:

Membership:	
1-500 members	1 vote
1-1,500 members	2 votes
1-3,000 members	3 votes
1-6,000 members	4 votes
1-10,000 members	5 votes
1-15,000 members	6 votes
1-25,000 members	7 votes
25,000 + members	8 votes.

The extended plenum stretched out the graduation as follows:

Membership:	
Up to 35,000	8 votes
Up to 45,000	9 votes
Up to 55,000	10 votes
Up to 65,000	11 votes
Up to 75,000	12 votes
Up to 85,000	13 votes
Up to 95,000	14 votes
Up to 105,000	15 votes
Up to 115,000	16 votes
Up to 130,000	17 votes
Up to 160,000	18 votes
Up to 200,000	19 votes
Up to 200,000 +	20 votes.

At this plenum, one of the anomalies evident was the National Committee's prior formulation of motions covering every item on the agenda. This was at odds with traditional practice. Although all of the motions ready-formulated by the National Committee were offered for discussion by the delegates attending the plenum, this procedure might, had the circumstances been different, have been denounced as irregular and contrived. Another irregular practice never before countenanced was the National Committee's participation in the deliberations on every debate, and most especially its advocacy of its motions.

Let us move on to the resolutions of the plenum.

Item 4 on the agenda — strictly speaking, the first item — encapsulated a preoccupation with discipline analogous with the military discipline on the battlefronts. 'We know', said the National Committee in its digest, 'that the vast majority of workers and militants have done their duty and have sought by every means to intensify output. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that there have been minorities which, utterly irresponsibly and not appreciating what they did, have not put into rearguard activities the effort which might have been expected.' The following motion was designed to lead to the establishment of Work Inspectors empowered to offer guidance and inflict sanctions on workers and firms under their jurisdiction.

'The working party appointed to frame a motion on Item 4 of the agenda, referring to the setting up of Work Inspectors, believes it encapsulates the aspirations ventilated at the plenum by the various delegates who have taken part in the debate. when it proposes:

1. At the instigation of the unions and through the Regional, Area and Local Federations, the National Federations of Industry shall appoint the requisite technical delegates to inspect and offer guidance to the economic units under their jurisdiction.

2. These delegates shall propose norms designed to offer effective guidance to the various industrial units with a view to bettering their economy and administration. They shall not be empowered to act on their own authority: they will have responsibility for implementing and seeing to the implementation of the dispositions of the councils, to which councils they will be answerable.

3. For the sake of greater efficiency and purpose and in those instances where this may be necessary, the councils which will have appointed them shall move the application of pertinent sanctions against agencies or individuals which may have earned them through dereliction of their duties.

4. The organisation shall delegate appropriate powers of correction to those agencies that must make use of those powers, these being prescribed under a set regulation.

These dispositions are designed to achieve just one thing and refer to those industries that are in the hands of the workers.

For the working party:

The National Peasant Federation; the Regional Committee of Aragón, Rioja and Navarre; the National Transport Federation; the Regional Committee of Catalonia; the National Federation of Chemical Industries; the Regional Committee of Levante; the Weaving, Textile and Ancillary Federation; the Regional Committee of the Centre; the National Health Federation.'

The reader conversant with the Confederation's organisational procedures will have problems understanding how representatives of Regional Committees could be signatories to the motions placed before a Plenum of Local and Area Federations.

Item 5 was designed to regulate, so far as this was feasible, the different modes and systems of payment, sometimes found within the same trade and locality. We have referred already to the ups and downs of the question of payment. In keeping with the egalitarian climate of the early months of the revolution, the notion of the family wage quickly made headway. However, there was still the thorny problem outstanding of the payment of technicians. According to the *resumé* in *Solidaridad Obrera*, Mariano R. Vázquez declared 'that the agronomist cannot be paid the same as the labourer, for it is not the wage of the latter that matters but what he produces...He maintained that the uniform family wage is anti-humanistic in that it damages the economy.'⁴

This matter was settled with the endorsement of the following proposition:

'The undersigned working party, having given consideration to the various opinions expressed at the plenum and having read with interest all of the written submissions presented, considers:

1. That to ensure greater efficacy in the procedure adopted, it is necessary that observance of this procedure should be forthcoming from the two trade union associations, the UGT and the CNT, and that our efforts should be so directed.

2. That having no desire to negate the basic precepts which have always informed our organisation, and agreeing that the family-type wage is most consonant with those precepts, we advocate adoption of that system of reward, in accordance with the percentages and formula set out in the analytical clause, with regard to those Industries, National Federations, etc. which may not be in a position to adopt a more comprehensive system of family payment.

3. That, acknowledging complementary needs among the various professional categories, we also advocate circumstantial recognition of same, albeit that our aim for

4 *Solidaridad Obrera*, 18 January 1938

the future is to do away with trade-based pay differentials where the workers are concerned.

Consequently, in keeping with those elementary findings, we propose to the plenum:

1. That a professional rate be adopted and, we suggest, adopted by the National Federations of Industry, albeit matched to their economic potentials in the following manner, taking X as the basic initial figure required to cover the producer's needs.

Basic grade. Unskilled labourer, X

First higher grade. Tradesman, X + 20%

Second higher grade. Specialist tradesman, X + 40%

Third higher grade. Assistant technician, X + 70%

Fourth higher grade. Supervisory technician, X + 100%.

These percentages are taken to be applicable, working from the basic grade figure upwards.

Firms are to supply technical personnel with whatever facilities they need for study and research, setting aside funding for this quite apart from the allotted pay rate.

We leave it to the Technical Councils of the National Federations of Industry, given the appreciable differences of the skills required by their work, to determine the percentages and grades of apprentices.

2. The family supplement is accepted, provided it be applied in the following manner:

(a) Firms shall contribute a certain percentage of the total wages bill to the establishment of the Family Compensation Fund. These funds are to be based locally, all of the funds in one area being linked up one with another.

(b) A National Plenum of Federations of Industry, following compilation of detailed statistics and technical-economic research, shall determine the percentage contribution towards the Family Compensation Fund and the rules governing the spending of these. The resolutions of this plenum shall be presented to the UGT Executive so that they may be jointly implemented by both trade union families.

(c) The family award allotted and determined by the appropriate National Federation is to be paid from the compensation fund, which is to be set up by the National Federation, with the endorsement of the National Economic Council.

(d) The Federations of Industry will have to set the maximum applicable figure for family income in each region eligible for supplementary payment.

(e) The CNT will champion this argument so as to ensure that the family supplement is established for all workers without exception.

Before any proposal can be put into effect, one needs to have access to the requisite organs which can make it fully effective.

It is the view of the working party that the only organs qualified to pronounce with finality upon the rate of recompense for work performed, as well as to prescribe the procedure and sums to be contributed towards the coffers of the family supplement fund, are the National Federations of Industry.

The National Federations of Industry are to hold regional congresses at which the special conditions that may characterise the economic circumstances of each of them may be examined, and they are to indicate the special features that may distinguish some areas established by the relevant National Federation of Industry in respect of the cost of living in some villages as against others; they shall prescribe the appropriate grading so as to lay down a scale of categories and pay corresponding to each one of these.

Acknowledging the importance of female labour in some regions, they are to make a prolonged study of this matter and work towards resolution of it by linking it in with the pay scale outlined in this motion.

Upon completion of this work, which can be broadened to cover whatever the Federations of Industry may deem suitable, with an eye to arriving at the figures required if the organisation is to be able to formulate a precise evaluation of the nation's economy as a whole, the National Committee is to summon a plenum of the National Federations of Industry, at which the sole and exclusive business shall be the possible implementation of the pay scale, together with the relevant family supplement by means of the organism established for that purpose, which organism will have to be run and monitored by the

two trade union associations or by ourselves alone, should our sister association fail to embrace the solution we have provisionally formulated to the question of recompense for work done.

In keeping with the second of our considerations, be it clear that if the formula whereby workers are to be rewarded according to their national and professional needs is to be put into effect, it will be crucial that the National Federations interested in the adoption of just such a procedure commit themselves, in conjunction with the national economy, to the ground leading to the introduction of that arrangement.

The working party's understanding is that the organisation should not be daunted by the obstacles which may be placed in its path...obstacles which are in any case natural, if we consider the situation the country finds itself in, and the politico-social spectrum involved in the transformation of Spain, and that in the face of these and remembering that the resolutions adopted are designed to move gradually towards the goal of our objective aims, they should redouble their energy and the crucial enthusiasm which may lead to ultimate success. Valencia, 21 January 1938. On behalf of Catalonia (the l'Hospitalet local federation), Jose Abella; on behalf of the Centre (the Regional Committee), C. Alonso; on behalf of Aragon (Regional Committee), Sigfrido Catala; on behalf of Andalusia (the Regional Committee), Domingo Martinez.'

When attention turned to Item 6 of the agenda, controversy raged between the advocates and opponents of the establishment of a trade union-type banking institution. The chairman (David Antona) put the following formula to the vote: 'Is the creation of a Trade Union Bank deemed appropriate?' The local federations of Igualada, Badalona and Colmenar Viejo came out in favour; the local federations of Madrid, the Andalusian regional federation of the Banking and Exchange Union, and the Madrid Regional Federation of the Construction and Timber Industry came out against. Then up spoke the National Committee (through Cardona Rosell):

'He said that this item was included — besides the committee's view — due to requests and suggestions made by many of the entities and organisations of the Confederation. This Trade Union Bank would be in charge of orchestrating other banks. It would perform ordinary banking duties, but would have its own view concerning the manner in which credit commissions should be handled and how other kindred functions should be performed. In relation to the socialised and collectivised industries, we would offer a service that the bourgeois banks never could.'⁵

The National Committee's contribution over, there was further insistence on the matter's being put to a vote; the outcome of which we have noted above. This is the working party's proposition:

'The plenum, having acknowledged the desirability of establishing a Trade Union Bank and this working party having taken cognisance of the studies, treatises and suggestions submitted by the Confederation's National Committee and by various delegations, we propose to the plenum that it adopt the following accords:

1. The plenum is agreed upon the creation of a Trade Union Bank to be known as the Iberian Trade Union Bank, wherein equal shares in the trade union working capital of the bank shall be set aside for the two union associations, CNT and UGT, the prior consent of the other association not being indispensable before it may begin operations immediately, and this bank must be governed by such statutes and norms of internal regulation as shall be drawn up, within the space of 30 days following the conclusion of this plenum, by the Special Commission indicated in this accord, said commission being empowered to determine who is to endorse the bank's foundation charter, occupy the positions of president and vice-president of the national representative body of the bank, to appoint the comrade to take up the office of director general of the bank

5. *Solidaridad Obrera*, 18 January 1938

and to make those initial appointments which it may be deemed advisable not to delegate to the president, vice-president or director-general of the Banco Sindical Iberoico (Iberian Trade Union Bank). Such appointments are to be made known to the organisation so that whatever objections may be deemed pertinent may be made before the probationary period has elapsed.

2. Said commission is to set the amount of trade union share capital, as well as the manner of its contribution or formation, and fix the manner in which the workers or representatives of the trade union and economic bodies resident in the district of these boards are to participate in the governing bodies of the bank, whether on its national board, regional boards, area boards or branch boards, such decisions being subject to final endorsement by a National Plenum of Regional Committees.

3. The Special Commission referred to in the first accord is to be made up of the following representatives:

(a) The secretary of the Confederation's National Committee, who will chair the commission.

(b) The secretary of the Economic Section of the National Committee.

(c) The secretary of the Banking Subsection of the National Federation of Banking, Insurance and Allied Workers.

(d) The secretary of the Confederation's Economic Committee in Barcelona.

(e) One delegate from Catalonia, the Centre, Levante, Andalusia, Aragón and Extremadura.

4. The plenum declares that the local federations and the CNT Regional Committees, based in those localities where the Trade Union Bank may launch its first operations, are to contribute such portion of trade union share capital as may be indicated to them by the Special commission mentioned in the previous accord. This same Commission is empowered to set the scale of contributions required of any other areas that may apply to have one or several ranches of the aforementioned bank set up within their boundaries.

Valencia, 23 January 1938'

The motion passed on Item 7 was preceded by a lengthy preamble dealing with the casual treatment that the CNT had hitherto meted out to the matters relating to insurance. 'Repeatedly', that preamble stated, 'we have argued the line that in the society towards which we are headed and whose foundations are even now being laid, security would render insurance redundant, and that insurance is merely the improvement introduced into capitalist economics by the desire, somehow, to approximate the attainment of aims that are socially and humanly monumentally significant, albeit with the underlying blight that is a feature of every capitalist creature connected with the existence of the means of exchange and wage slavery.' It went on to point out that since 19 July the workers, upon coming into possession of the means of production, had been concerned to find a solution to the problem of providence 'only insofar as it relates to the risks which might apply to the workers of their respective industries or entities.' But mutual societies had confined their interests to illness, working accidents, retirement from work and maternity, not expanding into general insurance matters like fire insurance, vehicle insurance, plant insurance, life insurance, etc. Thus with the bourgeois institution of insurance lingering on '...not merely in essence, but also with justification, in that the proletariat's efforts in that direction had failed to match the progress achieved in other theatres of the economy.' The dual circumstance of the progressive spread of socialisation and the runaway, irreversible economic crisis of the bourgeois institution of insurance lent an especial complexity to the situation. 'Some socialised industries are already practising the various forms of insurance in a comprehensive fashion in keeping with the policy that some day, perhaps not long off, it may become general and properly perfected, once socialisation becomes widespread in the country.' These industries covered their risks 'by adding to their normal running costs a sum to cover expenditure on accident payments, pensions, etc.' and carried out a clean-up and inspection of their industry that cut the number of

normal risks. 'Let us note the case', the preamble goes on to state, 'of one industry that invests upwards of half a million pesetas a year to cover pensions, retirement allowances, nursing care, sickness payments, help for accident victims, etc... However, as the state continues to retain in force in the insurance field the legislation antedating 19 July 1936, it demands and even goes so far as to make demands of the socialised industries which exercise such exemplary oversight of assistance and social providence matters, which the state, in an inferior way, undertakes to see to by levying the costs or premiums of the respective insurances.' This trajectory was the fruit of the disparity between revolutionary achievement and state legislation.

Here is the prescriptive part of the motion:

'... (a) CNT representation shall be sought on each and every one of the official state bodies, autonomous regional governments, provincial and municipal councils of loyalist Spain which may have charge of overseeing, directing or advising in the management and execution of national, regional, provincial, local or area policy regarding insurance and social providence in any of their forms. Such representation may never be inferior to the representation already enjoyed by, or likely to be awarded to, the other trade union association.

(b) Amendment is to be sought to current legislation on insurance so that the proletariat may not be confronted with difficulties in providing the most comprehensive social protection for the worker, in the socialised or collectivised industries and entities, such entities needing to be assured (once they have complied with those requirements technically deemed indispensable to effective performance of the mission assumed) of exemption from the obligation to pay those dues or premiums which are most lawfully payable; but ensuring that this reform favours those workers' collectives which can show annually that they have, as comprehensively as the official institutions, attended to the risks assumed and whose economic investment for the year may have exceeded the sum that might have been levied upon them as dues or premiums lawfully required of them in respect of payment of compulsory official insurance cover.

(c) There shall be negotiated an immediate suspension of all proceedings initiated against collectivised or socialised collectives, cooperatives, industries etc., for lack of cover owing to default upon dues or premiums payable for compulsory official insurance cover, regardless of the period of time to which the due date of said payments or premiums may refer.

(d) All proceedings and cases pending against the bodies covered by the provisions of the previous clause are to be reviewed in the light of the amendment made to governmental legislation as indicated in clause (b).

(e) The requisite steps shall be taken so that each and every one of the private agencies engaged in insurance in any way... unless said agencies are wholly comprised of, and run by workers affiliated to the CNT and UGT,... operate in accordance with the proportionality and targets which these two associations may mutually accept as nationally binding.

(f) Immediate payments shall be sought to current legislation on accidents at work, to the effect that payment of the obligatory minimum pensions due to accident victims may be assured by methods consistent with the circumstances prevailing in the country and with the ongoing progress of socialisation, without any need for capital sums to be set aside to earn interest with which to meet payment of such pensions.

(g) Efforts are to be made to ensure the lifting or reduction of contributions and charges levied upon mutual associations, cooperatives and entities comprised of freely associated workers, collectives and unions affiliated to either of the two existing union federations, so that they may operate in accordance with the social legislation in force at any given time: ensuring that our own trade union federation may at all times have a direct involvement in the framing of such social legislation.

(h) We must pursue the most comprehensive overhaul and transformation of so-called general insurance, adapting the calculation of their mathematical reserves or providence guarantees (or funds) payable to accident victims (by means of adjustment, modification

or alteration or by making them conditional upon the nature of the valuables or assets involved), to the socio-economic panorama created by the revolution begun on 19 July 1936 and continued forward through the socialisation currently in progress. Consequently, we will arrive at a variation of the sorts of premium payable on various types of insurance, and the fullest freedom should be afforded in the devising of new forms of policy for bodies already extant or which may be formed in the future, following their expert investigation, building up a minimum social fund capable of guaranteeing that they operate as normal.

Coordination, supervision and direction of CNT bodies involved in insurance and social providence, or which engage in such operations on their own behalf. The solutions we propose, for satisfactory compliance with the aims outlined, consist of the definition of three distinct spheres of activity, and the perfect matching of the first two of these with the third, thereby arriving, at some date in the future which cannot be predicted (whether in the short-term or in the long-term, though we can even now be specific about the circumstances which must attend it) at the establishment of a single, national agency to oversee the entire set-up and capable of handling every conceivable sort of insurance and social providence and appropriate to the proletariat and to the revolutionary economy, the existence of said powerful agency being adjusted to the contention implicit in this motion, as set out in the preamble and in the conclusions to the first chapter.

Let us now proceed to spell out the solution that we deem appropriate in each of these spheres of activity:

(a) CNT bodies or joint CNT-UGT bodies set up to cater for social providence or insurance activities or which, while not expressly formed for that purpose, do themselves perform said functions.

Those unions or federations which themselves (or through their collective enterprises, etc.) engage in any form of insurance, will have to furnish the agency cited in clause (c) above, with whatever statistics it may require of them, and will also be required to submit to whatever inspection said agency may see fit to mount of their health facilities, or statistical, administrative and technical services. Likewise they will have obligation to introduce whatever modifications the aforementioned agency may recommend as necessary, so that the insurance functions assumed by the relevant collective or industrial union, etc., can proceed with what is deemed the requisite guarantees for the insured workers and for the economic stability of the industry concerned. If, following inspection and a follow-up technical inquiry, and the determination of the necessary modifications, the industry concerned (be it collective, union or federation) should fail to introduce those modifications, it shall be barred from engaging in those forms of insurance cover. The agreement may be placed in cold storage until such time as a final decision has been made by the national leadership of the agency referred to in subsection (c) above, and, should that decision be felt unfair, the matter may be referred to the CNT Economic Council (8th Department of the CNT National Committee's Economic Section).

Those workers' mutual associations formed on the basis of CNT or UGT-CNT workers, or run by trade union representatives from those centrals, or in any way supervised by them, whatever types of social securities or providence functions they offer in return for payment of premiums or dues either by the beneficiaries directly or by the insured unions, or industries, etc., will likewise be required to furnish the said agency at intervals with whatever information it may seek and will submit to any inspection visits which that agency may deem necessary for their healthy or technical operations, etc.

They are similarly obliged to comply with the instructions of that agency in the following two areas:

(a) Modifications to be introduced by way of guarantee for services or for workers, insured persons or beneficiaries generally: adjustments to premiums or payments with a view to reducing or increasing...as the case may be...those in force at the time of inspection and which are shown from the technical point of view to be greater than required for the normal, efficient operation of the mutual association or mutuality concerned: whatever overhauling of auxiliary or other services may be advisable on

technical or practical grounds so as to make those services more economical and administration of them more elastic and straightforward.

(b) Amalgamation of mutual funds with others already in existence within the same municipal, regional or national borders, either straight away without intermediate stages, or through a planned series of progressive territorial expansions, so that the facilities on offer at the old level of operation can more readily be improved and not reduced, thereby achieving a streamlining or reduction in overall costs and a positive expansion in the mutual fund's services and facilities through amalgamation with a number of already existing funds.

The regulations set out above for mutual funds are, of necessity, applicable to CNT-run ones and also to joint funds in which both union federations are involved, if they wish to go on enjoying our official involvement.

Establishment of an Insurance Technical Advisory agency to link up with official, private, and CNT bodies involved in the insurance and social providence field, so that each and every one of the aims laid down for a Trade Union Insurance Administration Agency in the National Committee's proposition as attached to the suggestions of this working party, may be fulfilled.

The branches or offshoots of the Insurance Technical Consultancy are to be set out and governed according to rules that may be adopted by the agency indicated in subsection (c), and of which the Insurance Technical Consultancy will be merely a sub-branch or department.

The agency mentioned in subsection (c) below, has authority to extend or amend the functions or legal standing of the Insurance Technical Consultancy.

(c) With the powers and purpose indicated in the same subsection of the enclosed proposition submitted by the National Committee, a Mutual and Insurance Section is to be set up, as a subordinate part of the National Committee of the CNT's Economic Council: it is to be organised on a national scale and will be governed and orientated by the aforementioned Economic Council. In its operations, this section will strive, insofar as it may, to achieve initiatives of immediate import to workers, pending achievement of the ultimate objective prescribed in the final paragraph of the report submitted by the National Committee.

The appropriate draft is to be placed before the organisation by the latter when the time is right.

Valencia, 21 January 1938. On behalf of the National Federation of Bank, Savings, Insurance and Allied Workers, Mariano Cardona Rosell; on behalf of the Badalona Local Union Federation, Ramiro Colell; on behalf of the National Health Union, A. Garcia Lorent; on behalf of the Barcelona Local Union Federation, Gonzalo Aubray; on behalf of the Valencia Local Union Federation, E. Navarro Beltrán; on behalf of the Madrid Local Union Federation, Jesús de Asurmendi.'

The resolution on Item 8 of the agenda, notes three reasons for reduction in the number of CNT publications. The first is the paper shortage, the lack of raw materials or the foreign currency for importing newsprint. Then again there was a pointless over abundance of publications in cutthroat competition with one another. The second reason was the tiny number of comrades of both proven ideological soundness and journalistic ability. Finally, there was the need to offer standard guidelines to their publications. As the motion declared, 'There must be an end of public contradictions from within the movement.'⁶ In the light of which the following guidelines were laid down:

'In Barcelona, Valencia and Madrid, two daily papers should appear; one in the mornings, the other in the evenings.

6. There was talk in the CNT press on 20 February 1937 of a future national conference of all the CNT and anarchist press with the aim of introducing a 'homogenous orientation'. The conference took place on Sunday 28 March in the Casa CNT-FAI in Barcelona. Despite the fierce opposition from *Acracia* of Lleida and *Nosotros* of Valencia and the other odd publication, the 'orientation' was approved by the higher committees. In the debates, Mariano R. Vázquez, Secretary of the CNT National Committee, played an active role.

One morning paper may be published in each of the following localities: Catalonia — Girona, Lleida and Tarragona; Levante — Castelló, Albacete, Alicante, Murcia or Cartagena (one appears in each of the last two cities and one only should appear with provision made for ensuring that its appearance is simultaneous in both places); Andalusia — Almería, Ubeda, Jaén or Baza; Extremadura — Cabeza de Buey (Badajoz); Centre — Cuenca, Toledo, Ciudad Libre; Aragón — Alcañiz.

With daily papers appearing as set out, our movement's propaganda in both respects is absolutely assured...we have large presses of enormously wide circulation and the smaller provincial ones, meeting the need for guidance attuned to the ethos and mores of the towns.

All dailies failing to comply with this arrangement will have to go, in that they are considered uneconomical and unnecessary.

On the decision of the national plenum, all newspapers are required to devote one page or one half-page daily to the peasants.

On no account is there to be non-compliance with this accord.

Bulletins. Each National Industrial Federation will, each month, publish a bulletin offering briefings on trade union and constructive developments in all of the industry's operations. That bulletin is for the exclusive use of the unions and will not in any way deal with political or military developments, this being the exclusive prerogative of the daily press.

Reviews. One quarterly issued by each National Industrial Federation and recording progress achieved in the technical development of the industry, is sufficient. The National Peasants' Federation will publish a monthly magazine instead of a quarterly. This magazine will have to confine its contents to analysis and technical advice, keeping absolutely clear of political or trade union guidance functions, since these are the sole preserves of the dailies and of the bulletins, respectively.'

With its resolution on Item 9, the plenum sought to restore confidence to the people by making provision for fair distribution of available foodstuffs and by curtailing the activities of speculators, businessmen and politicians.

The resolution stated:

'The working party charged by the plenum to draft a resolution on Item 9 of the agenda, having come together and familiarised itself with suggestions advanced by a variety of delegations, and in view of the contents and implications of the motion submitted by the CNT National Committee, is unanimous that it is proper to suggest to the CNT's economic plenum adoption of the following accords:

1. The unions' distribution sections, in concert with the Local and Area Committees, are to proceed forthwith with setting up, in every township, large distribution warehouses and may assume whatever name and form circumstances may commend in each region.

2. In order to establish a network of connections among these distribution warehouses a statistical branch is to be set up, attached to every Local, Area, District or Regional Economic Council.

3. The powers of these Statistical Branches will be:

- (a) To maintain up to date figures for stocks in the various warehouses with a view to their being shared out fairly between localities according to need.

- (b) To take a hand in wholesale purchasing operations.

- (c) To fix sale prices, taking due account of general expenditure, transport costs, etc., which will vary according to the provenance of articles and the characteristics of the locality where they are retailed.

4. The purchase of produce from abroad will be handled by the usual agency.

5. In the establishment of these distribution warehouses, it is to be borne in mind that their services will be for the people as a whole.

6. The operation of the Statistical Branches will be governed by the Economic Council in accordance with the points set out above.

On behalf of the Valencia Local Union Federation, Leoncio Sánchez; on behalf of the Madrid Local Union Federation, José Zaragoza; on behalf of the Barcelona Local Union Federation, Manuel Cirach; on behalf of the Levante Regional Peasant Federation, Salvador Galea; on behalf of the Sabadell Local Union Federation, Bruno Lladó. Valencia, 21 January, 1938.'

The motion on Item 10 of the agenda is one of the most ambitious of all. In sections (b) and (c), the CNT set about tackling the industrial planning that was widely advocated in Spain: winding up industries redundant in time of war, or converting them so as to improve and render their output more appropriate; boosting the output of those industries regarded as crucial, in accordance with a scrupulous plan and nationwide deployment of surplus labour. In the absence of a National Economic Council with trade union participation — as the CNT had been urging — the plenum broached and resolved the problem for itself insofar as the Confederation itself was involved:

'How effective industrial planning might be pursued, without the creation of the national economic council, an official agency with a mixed state-trade union basis, which would be called upon to meet this glaring economic need.

Motion placed before the CNT's plenum by the working party charged with reporting on sections (b), (c) and (d) of Item 10 on the agenda.

As section (b) of Item 10 of the agenda has raised the issue of how effective planning of industries might be achieved in the conditions described by that section, and as it has become apparent in the debating of the views on the aforementioned Item 10 that the plenum wholly agrees with the explanations offered by the CNT National Committee and several delegations, this working party reckons that its own report should be confined to noting the foregoing and to solemnly urging the plenum to be more specific in ratifying (and outlining the parameters within which it should take place) the planning mentioned in section (b), indicating the nature of the norms requested in section (c) and specifying the powers to be devolved to the Economic Council in the implementation of the dispositions of section (d) ...in consequence of all of which this working party is unanimous in proposing to the plenum that it adopt the following accords:

1. The plenum does not regard it as at all necessary to wait for the establishment of a formal National Economic Council founded upon a mixed state/trade union basis with an effective majority and equal representation for both trade union groupings, before tackling such overall industrial planning as may ensure a maximum possible increase in output, streamlining production, making products more cheaply or effecting reductions in their cost prices, or simplifying/reducing the number of intermediaries between producer and consumer and, through appropriate exploitation of the country's natural resources, the provision of replacements or substitutes for those raw materials requiring importation and refinement or extension of the range of tools, machinery and equipment currently in use, with a view to achieving an effective economic overhaul of industry and of the national economy, at least as far as that segment of the national economy controlled, collectivised or essentially dependent on the economic agencies of our trade union federation may be concerned.

2. The Economic Council is hereby authorised to draw up and proceed with the implementation of a wide scheme or planning programme for the whole of the economy, subject to the following conditions:

- (a) That, with the utmost haste, it embark upon the necessary research preparatory to drafting the overall plan for the economy: its inquiry into and adoption of a decision upon this should be completed within a period not exceeding four months from the date on which the Confederation makes its final pronouncement upon the draft agenda, to wit "Overhauling industrial operations".

- (b) That the scheme which the Economic Council is to draft and, when the time comes, put into practice, has the special feature of containing the necessary elasticity to embrace

the overall picture (the broadest possible picture) of the entire national economy, and thereby, engage in planning in everything relating to the economy, be it through partial implementation of overall targets of such general economic planning as the Economic Council may reckon necessary to the undertaking of national reconstruction and consolidation of the Spanish proletariat's revolutionary process, in which case the plenum thinks it should continue for the duration of the war against fascism, in view of the ineluctable need to go on building our economic potential, building up our reserves and laying the groundwork for a beneficial revamping of the economy in the event of victory.

3. At its plenary sessions, the Economic Council is empowered to determine which industries will, under the projected planning, be subject to conversion, relocation, suspension or abolition, its sole obligation being that its resolutions should offer these two guarantees:

(a) That the eventual decision regarding suspension or closure of some industries or establishments be prompted by the intention to arrive at a real economy or reduction in the cost price of the product or service rendered more expensively in a given factory, workshop, farm, etc.; the aim therefore being that the solution should be purely objective and economic, with loyalist Spain as a whole being considered as a single unit without regional or other differences.

(b) That no factory, workshop, farm, mine, etc. be suspended or shut down unless prior arrangements have been made for redeploying the producers who might be left jobless if this condition were not to be fulfilled. Consequently, unemployment could not come about at any time as a consequence of the implementation of planning in the economy.

Until such time as the projected overall planning can be implemented, all Industrial Unions, and Regional and National Industrial Federations and the Regional Committees themselves are empowered, acting alone or in concert with regional, area or local agencies for the management and direction of the economy in their respective regions, to pursue, insofar as may be feasible, the objective underpinning the plenum's intention of introducing planning into industries. This assumes, of course, that whatever the decisions adopted by said agencies and the nature of the improvements introduced, or whatever the changes effected, etc., these are overruled by the planning guidelines agreed by the Economic Council, just as soon as the latter are published or otherwise communicated to the respective pertinent National Federations and Regional Committees.

Valencia, 24 January 1938. On behalf of the CNT National Committee, Mariano Cardona Rosell; on behalf of the Barcelona Local Union Federation, Fernando Alemany; on behalf of the Area Federation of Cardoner and Alt Llobregat, F. Daniel Cuevas; on behalf of the Madrid Local Union Federation, Julián Fernández; on behalf of the Mataró Local Industrial Union Federation, Miguel Suñé Atanasi; on behalf of the Valencia Local Industrial Union Federation, R. Cebrián.'

Item 10 had been shorn of its section (a), regarding which the National Committee had framed a motion stating: 'The necessity of arriving at administrative centralisation of the economy.' What the plenum adopted was a scheme that confronted the many workers and collectivists who believed that 19 July 1936 had changed only the mode of ownership, and was designed to eliminate the economic differences which existed between the collectivists and the non-collectivists, determined by whether they were advantageously or disadvantageously placed in their industries and places of production.

The motion passed was as follows:

'Unanimously and before entering into debate upon this item on the agenda, the plenum declares:

"Industrial undertakings and peasant collectives under CNT control are to be governed by the National Economic Council."

Months have elapsed since the glorious 19 July 1936 and the creative potential of the proletariat has absorbed all of the attentions of militants, for it has left us hardly any time for anything other than fleshing out revolutionary aspirations and doing everything possible and, sometimes, it seems, the impossible, in order to see them fleshed out in hard and fast creations, while large numbers of militants have shouldered the hard, sublime task of sustaining the armed struggle against fascism, mainly in order to consolidate the gains of the revolution and speed the complete attainment of the goals it set itself.

So it is scarcely surprising that after almost a year and a half since that memorable date, it has not been possible to achieve the necessary co-ordination essential at national level if all the spheres of the economy under the control or at the disposal of Spain's working class are to interlock and fuse together as required if we are effectively to reap the benefits of a socialisation which, if it is to be wholly deserving of the name, has to overcome certain stages, the chief one being no doubt, the stage involving the matching of efforts and resources, leading on to economic fellowship in the broadest possible sense of those terms.

The phase to which we refer could not possibly be completed, unless we resolve to lay down the rules and create the mechanism which may allow administration of the economy to be concentrated in workers' hands. As far as our own trade union central is concerned, we alone can decide and we will do precisely that in the text of this item on the agenda, the economy. Meaning not merely that economy which is wholly ours, but embracing also our involvement in economic units, every last one of them, marshalled together as is vital if we are to oversee (these being statistical data of the first importance) the monies represented by stocks of materials processed, received, invested or issued by the warehouses of every unit, and the sums actually paid out as wages, the value of the equipment and the means of production in workers' hands, and the sums of money and credit at the disposal of said economic units. This, plus all related data not specified here but which is required for accounting and administration purposes, set out in such a way as to furnish a sound foundation for the investigations, estimates and determinations of the Economic Council.

The agency and no other will, in accordance with the powers and licence afforded to it by the organisation under the accords of the plenum or at our trade union organisation's ordinary congresses and, failing that, at national or regional plenums, be empowered to mobilise the economic resources falling under the remit of this motion.

Centralisation will be effected from the economic units up towards the Local Industry Administrative Technical Councils, whereupon two processes will be set in motion: one will operate through several graduated stages (the Industrial Federation structure) while the other will be the Economic Councils arrangement.

The economic units forming the basis of this administrative arrangement are of two kinds:

- (a) Wholly CNT in composition, and
- (b) of mixed CNT-UGT or other composition.

The first of these categories comprises:

1. Collectivised undertakings or any which may assume such designation anywhere on the national territory, regardless of the legislation under which they may be legalised or licensed.

2. Socialised industries i.e. industries so designated by workers on account of their having achieved a fuller measure of collectivism in them, and of their being tied directly to the relevant Industrial Union, Regional Industrial Federation or National Industrial Federation.

3. Workshops, establishments or shops. This category should be understood as embracing all those workshops, etc. so designated on account of their being directly subject to the economic oversight of the Industrial Unions or through their being tied to their leadership and direction.

4. Production co-operatives, established in accordance with the laws in force or enforceable at any time, and where the co-operators are CNT workers.

5. CNT peasant collectives, regardless of how they may be governed or legalised.
6. Trading companies, however designated (Collectives, Joint Stock or Limited Companies) wherein the capital belongs to CNT workers.

We should add, as making up a special category and as a fundamental component, the three following bodies:

7. The branch office of the Iberian Trade Union Bank.
8. Consumer co-operatives or trading centres that the CNT may have set up or may yet set up.
9. Insurance mutual funds, Providence and accident mutual societies, trade union insurance-broking agencies etc.

The second category of economic units comprises all those bodies listed under sections 1 to 6 of the first category, but which have been set up in alliance with UGT workers, regardless of their numbers.

In the light of the above, the plenum feels obliged to outline a structure for:

1. Those economic organs making up a National Industrial Federation, and
2. The Economic Councils.

Structure of the Economic Organs of a National Industrial Federation.

The arrangement of the economic organs which, starting from the base in the production centre, must build up to the National Industrial Federation, is as follows:

1. The Production Centre (Administrative Technical Council or Delegation) level.
2. The level of the Industrial Section (Administrative and Statistical Technical Council).
3. At the level of the branch of industry (Administrative and Statistical Technical Council).
4. At the level of Local Industry (Administrative and Statistical Technical Council).
5. At Industrial Area level (Administrative and Statistical Technical Council).
6. At Industrial Regional level (Administrative and Statistical Technical Council).
7. At National Industrial level (Administrative and Statistical Technical Council, National Federation).

At the aforementioned levels there will be the councils specified below:

1. In every Production Centre and according to the centre's economic importance, there will be a Technical Administrative Council or merely a delegation to oversee those aspects of production indicated by its title.

2. Similar production centres will, together, make up the Section Technical Administrative Council and Statistical Council. This will maintain technical, administrative and statistical supervision of the production centres making up the section.

3. The different sections from one branch of industry are to appoint a Branch Technical Administrative Council and Statistical Council, which will collate all the figures from the reports submitted by the sections, ensuring at all times that there is good technical guidance.

4. The component branches of an industry are to be connected by a Technical Administrative Council and Statistical Council of the branches making up the industry in question. This will oversee the Branch Councils.

5. Organised on a regional basis, the industry, following scrutiny of the industrial location of its centres of production, will stipulate the number of zones into which the region is to be divided and will fix the town wherein the Technical Administrative Council and Statistical Council is to reside.

6. In each region, there is to be a regional Technical Administrative Council and Statistical Council, for the purpose of overseeing the work of the Area Councils and collating the information furnished by these.

The Regional Technical Administrative Council and Statistical Council will be linked to the Technical Administrative Council and Statistical Council of their National Industrial Federation, which will see to the monitoring and supervision of industry.

Appointment of the Various Technical, Administrative and Statistical Councils.

1. The workers of each production centre are to appoint from among their number the delegates who are to make up their Technical Administrative Council and Statistical Council or Delegation.

2. All the workers belonging to the same Industrial Section will appoint delegates to form their Section Technical Administrative Council and Statistical Council.

3. In a general assembly of the Industrial Branch, the delegates who are to make up the Branch Technical Administrative Council and Statistical Council will be appointed, as will the delegates who are to join the Local Industry Technical Administrative Council and Statistical Council.

4. A general assembly of the Industry will appoint the three delegates — secretary, treasurer and technician — who, together with the delegates chosen by the branches, will make up the Industrial Technical Administrative Council and Statistical Council.

5. The Local Technical Administrative Council and Statistical Council, assembled as an Area Industrial Plenum, are to appoint three delegates to take charge of the aforementioned specific duties on the local body which, in concert with delegates who may be deemed necessary as council members (and who will be appointed by the Local Industry of the place of residence) will make up the Area Technical Administrative Council and Statistical Council.

6. A Regional Plenum of the Local Technical Administrative Council and Statistical Council will appoint the three delegates, whose duties have been indicated, to the Local and Area bodies. The locality in which the Regional Technical Administrative Council and Statistical Council is to reside will supply the necessary councillors so that the Regional Council can be made up. The same plenum will at the same time appoint two comrades to join the National Council of the Industry as representatives of the region.

7. The Regional Technical Administrative Council and Statistical Industrial Council, gathered together in plenum, will select the three delegates who are to bear the heaviest responsibility on the Economic Council and these — together with the other regional delegates, plus any others who may be deemed necessary (and who will be furnished by the locality in which the Council resides) — will make up the National Technical Administrative Council and Statistical Council of the Industry.

Periodical reports will be passed up from the grassroots economic body — the Technical Administrative Councils — to the agency immediately above, until they reach the National Council of the industry concerned and the Local Economic Council.

All of these bodies — from the Technical Administrative Council of the production centres, right up through the higher economic organs (Section, Branch, Industry, Local, Area, Regional and National) — are to participate, in a reporting capacity, in the meetings of the Economic Councils.

Regarding the Economic Councils

1. In each locality, Economic Councils are to be set up with duties delegated from the Regional Economic Council. These Local Economic Councils will have charge of the technical, administrative and statistical supervision of the locality in question as regards the industries that make it up.

The Local Technical Administrative Industrial Councils, in joint session, will appoint two delegates to make up the Standing Commission of the Economic Councils and who will have hold the positions of utmost responsibility as described by the superior bodies. This standing commission will be joined by delegates appointed by each of the industries represented in the locality concerned. The Local Economic Council will be completed by a delegate appointed by the Local Federation of Industrial Unions or, failing that, by the Amalgamated Trades Union, in an advisory and monitoring capacity.

2. In each region, Regional Economic Councils are to be set up: it will carry out functions delegated from the Economic Council. These Regional Economic Councils will have charge of technical, administrative and statistical supervision of their respective regions. The Regional Industrial Technical Administrative Council and Statistical Council will appoint six delegates to make up the standing commission of the Regional Economic

Councils and handle functions of the greatest responsibility defined by the higher agency.

This standing commission will be joined by two delegates who will be appointed by each of the Regional Industrial Technical Administrative Council and Statistical Council. For the purposes of consultation and supervision, the Regional Committees of Industrial Unions will appoint two delegates to complement the Regional Economic Council and one of these delegates will serve on its standing commission.

3. The National Technical Administrative Council and Statistical Council of Industry will appoint eight delegates to make up the standing commission of the Economic Council, which will be completed by one delegate from each of the main branches of each National Industrial Federation.

This standing commission will set up the following departments: General Secretary's office, Statistics, Control, Administration, Propaganda, Technical Guidance and whatever others may be deemed necessary.

The Economic Council is to have charge of the technical, administrative and statistical supervision of all industries, trading centres, or co-operative ventures belonging to the CNT, as well as banking agencies, Insurance Technical Brokerage, family payment fund, the National Association of Technicians and whatever others our organisation has or may yet set up. In order to facilitate its task, they will delegate such duties as it believes to be quantitatively appropriate, to the Regional Economic Councils so that the latter may, in turn, likewise devolve these to Local Economic Councils.

Three delegates appointed by the CNT National Committee, for consultation and supervision purposes, are to join the Economic Council and two of them will in fact serve on the Standing Commission of this Council.

Given that this Council co-ordinates every facet of the National Industrial Federations, from which it is to receive all information and briefings, it will be up to it to decide upon all matters affecting the economy at national level, whether technically or in administrative and statistical terms, and its decisions will be binding upon all.

For the purpose of allocating work, the Economic Council will appoint specific commissions to report upon the issues entrusted to each of them.

The corresponding Councils will have access to whatever auxiliaries of any sort they may need in order to perform their duties.

Delegates serving on the various Councils and staff answerable to the Councils will alike be economically dependent on the resources administered by them.

The appointment of delegates making up the local standing commission, as well as its regional and national counterparts, is subject to the endorsement of the Local Union Federation, and the CNT Regional and National Committees respectively.

The trade union committees parallel to the Local, Regional and National Economic Councils are to appoint the comrade who will serve as secretary on the aforementioned Economic Councils.

Valencia, January 1938; on behalf of the working party: the l'Hospitalet Local Federation, Elda Local Federation and Vilanova i la Geltrú Local Federation.'

After 19 July 1936, a range of forms of production spontaneously came into operation. The extended plenum was keen to shoulder the responsibility for outlining regulations governing the rights and duties of the producer, laying down a series of obligations and sanctions. In its preamble, the motion on item 11 of the agenda ('Establishment of working norms...') opposed 'a single concept and a single executive voice' and the belief that it should be 'left to chaos to work the miracle of bringing forth order.' 'The ideal,' it added, 'the libertarian ideal, posits the formula of responsible organisation as against these wrong-headed systems unsuited to the ongoing existence of a civilised people conscious of its dignity.'

Here are the prescriptions contained in the working party's recommendations:

1. Work is to be organised through selection of those workers with the best technical capability and revolutionary credentials.

2. In production, the old output level is to be taken as the base figure, though this shall

not preclude the introduction of norms in excess of that figure, should the needs of the economy so dictate, and with the model of payment being the current equivalent percentage rise and never a sliding scale.

The overtime system is hereby abolished, and only in those industries where the strict requirements of the war may so ordain, will the Organisation be able to decide to introduce bonus payment for exceeding targets in production, it being understood that this is applicable only to war industries and for the duration of the war only.

Where the state is the employer, the Technical Administrative Council and the appropriate union junta will intervene with regard to what may be deemed excessive demands by the firm or by the workers, depending on the pertinent trade union. In other instances, the Technical Administrative Council will be the decision-making agency, along with the Economic Councils, according to the scale and situation of the industries concerned, through appropriate resolutions in partnership with the trade union bodies.

3. The Technical Administrative Councils and the Economic Councils, each within the parameters of its organisational jurisdiction, will be the agencies responsible for progress in work. They are to budget, hire, manage and set work regulations, determine movement of production units, procurement of materials, financial management, etc., appointing and staffing factory councils in accordance with the workforces of the industrial units.

In every department where work is on the basis of trades there is to be a job-allocator who is to be officially responsible for the work in progress, monitoring for quantity and quality and supervising the workers' conduct. Also the firm is to have a general manager in charge of important administration, answerable to the Technical Administrative Council and enjoying an authority which can only be curtailed by the factory council and the union control committees.

This general manager is required to submit monthly signed reports to the Technical Administrative Council regarding every aspect of the firm's experiences and progress. This general manager is to be classed as a technician, and the job-allocator as a skilled workman and paid in accordance with the prescriptions of the organisation.

4. The job-allocator operating as assistant manager in the trade section, site or on the union control committee, will be able to propose that a worker be dismissed and, with the agreement of the general manager, decisions are to be made speedily over the following:

(i) With regard to unjustified absence from work; (ii) with regard to incorrigible late-comers; (iii) with regard to those failing to meet production targets; (iv) with regard to those displaying defeatist tendencies by bringing workers into confrontation with works managers or with union leaders.

Once dismissal has been decided upon, the worker is free to appeal to the union junta which, in consultation with the Technical Administrative Council, will have the final say in the decision.

When, acceding to the proposal made by an allocator, general manager or control committee, the union junta decides that a worker is to be dismissed for shirking or dishonesty, the Industry will have an obligation to find him work elsewhere, issuing him with the appropriate work permit.

If, in his new place of work, the worker should re-offend and be again dismissed under the formal procedures, he should not be afforded work in the same locality, but should be re-assigned to industry elsewhere, where he will be put to work, as deemed necessary.

If, even after such a change, a further offence should occur out of stubbornness, his record is to be noted in his work cards and union cards and it will be at the discretion of the union concerned to order temporary suspension from work, which course may be recommended as a last resort.

As all hiring of personnel in any firm is to be monitored by the offices of the union's Technical Administrative Council, all workers and staff will have a file cataloguing details of their professional and social life. The Technical Administrative Council will draw its personnel from the various sections of the union, and these will furnish

evidence of their integrity and professional aptitudes.

5. On every work site there will be a union control committee that will sit in on meetings of the factory council and ensure that work is performed scrupulously. It is to cooperate and to seek at all times to assist in the improvement of working methods and in boosting productivity. The union control committee will brief the union junta on all of the characteristic details of the firm. It will propose charge hands and general managers for the Technical Administrative Council to appoint for the firm. It will help expose negative elements, reporting any instances of incompetence that come to light. It will take pains to make improvements in anything to do with the workers' material conditions. It will suggest promotions up the professional scale for those who merit them and whom the charge hand may have overlooked, making provision for a competency test to this end. It will concern itself with hygiene, propaganda and the strengthening of psychological bonds between workers in socialised labour. From time to time, it will audit the books and on that basis, endorse all complaints or commendatory reports to the Technical Administrative Council and to the union junta, and will place itself at the disposal of the work delegate for anything which he may require.

Factory councils and union control committees in the larger plants and sites (generally permanent), will examine and look to the establishment of co-operatives, primary and technical schools, recreational education, etc. under the administrative and moral direction of the Technical Administrative Council and the union junta of the Industry.

6. In connection with work accidents found to be slight and of dubious origin, the general manager and the union control committee will look into the accident, and should it be found that it is a sham designed to provide relief from work or forestall expected dismissal, it shall be so reported to the Technical Administrative Council.

Redundancy notices are to be issued by the Technical Administrative Council, acting on reports received from the managers mentioned, but will be withheld from those of inadequate moral character, who, in the event of recidivism are to be punished by bans similar to those noted earlier as applicable against a different category of undesirables. In the case of fortuitous accidents, the Technical Administrative Council will ensure full pay for the victims, ensuring that commitments given to insured firms are honoured, and making good out of central funds, any shortfall in payments so that the accident victim suffers no financial loss. In instances of protracted treatment, the Technical Administrative Council will arrange a home visitation service.

Final Consideration

In every instance the organisation has absolute authority to decide upon norms, sanctions, and all sorts of conversions and any sort of frictions that may arise among work managers, the Technical Administrative Councils and the Local Economic Councils.

The National Economic Council will issue a producer's card spelling out everyone's rights and duties under the economic contract of production, encapsulating the main accords of the extended Economic Plenum.

On behalf of the working party: the Puerto de Sagunto Local Federation, the Vilafranca del Penedes Local Federation, the Central Regional Peasants' Committee, the Badalona Local Federation and the National Railwaymen's Committee, Valencia, 22 January 1938.'

As indicated above, one of the tasks of the Plenum was to 'overhaul the National Industrial Federations'. It was also noted that, on a majority vote, an amendment was passed against the National Committee's motion. This amendment was backed by the delegations from Catalonia and the Centre and it asked that the number of existing federations be maintained, to wit, the following... the Farming, Fishery and Food Industry, the Iron and Steel Industry, the Transport Industry, Health and Hygiene, the Construction and Woodworking Industry, the Water, Gas, Electricity and Fuel Industry, the Entertainments Industry, Bank, Insurance and allied workers, Communications,

Paper and Graphic Arts Industry, Chemical Industries, Public, Administrative and Judicial Staff. The National Committee's draft motion, backed by other members of the working party, increased the number of federations to 20, which is to say that the Tobacco, Railroad, River and Maritime Navigation, Mining and Petroleum Industries, etc. would get federations of their own. Both options were left hanging, pending a final decision by unions.

The Confederation's peasants also had something to say to the plenum. By way of a coda to our resumé, we reprint this extract from the comprehensive, well-documented report on national agricultural development:

'As far as the need to develop agriculture goes, now that the traditional obstacles in the way of organised planning of rational exploitation of the countryside have disappeared or largely been reduced, we, voicing the thoughts and feelings of the recent plenum, reckon that the time has come for the National Federation of Peasants to outline a standard scheme for the intensification and improvement of agricultural output. The area under cultivation in the whole of Spain stands at around 20 million hectares, of which only one and a half million are irrigated, the remainder, which is to say 92.5 per cent, being dry soil. The financial value of the produce from the dry and irrigated soils, if we are to take, say, the 1935 harvest, stands at 6,455,000,000 pesetas for the dry lands and 2,751,000,000 for the irrigated lands. It follows from these figures that average gross yield per hectare is very poor and that the keynote to date has been a pronounced poverty. This is precisely why there is an urgent need to increase yields and intensify cultivation, not merely through irrigation of dry soils — undertakings which require enormous capital investment and which are limited by the amount of hydraulic resources available to us — but by basing these upon an overhaul of our normal methods of cultivation and upon the nurturing of complementary industries.

We will get a fairly exact notion of how backward Spain is in such matters if we look at the shortcomings of our wheat harvest, the little that has been done in the hybridisation of maize with a view to developing strains of high yield, adapted to our dry soil conditions: the absolute absence of microbiology in the growing of leguminous plants, the essential nitrogenous factor that would annually save us from expending many millions of pesetas on nitrogen fertilisers; the lack of a powerful fruit-growing sector which, if one excepts citrus fruits, can scarcely produce enough to meet the home market; how poorly off our vine-growing sector is for choice varieties of table grape; the lack of agricultural industries designed to handle and utilise by-products; and lastly, the state of health of our crops, so inadequate that in Levante alone nearly 300 million pesetas are lost every year as a result of so-called farming blights, not to mention, of course, the sizeable figure which our exclusion from many markets abroad accounts for. The first step, if we want to solve the problem, must be to work towards recovery of the manpower resources we possessed prior to the revolt...'

As for intensifying and improving livestock resources, the peasants point to the following solutions:

'... There are three ways of achieving this: first, massive importation of breeds readily adaptable to the various climates and conditions of our regions; second, identify in each species and breed those shared characteristics which are of interest to us arriving at bloodstock groups, establishing a standard breed for the provinces or non-political natural regions by means of a painstaking nationwide selection procedure, so as to foster those groups and progressively improve upon them; third, there is what we might term the mixed option, and in our estimation it is the most interesting one: once we have settled upon the standard breed to be utilised in the various regions, it must be cross-bred with imported beasts with kindred features until our stock is completely absorbed by the imported stock.

In order to effect an intensification of livestock farming, we propose to set up a national livestock breeding board, regional breeding stations, area livestock agencies

and local livestock sub-agencies. The functions of these bodies and their structural format are set out below. Finally, a programmatic profile of the farming economy has been set out: this will make possible thorough training and a progressive improvement of agro-technical educational levels from the most elementary levels up to complete mastery of professional and techno-agricultural skills, without contact being lost at any time with the countryside, to which we have to feel ourselves deeply attached in that it is the decisive factor in output. Special reference is made to wheat-growing and to the fact that appropriate modification of the tasks and relationships involved in planting can triple the yield of that cereal crop. With a view to the speedy achievement of this state of affairs, the farm development section of the National Peasant Federation is cognisant of the need for an articulated plan whereby the following agencies may be established; a national board for intensive cultivation, regional agronomic stations; area agronomic agencies and local agronomic sub-agencies. There follows a detailed breakdown of the functions to be performed by each of these bodies. As regards a national livestock development plan, according to the findings of the 1934 survey, our economy's intrinsic value rose by 21 million pesetas, bringing in six thousand millions a year. Now we know that livestock farming is in ruins, but Spain does have the potential to build up a superb livestock industry. Our stock-breeding economy is only a matter of improvement and of increased output.'

▼ Valencia: street scenes



Valencia: street scenes ▼



Chapter Two: The New Trade Union Platform

On 19 January 1938 the *Diari Oficial de la Generalitat* made public a personal order (as the 22 January edition of *Solidaridad Obrera* emphasised) from Joan Comorera, the autonomous government's Economy Minister. Under it, the public entertainments sector in Catalonia, except for those facilities already subject to municipal control, was to be taken under control. A press release of 22 January gave to understand that Comorera's order had been prompted by the general strike of the Barcelona public entertainments sector. A commission from the union concerned visited the President's Under-Secretary and later called on Comorera himself. It was then announced that an amicable solution had been found to the dispute. What was that solution?

On 1 February the press made it public that in the Economic Department, the formal investment of the Public Entertainments of Catalonia Commission of Inspection had taken place, and that the minister had himself invested the inspectors from the Generalitat, Miguel Espinar, Rosalio Alcón and César Viaina, and the departmental Under-Secretary, Estanislau Ruíz i Ponseti. The first three persons named belonged to the CNT as might be deduced from the fact that acceptance of the take-over order was conditional upon CNT personnel being included in the Commission of Inspection, albeit as Generalitat delegates.

The take-over order in question stated as follows:

1. Technical and administration inspection of all public entertainments concerns in Catalonia, for the purpose of ensuring their survival and the maximisation of economic improvements, is hereby agreed. This inspection is to be effected by a Commission of Inspection comprising three inspectors appointed by the Economy Minister and a delegate from the Finance Ministry, in accordance with what is laid down in current ~~medidas~~.

2. Generalitat inspectors are to enter into contact with the present organs overseeing public entertainments in Catalonia, with a view to arriving at as rapidly as possible at a joint administration with them and arranging a uniform working system. Until such time as this arrangement secures the approval of the Generalitat, the Commission of Inspection shall assume charge of the administrative and technical duties incumbent upon the management of the concern. One of these three inspectors, especially appointed, is to be president of the commission.

3. The Economy Minister in person shall prescribe the powers of these Generalitat inspectors who may not have been seconded by other official bodies or by the Department of Economy itself, until such time as this uniformity has been achieved.

4. The trade union representatives of the public entertainments workers shall appoint a working party made up of six delegates, to assume the duties of a Workers' Supervisory Committee at the same time. Of these six delegates, three are to be appointed by the CNT and three by the UGT.

5. The normal management of the amalgamated concerns is to be handled by the Commission of Inspection in ongoing consultation with, and under the supervision of the consultative working party in the taking of decisions of a general nature, especially such as may relate to the manner of amalgamating concerns and the rights of the workers concerned; the Commission of Inspection and the Consultative Working Party are to hold joint meetings, making up the Management Council which is to be chaired by that member of the Commission of Inspection especially designated by the Minister. Should there be any irreducible difference of opinion between the Generalitat representatives and the trade union representatives over matters referred to the Management Council for consideration, the ultimate arbiter is to be the Economy Minister.

6. The duties performed hitherto by the appointed Economic Committees or other bodies, are hereby transferred to the Commission of Inspection, which is to make the

utmost haste to put the appropriate winding-up operations into effect.

7. Exempted from this take-over are those public entertainments facilities under municipal control at the time of issue of this order.

Barcelona, 19 January 1938, the Economy Minister, Joan Comorera.'

On 8 February the Generalitat's Economic Ministry published some explanatory comments about the Collectivisations Decree of 24 October 1936, pointing out that the powers of the Workers' Supervisory Committees, which overlapped with those of the Collectivised Firms' Councils, were being interpreted somewhat too liberally. The statement declared, in one paragraph:

'It needs to be spelled out clearly that in those firms where the employer is still in place, he retains all of his prerogatives of authority, representation and responsibility and it is the workers that should be more interested than anyone in ensuring that the prescriptions of the law governing such matters are scrupulously observed, so as to preclude partisan campaigns by persons interested in causing upsets to the actions and playing up the shortcomings of the new economic regime. Since the workers representatives were the ones who gave an undertaking, together with the political representatives of the petite bourgeoisie, to introduce the current system which still affords belligerent status to the latter estate.'

In the trade union world, important negotiations were being launched just about then between the representatives of both trade union associations. At a gathering of the UGT Executive Commission (in early February) approval had been given to a programme of action that was to be put to the Confederation's representatives. The UGT proposals would be set out by UGT delegates Amaro del Rosal Díaz, César Lombardía and

The first encounter took place in mid February at the headquarters of the CNT National Committee in Barcelona, for, following the central government's removal to that city early in November 1937, immediately after the collapse of the North, all of the national bodies of a political and trade union character followed that example. The CNT was represented at the meeting by its general secretary, Mariano Vázquez, Horacio Prieto, and Frederica Montseny. But the exchanges of opinion remained just that until the terrible enemy offensive of 9 March that led to the collapse of the Eastern Front. Indeed, for the time being, they were confined to examination and discussion of the respective proposals. The UGT proposals were published in the press on 9 February. They were as follows:

'Army. The Liaison Committee acknowledges the tremendous progress made in the training of the Popular Army, in its battle-readiness and in the technical expertise of its commanders. It takes the line that the workers' organisation should assist the government to the utmost so as to build a powerful army imbued with a profound anti-fascist mentality and equipped with a uniform fighting spirit capable of crushing Franco and the foreign invaders. The Liaison Committee will have to concern itself constantly with the maintenance and reinforcements of the ties of fellowship between the members of the army, beneath the banner of anti-fascism. It appreciates that it is a fundamental task of the unions to avoid the raising in the rearguard of issues which may distract government attentions away from its special mission, which is to win the war with all haste, thereby helping to build up war morale in the rearguard.

1. The unions will render intensive assistance to the government, falling into line with the latter's initiatives in the establishment of sturdy reserves capable of boasting the membership of the Popular Army and ensure the latter of continuity in advances and a regular policy of relief. To this end, the unions are to ensure that all their members comply enthusiastically with government mobilisation orders. Military instruction and weapons training among the workers are their concern: they are to co-operate in the provision of pre-military training, to avert the disarray caused in each industry by the

absence of workers called into the colours, to which end they are to strive so as to ensure professional training for women and for those men outside the age of liability for military service.

2. The UGT and the CNT shall strive to engage in an intensive fortification, construction and road and railroad repair drive and the erection of shelters for the civilian population.

3. The Liaison Committee will make efforts to ensure that the functions of the War Commissariat, the backbone of our army, enjoy all possible aid from the unions so that its work may be daily more effective. Similarly it will strive to ensure that the fellowship and identification existing between the army's officers, whether drawn from the old army or promoted from among the people, may be the more forcefully consolidated with each passing day.

4. The unions shall at all times take care to maintain close contacts with the fighting men, to which end they shall continue to regard the latter as members and shall see to their needs and those of their families, without this implying an interference in those functions which are the prerogative of the military command.

Industry. The Liaison Committee appreciates the need to give a greater boost to our country's industrial output, most especially, in the war industries, by co-ordinating and stepping up the efforts of the unions in this respect. The Liaison Committee will make efforts to maintain an unflinching, disciplined rearguard and to imbue all workers with the spirit of selflessness and sacrifice that the present times demand, so that they may spare no effort in their work connected with military requirements. Within that spirit, the Liaison Committee shall defend the following measures:

War Industries. 1. The UGT and CNT will co-operate with government in the task of speedily constructing a powerful war industry. The unions will have to tackle, as an urgent and indispensable task, the business of creating among the workers a severe spirit of vigilance against any sort of sabotage or inactivity in work and in the improvement of the same, with an eye to boosting and improving output;

2. All factories and workshops whose circumstances make this feasible are to be converted to meet war needs;

3. All raw materials, chiefly those supplying the war industries, are to be brought under centralised control;

4. Militarisation and centralisation of all means of transport. Nationalisation of basic industries;

5. Basic industries will have to be nationalised as a matter of urgency. The government must centralise the nationalised industries and co-ordinate their development;

6. The nationalised industries will have to be run by experts in those industries, appointed by the appropriate ministry, but in allotting these positions account should be taken of the opinion of the workers;

7. Nationalisation of the railways;

8. The government must move towards a centralisation of banking operations, paving the way for nationalisation of the banks.

National Councils of Industry and the Higher Economic Council. 9. The Liaison Committee calls for the immediate establishment of National Councils of Industry with participation for the unions, charged with regulating the output of each industry, with fixing prices, wages, resources and the import and export of produce and materials, in accordance with government directives at all times. These Councils are to be answerable to the Higher Economic Council the establishment of which, by the government, is regarded by this Liaison Committee as a matter of the utmost urgency as the most effective means of organising and planning production.

Professional Training. 10. In addition to any measures the government may have established or may yet establish in the field of professional training, the unions will help to raise the levels of learning and professional skill of the workers by organising special courses for them.

Municipalisation of Services. 11. The Liaison Committee recognises the need to orchestrate and reorganise urban services, based upon the municipalisation of those which, by virtue of their importance and characteristics, require this, so as to work towards the elimination of the confusion which presently obtains. As all of the assets, chattels and properties of the prominent proprietors involved in the fascist revolt are the property of the state, urban properties are to be put to use by the municipalities by means of the legislation handed down by the government in respect of this.

Intensification of Agricultural Output — Co-operatives and Collectives in the Countryside. The National Liaison Committee declares that the two union associations shall make every effort to ensure that the produce of the land, the fruit of our peasants' labours, is respected at all times and priced in accordance with industrial prices. The Liaison Committee recognises the advances that have been made by the Popular Front government in the field of farm legislation. At the same time, it warns of the need to step up agricultural output so that not one inch of arable land may be left uncultivated, to which end it regards it as indispensable that there should be unity among the land workers in each district and that the collectivist and co-operative movement act as one in accordance with these principles:

1. the Liaison Committee calls for nationalisation and industrialisation of the land which will have to be given over in inalienable usufruct to the peasants and agricultural labourers which may work it individually or collectively with the proviso that the land allotted for cultivation by the individual not exceed the capabilities of that individual together with his family, account being taken of the peculiarities of the autonomous regions, provided that these fit in with the minimum prescribed by law in the remainder of the country. Rustic smallholdings of the farmers who directly cultivate the land must be respected;

2. both union associations are to defend all of the gains made by the rural masses, and will endeavour to step up farm output. This requires:

- a. intensification of agricultural production. For the purpose of boosting the work inside the collectives, it may be broken up into tasks, with the farm-workers being guaranteed a minimum payment, with a quarterly review to determine the pertinent increases or reductions;

- b. regulation of cultivation of the land so as to ensure that individual tillage does not hamper collective endeavours;

- c. improvement to the standard of living of the agricultural workers on the basis of farm produce being so priced that the peasants may obtain prices that are due reward for their produce indexed to the costs of the industrial products which they consume and for which a standard rate should be prescribed;

- d. the government is to assist the peasants in the acquisition of machinery, seed, fertilisers, etc. and of credit through the National Farm Credit Bank, the creation of which is necessary;

- e. the establishment of experimental farms (farming colleges) is to be encouraged: there will have to be at least one of these in each area, so as to train experts, machinists, organisers and administrators for the collectives and co-operatives.

3. The formation of farming co-operatives will have to be stepped up, with the aim being to establish just one in each district, in conformity with the government's ordinances concerning co-operatives, and collectives already constituted will have to be legalised immediately. Similarly, we must encourage the grouping of cooperatives into regional or provincial federations so they may take their place within the co-operative movement nationally and internationally.

Pay, prices and provisions. The improvement of the workers' standard of living and the struggle against the current high cost of foodstuffs and the difficulty of procuring the same are self-evidently necessary. So, the Liaison Committee regards the following steps as necessary:

1. the unions must step up their struggle against speculators, thereby assisting the

endeavours of the government in that regard. This task is primarily incumbent upon the hotel and dairy organisations and other unions in the food and commerce sectors;

2. the formation of strong retail consumer co-operatives should be encouraged, along with the establishment of production co-operatives and the foundation of great wholesale centres for marketing produce, under state supervision. Likewise, a scheme should be drawn up for the importation of those crucial items which are the staple of the workers' diet, so as to ensure that the workers get the ration needed by their family at a fair price in accordance with the rates of pay existing. The government should also assume control of production and regulate domestic consumption of all those products which are the foundations of our export policy;

3. the Liaison Committee takes the view that a minimum wage should be introduced, tied to the cost of living and taking into account, on the one hand, professional grades and, on the other, the performance of each one of these. In this respect it will champion in industry the principle of "the greater and better the output, the greater the reward" as a bonus or premium regardless of sex or age. To this end, a National Pay and Prices Commission, with representation from the union associations, will have to be set up.

Workers' Control. The Liaison Committee understands that workers' control constitutes one of the most highly valued and meaningful of the workers' gains. It takes the line that a law on workers' control is at present a necessity in this country of ours, so as to prescribe the rights and duties of workers. And so, it is agreed that:

1. the government must promulgate a law of workers' control wherein the rights and obligations of workers in respect of supervision of production and monitoring of performance are set out, along with their participation in administration and profits, the working conditions and the defence of social legislation;

2. the control agencies are to be democratically elected by direct suffrage by all of the workforce of the same plant or workshop, thereby constituting an authentic labour democracy and ensuring that the interests of the workers are protected.

Social Legislation. Maintenance of the advances achieved by the proletariat being deemed appropriate, the Liaison Committee takes the view that current social legislation should be reviewed so as to incorporate dispositions covering the claims already won by the working class and whatever others may result from those contained in these guidelines, or to eliminate precepts that may be at odds with these. Barcelona, 8 February 1938.'

The counter-proposals from the CNT were not long in coming. They were published in the press on 13 February 1938. They were as follows:

'Having examined the guidelines which the UGT has publicly submitted for consideration by the National Committee of the CNT with a view to arriving at an agreement between the two organisations, let us state that we are truly gratified by this gesture on the part of our sister association, in that we had been expecting it for many a long month, having looked for it on various occasions. And as we have been publicly put on the spot, without first having had a chance to express our views also, we are adopting the same procedure, albeit deploring its prejudicial implications.

The guidelines which we are making public and offering for discussion with the UGT represent nothing new for our organisation, but indeed conform with its accords and have been withheld for the drafting of a minimum programme of action common to all anti-fascist forces. In that the requests that we have presented time and again for the holding of joint meetings to elaborate such a programme of popular unity have fallen on deaf ears, we now spell out those accords and give extracts from them in accordance with the invitation issued to us, with the compromises necessary to discussion having a very definite limit.

Guidelines which the CNT puts to the UGT for Unifying the Activities of the two

Organisations. The CNT and the UGT, forever preoccupied with guaranteeing the political and economic gains won by the proletariat during the revolution, and hoping to move beyond these always and everywhere, ratify the existence of the National Liaison Committee, endorsing its remit along the following guidelines:

1. the UGT and the CNT undertake to ensure that the proletariat is effectively involved in the governance of the Spanish state without prejudice to the proportionality due to the non-proletarian forces;

2. now and forever, the CNT and the UGT undertake to stand by a social system of true democracy, resisting any totalitarian pretensions on the part of any class or party. These being the fundamental premises of any cordial and lasting understanding between the two labour associations, we take the line that the immediate, short-term aspiration of both should be encapsulated in some general guidelines that outline a specific order of conduct.

National Defence. 1. The CNT and the UGT are resolved to bolster every measure which may facilitate the creation of an efficient people's army which may guarantee success in the war and in any possible external conflict which may derive from such victory.

2. The two organisations call for the retention and reinforcement of the War Commissariat and for fair representation within it of the anti-fascist forces, opposing any attempt to monopolise the Commissariat.

3. The CNT and the UGT recommend the creation of an Under-Secretariat for the War Industries, with representation for the government and for the unions through a National Council of War Industries which is to assume sole management of those industries.

4. In each under-secretariat of the Ministry of National Defence, there is to be established a Reconciliation Council whose main role will be to foster co-operation and avert partisan decision-making.

5. Transportation which, by its very nature is being deployed for the purposes of war, is to be placed at the disposal of the government and the latter must ensure that it is deployed strictly, lest output and trade in the rearguard be exposed to unsettling influences.

6. In all of the armed corps a National Council is to be set up which proportionally represents the anti-fascist masses and which will exercise advisory and supervisory functions. The idea which prompts the CNT and the UGT to agree upon these short-time demands is the need to defeat fascism speedily and resoundingly, to establish a positive democracy in every place where the war is organised and pursued, to accredit the Commissariat as a weapon for the purging and aggrandisement of the Popular Army, and to offer de facto assistance, with their experience and might, in the undertaking of governments by relieving these of much of their responsibility in the view of the agreed fact that no government is intallible.

Economy. The CNT and the UGT shall contribute every effort, all of their technical personnel and their capacity for sacrifice towards the industrial, agricultural and commercial reconstruction of the country. Such efforts, though they have been made already at all times and everywhere by the proletariat, might render more fruitful the form in which the two organisations envision the economic reconstruction, as set out below:

Nationalisation. 1. Those industries specifically turning out war materials must be nationalised speedily, with technical and administrative responsibility being assumed by the National Council of War Industries under the conditions prescribed elsewhere, the aim being at all times to achieve a national industry which renders the country immune to all external pressure.

2. Mines, railways, heavy industry, banking, telephones, telegraphs and aerial transport have to be nationalised with the greatest possible speed.

3. While nationalisation of banking is in progress, the state must guarantee the

impartial award of credits to the collectives, this official undertaking being brought into line with the circumstantial existence of the Iberian Trade Union Bank set up by the CNT and UGT to this end. So that this industrial nationalisation plan may be implemented and also so that the general plan for the economy may become a reality, the CNT and the UGT call for the formation of a state-run National Economic Council, and made up of representatives from the state and from the two trade union organisations. This National Economic Council is to draw up the national economic plan and through the National Councils of Industry, organised along the same lines as the National Economic Council, will oversee output, distribution, credit, modes of payment and trade as a whole, availing of whatever services need to be set up if it is to perform its functions properly. The two trade union organisations will ensure that wages are so adjusted that in the shortest time-span the workers may enjoy the benefits of a wage that affords them access to their basic requirements and places them in a position, physically, to mount the effort systematically demanded of them. To this end, there needs to be a Mixed National Wages and Workers' Control Commission answerable to the National Economic Council to regulate pay in each industry and each locality in accordance with available figures and to undertake examination of family payment formulae through a purpose-constructed organism. The National Economic Council is to establish a work inspectorate in every one of the two organisations for this purpose, as well as the technical personnel required for the implementation of planning and the running of all state services, officials and technicians being infused with the same spirit of sacrifice which exists among the manual workers and whose encouragement is required as a matter of urgency. The technicians, whether from the collectives or the state, are to be supplied with all the wherewithal of study and mobility likely to help lead to improved performances in their scientific business, both qualitatively and quantitatively. The two organisations shall also introduce work inspection into the collectives, plus some general guidelines liable to give a fillip to the morale of productive management and performance with an eye to achieving an immediate boost in output. The National Economic Council and the labour organisations are to set up trades and technical training schools in considerable numbers, maintained by the state. The government is to respect and to favour the decisions of the National Economic Council as a living organism linking popular management and state management, since it will be decidedly made up of morally and technically well-equipped individuals.

Agriculture. The CNT and the UGT declare that the soil and subsoil are the property of the nation and thereby agree that in agricultural policy:

1. the land is to be given over in usufruct to the CNT-UGT unions preferably, with the government showing favour to the collectives of those two organisations in the shape of credits, expert assistance and experimental training centres for cultivation, plus centres covering the commercial aspect;

2. recognition is to be granted only to those individual users who work for their own purposes and the employment of any waged labour is not to be countenanced on any pretext;

3. the National Economic Council is to embark upon the progressive industrialisation of agriculture by rationalising cultivation and operating on the financial basis of the assets of the Agricultural Credit Bank, until such time as banking may be nationalised. Be it understood that in all of the creative bodies spawned by the reconstruction of agriculture, the two trade union associations are to be represented alongside the state.

Collectivisations. The CNT and UGT ratify the existence of the collectives and intend to extend this arrangement, showing in practice that this is the form of labour organisation which best expresses the temperament and wishes of the Spanish proletariat for economic emancipation. For this reason, they advocate:

1. in industry, in the countryside, in trade, in all of those aspects of the overall

economy which may not have been subject to nationalisation, the two organisations advocate collectives and will pursue a steadfast policy seeking legal and judicial recognition of them;

2. the collectives are to be acknowledged as having a right to organise among themselves, building up an economy of their own appropriately tailored to official ordinances for taxation purposes;

3. consumer co-operatives, a flawed form of collectivisation, are to be made known and encouraged by the CNT and the UGT so as to confront the present speculation and to combat the bourgeoisie's mentality in small trade, with the two organisations having a free hand to organise and sponsor co-operatives as they see fit, with the current legislation on co-operation standing in need of review.

Municipalisation. In respect of municipalisation, the CNT and the UGT resolve:

1. accommodation generally is to be undertaken under municipal control, with the exception of buildings declared property of the nation and those rendering a small rent;

2. urban public services and those which the municipalities consider suitable for organisation in defence of the common good without damage to different interests shall be so treated;

3. health and social welfare: the jurisdictions of the municipalities are to be brought into line with state legislation.

Trade. The two organisations are agreed upon the need to introduce a monopoly on foreign trade, in the import and export fields alike, as far as raw materials and the main foreign-currency earning products are concerned. Trade is to be organised in accordance with these conditions, as follows:

1. the National Economic Council is to set up trade centres specialising in state commerce;

2. the workers are to have due representation on these centres;

3. the earnings of foreign trade are to be distributed without undue diminution, in the shape of national currency, to the producers, with the foreign currency being retained by the state;

4. a review is to be carried out of all taxes, with these being considerably reduced on imported foodstuffs and on trade conducted under the auspices of the collectives.

Social Action. The CNT and the UGT are of the view that there must be progress towards an overhaul of the country's legislation which amounts to an acknowledgement of the advances of the revolution, erasing any provision of the old legislation which implies within itself the return of the oppressor classes.

1. Legislation on worker control in those concerns not directly administered by the workers.

2. Legislation on accident insurance and social providence which enables the worker to avoid any privation or suffering as a consequence of accident, illness or old age, with favour being shown to the union organisations' own attempts to satisfy these beneficial aims.

3. Teaching being a crucial factor in the re-education of the Spanish people, a national mixed council subordinate to the state is to be set up, containing qualified representatives from the trade union associations, to work out the most rational educational methods and practices in tune with the scientific and moral progress promised by the revolution.

4. Special legislation on foreign firms in Spain, provision being made for the winding-up of their operations and the rescinding of contracts, without prejudice to the meeting of what claims may be demonstrated to be fair.

5. Repeal of all civil, penal, commercial legislation etc. and the opening at a suitable opportunity of a new constituent period which may enshrine the aspirations of the people within a democratic, federal, socialist republic. The CNT and the UGT stand ready to pursue a policy of aid in every sense...political, military and commercial...in

this regard, by fostering all practices and methods considered likely to secure a speedy victory in the war. All trade union bodies, of a state or mixed nature which may be established for the purposes outlined, shall be formed with the CNT and UGT participating in proportion with the strength of each association, depending on the agency and location where such participation is to take place. The two organisations give an undertaking that upon conclusion of the struggle against fascism, the Spanish people and above all the working class, will be assured of the right to endow itself with that form of government consonant with the sacrifice presently being made and to maintain a true democracy in this country of ours. The National Liaison Committee shall at all times and in every specific instance analyse problems relative to the free expression of thought and the impartial enforcement of justice. All bodies of a trade union, state or combined character established for the purposes outlined, shall be formed with CNT and UGT participation proportionate with the strength of each association, depending on the agency and location where such participation takes place. Both organizations declare that the proletariat is the only agent capable of fighting the rebels to the finish; only the proletariat is capable of making the necessary sacrifices that will lead to victory – it is the only defence against the moral, political and economic disintegration of the country. Since the proletariat will play the decisive role in rebuilding the country, these two proletarian organisations are entitled to take a hand in the administrative governance of the country on their own account or through those whom they consider the representatives. The CNT and UGT are firmly resolved that every clause and the entire contents of this document shall be implemented without delay, and they call for the immediate establishment of an Anti-fascist Popular Front and an overhauling of the government, both of which shall operate in accordance with the relative numerical presence of each party or organization [...] (22 lines blanked out by the censor here)

Final Considerations. This is the conclusion at which we have arrived, having scrutinised the UGT comrades' resolutions and married them with those tabled by the CNT in June 1937. The foregoing is the result of compromises voluntary made by the CNT and a necessary preamble to further discussions between the officers of the higher committees of the CNT and UGT.

We have no doubt that the principle of mutual accommodation will be shared by our UGT comrades and that we will, inescapably, arrive at common ground upon which to flesh out the aspirations and ultimate ambition of the Spanish proletariat, which wants to see its beloved organisations acting in concert to ensure eager and rapid progress along the road to victory.

On behalf of the CNT National Committee, Mariano R. Vázquez (secretary)'

While these meetings were taking place and discussions being held, *Solidaridad Obrera* threw its columns open to sound out the opinions of leading political figures regarding the agreements and counter-proposals which had been advanced. The views transcribed below were those of the socialist militant and publicist Luis de Araquistáin:

'The PSOE has undergone a radicalisation, as evidenced by the resolution of the Madrid Socialist Association of March of 1936 to overhaul the old party programme. The UGT has also become more radical in political and trade union terms, the majority of its unions subscribing to revolutionary socialism and embracing the revolutionary vocation which Marx and Lenin contend is the proper calling of the trade unions in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. The CNT has carried out socialisation in a way that acknowledges the role of the state in the development and consolidation of the revolution's gains at home and abroad. What a joy it is for a socialist to read the nationalisation, municipalisation and collectivisation proposals contained within the CNT proposals! These provisions look as if they might have been borrowed from our socialist programme and, especially, from the aforementioned draft reform from the Madrid Association. Bakunin and Marx could shake hands over this document from the CNT.'

Let us depart yet again from strict chronological order in order to reprint the CNT-UGT

unity programme finally agreed on 18 March, under the pressure of Franco's invading armies:

'The CNT and the UGT, ever preoccupied with winning the war and guaranteeing the political and economic advances made by the proletariat during the revolution, and hoping to develop these whenever and wherever feasible, hereby endorse the establishment of the National Liaison Committee and reaffirm its remit on the following foundations:

National defence. The CNT and the UGT acknowledge the great strides made in the formation of the Popular Army, in its fighting ability and the technical training of its officers, and are resolved to reinforce all measures facilitating the creation of an efficient regular army, which can guarantee victory in the war and in whatever foreign engagements may derive from that victory. The CNT and UGT must be continually preoccupied with maintaining and bolstering the brotherly bonds between army personnel serving under the banner of anti-fascism.

1. The trade unions are to afford all possible support to the creation of strong reserve forces that may add to the numerical strength of the Popular Army and ensure that the latter continues to advance and that those on active service are regularly relieved. To this end, the unions are to ensure that their members enthusiastically implement mobilisation orders. They shall take an interest in military training and weapons training among the workers and cooperate with the development of pre military training. They shall avoid the disruption caused to individual industries by the absence of workers called to the colours, to which end they will strive to ensure that skills training is available to women and to men outside military age.

2. Both organizations lobby for the retention and invigoration of the Commissariat of War and for the fair representation of all anti-fascist forces within it. The UGT and the CNT are to ensure that such equitable representation obtains at all times and in all places. Attached to the Army Commissariat and performing the same functions, there will be a Naval Commissariat and an Air Force Commissariat. There will also be a Commissariat for the armed corps in the rearguard and it will perform the same functions. Both organizations will see to it that the existing mutual respect prevailing among military commanders, whether veterans of the former army or those promoted from within the ranks of the people, is consolidated more forcefully with each passing day, ruling out any resurrection of the shortcomings of the pre-19 July army.

3. The component organizations of the CNT and the UGT will have to secure from the government whatever is needed to implement an intensive fortifications policy, with the construction and maintenance of roads, highways and rail links and the erection of shelters for the civilian population.

4. The unions shall make it their business to keep in close touch with combatants, to which end they are to carry on regarding them as members and looking to their needs and to those of their families, without this being taken to the lengths of meddling in the specific prerogatives of military command.

5. The idea underpinning the mutual agreement of the UGT and the CNT on these short-term demands is the determination to deliver a quick and resounding defeat of fascism, strengthening the Commissariat as a means of screening and enhancing the Popular Army and making an effective contribution to the work of governments, relieving the latter of much of their responsibilities.

Industry. The CNT and the UGT are sensitive to the need to inject greater vigour into our nation's industrial output, most especially in the war industries. To this end, we must coordinate and boost the efforts of the unions. Both organisations shall strive to keep the rearguard sound and disciplined and to invest all workers, of whatever category, with the spirit of selflessness and sacrifice required at present, so that no effort may be spared in any work relating to our military needs. As part of this ethos, the UGT and CNT are to press for the following measures:

Industry and the war effort. 1. The Armaments Under-Secretariat would assume sole

control of the war industries, by agreement with the National War Industries Council to be set up with CNT and UGT participation.

2. All suitable factories and workshops are to be adapted to the requirements of the war industries.

3. All raw materials are to be centralised, especially those vital to the war industries.

4. Such transportation resources as may be necessary for the prosecution of the war are to be placed at the disposal of the government, centralised and militarised, and with due respect for what is vitally necessary lest output and trade in the rearguard be subjected to unwarranted disruption.

5. The UGT and CNT shall cooperate towards the speedy establishment of a mighty war industry. The unions must assume as a matter of urgent and vital necessity the task of creating among workers an austere spirit of vigilance against any sort of sabotage and lacklustre work practices and encourage increased commitment as a way of increasing and improving production.

Nationalisation. 6. The railways, heavy industry, shipping, the banks and other industries regarded as vital for the reconstruction of the country must be nationalised as a matter of urgency following verification of their importance by the relevant state agencies. The nationalised industries should be centralised and their development coordinated.

National councils of industry and the higher economic council. 7. The UGT and the CNT move that a Higher Economic Council be set up immediately, with both trade union organisations playing their parts, as a state agency for the implementation of this industrial nationalisation scheme as well as for the organisation and overall planning of production. This Higher Economic Council will draw up a national economic plan, and, through the National Councils of Industry, in which the unions will also have a part to play, will regulate — especially where the nationalised industries are concerned — output, distribution, credit, pricing and utilities, the importation and export of products, pay rates and trade, availing of whatever services may be necessary for the proper execution of its functions. In economic matters, the government will frame legislation in concert with the Higher Economic Council. The Higher Economic Council will set up a Labour Inspectorate for all production outlets.

Skills training. 8. In addition to whatever measures the government may have devised or may yet devise in terms of skills training, the unions are to help boost the cultural and technical levels of workers by organising special courses and schools with state subsidies.

Municipalisation of services. The CNT and UGT acknowledge the need for the overhaul or reorganisation of urban services, taking into municipal ownership those whose significance and character require this. The view being that real estate is the property of the state, urban properties, other than those bringing in low revenues, are to be made available for the use of the municipalities, with the government promulgating legislation to this effect.

Collectivisations. 1. The UGT and CNT see a need for formal legalisation of the collectives and to this end see a need for legislation on collectives determining which of these should continue in existence, setting the rules for their establishment and operation and state participation in them. Collectives not conforming to this legislation should be wound up.

2. The state is to help the collectives to adapt to said legislation, the economic advisability of which is conceded.

3. Legislation on collectives must be scrutinized and proposed to the government by the Higher Economic Council.

Wages, prices and provisions. Raising of workers' living standards and the struggle against the currently high costs of foodstuffs and the difficulties of obtaining the same are self-evident needs. To this end, the CNT and the UGT regard the following as necessary measures:

1. The unions should step up their watchfulness and struggle against speculators. Such efforts are primarily within the remit of the catering and bakery organizations and

other foodstuffs and shop workers' unions.

2. Encouragement must be given to the establishment of strong retail consumer cooperatives and the establishment of production cooperatives, with the latter falling under the remit of highly restrictive legislation and the setting up of large sales outlets for most export produce under the strict supervision of the state and the Economic Council. Similarly, a plan should be drawn up for the importation of those essential items which make up the staple diet of workers, so as to ensure that the latter receive whatever allocation their family requires at a price appropriate to existing pay scales. The government should also audit production and regulate home consumption of all produce central to our export policy.

3. The UGT and CNT reckon that a minimum wage should be introduced that is indexed to the cost of living, taking due note, on the one hand, of skills levels, and, on the other, the productivity of the individual. In this regard, in industry they are to stand by the principle of "the greater and better the output, the greater the reward" as a bonus or reward payment made without regard to gender or age for the duration of the circumstances brought about by the demands of national reconstruction. To which end, a National Pay and Prices Panel should be set up, with due representation from both trade unions.

4. Whether working for collectives or for the state, technicians should be afforded every facility for study and mobility which may lead to quantitative and qualitative improvements to the productivity of their scientific endeavours.

Trade. Both organisations are agreed on the need to introduce strict controls on trade with the outside world, whether in the form of imports or exports, raw materials or the main foreign currency-earning goods. The basis on which foreign trade is to be organised is as follows:

1. workers are to have appropriate representation on the boards of trade that will be specifically set up under the supervision of the Higher Economic Council;
2. profits are to be subject to overall legislation.

Workers' control. It is the understanding of the Liaison Committee that workers' control constitutes one of the workers most prized and significant gains. It is of the opinion that a law on workers' control is required at this juncture in the country, so as to set out workers' rights and duties. And so it agrees:

1. that the government should promulgate a workers' control law spelling out the powers of workers in respect of the control of production and monitoring of productivity, their share in administration in profits, the workers' working conditions and defending social legislation;
2. the control agencies are to be democratically elected by direct suffrage by all of the workforce in the same factory or workshop, thereby laying the foundations of genuine labour democracy and ensuring that the workers' interests are protected.

Agriculture. The UGT and CNT declare their support for speedy nationalisation of the land, the usufruct of which ought, preferably, to be handed over to collectives and farming cooperatives and, of the latter, especially to those set up by the UGT and CNT, respecting the wishes of those peasants who prefer to work the land individually and with the state pursuing a policy of support for the existing collectives, giving preference to those of the UGT and CNT, and those voluntarily formed in accordance with the law by the unionised farm workers. The individual farmer is to have his right to his smallholding respected, if he can show that his title has been come by lawfully and as long as the provisions of the law are observed. Both trade unions are to defend all the gains achieved by the rural masses and will strive to intensify farm output. To which end there is a need for:

- a) regulation of tillage of the land, the object being to ensure that the individual smallholder does not hinder the collective;
- b) the living standards of farm workers must be raised on the basis of proper

payment for farm produce, the aim being that the peasants are properly recompensed in comparison with the costs of the industrial goods they consume, for which a fixed rate must be set;

c) the government is to assist the peasants and especially the (UGT and CNT) collectives and cooperatives in procuring machinery, seed, fertilizers, etc., and loans through the National Agricultural Credit Bank which is a necessity;

d) encouragement will be given to the establishment of experimental farms (agricultural schools), of which there ought to be at least one in every area, for the training of technicians, mechanics, organisers and administrators for the collectives and cooperatives;

e) ongoing industrialisation of farming and rationalization of crops.

Social action. The UGT and CNT reckon that there has to be an overhaul of legislation to take account of the advances by the proletariat and repeal anything that conflicts with these.

1. Legislation on accident insurance and social providence should ensure that the worker is not faced with deprivation or suffering in the event of accident, illness or old age.

2. The government must look into ways and means of introducing statutory family wage arrangements.

3. All civil, criminal, commercial law, etc., should be revised.

4. Both unions aim to safeguard the nation's wealth by organising the economy and making legal provision to ensure that the country's independence is comprehensively guaranteed. The CNT and the UGT stand ready to pursue a policy in every realm - politics, trade unionism, trade and work - giving encouragement to all those procedures and measures that are adjudged likely to expedite victory in the war. All representative bodies, trade union or official, which may be set up for the purposes outlined and with the agreement of both organisations shall have UGT and CNT representation proportionate with the relative strength of these organisations and depending on the body concerned and its theatre of operations. Both organisations undertake that, come the end of the fight against fascism, they will guarantee the right of the Spanish people, and especially of the working class, to endow itself with a form of government that reflects the sacrifices currently being made and that genuine democracy will be retained in our country. The National Liaison Committee shall at all times and in every specific instance analyse problems relative to free expression and the impartial enforcement of justice.

Addendum: the UGT and the CNT have scrutinised the proposals from the latter organisation concerning incorporation of the trade union organisations into government roles. Following discussion of this issue, it has been agreed:

1. the UGT, which has always considered itself represented in government by the PSOE and, currently, by the PSOE and the PCE, takes the view that it behoves the country's constitutional authorities and the political parties making up the Popular Front to pronounce upon this matter once and for all;

2. the UGT declares, acknowledging that the CNT is in a different position from its own, that this will be no impediment to the incorporation of the CNT into government functions. As a matter of the utmost urgency, the two organisations shall look into the matter of their incorporation into the Popular Front.'

Before analysing this compact we would need to examine all of the attempts (or at least the most important attempts) to unite the Spanish proletariat. But before we do so, it is no less indispensable that we review the historical record a little.

As we saw in volume I, on the eve of the First Republic there had been only one trade union organisation in Spain, the FRE, affiliated to the First International. At its congress in The Hague the First International split and the labour movement was deeply riven by disputes which had arisen abroad. Just as the International had begun to organise in Spain at the instigation of Fanelli, an envoy dispatched by Bakunin, so

too can its division be attributed to the handiwork of an outsider, Marx's son-in-law, Lafargue, who was dispatched to Spain with the apple of discord, which Marx used to split the international workers' movement.

In fact the Spanish split came in 1872 during a congress held in Zaragoza. During 1872 the breakaway faction was grouped around a newspaper, *La Emancipación*, and set up the Federación Madrileña (Madrid Federation), affiliated to the schismatic Federal Council in London. In 1888, at a congress held in Barcelona by the Marxists, it was resolved to lay the foundations of the UGT.

As for the Bakuninist majority, it went into decline as a result of the repressions which followed one another from 1872 on... 1872 being the year when, following a heated 15-day debate in Parliament, the Spanish section of the International was outlawed and thereafter subjected to implacable persecution. Heroically the libertarian organisation passed through a clandestine period after the Restoration and re-emerged into public life under a variety of names, one of them, *Solidaridad Obrera*, the forerunner of the CNT. *Solidaridad Obrera* (the organisation) founded in 1907 the newspaper *Solidaridad Obrera*, managed by Anselmo Lorenzo.

Now let us review the various attempts at unity.

The first compact between the CNT and the UGT was in 1916 and triggered a 24-hour general strike by way of a protest at the escalating cost of living. In 1917 both organisations were in touch again over the revolutionary upheaval of August, half-heartedly contrived by liberal-democratic politicians. Later on, Salvador Seguí negotiated a further CNT-UGT compact which a plenum at the end of 1920 disavowed. The refusal of UGT personnel to join the general strike declared by the CNT over the deportations to Maó once again ruptured the entente between the two trade union centres.

Well into the Second Republic, following the 1933 elections and under the shadow of the 'black biennium', Largo Caballero embarked upon a series of incendiary speeches and overtures directed at the CNT. The resentment generated by the two-and-a-half years of republican-socialist rule, and the quasi-Soviet stance of the 'Spanish Lenin' added to the reservations of CNT members. Nonetheless, the overtures from the *caballerista* socialists made headway among the Asturian militants who, as early as the CNT's 1919 Comedia Congress had spoken out in favour of 'fusion' with the UGT.

In February 1934 the need for a Workers' Alliance was discussed at a National Plenum of CNT Regional Committees. Under the accords of that plenum the CNT enjoined the UGT 'to make a clear and public statement of its revolutionary aspirations', bearing in mind that 'in speaking of revolution this should not be done in the belief that one was aiming at a simple power shift as on 14 April but the suppression of capitalism and the state.' On 23 June of that year, another National Plenum of Regional Committees was held and it recorded the UGT's failure to respond. But the Asturian Regional Committee arrived at the plenum with a bi-lateral pact bearing the signature of the UGT.

Let us briefly summarise the contents of this agreement. Both signatory organisations acknowledged as their ultimate objective the necessity of making a social revolution in Spain for the purpose of 'introducing a regime of economic, political and social equality founded upon federalist socialist principles.'

But that declaration left unanswering the essence of the question put by the February plenum of the CNT. Although the intention to abolish capitalism was taken on board, the same was not true of abolition of the state. As a result, for all its federalist socialist flavour, economic, political and social equality was as vague as ever.

Another of the crucial points in the agreement states that the labour organisations entering into the commitment should break off their relations with the bourgeois political parties in an automatic way. It is also understood that the PSOE is immune to the spirit and the letter of the anti-bourgeois declaration. And it could be assumed that if the signatory organisations were only to have dealings with proletarian parties, this was no impediment to the latter's having dealings of their own with the bourgeois parties. And that is exactly what happened. The Workers' Alliance, established nation-

wide, was a Babel featuring more or less authentic proletarians, more or less pretentious intellectuals, socialists of varying degrees of moderation, republicans of the centre and of the left, petit bourgeois and Vaticanist nationalists, fascist-style separatists like escamots of Dencás and Badia, and police, in and out of uniform. The latter, even as they rebelled against the central state on 6 October, stormed the CNT unions at gunpoint and jailed their most outstanding militants.

Nonetheless, the compact signed in Asturias prescribed in one of its clauses that the Executive Committee that would be established there would be subordinate to a National Committee charged with directing the revolt nationwide. The response to the problem of the state is perfectly expressed in the national programme of that revolt, made public after the Asturian revolution had been crushed. All in all, it was a state-socialist programme of the old school.

From 1934 on, the unity question made headway among even the most stick-in-the-mud CNT personnel and figured on the agenda of plenums and congresses. Prior to the Zaragoza congress, and at that congress, the CNT reiterated its invitations to the UGT in the usual terms. But the leftist honeymoon election period of February 1936 completely wiped out such concerns from the minds of socialists.

Not until August 1936, with the revolutionary period at its height, was there a further bilateral attempt at an approximation. We are referring to the agreement-in-principle of 11 August between the UGT of Catalonia, an offshoot of the PSUC, that party itself, the FAI and the CNT. The object of that pact was simply to create a Liaison Committee to 'render more effective the workers' revolutionary action against fascism and to reinforce and galvanise unity' and it set an example for the National Committees of the CNT and UGT.

That agreement went into a second edition in the month of October. And that new edition, endorsed by the same organisations and parties, was a repetition of the political declaration of the first Generalitat government to include CNT representation. It encapsulates all the legislation under consideration in respect of collectivisation, worker control, respect for small property, banking controls, municipalisation of accommodation, nationalisation, political and military collaboration with the central government, the struggle against 'uncontrollable groups', etc.

The earlier invitation to the national committees of the CNT and UGT was taken up in November 1936. The document endorsed then by the representatives of the UGT Executive and the CNT's National Committee was more of an establishing of a contract and an earnest fraternity (at the time both socialists and an anarchist figured in the central government). Largo Caballero described the aforementioned document as merely a 'non-aggression pact'.

Relations between the CNT and the UGT were further tightened up after May 1937. This climate of unity was enforced by the political crisis that ousted Largo Caballero and the CNT from power, and by the battle waged against Largo Caballero inside the PSOE and in the UGT itself. But in early January 1938, Largo Caballero went under, politically speaking, and was ejected from party and union. The UGT was left under the sway of the pro-communist socialist faction and it was with this new Executive that the CNT was to have to get along.

Let us now make a comparative study between the proposals of the UGT, the CNT's counter proposals and what was finally agreed by both organisations on 18 March 1938. For simplicity's sake we shall summarise all the proposals and clauses and set them out beside the respective anagrams. Which is to say, in the following manner:

Military Affairs. UGT: Suggests the establishment of a mighty army imbued with an anti-fascist spirit for the crushing of Franco and the foreign invaders. The unions are to offer intense support to the government and furnish it with every facility and assistance in the achievements of this objective.

CNT: Expands upon this outlook to the effect of strengthening the army with an eye to external war contingencies.

CNT-UGT: Agree to amalgamate both views.

COMMISSARIAT-UGT: The Liaison Committee which is to be set up will work to ensure that the unions support the work of the War Commissariat.

CNT: Adds that within the Commissariat the anti-fascist forces should be fairly represented, shunning all monopolistic tendencies.

CNT-UGT: Substantially embrace the CNT viewpoint.

War Industries. UGT: Both union organisations shall cooperate with the government in order to create, rapidly, a powerful war industry. It will oversee security against sabotage and the adaptation of industry for the purposes of war. Immediate formation of National Industrial Councils with trade union participation.

Role of these Councils: to regulate production, prices, pay, earnings, importation and exportation of products, in accordance at all times with government guidelines. Said Councils to be answerable to a Higher Economic Council to be established by the government.

CNT: Creation of an Under-Secretariat of War Industries and a National War Industries Council with representation for government and for the trade union associations. This Council to assume the absolute burden of the technical and administrative management of the war industries.

CNT-UGT: Accept the first part of the UGT view on the need to establish a mighty war industry and the responsibilities assigned to the workers. The Under-Secretariat of Armaments, already in existence, is to assume sole control in accordance with the War Industries Council, wherein the unions will be represented. Centralisation of all raw materials.

Nationalisations. UGT: Nationalisation of essential industries. Centralisation by the government of the industries nationalised. Management of these by experts appointed by the appropriate ministry, but account taken of the views of the workers. Centralisation of banking with an eye to nationalisation of banking.

CNT: Rapid nationalisation of industries basic to the production of raw materials: mining, railways, heavy industry, banking, telephones, telegraphs and aviation.

CNT-UGT: Espouse the CNT view. The government to assess the necessity of nationalisation. Industries must be centralised.

Banking. UGT: The government should aim at centralisation preparatory to the nationalisation of banking.

CNT: While nationalisation of banking is underway the state must guarantee impartial granting of credit facilities to the collectives. Seeks recognition for its project of an Iberian Trade Union Bank.

CNT-UGT: Make no special mention of nationalisation of banking nor of recognition for the Iberian Trade Union Bank. The state is to help those collectives of acknowledged economic value that conform to legislation.

Municipalisation. UGT: All assets, furniture and real estate, belonging to fascist proprietors are state property. Urban real estate is to be put to use by the municipalities in accordance with such laws as prescribed by the government.

CNT-UGT: Municipalisation of those urban services which may so require on account of their importance and characteristics. Real estate — state property (urban real estate, excepting those offering small returns) — shall be put to use by the Municipality by means of government legislation.

Economy. UGT: Creation by government of a Higher Economic Council to plan production.

CNT: Formation of a National Economic Council within the state, made up of representatives of the state and of the trade union organisations. It will manage output, distribution, credit, wage schedules, trade generally, work inspection, planning. To technicians from collectives and state alike, it will furnish the necessary research materials. It will set up state-subsidised trade and technical training schools.

CNT-UGT: Creation of a Higher Economic Council within the state, with trade union participation. It will prepare the national economic plan, and will, especially in the nationalised industries, regulate output, distribution, credit, prices and profits, exports and imports, payment, trade and work inspection. In economic matters the government

will legislate in accordance with this Council. As for professional training, independent of what the state may do in this regard, the unions will help to raise the professional, technical and cultural levels of workers through special, state-subsidised courses.

Agriculture. UGT: Nationalisation and industrialisation of the land and its transfer in usufruct to the peasants who are to work it individually or collectively. Intensification of cultivation in such a way as to leave no arable inch of land uncultivated. Improvement of farm workers' living standards through raising prices for their produce. The government is to supply peasants with machinery, seed, fertiliser and loans through the Agricultural Credit Bank. Encouragement of experimental farms and agricultural colleges to train technicians and administrators.

CNT: The soil and sub-soil are national property. The land will be given over in usufruct to the unions of the CNT and UGT as a matter of preference. The government will favour farming collectives of both organisations through loans (through the agency of the Agricultural Credit Bank until such time as banking may be nationalised), expert assistance, training and experimentation centres. Progressive industrialisation of agriculture and rationalisation of tillage by the National Economic Council. In all bodies which may be set up with an eye to agricultural reconstruction, both union organisations are to be represented along with the state.

CNT-UGT: Speedy nationalisation of the land. This will be given over in usufruct preferably to the collectives and farming co-operatives of the CNT and UGT. Both organisations will defend all of the gains achieved by the peasants and will strive to boost agricultural production. Regulation of farming for the purpose of ensuring that individual tillage of the land may not prove a hindrance to the collective. Improvement of peasants' living standards through increased prices for farm produce. Progressive industrialisation of farming and rationalisation of farming.

Collectivisations. UGT: Identification of the collectivist movement and the farm co-operative movement. Respect for agricultural smallholdings worked directly. The land of which the individual farmers have the usufruct will be allowed to exceed the amount which each one of these individuals with his family may be able to cultivate. Step up the formation of farm co-operatives (one for each locality) and immediate legislation of established collectives. Marshalling of co-operatives into regional or provincial federations and incorporation of them into the national and international co-operative movement.

CNT: Recognition, intensification and legal protection for the collectivist system in industry, in the countryside, in trade and in the whole economic complex which may have escaped nationalisation. Acknowledgement of collectives' right to organise among themselves and to create an economy of their own consistent with government and tax prescriptions. Propagation of consumer co-operatives to counter the bourgeoisie's speculation in small trade. Freedom in both organisations to encourage co-operatives according to their particular conceptions of these. Review of existing legislation on co-operatives.

CNT-UGT: Legislation of collectives. Determine which of these should continue to exist. Need to legislate on rules for their establishment and operation. State intervention in them. Those collectives which do not conform to legislation must go. Those in conformity with legislation and recognised economic necessity are to be assisted by the state. Legislation on collectives is to be proposed by the Higher Economic Council. Encouragement of the establishment of consumer co-operatives at the very least, and of production co-operatives subject to highly restrictive legislation. State support for existing agricultural collectives, with preferential treatment for those of the CNT and UGT, and those which may be set up voluntarily by farm workers in accordance with the law. On a preferential basis, government shall supply the CNT-UGT collectives with machinery, seed, fertilisers and loans through the Agricultural Credit Bank. Farms and experimental schools are to be set up to train technicians, mechanics and administrators for the collectives and co-operatives. The wishes of those peasants who prefer to farm on an individual basis shall be respected. The direct cultivator will have his title to land legally acquired honoured.

Wages. UGT: Establishment of a minimum wage indexed to the cost of living, but taking account of trade categories and the contribution of the individual. In industry the principle of 'better pay for increased and better production' will be implemented regardless of sex or age distinctions.

CNT: Overhaul of wages. Such payment as may make it possible to earn the minimum required to meet basic needs. Introduction of a National Mixed Wages and Workers' Control Commission, answerable to the National Economic Council, to regulate professional payment in each industry and area in accordance with statistics and to look into family wage schemes.

CNT-UGT: Adopted, the formula suggested by the UGT, plus the establishment of a National Wages and Prices Commission with representation for both trade union groupings. Government to embark upon an examination of family pay arrangements through the law.

Workers' control. UGT: The government must promulgate a law on Workers' Control to prescribe the powers and obligations of the workers in this regard. It should embrace workers' control of production, their take-over of administration and profits, working conditions and defence of social legislation. The Control Committees are to be democratically elected by direct suffrage of the workers in the factories and workshops.

CNT: Legislation on Workers' Control in those works not directly administered by the workers.

CNT-UGT: Adopted, the arrangement suggested by the UGT.

Social Legislation. UGT: Retention of the advances achieved by the proletariat. Review of existing legislation so as to incorporate into it these advances and to eliminate precepts at odds with the demands already secured.

CNT: Review for the purpose of acknowledgement of the revolution's advances. Elimination from this legislation of anything which may imply retrogression. Legislation on Workers' Control, Accident Insurance and Social Provision (for illness or old age), establishment of a National Mixed Educational Council, accountable to the state and with participation by both union groupings for the purposes of re-educating the people along rationalist lines, in keeping with the scientific and moral progress augured by the revolution. Special legislation for foreign firms, with an eye to retrieval of national assets. Overhaul of all civil, criminal and commercial legislation. In any bodies of a trade union, state or mixed nature which may be established, the CNT and UGT will have to have representation proportionate with their size.

CNT-UGT: Incorporation into existing social legislation of the proletariat's advances and elimination from it of anything found to be at odds with those advances. Legislation on Accident Insurance and Social Provision. Overhaul of all civil, criminal and commercial legislation, etc. Retrieval of the national wealth in order to ensure the freedom of the country. Policy of assistance on the part of the CNT and UGT in every regard in order to bring the war to a speedy and victorious conclusion. On all representative bodies of a trade union and governmental nature which may be set up to handle the various areas agreed in these bases, the UGT and the CNT are to have a presence proportionate with their membership in the location concerned.

Political Matters. CNT: Undertakes now and always to stand by a social regime of true democracy, to combat any class-based or party-based totalitarian ambitions. Initiation of a new constituent period which may incorporate popular aspirations into a Federal Democratic Socialist Republic. The CNT undertakes to see to it that the proletariat is effectively involved in the governance of the Spanish state, without excluding from this non-proletarian forces, who will be represented in due proportions. The CNT calls for the immediate establishment of an anti-fascist Popular Front and the reorganisation of the government...both of these on the basis of representation proportionate with the numerical strength of each party and organisation.

CNT-UGT: Both organisations undertake to ensure, after the war, that the people, and especially the working class, enjoys the right to endow itself with that form of government that, in a context of genuine democracy, corresponds to their sacrifices. Both organisations are as a matter of urgency to look into the matter of their

incorporation into the Popular Front. The UGT states that it will raise no objection to the incorporation of the CNT into the functions of government.

With our dissection now completed, we note first that in military affairs the CNT aligns itself with the proposal to set up a mighty army under state control and build up the peculiar or internal attributes of that army with external ones of militaristic provenance, offering no assurances to the people other than the very meagre reassurance of a Commissariat which is also a creature of the state.

On war production, the CNT accepts only that unions should be involved through a Council which is in turn subordinate to the state, or to its offshoot, the Armaments Under-Secretariat. But the Under-Secretariat's assumption of sole control seems to contradict its operating simultaneously in accordance with the aforementioned Councils.

In the next respect, the CNT accepts *mutu proprio* nationalisation of basic industries and that such nationalisation be determined by the state's criterion. The state is still placed at the apex of the social pyramid. The same thing happens with the nationalisation of banking which the CNT embellishes with a new bank: the Iberian Trade Union Bank.

On municipalisation the CNT strikes once and for all the colours of its classical thinking regarding free municipalities, which the Confederation had always sponsored by inscribing the struggle for libertarian communism as the chief of its aims. Libertarian communism always meant this: a social regime which had as its principle the autonomous and federal free municipality (commune), a notion diametrically opposed to state centralism and coexistence with the state. The best illustration of this was the resolution approved by the May 1936 Zaragoza Congress on the question of 'The conception of libertarian communism'. Under the CNT-UGT compact the municipality remained merely the administrator of the real estate of militaristic, centralistic, usurious state.

The best proof of the centralist bias of the compact we find in the section dealing with the economy. A Higher Economic Council within the state, made up of representatives of the state and of the trade union organisations, was to have a monopoly over economic affairs.

The state, master of the army, of industry, of the municipalities and of the entire economy, is master also of the nationalised land. And the peasants are but its sharecroppers. State usury persists through its nationalised lending banks.

The CNT and the UGT in concert reserved for the state the power (on the recommendations of the Higher Economic Council) to legislate on collectives and the highly refined power to oversee them. Plus the power to determine which ones ought to continue or to go under. Only those conforming to the legislation were to be given state aid.

Both organisations accepted the continuance of wage slavery and the scandal of wage differentials. And the Stakhanovite principle of 'the greater and better the output, the better the pay', regardless of sex or age.

The Control Committees were to be democratically elected by the workers, sure: but through legislation, the government was to establish the powers of these controllers who were at the same time to be controlled by the one called upon to be controlled.

The two contracting parties called for the incorporation into extant social legislation of the advances made by the proletariat and the elimination of all backward-looking features from that legislation. But as basically little or nothing had altered, the task of adding on and pruning away was going to be an easy one.

And to wind up, there are the short-term and medium-term political aspects. As for the latter, the CNT makes boundless sacrifices. It begins by whittling its irreconcilable incompatibility with the state down to a mere expression of a form of government. Takes exception only to the totalitarian state and forgets the lesson that every government carries a totalitarian baton in its kitbag. The CNT opts for 'a true social democracy', which is to say, for a federal democratic socialist republic, a hieroglyphic

which perhaps sheds some light on its ensuing intention to initiate 'a new constituent period', which is to say, to intervene in election contests...abdication, pure and simple, of its apolitical past. And as if there was any lingering doubt, the CNT undertakes to yoke the proletariat to the chariot of the Spanish state.

Finally, by way of a rider, the Confederation is careful not to forget its immediate political demand for a place in the current government and any which may be formed thereafter, relying upon the UGT, upon the timeliness of the compact and, maybe, upon the prospect of a future electorate.

On 6 February the FIJL had sat down to the business of its Second Congress, its biggest gathering since its establishment in 1932. Its press organ, *Juventud Libre*, was coming out as a daily at that time. The gathering took place in the Teatro de la Metalurgia belonging to the CNT, and there were delegations from the Centre, the South, Levante, Aragón and Catalonia in attendance. Young libertarians serving with the military units on the fronts also sent representatives. One of the most sizeable delegations was from Catalonia, for among the main business of the congress was a debate on the insubordinate attitude adopted by the Catalan youth vis à vis the overall line of the youth organisation. Two tendencies, one centralist and the other autonomist, had been evident for some time past. The Congress had to pronounce its verdict upon a proposition which, centralistic in tenor, was endorsed by the bulk of the working party and on a minority report presented by the representative from the 119th Mixed Brigade (26th Division) that enshrined the federal aspirations of Catalonia. The majority inclined towards the proposition from the working party. Defeated, but not convinced, the delegates from Catalonia, with the backing of most of the delegations from the Aragón front, signified that, given the federalist nature of the youth organisation, they did not feel themselves this time obliged to abide by the outcome of the law of majorities.

In the end, the Congress proceeded to appoint a new Peninsular Committee. It was made up as follows:

General Secretary	Lorenzo Iñigo
Organising Secretary	Ramón Liarte
Propaganda Secretary	José Leiva
Women's Secretary	Carmen Gómez
Cultural and Sporting Secretary	Prometeo Miralles
Political, Social and trade union secretary	Manuel López
Administrative Secretary	Jacinto Rueda
Military Secretary	José Cabañas
Chairman of the AJA	Serafin Aliaga
Delegate to the CNT National Committee	José Consuegra
Military Secretary of the AJA	Alfredo Camin
Delegate to the FAI Peninsular Committee	Avelino Blanco

The Alianza Juvenil Antifascista (Anti-fascist Youth Alliance; AJA) had been set up in 1937 and was based mainly on the FIJL, the JSU and the youth movements of Izquierda Republicana and Unión Republicana. Here are the principles of the AJA:

1. Youth and Revolution. The AJA, acknowledging the social, political and economic transformation, wrought in our country since 19 July last year, undertakes to consolidate the revolution's gains.

Likewise, the youth organisations will strive constantly for alliance of the CNT and UGT, for victory in the war and for prosecution of the revolution. Similarly they will look sympathetically upon the unity of like-minded political forces to the same end.

The AJA's members express the opinion that all of the political and social organisations of our people, marshalled in the anti-fascist camp, should be represented in the leadership thereof, in proportion to their numbers and influence, following the

drafting of a common programme to speed our victory over fascism and to galvanise the progress of the revolution.

2. The Youth of the Popular Army. The AJA affirms that our combatants are fighting for national independence, for freedom and for economic and social emancipation. This war of ours is not just another squabble among the vested interests of capitalism.

Spanish youth knows that its future, the achievement of the right to culture, freedom and well-being hangs upon victory in the war being waged by the Spanish people against fascism. It is for this reason that we proclaim it the duty of every young person to abide by the conscription laws and serve within the Regular Popular Army as a loyal, disciplined soldier, heroic unto death. And as a result, the organisations below, which from day one of the struggle have given selflessly to the people's cause, sacrificing their finest militants, take upon themselves the task of educating the new generation of our country in the spirit of respect for the united command represented by the army staff and the government.

Competence, loyalty and heroism are the virtues which every combatant has a duty to display in full. For those who merit it, we demand ready access to positions of command in our glorious Popular Army. We need an army for which military technique holds no secrets. The popular war academies must look for their pupils among those who have most distinguished themselves in the fray. Should there be any among those equipped with the minimum learning required to embark upon professional training, the government must lay on induction courses to place with technical know-how in positions of command those who have earned this through their heroism and loyalty, since, in the last analysis, they alone are the guarantee of our army and thus of our victories.

The view of Spanish youth is that, as of now, it is possible to redouble the efforts made hitherto and that it stands ready to make ever greater sacrifices, and greater efforts in combat, furnishing hundreds upon hundreds of new fliers, tank corpsmen, sailors, gunners and dozens of thousands of new soldiers.

Spanish youth stands ready to improve still further upon its expenditure of unselfishness and heroism on the fronts, and its onward striving in combat until ultimate victory so as to press on then with the establishment of a just and free Spain. To this end it asks that, parallel with their heroic efforts, young combatants' welfare be guaranteed, whether these be workers, peasants or intellectuals. Likewise, these youths left disabled as a result of the fighting will have to receive from the state a professional education which may afford them a dignified existence so that they go on being of service to the people.

3. Youth in Production. Spanish youth wants the nation's war output to expand so that it may be able to manufacture in our country everything that we need for the struggle against the fascist invaders. We must manufacture more and better material than the enemy has and to this end we are ready to expand the super-production brigades and manufacture clubs with the great mission not only of increasing but also of making daily improvements in our war output. The government must help in the spread of these brigades and clubs and should withdraw from them those youths who distinguish themselves by their unselfishness and competence so as to turn them into the new technicians which Spain needs. To develop the war industries the situation in our country so demands, the government should be directing into production the thousands of hands presently idle in our country.

To the same end, we propose that in the war industry, if it is to meet the required target, a National Armaments and Munitions Council be created, made up of representatives from the CNT and the UGT, under government direction.

4. Peasant Youth. Since the outbreak of the war, the peasant youth of Spain has given many thousands of lives to the people's cause, in conjunction with the rest of the youth. It too has a great mission to accomplish: to do what it can to boost the output of our agriculture so as to draw from the soil the greatest possible amount of produce with which to meet the needs of the country and of the war.

The Youth Alliance will struggle alongside peasant youth to secure these rights, for

respect and support for the peasant collectives and to guarantee the property rights and unfettered development of small peasant proprietors.

We declare our opposition to all speculators and any who seek to turn the transformation of society wrought in the countryside to their own benefit in order to become a new class of proprietors. The Youth Alliance must, if need be, give its material assistance to the countryside and press tirelessly for the provision to it of all that is needed to afford the peasants a rounded technical training.

5. Youth and Culture. The revolution, in freeing youth of the exploitation of the big capitalists and landlords, in winning freedom and well-being for the new generation, has inspired the whole of the younger generation with the urge to learn, to equip itself with culture, to expand its intellectual facilities and creative capabilities. And so we welcome the creation of the Workers' Institutes, an endeavour which must be continued so that the higher centres of learning, the universities, etc. are opened to all young people of ability. This, together with the unstinting campaigns to eradicate illiteracy in rural areas and in the army, through the Cultural Militias, libraries on the fronts, educational missions to the peasants and the spread of the "Alerta" movement for the pre-military, physical and cultural training of Spanish youth, will ensure that the generation of the revolution may be the start of educated, healthy and sturdy generations which will reaffirm in the future those political and social gains for which we today are striving.

All of the young workers who find themselves denied the ability to make their contribution to society through their labour, whether through physical weakness, congenital or acquired illnesses, must receive appropriate aid from the state. The Spanish youth also hopes that a requisite watch will be kept on the hygiene of the working environment, with workers being assured of health care in all of the places of production.

6. General Remarks. The Youth shedding its blood on the fronts for the revolution and, together with it, the whole of the Spanish younger generation, regards it as necessary that there should be a solid revolutionary order in the rearguard if the struggle against fascism is to be waged victoriously.

The organisations named below declare their respect for the free self-determination of the several Hispanic regions which display the characteristics of nationhood, without this meaning separatism, whose foes we shall always be.

As a moral principle, the Youth Alliance will employ loyalty and will openly combat coarse and aggressive language, calumny and any sowing of discord, whether on the fronts or in the rearguard, which tends to undermine the unity of anti-fascist forces.

Through the unity of the anti-fascist and revolutionary organisations we wish to unite all Spanish youth, whatever their political or trade union organisation, on the basis of what they feel for the cause of Spain's independence and the revolution.

With that formidable weapon, our country's youth will pursue its revolutionary struggle for a Spain free of exploiters, where all of the wealth is in the hands of the people, where all young people are assured of well-being and of their right to culture and freedom.¹

Now let us focus our attention upon military events (so full of implications for political events), which began in mid-December 1937 and continued through the whole spring of 1938.

1. *Nosotros*, 2 December 1937



▲ Open air meeting

Chapter Three: From Victory at Teruel to Disaster in Aragón

At the time of the military developments that were to culminate in the collapse of the Aragón front, our lines on that front were snaked from north to south, from the border with France as far as the Broto valley; thence they shifted south-west as far as Biescas, crossing the highlands parallel to the Gállego river and then swung in an easterly direction across the massif and Gratal heights and through a succession of villages until they formed a sort of noose around the city of Huesca. From Cuarte they crossed the massif from the Almudevar highway, entered the Sierra de Torralba and the Vedado de Zuera as far as the environs of Lecínena. From there they led in a southerly direction, swept along the Ebro as far as Osera and then westwards via Fuentes, Puebla de Albortón and Fuendetodas, before heading southwards again, to encircle the city of Teruel.

Ever since the end of the northern campaign, the enemy had been marshalling his forces with a view to a decisive push against Madrid. The object of the enemy concentration was to breach the front at Guadalajara.

On 15 December 1937, the day on which the attack on Teruel was launched, the newspapers carried an article lifted from the *Boletín Oficial del Estado Mayor del Ejército de Tierra*. The article closed like this:

'The geographical factor operates in favour of republican Spain, which is to say the only feasible Spain. Today we constitute, militarily, strategically, economically and politically a homogeneous whole, well co-ordinated and capable of energetic responses. We can reply to attacks not merely by resisting but also by attacking. Naturally we shall say nothing of the plans of our commanders. Actions will do the talking at the opportune moment. As for the enemy's plans, the reports reaching us are confused, various and contradictory. Will the attack come via Huesca against Lleida, via Teruel against Castelló, via Sigüenza against Guadalajara, via Arganda against Alcalá de Henares, Pozoblanco, Jaén or Almería? Will there be an overall combination of attacks? Or will he concentrate on just one sweeping and crucial operation just as he did in the North? Will there be a flurry of feinting movements to mislead us? We know, of course, that many of his northern forces have been transferred to the East and the Centre. We know too that Italian, German and Moroccan contingents continue to disembark on the Peninsula, and huge consignments of war material with them. We know that Non-Intervention continues to do us enormous damage... But we know also that we have an army at our disposal.'

The push against Teruel was admirably prepared, but left much to be desired in its execution. There was but slight cohesion among the units and even less mobility in the troops. Troops were pinned down unduly in protracting mopping-up operations against die-hard pockets and no account was taken of the capture of advantageous positions by means of pressing home the advance. This afforded the enemy time to reply with a series of rapid and powerful counter-attacks. These counter-thrusts brought him the benefit of the capture of the Sierra Palomera heights, and so he was able to press on southwards and capture the heights overlooking the city without undue difficulty. In this way, he was able to re-take the city after 70 days of bitter fighting and implacably inclement weather conditions (-18°). With his lines secured on that front, the Francoist commander then redeployed his attacking forces and, within the space of one month, had removed his entire war machine to the Aragón front.

On 15 March 1938, the CNT National Committee forwarded to Prime Minister Negrín, a document signed in Barcelona by its general secretary, Mariano Vázquez, wherein a number of criticisms were made of the government's war policy. Beneath the heading 'Critique of the capture of Teruel', admiration was expressed for 'the planning

and execution of the operation against that city', although a distinction was made 'between that which culminated brilliantly in the seizure of the city under attack and what subsequently led to the catastrophic straits in which we now find ourselves.' The catastrophic straits had been caused by the collapse of the eastern front following the three-month operation centred on Teruel.

As its primary criticism of the prosecution of that operation, the document went on to say:

'Above all, one has to single out the incomprehensible relief of the attacking forces when, having entered the city victoriously, they found themselves replaced in the task which, just like the task of eradicating the rebel pockets lingering in the city, was not merely the finishing touch to all that had gone before, but indeed the very key to capitalising upon it. Next, one has to point to the miscalculation implicit in the failure to amend — in the light of the unexpected overwhelming nature of the outcome and of the resultant boost to the troops' fighting morale — the plan which had initially been sketched out, cautiously and applying to Teruel only, for complementing the units which had borne the brunt of the operation with the reserves which had remained intact and for deploying every last man of them until reaching the point where the Guadalaviar and Alfambra separate from the Jiloca, establishing a line of resistance stretching from the Sierra Palomera to the Sierra de Albarracín, whereby the exposure of Teruel to enemy artillery fire might have been averted...'

The report advances the suggestion that the attack had been only a diversionary move, calculated simply to drawing off enemy troops who had been marshalled with an eye to other fronts. That being so, the document goes on, it ought not to be overlooked:

'...that these troop concentrations, which the Command deemed sufficiently important for it to be necessary to break them up, were strategically located in communications centres which, by virtue of their distribution and the fact that they afforded the enemy the benefit of being able to move along internal lines (of communications) made it possible for him to re-deploy his forces within a matter of days upon the Teruel front: in the light of which, it was a mistake to content oneself with displacing him from the theatre of war, and to assume, frivolously and gratuitously, that the enemy would remain out of action, instead of steps being taken to force a change in his strategic situation...'

The Command ought to have ensured that the enemy would believe that their plan of attack had not ended with the capture of Teruel: but that no effort would be spared to fend off a supposed greater danger, rebuild their military prestige, their international standing and the morale of their rearguard. The document goes on:

'So we see, that, with the fall of La Muela on 31 December, and with the enemy located no more than 500 metres outside of Teruel, the Command not only failed to take appropriate steps to face up to this new and extremely serious situation (and even without the perils implicit in the initial situation, this was absolutely inexcusable), but decided to withdraw the Army of Manoeuvres and to cut down other important resources, which, at the very moment when the enemy (at a point when the offensive had been run down) was concentrating in order to engage us on the front to which we had carried the fighting, implied dissipating those resources, thereby deploying them to no purpose on other fronts where nothing of any seriousness could be attempted and where, since the nationalist troops were inactive, nothing needed to be done.'

But, with the enemy's intentions already discernible, the Command determined upon hopeless and suicidal action which boiled down to a counter-attack mounted by a single reserve Division. But that plan, which of itself might have been correct, went awry when efforts were concentrated on securing Cerro Gordo without the necessary

resources being available and when there was insufficient emphasis upon serious harassment of the enemy's flanks. The Teruel operation, the document goes on to say, might have been effective had it been linked to another offensive designed to secure an important base for supporting movement by the Army of the East.

'The upshot of so many, so very many sins,' it concludes, 'in terms of actions, such as withdrawing significant resources from the army units located in Teruel and dispersing them on other fronts; and in the shape of omissions such as the launching of a push in the direction of Singra without adequate resources, and the failure to match it with due complementary activity, was not long in coming: the enemy, his first tentative attacks upon the centre having failed, brought exploratory pressures to bear upon the flanks and, upon discovering on the left flank, exactly where the Armies of the East and of Levante knit together, a weak spot, in that the average density along the fronts there was not in excess of 120 men per kilometre, hurled himself through it to seize Sierra Palomera and Alfambra, as a result of which some days later he re-took Teruel and occupied positions posing a real threat in the Maestrazgo, whereas our Command, with inconceivable insouciance set about not only moving our most battle-hardened forces at a whim, but also disorganising them, in that the secondment of significant numbers from our units to others has resulted in some Divisions being left with only their officers and staff.'

In General Rojo's book *España Heroica*, one may read the following explanation for the aforementioned criticisms:

'That the manoeuvre had been a success was already apparent from the fact that the enemy decided to call off the offensive against Madrid, and hastened to Teruel to give battle with his reserves. What had turned out to be a favourable situation had to be capitalised upon. In Teruel we had enough forces to fight on defensively, but not for pressing home the attack and it was advisable to strike elsewhere. Just as this plan was about to be set in action, the situation altered unexpectedly and so radically as to preclude any other action on our part, forcing us to move up all our reserves to Teruel. The enemy had attacked the external front once again on the 29th but at this blow the front gave way due to panic: significant positions were lost and our adversary captured ground as far as the city itself.

...Teruel, which had been left totally unmanned by our troops in the early hours of the night of the 31st (a detail which is telling but unknown to many people) was reoccupied four hours later by the very same unit which had given it up, without which neither the enemy, nor those under siege nor the back-up troops would have been aware of such an unfortunate accident.'¹

The Teruel operation involved some 40,000 men. The enemy garrison was reckoned at 10,000. Among the attacking forces, a significant role was played by the 25th Division. Shortly before the city was lost once more, the 125th and 126th Brigades of the 28th Division (likewise made up of CNT personnel) were moved to that front. As for the republican losses, one account among the many reckons them at 2,100 dead and wounded together (750 from the 25th Division). Not until 22 January was the last enemy redoubt in the city mopped up, according to General Rojo, and by then fascist reinforcements were at the gates of Teruel. As we shall see anon in greater detail, the promotions set-up suffered on this occasion from the usual partisanship. Only Lister, the commander of the 11th Division, was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

At around this time, the FAI issued the following circular to its affiliates:

'To the Anarchist Groups. Respected comrades: Of late the situation at home and abroad has deteriorated considerably. The recent Teruel disaster is before all our eyes.

1. Vicente Rojo, *España Heroica*, Buenos Aires: Americalee, 1942, pp 140-141

On the international scene, Hitler's speech, the resignation of the British Minister of State, the hurried meetings of the chancelleries and general staffs of a number of countries signify a deterioration of the situation which may at any given moment bring us to the brink of a ghastly prospect: a European and maybe a world war.

Undoubtedly, this whole train of events, nationally and internationally alike, is a considerable deterioration of our internal situation. All the more given that every moment foreign intervention is growing more blatant, albeit in an apparently generalised way, in every facet of Spanish life.

The Peninsular Committee, which is closely monitoring developments affecting the struggle in which we have been intensely embroiled since 19 July, in issuing this circular to the organisation today, does so in order that at any moment, au fait with the serious circumstances around us, the anarchist movement may not be taken unawares by any significant new events impacting upon the outcome of our struggle.

Our activity must be stepped up intensely in every sphere. In addition to ongoing contributions to the war fronts and the labour fronts, at the front and in the rear, the exertions of anarchists in concert with the people must be increased so as to avoid the penetration into their ranks of the poison which some would introduce "from above" for disreputable ends.

We ought not to lose sight of the fact that, unfortunately, in many anti-fascist political quarters, little has been learnt during these long months of struggle. The proletariat's spontaneous and disinterested contribution means nothing to them and they seek to capitalise upon its exertions in order to ensconce themselves in the machinery of state, turning the functions of government into a family affair and serving the interests of the petite bourgeoisie disguised as *prietista*-style socialism, which have absolutely nothing in common with the overall interests of the working class.

Lurking around are appetites and ambitions, the mere manifestation and contemplation of which signify a betrayal of the general interests of the fight against fascism. There is talk of wholesale militarisation and of an ineluctable duty of utter obedience to the Prieto-Negrin government. Lots of other things are mooted also...things which, in view of their seriousness, we deliberately and responsibly have no desire to mention. But what is incumbent upon us is that we should alert the groups against genuinely counter-revolutionary work, since it goes hand in hand with the obstacles consciously erected to impede understanding between the two great trade unions and, with no less significant difficulties, ensured that the Libertarian Movement is not represented in the administration of the country.

All of these contingencies which require prolonged deliberation, also, require of us that we escalate our activities against the Fifth Column, exposing those who make its actions possible.

In the strictly organisational dimension, liaison with the established committees, from district right up to peninsular levels, must be improved and extended.

Within the municipal councils, the representatives of the FAI must give a lead in the performance of their duties, working flat out so that the living conditions of the people who have entrusted them with the administration are permanently improved, and reporting back quickly to the relevant higher committees on the political intrigues which prejudice the functions entrusted to them. Moreover, they should, at all times, by agreement with the CNT representatives, be in permanent contact with the people, keeping them briefed on their work and seeking to involve them in it.

We reiterate: the Peninsular Committee is monitoring developments with the utmost attention. The criminal ambitions of those who seek to do everything "from above", striving unsuccessfully in this way to disguise their hatred of the creative energies of the working people, have not escaped us. Nor are we oblivious to the nefarious role of certain ministers and high ranking officers. We know, too, the damaging effect of the politics in which a certain party — the PSOE — is engaged, in competition with its cousin, the PCE, when it comes to sharing out state posts and places. And we will know how to do our duty when the time comes.

That duty will be the result of the proletarian masses' work of conquest: it will be the

result of the determined endeavours our groups in striving to improve upon their daily efforts; and a direct consequence of the responsibility displayed by the militants of the FAI: responsibility in work, in war, wherever their efforts are deployed unceasingly and where they will increase and grow further, until they strangle the freedom-killing ambitions of those who appear to forget that we are fighting against totalitarianism, and that we do not want fascism, even should it seek to hide behind a different name.

And, to this end, the Peninsular Committee of the FAI exhorts anarchists organised in their groupings:

Multiply your efforts a hundredfold. Increase your contact with the people. Step up the production entrusted to you, thereby rendering the state's inept interference impossible. Demonstrate that responsible collectives are the only acceptable face of the present economy. Remember, remember at all times that only our efforts, the creative, determined efforts of the labouring people, thwarted the fascists on 19 July.

We hope that you will have taken this circular to heart and will be able in a responsible way to respond to all that is asked of you, demonstrating yet again that our organisation's glorious initials have an indestructible, constructive, responsible content.

Fraternally yours and anarchy's, on behalf of the Peninsular Committee of the FAI, Germinal de Sousa (general secretary).'

The Aragón disaster began on 9 March 1938 with an enemy push against the 12th Army Corps, driving towards lower Aragón. The front under attack was manned only by the four conscript units. The remainder of the front was defended by a *par* of the 21st Army Corps. In the rear there was the 18th Army Corps which was in the process of being reorganised, and the local reserves of the Army of Manoeuvres were still in position in the Maestrazgo and in Teruel, covering the approaches to Levante. The 12th Army Corp's front collapsed completely during the first three days of the offensive. The majority of its units were smashed and the reserves arrived too late to contain the enemy's motorised incursion. On 15 March, there was not a single organised unit to be found in the area between Caspe and Calanda. Once the enemy reached the Caspe-Alcañiz line, he attacked in the Quinto sector. The enemy crossed the river via Belloque on 23 March at daybreak and skirted the 26th Division's left flank, making for Bujaraloz, Fraga and Lleida. Almost instantaneously, he launched phase two of his offensive on the Huesca front — which also collapsed — pressing on towards Lleida and the border. The 26th Division, made up of just two brigades, the 119th and the 120th (the 121st having been seconded to the makeshift Autonomous Ebro Army since the early days of the onslaught on the 12th Army Corp's sector), found itself in desperate straits in its outlying positions towards Zaragoza. The situation worsened on 25 March, when the right flank was left exposed by the retreat of the 137th Brigade which held the gap between the 26th Division and the Huesca front. That very day, the erstwhile Durruti Column began its own withdrawal, a tragic retreat across the Sierra de Alcubierre and the flatlands of Serriñena towards the Alcanadre, the Cinca and later towards the Segre (at Balaguer). By around 15 April, the offensive against Catalonia had ground to a halt, more than anything else, because of the enemy's commitment to focusing maximum offensive thrust against Levante. On 15 April itself, communications between Levante and Catalonia were severed when the enemy reached the Mediterranean port of Vinaroz. In Catalonia, the front stabilised along a line which stretched from the French border, to the north of Seu d'Urgell and meandered towards Tremp, Balaguer, Lleida, the environs of Mequienza, Flix, Mora d'Ebre and thence followed the course of the Ebro as far as Tortosa and the Mediterranean. The whole of Aragón and much of Catalonia had been lost and the enemy pressure would continue towards Levante, leaving Castelló in its wake (24 July) and the whole massif of the Maestrazgo until the front there stabilised on a line from south of Teruel to the sea, between Nules and Sagunt. Valencia lay just 35 kilometres from the combat zone. The republican command had claimed to have discovered that the objective of the manoeuvre through Aragón and the Maestrazgo was Barcelona. General Rojo has acknowledged that then, with less exertion and in less time, what was

to be achieved in February 1939 might have been encompassed by May 1938: 'The circumstances', says Rojo, 'favoured him [the enemy]: a larger disproportion of resources and manpower, lower morale in the rearguard, worse organised and trained units and more inadequate officers'.²

In Barcelona, where the central government had already set up shop, the repercussions of the disaster were vast. The most alarming rumours were current among every stratum of the population. Such rumours were aggravated by the presence of soldiers, who had successfully eluded the vigilance of the recovery teams, fleeing from the fronts. On 13 March, the national representatives of the CNT and the UGT issued a joint statement. The issue of *Solidaridad Obrera* which appeared that day did its best to give encouragement to workers by stating that both union associations had come to an agreement on all of the items of a programme of unity. On 16 March, enemy aircraft initiated a spate of bombing raids on the population. The following day, Barcelona suffered similar attacks. Terrified, workers began to quit their factories. The upshot of the air-raids during 16, 17 and 18 March 1938 was a total of 67 dead, 1,200 wounded, 48 buildings demolished and as many damaged. Later the following figures for the bombing raids suffered in Catalonia were released: 77 naval bombardments and 219 air raids. Casualties: 1,342 dead and 1,425 wounded.³ The number of bombs dropped by plane was 5,024 and of the navy's projectiles, 398. On 5 March, Almería was bombed by the German fleet in retaliation for an attack on the *Deutschland* by republican aircraft in Balearic waters, and on 6 March, the *Baleares* was torpedoed and sunk by the republican fleet and air force in an engagement 40 miles off Cartagena.

A typical document from this time in 1938 is as follows:

'The CNT and UGT Weaving, Textile, Clothing and Associated Industries unions of Barcelona would be defaulting upon the overriding duty required of them by the anti-fascist struggle were they to fail to take the urgent measures which production and the war expect of trade union bodies. To that end, and with a view to ending the recent irregularities and absenteeism which have been noted in our industry, the two unions have reached the following agreement, which must be implemented and acted upon across the board and without delay, by the Factory Councils, Control Committees and trade unions.

1. All workers who fail to report for work within 24 hours of publication of this notice shall be regarded as having quit our industry completely.

2. Any holiday leave which may have been awarded by the Enterprise Councils or factories, offices or Control Committees are hereby rescinded, and the workmen and women should report back for work within 24 hours.

3. Male and female employees who fail to report for work within the allotted time shall be liable to the same sanction as outlines in the articles above.

4. Male and female workers who fail to show up for work on grounds of illness, either their own or that of their children, husbands or parents, will have to produce a medical certificate of the utmost reliability.

5. The Enterprise Councils and Control Committees are to be answerable for failure to comply with this circular.

6. The names of those male and female workers liable to the sanctions noted, are to be forwarded to the War Fortifications agencies.

7. The two Weaving and Textile Union Groupings expect that the same sense of responsibility will prevail in all trade union and official bodies.⁴

On 18 March, the text of the CNT-UGT joint programme which we mentioned earlier to the reader, was made public and a new National Liaison Committee was immediately formed of the following: Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Horacio Prieto and Roberto Alfonso (CNT); Secretary and Vice-Secretary, Rodríguez Vega and César Lombardía

2. Vicente Rojo, *¡Alerta a los pueblos!*, Buenos Aires, 1939

3. The number of wounded when compared with the death toll suggests these figures may not be accurate.

4. This note was carried in much of the press on 20 March.

(UGT). One of its first moves was to hold meetings to publicise the agreement jointly arrived at in Valencia, Madrid, Ubeda, Almería, Castelló and Alacant.

On 30 March, the FAI Peninsular Committee issued the following circular:

'To all Anarchist Groups. Respected comrades: the grave situation in which the eastern war fronts find themselves compels all anti-fascist sectors, and, first and foremost, the Libertarian Movement, to make every effort to help achieve the single objective of winning the war.

Two days ago, on a summons from the leader of the government, representatives of every organisation and party, including those of the Catalan region, came together and Dr. Negrin explained to them the seriousness of the situation and the need for all to waste no time in collaborating with the government in the work which it must carry out, by making whatever suggestions they may regard as helpful in improving the fight against the enemy.

As a result of this gathering, yesterday two further meetings were held, attended by the PCE, the PSOE, Izquierda Republicana, Unión Republicana, the Partido Sindicalista, the CNT, the UGT and the FAI.

At them, our organisation broached the basic necessity of setting up a body to channel the activities to be pursued in conjunction with the government, a body which could be a broadening of the nationwide Popular Front or, should that not be deemed appropriate, a body could be established that will have room in its ranks for all of the responsible expressions of the national anti-fascist organisations, excluding none.

The representatives of the PSOE and the UGT were insistent that the most urgent steps be taken first, and, according to them, these consisted of the publication of a manifesto, the organisation of the recruitment of 100,000 men and fortifications; in this they had the active support of the PCE and the passive support of the republican parties.

This matter brought us to a discussion of the meetings held the day before and in the end it was agreed, in keeping with the view we expressed, that the Popular Front should meet today to agree upon or reject a widening of its ranks to accommodate other anti-fascist groups.

This very evening, a further meeting is to be held, at which we will possibly be in attendance and upon whose outcome we will report to you speedily.

So, independently of any action which may have to be conducted through the Popular Front, should this be broadened, which is likely, or through any other national agency, it is necessary that our movement, through its anarchist groups or the CNT unions, should take the initiative in launching a great propaganda campaign in every locality, summoning all anti-fascist organisations to join in with it.

That agitation and propaganda campaign focusing on war needs might have the following objectives:

1. The immediate formation of an anti-fascist Popular Front charged with collaborating intensely and responsibly with existing agencies and which will be the vital nerve centre of all activities to be pursued and which will have to be set up by all local political and trade union sectors, setting itself as its immediate tasks:

- a. Mobilisation of the rearguard in the exclusive service of the war, dispensing for the moment with unproductive or secondary tasks and incorporating womenfolk into production on a large scale. Men all to be employed on war-related tasks, fortifications, etc.

- b. Establishing surveillance and intelligence commissions against suspect elements, to prevent loss of morale among the populace or that "moles" (emboscados) should capitalise upon the gravity of the situation to provoke disturbances.

- c. Removal from all positions of responsibility, be they military, economic, judicial, etc., of all suspects, incompetents and defeatists and their replacement by capable and tried anti-fascists.

- d. Close surveillance of all output and the whole of public life, accepting no failings, no dereliction and intervening in any place where such dereliction may have

come to pass, assuming a rapid change of the whole life of the country.

2. Campaign for the replacement of that portion of the forces of public order which should be dispatched to the fronts by responsible personnel from the organisations not included in the call-up.

The situation, let us repeat, is serious. And that being so, the Libertarian Movement just as it has always done in like circumstances, must have the initiative and solutions to problems which can help towards the achievement of victory, imposing its dynamism and enthusiasm on whatever incompetents and defeatists there may be.

In the monumental moments through which we are passing, in these times when everything is to be deployed with our eyes fixed upon the single goal of victory, the anarchists and all libertarian militants must, as in July, whether off their own bat or in concert with other groups, strike an optimistic note and not let themselves be overpowered by any secondary considerations.

The war will be won despite the present problems. And any who may oppose the contributions which the Libertarian Movement, now as ever, may make towards overcoming current difficulties and salvaging the situation should be denounced as a traitor.

We hope that the guidelines indicated here will be speedily put into effect, and we reaffirm that we are yours and anarchy's. On behalf of the Peninsular Committee, Germinal de Sousa (general secretary).'

At a meeting held on 24 March, the CNT's National Committee agreed to proceed quickly with the formation of battalions of volunteers. On 31 March, the Popular Front of Catalonia was given a broader base when the trade union federations, Estat Català and the FAI were accommodated within its ranks.

The Popular Front manifesto, published on 1 April, ended with these words:

'100,000 volunteers must be mobilised as a matter of urgency in answer to Premier Negrin's appeal, to defend the Republic and the liberties of Catalonia. We have to rally to the appeal of our President, Lluís Companys, president of all Catalans⁵, and, united behind one single determination to win the war, make 100,000 volunteers available to the government of the Republic. We need to place on a war footing ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND volunteers to defend, in the glorious lines of the Popular Army, the independence of our homeland. We must immediately mobilise 50,000 builders so as to confront the enemy with a double barrier of cement and men ready to perish rather than let a yard of earth be wrested from them. To arms, Catalans! For the Republic! For Catalonia! For freedom! They shall not pass! For the CNT, García Oliver and Joan Domènech; for the FAI, Josep Xena and Josep Tapia; for the ERC, Josep Terradellas and Josep Andreu; for the PSUC, Miquel Valdés and Rafael Vidiella; for the UGT, Josep Moix and Miquel Ferrer; for the Rabassaires, Josep Calvet and Joan Bertrán; for Estat Català, Vicent Barrell and R. Andreu; for Acció Catalana, Ramon Peypoch and Rafael Tassis.'

At around this point, the Confederation in Catalonia held a Regional Plenum of District Committees. At this plenum, the following accord, later made public by *Soldaridad Obrera*, was arrived at:

'CNT — Against the [word erased by the censor here]. As agreed by a Plenum of District Committees held on 10 April, we hereby inform all CNT unions that no individual who, through cowardice which defies description at this juncture, quits his post in the vanguard or abandons his obligations in the rearguard, should be

5. At around this time, the fascist command had announced the abolition of the Statute of Catalonia which had, de facto, been repealed by the Negrin government: 'In political terms, the national rising has meant a breach with all the institutions that stood for the negation of the values which it proposes to establish. And obviously, whatever may be the conception of local life which may inspire future norms, the statute of Catalonia, erroneously granted by the Republic, is bereft of any value in Spanish legality since 17 July 1938' (from Canon Carlos Cardo's book *Histoire spirituelle des Espagnes*).

considered a comrade nor even as a mere affiliate.

With prejudice to the punishment prescribed by the law's being applied to such individuals, we recommend to our comrades that they begin to implement the most basic procedures as they may deem fit and lawful, to get over to the persons concerned in the most effective fashion, the contemptible nature of their conduct.

The plenum reckons that in these difficult times it is more imperative than ever to demonstrate the historic rationale of our movement vis à vis collective responsibility.

Against traitors there must be no quarter given, and a militant of our movement today who shows cowardice, must be regarded thus. On behalf of the Regional Plenum of District Committees, the secretary, Joan Domènech.⁶

According to circular no. 7 from the FAI Peninsular Committee, dated 1 April, the committees of the Libertarian Movement had got together on 1 March and agreed upon the following immediate tasks to be tackled:

1. Prepare for general mobilisation;
2. Prepare for immediate suppression of those production areas regarded as superfluous;
3. Involve women in the pursuit of productive activities deemed useful to general requirements.

In Military Matters:— Commands to be filled by trustworthy servicemen with a capacity for the task to be performed. Exemption from sanction of the volunteers who are mobilised and incorporated into the drafts. Immediate regimentation and equipment of those called up.

In Political Matters:— Incorporation of the CNT and the FAI into the Popular Front. Immediate incorporation of the CNT into government functions. Immediate implementation of a policy to exterminate the Fifth Column. Immediate formation of a political Commissariat in the forces of Public Order.'

The circular closed by urging all anarchist groups to work flat-out in the areas indicated. But it is evident from the document that implicit in the call for the 'immediate re-incorporation' of the CNT into government functions was the endorsement of the FAI Peninsular Committee and this is something to be borne in mind.

About this time, given the gravity of events, the central government was obliged to pay heed to the CNT's repeated requests for a share in governmental responsibility. When a crisis arose, requiring a cabinet re-shuffle, this was resolved on 6 April by the formation of the following cabinet:

Premiership and National Defence:	Juan Negrín (PSOE)
State:	Julio Alvarez del Vayo (PSOE)
Justice:	Ramón González Peña (PSOE)
Home Affairs:	Paulino Gómez Sáez (PSOE)
Public Works:	Oñate Velao (Izquierda Republicana)
Public Education:	Segundo Blanco (CNT)
Finance and Economy:	Méndez Aspe (Izquierda Republicana)
Agriculture:	Vicente Uribe (PCE)
Communications and Transport:	Francisco Giner de los Ríos (Unión Republicana)
Labour:	Jaume Aiguader (ERC)
Ministers without Portfolio:	José Giral (Izquierda Republicana), and Manuel Irujo (PNV).

In the cabinet reshuffle it can be seen that the communist Jesús Hernández, Indalecio Prieto and Julián Zugazagoitia were dropped, and Alvarez del Vayo, González Peña,

6. *Solidaridad Obrera*, 2 April 1938

Paulino Gómez and CNT member Segundo Blanco brought in.

Irujo stayed on as minister without portfolio, as did Giral, who had been ousted from the Ministry of State. Negrín gave up Finance to Méndez Aspe, to take up the Defence portfolio. Méndez Aspe, although a member of Izquierda Republicana was also a quasi-communist or *libelático* (idolater), as those who, though members of one party, served the interests of another party were generally described at the time. The main ministries were still in the hands of the pro-communist socialist faction. As for Segundo Blanco, Abad de Santillán has stated that 'he was a minister chosen by Negrín himself'.⁷

What ensued was as follows. As a result of the serious situation created in Catalonia by the collapse of the eastern front, and of the CNT-UGT pact, which specified that the UGT would not put obstacles in the way of the incorporation of the CNT into government office, the Confederation's insistence that it be given a place in the government was more fruitful. Prepared now to yield on this point, Negrín asked the CNT to supply a list of three names from which he might select the one who would be minister. This highly questionable suggestion was debated at a meeting of the Libertarian Movement, at which opposition to this deal surfaced. Yet again, Mariano Vázquez and Horacio Prieto managed to swing a decision in favour of acceptance. The short-list presented contained the names of Horacio Prieto, García Oliver and Segundo Blanco. Negrín plumped for Blanco who, as time wore on, turned out to be just another *negrinista*.

The government sought and was awarded full powers and resolved to delegate its authority as far as the territory outside of Catalonia was concerned, to General Miaja. General Pozas and Eduardo Castillo were stood down as Commander and Commissar of the Army of the East, respectively, and were replaced by Lieutenant-Colonel Juan Perea and Ignacio Mantecón respectively. Several classes of conscript were called to the colours.

On 13 March, the following bulletin was carried by *Solidaridad Obrera*:

'A special invitation is extended to all members of the CNT belonging to the call-up classes of 1926, 1927 and 1928, due to be mobilised, to enrol as a matter of urgency with the volunteers, and all Committees, union and groups, youth and militants are required to commit themselves with the utmost zeal and enthusiasm to the campaign to mobilise volunteers for the units of the glorious Popular Army, by making contact with the organisation's relevant committees.

The men of the Libertarian Movement should require no other encouragement than the prick of their anti-fascist consciousness and their love of liberty in order to mobilise.

[We therefore summon] to voluntary mobilisation, all of those falling within the call-up classes of 1926, 1927 and 1928, with all enthusiasm, seriousness and vigour of the very first moments, in order to crush fascism and achieve independence for our homeland! The Executive Committee.'⁸

The following day, the same paper reported the departure for the front of the 2nd Volunteer Battalion of the Libertarian Youth.

Aside from an honest sense of military responsibility, the Libertarian Movement's recruiting of volunteer battalions also has this dual objective: to divert anarchist militants and sympathisers away from the recruiting offices so far as possible, as they were likely to wind up in Marxist brigades through those offices; and to bring fresh blood into the CNT units which had been virtually decimated as a result of the Aragón disaster. Virtually every one of these volunteers was absorbed directly into the 26th Division.

The Libertarian Movement's Executive Committee had been set up by a plenum of anarchist groups, delegates from the unions, militants and committees from the three organisations (CNT, FAI and FIJL), held in Barcelona on 2 April 1938. We know that on

7. *Por qué perdimos la guerra*, p. 205.

8. *Solidaridad Obrera*, 13 March 1938.

1 April, there was a Plenum of District Committees of the Catalan CNT, in whose name the bulletin printed above (signed by Joan Domènech, the secretary of the Regional Committee) had been made public. Now then, are we dealing here with two different plenums, or the same one? If we go by the only known resolution of the one held on 2 April (which is not endorsed by any district representative) it is possible that the second one was an immediate follow-up to the first.

What we do know about the latter plenum was that García Oliver delivered to it a pathetic analysis of the military situation; the aforementioned Executive Committee, quite patently at odds with every one of the traditional teachings and practices of the anarchist and union organisations, arose out of that situation.

Here is the text of the resolution establishing and prescribing the powers of the Executive Committee:

'Resolutions of the Working Party appointed by the Plenum of Groups, Union Delegates, Militants and Committees of the Three Organisations of the Libertarian Movement, held on 2 April 1938.

The assembled representatives of the three libertarian organisations are agreed upon the necessity of establishing, for the duration of the circumstances created by the war, a committee, executive in character, to oversee the functions of the Libertarian Movement.

This Executive Committee shall be made up of three representatives from the CNT Regional Committee, two from the CNT Local Federation, two from the FAI Regional Committee, one from the FAI Local Federation, one from the Regional Committee of the FIJL and another from the Local Federation.

Each organisation will appoint the members of the Executive Committee and must select the best equipped individuals.

This Executive Committee shall be governed by the following internal mechanism. All accords shall be taken by unanimous vote or by majority vote and, whenever there is deadlock, the members of the Committee are to be replaced in their entirety.

All local and district organs of the three movements are to support and implement the resolutions of the Committee.

The Executive Committee of the FIJL is to be assisted by a Military Commission whose task it will be to brief it in advance on any such problems.

The Executive Committee shall be empowered to select, in concert with the movement's other committees, personnel equipped to make up the Military Advisory Commission and the Political Advisory Commission.

The Committee's executive powers shall extend to final expulsion of those individuals, groups, unions, Local or District Committees who fail to abide by the general resolutions of the movement and who damage the movement by their activities.

It will also proceed against any who lend assistance to those expelled from the three organisations for the reasons outlined above.

The Committee's executive and sanctioning powers are to be applicable to the front and to the rearguard without distinction.

Fundamental Decisions Reached by the Libertarian Movement and which it will be up to the Executive Committee to see put into Effect:

1. To support the war against fascism as long as a single patch of land remains in enemy hands.
2. To accept militarisation with all of its implications.
3. To afford no shelter to deserters and runaways, obliging them to report to the units of the Popular Army.
4. To step up production in every sphere of work.
5. To shut down all branches of production which may be deemed superfluous and then to re-deploy their workforce on war-related tasks. To absorb women into every facet of production.

6. Not to harbour or shelter those who sabotage output.
7. Not to harbour or shelter those who cause breaches of anti-fascist order.
8. To defend only those comrades who may be imprisoned due to error or lack of understanding on the part of the authorities.
9. A share for the CNT in the governments of the Republic and the Generalitat, in the municipalities and in all of the nation's administrative and leadership organs.
10. To keep the CNT and FAI always in the Anti-fascist Popular Front of Catalonia.

Barcelona, 3 April 1938.

On behalf of the working-party: for the CNT Regional Committee, Joan Domènech; for the FAI Regional Committee, J. Tapia; for the FIJL Regional Committee, J. Seva; for the Local Federation of CNT unions, M. Molero; for the Barcelona Local Federation of Anarchist Groups, J. Merino; for the Barcelona FIJL, L. Rufinelli; for the plenum, Juan García Oliver, Manuel Escorza, Juan Giménez and Frederica Montseny.⁹

Fidel Miró was appointed secretary to the Executive Committee, and on 20 April 1938 *Solidaridad Obrera* carried a *communiqué* signed by him, summoning comrades Francisco Tomás, Moro, Orille, Magro, Capell 'and whatsoever militants from Lleida who held positions of responsibility until the capture of that city.' Some of those comrades were indicted on several counts and punished by being dispatched to the battlefronts. One of those so punished was the prominent militant Francisco Tomás who died shortly afterwards in actions against the enemy.

During the second half of April a Plenum of Regional Committees was held in Valencia. It was chaired by Mariano Vázquez and the Regional Committees from the Centre, Levante, Andalusia and Extremadura were in attendance. One of the most important accords was that a National Sub-Committee of the CNT should be formed for that zone. Comrade Galo Díez, secretary of this sub-committee died a short time after this in an unfortunate accident. His place was taken by Manuel López. The FIJL, and FAI as well as all the political parties, trade unions and liaison agencies also moved their respective representations to the zone. On 27 April, the CNT National Sub-Committee published the following manifesto:

'The possible separation of Catalonia from the rest of loyalist Spain, should it be achieved by an invader who has the whole might of Italy and Germany at his disposal, will not in any way diminish the capacity and enthusiasm which the good people of Spain put into their pursuit of victory. Instead, their tremendous valour increases in the face of yet another peril: and in the face of every enormous difficulty which they have already had to contend with, and which would have left a less determined, less daring people immersed in complete defeat, free Spaniards stand courageous and defy the danger with bravery that grows in keeping with the scale of the adversity.

For our part, we give a public commitment to fight on to the end, given that it is a worthier fate to die fighting for liberty, bread and our well-being and that of future generations, than to bow the knee before a shameful surrender, and so the severance of communications can have only one meaning: that we must redouble our efforts and multiply them a hundredfold, improving it in every way, especially as regards the productivity of our contribution to the anti-fascist cause.

In order to channel this effort insofar as it can, being profoundly alive to all of the worries implicit in its realisation, the CNT National Committee is transferring some of its members to this zone and, with the endorsement and express assistance of the Regional Committees of the Centre, Andalusia, Extremadura and Levante, is setting up a National Sub-Committee which will keep the revolutionary anti-fascist sentiments of the Confederation workers based in this part of loyalist territory constantly alive.

The Sub-Committee has already been established. And on the solemn date of the

9. *Solidaridad Obrera*, 20 April 1938

commencement of its existence, cognisant of the lofty mission entrusted to it by the Confederation, it sends this message of greeting to all fighters for freedom, the precursors of the social justice of the Spain which is coming into existence, to the producers, the unions and to all who feel their breasts beat deep down to the burning flame awakened by the struggle for our political, economic and social independence, urging them to prosecute with gusto, with the same faith they have hitherto placed at the service of anti-fascism, the struggle we are waging against the invaders and military traders who rose up against the people in order to foist an onerous tyranny upon them.

Know, ye soldiers of freedom, that the banner you unfurl on campaign stands for the cares of millions of workers, seventy years of social struggles and precious gains which will founder should you allow our enemies to sweep them forever aside. Know that above and beyond your personal pride in being Spaniards, you are the vanguard of that legion of peoples who are on the march to a better world, where human miseries may be laid to rest, where castes and privileges foisted upon men who were not born rich are no more.

Do not forget, anti-fascist fighters, the eloquent example of those peasants from a village in Levante who, without rhetoric or fuss, in their mountain fastness have agreed to work from sun-up to sundown for as long as the war may last, lest those who fight should want for anything.¹⁰ They who wrestled with the bourgeois a hundred times over to achieve the legal wage have discovered no other way of increasing production than to increase their working hours, severely punishing the traitors who may bring themselves to default upon our organisation's mandate.

Within our grasp we have the powerful levers of victory...the trade union alliance of the two mighty movements which embrace the productive masses of the nation and the unity of political action sustained through the Popular Front, at the heart of which all the anti-fascist sectors who assumed honourable positions on the field of battle whenever drunken or perverse generals sought to revive on our soil the tragic age of military *pronunciamentos*, share the same concerns; in order to achieve a speedy victory, we have set up a government of war and national unity wherein all parties and organisations are represented.

Thus everything is in our hands. Never more than now could we have felt ourselves so in charge of, and so committed to giving all that our energies may allow. Watchful at its post, the CNT will be able to pick up the gauntlet which history has hurled down before us, with the pride and the same gallantry with which we would want all honourable, worthy anti-fascists to take up the challenge.

Through this National Sub-Committee for liaison between the Confederation members here and the organism which presides over those in the whole loyalist territory, let us seek to strengthen the ties which logically ought to exist between all Spanish anti-fascists, and let us make them a living reality with the hopes expressed by all revolutionary producers along the way.

May this greeting, a manly promise of libertarian consistency, serve as encouragement for the anti-fascists in the van and in the rear who know how to stand by their posts with steadfastness, unhesitating and convinced that the final victory will be ours and that we will be able to achieve regardless of Mussolini's and Hitler's hirelings.

Long live the unity of the workers and the anti-fascist people! Let us soldier on today so that we may be victorious tomorrow! Let us be worthy of those who fell, mowed down by fascism! The National Sub-Committee.'

As a result of the pact between the national labour organisations, the CNT and the UGT of Catalonia in turn signed a fresh agreement on concerted action, and this was made public on 20 April. Here is the text of this new document:

10. A reference to a resolution of the CNT peasantry in Beniguacil (Valencia) as published in the newspapers around the time.

'The CNT and UGT in Catalonia, acknowledging that the imperative of the times in which we live requires of us all the greatest contribution to the struggle against fascism until such time as it is utterly eradicated, and reckoning that unity of the workers increases their capacity for resistance and is a mighty aid to victory, do, this day, in defence of the liberty and independence of the Hispanic people within the Republic and at all times in the constructive and liberating feats of the proletariat, respecting those traits which are proper to them and upon which their *raison d'être* is based, subscribe to the following

PACT OF UNITY OF ACTION

Article 1. The CNT and UGT in Catalonia are in agreement with the programme of united action signed in Barcelona on 15 March 1938 by the Executive Commission of the UGT and the Committee of the CNT, adopted to the needs of Catalonia, in solidarity with other Hispanic peoples and workers, adapted to Catalonia's Statute and to the gains achieved by the workers.

Article 2. The UGT and CNT in Catalonia undertake to pursue the struggle against fascism to the end, deploying all of their material, moral and human resources to ensure that:

a. They will monitor the implementation of the military mobilisation orders which the government of the Republic may issue, will track down and denounce "moles" (*emboscados*), deserters and their accomplices, will encourage the training of reserves and will assist with the basic military training so as to have ready at all times the comrades included in the three call-up classes promptly to be drafted, and to ensure that our Popular Army grows stronger each day so as to hasten the final victory over fascism.

b. They will keep in close touch with the combatants, organising joint visits to the battlefronts, and will concern themselves with the comrades drafted into the Army, and with their families.

c. They will see to the implementation of compulsory civilian mobilisation orders for the purpose of building fortifications and shelters in settlements in the immediate vicinity of the front and coastline, for repairing and building of roads and highways, to which end they will encourage volunteer labour and co-operate in passive defence measures.

d. They will help with the purging of the rearguard by exposing Fifth Column personnel, defeatists, profiteers and speculators: they will create an exacting vigilance among the workers of city and countryside.

(...)

Article 6. The UGT and CNT in Catalonia will lend every support to improving the operations of the Industrial Economic Federations, General Councils and the Economic Council of Catalonia and likewise to any parallel agencies which the government of the Republic may yet create.

Article 7. The CNT and UGT in Catalonia will ensure that industries in general and especially war industries are supplied with the necessary raw materials for the stepping up of production to the maximum degree and so that they can redouble the efforts which the workers are ready to make to increase output.

Article 8. The UGT and CNT in Catalonia will see to it that workers and their families have access to a minimum amount of foodstuffs at prices indexed to the prevailing pay model: they will encourage all worker families to join consumer co-operatives and the establishment of popular canteens, collective or factory canteens, children's canteens, school canteens, etc. It will be the especial task of the unions of the Food Industry and of shop workers to watch out for and campaign against hoarders and speculators.

Article 9. The CNT and UGT in Catalonia will defend the revolutionary gains of the rural workers as partly reflected in the new agrarian legislation passed after 19 July, introducing the necessary reforms into them.

Article 10. The UGT and CNT in Catalonia are in favour of united action between

their peasants' organisations and the Rabassaires' Union, on the basis of the principle of acceptance of the broad lines of the present Pact.

Article 11. The CNT and UGT in Catalonia will not acknowledge the existence of any other industrial workers' union organisation which may seek to establish itself in our country.

Article 12. For all matters relating to this pact of unity of action, there shall be set up a CNT-UGT Standing Liaison Committee with jurisdiction over the entirety of Catalonia, in close conjunction and fellowship with the National CNT-UGT Liaison Committee.

Article 13. The Standing CNT-UGT Liaison Committee in Catalonia will have its base in Barcelona.

Article 14. The Liaison Committees which may be set up in Catalonia are to be governed by the provisions of this pact and any of a national character which may have been agreed between the CNT and the UGT, subject to their adaptation to Catalonia.

Article 15. This pact may be improved and extended by subsequent agreements accepted by both organisations.

On behalf of the UGT, Josep Moix, Tomás Molinero and Miquel Ferrer (general secretary); on behalf of the CNT, José Jiménez, Antonio Marco and Joan Domenech (secretary). Barcelona, 18 April 1938.'

The Aragón disaster was exploited to the detriment of the anarchists' alleged predominance on the eastern front. A report from the FAI Peninsular Committee, dated 1 April 1938, opens with these words:

'The causes underlying the collapse of the Aragón front can be classified under several headings: one, strictly military; others of a political-psychological nature but always dependent on the politico-social complex which has become the sponsor within anti-fascist Spain of a muted but bitter struggle between parties and persuasions despite the repeated calls made for unity and an "anti-fascist front", a front which never managed to become a reality, precisely because there were parties and groups which merely sought and seek still their own hegemony at the expense of the vital interest of the broad masses of the people.'

Among the military factors was the enemy's overwhelming material superiority. The offensive had begun with a formidable deployment of air power. Up to 150 planes were in the air at any one time in the very limited area, and were able to bomb and strafe the lines and the rearguard from very low altitude. Also involved were masses of men protected by tanks and artillery aplenty. The report goes on:

'Upon comrade Yoldi's assuming command of the 24th Division, he forwarded several reports to the Staff of the Army of the East, remarking therein upon the inadequacies of the fortifications in his Division's sector, which is to say the one through which the enemy launched his offensive: and about the inadequacy of the armaments of the 153rd Brigade, in the light of which he would not be responsible in the event of its being attacked, in that it was impossible for it to fight back with the weaponry it had. None of this was heeded. The enemy broke through the front through the area manned by the 153rd Brigade which, despite its magnificent efforts, was unable to ward off the disaster.'

Yoldi's dispatches, which were to end up with the Central Staff, where dispatches from the artillery observation posts of the 9th Army Corps were also arriving (the latter indicating heavy convoys of enemy troops in movement), were dismissed as 'seeing things'.

A complicating factor in the situation was the military policy followed by the government, to wit, the ousting of genuinely anti-fascist commanders and their being made to take second place to dubious individuals whose talents lay in matters political,

and to reactionary military figures. The so-called 'propagandising' with which we shall deal anon at greater length, had succeeded in demoralising and disconcerting the army. The Trojan Horse of this hard-sell campaign was the Commissariat: even at staff levels, not to mention in the ministries, there were persons dedicated to factional activity, officers or commissars who were drawn from any opposing organisation or party were sabotaged.

We have already dealt with the government's reactionary policy in Aragón, which region had been swamped by Lister's henchmen. With the repression and murders perpetrated by those troops, with the onslaught against the collectives and with the conversion of town councils into 'management commissions' made up of personnel drawn from a number of parties but excluding the CNT. Lister handed over authority to Governor Manticón but Manticón forged ahead with Lister's work.

The army had been worn down by political-style military operations like the Brunete offensive and the operations in early September 1936 south of the Ebro. In those operations, the CNT divisions, made up largely of battle-hardened peasants familiar with the terrain, were virtually dismantled, in that they were placed under the command of outside commanders who failed to earn their confidence and who, due to their subscribing to a certain political ideology, were content to humble the divisions and humiliate their original militia commanders. The military ineptitude and political zeal of these sectarians ensured that the chief objective, namely Zaragoza, could not be achieved. And what partial successes were achieved ... namely the capture of Belchite, etc., were achieved by CNT troops, by the 24th and 25th Divisions (the former of which included the 153rd Brigade, which was then indicted on a charge of being chiefly to blame for the disaster on the eastern front).

As the 9 March offensive got underway, the 24th Division and the 127th Brigade (attached to the 28th Division) put up a dogged resistance, several times repulsing the enemy, and succumbing only because of his material superiority. The front collapsed and during the initial stage of the collapse, the high-ranking officers from the army corps were nowhere to be seen. No preventive measures had been taken and an army of 70,000 men was left to cut and run in disarray under strafing from planes which faced no challenge for control of the skies. However, there were instances of heroic resistance, such as the resistance put up by the 121st Brigade, and of orderly withdrawals such as the retreat made by the bulk of the 26th Division. The indulgence shown the higher officers was not available to the troops and their more closely associated officers. Yoldi, commander of the 24th Division, was the target of an assassination bid, which he survived by a miracle, only to be arrested afterwards. Stalinist International Brigaders, themselves withdrawing without a fight, performed this punitive mission on the ground. Máximo Franco, commander of the 127th Brigade suffered a similar fate to Yoldi's, but Franco was released by troops from his own brigade.

The 127th had been summoned on 9 March from its billet in Albalate de Cinca. With what troops it was possible to transport, and with basic issue equipment, the 127th arrived at the front to meet with a chaotic situation. Due to the rout, these troops were necessarily swept along by the avalanche. Máximo Franco himself states in a report to the Libertarian Movement's Defence Section, dated 16 June:

"The reasons behind the "stampede" phenomena to which the Brigade was exposed are:

1. The fact that, as our troops arrived in the environs of Muniesa, where the front had been established, there was a Division in disorderly retreat. At the same time, neither the 12th Army Corps nor the 30th Division were able to furnish specific intelligence as to the enemy's position and the situation of lines close by.

2. The failure to link up even once on either of the flanks of the front we manned, which offered no personal security but a high chance of being surrounded and cut off, as befell the odd unit which, obedient to the letter to the watchword of resistance issued by the command, were taken prisoner by the enemy.

3. The disproportion of the equipment available to the enemy, and its quantity and quality, in that whereas he attacked with tanks and artillery, under tremendous

aerial cover we had only the odd automatic rifle and the occasional hand grenade with which to resist. If we add to this that our troops were not dug in behind any sort of fortifications, the disadvantage obtaining between our troops and the enemy's becomes apparent.

4. The dismal performance of the units seconded to the brigades by way of Service Corps, Transport Corps, etc., due to which personnel were left rather neglected, the supply arrangements and other facilities very necessary on campaign could not be seen to.

5. The fact that many of the officers failed to supervise their small units at all times for, although the enemy was bragging about his material superiority, and of his platoons and sections having responded well to the withdrawals which had been ordered throughout, the command could, on more than one occasion, have counter-attacked, outflanking the enemy, with the assurance that his advance would have been slowed.

The demoralisation which spread among the troops when they observed that neither the wounded nor the dead could be evacuated.'

Máximo Franco and his entire staff were arrested by the commander of the 5th Army Corps, the communist Modesto, while on rest and recreation in a rearguard position. They were subjected to all sorts of humiliations. The 127th Brigade itself was disarmed and marshalled near the line of fire. Needless to say, such measures were not employed against all units...not against, say, the 30th Division to which the 127th Brigade had been subordinated, and on the instructions of their superiors, during the incidents in question.

As we have already noted, three battalions from the 121st Brigade (26th Division) went to occupy the Sástago sector on orders from the Headquarters of the Army of the East. Their task was to stem the enemy advance and prevent him from crossing the Ebro through that sector. It was also their task to marshal and organise the troops who were routed and who included the 11th International Brigade. There were commanders and officers galore who had lost contact with or abandoned their units. On some occasions force had to be used to coax the stubborn ones whose intentions were to press on towards Bujaraloz and Caspe, and this triggered a number of incidents.

A report drafted by the then Commissar of the 26th Division, Ricardo Rionda and dated 18 March, stated among other things:

'I was summoned to the 11th Army Corps by the Commissar of the Army of the East, to attend a meeting. Before the meeting opened, the Commissar of the 11th Corps showed me a telegram from the Minister of National Defence ordering the arrest of the Commander of the 121st Brigade for one month, without specifying the grounds and charges. As soon as the Commissar of the Army of the East showed up, I lodged a strenuous objection against such behaviour and was assured that the arrest would not be made, because neither he nor the Commander of the Army of the East knew anything about it. At the same meeting, after matters relating to the misfortunes of the 12th Army Corps had been examined and discussed, the 44th Division's Commissar presented a list wherein there was a request that the 121st Brigade hand over 700-odd rifles, 14 automatic rifles and a batch of Maxim machine guns which that unit had extracted from him "at gunpoint".'

Another report, this time from the CNT-FAI Liaison Committee in charge of liaison with the front, and datelined Lleida, 22 March, deals with the determination of the 26th Division's command to resign after the 121st Brigade had been removed from his command. In contrast to the conciliatory line of the Committee, which countenanced the move to some extent as a war requirement, Sanz insisted that he was not prepared to put up with any further humiliation, stating that he would not be bound by the orders of cowards and incompetents:

'Sanz's indignation knew no bounds when we told him that Lieutenant Colonel Montaner was to assume command of the 11th Army Corps. Sanz's reaction was, word for word, as follows: "With what moral authority is a coward who took to his heels at El Sillero and did not stop until he got to Bujaraloz about to give me orders? I steadfastly refuse to abide by the orders of traitors!" He says he reckons the time has come for our organisation to demand respect and that but for the 26th Division the disaster would have been even greater. The injustice being meted out to the 26th Division now is not without precedent. Here he recalls the humiliation to which he and other officers were subjected at the time of the push that culminated in the capture of Belchite. The Division's Command Post was showered with abuse. He is still waiting for an explanation. Communist troops labelled the Division's militiamen and officers as cowards. But for the heroic endeavours of those so insulted, that push would have been a complete failure. Well, he is still waiting for justice to be done, since they have been completely forgotten about. Not only will he quit or else they will dismiss or shoot him, but every one of the Division's commanders will do likewise. He concluded by saying: "Go and pass that on to the organisation! I stand by my unshakable intransigence! Let every individual shoulder the responsibility that is his!"'

Sanz also based his stance upon orders that had come down from Division warning him to hand over, without delay, the weapons which they had recovered from deserters who had dumped them and upon the month-long detention of the 121st Brigade's commander, Gil Montes, who deserved nothing but commendations. The report closes by saying:

'So, for the time being, the issue has been resolved in the manner indicated, namely: they will do their best to act upon the order to give up the weaponry they recovered from the runaway troops. In accordance with the promises made to them, the 26th Division will retain control of the 121st Brigade and the arrest warrant against Commander Gil Montes will be shelved and a dead letter.'

By way of a summary of this episode, we reprint below the most interesting portions of a report issued by the Executive Committee (Defence Section) of the Libertarian Movement of Catalonia on 15 April 1938:

'Time and again we denounced the sabotage and disorganising work carried out by the Engineers' General Command of the Army of the East, effected by the PSUC and commander Montserrat Fenech. Our complaints, an uninterrupted succession of them since July 1937, failed to alter the fact that the seven Works and Fortifications Battalions are still in disarray: that commander Montserrat Fenech would scarp to France, that a captain of the Transport corps and several officers vouched for by the UGT of Catalonia were arrested and sentenced for attempting to defect to the enemy, and, what is more to the point, that no serious effort was to be made with regard to fortifications in the Army of the East or that the Cinca works, the works on the front and on the coast, etc., would be at a standstill, which led to the straightforward collapse of the front.

The same thing happened in the Transport Corps where even now there is no car pool operational, nor any adequate organisation to cater for the most elementary requirements of the war.

Similarly, we registered timely complaints about party propaganda and sabotage in the war industries and the vandalism on an unbelievable scale among the personnel of the Armaments Under-Secretariat whose performance in Catalonia led to a 70 per cent to 80 per cent drop in war production as compared to what was achieved previously in spite of all the difficulties obtaining for reasons which are common knowledge.

When the operations were mounted on the Eastern front in August 1937, with the capture of Belchite, Codo, etc., ... we furnished plentiful documentary evidence to show that the party of Cardón, Almendros and Llanos had thwarted the capture of Zaragoza. The undermining of our units and the communist commanders' ignorance of the terrain

were the causes of the failure and of the ongoing demoralisation of our comrades. When Walter¹¹ iniquitously abused comrade Seba, commander of the 153rd Brigade, we duly complained, yet Walter is still in command of troops and continues to do as he pleases.

Some very suspicious things occurred during the Teruel operations: Lister was promoted, the 25th Division was kept in the line for a tremendously long stint and was seven times redeployed without being issued with new weapons. These suspicious incidents are very well documented in a report by comrade Ejarque, Commissar with the 25th Division, and in the complaints made by the National Committee, which have no effect.

Along came the collapse of the 12th Army Corps, and comrade Yoldi, whose performance was unequalled, is put on trial, his Division disbanded and Walter organises his murder. Meanwhile not a finger is lifted against Walter who had retreated without due cause. The 24th Division is disbanded, whilst the 30th reorganises and so is the 44th. The 153rd Brigade (the erstwhile *Tierra y Libertad*) has been seconded to the 30th Division and its men have had no rest for 40 days, and only cold rations.

In connection with the same episode, comrade Máximo Franco, Commander of the 127th Brigade is arrested, when he has done the most sterling work and when his brigade is the most pugnacious. The comrades took it upon themselves to get him out of jail and replaced him at the head of the Division. The comrade in question is presently separated from his brigade, having been stood down and tried.

Commissars who acquitted themselves in exemplary fashion, such as Villaverde of the 153rd Brigade, or Sánchez, commissar of the 153rd Brigade battalion, a 58-year-old who has displayed truly exemplary courage and integrity, have been stood down, whereas the only Communist commissar with that Brigade, a man who deserted on 11 March, has been kept on. Other comrade commissars have been stood down unjustly, as in the case of Justo del Valle, Sanz and Valentín López Escribano.

It can be proved that the 32nd Division commander, Major Gancedo, of the PCE, has murdered several comrades: we have obtained the minutes of a meeting of the 141st Brigade of that Division, at which there was talk of eliminating personnel, officers and commissars who were not members of the PCE: copies were made and these were forwarded to Negrín and Prieto. Gancedo and other communist commanders are still in charge of the 32nd Division, obviously endangering the Division commissar, comrade Señor.¹²

Almendros has been appointed Commissar Inspecting Rearguard Services, at which we protest: nonetheless, he later appointed commissar of the Southern Group of the Army of the East, handing over to Quiles of the PSUC, a man included in the draft and one-time commissar of the Military Training Centre of Catalonia.

We have passed on documentary evidence proving the culpability of Amancio Martínez, commissar of the Barcelona Military Command, and of Durán Rosell, without their having, thus far, been condemned: indeed, Rosell has been formally appointed Brigade Commissar.

We have passed on a complaint from comrade Santiago Gaspar, major of militias, and from his battalion commissar, a PSUC member, against the commander of the 135th Brigade, who abandoned his brigade, leaving Gaspar to salvage equipment and personnel. On the 14th, we received a postcard from comrade Gaspar, telling us specifically: "The commander of the 31st Division has ordered me into the castle." This speaks for itself.

The Defence Section of the National Committee, on its visit to Mantecón was told by him of the news that he was considering standing down "Juanel". When "Juanel" was informed of this, he stated that this was a ploy, since he was not tired nor anything like it.

We pointed out to the National Committee that to appoint Pérez Salas as Under-Secretary of the Army was tantamount to paving the way for a break-up of the army, given his well-known ineptitude and dishonesty. Subsequently, after the crisis point, the

11. A German Commander in the republican army.

12. We deal at greater length with these examples in Chapter 32.

appointment went to Colonel Cerdón against whom the National Committee's Defence Section had made complaints to the ministry concerning his performance as chief of staff of the Army of the East and later as Operations Officer with the Central Staff.

This individual, a rabid Stalinist, has already embarked upon his arrogation of powers. Although it was not his place to do so, he has indicted comrade Máximo Franco for trial. Yesterday a disposition appeared seconding the Intelligence and Control Bureau to the Under-Secretaryship, whereby he will have the fate of officers in his hands and will be able to engage in blatant propaganda and hang the label of fascist or anti-fascist on personnel who may not be to the liking of the PCE.

In the Commissariat, disarray and "propaganda" linger on and on. Countless comrades have been stood down unjustly. The communists hold the positions and make the appointments as they please without waiting for official confirmation. Witness the instances of the Military Command in Girona, or in the 11th Army Corps, etc. Proportional allocation of appointments is as yet a distant hope.

The International Brigades continue to be a tool of the PCE and nothing has been done to counter this, except on the part of some foreign comrades. It has to be borne in mind that these units are topped up with Spanish recruits drawn from the drafts and which include lots of comrades who suffered vexations and harassment, and indeed some of them have even been done to death.

The "moles" in the Under-Secretariats of the Air Force, Navy and Armaments have not been eliminated, nor are there any apparent intentions of doing so.

Whether through their own intrigues or because of help from General Rojo we do not know, but in the Army of the East, 80 per cent of units belong to the PCE and there is serious infiltration in every military rank.

The commander of the Central Staff, General Rojo, has been a resounding failure, yet he remains in his post, as a result of which the mistakes go on and defeat follows defeat at hectic speed. The organisation forwarded reports to the then prime minister, Negrín.

It seems certain that the Commissar-General who is to be appointed is Jesús Hernández, by which the communist influence would be increased. However, that post belongs by rights to the CNT, because the leading commissars general associated with the PCE (Alvarez del Vayo) and the PSOE (Bilbao) have been resounding failures.

The Medical Corps is a complete shambles: wounded are not being tended to, they are being classified arbitrarily according to favouritism and there is no sign of steps being taken to remedy this state of affairs. Due to incompetence and planning failure, health equipment is in short supply, though such equipment is readily obtainable abroad.

The military courts are teeming with fascists and "moles", most of them card-carrying members of the PCE who devote their time to shooting soldiers and NCOs, but who delay sentencing superior officers, the ones chiefly responsible for all the planning failures and defeats.

We offered to organise a Pyrenean battalion completely outfitted for specialist personnel and *dinamiteros*, but the General Staff had only to say no for that special battalion to come to naught...

Here are some of the things which happened since the beginning of the year.

On 11 January, the Catalan CNT killed off the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils and other uniformed corps. The then Secretary of the CNT Catalan Regional Committee said, in reply to certain leaflets circulated by these bodies (he was Joan Domènech):

'Above all we find ourselves obliged to head off this contemptible ploy in that it is not certain that the CNT authorised any leaflet, much less one by the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, an agency that was disbanded by a Generalitat Decree.'

On 13 January, Miguel Cerdón, director of the CNT newspaper *Cartagena Nueva*, was jailed in Cartagena for publishing an article. On the plus side, Court No. 6 of the Supreme Court notified the Defence Minister on 8 March of its decision to review the

charge against Major Francisco Maroto and consequently to rescind the sentence of death which had been hanging over Maroto for several months past.

The socialist Máximo Muñoz, who was Commissar of the 9th Army Corps of Andalusia, later wrote: *Dos conductas: Indalecio Prieto y yo*:

'...Shortly afterwards, at the request of Colonel Prada and his sons who were, as already noted, members of the communist youth movement, the Standing Tribunal of the Army of Andalusia passed sentence of death on a CNT leader, Maroto. The sentence, bearing the endorsement of Colonel Prada, was passed to me. I probed the matter thoroughly and refused to endorse the sentence. Aside from the fact that unquestionable political rancour had been a factor in the charges, I was unable to put my reputation at risk, whereby the shooting of such an outstanding libertarian might trigger grave disturbances on that front. Suffice it to say that the communists posted placards on the trunks of the olive trees calling for Maroto to be executed, and the CNT people replied with other posters threatening to quit the front should their co-religionist be shot. So I proposed that the matter be placed before Court No. 6 of the Supreme Court of Justice, not that this was any more to the liking of the communists, because it was so done.'¹³

Let us say, in parentheses, for the sake of Maroto's standing in the eyes of history and to the discredit of his accusers, that when the war ended, and after the drama of the harbour at Alacant, Maroto, whom the communists had accused of being in cahoots with the enemy, was arrested and shot by the Francoists.

The same Supreme Court later cleared General Asensio who had been Largo Caballero's assistant as Under-Secretary at the Ministry of War. Asensio had been indicted and locked up in San Miguel de los Reyes over the capture of Málaga and following a campaign waged by almost every newspaper, *Solidaridad Obrera* foremost among them. The latter paper, following the absolution of Asensio, who was given a clean bill of health by such a highly placed court, reconsidered the virtues of this former accused. Upon being released, Asensio was to state at a public address, the following:

'The enemy is big: he stands for half of Spain with 10 million inhabitants, six million from Portugal, 40 million from Germany, and 35 million from Italy, giving a total of 91 million of a population versus some 12 million Spaniards loyal to the Republic.'

At the end of February, the reactionary news agencies reported the transformation of the 'Burgos Junta' into the full-fledged government of Spain, and on 21 March, in an address to the Reich, Adolf Hitler stated that in the Spanish war, Italy and Germany were at one in their resolve to 'assure the independence of nationalist Spain'. And so the following cabinet was formed in the rebel zone:

Premiership	General Franco
Vice-Premiership and External Relations	General Jordana
War	General Orgaz (or General Dávila)
Navy	Admiral Cervera
Air Force	General Kindelán
Home Affairs	Serrano Suñer
Public Order	General Martínez Anido
Public Education	Sáinz Rodríguez
Public Works	Alfonso Pina
Labour	González Bueno
Finance	Suances
Justice	Conde de Rodezno
Agriculture	Fernández Cuesta.

13. Máximo Muñoz, *Dos conductas: Indalecio Prieto y yo*, Mexico, 1952, p.177

Martínez Anido died on 24 December that year. The Vatican and Portugal recognised this government on 24 June.

On 1 April there was a measure of activity around the international labour movement. The IWA had held an Extraordinary Congress in Paris from 8 to 17 December 1937. It had been held at the suggestion of the CNT 'to examine the Spanish situation and adopt resolutions which might lead to direct intervention by the world's proletariat in solidarity and in defence of the Spanish proletariat's very own cause.' In addition to the Spanish CNT, there were direct representatives at the Congress from the anarcho-sindicalist unions of Sweden, Portugal, France, Holland, Italy, Chile, Germany, Belgium, Poland and Argentina. The IWW in the United States and Uruguay's FORU sent messages of support.

From the *Boletín de Información CNT-FAI* published in Barcelona on 31 December 1937, we reproduce the main resolutions of this IWA Congress:

'Worldwide Proletarian Front against Fascism. After hearing the report from the CNT, and having studied the Spanish situation and its international implications at length, the Congress decides:

To allow the CNT full scope to carry on with its plans and, under its responsibility, with the experiment in progress.

As a result of this decision, the Congress invites all of the sections of the IWA to assist the CNT in its mission, by whatever means they may adjudge the most appropriate to the situation in their respective countries, with a view to ensuring the speediest possible victory in the anti-fascist war and revolution in Spain.

The Congress grants the IWA Secretariat urgent powers to make overtures to the International Trade Union Federation with a view to organising a worldwide boycott of Italian, German, Portuguese, Japanese and Brazilian shipping, merchandise and produce, and possibly of these from elsewhere wherever fascism may attempt to gain a foothold. An approach will also be made to all workers at whatever affiliation in order to ensure support for this Section.

In the face of fascism and given cowardice of the democracies, this Extraordinary Congress resolves to foster the formation of an anti-fascist Workers' Alliance which, embracing all workers' organisations, may prescribe effective action that allows the mobilisation of all worker energies for the crushing of the imperialistic fascism which rides rough-shod over popular freedoms.

For its part, the IWA Secretariat shall immediately embark upon a study of a sweeping scheme for sabotaging and boycotting fascism. This scheme will be implemented simultaneously by all of the Sections of the IWA in so far as this may be feasible for them.

The Secretariat will have to take all necessary steps to publicise this decision, and to have it accepted by the labouring masses of every land, and to issue an appeal to them to put those steps into effect with the least possible delay.

Boycott will be no more than the opening shot of a plan of attack which the Secretariat will put to the sections and which each of these will implement on its home terrain, drawing inspiration from a general plan of action against fascism, the execution of which will have to be maintained until such time as that monstrous regime will have disappeared completely.

Mobilise the Working Masses against Non-Intervention. The Extraordinary Congress expresses its whole-hearted admiration for the Spanish comrades who have been battling against international fascism for the past 17 months.

It is convinced that victory will ultimately crown their efforts and that capitalism, of which fascism is the modern face, will be defeated in this decisive contest.

Pre-eminent among its concerns, the Congress places the restoration of all its international rights to lawful, anti-fascist Spain.

Consequently, the Congress determines that the IWA as a whole must take strenuous steps to secure the cessation of Non-Intervention (which is, in effect, merely the armed intervention of the fascist countries against anti-fascist Spain) and [to secure] the lifting

of the blockade and controls which merely prevent republican Spain from supplying and arming herself, whilst affording every sort of facility along those lines to the fascists.

The Congress thus determines that all IWA sections should strive to these ends: they should as a matter of urgency issue an energetic appeal to and mobilising the toiling masses in order to compel the so-called democratic governments to put an end to Non-Intervention, the controls and the blockade which paralyse the military action and economic activities of the anti-fascist forces.

Convinced that its decision will be well received by all workers marshalled within the IWA, the Congress asks them to put these decisions into effect everywhere with a lofty sense of self-discipline, which is the essential moral strength of our international movement, whose obvious wish is to afford as speedily and completely as possible, to the CNT and the Spanish revolutionary war, its total support and broadest assistance.'

The Congress's agreement to empower the IWA Secretariat to make overtures to the International Trade Union Federation (ITUF) was followed up by a meeting on 1 April 1938 in Paris between the secretariats of these two international labour unions. Judging by the press reports, the only outcome of this meeting was that the IWA representatives handed the ITUF representatives a document or technical draft scheme for a boycott and embargo on merchandise from the aggressor fascist countries. Once the document had been scrutinised by the latter, final guidelines would be thrashed out for its implementation.

These noble intentions never were realised.



Chapter Four: The Libertarian Movement's Crisis Within

The month of May saw a growing preoccupation with diplomatic activities. Overwhelmed by a defeatist outlook, government figures and scandalmongers were taken in by wishful thinking, the great balm of Iberia, or turned their eyes in the direction of the *deus ex machina* in Geneva.

The seat of the League of Nations had just seen rejected a proposal by the Spanish representative Alvarez del Vayo calling for a suspension of those parts of the Non-Intervention Agreement injurious to the interests of the rightful government of Spain. When it came to a vote, there were nine abstentions, including one British dominion (New Zealand). Nevertheless the government press made a song and dance about some supposed forward progress for Spain's cause. Another reason for contrived optimism was the equally alleged break-up of the Francoist rearguard. According to rumours in circulation, Yagüe had supposedly rebelled against Franco, was a prisoner or had taken his own life. The only certain fact was that General Cabanellas had died — in bed. The newspapers displayed a livelier interest in foreign policy issues than in domestic issues proper. The rosy ripple of rumours went so far as to exaggerate the difficulties of the British government, which was alleged to be on the brink of collapse under the assault of the opposition's 'terrible' attacks.

At the beginning of December 1937, the leader of the British Labour Party, Clement Attlee arrived in Spain at the invitation of the leader of the government. On 9 December, the conservatives put down a motion censuring him in the House of Commons — he was charged with having breached 'his undertaking to refrain from all activity contrary to the British Non-Intervention policy'. The issue had arisen out of a visit paid by Attlee to one of the International Brigades, specifically to a British company. A newspaper of the Brigade itself carried this message from Attlee's own pen:

'I am delighted to send my warmest greetings to the whole brigade and especially to the British company. We felt proud to learn of the high repute that it has earned. I can assure them of our admiration for their courage and devotion to the cause of liberty and social justice. I shall try to pass on what we have seen to our comrades in England. Workers of the world, unite!'

The incident had no further repercussions.

From time to time, government optimism made to cleanse the atmosphere of defeatism by re-floating the oxygen balloon of the miracle of the Marne. In the spring of 1918 the German armies which had freed themselves of the nightmare of the Eastern front through their peace with Russia, were marching determinedly westwards. On 21 March they breached the British lines and in four days reached Amiens. On 14 July they crossed the Marne, making for Paris. But on 18 July the Allied counter-offensive began. And within three months the war was won — with assistance.

Throughout 1938 several attempts were made to re-enact that great miracle of the First World War. The first one was in the month of May. Indeed on 25 May, a tremendous manoeuvre was begun in the Balaguer sector and in the Trespín basin. In the latter, the three brigades of the 26th Division occupied two towns and captured two battle-hardened enemy battalions, the Arapiles and the Cerinola battalions, which had participated in the major enemy offensives, especially in the Centre on the Madrid front and in the north, in breaking through the famed 'ring of steel' around Bilbao. The war booty taken by the 26th Division in the May operations was as follows — the towns of Bast and San Román de Abella were captured; 1,000 prisoners were taken, including 15 sergeants and 13 subalterns; upwards of half a million cartridges; 1,500 rifles; 12 mortars of the 50 and 81 calibres; 20 machine-guns; 20 automatic rifles; and 5,000 hand grenades; a stores depot, a large amount of pack animals and 50,000 pesetas in rebel currency. The communist

Trueba, who was to have attacked on the right flank of the CNT troops met with complete failure, aggravated by the confusion created among his own troops who, in error, attacked one another, resulting in a large number of dead and wounded. In the course of this operation, there was a no less resounding failure by Del Barrio, the commander of the 27th Division facing the Balaguer bridgehead, and also by Lister and El Campesino on the same front: their troops went into action most ostentatiously.

In the rearguard, the political controversy had abated somewhat. Recruitment of volunteers and the frantic campaign to construct fortifications and shelters continued. Worthy of note is the news item carried by the press at the time, to the effect that, under an order included in the *Diario Oficial del Ministerio de Defensa* cavalry colonel Segismundo Casado had been appointed head of the Army of the Centre, under the command of the chief of the Centre region army group. Special courts were taking a dim view of desertion and defeatism. And the entire press was accusing a Fifth Column of speculators of speculating upon the food shortages. To ease the hunger beginning to gnaw at the populace, a chimerical increase in output, a policy of fixed price levels and an end to favouritism were advocated. According to *Solidaridad Obrera*:

'War needs with the absorption of most young people into the ranks, had presented the Libertarian Youth Movement with a problem of an organisational nature: the problem of replacing those cadres scattered by the mobilisation, but where hitherto it had militants aplenty, today the only ones left are those who, by dint of excessive youth, are of no use in the direct activities of our war.'¹

This point was laboured in the same edition:

'By reason of the war, the unions had been left bereft of militant. Some have offered up their lives at the start of the revolution and in the trenches, face to face with the enemy, fighting like lions: others occupy posts in government circles in loyalist Spain. The bulk of our youthful membership is on the fields of battle doing its duty, resisting, attacking and filling with glory the historic pages of the proletarian cause. One has to acknowledge with pride that in the unions there is a manpower shortage, a shortage of active and talented militants, whom the struggle against fascism has wrenched away from us. Leadership and administrative posts fall to three or four comrades left behind in the rearguard by reason of their age.'²

And from time to time there was a revival of the usual demands of the Catalan CNT vis à vis the Generalitat government. As *Solidaridad Obrera* pointed out:

'The CNT, which has been some time in the Generalitat government, did so in order to be of service to Catalonia, without being called catalaniste. It was a common endeavour which needed to be made regardless of labels of party political considerations. Our representatives, Castilians some of them, did fruitful work on behalf of the Catalan people and on behalf of anti-fascist unity. No one will dare dispute that. Nonetheless, it seems that some have forgotten that in these times, co-operation in good faith is useful: more than useful...necessary and indispensable: and that exclusivist attitudes are injurious and harmful for everybody.'³

In matters military, there was a wistful harking back to the old guerrilla wars. This was a cunning way of exalting the glorious militias in comparison with the bruised and battered Popular Army.

The running in this campaign was made by none other than the Peninsular Committee of the FAI.

1. *Solidaridad Obrera*, 26 May 1938

2. *Solidaridad Obrera*, 26 May 1938

3. *Solidaridad Obrera*, 29 May 1938

'A guerrilla army forward of the advance positions, infiltrating the enemy camp, cutting lines of communication, blowing up bridges, attacking convoys, water supplies and villages and raising rebel bands in the enemy's rear; nomads and warriors reliving feats from our past, carrying out harrying exercises, affording no rest to the foreigner, nor to the traitor who invited him to trample the blessed soil of his homeland which we alone love, we, the "anti-patriots" as they describe us...Let us follow the example of the Moors of Africa who waged that sort of warfare: of the Chinese who are even now doing so, and of our legendary heroes of the War of Independence, the Carlist war, the Reconquest from Covadonga to Granada...We need a regular army, who would doubt it? But we also have need of these guerrillas who, by keeping the enemy constantly at full stretch, erode his morale and drive him to distraction, forcing him to divert his forces.'⁴

On instructions from the Executive Committee of Catalonia, the veteran militant Josep Viadiu took over as manager of *Solidaridad Obrera*, a position which had been occupied by Jacinto Torryho since late in 1936. The CNT's Catalan-language daily, *Catalunya*⁵, ceased publication and gave way to CNT which, like a paper of the same name issued in Madrid, came to be the mouthpiece of the National Committee; it was managed and administered by Acracio Bartolomé and Fermin Arce, respectively.

On 31st of that month there was the awful bombing of Granollers, which left 100 dead and 450 injured.

But as we have noted above, one of the most worrying problems for the civilian population was the ongoing shortage and expense of foodstuffs, a process aggravated in Catalonia when that region was cut off militarily from the Centre zone and especially from Levante, and because of the government's pernicious supply policy. Those sectors most closely connected with the government sought to make capital out of the growing misery among the people, aiming to shift responsibility for the predicament on to the collectives and most especially blaming it on the Workers' Control committees. *Solidaridad Obrera*, in an effort to get to the nub of the problem, revealed the flaws in the revolutionary legislation, legislation in which, moreover, such pride had been taken.

'The Workers' Control Committees which, in accordance with the decrees of the Generalitat on 24 October 1936 and 18 January 1937, operate in firms which remain in the private ownership sector, cannot be responsible for the situation of their respective employers in the unwarranted price-fixing which the authorities have so properly been cracking down on.

We give our approval to the campaign begun against the runaway speculation to which shameless traders, whose sole aim is to hinder us in our struggle against fascism, have been devoting themselves.

But let us add straight away that we are greatly pained that there is a desire to use the issue to reflect discredit upon the new regime of collectivisations and worker control which Catalonia, with the assent of every anti-fascist sector, from Acció Catalana through to the FAI, has sought to equip itself with.

Indeed: under the established legal provisions, what possible hand could the control committees have in the fixing of sale prices and in the establishment of the margin of profit to be charged on goods? Neither in the Collectivisations Decree nor in the one issued later prescribing the role of these bodies can we discover any clause affording them any role in this.

Quite the contrary: Article 13 of the Decree of 18 January 1937 specifically states: "The employer's representatives will assume charge of the conclusion of contracts, of the custody and use of finances, of the use of the firm's signature, etc.", which is to say that

4. *Servicio de Información de la Prensa del Comité Peninsular de la FAI*, 27 May 1938. In July 1936 well-trained groups of guerrillas could have undermined the rearguard of the enemy, but the CNT and the FAI had only schooled its fighters in barricade-building and street fighting, the insufficiency of which was observed in all the pre-1936 insurrections. In 1938, it was too late to remedy this.

5. This evening paper first appeared on 22 February 1937. Belatedly, the CNT recognised the need for a newspaper in Catalan.

the employer to all intents remains just that and he alone bears all direct and delegated responsibility.

Furthermore, section (g) of Article 9 of the same Decree states that one of the things the employer will have to submit for approval to the Control Committee will be "the account of expenditure and income", which is to say, that all inspection takes place after the fact, without the workers' representatives having been able in any way to initiate anything in this respect.

We believe that these points needed to be spelled out so as to avoid misleading public opinion and, where feasible, the application of sanctions.

To finish, we will add only that we find it extremely odd that, in defiance of all logic and clarity on this matter, the campaign which some have sought to whip on this issue has managed to find an echo in workers' newspapers which ought rather to be the ones primarily concerned to defend the workers' gains.⁶

But the political event of that May was Dr. Negrin's so-called '13 Points'. The press on 1 May reported this important ministerial statement which explained the government's war aims. The document read as follows:

'The government of National Union which enjoys the confidence of the parties and trade union organisations of loyalist Spain and which represents those Spanish citizens subject to constitutional legality solemnly declares, for the benefit of its compatriots and the information of the world that its war aims are:

1. To guarantee Spain's absolute independence and total integrity. A Spain wholly free of all foreign interference, of whatever nature and provenance, with its territory and its possessions intact and safe from any attempted dismemberment, expropriation and mortgage, retaining the protectorate areas allotted to Spain by international agreements, until such time as said agreements are amended with her participation and consent. Conscious of the obligations inherent to her tradition and her history, Spain will tighten with other Hispanic countries the bonds imposed by a common stock and the sense of universality which has always been a characteristics of our people.

2. Liberation of our territory from the foreign military forces which have invaded it, as well as from those elements which have journeyed to Spain since July 1936 and which on the pretext of technical cooperation, interfere in or seek to dominate Spanish juridical and economic life to their own advantage.

3. A Popular Republic, represented by a vigorous state which rests upon democratic principles, which acts through a government endowed with full authority conferred by the universal suffrage of its citizens and which is the symbol of firm executive power answerable at all times to the guidelines and plans laid down by the Spanish people.

4. The juridical and social format of the Republic will be the work of the national will freely expressed, by means of a plebiscite which is to take place just as soon as fighting ends, conducted with every guarantee, without restriction or limitation, with any who participate in it being protected against any possible reprisals.

5. Respect for regional rights without injury to Spanish unity. Protection and encouragement of the development of the personality and characteristics of the peoples that make up Spain, as required by a historic fact which, far from signifying a decomposition of the nation, represents the best adhesive between its component elements.

6. The Spanish state will assure the citizen of his full rights in civic and social life, of freedom of conscience and will guarantee the free exercise of religious beliefs and practices.

7. The state will guarantee property, lawfully and legitimately acquired, within limits which the supreme national interest and protection for producer elements may

6. *Solidaridad Obrera*, 26 May 1938.

impose. Without prejudice to individual initiative, it will prevent the accumulation of wealth that might lead to either individual or collective exploitation and impair the state's overseer activity in economic and social life. To this end the spread of smallholdings will be encouraged, family possessions are guaranteed and encouragement will be given to all measures which may lead to an economic, moral and racial betterment for the labouring classes. The property and legitimate interests of those foreigners who have not abetted the rebellion, will be respected, and with an eye to appropriate indemnification, damages not purposely caused in the course of the war will be looked into. To investigate such damage, the government of the Republic has already established the Foreign Claims Commission.

8. A thoroughgoing agrarian reform which may put paid to the old, aristocratic, semi-feudal property-holding which, being devoid of a sense of the humane and any national and patriotic sense, has always been the greatest obstacle to development of the country's great potential. The new Spain to be established upon a broad-based and solid peasant democracy, master of the land upon which it works.

9. The state will guarantee the rights of the worker through advanced social legislation in accordance with the specific needs of Spanish life and economics.

10. A primary and fundamental preoccupation of the state will be the cultural, physical and moral uplifting of the race.

11. The Spanish army in the nation's service will be free of all ideological and party hegemony and the people must see in it a reliable instrument for the defence of its freedoms and independence.

12. The Spanish state reaffirms its constitutional doctrine of renouncing war as an instrument of national policy. Spain, faithful to her pacts and treaties, will support the policy symbolically represented in the League of Nations, and, as a Mediterranean power, claims a place in the comity of nations, prepared at all times to co-operate in the strengthening of collective security and in the overall defence of peace. To make an effective contribution to this policy, Spain will develop and intensify its defensive potentiality.

13. A full amnesty for all those Spaniards desirous of cooperating in the immense task of reconstructing and making Spain great. After a gory contest such as the one bloodying our land, in which the ancient virtues of heroism and the idealism of the race have resurfaced, anyone who fails to curtail and overwhelm any notion of revenge and reprisal so as to embrace instead a concerted effort of sacrifice and toil, which all we sons of Spain have a duty to make for the sake of her future will be committing a crime of treason against our country's destiny.'

And how did the Libertarian Movement react to such a sensational document? If we judge by its public declarations, the reaction was one of absolute compliance. On 10 May, the CNT-UGT Liaison Committee issued the following statement:

'Our Popular Front government, in its recent programme, summarised into 13 points, has encapsulated the fundamental requirements of our struggle: complete and absolute national independence; defence before the world, and from vanguard positions, of the present and future of civilised humanity, sparing neither effort nor sacrifice, winning for our homeland, in the community of nations, the position which she deserves, defended with collective interest: the right to dispose of the destinies of our country and that it may be the national will that awards the Republic those juridical and social structures and substructures for living together which may be deemed humane and just.

Such aims provide the wherewithal and the strength to desist from our efforts until victory for our cause is achieved. And as the struggle to the end, or to victory, expresses in words the steadfast will of the proletariat that we represent, so this National CNT-UGT Liaison Committee identifies with our Popular Front government and affirms and looks upon those declarations as its own.'

Did that statement speak for the whole of the Libertarian Movement? On 3 May, the FAI Peninsular Committee issued a circular (no. 17) to its Regional Committees, wherein it stated:

'The note made public by the government with regard to the aims pursued by the Republic in this war represents a momentous document in that it enshrines a line of conduct which to all intents signifies a return to the regime existing prior to 19 July, with all of the implications that might have for the proletariat. This restoration process, which is being pursued in a shameful manner, doubtless has to accelerate now in a manner open and above board. There is no doubt that the basic motive behind this declaration resides in the difficult situation of our war and is focused upon inclining international policy to some extent in favour of anti-fascist Spain. It is a question of making more or less definite offers to Franco-British capitalism so as to secure the hoped-for shift. But there can be no doubt that it also fits in with the wishes, harboured for some time back by those presently in government, to erase any hint of revolutionary transformation in Spain. Then again, given the international situation with its imperialist forces at work, it is logically to be expected that, in the event of such a shift by the democratic powers in favour of the Republic, this would take the shape of an outright intervention in our domestic arrangements, with all of the assurances that the Anglo-French bourgeoisie will seek to impose in favour of its interests.'

The circular, after stating that the government note was accepted 'as a necessary fact, something imposed by superior forces' against which the FAI could not openly offer opposition without causing a real catastrophe to anti-fascist Spain, concluded by saying that the anarchist organisation would have wished the CNT not to share in the responsibility for the note. But that the FAI 'free of such commitments, should and can go on being the vehicle of anarchism's revolutionary aspirations and concerns.'

On 6 May, the same Peninsular Committee sent out its Circular No. 18. According to that circular, at a cabinet meeting on 27 April, Negrín had announced that an extraordinary cabinet meeting would be held shortly to debate and agree a programme of government. And that the drafting of the programme had to take place within that cabinet, since intervention by political and union sectors would make the task unduly laborious. Nonetheless, it was hoped to have some knowledge of the draft prior to its being voted upon so that debate would be possible. But by 30 April the programme was definitively approved without the text's having been seen beforehand by the National Committee of the CNT.

The circular went on:

'From point 3, which prescribes a parliamentary regime, up to point 13, which promises an amnesty for Franco's supporters, the entire content is violently at odds not only with our ideas (which we did not expect to see reflected in a governmental document) but also with the established reality in antifascist Spain since 19 July. Especially telling in the document is that which is missing from it. We find neither the merest allusion to 19 July, to the counter-revolutionary forces which then rose up in arms against the people and were radically eliminated from public spaces nor do we find in the draft any formula guaranteeing the gains of the labouring and peasant class, such as the right to collective operation and worker control of production. Instead, the State undertakes to guarantee property rights, individual initiative, the free exercise of religious practices, to encourage the development of small ownership, to indemnify foreign capitalism, etc., etc. ...'

The view of the CNT National Committee on the matter was reflected in two circulars — no. 9, dated 1 May and no. 12, dated 10 May. It was reported in the former that at the cabinet meeting held on 30 April, the premier had presented the cabinet statement to his ministers. The CNT representative, Segundo Blanco, set out the views of his organisation, namely, that the note, in view of its importance, should be made

known to organisation and party leaders. Negrin opposed this, alleging that it had to be released to the public that very day and delivered to the British Embassy. That the aim of it was to show the outside world, especially France and England, 'that there was no extremism nor red peril here', but merely a struggle for an advanced Republic. That to submit it to the parties and organisations would be to whip up a debate, for no one would find his doctrinal viewpoints reflected in the text. As to the political impact of the note, the circular added that, that same day, the ministers of France and Great Britain were examining the Spanish question in depth, and that France, in negotiating with Britain over recognition of Italy's conquest of Abyssinia had imposed the withdrawal of volunteers from Spain as a precondition for talks.

The circular continued:

'Our representative, in keeping with the mandate issued to him, withheld his vote, not on account of the content of the declaration, which he did not dispute, but because it would first be circulated to the organisations.'

And so the note was endorsed, with the leader of the government specifying that it was not to be taken literally, since, more than anything else it was a statement for effect aimed at the outside world, devised for the meeting in London and for the purpose of providing ammunition for the opposition in the House of Commons.

In its Circular No. 12, the National Committee set about making a thoroughgoing analysis of the 13 points in order to show that there was there 'plenty of scope for advanced achievements' and to give lie to the negative arguments of the defeatists. And then it dissected the 13 points one by one:

1. Assertion constantly reiterated by us since 19 July and by which, if anyone can feel themselves upset by it, it will be communist elements when it says: free of all foreign interference of whatever nature and provenance.

2. We have to agree with and subscribe to the text. But for clarity's sake we will point out that in referring to technicians, expression is being given to a formula accepted by the government for application to the problem of controls upon the withdrawal of volunteers. The problem of technicians has been raised because it is not enough that some fine day the volunteers may be withdrawn and "technicians", who swamp the fascist zone in war as in civilian activities, remain. In a declaration one cannot refrain from placing this point on the record, and that is our demand.

3. At the September 1937 plenum it was agreed that we would adopt as our own and would espouse the thesis of electoral consultation under the aegis of a "federal democratic socialist republic". In the guidelines submitted by us to the UGT and adopted by the National Plenum of Regional Committees, we inserted one clause which encapsulated the September agreement. The government's declaration changes the tack and speaks of a Popular Republic, which does not conflict with our thesis.

4. One consequence of our agreements as spelled out above is acceptance of electoral consultation. It is understood that once the struggle is over, of course, things will not be "as in the old days", but rather that there will be the usual necessary interval required by an election. But there is a further point. Abroad, hopes are entertained of imposing mediation upon us, proceeding with a plebiscite which may determine our future arrangements. This would be sponsored by the League of Nations and would guarantee defeat for the will of the people of Spain. But will the same thing happen if the government of the Republic handles it? We already know what elections mean if the person in government wants the people's wishes to be acted upon. This being so, in addition to this business of a plebiscite being something we accept – upon its outcome depends the structure and social advances to be stamped upon the country (the advances will be all the more notable when popular feeling triumphs and begins to legislate) — this clause indicates a heading off of Britain's ambition to mediate. We say: let us proceed with the plebiscite with assurances for us all, through the government of the Republic, refusing to let outsiders mount it. This is a follow-up to point 4.

5. What might we add to this item? It is our doctrine, our outlook. Federalism, identity and respect for the characteristics of peoples. Here too, if anyone could complain, it would be the communists. Not we, if we wish to be consistent.

6. Could any other declaration be made? It is *de rigueur* that in any programme type declaration we register our respect for religions, when we know that today this plays an important role, especially in Britain and America. In both countries it is tremendously important that we win Catholic opinion to our side. Working in this field, José Bergamin⁷, in America, is doing sterling support work which is not, in its outcome, unconnected with the possible rescinding of the neutrality laws in America, and which has such a tremendously significant part to play in our war.

7. Of revolutionary importance, since it has to do with the economy and property. We should have liked a statement on socialisation, collectivisation etc., but could we have forgotten that this is the "nub" of our foreign problem? Can we suddenly ignore what we have lost sight of, that neither Britain, nor France nor America nor any other democracy can go for socialisation, welcome nor assist in the success of a regime of collectivisation, socialisation or even nationalisation run by the workers, on account of what this precedent would mean and its implications in economic and revolutionary terms? If we want to be consistent with our deepest convictions and with actual experience, we necessarily have to acknowledge the existence of the aforementioned factors. And to conclude that the government of the Republic could make no other declaration as far as the outside world goes, in view of the above considerations, that the one which it has made on this point. But let us dissect it, and, despite these crucial considerations, we will discover elements that open up a route to a truly reborn future, without our lapsing back into the situation that existed prior to July.

It says: "The state will guarantee property lawfully and legitimately acquired within limits which the supreme national interest (and a supreme national interest can mean as much as one wants it to mean), and protection for producer elements (a protection which could be taken to unexpected lengths)"! And it goes on..."without prejudice to individual initiative, it will prevent the amassing of wealth that might lead to exploitation. Let us, to bring out its importance, repeat this prohibition on the sort of capital accumulation that may lead to exploitation." And it does not even say that it may lead, but rather that it can lead. How much might be made of this! And this point goes on: "To this end the spread of smallholdings will be encouraged, family possessions are guaranteed and encouragement will be given to all measures which may lead to an economic, moral and racial betterment for the labouring classes."

Since 19 July we have been harping on the message "let us respect small property", on account of the reckoning that such a declaration was crucial lest we come into confrontation with a huge mass of interests which would ally themselves with fascism unless we did not respect them. The declaration, and let us be clear, does not say respect but encouragement. But is not that perhaps a proper, logical, consistent and necessary declaration on the part of a republican government? Is it not the mark and the norm of the advanced democracies? Is it not perhaps that in Mexico, regarded as the most advanced country in revolutionary terms, not counting Russia? But then a declaration follows that measures will be encouraged that may lead to economic and moral betterment for the workers. How much might not be encompassed in this respect? How far might one not travel down that road, meeting overlapping points aplenty with our aspirations which can also be encapsulated theoretically and practically as securing improvement and constant betterment for the working masses? It then goes on to talk about respecting foreign interests and of compensation. Well, that is another declaration that we have already made. But even if we had not made it, could the government have avoided making it when we are dependent upon those

7. Born in Madrid in 1895, he was an active supporter of the Catholic-republican movement during the Second Republic, editing the journal *Cruz y Raya*. Like many intellectuals, he gravitated towards the PCE during the civil war. Perhaps in an attempt to ingratiate himself with his new comrades, he excelled himself in his tirades against the POUM and heterodox communists. After the civil war he went into exile in Mexico.

foreigners, obliged to ensure that they do not fall out with us, asking favours of them day in and day out, to ensure that they do not close the frontier, because if they do close it the war will be over with fascism triumphant? This clause is no obstacle to social achievements in economic matters.

8. Another important point, this. Let us dissect this one too. It states, after asserting that the old aristocracy has been done away with, "the new Spain is to be established upon a broad-based and solid peasant democracy, master of the land upon which it works." There is no doubt that we can endorse the implications of the above phrase. Peasant democracy — which we have never opposed — "master of the land upon which it works", we find gratifying because it does not specify — it speaks in the plural — if the peasant is to be the owner of the land which he works individually or collectively, and thus collectivist arrangements may subsist in the countryside, with their peasant members being deemed owners of the land that they work.

9. Advanced social legislation congruent with the requirement of life and economics. A repetition of what we said, the UGT and the CNT, in other words, in the bases which we signed.

10. We cannot possibly raise any objection to this, since the moral and physical betterment of the people's is one of the premises of anarchism.

11. A repetition of what we have been calling for to counter the intrigue and expansionism of the communists: a hegemony-less army of the people, in the people's service.

12. A peace declaration indicative of pretensions to military might. The only debatable item is affiliation to the useless League of Nations. But was there any point in seeking confrontation and making a concrete statement to it when we had recourse to it in order to make our voice heard? If Geneva is to be taken to task, this is not the proper time to do so, on the government's part at least.

The last point, much talked about. Let us dissect this one also. It says: "A full amnesty for all those Spaniards desirous of cooperating in the immense task of reconstructing and making Spain great." This declaration is an important one as far as the outside world goes by virtue of the altruistic content which cannot be neglected by a government that wants to be regarded as victorious. And it is of importance in the rebel zone in that it offers hope to those who daily confront the Italo-German invasion. One need only follow incidents in the enemy camp to realise the scale being assumed by the intestinal struggle between Falangists, *Requetés*, *cedistas* and foreigners. It is excellent policy to foment this. To be sure, there are many ways of doing that, including more accelerated and efficacious ways. It will be seen that these are employed. But it does not preclude another little addition. And the point is just that.

One more thing: if the war continues and we take the territory that is in rebel hands, or if his rearguard collapses and we overrun it, victorious, who will restrain the people's impulses? Who will stay the avenging arms? The people which has been two years under the fascist yoke, made serfs by invaders will, on the day it finds itself free, call to accounts and take action beyond what is anticipated in the law or in writing. This is inevitable. It is unimaginable that it should come about otherwise. At least the Libertarian Movement can spare a thought for nothing except victory. It is not permissible for our membership even to imagine that our war can be concluded by mediation. Others may think it, not we. Will it come to pass? That cannot be foretold. But we must be firmly convinced not. And reckon on victories.

Consequently this point is for pure effect. The document is adorned with phrases. In practical terms, we must agree that point 13 is worthless in that implementation of it is not feasible.'

The CNT National Committee's reasoning suffered from a formal deficiency that had grave underlying implications. Justification of the points analysed took as its premise a series of precedents or *faits accomplis*: What is stated in the note is what we ourselves have been saying since such and such a date, anything beyond that fits in with what was agreed at a plenum of the Movement; a constituted government cannot say

anything else: to say otherwise would be to put us in a bad light with France and Britain; the intention to socialise, collectivise and indeed nationalise etc., cannot be made in the name of a democratic state.

Flawed reasoning. One cannot cite one mistake to excuse another one. In any case, one ought to demonstrate that no such mistake is present in the comparison one is taking as the basis of one's reasoning. One has to show that what was said or agreed yesterday was correct and suited to reality. Only then might it furnish the groundwork for a rational construct. A democratic government, any government is precluded from making certain declarations. Correct. What is not so correct is that any organisation may make them through the mouth of that government. If it comprises part of it, yes: but in that case it would have to examine the logic of belonging to such a government. By concentrating simply on precedent anything might be justified, and more. Justification might be found for the following historic event, to take just one.

On 15 April, the *Gaceta* carried a decree establishing a General Commissariat of Electricity. The Defence Minister offered the post of Commissar-General to the former minister Joan Peiró who, by agreement with the CNT National Committee, accepted the appointment. But on 28 April, Negrín himself issued an order dissolving the Unified Electrical Services of Catalonia. In keeping with the order, the Commissar-General of Electricity would appoint state auditors to each of the undertakings that automatically recovered their individual identities, that is, their erstwhile status as limited companies, and he would disband the Company Councils and Workers' Control Committees.

Under the logic of the precedent or the *fait accompli* to which the CNT National Committee subscribed, Negrín's manoeuvre would be fully justified. But not everyone subscribed to this adventitious form of reasoning.

The Confederation registered its strenuous objections to such a blatant assault upon the Collectivisation Decree. Catalaniste political groups did likewise against what they took to be central government interference in Catalonia's autonomous interests.

On 7 May the FAI's Catalan Regional Committee forwarded to the Peninsular Committee a letter in which it registered its wholehearted agreement with the contents of Circular No. 17. The letter sent to the FAI's Peninsular Committee by the CNT National Committee, dated 10 May, adopted a very different tone:

'To the Peninsular Committee of the FAI — Dear comrades: In view of the latest Circulars forwarded by the FAI Peninsular Committee to its Regional Committees, this National Committee finds itself compelled to deal with the matter of orientation of the membership. We must stop seeking to pit one Committee against others, with some appearing to be more revolutionary and more consistent than the rest, for this will show itself as divisions dangerous to the integrity of the Libertarian Movement.

The Secretariat of this Committee, having got together with delegates from its Regional Committees, has concluded that it was vital that a meeting be held of the three National Committees of the Libertarian Movement and that developments be dealt with clearly so as to see if it is possible to avert the continuance of events whose outcome must be of benefit only to political adversaries and to the enemy.

In consequence of this, we invite a delegation — five or six delegates from this Committee — to the gathering which is to take place tomorrow, Wednesday, at 11 am, at the offices of the secretary of this National Committee.

In confident anticipation of your attendance, cordial greetings on behalf of the National Committee. Mariano Vázquez.'

At the meeting the FAI was represented by Germinal de Sousa, Pedro Herrera, Manuel Escorza and Jacobo Prince, the FIJL by Lorenzo Iñigo, Serafin Aliaga, and José Cabañas and the CNT by Mariano Vázquez, Galo Díez, Laborda, Gallego Crespo, Manuel López, Juan Arnalda, Delio Alvarez, Francesc Isgleas and Avelino Entrilgo.

According to the minutes kept by Galo Díez, the discussion was quite heated. The minutes were rejected by the FAI Peninsular Committee in a letter of 14 May to the

CNT National Committee on the grounds that they had been drafted 'in an adequate and confused form', and it had resolved not to endorse them even as 'a reliable *précis* of the discussions at the meeting.' At the meeting, the FIJL Peninsular Committee had played the peacemaker's role and, according to the minutes, a proposition from the Committee comprised of the following points had been approved there:

'1. That for the sake of the union of the Libertarian Movement generally, none of the three National Committees may issue to their organisations circulars or writings which imply an affront to the conduct and standpoint of any of the three organisations of the Movement, and that, should any of the Movement's organisations be at odds at any time and in any circumstances, the organisations' National Committees should come together, jointly to have full discussion and to reconcile differences in outlook on what problems may exist, to prescribe and adhere to a homogenous line of conduct and policy for the whole Libertarian Movement.

2. Meanwhile, and on a regular basis, that the Political Section of the National Committee, with its triangular representation (CNT-FAI-FIJL) be the one which, upon examining the suggestions and reports of a political nature, lays down the guidelines to be followed by the Libertarian Movement through its three National Committees.'

To its members, the FAI issued a *resumé* of its contributions to the aforementioned meeting and claimed to have stated at this its intention:

'not to accept control over our attitudes and positions, since our organisation is the only one called upon to inform us as to the suitability or unsuitability of a stance adopted by the Peninsular Committee, and as regards the dispatch of reports or circulars, we have nothing to submit before other committees outside of the FAI, since we have no wish to have prior control of the reports or circulars that they may issue to their bodies.'

It also spelled out its readiness to participate in the National Policy Commission:

'provided that it be a truly efficient organ and not what it has been to date: that all policy issues are submitted to it, upon which it alone may report, draft proposals and offer advice, so that the National Committees may then decide upon them. And thus, chastened by a period of inadequate performance by the Political Section of the CNT's National Committee, we declare our readiness to participate, provided we receive these assurances.'

On 12 May, at an ordinary meeting of the Popular Front, the PSOE moved that a vote of confidence be passed in the ministerial declaration. The FAI's representative refused for the moment to endorse this, alleging ignorance of the opinion of his Committee, and he confined himself to requesting a copy of the aforementioned note. On that very day the Peninsular Committee issued a circular, no. 23, to its Regional Committees, wherein it stated:

'to demand of us an unconditional vote of support for this "Declaration", when we were not consulted prior to its drafting and release by the government, strikes us as unduly demanding, and we take the line that they are requiring of us a sacrifice greater than we can deliver. It is already enough that we should tolerate said Declaration without registering a public objection...

...The Peninsular Committee, realising perfectly the importance and seriousness of this situation, and before delivering a definitive opinion of the Popular Front, urgently calls upon the Regional Committees to let us know by telegram their feelings on the matter broached here, within three days at most.'

The FAI's Catalan Regional Committee, on the grounds that in Catalonia there was a Libertarian Movement at one in its conduct and outlook, left its reply up to the Executive

Committee of the region. And this, in a letter dated 15 May to the Peninsular Committee, summarised its reply to Circular No. 23, in the following points:

1. The 13 points are a declaration made by government with an eye to the outside world, which makes it obligatory that it be put to all its component parties and organisations.

2. The implementation of the 13 points domestically hinges upon an end to the war and the establishment of a government or broadly democratic government policy.

3. Commentary upon and dissemination of the 13 points on the domestic scene would be prejudicial to their implementation and would lead to profound disagreements because there is no proportional, democratic sharing of the political power of the state.

4. The 13 points do not constitute matter for the Popular Front to make propaganda from, unless the Popular Front first organises a proportional, democratic sharing of the political power of the state.

We have met the requirement made of the Regional Committee of the CNT and of the FAI by the National and Peninsular Committees in their respective circulars, and hereby set out is the outlook and position of the Libertarian Movement of Catalonia. Fraternal greetings to you, on behalf of the Libertarian Movement of Catalonia: Acting Chairman, Josep Xena; Secretary, Fidel Miró.

There can be no more graphic expression of the fact that what mattered to this Executive Committee was not the counter-revolutionary content of the 13 points, but the prospect of 'proportional and democratic sharing of the political power of the state.' But upon seeing this reply, the Peninsular Committee badgered its Regional Committee in Catalonia (16 May):

'With all due respect on our part for the opinion set out by the Executive Committee of Catalonia and however important it may be, we, the FAI Peninsular Committee are concerned to know your specific opinion as far as this matter is concerned, even though it may be, as we imagine, the same as that put to us by the Executive Committee of Catalonia.'

In point of fact, the reply from the FAI's Catalan Regional Committee, dated 17 May and signed by its secretary Josep Xena, wholly reiterated the sentiments expressed by the Executive Committee. The reply from the Asturian Regional, based in Catalonia since the complete loss of the north, was openly favourable to concession:

'We also accept as monumental the note containing the Government's 13 points, but not that the note signifies a return to the state of affairs obtaining on 19 July 1936. Although we also declare that the note cannot meet the revolutionary aspirations of the FAI. But this does not diminish the fact that it espouses an extraordinary position vis à vis the war and concerning victory.'

Aragón, on the other hand, took the same line as the Peninsular Committee. Not until 27 May was a reply to the same effect received from the Centre Regional Committee, by which time the Peninsular Committee had already made its decision.

On the suggestion of the Executive Committee of Catalonia, a meeting of the Political Section of the CNT National Committee was held on the evening of 17 May. As Executive Committee members, the meeting was attended by Germinal Esgleas, Francesc Isgleas and García Oliver; the CNT was represented by Luque, Prieto and Vázquez; the FIJL by Cabañas and Serafin Aliaga; the FAI by Germinal de Sousa and Jacobo Prince. In the light of the replies received from its Regional Committees, the Peninsular Committee had met that very morning to consider the matter. In the event of the delegations at the joint meetings taking the line that the FAI should endorse the Popular Front note, it would accede to this, but with a solemn declaration that the anarchist organisation in no way abjured any of its views.

That same Peninsular Committee, in a Circular of 27 May, summarised the business of this meeting of the Political Section.

'We attended the aforementioned meeting and found that all of the delegations represented argued that the FAI's Peninsular Committee should not withhold its signature from the National Popular Front's note, supporting the 13 points.

For our part we once again set out our by now well-known views concerning the government note and argued extensively, denying that the FAI's dissenting stance would compromise the movement, in that we took the view that it would bring it greater prestige overall when it was found that the CNT and the FAI were two distinct organisations and that, at a given point, they might present themselves in public with differing opinions on the same issue...

But in view of the insistence of the delegations present, though not sharing their views and getting round the FAI's responsibility in all that was said, and without prejudice to raising the issue again when opportune, we declared that we would endorse the Popular Front's note.'

That note, as published in the press on 19 May, read as follows:

'The note in which our government has just encapsulated the war aims of anti-fascist Spain, enjoys, as is only logical, the support of the Popular Front which sees reflected in it the aims so insistently voiced by us and so cunningly negated by our foes within and without.

Spain — the authentic Spain — which rallies under the republican banner, is fighting for the supremacy of the civil power, transgressed by the military revolt. This is a fight for her independence, upon which the fascist traitors have fixed a price and for the personal liberty of her citizens in every facet of ideology and respectable beliefs, whether timid or forward-looking: for respect for property that is not based on exploitation of the worker, for a people's army, for the people and not for sectarianism, or for any leader cult (caudillismo), and for human generosity. In other words she fights for her moral and material growth, leaving the way wide open for boundless political and social progress, founded exclusively upon the free determination of the country.

The offshoots of the Popular Front have, in this government note, a superb pathfinder and working guide. From this moment forth, the actions of Spanish anti-fascists should be geared to ensuring that all may understand and act upon this code of conduct, and the National Committee wholeheartedly invites them so to act.'

The always latent internal crisis of the Libertarian Movement had grown worse as a consequence of the events of May 1937, or rather of the 'pacification' of those events. The 'ceasefire' order had been followed by an ongoing demolition of popular gains, and some militants were beginning to appreciate that if they continued along that road, what remained of those gains and the very life of the Libertarian Movement had their days numbered. Daily, more and more important ground was being lost. The movement was, to all intents, living on borrowed time. For a time, though, there had been the hope that the war might be won. But come the Aragón disaster, the inevitable conclusion of the fighting was taking shape clearly in the minds of many. And, albeit belatedly, a timid backlash was emerging from some libertarian militants who hitherto had stubbornly refused to acknowledge certain facts of life. In writings and speeches it had become fashionable to take to task the slightest wavering of belief in the infallible dogma of victory ('we libertarian militants are prohibited even from imagining the possibility of defeat'); but when this object of winning the war to which everything had been sacrificed — the lives of militants and the most sacred principles — and for which unspeakable humiliations had been endured, was dealt blows as rude and repeated as the enemy's recapture of Teruel, followed by invasion of Aragón, Levante and Catalonia, some militants wound up wondering whether there was anything left to sacrifice or to sacrifice it for.

As the conviction that the war was lost took root in the minds of those militants, there occurred storms like the one we have just outlined. Two tendencies had surfaced: the CNT National Committee, on the one hand, which had sacrificed everything to success in the war, and which now, perhaps to shrug off the torment of uncertainty, was looking to the *negrinista* drug of diehard resistance for the optimism needed ('and let us stop the mouths of the defeatists and pessimists who refuse to listen to reason and seize upon incidents or details — as with the case of the 13 points — to talk of revolutionary losses, cave-ins, betrayals and liquidations' — Circular No. 12 from the CNT National Committee, Barcelona, 10 May 1938); and the tendency represented by the FAI Peninsular Committee which, albeit belatedly, aimed to salvage its honour by its opposition to the methodical and ongoing advance of counter-revolution. This latter faction, as Abad de Santillan intimates in the last two chapters of his oft-quoted book, intended, in mid-1938, to contrive an armistice akin to the one contrived (and worsened by the anti-communist backlash) in March 1939. Then again, the none too gratifying military panorama had led many anarchists to share almost Prieto's 'it's hopeless' line and in this regard important negotiations or overtures with influential figures in Spanish politics were initiated.



▲ Diego Abad de Santillan: FAI Peninsular Committee



Chapter Five: The August Crisis and the Battle of the Ebro

On 25 June 1938 a plenum of area delegations of the Libertarian Movement of Catalonia, convened by the Executive Committee, sat down to business. There was but this single item on the agenda: 'Report from the Executive Committee.' And the notice of convention had added:

'No area federation of the Libertarian Movement's three branches should omit to send along a properly authorised delegation sufficiently trustworthy to pronounce upon the resolutions.'

It is striking that, summoned by the Executive Committee, these delegates arriving to consider an unknown quantity were required to have the same executive powers *vis à vis* the grassroots whom they were representing.

As to the proceedings of the plenum, the report carried by the press of 26 June could not have been more nebulous. It was recorded there that Germinal Esgleas, who delivered the promised report, spoke for the entirety of the morning session and for part of the afternoon session on the following subjects: the reasons why the Executive Committee had been set up, its structure, powers and operation; the Executive's activity in regional and national politics and within the Popular Front; encouragement of the fighting men, volunteers and other matters related to the war; the Executive's dealings with regard to public order, the prisoners issue and the reorganisation of the Regional Legal Commission; its activities in relation to economic matters, production and supply; the reorganisation and strengthening of the union, specific and youth movement; intensification of propaganda to bolster fighting spirit against defeatism and, lastly, relations with the national committees of the Libertarian Movement.

The press stated that the report had the (almost) unanimous endorsement of the delegations. It also reported the favourable impression made in the provinces by the creation of the Executive. The plenum spelled out the perfect understanding which existed between the three branches of the Libertarian Movement, while the delegates' report hinted at the sound condition and activity of the cadres of the organisation, due largely to establishment of Local and Area Liaison Committees embracing all three branches — union, anarchist and youth — which streamlined the organisational machinery and had established a unity of action that could not have been bettered.

The item adds:

'Nearly every single delegation stressed the need to make use of the Executive Committee in the most libertarian sense of the word and stated its firm determination to win the war and strengthen the Libertarian Movement everywhere.'

From 2 to 10 August, Valencia was the meeting place for a National Plenum of the Regional Committees of the CNT. Every Regional Committee attended, including Catalonia as well as those which had emigrated to Catalonia (such as Asturias and the North). *Solidaridad Obrera* carried the following briefing:

'The plenum fell into two parts: the one political and trade union, the other economic.

In part one, the Secretariat of the National Committee delivered a comprehensive report on the political and military situation, on the CNT's record in government and in the Popular Front, on the UGT-CNT National Liaison Committee and on dealings with other political parties, whereupon the report was endorsed, as was the stewardship of the National Committee.

Likewise ratified was the written report on its stewardship as already submitted to the organisation by the National Committee.

The plenum reaffirmed the resistance watchword advocated by the government, under which the struggle must be prosecuted zealously until victory is achieved. The only option is the pursuit of a victorious conclusion to our war for independence, liberty and the collective well-being of the people. This entails a permanent struggle at the front and in the rearguard.

As for dealings with other parties, unity must be upheld among all anti-fascist parties and organisations...

The plenum showed especial solicitude in its examination of concerted action with the UGT, unanimously expressing the wish and need for this to be strengthened, stressing the role of the liaison committees and endeavouring to ensure prompt implementation of the various provisions of the pact signed in March relating to the creation of a National War Industries Council, a Higher Economic Council and a Commissariat of Armed Rearguard Forces.

Several problems of an internal character were gone into, with appropriate resolutions being adopted in each instance. Likewise, the definitive overhauling of the Industrial Federations was approved, the number of these being reduced to 20...

Regional Economic Councils, already in existence under the accords of the Economic Plenum in January, reported at length upon their operation...

The agreement to set up an Iberian Trade Union Bank was endorsed, with the National Committee being empowered to do so at the opportune moment. Approval was given to the resolutions passed by the CNT Economic Council, and especially to those relating to management of economic resources and distribution of surpluses and profits, as well as the rules governing deployment of tools and all manner of resources in activities furthering the interest of the nation's economy.

Guidelines were sketched for interpretation of the Extended National Economic Plenum with regard to the setting-up of Area and Zonal CNT Economic Councils and to coordination and liaison between Federations and Councils. The Centre was authorised to set up a Compensation Fund with purely administrative functions, until such times as the Confederation, at another plenum, may determine the manner in which this compensation arrangement can be applied nationwide...

The plenum was briefed on the regulations laid down by the CNT Economic Council concerning the operations of the Union-controlled Wholesale Distribution Service in accordance with the prescriptions of the January plenum. There was lengthy examination of a general scheme to be enacted immediately and progressively, for the professional training of women and their absorption into production, managerial and administrative functions which might be compatible with their biological, natural and temperamental aptitudes — and the scheme was approved. They also looked into the re-skilling of workers currently engaged in trades which might be classified as compatible with and suited to female personnel. The plenum was informed of the broad operation of the scheme for a "Family Allowance for Military Mobilisation Fund" currently under examination by the CNT Economic Council. Rules were laid down for the building-up of "Mutual Funds" for social security and other things, and for speedy implementation of earlier accords, due account being taken of existing legal provisions.

Above all, consideration was given to ways of fully implementing fiscal provisions in the collectivised and socialised industries.¹

At the start of August, when the fronts had scarcely finished collapsing and when offensive operations like the Ebro attacks had been launched, the political truce imposed by the catastrophic developments in March was deemed to have run its course.

An editorial item in *Solidaridad Obrera* recorded this fact:

'We regard this wholly political meddling with working and productivity arrangements as an incitement to schism within the family of labour.

1. *Solidaridad Obrera*, 19 August 1938. *Solidaridad Obrera*, 19 August 1938

The right to intervene in labour issues is vested solely in the Liaison Committee of the two unions, together with the respective agencies of those unions.

That which is properly a function of the union organisations cannot be replaced by the action of parties, whatever those parties may be.

It is an act of treachery to default upon undertakings agreed between the two union organisations in order to engage in a politicking which has all the hallmarks of negativity in every respect and as far as the proper ends for Spain, the war and the workers are concerned.

All such plays will meet with appropriate steadfast opposition from us...²

Only the imminence of a common peril had led to an armistice between the parties and the organisations, a sort of truce in their factional warfare, a war that pitted the PCE against each and every one of the rest. The CNT-UGT pact met with ferocious opposition from the communists. Faced with the earlier CNT-UGT pacts (of 26 November 1936 and 29 July 1937), the PCE had responded by adopting a wholly uncompromising advocacy of its Popular Front policy, as against the existing anti-fascist front which embraced all union and political denominations against Franco, without distinction. Confronted with the *fait accompli* of revolution, the party had come up with the opportunistic alternative of a democratic parliamentary republic. But the most telling campaign against an effective labour *entente*, which was construed as indicative of a desire to oust political parties from public life, was conducted (as we have had occasion to see) inside the PSOE and the UGT. The March pact had been dictated by circumstances and once the gravity of those circumstances had begun to recede, the time came to renege upon the unity which had been embraced in a moment of weakness.

On 6 August the organ of the Catalan CNT repudiated the Stalinist lust for the political tutelage of the unions:

'At this present point in time, it is indeed contrivance and ill-timing to raise issues likely to lead to divide forces or inhibit the normal dealings between the workers of both union organisations by allowing the political machinations of the PCE and the PSOE...

We have already pointed in these columns to their fundamental inadequacies in respect of the upholding of workers' unity. But we cannot allow to go unanswered another argument or pretext by *Frente Rojo*. The workers' parties, this colleague alleges, are invested with the "basic mission" of guiding the unions, in that the problems with which the unions have to grapple are eminently political and, that being so, to get to the point, the obvious suggestion seems to be that a committee representative of both workers' parties must somehow carry more authority than a trade union committee, allegedly because the first-mentioned committee has a political capability.

The conclusion is absurd, but it is not our conclusion. It follows from this view that the unions are politically incompetent and this notion is echoed by *Frente Rojo*; it is a notion broadly aimed at making specifically labour organisations take second place to specifically political ones. And it is likewise absurd and dishonest to drag in the FAI in support of any such approach. At no time has the FAI sought, through its groups inside the unions or in any other way, to usurp functions which specifically appertain to trade union organisms...³

With less fanfare, the state was making the boldest strides forward, one after another, almost imperceptibly. The new CNT-UGT pact provided for interventionist measures with regard to functions proper to the state or which might, under the provisions of the pact, come to be such. Into this last category came the surrender of the management of war industry to the Armaments Under-Secretariat and provisions such as those which

2. *Solidaridad Obrera*, 3 August 1938

3. *Solidaridad Obrera*, 6 August 1938

called for centralisation of raw materials and transport, nationalisation of the railways, heavy industry, deep sea shipping, banking etc. — all of them traded against a guarantee of establishment of supervisory agencies, in the shape of the so-called National Industrial Councils, National Economic Councils and so forth, with a role for the trade union organisations. In this regard, the pact represented the greatest historic concession, on the part of a revolutionary organisation, in favour of the state and all in return for the crumbs of a highly elastic and ill-defined partnership role. In practice, the trade union partner was swamped by accompanying generosity of representation. The following is typical of such swamping.

The Labour Council came into existence at the beginning of August 1938. As Jaume Aiguader, the Labour Minister, put it, the Council's task was 'to normalise the smooth performance of work in every regard and in every sector.'

Out of the 31 members who made up the Labour Council, 19 represented the state and the employers. The breakdown was as follows:

State representatives: one chairman, three vice-chairmen and three secretaries, leaving a total of seven state officials.

Employer representatives: four permanent board members and two acting members (freely appointed by the employers concerned) plus four full members and two acting members appointed by the government. This made for a total of 12 employer representatives.

Trade union representatives: for the CNT, four full members and two temporary; for the UGT, four full members and two temporary. In all, 12 workers.

Under these circumstances, the CNT's presence on this Labour Council amounted, on the one hand, to an acknowledgment — and in this in the full flush of revolution — of the employer class and employer interests; and on the other, to the CNT's abjuring of class struggle. Alongside the Labour Council, the old *comités paritarios* of the dictatorship and the *jurados mixtos* of the republican era, against which the CNT had fought with tooth and nail, were the very models of revolutionism. In the latter, there had been equal representation for workers and employers, which is to say balanced representation, with one solitary state official holding the casting vote. But this latest partnership or control existed only in the most derisory form and all of the participation advocated or secured was of the same stature.

When, at a later date, there emerged a hint of defiance of the state's requisitioning of the war industries (as had been fully anticipated in the CNT-UGT pact), a defiance which welled up from below, from the workforce in the factories, the only response from the higher committees of the Confederation was to reiterate the partnership measures which had been agreed. The politicians, especially the Catalan and Basque nationalists, took the issue more to heart and displayed more extreme reactions.

August 11 saw a crisis of tremendous political significance. At a cabinet meeting, the leader of the government had insisted upon approval of some decrees earlier repudiated by the representatives of Catalonia and the Basque Country, the latter having construed the decrees as trespasses against home rule privileges. This time around, the decrees were approved and fresh objections were overruled. But the press published the following from the Basque minister, Irujo:

"Barcelona, 11 August 1938.

His Excellency *Señor* Don Juan Negrín.

President of the Council of Ministers.

My dear premier and friend,

The Catalan minister, *señor* Aiguader has made it known to me that he tendered his resignation over fundamental disagreement with the policy espoused by the government of the Republic in Catalonia, a policy which has culminated in the three decrees approved at the cabinet meeting this afternoon despite his protests and mine.

The normal rapport between Catalans and Basques, which first showed itself in parliamentary terms in our withdrawal from the *Cortes* over the repeal of the *Ley de Cultivos*, compels me to follow the lead set by *señor* Aiguader and tender my

resignation from office as a result, not that this prevents me from reiterating as a republican and friend my most loyal feelings towards you. With an embrace — Manuel Irujo.'

The press mentioned three decrees: one on requisitioning war industries, another on the militarisation of ports and a third on the reform of the Commissariat. Between the lines there was a hint of a fourth decree bearing on the courts, but it was alleged that the President of the Republic had refused to ratify this one.

The three published decrees seemed to be spin-offs from certain clauses of the CNT-UGT pact. But in the case of war industries, the take-over proceeded without any regard for setting up the National War Industries Commission for which the pact had also made provision. This take-over was what had prompted the resignations of cabinet ministers Aiguader and Irujo.

On 17 August, the UGT Executive hurriedly made the following declaration:

'Having examined the decrees recently approved at a cabinet meeting ... [the Executive] resolved to signify its agreement with the aforementioned decrees, some of which have already been looked at in a meeting held by the CNT-UGT National Liaison Committee.'

The CNT maintained its silence. For its part, the FAI spelled out its stance in a document that was summed up in these two points:

'Looking into the situation, the FAI Peninsular Committee, exponent of an idea and a movement with deep historical roots in Spain, an organisation which, while assuming no government office, has thus far demonstrated that it is capable of sacrificing all that can be sacrificed, to the supreme aim of winning the war, hereby declares that the decrees approved by the cabinet on 11th instant represent an affront to the liberties and rights of the Spanish people.

All those parties and organisations, for which the general interest takes precedence over their own particular ambitions, are hereby exhorted to express their repudiation of the policy implicit in these decrees.'

A *propos* of the militarisation of the ports, *Solidaridad Obrera* hinted:

'In the workplace there ought to be respect for the role of the union, just as the political commissariat should be honoured in the army. Absolutely no one can, without committing the gravest offence against anti-fascist unity, bring pressure to bear and employ concealed bribery in order to encourage propaganda. We have long resisted this practice which led to the passing of a decree that we must not forget.'⁴

In the same edition, the paper reported the implications of the decree upon the overhauling of the Commissariat, which, as the reader will readily appreciate, made mince-meat — as it turned the clock back — of all the reforms previously introduced. The Commissariat never managed to function as the guardian angel of the serviceman against the inherent arbitrariness of the military command; instead it added to his burden, squeezing him between summary discipline and the poison of propaganda. This acquires a singular expression thanks to this most recent decree. As was noted in *Solidaridad Obrera*:

'The decree organising the General War Commissariat stipulates that the Commissariat of Land Forces is an agency made up of political and trade-union representatives, the chief task of which is to strengthen and raise the fighting capabilities of the combatants, creating in soldiers and officers a spirit of high military discipline and leading to an

⁴ *Solidaridad Obrera*, 20 August 1938

atmosphere of selflessness, sacrifice and love of arms, boosting the steadfast determination to fight on until victory is secured over the enemies of Spain.

The Commissariat will operate under the minister's supreme authority. It will be headed by the Commissar-General, the minister's representative, under whose leadership the consultative junta, comprised of the sub-commissars general who are appointed by the minister on the recommendations of the national parties and organisations, will operate. The sub-commissars will also have inspection duties in accordance with the dispositions of the Commissar-General.

The General Commissariat shall comprise of the General Secretariat and of Organisation, Propaganda and Press, Recruitment and Recruit Education and Inspection departments. The general secretary will be chosen by the Defence Minister and act as the executive arm of the Commissar-General. The post shall be filled by a sub-commissar who has been relieved of inspection duties.

The Organisation Branch will have the commissar training and education schools under its purview. The Propaganda Branch will be under the immediate supervision of the Commissar-General and, in all matters relating to propaganda, will operate in accordance with the guidelines of the Central Staff and with the resources which may be made available to it by the Propaganda Sub-Secretariat.

The Recruitment Branch will engage in political work and screening in the recruitment centres. The Inspection Branch, which is to be made up of the sub-commissars general, is to be under the supervision of the Commissar-General.

The Commissar will complement the functions of the Military Command, without interfering with the latter: he shall act as the representative of the government and its war policy, and his authority should be derived from his educational work and his conduct under fire.

The ranks which the Commissariat will have are: Divisional Commissar, Brigade Commissar, Commissar of Land Forces. The commissars are to operate not only in combat units but also in all centres and establishments where, by virtue of the presence of soldiers, there may be a need to carry out intensive political work in their vicinity.

The Commissar is empowered to establish one or more Commissar Schools. Combatants shall be given preference for acceptance into the Commissariat. Alongside every military commander there will be a commissar with a status equal to that of the former. In the event of a Commissar going missing or being killed on active service, his dependants shall enjoy the entitlements appropriate to the rank which he had been assigned, and, in the event of incapacitation, said entitlements will likewise be due, but subject to the post assigned being compatible with his incapacitation.⁵

The history of the Commissariat is as brief as it is eloquent. Since the very early days of the campaign, the columns of *milicianos* who had set out for the front had been organised, most of them, by political parties or labour organisations. Professional soldiers were incorporated into them as 'technical officers', alongside whom 'political delegates' were assigned from the unions or parties. The mission of the latter was to supervise or monitor the military officers. With the rise of the Stalinists, this outlook was altered with the establishment of the War Commissariat, a straight copy of the structure of the Soviet Army. However, perhaps deliberately, the prescribed powers of the Commissariat were always vague. Whereas in some units the Commissariat had a finger in everything, in others it meant nothing. Often the conclusion had been reached that the Commissar and the military commander had identical powers and responsibilities, to wit, that there was a single command embodied by two separate individuals. This notion gave rise to violent clashes. The prescribed definition was not a logical definition of anything: the commissar would be the representative of the government's war policy inside the army and would do his duty without interference with the military command.

The serious matter of the duality of command was seemingly resolved: the intrusion

5. *Solidaridad Obrera*, 20 August 1938

by organisations and parties into commands and into the army was abolished by decree. But what remained of the Commissariat? Its task was to disseminate the government's watchwords among its own and the enemy's troops. But this was a task done by the military command through the Second Staff Section (Information) with its appropriate offshoots, including propaganda based on precise figures which the Commissariat did not possess. Furthermore, there was a Propaganda Under-Secretariat (government-controlled) for the purposes of the government zone.

The Commissariat could have staked a claim to an exclusive mission: ensuring the ideological liberty of the combatants, preventing injustices, abuses and party propaganda. But that was precisely what those 'on high' had no intention of prescribing as its functions. The Commissariat was turned into the special organ of propaganda by means of intrigue, coercion and criminal action, for the benefit of the most influential party in the government.

Come the crisis to which we have referred, the problem arose of resolving it on the most advantageous terms possible as far as the prevailing policy went. 'The crisis', wrote Abad de Santillán, 'was resolved by incorporating two communist or quasi-communist ministers into the government.' This assessment comes close to the truth. The two incoming ministers were José Moix of the PSUC, and Tomás Bilbao of Acción Nacionalista Vasca. Moix was a one-time CNT member, one of the leading lights in the Sabadell unions at the time that these broke away from and were expelled from the CNT in March 1933. Tomás Bilbao belonged to a liberal party akin to Catalonia's Esquerra or to the Izquierda Republicana party, albeit socially more progressive than either. Bilbao was convinced of Negrín's personal and political superiority over any other republican politician: he believed in the correctness of the policy of resistance to the death, which might make it possible to extend the civil war into the coming world war. He disagreed with and made a stand against the view of his fellow leaders of Acción Nacionalista Vasca to the effect that he had to co-operate in the political endeavour marked out by Negrín; he ensured that his party leaders revised their initial view and committed themselves to ministerial collaboration in the last territorial government of the Republic. In short, Tomás Bilbao was a *negrinista*.⁶

In spite of everything, the crisis exacerbated the scarcely contained political tension. And given the implications of the resignations, which virtually amounted to the departure from government of the representatives of two autonomous regions, because it was anticipated that the solution might be distasteful and even exasperating for certain sectors in Catalonia, in which territory the government was then based, the government reckoned that a crude gambit was called for.

To get this underway, it turned to the quasi-military police agency, the Servicio de Investigación Militar (Army Investigation Service; SIM), which, it seems, had no nobler actions to perform.

A report from the FAI Peninsular Committee, presented to the Libertarian Movement's Plenum in October stated:

'The SIM lately excelled itself in its miscalculations by taking a hand in contriving situations for purely political gains. More specifically: the SIM has had the entire war-making resources of the nation mobilised in the service of the communist-socialist faction which usurps the functions of government, adopting a blatant stance in favour of a *coup d'état*.'

When political tensions peaked during the days of the recent crisis, the SIM issued to the army, to parties and organisations, a memo wherein the following was stated:

'Into the hands of the SIM, through absolutely reliable sources and agencies, has come the following watchword issued to all and sundry by the fascist command...

"On the night of 14-15 August, in every position, every command post, every

6. Based on Irujo's testimony to the author.

rearguard village, every depot, every aerodrome, everywhere in short, you will, shrinking from no method, have moved simultaneously and resoundingly to incapacitate your leaders and their trusted henchmen, capitalising upon your numerical superiority of ten to one. At sunrise, raise a white flag in every place you have brought under control, so that we can be lying in wait and hurry to your aid to liberate you once and for all from the criminal red oppression under which you live:

Patriots, brother Spaniards of the red zone: until tomorrow, until dawn on 15 August!"

This is to be brought to the attention of the lower ranks at your orders.'

In a follow-up to this news, the following day, this *communiqué* was issued to all units.

'Further to my telegram of last night, regarding an announcement made by the enemy and with a view to aborting the revolt at which it hinted, you should see to it as a matter of urgency that the following suggestions are complied with:

1. Throughout the area under your command, surveillance shall be maintained tonight so as to thwart realisation of the enemy's plans.

2. In the event of any incident, perpetrators of the incident are to be peremptorily arrested and should be handed over with all speed to agents of the SIM so that a statement can be taken from them prior to being brought before the army's standing tribunals.

3. A special watch is to be kept on roads, depots, gasoline depots, telephone and telegraph exchanges and lines, etc.

4. All units are to be under orders to take up whatever positions may be necessary.

5. Likewise, this great unit will have a trusted detachment standing by, ready to step in wherever any incident may occur. You are to report any incident which may occur to me with all urgency. Acknowledge receipt.'

That message, issued also to the armed forces in the rearguard, prompted the adoption of precautionary measures which in reality amounted to a show of force intimidating the parties and organisations that sought to invest the crisis with implications that did not suit a certain sector.

Just in case we might have misinterpreted things, we waited until the time of the self-styled fascist action had passed, before the SIM would begin to make suitable arrests in order to dismantle the enemy's gigantic conspiratorial set-up and before all of the members of the SIM would immediately submit their final resignations. On the basis of having failed to prevent the setting up of a rebel apparatus on such a scale. Conceding the possibility of a venture of that nature amounted to an admission of its own ineptitude. But not a single arrest was made, nor did anybody feel embarrassed, nor have we heard of anyone's having committed *hara-kiri*. Apparently SIM personnel are immune to blushes.'

Now it is time for us to turn to the progress of military operations. According to General Rojo, in his *¡Alerta a los pueblos!*, the paralysis of the enemy offensive against Catalonia and his choice of a new target in the shape of Levante, enabled the army to be overhauled in the former region. Rebel troops who had occupied Castellón and got within a few kilometres of Sagunt, had set themselves 15 July as their target date for the occupation of Valencia. Into the loyalist lines in Levante were placed the last troops which had been able to withdraw from the fronts in the Centre, Andalusia and Extremadura. Should the plan of resistance fail, no more reserves were available and the rich Valencia region, the most important farming and industrial area in that zone, plus one of the Republic's finest ports, could be considered lost.

At the end of June, the Staff drew up its plan of manoeuvres for the second half of the year. It was as follows: (a) resistance in Levante; (b) a strike across the Ebro; (c) an offensive through Extremadura. The aim of these manoeuvres, the only feasible ones, was to bring help indirectly to the front under threat.

With its Ebro gambit, the command hoped to get as far as Gandesa, Barea, Valderrobres, etc., and to link up these operations with those of the Army of Levante. The initial onslaught achieved an incursion some 20 kilometres deep, but this proved incapable of being exploited properly. The enemy advance towards Valencia was halted but only at the cost of a horrifying battle of attrition which was to use up the reserves of the armies of Catalonia. This would lay the groundwork for their resounding annihilation six months later.

The Ebro offensive, launched at 0.15 hours on 25 July had virtually ground to a halt by 31 July. A dispatch from the central observation post of the anti-aircraft defences on 31 July was rather eloquent in its explanation of the reasons why the advance had been contained. According to that dispatch, on 31 July, between 7.08 hours and 17.55 hours there were 50 enemy air attacks, deploying a total of 200 bombers and 96 fighter planes. This record would be well beaten later on, when the battle of the Ebro proper began — the toughest of the whole war; it lasted for three and a half months and on the loyalist side alone the dead, wounded and captured, taken together with the casualties of the operations across the Segre, amounted to something in excess of 50,000 men. During the battle, the enemy mounted eight powerful counter-thrusts, backed by a huge deployment of equipment and manpower. On the republican side, support and cover offensives were launched across the Segre; these turned out, every one, to be catastrophes, for the enemy, who controlled the Pyrenean reservoirs, deliberately flooded the rivers, sweeping away bridges and makeshift footbridges, effectively frustrating all efforts and threatening to turn every withdrawal into a catastrophe. Several units were seconded from the Army of the East, for the battle of the Ebro, the 120th Brigade of the 26th Division among them.

A secondary offensive, coinciding with the main Ebro attack, sought to make headway into Extremadura, far enough to leave the enemy forces from Andalusia and the North isolated. This failed, according to General Rojo, due to the fact that the enemy who had in mind a supremely ambitious attack towards the rich mining area of Almadén, anticipated the republicans' intentions. The truth is that the enemy offensive, which came on 19 July, came up against a front which was perfectly ripe for demolition. The Extremadura front, covering a distance of some 400 kilometres, from Monterrubio to Puente del Arzobispo, amounted to a huge horse-shoe manned by only a few troops, each battalion having to cover 15 or even 20 kilometres. Whereas the enemy had been improving upon his positions thanks to little *coups de main*, the government commanders, the communists Burillo and Cabezudo, otherwise engaged on furloughs that caused a great scandal, failed to make provision against possible attacks. A short while before disaster struck, Burillo, a colonel commanding the Army of Extremadura, simply dismissed all the reports reaching him about enemy troop concentrations and rejected the suggestion that aerial reconnaissance be made to check them out. The offensive began on 19 July and by 26 July the enemy had gobbled up 1,000 square kilometres of territory complete with 24 villages, some of them as significant as Castuera, Cabeza de Buey, Don Benito, Villanueva de la Serena and Campanario. It was a repetition of the disaster which had struck in Aragón months earlier.

In the second half of August, the Republic mounted an offensive of its own on that same front. This involved the 125th Brigade of the 28th (Ascaso) Division, which broke through the front at a spot opposite Esparragosa de los Lares on the River Zujar, reaching a point within eight kilometres of Castuera, alongside other forces. The 125th Brigade, which together with the remainder of its Division made up the reserves of the 7th Army Corps, was used as a spearhead and had to cover some 55 kilometres, almost barefoot, between their billets and the furthest extent of the incursion. This gives some idea of the weary condition of the troops chosen for battle service. The upshot was that there was a retreat of 15 kilometres towards the rearguard.

The Battle of the Ebro proper began in early August:

'The Battle of the Ebro was a most pitiless contest, a fight conducted over a period of three and a half months with fleeting interruptions on the ground and none in the air; a

battle of equipment, in which all weapons and devices, save gas, were deployed on the narrow fronts with devastating force.⁷

The attacks made during those months in the Lower Segre sector were designed to speed or ease the withdrawal of troops from the Ebro. The first of them came on 9 August, at a point on the Segre between Lleida and Balaguer, facing Vilanova de la Barca. The operation to cross the river was entrusted to the 30th Division (formerly Macià-Companys Column, which at this point included part of the 153rd Brigade, the erstwhile Tierra y Libertad Column), the 34th Division and the Mixed Carabineers Division.

The enemy, probably well informed, put up no resistance to the river crossing but subsequently opened the floodgates of the Camarasa reservoir, while simultaneously opening up with automatic, artillery and mortar fire. Gripped by panic, the assault force, made up exclusively of carabineers, fell back in disarray, dumping the precious war materials which had been issued to them, and which included tanks (many of which were left behind half way across the rushing waters) on the river bank. The bridges and footbridges were swept away by the rising waters and quite a few of the runaways perished by drowning in their hopeless attempts to reach the opposite bank.

All of this equipment was retrieved by the 153rd Brigade which was a reserve rather than an operational unit: it was ordered to secure the bridgehead, which it did by crossing the river in broad daylight. Retrieval completed, it made a final withdrawal on 18 August, after bitter engagements with the enemy costing hundreds of dead, wounded and missing. Among the wounded was commandant Feliciano Llach (better known as Leal).

The second offensive in the Segre sector came on 7 November and involved the 26th Division's 121st Brigade.

This fresh offensive was designed to facilitate the republican withdrawal from the threatened bridgehead on the right bank of the Ebro. The eventual withdrawal from the Ebro was made between 8 and 15 November.

A report from the FAI Peninsular Committee (Military Secretariat), dated 30 September 1938 and referring to the battle of the Ebro, had this to say:

'When the Aragón front collapsed, orders were issued — although authentication of this may not be possible — for the bulk of the troops of Marxist origin to stay behind in the Catalan zone. Come the inevitable severing of communications between Catalonia and Levante, the 5th and 15th Army Corps, Marxists to a man, remained on the Catalan side, in compliance with said orders. The PCE had the ambition of having an army commander and something had to be done to achieve this, and to that end was the Ebro operation launched. To be sure, something had to be done to assist the fighters of the Levante front who were extremely exhausted by an offensive which had been more than two months in progress.

In issues No. 38 and 39 of the *Boletín Decanal de la Sección Información del Ejército de Tierra* (Fortnightly Bulletin of the Army Intelligence Branch) there is a masterly exposition of the factors to be taken into consideration in the crossing of a river: suitable terrain, water levels, meteorological forecasts of weather which may affect the latter, the volume of water, the strength of current, etc., etc. and the imponderables also have to be considered. And in the prosecution of the Central Staff's operations, the Talera reservoirs were not reckoned as imponderables, since they were not considered, and to this fact we can attribute the failure of the operation to score any crucial initial success.

The river crossing operation was made with laudable precision. The pontoon teams did stalwart work in erecting bridges and footbridges with extraordinary speed.

When our forces had their first clashes with the enemy troops in the Sierra de Fatarella and Venta de Campesinos, all of our infantry and part of our heavy gear had already crossed the Ebro. and cavalry forces had been left behind at our old lines to

7. Vicente Rojo, *España heroica*

await orders. Then up cropped the imponderable. The enemy, upon seeing that, for all his bombardment, he had failed to destroy the bridges thrown across the Ebro, opened the Talera dams, causing a two-metre rise in water levels which swept away all the bridges and footbridges.

And for a period of 48 hours, our army was left without any of the supplies it needed to prosecute the operation, and the upshot of this, aggravated by the lack of artillery support and tanks and the absolute absence of air support, was that our forces were unable to reach their immediate objectives and occupy Gandesa as a first step to making an effective incursion into enemy territory. During this time, the enemy, realising the importance of the offensive upon which we had embarked, concentrated on Gandesa and succeeded in making capture of that city impossible.

Four days on from the launching of the operation, the entire mass of artillery, tanks and aircraft which the enemy had in Levante was moved up to the Ebro, leading to the offensive which is still in progress. Inch by inch terrain is being lost. Enemy losses are incalculable, in terms of both men and material. Considerable time may have to elapse before he is in a position to prepare any offensive. He is shattered. The Levante offensive has ground to a standstill and so has the Extremadura offensive.

But, to be frank, we believe that more practical and beneficial results could have been achieved with the manpower and material resources employed in this operation, had the operation been mounted elsewhere. For it should not be overlooked that, despite the brilliance of our resistance, we have no option left but to go back to the starting point, which is to say, to the left bank of the Ebro and make the crossing again.⁸

But the military outlook in the wake of the battle of the Ebro could be gauged as poor in the light of the bitter and costly battles fought in 1938 and of the Republic's entire war policy, without going any more deeply into the matter. The events of the immediate aftermath do require thorough examination. And the next chapter will be given over to that.

8. Military report by the FAI, 30 September 1938





▲ The Battle of the Ebro

Chapter Six: Francoist Policy

It is flying in the face of the most recent information about the war in Spain to attribute Franco's military success exclusively to foreign aid and to that aid being contingent upon a complete abdication of political and economic interests. The years since the end of World War Two have seen the publication of important papers on the basis of which a more assured examination of this question can be effected. It is strikingly obvious from this documentary evidence that Italian and German aid and created a delicate situation as regards the independence of Franco's Spain, and also that Franco was adept at surmounting the most dangerous of these hurdles.

The problem concerned not only foreign volunteers or conscripts, nor only the unlimited loan of combat equipment but also the administration of victory. With slight differences (a lot slighter than may be believed) both sides had equipment and manpower to call upon. Where differences came in related to how each side managed its resources. In view of what has been said in previous chapters, there is no point in labouring the point about the republican governments' ineptitude in the management of victory. To the assertion that Franco's Spain had more determined sponsors outside the borders of Spain, it must always be retorted that in the opposite camp potential advantages were allowed to slip away because of incompetence, pettiness and chicanery. If we are to heed their most candid comments, at no time did Franco's most influential friends have any faith in his military victory, except from the end of 1938 onwards.

As for the question of mortgaging assets, the documents to which we have been referring show the rebel side to have been a lot more wary and adept in the skilful art of having its cake and eating it. In authenticating this claim two works are crucial: the *Political Diary 1937-1938* (cited already) of Count Ciano, and the third volume of *The Secret Archives of the Wilhelmstrasse* published by the Paris-based Librairie Plon in 1952 as *L'Allemagne et la guerre civile espagnole* (Germany and the Spanish Civil War). These books, which reflect the private thoughts of Franco's powerful allies, are awash with whingeing, reproaches and tantrums over the twists and turns of Francoist policy. It is very telling that it is the cautious and Machiavellian German turned out to be the more disappointed, deceived and infuriated. Through this copious confidential and, at times, top secret correspondence Francoist policy appears invested with an intransigent streak in matters military, political and economic. In the first of these spheres, Franco listens dutifully to the smug insinuations of his advisors, but almost always conceals his main tactical and strategic intentions from them. In the second, he reciprocates for the plentiful deliveries of war materials with raw materials, but taking great care not to be drawn into sweeping, monopolistic treaties. Politically, he doggedly resists the plans of his sponsors on the Non-Intervention Committee, who have it in for France and England. No less a figure than General von Faupel, Hitler's envoy, is declared *persona non grata* on account of his intrigues in Spain's domestic political matters and is forced to withdraw to Salamanca.

In so far as space will allow, let us examine some of these areas.

In late December, in the light of the Republic's successful offensive against Teruel, the Duce summoned together his principal military leaders and reached with them the conclusion that Franco's military inactivity was contrary to Italy's interests and that Franco would have to be cautioned that they were not prepared to go on investing men, equipment and money in the Spanish venture indefinitely. The Germans were no less disgruntled with Franco's 'vacillation' and criticised him for having been inactive for upwards of two months since the capture of Asturias. Thus Germany and Italy were both beginning to have doubts about the military competence of the Caudillo and even came to imagine that he was inclining in the direction of a negotiated peace, of a 'pink' solution, neither white nor red.

'An understanding between reds and whites, say, an armistice followed by elections to determine the new form of government, would bring the reds, through the ballot box, the victory that they cannot hope for from the battlefield.'¹

The spectre of possible peace negotiations was a constant nightmare for the Italians and Germans. Such negotiations, almost invariably under the aegis of England, and involving certain republican personalities, were plentiful and consistent throughout the war. Franco's intransigence scuppered any possible solution from that quarter. Nonetheless, what the sponsors of the Caudillo found most exasperating was his dismissive attitude to their generous tactical military recommendations. After the battle of the North, the Germans proposed a thoroughgoing attack via Catalonia. Franco, on the other hand, planned an offensive through the Guadalajara sector and the loyalists managed to thwart this by means of a manoeuvre around Teruel. Once the situation of that front had been stabilised again, the Italians recommended that the success be capitalised upon by means of an all-out push against Valencia and the sea. Instead, the Francoist command mounted the 9 March offensive via Aragón.

In mid-January, General Berti, commander of the Italian legions in Spain informed the Caudillo on behalf of Mussolini of the latter's dislike of the way in which Franco was conducting operations. The Duce reaffirmed the Italian commitment to render assistance for a limited period of four or six months, but on the condition that there was a reshuffle of the command for the sake of greater efficiency and that units be co-ordinated better. It was spelled out clearly to Franco 'that henceforth more heed than hitherto should be paid to Italian military advice.' Both Count Ciano's diary and German diplomatic correspondence of the time testify to the Duce's irritation with the fact that the Italian volunteer corps was condemned to kick its heels in idleness. This inactivity was indicative of Franco's disdain for the fighting capabilities of Italian troops. And at a time when England was becoming more insistent as to the withdrawal of volunteers, Franco showed himself to be almost ready to dispense with these troops.

In late February 1938, Germany gave Franco to understand that her military aid depended not merely on her goodwill, but also upon how things went on the Non-Intervention Committee, and she was insistent about the need to strike a definitive blow against the enemy. Franco's response was as follows:

'Regrettably, the regrouping in the wake of the Northern campaign has taken longer than anticipated. The delay has been occasioned solely by the fact, kept secret from the outside world, that guerrilla fighting has persisted, especially in Asturias, until very recently. After the capture of Gijón there were still 18,000 men under arms scattered about the region: only very recently have the last of them been captured, roughly 2,000 men with machine-guns and 1,500 rifles. It is for this reason that the enemy has managed to seize the initiative and, thanks to a miscalculation by our command, scored initial successes in Teruel that have prevented the launching of the December offensive against Madrid. This I set out some time ago in a letter to Mussolini. Once again the military situation has swung back in our favour. The reds have taken very heavy losses in Teruel. Their reserves are used up and their morale shattered.'²

In that dispatch, Franco spells out his intentions to launch an offensive south of the Ebro which, in the event of its success, would be followed up by further operations in the North, with the ultimate objective of bringing the war to a successful conclusion.

Following the 9 March offensive, the awful air raids on Barcelona took place. A propos of the 18 March air raids, which made a tremendous impact in London, the German diplomatic correspondence notes that 'to the great outrage of Franco' the raids had been ordered by Mussolini personally. On page 150 of Count Ciano's diary, we find the following entry:

1. *L'Allemagne et la guerre civile espagnole*, Paris, 1952, p. 458

2. *L'Allemagne et la guerre civile espagnole*, pp. 499-500

Perth (the British ambassador in Rome) this morning handed me a note in which our attention is called to the bombing raids on Barcelona, it being added that this could create a climate unhelpful to the continuation of the Italian-British negotiations. I replied that the operational initiative belongs to Franco and not to us. That we could exercise our moderating influence but without committing ourselves to that effect. As Perth alluded to possible French intervention, I stated roundly that we in our turn would have recourse to more vigorous measures. The truth concerning the Barcelona raids is that Mussolini himself gave the order for them to Valle in the Chamber some minutes prior to delivering his speech on Austria. Franco who was wholly ignorant of this yesterday requested that they be suspended for fear of complications abroad. Mussolini believes that these air raids have a very efficacious impact on the reds' morale at a time when troops are advancing in Aragón. He is right. When I briefed him about Perth's approach, it had not the slightest effect on him and indeed he expressed his satisfaction at seeing Italians inspire panic on account of their aggression, Italians who, not long ago, were appreciated only as mandolin-players. In his estimation, this increases our standing in German eyes which prefer total and ruthless war.³

One of the most obscure aspects of Franco's 9 March push was the abrupt halt of the advance into Catalonia. There are grounds enough to rule out any allegedly insurmountable republican resistance. Likewise we can dismiss the argument that the invading forces were spent since the offensive lasted and swept all in its path, albeit that it was diverted towards Levante. Bearing in mind Catalonia's strategic importance, given that it was then the seat of the republican government, that the bulk of the Republic's war industries were based there, given its border with France and given that it was the principal bulwark of anti-fascism, the paralysis of the Francoist advance along the Noguera Pallaresa, the Segre and the Ebro, when faced by an enemy who was all but a spent force, cannot but be telling. The Francoist army's experienced commanders could not have made such a mistake of tactics which dispelled chances of immediate victory and doomed them to another year's war.

So what was it that happened in mid-March?

On 16 March, the German Secretary of State in Berlin received a visit from the accredited ambassador of Spain. The purpose of the visit was to brief him most anxiously about rumours to the effect that the French government would be ready to embark upon direct intervention on behalf of the Spanish republicans. The Francoist ambassador wanted to know where Germany stood in the event of any such active intervention's proceeding. The next day no less a figure than Germany's ambassador in Paris addressed its Foreign Affairs minister in these terms:

'According to a variety of reports to the same effect, the Supreme Council of National Defence, at its session of 15 March, dealt with the Czechoslovakian question, but also, and specifically, with the situation in Spain. As a result of that meeting the French fleet was allegedly ordered to maintain a state of battle readiness. According to the press, four vessels supposedly weighed anchor for Barcelona for the purpose of protecting French subjects, while others made for Port Vendres to take up positions there. The army is preparing to take certain security measures in regions 16, 17 and 19. It seems also that reinforcements from the interior have been dispatched towards those military undermanned regions.'

With these grave rumours in mind, the Wehrmacht High Command was invited to give its opinion. It delivered its report on 22 March and this bore the signature of Supreme Commander von Keitel. According to the report, a French military intervention would be the step required to prevent a collapse of the Republic's front lines, but that very act would involve the risk of turning a civil war into a European war: 'For France is aware that south of the Pyrenees she would encounter not only the Spanish nationalist army,

3. Count Ciano, *Journal politique* (1937-1938), p. 159

but also Italian and German troops.' This would imply the deployment of substantial numbers of French troops and a consequent under-manning of the eastern fronts. That sort of risk could not be incurred unless she could depend upon the active collaboration of England, which was wholly unacceptable and upon the ending of French domestic discord.

In accordance with this analysis, the German ambassador in Spain was instructed on 30 March to urge Franco to press home his military operations until Catalonia had been completely overrun and not to let up in order to mount an offensive elsewhere along the fronts. In spite of everything, after the capture of Mequinenza, Serós, Lleida and Balaguer (the latter on 7 April) the advance into the very heart of Catalonia ground to a halt. But the excellent successes of the advance towards Levante, and the reaching of the sea at Benicarló, lifted the cloud from Franco's behaviour in the eyes of Italy and Germany. Germany's thoughts were focused more upon finalising her political and economic demands in anticipation of what was believed the *fait accompli* of imminent nationalist victory. Around this time, Franco, Italy and Germany were even euphorically discussing movement towards the removal of volunteers. But towards the end of April, Franco's opinion changed abruptly. The nationalist advance in Levante had been halted and this he sought to explain in terms of the need to effect a certain regrouping of his forces, of the bad weather and, more timidly, of the 'startling red resistance, now abundantly provided with war materials.' Consequently, in early May, Franco spelled out his analysis whereby, given the anticipated diehard resistance from the 'Reds', the Condor Legion and Italian mercenaries had better remain at his disposal until such a time as the war might be reduced to a straightforward policing operation.

Also in May, the German ambassador in Salamanca informed his minister of the psychological impact on the Francoist rearguard of the slowness of operations. He spoke of the underground activities of those disaffected from the regime, estimating these to amount to around 40 per cent. Likewise, he referred to the sabotaging of bridges and magazines, to arson and assassination bids and above all to 'a guerrilla war which is presently devastating southern Spain (Cáceres) and Asturias.' Elsewhere in the same report, he stated that the expectation of an imminent ending of the war had resurrected frictions among those allegedly loyal to the regime. The party of unity, the Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Jons was as yet a long way short of a positive success.⁴ Spanish individualism, so predisposed to indiscipline and criticism, was leading to numerous incidents. Foremost among these was the Yagüe episode. Yagüe had delivered a speech wherein he had referred to the necessity for far-reaching social reforms, honest, incorruptible courts, anti-foreign patriotism, Christian charity and the spirit of Spanish chivalry. What created the greatest sensation was his tribute to the bravery of their 'Red opponents' and his appeal on behalf of political prisoners, be they red or blue, who were in custody because of excessive zeal, seizing upon this as an opportunity to upbraid the courts for partisanship.

This speech was deemed an act of indiscipline and earned Yagüe dismissal from command of the Moroccan Corps; he was to hold himself at the disposition of the Caudillo. Incidents of this sort came to be a persistent feature of relations between

4. Franco, a leader without a party, intended to amalgamate the Falange, a leaderless party, with the monarchists and traditionalists. After José Antonio Primo de Rivera was shot, he was replaced by Manuel Hedilla who took the gospel of his teacher to heart and aimed to turn the Falange into a party modelled on the German Nazi party. Franco did not fail to see the danger of a state of political warfare which, given the presence of monarchists and traditionalists every whit as fanatical in their legitimist claims, was what the Falangists' aspirations to hegemony implied. A decree promulgated on 19 April 1937 set up a single party dubbed the Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las JONS, the supreme leadership of which was assumed by Franco himself. This decree sparked off dogged opposition bordering on revolt from the Falange and government circles got wind of coded watchwords issued to the Falange's provincial organisations urging them to signify their opposition. Envoys dispatched for the purpose of organising demonstrations were intercepted. And Hedilla had even gone so far as to appoint a political junta which featured, among others, General Yagüe and Pilar Primo de Rivera. The court martial appointed Commandant Doval to handle the trial. Doval set in motion sensational measures that led to mass arrests, including the arrest of Hedilla himself who, along with others, was condemned to death. However, no execution was carried out. The Traditionalist sector's reaction was likewise less than compliant. Fal Conde saw the death sentence passed on him commuted to one of banishment from the country. Thereafter, the single party existed only on paper.

Franco and the viceroy of Seville, General Queipo de Llano.

In mid-June, Berlin briefed its ambassador in Spain:

'Confronted in fact with a choice between reforming the Condor Legion with its usual composition so as to make good the considerable losses inflicted upon it in recent months in terms of material and manpower, or proceeding with its withdrawal, we have decided to restore the Legion to full fighting strength on account of major political and military arguments in favour of its remaining in Spain. This decision compels us to furnish replacements which represent a heavy sacrifice for us. Kindly point this out at the earliest opportunity to the Foreign Affairs minister and to Franco also.'

A few days later there was an escalation of air attacks against British merchant shipping in the Mediterranean. On 22 June two British ships were crippled in Valencia, and on 27 June two more ships of the same nationality were sunk in Alicante and in Valencia itself. The Francoist ambassador in Berlin quickly made overtures to the German Foreign Affairs minister, reporting to him rumours to the effect that the British ships had been bombed by German aircraft. For his part, Franco about this time slapped a ban on any air raids on the ports of the red zone.

On 28 June, the German ambassador in Spain reported the following, among other things:

'The most recent air raid made a profound impact upon the British government leader, for he reckons that British public opinion has been misled and he fears the consequences. Given that London is *au fait* with Mussolini's desire to reach an agreement with Britain, as well as Franco's wish to reach an agreement with her also, the belief seems to be that the latest attacks have been mounted by the Germans — acting on Berlin's instructions — which represents a source of worry for the future.'

Ribbentrop, then the Reich's Foreign Affairs minister credited the Italian ambassador in Berlin with admitting that 'the whole world was well aware that the airmen who had been active in aerial bombardments of ports and especially of Barcelona were Italians.'⁵

In instructions dispatched by Berlin to its ambassador in Spain, one reads:

'Pay a visit to Franco in person and utilising the aforementioned point out to him very clearly that out aviators who are fighting selflessly for nationalist Spain, must be able to depend upon Franco and upon the responsible Spanish authorities under any circumstances, and be protected from the odious suspicion that they were the direct or indirect authors of the bombing raids. Furthermore, according to information in our possession, the bombing of British shipping in recent days has been the handiwork chiefly of the Italians.'

This dispatch is dated 30 June.

As a result of these incidents, the position of the British premier was seriously jeopardised. Chamberlain had sacrificed Eden who resigned as Foreign Affairs Minister on 20 February, for the sake of the appeasement which he believed might be achieved by means of a treaty with Italy concerning the Mediterranean, East Africa and the Red Sea. The origins of this agreement date back to September 1937, but negotiations only became effective after Eden's resignation, which had been, to some extent, prompted by it. The agreement implied *de facto* British recognition of the 'Italian Empire': Britain had been the Italians' *bête noire* in this undertaking. The agreement was signed on 16 April. Contemporary observers looked upon the pact as the most eloquent proof of Britain's renunciation of any interest in the final outcome of the civil war and as a stab in the

5. In his *Diary 1937-1938* (p. 155), Ciano states: 'A plane of French manufacture but bearing no registration and camouflaged crashed last night on a mountain in Iglesias. Since the likelihood is that it came from Spain and was en route to Rome, a statement from the reds in Spain is to be expected. I have briefed Perth (the British ambassador in Rome) about it, adding that any such action would lead to war.'

back for the Spanish Republic. The Francoist push through Aragón and its immediate results perhaps convinced England that as far as the republicans were concerned the war was lost beyond all remedy. Hence the signing of the pact, the aim of which was to keep the route to the East open to British trade. The fact is that the war did not stop, as the Foreign Office had expected, in the spring of 1938. And from then on, stalling over implementation of the agreement with Italy was Britain's way of pressurising Italy and forcing her to give in on the lingering problem of withdrawing volunteers. Furthermore, also pending was the old British ambition of arranging an armistice between the warring sides in Spain. But Italy took the very opposite approach to what London had expected. Annoyed by the unexpected resistance from the republicans and by the British government's delaying tactics, she resorted to acts of piracy in the Mediterranean against British shipping in the aim of bringing about Chamberlain's downfall at the hands of an indignant people and the criticisms of the parliamentary opposition.

In his diary entry for 19 June Ciano wrote:

'The meeting with Perth has not been any too fruitful for Italian-British friendship. It is not possible for us to accede to his demand that we recommend armistice now that Franco is on the road to victory. Compromise is not an option in civil war ... But I reckon that this postponement of implementation of the agreement until the Greek kalendas is highly dangerous.'

Further on, alluding to the Duce, he states:

'[He] approves my reply to Perth and shows himself clearly intransigent. We shall not amend our conduct towards Franco by one iota, and the agreement with London will come into force when God wills, if at all.'

On 5 July the Non-Intervention Committee endorsed a British plan for the withdrawal of foreign volunteers. It was immediately communicated to both camps. Before giving his answer, Franco sought the advice of Italy and Germany, who hinted at the need to accept the plan in principle and at the same time to formulate comments on specific details so as to buy time until the republican government's answer became known. Franco was especially urged to avoid giving the impression, to world opinion and to Britain, of systematic opposition which might lead to his being blamed for the possible aborting of the plan. The republic's response was made known on 26 July. It was wholly favourable to the terms of the plan. Not until 16 August did the Burgos government deliver its answer to the British government's official representative, Sir Robert Hodgson. The spirit of that answer completely jumbled up the order of the British plan's clauses, for it made recognition of belligerent rights a prelude to the withdrawal of volunteers.

At this point, the political crisis looming over Czechoslovakian democracy was coming to a head and at the same time the imminence of a European war was discerned. In Spain, both camps were following the development of the crisis with a different preoccupation. In the event of war in Europe, the Francoist victory would be in serious jeopardy. Republican Spain would line up with France and her allies, from which would come extensive material aid that would render Franco's military position untenable and in a counter-coup Franco would be bereft of direct backing from his sponsors. In which circumstances it was to be supposed that, in anticipation of a resounding Francoist defeat, an unfavourable armistice would be concluded. This worry was confirmed when Franco sent 20,000 prisoners of war to work on the fortifications along the Pyrenees and along the Franco-Spanish border in Morocco. What is more, the German-British negotiations to which the Sudetenland issue gave rise worried Franco who feared at the time that the conflict might be resolved peacefully, with himself being sacrificed. The enigmatic line being taken by Berlin did nothing to appease such worries. On 25 September, Stohrer sent this telegram to minister Ribbentrop:

'The German liaison officer at the Spanish headquarters reports as follows: Franco is surprised that Berlin has no contact with him. He claims to be ignorant of Germany's political and military intentions in the event of a European war or of a limited war in Czechoslovakia. If nationalist Spain is not at the moment a great power, it is nonetheless, as a friendly power, in a position to render us help somehow. Franco inquires as to Germany's intentions *vis à vis* her fleet and whether she wishes to use Spanish ports as supply bases: in which case preparations could be made. What is to become of the Condor Legion? The warship *Deutschland* entered the port of Vigo with a huge tug, assuredly with intentions to which he is not privy. He had expected to receive requests and suggestions from Berlin. But in vain. Franco seems somewhat hurt. Those around him say that nationalist Spain is being slighted.'

In the Francoist camp, anxiety showed itself through cautious questioning. Long faces began to be seen at the headquarters of the *Caudillo* and Germany was even quietly taken to task for the lousy idea of having chosen such a bad time for her provocations in central Europe. In a telegram from Stohrer to Ribbentrop, dated San Sebastián 28 September, the following was stated:

'Before I had had time to put my question, the Foreign Affairs minister stated to me today that France and England had questioned the *Generalissimo* as to his intentions in the event of a European war: this question had been put to Quiñones de León and the Duke of Alba. Referring to the talks which had taken place in London that very day with French ministers and with General Gamelin, the Foreign Office particularly told the Duke of Alba that the French general staff was prepared to take no action against nationalist Spain if Franco were to declare himself neutral, otherwise France would attack immediately via the Pyrenees and in Morocco. Spain's situation is a very difficult one. Without doubt, she would not be able to reckon upon substantial aid from Germany and Italy; thus they are not in a position to prosecute their war against the Red Army and simultaneously fend off the French. The *Generalissimo* regrets that Spain is not yet strong enough to side with us. Unfortunately, for the time being he can see no option other than to declare himself neutral.'

The most telling part of this text is the part where Jordana is credited with saying that 'in return for her neutrality, nationalist Spain would of course insist that the French, etc. cease all support to Red Spain.'

That assurance seems to have been given in full. Franco's political manoeuvre was to be crucial in deciding the outcome of the contest in Spain. Declaration of his neutrality during the uncertain days which led up to the Munich compromise raised his standing in British and French diplomatic circles. In those same quarters, the republican cause was automatically discarded and, to boot, Russia herself, who had doubtless gauged the gravity of the Czechoslovakian crisis, evinced a desire to stay out of artillery range, disentangling herself once and for all from the Spanish problem. Certain winding-up measures gave this away. Increasingly the French border with Catalonia was sealed off. In the book which General Rojo devotes to the end of the fighting in Catalonia, he is haunted by the obsessive expectation of a providential influx of armaments which never arrived until, with Barcelona lost, catastrophe was unavoidable. Every policy, every power, democratic and totalitarian alike, agreed upon the intention to back Franco and to wind up the nightmare which had kept the world on tenterhooks since 1936. Franco's neutrality declaration was a prize political gambit played with no less extraordinary adroitness. Britain's backing down in Munich diminished its importance not one whit, whereas for the republican camp, which had staked all on some stormy international imbroglio, Munich was tantamount to the *coup de grace*.

Germany feigned indifference towards the *fait accompli* of Francoist neutrality. She confined herself to revising her procedures and also claimed to find such a declaration unnecessarily hasty and premature when no war had actually broken out as yet. She

bowed to the *fait accompli* and stated that such a declaration, which she hoped was a verbal undertaking involving no commitment of any sort, was not directed against Germany and Italy. In his entry of 23 September, Ciano opened with these words:

'Franco, preoccupied with his own position, intends to open negotiations with London and Paris towards a declaration of his neutrality. Shame on him! Our people who perished in Spain must be turning in their graves.'

The Germans were sure that, once the Czechoslovakian question was out of the way, England would make a determined effort to resolve the Spanish problem without recourse to arms. They were worried about the possibility of an armistice 'Made in England'. They knew the Francoist government to be fanatical in its opposition to anything that smacked of compromise. Franco, no less, had by means of an intense newspaper onslaught, insisted on the unconditional surrender of the 'Reds', the result of which would not spare any whose hands were stained with blood.⁶ But this was not the general feeling prevailing in the nationalist zone where war weariness was making greater daily inroads at the front and in the rear as the war dragged on and on. In view of this, Germans and Italians concluded that military victory was not to be expected from Franco unless he made up his mind to face up to further sacrifices in men and materials in order to secure it.

Early in August Rome was the scene for an important military gathering for the purpose of dealing with the issue of the Italian contingents in Spain. An official statement was made to the effect that during the first 20 months of the war, Italy had suffered 11,552 losses, either wounded, dead, taken prisoner, or missing. Consequently, the Duce put the following proposals to Franco: that two or three fresh divisions be sent on: that 10,000 men be sent to make good the losses taken by the two divisions which were already in Spain: or the Italians be withdrawn. Franco found the first and second proposals unacceptable, for fear they might draw the retort of French troops entering via the Pyrenean frontier; then again — he said — it could be hard to keep the dispatch of 10,000 more volunteers to Spain secret. While deploring this, he endorsed the last proposal, for a partial withdrawal that would not apply to specialist troops, and providing that the air force was beefed up. Was Franco privy to Mussolini's phoney dilemma? Mussolini's decision was directly bound up with the negotiations in progress between Italy and England (the pact of 16 April).

In his diary entry for 6 October, Ciano hints at the inner workings of this unashamed trade-off:

'Perth delivers the British reply. Basically it amounts to acceptance of the implementation of the agreement once the 10,000 men have been pulled out. But Chamberlain is asking for a breathing space. He does not want to present himself before the Cabinet and then the House, saying: "I have here a take it or leave it offer: Mussolini has set me a time limit." In that case, his position which, despite the vote of confidence, is tenuous, would become untenable. He asks that a delay until 1 November be granted. The Duce who initially had reacted disagreeably to the English reply, ended up by giving in. Of course, he has no intention of giving any assurances about aircraft and their operations.'

The evacuated Italians landed at Naples on 20 October. On 2 October in the republican zone, foreign combatants had begun to muster for departure from Spain. They left on 23 October. The agreement between Italy and Britain came into effect on 16 November. The British parliament had given its approval on 2 November.

Officially, that left on the Francoist side the 12,000-man 'Littorio' Division, aircraft, tanks, artillery, specialist forces and officers and NCOs enough to staff three mixed divisions. So much for Italian personnel. Albeit less than voluntary, this withdrawal of

6. Franco claimed to have in his possession one million dossiers on 'Reds' with blood on their hands and these would be held accountable for their crimes.

volunteers was seized upon by the Francoist press for a violent campaign against intervention and on behalf of recognition of rights of belligerency. Despite this display of rabid intransigence, the impression in Berlin at the end of the month was that, except in the event of significant military assistance, victory would only be feasible if shipments of war materials were substantially increased.

A note from the German Under-Secretary of State in Berlin, dated 22 October, encapsulated the whole of the problem:

1. After having pulled out around 12,000 men from Spain, the Italian government negotiates with the British government so as to discover whether this gesture is enough for the Anglo-Italian agreement to become effective. It is discovered that implementation of the agreement was made conditional upon a substantial withdrawal. England will not be able to reach any decision until early November. Chamberlain, indeed, has promised the House of Commons that he will do nothing without consulting them and the House does not sit until early November.

Colonel von Funck has already informed the Reich War Ministry of Franco's wishes. Shipment of rifles and artillery pieces was already agreed. There are still problems with shipment of machine guns.

2. Against this background we have agreed with the Italian government to confine ourselves for the moment to keeping our material in Spain in any event at the old level. This means that at the end of three months' normal rate of use the equipment of the Condor Legion will have to be refurbished. We will do whatever is required.

3. Furthermore, Franco is asking for additional war materials destined, not for the Condor Legion, but for Spanish troops to be more specific, not counting gunpowder shipments already underway, he has asked for delivery of 50,000 rifles, 1,500 light machine guns and 500 heavy machine guns, as well as 100 75mm artillery pieces.

The German military attaché in San Sebastian, Colonel Baron von Funck has just arrived to expedite matters. He has explained what Franco wants to the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and to the Commander-in-Chief of the Wehrmacht. According to him, General von Brauchitsch is due to brief the Führer about this on Monday 24 October.

The Wehrmacht Commander-in-Chief reckons that there is no particular problem in the shipment of rifles and artillery pieces. By contrast, the machine gun delivery amounts to nearly one month of Germany's output. Thus it would delay by a month the refurbishment of the German army in machine guns. Such an undertaking may be necessary on political grounds: the Wehrmacht is not qualified to determine.

4. In justification of his demands, Franco has stated to Colonel von Funck that he has no shortage of manpower. It is precisely on account of his inability to arm his men that he has not called up further classes of conscripts. This is why he lacks reserves, which fact has caused him irritation.

5. The political issue, then, is posed in the following terms:

a. Do we want to help Franco up until ultimate victory? If the answer is "yes", he needs considerable military assistance in excess of what he is seeking today.

b. Do we aim merely to maintain a balance of power between Franco and the Reds? If so, here again he requires our help and as far as Germany is concerned the equipment he has requested would be of use to him.

c. Should our aid to Franco be confined to the Condor Legion, Franco cannot aspire to anything beyond some sort of compromise with the Red government.

6. In these circumstances, I cannot but recommend delivery of the material to Franco. But we should not inform him of this until such time as we have discussed it once again with the Italians. It has to be believed that the Wehrmacht chief will do nothing without us.

7. Should we deliver the material, we ought to question once again whether our own provisions should be secondary to loans.

The following points should then be looked into:

a. Renewal of negotiations with a view to a political deal with Franco. Without

any doubt we ought to stand by the attitude which we have adopted thus far: this does not seem an opportune time to consider a more comprehensive political treaty than our existing protocol with Franco, given the wait-and-see stance espoused by the latter.

b. Acknowledgement of the significant costs to us of the deliveries already made by us, and of these new shipments.

Our ambassador might be urged to broach this subject once again with Franco, while at the same time reporting that we are ready to grant him assistance. Negotiations on this point might then be pursued through other channels.

c. Lieutenant Colonel von Funck has stated personally that we might also make our assistance conditional upon our being given a more significant role in the running of military operations. He pointed out that Franco's set-up, seen from the viewpoint of an officer of the German staff, leaves much to be desired. I do not think it very advisable to put this demand, which in any case would have to have the consent of the Italians who would stake a claim to the same influence.⁴

The speculation triggered by Franco's request catapults us fully into the matter of German economic policy in Spain.

The hypothesis that there was an understanding between Hitler and the Spanish rebels, and an understanding that military assistance would be available to them, in advance of the coup attempt of July 1936 seems somewhat dubious. It was around 22 July 1936 that Franco dispatched a German resident in Morocco (Bernhardt), a businessman, and a Nazi regional boss, to seek military assistance from Germany, especially in the shape of aircraft. His application was heeded and for the purpose of effecting operations there was established in Seville the Hisma firm which, to begin with, was involved in transporting rebel troops from Morocco across to the peninsula. Later it diversified into several aspects of Spanish economic life. Another company, the Rowak company, was set up in Germany to oversee the German co-operation programme.

The normal preoccupation of these companies was dealing in raw materials and they enjoyed a monopoly in purchasing and sales. The Reich's Finance Minister has awarded Rowak a loan of three million reichsmarks.

When Germany recognised Franco, ambassador Faupel was commissioned by the Führer to orchestrate political and commercial dealings with Spain in order to forestall the market's being captured by England which had abundant capital invested in Spain.

The German-Spanish treaty of 9 March 1936 expired on 31 December 1936. There was an option on extending this for a further year if both parties were agreeable. On 23 December, the German ambassador in Spain was instructed to suggest that the treaty be prorogued for a three month period. Simultaneously he was urged to initiate negotiations the following April with a view to adapting the treaty to the current situation.

In mid January 1937, Franco's commandeering of the Rio Tinto mines (a requisition made in Germany's favour) sparked off protracted debate in the Non-Intervention Sub-Committee and around the same time Franco, who had been receiving sizeable deliveries of war materials from Germany in return for goods, was confronted with this dilemma: since he was settling accounts with other nations on the basis of foreign currency, he was to set this foreign currency aside exclusively for Germany. Which is to say that, given the receipt of the latest substantial deliveries of arms, he had no need to look elsewhere for supplies.

On 21 February, Faupel reported that the Caudillo had admitted to him that the French Foreign Affairs minister had attempted, through the good offices of a second party, to open negotiations with the nationalist government with an eye to renewing commercial relations. According to Franco himself, his reply had been that this was not on as long as men and war materials destined for the 'Reds' continued to cross the Franco-Spanish border.

This is how things stood on 20 March when Hitler's and Franco's representatives signed the following secret protocol:

'PROTOCOL.

State Secret.

Salamanca, 20 March 1937.

The German government and the Spanish nationalist government, convinced that the continued growth of the friendly relations obtaining between them will further the prosperity of the German people and the Spanish people and will be a significant factor in the upholding of European peace to which they are solidly committed, have been moved by a common urge to establish right away the foundations of their future relations, achieving agreement in this connection upon the following points:

1. Both governments are to have ongoing consultations regarding steps to be taken to avert the perils of communism which threatens their countries.

2. Both governments will remain in continual contact in order to reach agreement upon international policy issued affecting their common interests.

3. Neither government will join with third powers in treaties or agreements of any sort which may be directed, directly or indirectly, against the other.

4. Should one of the two countries be attacked by a third power, the government of the other will refrain from any measure likely to benefit the aggressor or harm the country under attack.

5. Both governments share a common desire to see the fullest possible development of economic relations between their two countries. They confirm their wish to see both nations, now and in the future, complement one another and co-operate in every facet of economic life.

6. Under further instructions, both governments will keep this present protocol secret: said protocol to become effective immediately. When the time comes they shall establish the forms of their political, economic and cultural relations through specific treaties founded upon the principles set out above.

Signed in two originals, one in German, one in Spanish

For the German government, FAUPEL.

For the Spanish nationalist government, FRANCO.'

At the beginning of February, Britain asked Germany for compensation for 2,120 tonnes of copper precipitate purchased by the Hisma company. The British government insisted upon restitution or delivery of an equal quantity of copper ore, failing that, indemnification in pounds sterling. The German government retorted that the affair, being of a private nature, was none of its concern. In July the British made a fresh sally and stated that the requisition by the Francoist authorities had been unjustified since the Rio Tinto Company was a British and not a Spanish firm and its products, under the terms of its concession, were likewise British. In any case requisitions could be made to meet the needs of the war itself, but not for use as currency in dealings with other countries.

In May the German economic department, alarmed by certain rumours, and with economic negotiations with Franco in progress, instructed its ambassador in Salamanca as follows:

'Although we have no wish to make delivery of raw materials a condition upon our loans, Franco must recognise that in view of our limited capabilities these loans are to some extent dependent upon our essential imports from Spain. So I ask you to focus General Franco's attention particularly upon the fact that over the past few months, only astute use of the profits derived from Hisma-Rowak's exports from Spain have made it possible to finance in Germany a sizeable portion of the requests for war materials destined for Spain.'

The aforementioned economic negotiations concluded with the signing of the following protocol:

'The German government and the Spanish nationalist government are of one mind in

considering it appropriate in the present circumstances to postpone until a later, more suitable date a joint arrangement of the economic relations between their two countries.

Whereas in consequence both governments refrain for the time being from concluding detailed agreements in this regard, they nonetheless intend henceforth to ensure that in the future there is economic co-operation between their two countries. From this point of view the Spanish nationalist government declares itself ready to conclude, for the first time ever with Germany, a general trade agreement. Should it be considering international trade negotiations, it will first so inform the German government so as to afford it the opportunity of first concluding such an agreement with it.

Should the Spanish nationalist government for any particular reason find itself obliged to open economic negotiations with a third power rather than Germany, it will keep the German government briefed on these negotiations in so far as Germany may be affected so as to enable it to formulate its wishes in advance. In any event, those negotiations would not be affected.

Without prejudice to the agreements contained in the present protocol, the Spanish nationalist government reserves the right to afford Italy the treatment hereby afforded Germany.'

The same signatories that day endorsed a treaty complementary to the German-Spanish trade agreement of 7 May 1926:

'PROTOCOL.

Confidential.

Although it is the wish of the German government and Spanish nationalist government for the time being to refrain from concluding fresh agreements to govern the traffic in goods and payments between Germany and Spain, they aim nevertheless to place on general record in a way binding on both parties their joint intention to foster trade between both countries so as to achieve the fullest possible expansion thereof. Both governments state in particular that they feel a real desire to afford one another the utmost possible assistance in the supply of raw materials, food produce and manufactured or semi-manufactured goods of special interest to the importer country. Likewise, both governments will take maximum possible account of the interests of the other in the export field. Consequently, both governments will help insofar as they are able to ease the operation of private supply markets in the traffic of goods between Germany and Spain.

Signed in two originals, one in German, one in Spanish, Burgos, 15 July 1937.

For the German government, FAUPEL, EUCHER.

For the Spanish nationalist government, FRANCO, GÓMEZ JORDANA, BAU.'

At the end of September, the Germans were on the scent of the initiation of negotiations between Franco and Britain towards a *modus vivendi* in economic affairs, negotiations for which the British representative 'would follow'. Although the Germans were confident that Franco was not about to meet England's requirements at Germany's expense, they did believe that any negotiations between Franco and any other country was, when all was said and done, a threat to Germany's upper hand in economic affairs in Spain. For on Spanish soil Germany and Britain were in competition for iron, ores, copper, pyrites, etc. It was of vital concern to Germany that she should have the upper hand and Germany was obsessed with maintaining her status as most favoured customer for Spain's raw materials. Thus the German Foreign Affairs minister asked his ambassador in Spain to keep him briefed on the progress of the Anglo-Spanish negotiations and to intervene to protect Germany's 'sacred interests'.

"The protocol of 15 July states very clearly that "economic negotiations of a general nature" should take place with Germany in preference to all other nations and that should it be necessary to conclude negotiations with a nation other than Germany

everything possible would have to be done to signify any such intentions in advance. Given the phrasing, it might be claimed that the consultation agreement is not applicable to the Anglo-Spanish negotiations which are not "of a general nature". Nevertheless, the consultation agreement can be invoked by reference to its spirit. It was concluded in the formal intention "of ensuring economic co-operation in the future as well".

The German ambassador replied on 24 October in the light of the answer which he in turn had received from Nicolás Franco: 'Mr. Franco has confirmed to me that in the course of those negotiations England, although he has requested them, has not been awarded any sort of economic preferences.'

On 9 October 1937, Franco's government promulgated a decree cancelling all mining concessions and other agreements. This decree undid Germany's efforts to secure control of Spanish mining companies. 'Montana Project' was the name given to the monopolistic activities of the Hisma corporation and the objective was to establish a series of new firms in the country alongside it. Hisma officials lodged objections with General Jordana and with Franco about the implications of the decree which, according to them, greatly reduced the foreign shareholding in the mining corporations. The response was evasive and stressed that the decree was not directed against Germany, although the Germans, on the basis of information received through secret channels, were sure that the opposite was the case. The reaction to the decree is reflected in a memorandum from the ambassador to Stohrer, from which the following extracts have been taken:

'It is obvious to us that the Montana Project completely alters the meaning and purpose of our aid to Spain in the economic sphere: for our whole provision in raw materials by means of purchases — as trading companies are very well aware — has only a short span: it is day by day supply.

The object of our economic involvement in Spain should be to make deep inroads into the chief sources of Spanish wealth, which is to say, into agriculture and mining exploitation...

More clearly it could be said that the success or failure of our assistance to Spain hinges upon the success or failure of our efforts in the mining sector in Spain. Only in the full knowledge that the Montana Project is the real objective of our economic endeavours should we resolve this problem with all of the resources at our disposal. Let it be stated here that such resources must be marshalled and applied in every sphere, and that, as a result, we must deploy our diplomatic, military and cultural influence on behalf of the ultimate goal: our economic undertaking ...

Achievement of our overall objective, if it cannot be achieved by reasonable means, will have to be attained by means of violence ...'

At the end of November, retired commander von Jagwitz was commissioned by Goering to journey to Salamanca without delay 'to place a gun at Franco's breast.' According to the Reich's Secretary of State, Mackenson, General Goering reckoned that the exceptional favours done Franco authorised him to make a formal request of him that he safeguard 'German war booty'. Goering had the impression that 'General Franco has increasingly been making more and more concessions to the British of late, the upshot of which is likely to seriously jeopardise our economic position in Spain.'

According to the German Secretary of State:

'Between Franco and England there had in fact been something afoot which might have struck us as suspicious by virtue of the fact that the Generalissimo was not putting his cards on the table with regard to us; but it should not be overlooked that Franco must of course take account of the commercial interests of England in Spain. What we have thus far obtained from Spain, under the current contracts, is, in spite of everything, considerable: one is talking about some 900 millions, made up almost exclusively of

vitally important raw materials whereas before the mainstay of our commercial dealings with Spain had been confined to superfluous importation of oranges to the tune of something in excess of 40 million marks. We also have to ask ourselves whether our threat to Franco to reduce or wholly dispense with the military and which we have loaned him hitherto, would have the same impact now that the military situation is in his favour, that it would have had if we had acted upon it three months ago. Should the threat to Franco remain idle and should he brave all the risks, we would lose our commercial dealings with Spain once and for all. On all of these grounds, Jagwitz reckons it better not to adopt such vigorous steps in principle but rather, instead, to invite our ambassador to speak with General Franco as a matter of urgency and to inform him of certain anxieties felt here regarding our access to the Spanish economy and that the ambassador be recalled to Berlin to give account of these matters forthwith. But before setting out on that trip he would need to have received clear-cut explanations from the Franco. If Franco were to answer evasively, or refuse to answer, deliberations might then proceed in Berlin as to the course to adopt in view of the ambassador's personal report.

There would always be time to dispatch Jagwitz to Salamanca on a special mission bearing appropriate and specific instructions...

Should Franco fight shy of a reassuring explanation, especially with regard to the mines which seem to be exposed to serious threat, we still have time to proceed along the lines prescribed by General Goering.'

On 30 November 1937, the Reich's Foreign Affairs Minister dispatched the following telegram to his ambassador in Salamanca:

'1. To judge by reports from reliable sources, Nicolás Franco's declaration regarding Spain's agreements with England is either incomplete or has been overtaken by a turn of events being kept from us by the Spaniards. We have grounds for believing that Franco has made firm and substantial concessions to England, the details of which we are not conversant, but which represent a serious threat to our interests. So I ask you personally to ask the *Generalissimo* for an explanation and let him know without equivocation that, setting aside all the privileges which they have awarded us under contract, we make our stand solely on the basis of the moral, financial and extremely effective military aid we have rendered him at crucial points in his revolt in unreservedly insisting that our special economic interests should not be sacrificed for the sake of a third party, but ought instead to be respected in their entirety. In particular, we must insist that the iron ore output of the Bilbao and Asturian mines be reserved mainly for us, and that, furthermore, we be awarded an unlimited concession in the purchase of scrap iron. We acknowledge, however, as we stated in our instructions of 16 October, the necessity of England's also being granted a certain place in the Spanish market. But there is no way we will tolerate England's being favoured at the expense of our economic position, principally as far as the supply of raw materials is concerned. Should General Franco's response be evasive or should he challenge the accuracy of our information, refusing at the same time to furnish us with a satisfactory explanation of how he intends to respect our legitimate interests, I ask you to tell him bluntly that we will then find ourselves obliged, albeit reluctantly, to reconsider our attitude *vis à vis* the Spanish Nationalist government in various matters and in the light of this new situation.

2. To authenticate the extent to which Franco is ready to respect German interests, I ask you to seek an acknowledgment of the mining rights which figure in the list dispatched along with our instructions of 27 November.

3. Given that Franco's negotiations will still be in progress and that a snap decision may be necessary, I ask you to approach the *Generalissimo* as a matter of urgency and report back to me by telegram.'

Goering, on the basis of documents available to him, claimed to be certain that Franco

had entered into talks with the British and that the latter had already secured economic concessions which would be followed by others likely to seriously impact on Nazi interests in Spain. And he indicated that — the success of the German four-year plan being at stake — he was not disposed to put up with any such attitude on the part of the Generalissimo. As a result, he took steps to dispatch von Jagwitz to Spain immediately to 'put a gun to Franco's head.' However, Goering let himself be won over by a last-gasp suggestion that he deploy the full powers of diplomatic pressure without prejudice to recourse to his original plan in the event of further reverses and ultimately failure.

On 16 November, Sir Robert Hodgson had been appointed Britain's agent in Francoist Spain. On 22 November, the nationalists reciprocated by accrediting the Duke of Alba as their agent in London. This was tantamount to *de facto* recognition. They had awarded Franco *de jure* recognition, in addition to Germany and Italy, Albania and some minor American states, and Japan was on the brink of following suit. Austria, Hungary, Switzerland and Holland already maintained formal relations, while Yugoslavia, Poland and social-democratic Belgium also intended to establish relations.

From the German point of view, this haste to award recognition was not prompted only by a concern to protect slight interests but rather, as in the case of England, was designed to conclude advantageous trade agreements in anticipation of what was believed to be the imminent and resounding victory of the Spanish rebels. According to Stohrer, fairly reliable rumours had reached him to the effect that the British were negotiating the award of loans with Spanish agencies. At around this time, a Franco government representative was allegedly immersed in negotiations with north American groups with a view to re-establishing trade links. A trade agreement was believed to have been reached between the nationalist government and Switzerland under which Switzerland had agreed to pay for Spanish goods 30 per cent in foreign currency and the rest in kind. French trading corporations were urgently telegraphing Paris to re-open trade with Franco.

For their part, the Italians harboured the same misgivings as the Germans. According to the Italian ambassador in Salamanca, Franco's war debt to Italy amounted to 3,000 million lire.

While granting substantial economic benefits to Germany in return for the precious aid she had afforded him right from the outset, Franco wanted to maintain trading relations with England, at all costs. The Germans were left high and dry. But they were wondering if it might not be too late to suddenly cut off aid to Franco, now that the military tide was running in his favour. If the threat proved idle, they could lose all the advantages they had already gained. So they decided against heavy-handed tactics. The German ambassador would quickly invite Franco to a meeting at which he would share their concerns. If Franco's response was evasive or he refused to explain himself, there might still be time to switch to Goering's more direct approach.

Franco's reaction when challenged by the German ambassador on the point was to categorically deny the suggestion that any concession to Britain had been made or was being considered. As for recognition of the mining rights as broached by the Hisma corporation, Franco's declarations and those of his cabinet were not so satisfactory.

According to the Germans, the mining decree of 9 October was not binding on the Francoist government but indeed increased its freedom to act, as a result of which recognition of the much yearned-for rights would have furnished the best proof that the decree had not been directed against Germany. Failing that — as one set of instructions insisted — if Franco clung to his ambiguousness, they would have to insist upon observance of the undertaking implicit in paragraph 3 of a protocol of 16 July which Franco had personally helped draft. This protocol, it seems, committed the Francoist government to facilitating as best it could the creation of Spanish mining companies in partnership with German companies (Montana Project).

The position of the Francoist authorities was that they would gladly look into the matter, that the question was one of great importance to Spain, that the matter could not be resolved lightly since territorial assets of great worth were involved and that it

had to be remembered that theirs was only a provisional government and thus unable to countenance precipitate action of any sort in affairs. As for the aforementioned 16 July protocol, it pointed out that the facilities promised therein 'had to be in tune with the broad dispositions of Spanish law', which limited foreign share-holdings to 25 per cent.

To make things worse, Franco's official representative in London made a song and dance about German zeal, incensing England and waxed lyrical about an imminent resumption of economic relations between the two countries. The Duke of Alba, no less, had stated in the press that 6,000 German technicians were operating in Spain. The official representative in Paris, Quiñones de León, was credited with similar anti-German activity.

On 26 December, when Stohrer and Bernhardt had talks with the Caudillo, they failed to get Franco to budge, for he claimed to be bound by Spanish laws limiting foreigners' rights in respect of mining concessions. And he even suggested that Hisma, 'which I have commissioned to govern trade and prices and which seeks secretly to acquire mining rights', was operating in an underhand fashion.

On 21 January 1938, Bernhardt forwarded to the Foreign Affairs Ministry through ambassador Stohrer, a breakdown of mineral exports from Spanish Morocco and Francoist Spain to Germany during the year 1937, thus:

'For your information, let me inform you that mineral exports during the month of December were as follows:

Iron ore:	
Shipments ex-Bilbao	90,000 tonnes
Shipments ex-Morocco	100,000 tonnes
Other shipments	15,000 tonnes
Total	205,000 tonnes

Shipments of ores like	
wolfram, copper, bronze	152,000 tonnes
Pyrites shipments	55,000 tonnes

Thus in December we arrived at a record figure of roughly 260,000 tonnes.

We also have the figures for the year 1937. We shipped a total of 2,584,000 tonnes of ores, including:

Iron ores	1,620,000 tonnes
Pyrites	956,000 tonnes
Sundry other ores	7,000 tonnes'

There was further friction with Jordana on 25 January. But the situation was still unresolved: scrutiny of the numerous mining concessions acquired by the Germans — 73 in all — was a very time-consuming business. There was no suitably clear legal text on which to base a decision on the familiar German claims, nor was it possible to give any commitment as to the date on which any answer might be expected. One of the hitches was the fact that the government was provisional and the *Generalissimo*, the very incarnation of all executive authority: that Spanish legislation had to be strictly observed and that Jordana, on account of his activities during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, had subsequently been sentenced to death and served two years in prison, etc., etc.

Military developments during the first three months of 1938 pushed the economic issue into second place. The Germans believed that the time had come to pin down Franco and, on the basis of the 20 March 1937 protocol, their future political relations. A draft German-Spanish treaty was submitted by the Foreign Affairs minister to Hitler. In a memorandum that was attached, Ribbentrop wrote to his Führer:

'A draft of this sort, without any commitment to military alliance, would bind Franco

solidly to the Berlin-Rome Axis and would give us the assurance that Spain would not be a theatre of operations nor transit area for France or England.'

The draft, which was designed more to ensure that Franco would be benevolently neutral towards Germany, failed to win the wholehearted support of the German leader who stated a preference for a commercial treaty and for withdrawing his troops and fighter planes from Spain. Nevertheless, Stohrer did take the initiative during an audience with Franco. In his report to the minister about this audience the ambassador wrote:

'Franco is heartily in agreement: he has authorised me to negotiate with the Foreign Affairs Minister on the basis that we desire and above all to open discussions without delay on a cultural agreement. I immediately briefed the Foreign Affairs Minister of the outcome of the interview. The details will follow in writing...

Top secret: In accordance with your instructions, I happened to have occasion to ask Franco if Spain's adherence to the Anti-Comintern Pact might not be desirable. He replied that in fact he was already pursuing a very vigorous Anti-Comintern policy, but that embracing the Pact was impossible during the war, for a lively reaction could be anticipated from England which — as he pointed out appropriately — had used threats to prevent Portugal and Greece from joining the Anti-Comintern Pact. It would have to be considered after the war.

The general impression is very favourable. The atmosphere is heartening.'

This hopeful atmosphere, however, was dashed by Franco's abrupt *volte face*. On 19 May, General Jordana summoned Stohrer to inform him that, after thorough analysis of the draft of the German-Spanish treaty, the Generalissimo himself had, much to his regret, been compelled to voice certain, substantial reservations. Franco reckoned that England was inclining in favour of Nationalist Spain. The British government had hinted to the Duke of Alba that it was striving to get the French to close the frontier to all shipments of war materials to the 'Reds'. The British government itself had suggested to Alba that Mussolini be urged to take a softer line *vis à vis* France and had asked him to use his influence with the Duce to get him in turn to pressurise France into sealing the frontier. Mussolini's recent Genoa speech had signalled this intention. Again according to Franco, the war in Spain appeared to be entering a crucial phase. With the French border closed, the 'Reds' would not delay long before laying down their arms. Against that scenario, a far-reaching treaty between Spain and Germany might be the rock upon which such rosy expectations would founder. The merest leak (and that was inevitable) that such a deal existed would simply inflate its actual significance. The assurance of secrecy was illusory. Then again, an official treaty had of necessity to be submitted to the Council of Ministers and also to the party officials, according to the new provisions covering the powers of the Falange.

Nevertheless, Jordana took up Stohrer's suggestion of an agreement in the simple format of a secret 'protocol'. But that was precisely what Germany was not interested in: the last thing she wanted was for the proposed treaty to be secret. This can be deduced clearly from Ribbentrop's telegram to Stohrer, putting an end to the debate:

'Given that the Spanish government is for the moment hesitant about signing the draft treaty, we have no wish to give the impression that we have more interest in this treaty than do the Spaniards. The objective we have set ourselves in making the offer of a treaty would not be achieved were that treaty to be signed and kept secret during its term, nor would it by the conclusion of a secret protocol that would be no different from the 20 March 1937 protocol, so much so that the signing of a new document would be called for. Thus I ask you not to bring pressures to bear, but instead to follow up the idea of concluding the treaty at the opportune moment.'

Franco's misgivings had more to do with timing than with principle. In other words,

the Francoist government was afraid of alienating England and the democratic powers surrounding her until such time as a favourable outcome to the war should offer the fullest guarantees as to its policies. It so indicated to Germany and later acted upon this basis, displaying tremendous political and diplomatic tact.⁷

Finally, at the beginning of June, von Stohrer was informed by Jordana that a new mining law had been passed which would meet Germany's requirements in full. This new legislation provided for, first, the possibility of 40 per cent foreign capital investment; second, the Francoist government reserved the right to raise that ceiling in specific instances. But the legislation had already been ratified. During the drafting of it, the German ambassador had repeatedly and unsuccessfully sought, on behalf of his government, an audience with Franco, over five consecutive days. This cold shouldering and the *fait accompli* of the ratification of the law was supremely irritating to Berlin's representative. He went so far as to raise the question of trustworthiness, for he had intended to broach two vital issues at the audience for which he had applied: he had wanted to speak with the Generalissimo on a matter crucial as far as Germany was concerned and had wanted no definitive action to be taken before that audience had taken place. As a result, there was later a heated altercation between the German ambassador and minister Jordana:

'I ended by posing the following question to Jordana: What would happen if I were to report the facts to Berlin without comment, that is to say, that I had been denied an

7 With the war at an end, on 31 March to be exact, Germany and Spain signed the following treaty of friendship: "THE REICH CHANCELLOR and THE HEAD OF THE SPANISH NATIONALIST GOVERNMENT.

We acknowledge the common interests of our governments, the kindred nature of our political views and the bond of likely fellowship which unites our peoples. Our friendly alliance has already borne fruit and convinced that in tightening and strengthening our reciprocal relations we will be contributing towards the well-being of our peoples, to the safe-guarding of our most cherished spiritual assets and to the maintenance of peace, we wish to strengthen our common aims through a pact. To this end, we have appointed as plenipotentiaries, in the case of the Reich Chancellor, his ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the Spanish nationalist government, Eberhard von Stohrer ... and in that of the head of the Spanish nationalist government, the vice-premier of the nationalist government and Foreign Affairs minister, Lieutenant-General Don Francisco Gómez Jordana y Sousa, who have given their endorsement to the following provisions:

Article 1. The contracting parties are to remain in permanent contact for the purpose of jointly examining international policy issues affecting their common interests. Should their common interests be threatened by international developments of whatever nature, they shall consult without delay in order to determine the steps to be taken in defence of those interests.

Article 2. The contracting parties appreciate the dangers to which the activities of the Communist International expose their countries and they are to liaise on a permanent basis so as to reach agreement upon appropriate steps for the sake of their defence.

Article 3. In the event of the security or some other vital interest of either of the contracting parties' being threatened by an outside danger, the other contracting party shall afford the party under threat its diplomatic assistance so as to render it the greatest possible assistance in fending off the threat.

Article 4. With an eye to the friendship which unites both Germany and Spain to Italy, the two contracting parties are to be mindful in the application of the accords contained in Articles 1 to 3 above, of ensuring the co-operation of the royal Italian government.

Article 5. Neither of the two contracting parties is to conclude with third powers treaties or agreements of any sort which may be directed, directly or indirectly, against the other contracting party. The contracting parties undertake to keep each other briefed about treaties or agreements bearing upon their interests which may already have been concluded or may in the future be concluded with third states.

Article 6. In the event of one of the contracting party's going to war with a third power, the other contracting party shall avoid any military, political or economic measures liable to injure the contracting party or to favour its enemies.

Article 7. The contracting parties shall seek agreement through specific arrangements upon appropriate measures to promote good comradely relations between their respective armies and exchange of military experiences.

Article 8. Both contracting parties are to be mindful of extending and intensifying their cultural relations. The practical realisation of this principle shall be subject to specific agreements.

Article 9. The contracting parties are agreed upon the desirability of the economic relations of their two countries being, so far as possible, extended and they reaffirm their intention to see Germany and Spain complementing one another and co-operating economically in every regard. Practical implementation of this principle shall be the subject of specific agreements.

Article 10. This treaty will have to be ratified. Both instruments of ratification shall have to be exchanged as soon as possible in Berlin. The treaty will remain in force for a period of five years from the date on which the instruments of ratification are exchanged. Unless the treaty has been revoked six months before the expiry of this period, it will be prorogued for a further five years and so on thereafter.

In token of which the plenipotentiaries have signed this treaty - Stohrer, Gómez Jordana.'

audience with the Generalissimo and that binding decisions had been made without the opinion of the German government's having been heard?

The explanations offered to him were that this alleged slight had been due to the desire of the Caudillo to dispel rumours that Spain was prey to Italo-German domination and pressures. To have received Stohrer as Stohrer had wished would have been represented in enemy propaganda as the Spanish government dancing to the tune of the German ambassador.

Stohrer asked, as the meeting ended, that at least the law should not be made public knowledge until eight days had elapsed. When Franco was sounded on this, he replied that, regretfully, he was obliged to abbreviate that period of delay and that upon expiry of the period of grace prescribed...the text of the law would be issued to the press.

The law, published on 8 June, basically met the requirements of claimants. According to Stohrer himself, 'in the estimation of Hisma director Bernhardt, the law allows every opportunity to participate in the exploitation of Spain's subsoil.' There remained, however, just one reservation as to its practical application, especially with regard to the powers which the law afforded the Francoist government. And this led to frictions and wrangles that lingered right up until the end of the war.

We have already stated that Kremlin policy in Spain during the civil war was complementary to its international policy. The kernel of this policy was the reckoning that an international war was inevitable and the fear that the Kremlin had of the military might of Germany and her allies. Stranded in his isolation, Stalin trembled at the prospect of this. The Franco-Soviet pact of 1935, given its conditional nature and in view of French policy being subordinate to England, was little short of ineffectual. Stalin still feared the possibility of a reconciliation between the Axis powers and the democracies which might unite them against Russia or leave Germany a free hand to expand eastwards. There was every indication — General Krivitsky's views as given in his book and the events which followed — that Stalin's intention in his intervention in Spain was one of these three:

1. Alliance with Germany.
2. Alliance with the democracies.
3. To exploit the Spanish powder-keg in order to accomplish either of these aims,

by auctioning his inactivity to the highest bidder, or, failing that, helping to prolong the Spanish Civil War until it became a war between totalitarians and democrats, with the role of comfortable onlooker reserved for himself.

The policy of staggering arms shipments, as applied by Stalin in the Spanish context, confirms this intention merely of dragging out the Spanish conflict with an eye to the main chance. The Russo-German pact of 1939 is confirmation that the first of his objectives had been achieved. And there is no shortage of those — one particular Spanish communist who 'was Stalin's minister' (Jesús Hernández), for one — who argue that that pact was hatched in Spain as the prelude to the last decisive military reverses which, due to shortage of arms and the senseless manoeuvres which Stalin's 'advisors' foisted upon front-line commanders, put paid to the life of the Republic.



▲ **Joachim von Ribbentrop:**
Hitler's Foreign Minister



▲ **General Mario Roatta:** leader of
Mussolini's 'volunteers' in Spain

▼ **General Hugo Sperrle:**

Commander of the German Condor Legion, at his trial at Nuremberg, 1946



Chapter Seven:

State take-over of the War Industries

The trend towards government take-over of industries has to be viewed as a natural reactionary tendency inherent in the state which has the final say after the high tide of revolution. In Spain this tendency on the part of the state had survived 19 July. From May 1937 on, it acquired all the characteristics of a thoroughgoing backlash. The take-overs or seizures began with the pretence that industries related to war production were in need of centralisation, or that thoroughgoing and ongoing co-ordination of the war industries was imperative. In reality this offensive was prompted by a determination to nullify or wrest back the workers' gains. And to that end calculated slanders were peddled against the collectives, unions, factory or company committees which were taken to task for every failing from incompetence and sloth to deliberate sabotage, but these shortcomings afflicted only the government auditor agents. Governmental sabotage was a necessary prelude to justifying the subsequent, yearned-for take-over.

To begin with, we saw the seizure of some factories under supervision from Valencia and later, by means of establishing area delegations and, finally, by means of a decree of 11 August 1938, which militarised the war industries and provided for a complete take-over of that sector. The immediate upshot of the take-over was the appointment of experts, selected on political grounds, and the establishment of a wide-ranging bureaucracy made up of auditors and advisors, many of them Russians, and obedient to the watchwords of the political party which brooked no questioning. The consequences just had to be deplorable: progressive demoralisation of the workers on account of the loss of control and of the replacement of real experts by specialists in political propaganda, all of which rounded to the detriment of output.

In a report from Eugenio Vallejo — the CNT metalworking expert with whom our readers will by now be familiar — it is stated that the Defence Ministry's Under-Secretary for Munitions and Armaments had expressed a willingness to have talks with persons closely connected with Catalonia's war industry with a view to working out some formula for integrating that industry with the activities of the Munitions and Armaments Commission. Talks between the Under-Secretary and Vallejo got underway in Valencia on 1 September 1937. Vallejo produced productivity charts, books about phases of manufacture and a series of documents testifying to Catalonia's achievements in the production of war materials, notwithstanding the innumerable difficulties which she had had to overcome. Without the slightest help from central government, Catalonia had dispatched respectable shipments of shells of all sorts, explosives and sanitary equipment to every front. The Under-Secretary conceded that Catalonia's war industry's output was 10 times that of the rest of Spain (republican Spain) and that had the necessary wherewithal been made available in the shape of raw materials of foreign provenance, then, since September 1936 that industry might have been able to quadruple its actual output.

Already operational in Catalonia there was a Delegation of the Armaments Under-Secretariat made up of personnel bereft of any technical background and this delegation was bringing pressures to bear on the workers by promising them that if they were to work for Valencia they should not want for raw materials and other benefits. All this was spelled out by Vallejo to the Under-Secretary.

According to Vallejo, their meeting lasted for more than seven hours and during it, Vallejo, on behalf of the Catalan Commission proposed:

1. That the Army Central Staff which was conversant with the requirements of all the fronts, should devise a rational production plan to be implemented in a co-ordinated way in the various industrial regions, so as to avert overlapping output. For the sake of this plan, Catalonia would evaluate its capacity to meet whatever targets it might be assigned. The co-ordinating agency could not but be the Under-Secretariat itself in close concert with the Central Staff.

2. That the government ensure delivery of the requisite raw materials. To be doubly sure, it was agreed that the Under-Secretariat as such should place contracts with the war material plants of Catalonia. This would enable it to oversee for itself the proper usage of said raw materials. It was likewise granted oversight in respect of inspection of finished articles and storage of them.

3. Catalonia's Industries Commission would not be empowered to manufacture on its own account any sort of equipment not ordered by the Under-Secretariat.

4. That Commission would reserve its right to co-ordinate and manage the plants under its control, but provided that this accorded with the schedule of requirements submitted by the Under-Secretariat. This is because the Under-Secretariat's Delegation in the Catalan region did not have the competent personnel. Catalonia's War Industries Commission could not be replaced by any other agency without detriment to output and to the war effort itself.

All of these arguments were taken on board by the Under-Secretary. And he even went so far as to promise to visit Barcelona within 48 hours in order to speed a solution of the matter. Vallejo's proposals granted the Under-Secretariat oversight of 80 per cent of Catalonia's war industries. In short, the proposition entailed:

1. The drafting of a manufacturing programme;
2. Control of raw materials;
3. Direct contracts with the plants;
4. Direct oversight of the manufacture of finished items, and oversight of stockpiles of war materials.

The Under-Secretary showed up for the Barcelona meeting accompanied by, among others, the mining expert Madariaga, manufacturing director Izquierdo, master-gunsmith Echevarria, his technical secretary Segura, the Russian arms expert Sompters, three Russians who also claimed to be experts and two more Russians who had nothing to do with war materials and who were attached to the Under-Secretariat. They got down to business straight away and the talks lasted two days. The early sessions hinted at a certain optimism. Later, things changed. The Russians used the negotiations as an excuse to tour the factories, inspect output and inquire into the political and trade union affiliation of the workforce, especially that of the committee members whom they invited to work on behalf of Valencia. The Under-Secretary himself came under pressure from the PSUC or from Comorera, no less. The upshot of this was that at the third session Comorera, using adamant and overbearing terms, adopted a completely new tack, letting slip his ambition to effect a wholesale seizure of an industry in which 80 per cent of the workforce was affiliated to the CNT. He wanted to impose two grades of technicians and two management systems upon the one industry, plus one other delegate besides Vallejo (namely the aforementioned Izquierdo who was unmistakably a communist).

When Vallejo, speaking on behalf of his colleagues from the Commission, expressed his readiness to see the Under-Secretariat take charge of Catalonia's industries with all that this implied, this solution was rejected out of hand by the Under-Secretary. And when the latter stated that he was not interested in complete control, he clearly stated that neither he nor his companions had the technical equipment for any such undertaking. The middle-way formula which was being advanced was what they needed if they were to train or equip their swarm of civil servants. Once that had been achieved, the monitors could be thrown overboard.

The ploy, only too obvious, was exposed. And the Under-Secretary left Barcelona hurling threats that he would be back shortly with a government decree in his pocket.¹

The decree of 11 August 1938, under which Catalonia's war industries were taken over, was promulgated by a cabinet in which the CNT had a representative (in the shape of Segundo Blanco). We have said already that the decree triggered the

1. Archive of the FAI Peninsular Committee. The inconsistencies regarding the dates contained in these documents are the full responsibility of their authors or the result of the circumstances of the day.

resignations of the Catalan and Basque cabinet ministers, Jaume Aiguader and Manuel Irujo and we have seen too that it had previously been scrutinised by the CNT-UGT Liaison Committee. And although it seems that the higher CNT committees were sanguine about it, this was not the case among the rank-and-file militants and members of the CNT. There is evidence aplenty of the workers' dogged resistance to the surrender of the war industries. And it is even certain that the take-over was never able to be made wholly effective. But let us leave until later on the resistance encountered in Catalonia.

In the immediate wake of the promulgation of the decree, the Armaments Under-Secretariat Delegation in Madrid attempted to seize the CNT workshops there. The workers ignored orders and instructions and publicly stated their repudiation of the hand-over, unless they received prior assurances that a National War Industries Council would be set up.

For what the Libertarian Movement meant by talk of a Higher War Industries Council see volume one.

On 27 August, Madrid was the venue for a gathering of CNT metalworkers along with the appropriate responsible committees. Here is one report on the proceedings:

'The reason for the assembly is the decree on the war industries and the attitude adopted by the Metalworkers' Union with regard to it. According to the union's report, as soon as they became aware of the decree, they dispatched a letter to the CNT National Committee and similar missives to the Steel and Metalworking National Committees, the Regional Committee of the Centre and the Madrid Local Committee, registering their objections and demanding that the Ministry ensure that the decree does not become effective until such time as the War Industries Council comes into existence. Not one reply had been received. One day after the publication of the decree and without instructions having been received concerning its implementation, all of the industries in the sector had received a memorandum from the Armaments Under-Secretariat in Madrid, banning the removal of material or products from the plants and threatening severe sanctions against any breaches of this order.

The union lays especial emphasis upon the socialised status of all of Madrid's war industries and upon the dimensions assumed by that industry thanks to the efforts expended by the organisation.

Thereafter it states that the union has taken steps to defend its interests with regard to the decree and, quite apart from anything else which may be done or may be in the pipeline, it has issued a manifesto wherein it accepts the principle of militarisation, but insists upon a role for the unions and upon retention of the gains made during the war. The assembly resolved unanimously to endorse the union's stand and the maintenance of practices obstructing implementation of the decree.'

In mid-November 1938, the government issued instructions from its Barcelona residence that the CNT-controlled workshops in Valencia were to be taken over. On 21 November, envoys from the Under-Secretariat prepared to proceed with seizure of the 'Schmaisser' plant, meeting with opposition from the workforce and other personnel. Some days later, the CNT and UGT metalworkers of Valencia came together to resolve not to surrender any socialised workshop until such time as the government took steps to lay hands on workshops in private hands and, above all, until such time as the National War Industries Council was set up. Then, at a meeting of the Metalworkers' Liaison Sub-Committee, the UGT leader Pascual Tomás expressed the view that implementation of the decree was an affront to the workers and would damage war production, but said that he had orders from the UGT Executive to proceed with the surrender of factories and workshops, without conditions.

On 2 December, there was a meeting of the Metalworkers' Sub-Committee and the CNT National Sub-Committee. It was agreed that 'a commission made up of two comrades from both sub-committees pay a call on the Under-Secretariat's Delegate to get the latter to suspend the seizures until such a time as specific instructions were

received from Barcelona.' It was also stressed that numerous letters to this effect had been sent to the CNT National Committee and to the CNT-UGT Liaison Committee, and a reply had been forthcoming to none. In the event of there now being no response to a radio appeal addressed to comrade cabinet minister Segundo Blanco, another comrade from the Sub-Committee would fly to Barcelona.

On 3 December, there was a further meeting between the industry's Local Liaison Committee, the secretaries of both unions (CNT and UGT), and the Metalworker's National Liaison Committee. At this meeting, the CNT personnel insisted upon the following: that the workshops not be handed over unconditionally; that the conditions on which the take-over would proceed be made known; acknowledgement 'by whomsoever may be concerned' that the plants would always be regarded as conquests of the workers. In the event of seizure, it would be understood that the take-over would be effected by the National War Industries Council. Pascual Tomás stuck by his familiar position and regarded the trip of an envoy to Barcelona as ill-advised.

There was another meeting between the CNT-UGT Liaison Sub-Committee and the industry's National Liaison Committee. There, Pascual Tomás opined once again 'that his Federation unconditionally accepted the take-over in accordance with instructions from the Executive.' On the part of the CNT, it retorted 'that the CNT and UGT union organisations had commitments of national import and so did both Federations.' One of these was 'to watch out for the workers' gains of before and after 19 July.' The resolution was: that the CNT-UGT Liaison Sub-Committee visit the Armaments Under-Secretariat Delegate to urge him to suspend the seizures until such time as a categorical answer on the issue was received to a radio message addressed to the CNT-UGT National Liaison Committee based in Barcelona.

On 6 December, the UGT Delegation in the Centre-South zone (César Lombardía, Antonio Pérez and Claudina García) published a note in the newspapers reiterating 'the UGT's wholehearted agreement with the decree centralising the war industries and placing these under the exclusive aegis of the Armaments Under-Secretariat.' The Delegation also reminded all its affiliated organisations of the duty to offer the fullest co-operation to the appropriate governmental agencies. 'This stance by the UGT,' it was stated, 'is the result of repeated accords of its National Committee and accords with the provisions of the UGT-CNT united action agreement on this issue.'

This pronouncement drew another note from the CNT's National Sub-Committee to the effect that 'it is especially important to remind all workers of the stance adopted by the CNT,' a stance which was encapsulated by the following points:

1. Establishment and operation of a National War Industries Council with equal representation for the CNT and the UGT.

2. Surrender of collectivised war industries to the War Industries Council, once it is in operation, so that this agency may oversee their centralisation, output, wages and other ancillary rules for development and control on behalf of our war effort.

3. Until such time as the National War Industries Council comes into operation, we abide by the established national accords of the organisation and the prescriptions lately laid down by the CNT-UGT Liaison Sub-Committee, thereby honouring our commitments to governmental agencies as well as to the trade union agencies to which the workers have an obligation.

We do so because the workers need to have the greatest assurances, in handing over the industries, for whose growth they alone have been the inspiration, so that the revolution may not stagnate and may furnish the basis for the wider social achievements which are the pole star and guide along the path to our independence.

In all its decisions, the CNT affords the war priority over every other consideration, mindful that for every material or moral surrender assurances are required that may stimulate the workers to go on making their contribution with the same enthusiasm as and when they owned that which they are giving up, and in so doing, we regard this as doing our duty by the war and by ourselves alike.'

That was how the matter stood on the eve of the final and tragic phase of the revolution and the war.

So as to have some sort of idea of the situation of the war industries in the Centre-South zone, we shall summarise an interesting report submitted at the time by the CNT members Carañana and Calvillo on the basis of their first-hand observations. Their report comprises 30 pages and covered the following subjects: output, the trade union affiliations of the workers and technicians, anomalies, political chicanery, criticisms and guidelines for improvement of the industries. The authors visited 28 localities and around 50 production sites (factories and workshops). Here is a summary of what they encountered:

Gandia — Workshop set up by the CNT workforce (officials, women and apprentices). Three 8-hour shifts per day. Thirty-eight affiliates, three UGT members and 26 non-unionised apprentices.

Oliva — CNT workshop. Workforce of 57 (technicians, staff, women and apprentices). Three eight-hour shifts. Eight UGT members.

Denia — CNT workshop. No. 2 Factory under the control of the Armaments Under-Secretariat. Personnel 80 per cent CNT members. Small workshop: the owners, two brothers, worked there and belonged to the CNT. Another small workshop: with 11 (CNT) personnel. Another small workshop: 3 (CNT) personnel. Another had a staff of four (possibly UGT) members. Toy co-operative converted into a war industry: 350 workforce (mostly CNT). Two eight-hour shifts. This co-operative was made up of small scattered workshops.

Novelda — No. 3 and No. 4 Factories commandeered by the Armaments Under-Secretariat. 1,500 workforce, 200 of them CNT members. Mostly female workforce. Communist management. Discrimination against hiring of CNT workers. Competition between communists and socialists for the upper hand in management.

Villena — CNT socialised industry. Workforce of 28. Two eight-hour shifts. The workforce was very demoralised by the irresponsibility of the comrades in charge of the industry.

Ibi — No. 27 Factory, controlled by the Armaments Under-Secretariat. Socialist management. The report gives no figures for the workforce but says that this village was a UGT fief.

Elda — UGT Metalworking Co-operative. 52 personnel. Two 10-hour shifts. Communists and socialists. CNT socialised metalwork workshop, with 32 workforce. Two eight-hour shifts.

Elda-Petrel — Workshops and dockyard. No. 22 Factory, Armaments Under-Secretariat-controlled. UGT management. 1,250 workforce. Two shifts. CNT and UGT.

Alicante — CNT-UGT socialised industries. Several smelters and workshops. Workforce of 800. Eight hours daily. Parity between CNT and UGT.

Elche — No. 1 Factory under Armaments-Under-Secretariat control. Socialist management. Workforce of 1,050, 850 UGT and 200 CNT. Two 10-hour shifts. No. 2 Factory likewise. Socialist management. 450 personnel. Two 10-hour shifts. 390 UGT members, 60 CNT. Factory No. 4 under the Aviation Under-Secretariat. Communist management. Staff of 122 — 38 CNT and 84 UGT.

Alcoy — CNT socialised metalworking industry. Workforce of 863, all CNT.

Cieza — No. 15 Factory, evacuated from Sagunto. 150 personnel, mostly UGT.

Albaran — No. 8 Factory under Armaments Under-Secretariat control. Workforce of 120, the bulk of them UGT members.

Alcantarilla — No. 20 Factory, Armaments Under-Secretariat controlled. 1,200 personnel, only 10 per cent CNT.

Murcia — UGT 'Pablo Iglesias' workshops. 250 personnel. Two 11-hour shifts, nine CNT members. Peña workshops: 90 workers, 10 hours a day, UGT. Montesinos workshops: workforce of 31, eight hours a day: three CNT members. Rueda workshop: workforce of 76, three of them in the CNT. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours a day. Widow of Anastasio Alemán workshop: 28 workers, four CNT, 10 hours a day. With the exception of the first of these, all the workshops belonged to their old owners who grew rich from the war.

Cartagena — No. 26 Factory, Armaments Under-Secretariat controlled. Socialist management.

Albujon — Subsidiary workshop of the above factory. Both together had a workforce of 1,080 (1,005 and 75 respectively). No figures available for union affiliations, nor for the cartridge plant set up in Cartagena with machinery successfully evacuated from Toledo, machinery in disrepair. Nor are there figures for the naval dockyard and the boat-building yard.

Mazarron — Gállez y Acosta Grenade foundry. Workforce of 31 (23 of them minors) UGT membership.

Aguilas — Andalusian Railways foundry, converted for war production. Workforce of 290. Commandeered by the Armaments Under-Secretariat. CNT management. No further figures.

Almeria — Oliveros Workshops controlled by the UGT Metalworkers' Union. Workforce of 110, five of them CNT members. 10 hours a day. The UGT here was communist-controlled.

Ubeda — UGT Metalworking Collective. Workforce of 71. 10 hours a day. Heredero de Fuentes Workshop (CNT-UGT controlled). Workforce of 150. Two 10 hour shifts. Workshop subsidiary of Factory No. 28 mentioned below.

Linares — No. 28 Factory, Armaments Under-Secretariat controlled. CNT management. Workforce of 540 between Ubeda and Linares. No. 6 Factory under the control of the Armaments Under-Secretariat. Workforce of 450. Three eight-hour shifts. There was a socialist delegate and Political Commissar for the Ubeda and Linares plants. No further details.

Albacete — No. 18 Factory under Armaments Under-Secretariat control. Workforce of 210. Two eight-hour shifts. The bulk of the workforce was made up of minors and women affiliated to the UGT. The plant belonged to the International Brigades. No. 17 Factory, likewise. Socialist management. Workforce of 93, mostly UGT. The head of the workshops belonged to the CNT. Two 10-hour shifts. Workshops of the 'El Baluarte' Union (affiliated to the UGT).²

In the synopsis which the authors give of their report, the following comments are worthy of note:

'At the outset of this report we stressed that our task is not yet complete and that it will continue until completion. That we promise and will ensure.

In the field of war industry a fair amount has been achieved but not even nearly one half of what could be achieved. There are many workshops and factories where there is an evident discontent due to lack of competence or responsibility on the technical and organisational side of things. At this stage there can be no such disorientation unless there is a malicious concern to ensure that in the factories and workshops there is no matching of output to the characteristics of these.

There are workshops where, however hard the workers may strive, they cannot match the output they would reach in a different sort of work. Is it conceivable that a workshop with lathes of up to three metres tolerance should be given over to the manufacture of 20 mm anti-aircraft shells? Yet this is happening in countless places and in respect of various sorts of manufacture.

In the light of these facts, it might be supposed that the workshop or factory which operates in these conditions must make losses instead of gains. Not a bit of it. The Armaments Under-Secretariat depends upon the workshops to provide its budget. These do just that on the basis, of course, of the assets available to them, and work is contracted out along with the appropriate profit margin.

Furthermore, the Armaments Under-Secretariat has not yet drawn up a technical and organisational plan which bothers to examine and carry into effect the grouping together of small workshops which would undoubtedly double output.³ Instead, it

2. FAI Archives.

3. Opposition to this was based upon an absurd respect for small-scale ownership.

does concern itself with aiming to take over those workshops which do boast good organisation because their workforce runs them, like the Socialised Industries of our union in Madrid and the best works under the supervision of the CNT's Metalworking Board, the Alicante works etc.

The manufacturing norms adopted in the South are not the same as those in Levante, Catalonia and the Centre. A competent, well-meaning agency would have seen to the establishment of some arrangement for communicating norms between one Delegation and another, in an efficient way, so that the Inspectors and workshop and factory directors might put these into effect. But this is not being done, and there is every likelihood that this scheme may exist in some pretty blueprint format.

Nor is there any apparent attempt to capitalise upon all available assets in terms of dependable anti-fascist professionals who might be entrusted with tasks requiring such qualifications. Instead one finds a sea of dubious elements who are acknowledged by those in the highest positions to be dubious indeed, although they claim this is because these are in the training stage.

Nonetheless, care is taken, as in the case of Commissar Juan Alonso, upon learning of the transfer of Amutio,⁴ to send a telegram to the Under-Secretariat's Delegate requesting the appointment of a Director "who is a socialist".

Consequently, there is not one visible reason for us to be optimistic, but comrades who work exhausting hours in the industries on meagre food rations, are under threat of being dispatched to fortifications, the SIM or the Centros de reclutamiento y instrucción militar (Recruitment and Military Training Centres/CRIM) at the first sign of any shortcoming. Although this fate does not hang over the Directors, Commissars or Delegates who commit offences like lacking competence or bona fides.'

The documents which follow testify to what militarisation of the war industries meant, and to the ghastly prospects facing the selfless workers in the rearguard. The first document comes from the Onil Steel and Metalworkers' Union and takes the form of a letter sent to the committee of that industry, a committee based in Alicante. It is dated 5 September 1938 and states:

'Esteemed comrades. This present letter is to brief you on irregularities and outrages which have been occurring in these workshops, outrages which we are in no way disposed to put up with for a single moment more, so that should they persist we shall find ourselves obliged to initiate a grievance procedure with all that this implies. Before we do, we turn to you so that you may devise the speediest and most effective means of bringing things to a satisfactory conclusion, either by reporting them to our higher bodies or through talks with the management of these factories.

In the first place, the only views heeded around here are those of the PCE which just goes to show the favouritism which exists. One quite specific instance is that in the first-aid room there is a nurse who entered these workshops some days ago and has already managed to oust a more senior colleague, resorting to false accusations to do just that. Also, she has been awarded some 200 pesetas by way of a transfer allowance, though she is not entitled to them, in that only those of us who were transferred from Rabasa are so entitled. What is more, this money has been awarded to several communists without the remainder of the staff's having thus far received any such payment.

Another instance, and this is the crux of the matter, is that a regime of discipline through terror, a system contrary to all human principles, which even the most despotic bosses did not enforce in the days of the ill-omened dictatorship, is being introduced.

For instance, should a worker show up 10 minutes late for work, his daily pay is docked by 50 per cent. Punishments are imposed, all of them viciously assailing material well-being, with some workers being docked six, 15 or even 30 days' pay. Is

4. A caballerista socialist transferred from one of the Armaments Under-Secretariat plants due to communist intrigue. Amutio was removed from the managership of the Linares plant for refusing to cover up dishonest conduct on the part of its Commissariat.

such robbery to be tolerated? Yes, comrades, it is robbery and we are in no way prepared to countenance it. We will have recourse to those means available to us and will even have recourse to violence unless our organisms restrain us. For we say again that, especially where our members are concerned, we are not prepared to put up with the abuses.

We have had talks with management and they tell us that it is a matter for the Commissar. And the latter tells us that such punishments are prescribed by the Under-Secretariat. We say: how can the Under-Secretariat know if a worker shows up late for work? We regard this as collusion between the management and the Commissar, even though the latter says that we should appeal to our organisms.

Since we have not been able to settle this matter amicably, we need you to devise some solution as speedily as possible, for we are receiving complaints of the same nature from other branches.

In anticipation of your taking up this question, we remain yours and for our anarchist revolution. On behalf of the Committee, B. López (General Secretary).'

As for the second document, it requires no comment. It speaks for itself.

'Ministry of National Defence – Aviation Under-Secretariat – General Commissariat – Dispatch No. 988 – Date: 11.8.1938 – The most illustrious Under-Secretary of Aviation, in a memoir dated 29 July last informs me of the following:

Under circular order of 30 May 1937 (D.O. number 131), provision was made for militarisation of civilian male personnel employed in factories under the aegis of the Aviation Service, as well as any plants which may have been commandeered and handed over to that same body, it being stipulated that this militarisation, while not implying the awarding of any military rank, carries a liability to the other duties incumbent upon servicemen.

Along with the efficacy of said measure, realism has commended the need to match this obedience and the punishment for any slight offences which the workers may commit to the importance of the task they perform and keep them quite separate from purely military provisions, which ought to ensure that once the nature of the transgression has been established, the punishment prescribed should be the most appropriate.

To that end, and for the purpose of effecting appropriate amendment of the schedule of minor offences and punishments insofar as militarised workers are concerned, as well as with regard to the female personnel not covered by the order, I have seen fit to dispose:

1. The following are to be deemed minor offences by militarised and female personnel, whether working in plants controlled by the Aviation Service or in others which, having been commandeered, may have been handed over to that body:

Carelessness or negligence in the maintenance of tools and industrial machinery.

Failure to comply fully with the duties imposed by said workers' working arrangements.

Displays of reluctance or lack of enthusiasm in service.

Speaking to their superiors in an insolent or off-hand manner.

Absence for a period of time amounting to a serious misdemeanour or offence.

Infringement of the regulations governing work and proper administration in military plants, and anything which may not be liable to punishment under the above headings, being a serious misdemeanour of offence prejudicial to the proper operation or productivity of the aforementioned factories.

2. The abovementioned offences are to be liable to the following punishments:

a. Private reprimand.

b. Public reprimand.

c. Up to five days' loss of half of the earnings of any sort which may be due to militarised workers.

d. Due process for expulsion from the factory and, in the instance of a

worker under 45 years of age, recommendation for deployment on fortifications work.

3. The procedure for imposing the appropriate punishments upon the prescribed misdemeanours shall be delivery of a written report of the matter to the head of the factory concerned. This is to be verified by the most expeditious means, the period between the briefing of the factory with the report from the Political Commissar and the verification not to exceed 24 hours.

Should the factory chief deem it appropriate to impose the punishments prescribed in section (d) of Rule No. 2, the matter will have to be put to the Plant Director or to the Management's delegate in the Centre South zone who, after seeking the advice of the appropriate Political Commissar, will have to deliver their decision within 24 hours from the receipt of the referral of the matter.

4. Whenever the actions of the militarised workers or female personnel amount to a grave misdemeanour or offence, a prompt report shall be forwarded to the Plant Director or the Management's Delegate in the Centre-South zone, so that he may refer the matter to the appropriate tribunal.

Personnel included in the replacements called up and seconded to the Aviation Service as a soldier, as well as any other military personnel serving in Factories and Workshops, are to be subject to the Code of Justice and complementary legislation.

Any dispositions which may conflict with implementation of the provisions of this present order are hereby rescinded.

Let me stress the significance of the above, because it must contribute to strengthening labour discipline, its being a fundamental prerequisite that the Political Commissars should work for justice and to observe the established norms.

This I communicate to you for your information and action.

Barcelona, 10 August 1938, the Commissar-General, B. Tomás; the Political Commissar, Franco Quinta Blasco, Alicante.'

Let us now turn back to Catalonia and turn our attention to the aircraft workshops in Sabadell. In those workshops, beautifully appointed and capable of aircraft assembly, the workforce was kept idle for months and more. The excuse was that they were waiting for plans and materials which never arrived. What did arrive, when arrive it did, was unusable. The contractor — a foreigner — was never stuck for an excuse, and there was an enigmatic silence from the government. The workforce and their Commissar drafted repeated complaints to the factory bosses and to government agents, but these always fell on deaf ears. There was much passing of the buck. It was firmly suspected that the contractor, Raab, would not make aeroplanes and that the government was scarcely bothered about plane-making, even though 11 million pesetas had been handed over to Raab. Months went by in idleness, even though the government's experts bragged about the plant's being so outfitted and equipped so superbly that it could turn out two planes per week. The workers were raring to go. And they were also drawing 200,000 pesetas a month in wages, for no return.⁵

The Sabadell workshops had belonged to the Naval Air Force Command at Barcelona. A memoir from the erstwhile Control Committee relates the history of the reorganisation of the workshops. An end was put to abuses surviving from the old days when foremen and other privileged persons showed no consideration for anyone. The functions of technicians and auxiliaries were pinned down. Interference by military figures with no technical competence was brought to an end. The administration problem was solved: the cumbersome and time wasting red tape which hampered to procurement of raw materials, delaying the processing of orders to a tremendous extent, was done away with. A loan of 50,000 pesetas was applied for, and obtained. And then the productivity question was tackled. The plan was to assemble the Saboya-62. But experts were of the opinion that, this being an antiquated aircraft, with little speed and even less attack capability, the type of plane intended was unsuitable. So the Defence Councillorship then considered the Potez. Whereupon a veritable deluge of foreign technicians teemed down.

5. From a report, dated 27 March 1937, by the erstwhile Political Commissar of the workshops, Constantino Baches.

Materials and plans were taken in hand. Machinery was constructed, and the workshops extended. Then further difficulties arose: bungled blueprints, materials which failed to arrive and, above all, a terrifying contest between these technicians and the central aviation offices attached to the central government. The technicians accused the civil servants of ineptitude and bad faith; and claimed that the machinery of state, especially in those ramifications operating abroad, had been infiltrated by out and out gangsters who were undermining the whole undertaking for their own advantage. As we shall see, this claim was borne out. In the end, oil was poured on troubled waters and a solution was worked out: the Potez would not go into construction. Now the worst thing possible happened. The Saboya, which months before had been dismissed as useful, began to be built again. Further deadlock. The impatient workforce was fobbed off with a thousand excuses, if that. More foreign technicians poured in. Even Russian commissions showed up. And an avalanche of materials. There would shortly be more work than they could imagine. For the time being they would continue to do just repairs.

But another problem cropped up. The plant had to be removed to Sabadell for fear of air raids. The workers made the move in a few days. By the end of November they had set up in Sabadell. This miraculous feat testified to the workers' revolutionary faith. But once they had settled in, and the plan was ready to go into production, and after the promised Soviet commission had paid a visit...another hitch. The delegate, Lieutenant-Colonel Ramirez warned the Commission that according to orders from central government the workshop had to be packed up for transfer to Cartagena. This happened around early December 1936.

This order was greeted by the workforce with a blunt refusal. This stance was backed by their union and the whole chain of responsibility in Catalonia right up to the Generalitat's Defence Ministry. The upshot was that the minister was defeated.⁶

At the Elizalde works (Barcelona) output failed to come anywhere near expectations. Why? The usual reasons. Lack or shortfall of raw materials. Nine months after requisition by the Aviation Under-Secretariat, engine parts were still missing. Some did arrive but these arrived without any directions. In view of this, classification was an onerous task. It was patently obvious that there was no system or effort in the supply of such materials. The upshot was that there was considerable delay in the assembly of engines, for want of parts. Machinery, accessories, tools etc. were in short supply. The break-up of the factory into a series of workshops — a move prompted by air raids — only exacerbated the problem. Petitions and requests made over a four month period were never heeded. There was a black market and leasing where tools were concerned. And, what with the antiquated machinery, it was a laborious business to arrive at the finished article. In short, there was a decline in the morale of the workforce as they saw their efforts founder. Frequent stoppages due to power cuts. A makeshift solution was tried out, with the generators being replaced temporarily by internal combustion engines. Installation of the latter could not be contrived and the power cuts and their consequences continued. The Aviation Under-Secretariat had 100 horse-power Walter engines, made by Elizalde itself and suitable as a stop-gap or back-up power source. In April 1938, a total of 25 working hours were lost due to power cuts. Multiply that by 500 workers and it amounted to 12,500 man-hours. Reckon on pay at 20 pesetas an hour and one comes up with the figure of 250,000 pesetas.

What workers had been pressing forever since the power cuts had begun was:

- One 40 horse-power diesel motor;
- Two 25 horse-power diesel motors;
- One 11 horse-power alternator;
- One 15 horse-power alternator;
- One 35 horse-power alternator;
- One 45 horse-power alternator;
- One 100 horse-power alternating motor set.

⁶ From a report, dated 10 March 1937, from the Workshops' Committee and signed by Pardillos, E. Cervera, Juan Sanz, F. Cuenca and A. Balestegui.

Before it could be met, each and every one of these requests had to go through so much red tape and required so many 'go-aheads' that the remedy was never on time. Not even if an urgent request was put in. 'Regulation procedure' took precedence over all. Gentlemen who never went near the plant had to pronounce upon the necessity of this or that material, machine, device, accessory or lubricant. And it took three, four or even six months to secure the 'go-ahead', to which had to be added the time it actually took to procure the item.⁷

This is how the workers of one of the state-run war plants in Catalonia put in a report forwarded to the CNT on 2 March 1938:

'Indeed, as if these were normal times that we are living in, and under the current arrangement, certain channels and procedures have been prescribed and are being observed inside the plant and, quite apart from these being obsolete practices, they are utterly inadmissible in any manufacturing operation. The evidence throughout is that the primary concern is with formality. Content comes second or last.

We were short of labourers and various white-collar workers, etc. There are some very excellent ones available but as they are over 40 years old, the old dispositions of the Aviation Service precludes their being hired. We hold that in these times everything should come second to the achievement of positive results. Don't these workers have the right to earn a living?

We often witness differing treatment meted out to civilian and military employees and interference by the latter founded solely upon their being military personnel. In a factory, even one managed by military personnel, the only differences should be trade differences. No civilian employee should arbitrarily be replaced by a serviceman — though this has happened — especially when the former is fully trained and the latter bereft of all expertise.

We need materials, tools, etc. It is the factory which is needy. The presence of a state representative there ought to be a guarantee of efficiency. Nevertheless, niggling procedures will be adhered to. A request will be forwarded to some junta that it meets on a weekly basis. Should this be fortunate enough to win approval, it will have to be submitted to a series of negotiations, registrations, arrangements, procurement and manufactures before it can be acted upon.

Thus we have put in requests — some as long ago as last November — for raw materials, tools to be procured abroad and as yet have had no word on their having been approved. For example, in early October and after it had been shown to be absolutely vital, a machine for burnishing axles and sheet metal was applied for. Modern engines need that sort of finish so as to achieve low friction coefficients and full benefits from their lubricants. We have upwards of 200 repaired engines of varying provenance and that is the sort of finish they require.

Concerned to solve this problem, we reported that there was a good machine available in Paris, and another in the same condition in London. To date, we have not been given the go-ahead. We might say the same of the equipment for finishing springs. We need it to cater for spring-valves. Our application went in last August and we still do not know if it has been approved.

Before we were taken over, we obtained a high-precision, high-efficiency Erause machine for drilling cylinders, connecting rods, pistons, etc. The machine arrived complete with accessories that the manufacturer claimed were the current models. So that it could be put to full use, some additional axles were ordered in mid-November. To date, that application of ours has been greeted only by silence.

As for acquisitions in this country and equipment still in place, the picture is the same...for the procedure is identical.

We need electric motors. They are available. One is for the Kellembertgert drilling machine. We should be using that to drill connecting rods for engines, among lots of other things. The order went in at the beginning of January and we do not as yet know

7. From a report of the Elizade plant workforce, dated 10 April 1938 and addressed to the Defence Section of the CNT National Committee.

if it has been approved. They could be obtained in a single day by the direct method.

Another fact which we feel is very significant is that more attention is given to the precise compilation of the series of reports and briefs which are requested from time to time than to anything else.

Into what category fall the weekly compilations of staff lists, daily records of shortfalls, late-comings, leave (these were even sent by telegraph), the progress sheets for specific items under manufacture...

We do not wish to labour the point about the time which a fair number of employees have to spend in compiling such data properly, data which is just filed away without even a glance. We refuse to believe that there can be anyone who can spend so much time on that.'

In another report, the following figures for production levels before and after the take-over are given:

'In the SAF-8 - Elizalde I.C. plant, by deliberate choice and after working an 8-hour day and a 56 hour week and quite apart from the regular shift, workers were, before the take-over, putting in additional hours which varied according to the individual's capacity to get to work, and without expecting to be paid for them.

Thus, to take the squad of one section chosen at random: it comprises 58 workers and in the five weeks between 15 August and 18 September 1936, they put in a total of 2,688 hours, equivalent to the sum of 6,050 pesetas if we go by the average rate of pay at that time. Which gives us the following averages:

46.3 hours worked per operative during those weeks, which is to say 9.2 hours' overtime per week per operative.

This is to say that we can state without exaggeration that, if only one half of the company's workforce were to display the same commitment, the Collective would boost its production thus:

300 workers x 9.2 hours = 2,760 hours a week and 13,800 worked during the five weeks in question, with a value of 31,050 pesetas.

After the take-over, the enthusiasm put into output has declined so that — with few exceptions — not one single hour's overtime has been worked. Quite the contrary — and this is painful to note — but generally work stops a few minutes before knocking-off time. Another factor in the fall of production, due to waning enthusiasm, is that sections that had taken months to get themselves into a position to get on with internal production, have ground to a standstill and their machinery and tools are lying idle, even though the product is of consummate interest to the war effort.

As to productivity figures per article and operative, it has not proved possible to draw up a very complete study in that very few items manufactured before and since the take-over are comparable. However, on the basis of 13 whose manufacture has been repeated since the take-over of the plant, it has been possible to arrive at an average 21.33 per cent increase in the time taken to manufacture the same items. Another figure is that prior to the take-over of the plant, failures to report to work due to illness, accident, leave, etc. for something between 450 and 550 workers, hovered between 7 per cent and 8.5 per cent. Whereas at present the following absenteeism was recorded for a workforce of 850 for the days 18 and 19 February 1938. Here is the breakdown:

Illness	73.0
Accidents	20.5
Deliberate absenteeism	11.0
Air raid injuries	114.0
Leave	2.0
Detention	2.0
Lateness	12.0
Total	234.5

Which gives us a result of 15.6 per cent, to which it has to be added that lack of materials has had a bearing upon the failure to produce up to present requirements.'

The same report goes on to say that at the BIP workshops there had been a 50 per cent drop in production, due partly to staff shortages caused by the conscription of workers eligible for active service, and also to a shortage of raw materials and to workers' seeing that undertakings given to them at the time of the take-over had not been honoured. The workshops which had a considerable potential for war output busied themselves, so as not to waste their time, in assembling and testing radio equipment.

At the time of the take-over of the Elizalde IC company a new Company Committee appointed by an assembly of workers had just taken office. It comprised of five members of the CNT, and four from the UGT. Except for two who belonged to the PSUC, the members of the Committee foresaw the tremendous drawbacks implicit in the take-over. A meeting was held with the Committee of the Hispano-Suiza works and the following accords were arrived at: their decision against the take-over would be reported to the trade union organisations; they would seek an audience with President Companys, representing the Catalan government; and would appeal to Defence Minister Indalecio Prieto as he had decreed the take-over.

When the first of these steps had been taken, the UGT recommended that nothing be done to hinder the take-over. The CNT promised to take all steps to prevent it. Companys proved to be pessimistic and deplored his government's powerlessness in the face of what he termed usurpation by the central government. In the light of this, the Hispano-Suiza workforce backed down. Then the Elizalde committee organised a plebiscite among the factory's workers. Encouraged by the outcome, they journeyed to Valencia, and there had talks with Prieto but failed to secure any concessions from him. Only promises (to the effect that political commissars would be appointed to workers who so requested). This proved impossible as the UGT, on political grounds, refused to take part in the election. The excuse was that there was no unanimity among the workforce of the plant. Which was not quite the whole story, for most of the workers belonged to the CNT and some 25 per cent of the UGT membership sided with them.

Elsewhere when the take-over was announced factories were given solemn promises. Among these were undertakings that they would not lack for raw materials, that conscripts would not be taken off the factory floor, that pay would be improved and food rations increased. It was explained to them that the take-over was an expedient for the duration of the war and that they would be issued with a contract of hire. But promises were what they remained.

At the SAF-7 plant at the time of the take-over, a legal inventory was made of all produce and tools. However, no compensation was forthcoming, even though an archaic law prescribed a 30-day limit for payment of the value of requisitioned materials.

Under the requisition set-up, the role of the unions was diminished and reduced to communicating workers' demands to the Commissar or Director and vice versa. The union had no direct nor indirect hand in production, distribution or administration. Such functions were exclusive to the management, in this case as represented by a serviceman. This new climate was a hotbed for all manner of personal ambition, which had hitherto largely been eradicated.

With the outbreak of the revolt, Catalonia's War Industries Commission, anticipating the rapid exhaustion of available stocks of materials, had taken over most of the sales outlets in Barcelona and the Catalan region. This made it feasible to facilitate the factory committees when it came to speedy procurement of the materials they needed. Orders were filed that same day. Anticipating also that the war would be a protracted affair, and future problems with the supply of certain materials such as fine steels largely imported from abroad, consideration had been given to resolving the problem. Among the various steels manufactured in Spain, there was the high-speed steel turned out by the Echevarría plant in Bilbao. Of course there were mistakes which were being ironed out. But if there had to be mistakes, the system adopted under the worker's control

arrangement was preferable to the practice adopted under state control. In the first instance, a spirit of correction, responsibility, foresight and especially of enthusiasm was noticeable. Production was in the hands of persons of proven technical and professional capabilities, motivated by revolutionary ambitions.

Come the take-over, a bureaucratic system, laborious and antiquated was introduced and overseen by absolutely inept laymen.

The co-ordination of production could not have been more whimsical. The SAF-8 plant had a good track record as a producer of chrome-plated steel, yet the production of that was entrusted to another, non-specialist foundry, which implied an endless period of trials, research and analysis. Which is to say that time was squandered on uncertainty as to the adequacy of the product simply because the work force had no skill in the production of material of such delicacy of manufacture.

We have already dealt with the chaos in the distribution of materials. In trying to get hold of some existing product available from the private market, one first had to be conversant with prices so as to make a suitable bid to the appropriate agency. That agency or junta met every eight or 10 days and there were instances where approval was not forthcoming until 25 or 30 days after submission of the request. In the interval, the price of the item might have changed. As a result, the new price had to be established, the Economic Junta approached once more and another period of delay ensued. Often, just as everything was ready for procurement to proceed, the article vanished off the market.

This is the procedure followed: approach to the Economic Junta, approval is given, notification of the person in possession of the article sought, inspection, order placed, technical report, and, should the item be in stock, delivery.

As for materials that had to be secured abroad, a picturesque procedure was followed. Given the existence abroad of a Purchasing Commission, one's application had to be accompanied by a list of possible suppliers, as well as the prices of the items. With all of these formalities, months went by with scarcely any news received of the item applied for.

Although we have (in volume 2) already touched briefly upon the scandal of the Purchasing Commissions abroad, we ought to labour this dismal point. Otherwise some of the extreme instances of what we have related might not be appreciated. Regarding the dismal chapter we are about to broach there are documents aplenty. The most widely circulated document is the (already cited) FAI Peninsular Committee's report to the Plenum of Regional Committees of the Libertarian Movement in October 1938. That same report is included in the June 1939 pamphlet, *Negrín y Prieto culpables de alta traición*.⁸

The report in question is merely a collection of extracts from a number of reports included in the archives of the CNT-FAI and of which there were several copies in existence. These reports are replete with information, enough to fill a substantial volume, although the contents would be anything but edifying.

The dearth of weapons had always been chalked up to the Non-Intervention policy. The fact is that in spite of that policy, direct but plain dealing would have found a lot of doors open, maybe more than were needed. On the other hand, the incompetence and lack of honesty that, with but a few exceptions, characterised the activities of those responsible for purchasing arms abroad, were closing other doors and discrediting the anti-fascist cause. The personnel overseeing or helping to oversee these pernicious activities had close ties to the most influential ministers. Sources exposing the venality of ministers and of their agents emanated from some of those agents who strove to take their mission to heart and who were misled and even persecuted precisely because of their sterling services to the anti-fascist cause. Lieutenant Colonel Juan Ortiz Muñoz's case provides one instance of this.⁹ Another source is the correspondence from Paris-

8. *Negrín y Prieto culpables de alta traición*, Ediciones del Servicio de Propaganda España, Argentina, June 1939.

9. According to the FAI Peninsular Committee's report (September 1938) Colonel Ortiz had to flee Spain to escape the wrath of minister Prieto whom he had accused of high treason for his connivance or indulgence towards the dishonest practices of the armaments' Purchasing Commissions.

based agent, a certain 'C', reporting to one high-ranking socialist. There are other, pretty much anonymous reports, in which the complainants keep their identities under wraps, for reasons all too easily understood.

One of the letters from the confidential informant 'C' states as follows:

'Paris, 20 September 1937

Dear D J,

Whether the government, aside from comrade Prieto, is aware of comrade O's activities outside Spain, I do not know. As a representative of our party, comrade O served on the original Purchasing Commission. When comrade Prieto, Defence Minister, dissolved that commission, comrade O began operating on his own behalf, squandering money, especially on himself. Not his own money, let me be clear, but the State's money. In all likelihood, comrade O has not made great purchases of materials, maybe, of course, because he was not able to do so, on account of his having to grapple with countless obstacles, etc., etc. But there is no doubt that comrade O has frittered money away as if he was making huge purchases. Comrade O's cavalier approach is now notorious throughout Paris. On every visit, he stays in the finest hotels, sleeps with the most expensive women; eats in the most luxurious restaurants, and finally dishes out splendid tips for the most insignificant favours rendered. For instance, he slips a hotel waiter a hundred francs for fetching him a pack of cigarettes that costs eight, and tells him to keep the change, in a great seigniorial gesture.

It may well be all right to live high on the hog when one is dealing with folk who stand on ceremony, but only when such dealings are private rather than conducted as the representative of a state locked in a fight to the death and which needs all it can muster to prosecute that fight. If comrade O's extravagance were ultimately to bring some benefit to this fight, then it might just be excusable.

But the fact is that comrade O simply fritters the money away, procuring very little of service to the fight we are waging, and what little he has procured might equally have been procured with a much reduced expenditure. Comrade Prieto knows from a number of sources the sort of lifestyle that comrade O is leading, the paucity of purchases that he makes, the extraordinary expenditure in which he has engaged, etc. Comrade Prieto, however, persists in sending comrade O on missions to procure this item or that in France and elsewhere. Comrade Prieto has been told to review comrade O's expense accounts and likewise audit what procurements he has made. And, with both of these in front of him, to check the total cost of his procurements. To no avail. Comrade Prieto, overworked, no doubt, has not had time to carry out any such review. But persists in sending comrade O off on purchasing missions or purchasing attempts. Comrade O carries on frittering State funds away, funds sorely needed for other things, for the purchase of, say, the many materials not available to us or vitally necessary products, or simply for feeding Spanish workers who cannot increase output because they are not well fed.

By way of a sample of how comrade O squanders money, let me cite you a recent instance. It was precisely this case that prompted me to offer you a hurried briefing. Through the Mexican Embassy in Paris we recently obtained something that we needed, something very important, of course. In dealings with personnel from that Embassy, comrade O had a hand. After the safe arrival in Spain of what the Mexican Embassy had taken the trouble to send us, comrade O saw fit to hand a sealed envelope to a member of the Embassy staff, without further explanation. When this was opened, it was found that the envelope contained a hundred thousand francs, which were returned to comrade O with a short note in which he was told that folk there were working disinterestedly on Spain's behalf. A splendid example, which, let me assure you, has neither embarrassed comrade O, even though it would disgrace anybody, nor taught him a lesson. Because comrade O carries on with the same lifestyle as before, as if the Mexican Embassy business were a matter of no consequence. With, as ever, dear D J., my greatest respect. C.'

And here is yet another of these letters:

'Paris, 2 July 1937

Dear DJ,

In my reports I have referred several times to the persons dispatched to Paris by the government, or, to be more precise, by comrade Prieto to purchase war materials. I have given assurances, and stand ready to prove if need be, that purchases on decent terms have been rejected, sometimes because those terms excluded the possibility of commission for the purchasers, and on other occasions apparently because they did not want to see the government forces, in their fight against the enemy, equipped with the resources to at least put up a successful resistance. I have proof aplenty of both possibilities, which I shall deliver to you in person when I call upon you. In actual fact, purchases have never been made directly from the companies or persons who have supplied us with equipment, other than through intermediaries who have scandalously boosted the price of what we have received. Those companies and individuals have, in most instances, offered their goods directly, but have never been able to conclude a direct sale. For one reason or another, the offer has been rejected. And later, the very same items offered at a reasonable cost, with an obvious desire to help us out, have been procured through intermediaries in the service of comrade Prieto's envoys, with the latter dividing up the surcharge which sometimes amounts to a 100 per cent mark-up on the prices offered by the seller.

Grave though what I have just described may be, it is not the worst of it. The worst thing is that, in quite a few cases, magnificent chances of procuring ourselves material have gone a-begging, not because there may or may not have been good commission on offer, but because of a deliberate determination that we would not get our hands on it. I mentioned this before. However I must labour the point because there is incontrovertible evidence aplenty that this is the case.

In spite of what I have said, I am not trying to invoke the broader aspects of the matter, although, in view of comrade Prieto's repeated trust in many individuals, I am sure that I am going to have to speak to him frequently on such a disagreeable matter. My intention today is to brief you on facts relating to just one such individual: the seemingly irreplaceable Colonel P. A while ago I heard the true story (as I now know for sure, which is why I kept it from you previously) of what happened, through his fault, to an offer of planes made by Czechoslovakia. Here it is: Czechoslovakia agreed to replace her entire air force; to this end she made ready to sell off what she had in order to defray some of the costs of a new and more modern fleet. Through Colonel P, she offered it for sale to the Spanish government. Naturally, the aircraft were slightly antiquated, but, given that we had none, they were simply excellent for our purposes. Colonel P agreed in principle, but then put the deal on the backburner, explaining to any who moaned about his sluggishness in concluding the sale that we could not waste our money on antiquated planes, missing out on our chance of getting access to the entire Czechoslovak fleet with which, antiquated or not, we might have denied the enemy more than one of his victories. In point of fact (there being no other possible explanation) Colonel P was precisely concerned to ensure that those victories would not be denied. There is no other explanation for it. His being retained in his position defies understanding, because comrade Prieto, from what I have been told, knows every detail of what became of the offer from Czechoslovakia. But as it may well suit comrade Prieto for us to take a few setbacks so that, seeing that all is lost, we might agree to British mediation — something he supports — and it would scarcely be surprising if Colonel P, in not proceeding with the purchase, was acting on his instructions.

We come now to another case, not quite so significant, but along similar lines, in which Colonel P adopted the same policy. A number of French socialist comrades, worried about Spain's predicament, managed, thanks to their connections in Britain, to secure, at an advantageous rate, four British planes of a type used by the British army, for dispatch to Spain. This information was passed to Colonel P. Colonel P seemed interested in the matter, but, as in the Czechoslovak case, let some days go by without

making any move, doing nothing at all, before finally countering that the planes were not at all modern. (As I have said, they were of a model in use by the British army). The fact is that, ultimately, the opportunity to acquire the four planes, which were to have been dispatched directly to Santander, where I need not say, they were needed, was squandered. As in the Czechoslovak case above, does it not look as if Colonel P had an interest in Santander's being left defenceless?

The socialist comrades concerned, who were prompted by a lofty desire to help Spain with the purchase of four planes, forwarded a detailed memorandum to comrade Prieto regarding all that had happened. To date, comrade Prieto has not so much as deigned to reply. But he retains Colonel P in position, meaning that he has no quarrel with his performance of his duties.

No doubt Colonel P, like others in these parts with the same mission, has made the occasional purchase so as to justify his time in Paris, but never, let me reiterate, directly, but rather through intermediaries who have boosted the price, scandalously, if I may repeat it, so that they can share the splendid commission between them. But when it comes to important purchases which might be of great significance in our war, there have been none. It is not in their interests for us to have access to effective means of defence. This is the conclusion to which one has no option but to reach. It is the conclusion reached by the socialist comrades in the report they have forwarded to comrade Prieto, to which, as I have said, comrade Prieto has made no reply. A report in which those socialist comrades make scarcely any reference to the right predicament in which their desire to be of assistance to Spain left them.

For myself, I do not know what I can add to the foregoing. Except that, with my next letter, I shall enclose a copy of those comrades' report.

Yours, with the greatest respect. C.'

Lieutenant-Colonel Ortiz's report bears the dateline, Valencia, March 1937. Appointed in mid-December 1936 by the Navy and Air Force Minister (Prieto) to purchase aircraft in Paris, he set off on the trip with several trusted auxiliaries. Within a short time he was back in Valencia to report to the minister what he had seen of irregular practice in the performance of the agents who had preceded him, Colonel R and the Purchasing Commission headed by O. On 28 December 1936, the minister decided to wind up that commission and leave the one headed by Ortiz in place in Paris to handle all aircraft-related matters. Ortiz was enjoined to have no contact with the Embassy nor with members of the previous commission. His first act was to put before the minister an offer that he had had of 50 Potez 54 bombers which were to have cost some 115 million francs. Gonzalo Zabala, who was empowered by the minister to conclude the contract, refused to sign it on formal, legalistic grounds.

The Loiret-Olivier plane-making company for its part offered 26 Dewoitine 36K fighters at 1,250,000 francs each. The minister's response was to say that he had had this offer from an agent of the company already but at a price that was 100,000 francs lower. The agent in question was not an agent at all but someone with a dire business record, a declared bankrupt, so the deal had fallen through. The company kept on offering planes but Prieto's financial representative was always against the purchase, even during the last few days when the French cabinet approved delivery of the planes to Spain. The form made a further offer, this time of five ultra-modern planes not yet available to the French army. The deal could not be concluded within the agreed delivery period because of the debate in the French parliament on air force matters. The company applied for an extension of a few days and Zabala made this conditional upon the surrender of two million francs by way of compensation for breach of contract. So the deal failed even though the planes were ready to be flown directly to Spain.

At the start of 1937, Ortiz received a telegram from the minister instructing him to acquire six radio transmitters. A first set was secured and the bill forwarded, as was the billing for an order for 500 kilos of copper phosphorate. No confirmation was ever forthcoming. Then he was ordered to obtain a batch of trucks and light vehicles. By telegram he asked for six million francs to be forwarded by way of payment, only to be

told that he should apply for a loan to the Minister of Finance. By 4 February the sum had still not arrived in Paris. The vehicles set off for Spain unpaid for, due to the failure to meet the bill.

On 12 February he received written orders to acquire 20,000 petrol storage canisters, it being dangerous to store petrol in larger tanks due to the threat of air raids. After the cost was reported with all due urgency and the money requested, he was given the go-ahead and was told that application had been made to the Minister of Finance for the 4,670,000 francs that the deal cost to be sent on. The supplier company asked for a 50% down payment before starting manufacture. But since the money failed to arrive, a down payment of 400,000 francs was agreed. When the delivery date came around, the money had still not been received and the author of the report had to rely on his own devices in order to raise it so that delivery of the first batch of canisters could go ahead. A further application for funds to cover the costs of the materials he had been told to order and which cost a total of 4,120,000 francs, similarly fell on deaf ears. It was the same story with the purchase of a batch of machine-guns as approved by the minister, and with some aircraft bombs. It was unable to proceed due to a failure to deliver the funding. There was a plan for aircraft to be bought from Danzig for 93 million francs. He managed to get Marti Esteve, the acting chairman of the Purchasing Commission, to give an undertaking to set 33 million francs aside for the planes since the minister was not forthcoming with the funding. Just as the contract was about to be signed, he was startled to find that no such money had been ear-marked. That promise turned into a reduced offer of whatever money was left over from purchase agreements that had fallen through. When the minister got wind of this arrangement, he set his face against it. Ortiz made a trip down to Valencia to swap impressions with the minister. During his time in the city, he had only one audience, and that was so that he could hear a suggestion regarding the acquisition of 40 Potez aircraft. Two planes would be sent to France carrying a certain quantity of gold to cover the asking price. The planes arrived all right but delivered the gold straight to the ambassador and the defunct commission. Not one penny could be secured for the procurement of planes. Ortiz came up with further proposals for the acquisition of 19 Dewoitine-365s and 19 Spad-510s, as offered by a French air force officer, an individual with impeccable credentials. No response to this proposal could be got. As for the purchase of ancillary equipment and raw materials for aircraft factories, these ran into the same obstruction. The author of the report cited as witnesses a commission of workers from the Hispano works in Alicante who had seen this for themselves in Paris.

Another of the reports, from Major José Malendreras, was dated 25 July 1937. On 16 September 1936 the major had been seconded to a purchasing commission dispatched to the United States and Mexico. In addition to Malendreras, the commission was made up of Colonel Francisco León Trajo, the head of the mission, and Sergeant Francisco Corral. The commission arrived in New York on 28 September 1936. Neither the consulate nor the embassy had any knowledge of its mission, much less any funding to make available for its use. Because of this 'hitch', the first part of the mission failed: it was to have bought 9 Vultee planes from the American Air Lines company. The arrival of a new Spanish ambassador, Fernando de los Ríos, whom it was assumed had brought the funding with him, failed to resolve the matter. The ambassador had no money. They then tried to procure three very fast Saversky fighter planes, or rather, tried to stop them from being shipped out to Colombia. They were forced to wash their hands of this attempt too for the same reasons, creating a very poor impression as to the clout of an official commission of the Spanish government.

Before leaving for Mexico, the commission got wind that one company had 18 planes for sale. Closing the sale was a matter of the utmost urgency, for a Dutch commission was negotiating with the firm to the same ends. The utter absence of funding aborted that opportunity too. The asking price had been reasonable.

On 10 October, the mission had a meeting in Mexico City with ambassador Gordon Ordás, only to discover that he had pleaded countless times for moneys to be advanced. Through the good offices of Colonel Roberto Fierro, the Director-General of the

Mexican Air Force, three privately-owned Lockheed planes plus a cargo of arms, engines, propellers and aircraft radio sets were dispatched on board the Spanish vessel, the *Sil*, anchored in Veracruz, and came ashore in Santander. All of this gear was sent pretty much free of charge, for the aforementioned Colonel Fierro went guarantor for the cost of the planes until such time as the Spanish government might make up its mind to cough up.

Another offer came in from an American gangster. He offered 50 armed planes and whatever war materials might be needed (tanks, cannons, machine-guns and an endless supply of ammunition). The only condition was that payment would be made once the gear was dockside in Veracruz, loaded on board republican shipping and had been inspected by the commission. At that point the embargo on the export of war materials from the United States had not yet been introduced. The funding was not forthcoming, even though the ambassador persistently lobbied for it, and the deal had to be abandoned. The asking price had been 6 million dollars. The seller had asked for that sum to be deposited with a Mexican bank in the ambassador's name and frozen for a certain period, long enough for the gear to be delivered. If the gear did not arrive, the sum would automatically be unfrozen.

Malendreras wrote in his report:

'Not until 6 January 1936 was there any law in the United States of America banning the export of war materials to Spain. There was a ban that applied only to Cuba, Honduras, Bolivia and China. The only requirement to be satisfied before an export order became legal, and which our representatives in the United States seemed deliberately to ignore, was very straightforward. For the shipment of arms, that the material be purchased and the State Department informed. This latter official agency sought the endorsement of Spain's representative by way of reassurance that the goods were bound for the declared destination, after which it was free to leave unimpeded and in accordance with American law.

In the United States, where there is an exaggerated regard for the law, where there is no legal ban on exports, the government is very punctilious about allowing it to proceed. By which I mean to stress that, with funding and such authorisation, we could have shipped a startling quantity of planes and war materials to Spain. I am not exaggerating. Take the case of Mr. Cius with his exportation of eight planes that left from the port of New York on the very day that the embargo law was passed, under escort from a torpedo-boat and a plane for halting the ship should the law secure the President of the United States's signature before it could leave jurisdictional waters. But the Senate chairman that day forgot to bring it to him for signing until after the ship had left, from which point onwards all shipments of war materials to Spain were lawfully halted.'

Minister Prieto had set up another independent commission, made up of the familiar O who, as we know, was an expert in war materials and aircraft, alongside the journalist Corpus Varga, as well as Méndez and Prieto's own son. It was headed by a Jew by the name of Scherover who was the real leader of both commissions. They maintained a range of offices and staff, which merely served to commit a huge sum in dollars to a number of arms dealers who were to have delivered around 50,000 rifles to Spain on board a ghost ship. The value of these rose to several thousand dollars which suffered the same fate as the rifles. Following this calamitous operation, O quit the United States and the commission was disbanded. As for Prieto's son, he was made financial attaché at the Spanish embassy in Mexico City. Before the commission was wound up, it commissioned the Bellanca company to build twenty Bellanca make planes. This was done after the American prohibition law was passed, so the planes could not be transported to Spain.

The bona fides of the Malendreras Commission is proved by the fact that when funding finally reached Mexico, some 28 planes were procured, some by giving the slip to the vigilance of the American authorities. But once the US law came into effect,

things became trickier. On which basis the author of the report suggested that a plant for the manufacture of fighter planes might be opened in Spain in a very short time. In terms of speed of construction and the air speed of its planes, the likeliest prospect was the Seversky company. This company offered a metal-bodied fighter aircraft that might be kitted out with four machine-guns on its wings, two of them synchronised. For manufacturing purposes, the company had turned to steel stencils or moulds from which component parts could be made. Such manufacture could take place at different sites so as to avoid the threat of enemy air raids. Within the agreed price range, the plant offered two aircraft broken down completely into kit form, along with all stencils and machinery, if the government had sole patent rights, as well as potential plans and modifications, an arrangement whereby huge numbers of planes could be produced annually. The same company would dispatch engineers and a few technicians to train Spanish operatives. Manufacture was scheduled to start within three months. All the government needed to do was obtain the under-carriage which could be produced by Pirelli, plus metal airscrews, indicator equipment and engines, which could be obtained from Mexico through the Panamericana aviation company. One drawback was that the company was unable to sell its patent directly to the government on account of the laws mentioned earlier. But there was a very simple way around that: it could be sold to a Mexican-registered company which would set up a plant in Spain. The sale terms were excellent.

The minister's response to this proposal was that, according to his technical consultants, it was very expensive. However, in the very same message the minister ordered the urgent purchase of two hundred of these planes.

There was a proposal for another model of highly effective fighter plane to be built in Spain. That proposal never even received an answer. Yet the ministry sent out an avalanche of requests for the purchase of planes in the United States as if Valencia was in the dark about the passage of the American embargo laws. In time, the impact of those laws was felt in the form of interference with pressures and bullying brought to bear on neighbouring governments, such as the government of Mexico, which, for all its goodwill, of which there was more than enough practical evidence, found itself compelled not to funnel United States-produced equipment to Spain.

To conclude this dismal chapter of the Purchasing Commissions, albeit setting aside for the scrutiny of future researchers countless data and extremely grave charges levelled against high-ranking individuals and their underlings, who were overseeing the Spanish war effort, let us turn yet again to the text of the report from the [FAI] Peninsular Committee, dated September 1938. On pages 7 and 8 we read the following:

'To any explanation of the catastrophic performance of the Purchasing Commission we must add the scope the enemy was afforded in discovering shipments of equipment and the resultant bombing of the vessels carrying it.

According to a representative of the Bulouze company, the operating style of the commission's office also played into the hands of the rebels when it came to their discovering what they needed to know. According to the gentleman concerned, the office operated like this: the lay-out and internal division of such offices are not in any way helpful to the maintenance of the discretion which the delicacy of such matters requires. Instead, they lend themselves to the most basic espionage. Samples, catalogues and correspondence are spread out across staff desks in the same room where everybody waits, and, if that waiting goes on for much time, everyone can see, read and quietly make notes. Moreover, the staff do not take even the most elementary precautions to preserve discretion. All sorts of business is discussed in the presence of all and sundry. In the offices of the commission bosses, there is the embarrassment of having to speak in the presence of three or four persons who have nothing to do with the subject under discussion. On the pretext of making an offer, a secret agent can easily slip into the waiting room of Office No. 57, and monitor those who are waiting and pretty much eavesdrop on what is being said. For an agent well versed in such activities, succeeding in his mission is child's play.