

THE CASE
of
CATALONIA

APPEAL
to the UNITED NATIONS
at the INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION CONFERENCE
San Francisco, California
April, 1945

CATALAN NATIONAL COUNCIL
(United States Delegation)

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To the United States of America,
the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,
the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and
the Republic of China,
Sponsors of the United Nations Conference on
International Organization, at San Francisco.

Inasmuch as Catalonia (in spite of her present subjugation under Spain) is a well-defined nation,¹ as proven by her history, her ethnological characteristics, her particular language, her own literature and culture, her specific laws, her customs and traditions and, above all, her permanent and manifested will and her desire to regain national sovereignty;

Inasmuch as Catalonia (because of her unrecognized status as a nation) cannot adhere to the United Nations Declaration nor declare war on any Axis power and so gain admission to the San Francisco Conference;

Inasmuch as Catalonia, being occupied by the Fascist armies of General Franco, cannot proclaim her *de facto* state of belligerency against the Axis nor gain official recognition for her many sons fighting now in the United Nations' Armies;

Inasmuch as Catalonia cannot, in justice, be classified as a neutral nor legally as an Ally, although she is a friendly nation still occupied by Nazifascism;

Inasmuch as, on the other hand, the legal institutions representative of Catalonia no longer exist (her President Lluís Companys having been executed by Franco² and her democratic Government disbanded and nullified);

We, therefore, in our own name, as members of the Catalan National Council* (United States Delegation), in the name of 75,000 organ-

(¹) See Appendix No. 1

(²) To be noted that Catalonia's President is the first and only head of a nation to be executed by Nazifascism.

(*) See Appendix No. 2

ized Catalans residing on the American Hemisphere** and in the name of the people of Catalonia whose voice is now suppressed

R E Q U E S T from the Sponsors of the San Francisco Conference:

THAT, in view of these special circumstances and the unique position of Catalonia; in view that Catalonia is one of the few remaining nations in Europe whose national rights have not yet been recognized, CATALONIA BE CONSIDERED A SPECIAL CASE and since she cannot be legally represented nor actually participate in the proceedings of the Conference, BE ALLOWED TO PRESENT AND FILE THE FOLLOWING APPEAL TO THE UNITED NATIONS before their representatives at San Francisco.***

New York, April 14, 1945

J. CARNER RIBALTA

J. M. FONTANALS

J. VENTURA SUREDA

*Members of the United States Delegation of
the Catalan National Council in London.
(Registered with the State Department on March 28, 1942)*

(**) See Appendices No. 2a and No. 2b

(***) We hereby respectfully request from you, as Sponsors, to forward this Appeal to the President of the Conference at San Francisco to be, at due time, included in the Agenda of the Conference.

APPEAL

TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON BEHALF OF CATALONIA

THE special situation of Catalonia as a nation prevents her from having legal representatives and from being present at this Conference to participate with the United Nations in the charting of an international organization for peace and security. But it is precisely in view of Catalonia's unique situation that we have decided to present her case to your attention so that the national rights of 3,000,000 Catalans(*) may be known to all the United Nations and may justly be considered in the charter for a new world. We are not presenting a problem of frontiers or political reconstruction, economical recovery or any such matters which are not to be attended to until after the security organization has been set up. We present a case for national liberty which requires solution or at least consideration precisely while the security negotiations are taking place.

Catalonia existed as a free nation until 1714, when she was finally incorporated by force into the Spanish state, and is one of the few remaining nations in Europe whose national rights have not yet been recognized. This makes the case of Catalonia almost an obsolete problem, mainly because most of the problems of the European nationalities were supposedly solved at Versailles. But Catalonia's was not; her liberties were not restored at the end of World War I like those of the other nationalities. It is for this reason

* Properly, the Catalan lands include besides Catalonia, the old kingdoms of Valencia and the Balearic Islands, and also the old Catalan territory of Roussillon annexed to France. This forms Greater Catalonia, with a total population of almost 6,000,000 where the Catalan language is generally spoken.

that we present here her problem as a special case and as a matter which demands consideration and solution so that the Charter which is to be written for the new Europe does not become once more an injustice against Catalonia.

In a way, Catalonia's over-prolonged captivity and retarded liberation is due, more than to several military defeats, to repeated diplomatic misfortunes suffered by Catalonia. In 1713, by the Treaty of Utrecht, after a long war against her Spanish oppressor, Catalonia's rights were disowned by her own allies and sacrificed to power politics and matters of expediency. In 1919, at Versailles, in spite of the 18,000 volunteers Catalonia contributed to the Allied armies, the rights of that unfortunate nation were once more overlooked. In 1924, at Geneva, due to the defective clauses of the League's Covenant, and to the presence of Spain in the League of Nations, which made impossible the required vote of unanimity on such matters, the League of Nations could not even consider Catalonia's demands for liberty. In 1937, at the Nyon conference, Catalonia's rights were disregarded but, on the other hand, the claim of Italy about "the right to intervene in Spain to prevent the setting up of an independent Catalan Republic" (*) was considered valid.

This traditional diplomatic indifference towards Catalonia's claims should not lead anyone to believe that the Catalan case has no bearing in the maintenance of permanent peace and security in Europe. The "Catalan Question" has been at the bottom of much of the unrest and political turmoil in the Iberian Peninsula during the last three centuries, and there has never been any aggressive power or force in Europe which has not tried, at some moment, to speculate on the Catalan discontent to enhance or secure success of their plans. As an example, we will mention that during the period of the French Revolution, Robespierre in person, with the aim of gaining Catalonia to his cause, visited Barcelona with the written "Constitution of Catalonia" in his brief-case. Scarcely a quarter of a century later, Napoleon Bonaparte, in order to gain a foothold in the Peninsula, actually created the "Catalan State" and tried to establish a Catalan government separate from that of the kingdom of

* A. B. Keith, "The King, the Constitution, the Empire, and Foreign Affairs", 1936-7, pp. 166-167.

Spain. In recent times, in the geopolitics of Germany(*) for the Mediterranean area, Greater Catalonia (that is to say the old Catalan Kingdom or the present territories of Catalan Language—Catalonia, Valencia, French Catalonia, and the Balearic Islands) was scheduled to play a big role against France and her African empire, although Catalonia did not accept the "New Order" or nazism. As a final proof of the importance of Catalonia in the stability of Europe, any well-informed and clear-sighted statesman will admit that lest the national problem of Catalonia is satisfactorily solved, there will never be real peace and order in the Iberian Peninsula.**)

Now that a charter of the nations of the world is going to be definitively written for a durable peace, Catalonia can not let this opportunity pass without appealing to the justice of the United Nations for her due recognition, lest new and irreparable mistakes are committed at the moment of the charting, and her national freedom be postponed indefinitely.

In appealing to you for justice, Catalonia wants to state her full aspirations and the full scope of her rights. We earnestly request that this Conference do not commit the same mistake of the Peace Conference at Versailles, which dismissed Catalonia's demands on the erroneous argument that it was a mere case of home rule, to be granted by Spain, and as such an internal problem, a "family conflict", to be solved within the Spanish state. Neither could we allow the United Nations to judge Catalonia's rights on the same basis as the League of Nations that classified them as a simple problem of a minority inside Spain. Catalonia is a nation and must be recognized as such before any regional organization can be established in Spain, in the Iberian Peninsula, the continent of Europe, or the liberated world.

It is unnecessary to tire your attention by detailing the historical, ethnical, linguistic and cultural reasons which prove the national characteristics of Catalonia; nor need we present any list of all the persecutions and oppres-

* "Spaniens Tor Zum Mittelmeer und die Katalanische Frage", Franz Pauser (Teubner, Leipzig and Berlin, 1938) (See Appendix No. 2b).

** See Appendix No. 3.

sions of which she is and has been a victim. Neither do we believe it necessary to adduce proof of her determination and ever-increasing will to live again as a free nation. We do not even need to point out that her struggle for freedom has continued through the centuries. In 1640, in the first attempt against her freedom, Catalonia fought against Spain (War of Secession) and proclaimed the Catalan Republic; in 1714, after her national rights were disregarded at Utrecht, Catalonia continued to fight against Spain and France, even after having been abandoned by her allies (England, Austria, Portugal and Holland); in 1931, Catalonia led in the Peninsula the democratic and civil revolt against the Bourbon Monarchy, proclaimed the Catalan Republic(*) and made possible the Spanish Republic; in 1931, Catalonia organized a national plebiscite in which 98% of the population proclaimed Catalonia's will of self-government; in 1934, after the Spanish Republic had fallen into the hands of the fascists and reactionary forces, Catalonia struck for democracy and national freedom and proclaimed the Catalan State as part of the Confederacy of Iberian Nations⁽¹⁾; in 1936, upon the nazifascist coup of Franco and Falange, Catalonia became the bulwark of antifascism and fought at the same time for her national freedom.

There is, however, a matter which should be set forth here very clearly to end all possible misconceptions. We refer to the permanent and inalterable nature of the Catalan problem. In other words, the basic terms of the Catalan aspirations do not change with the existence of a more or less liberal regime in Spain, nor with a greater or lesser degree of persecution or oppression. For instance, Catalonia's aspirations are independent of the existence or non-existence of Franco in Spain. Catalonia has been an oppressed nationality under the Monarchy, under the Spanish Republic, and under Franco.** The removal of Franco *alone* will not solve the Catalan national problem, as it was not solved by the overthrowing alone of the Bourbon Monarchy. Catalonia fights Franco and is trying to overthrow his fascist regime, and in the same spirit she is fighting for the destruction of Hitler and Hirohito. Franco

* See Appendix No. 4.

(1) See Appendix No. 5.

** See Appendix No. 6.

is Catalonia's present tyrant, but in the dual function of representative of nazifascism and representative of the Spanish Unitarian State. The replacement of Franco will free Catalonia from nazifascism but it will not make Catalonia free from Spanish oppression.

This takes us to the real danger of any Catalan "solution" carried out under the light of routine and misconception. For this reason we appeal herewith to the United Nations before any decision be taken and any commitment be made with regard to Spain. Too many people erroneously believe that the Catalan case is merely a Spanish problem. It is not so. There is a tendency to classify the Catalan question among the internal problems of Spain. The conflict between Catalonia and Spain, as any problem between an oppressed nationality and her oppressor, has always been of an international nature. Catalonia is not a Spanish conflict but a European problem. In these terms the problems of the other European nationalities were solved at the peace table at Versailles.

To class the Catalan question among the internal problems of the Spanish state is to appoint Catalonia's oppressor to be sole judge and jury in a conflict in which it is itself a contending part. Catalonia, or any other oppressed nation, cannot expect justice from her own oppressor.

As history shows, not even a liberal and democratic Spain, of the type of the Spanish Republic, is capable of solving the Catalan national problem. (*) (**) Most of the leaders and the statesmen of the former Spanish Republic live in the erroneous notion that the principles and the clauses of the Atlantic Charter apply to the Spanish State but do not apply to Catalonia and the other nationalities incorporated by force into the Spanish State.

Hence Catalonia cannot accept the premise that her national liberty is to be identified and confused with the problem of restoring democracy and re-

* In 1942, the Spanish Republic granted Catalonia a Home Rule Statute which fell considerably short of the demands made by Catalonia through referendum. The Statute, naturally, proved to be insufficient.

** See Appendix No. 7.

storing the republican regime in Spain. At its due time, the United Nations will have to confront the Spanish problem, and Catalonia will help with all her strength to solve it, but its denomination and solution has no direct relation with Catalonia's problem of national liberty.

Let no one misinterpret this statement. Catalonia is vitally interested in democratic Spain. (*) 150,000 Catalan youths died in the Spanish Civil War to eradicate Fascism from Spain and to secure the subsistence of democracy in the Iberian Peninsula. But it is as Catalans that the people of Catalonia want to participate in the welfare of the Iberian block of peoples. (**) They want their rights as a nation to be recognized, so that Catalonia, through self-determination, can be free to join in the political reorganization of the Peninsula. Once free and duly recognized as a nation, Catalonia will be in a position to consider, for instance, a Confederacy of Iberian States, on the basis of equal rights and voluntary association, in which Catalans, Basques, Galicians, Spaniards, and Portuguese could participate.

On the other hand, Catalonia being absolutely identified with the cause of the United Nations—in whose armies so many of her sons are fighting on all the fronts—declares her willingness to accept the sacrifices the reorganization of Europe may demand of her, no matter how jealous she may be of her sovereignty and freedom as a nation.

Summing up, Catalonia

REQUESTS from the United Nations:

- a)—THAT her delayed case of national liberation be, from this moment, scheduled as one needing immediate solution.
- b)—THAT her case for self-government be filed for immediate solution under the principles and the clauses of the Atlantic Charter, independently of any regional solution contemplated for Spain.

*, ** See Appendix No. 8.

- c)—THAT her position in the political organization of Spain be decided by herself, through plebiscite of the Catalan nationals, after recognition of her status as a nation.
- d)—THAT any further disagreement or dispute between Catalonia and Spain be submitted for hearing before the United Nations Council or the International Court of Justice on its behalf.

In submitting her claim for national liberation before this Conference and before the international public opinion, Catalonia expects justice from the United Nations.

New York, April 14, 1945

J. Carner Ribalta

J. M. Fontanals

J. Ventura Sureda

Members of the United States Delegation of
the Catalan National Council in London.
(Registered with the State Department, on March 28, 1942.)

THE CASE OF CATALONIA

APPENDICES

APPENDIX No. 1—

EXISTENCE OF THE CATALAN NATION THROUGH THE AGES

(Her national status since the VIII century)

- Two centuries under the dependency of the Frank emperors.
- Four centuries of national independence.
- Three centuries of union with Spain through pact. (1469)
- Two centuries of Castilian domination by right of conquest. (1714)
- Four years of limited and insufficient home rule, granted by the Spanish Republic in 1932
- Six years under fascist domination and complete subjugation to Spain through Franco. (1939)

APPENDIX No. 2 —

THE CATALAN NATIONAL COUNCIL

Established in London in 1940, its members are:

PRESIDENT: Carles Pi-Sunyer

COUNCILORS: (in London)	Josep M. Batista i Roca Dr. Josep Trueta Fermí Vergès Ramon Parera
(in U.S.A.)	J. Carner Ribalta
(in Mexico)	Josep Carner Josep Tomàs i Piera Baltasar Samper Ferran Zulueta Dr. Salvador Armendares Dr. F. Paniello
(in Cuba)	J. Conangla i Fontanilles
(in Colombia)	Dr. Antoni Trias Joan de Garganta
(in Bolivia)	Dr. Santiago Pi-Sunyer
(in Argentina)	M. Serra i Moret H. Nadal i Mallol
(in Uruguay)	F. Bergós Ribalta
(in Catalonia)	X (A member of the underground movement "Front Nacional Català")

APPENDIX No. 2a —

ORGANIZED CATALANS IN EXILE HAVING AUTHORIZED THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION OF THE CATALAN NATIONAL COUNCIL TO PRESENT THE NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF CATALONIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ARGENTINA:

Casal de Catalunya	Buenos Aires
Associació Mutualista Montserrat	Buenos Aires
Protectora Ensenyança Catalana	Buenos Aires

Comitè Llibertat	Buenos Aires
Radio "Hora Catalana"	Buenos Aires
Revista "Ressorgiment"	Buenos Aires
Casal Català	Cordoba
Centre Català	Rosario
Centre Català	La Plata
Centre Català	Bahia Blanca
Grup Patriòtic Català	Mendoza
Societat Catalana d'Estudis Socials Econòmics i Polítics	Buenos Aires

CHILE:

Agrupació Patriòtica	Santiago
Centre Català	Santiago
Revista "Germanor"	Santiago
Hora Radial Catalana	Santiago
Auxili Mutuàl	Santiago
Revista "Noticiari Català"	Santiago
Grup Escènic Vilanova	Santiago
Orfeó Català	Santiago
Club Esportiu Barcelona	Santiago
Centre Català	Valparaíso
Centre Català	Concepción
Del. Comunitat Catalana	Valdivia
Del. Comunitat Catalana	Cautín
Del. Comunitat Catalana	Curico
Del. Comunitat Catalana	Linares

COLOMBIA:

Comunitat Catalana	Bogotá
Comissariat Ensenyança Catalana	Barranquilla

COSTA RICA:

Comunitat Catalana	San José
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CUBA:

Centre Català	Havana
Club Separatista Havana	Havana
Revista "La Nova Catalunya"	Havana
Grup N.R. "Catalunya"	Santiago

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC:

Club Català	Ciudad Trujillo
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ECUADOR:

Del. Consell Nacional Català	Guayaquil
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GUATEMALA:

Del. Catalan Colony	Guatemala City
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MEXICO:

Comunitat Catalana	Mexico City
Acció Catalana	Mexico City
"El Poble Català"	Mexico City
Estat Català	Mexico City
Orfeó Català	Mexico City
Esquerra Catalana (Secretariat)	Mexico City
Unió General de Treballadors	Mexico City
Partit Socialista Català	Mexico City

URUGUAY:

Casal Català	Montevideo
Hora Catalana de Radio	Montevideo
Protectora Ensenyança Catalana	Montevideo

VENEZUELA:

Catalan Delegation	Caracas
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U.S.A.:

Casal Català New York
"Free Catalonia" New York

On March 2, 1943, the United States Delegation of the Catalan National Council sent the following telegram to the aforementioned Catalan groups in the American Hemisphere:

"PRESUMING THAT POSSIBLE EMERGENCIES MAY SOON ARISE IT IS URGENT THAT YOU CABLE US YOUR AUTHORIZATION TO ACT BEFORE THE UNITED NATIONS ON BEHALF GROUPS IN YOUR TERRITORY IN PRESENTING NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF CATALONIA"

The answers follow: (translations of cables & letters)

FROM SANTIAGO DE CHILE:

CATALANS IN CHILE FULLY AUTHORIZE YOUR DELEGATION TO ACT ON OUR BEHALF BEFORE CHANCELERIES. (Signed: Agrupació Patriòtica; Centre Català Santiago; Centre Català, Valparaíso; Centre Català, Concepción; Delegations at Valdivia, Cautin, Curico and Linares; Revista "Germanor"; Hora Radial Catalana; Auxili Mutual; Revista "Noticiari Català"; Grup Escènic E. Vilanova; Club Esportiu Barcelona.

FROM MEXICO CITY:

ANSWERING YOUR CABLE WE FULLY AUTHORIZE YOUR DELEGATION TO ACT BEFORE CHANCELERIES IN PRESENTING OUR PROBLEM ON BASIS NATIONAL COUNCIL. (Signed: Tomàs i Piera, President Comunitat, Aymamí, Director "Poble Català."

TOTALITY OUR FRIENDS ADHERE TO MOVEMENT OF CATALAN COMMUNITIES. WILL SUPPORT ACTION YOU FOLLOW IN ACCORDANCE WITH INSTRUCTIONS LONDON COUNCIL. (Signed: Acció Catalana, Bosch, Peypoch. ESTAT CATALA AUTHORIZES YOU TO ACT BEFORE CHANCELERIES PROVIDED COMPLETE RECOGNITION OF CATALAN NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY IS ASKED. (Signed: Marcellí Perelló.

ASSEMBLY SECRETARIAT OF THE CATALAN REPUBLICAN LEFT PARTY (MEMBER OF CATALAN COMMUNITIES AMERICA) AUTHORIZES YOUR DELEGATION TO ACT ON ITS BEHALF BEFORE CHANCELERIES IN PRESENTING THE CATALAN NATIONAL PROBLEM IN ACCORD WITH THE LONDON COUNCIL. (Signed: Joan Loperena, Secretary.

THE SECRETARIAT OF THE WORKERS' GENERAL UNION, WHICH SUPPORTS THE MOVEMENT OF NATIONAL REIVINDICATION HEADED BY CARLES PISUNYER, PRESIDENT OF THE CATALAN NATIONAL COUNCIL ESTABLISHED IN LONDON, INFORMED THAT YOUR DELEGATION IS REQUESTING THE AUTHORIZATION OF THE NUCLEI OF CATALANS IN EXILE URGES YOU TO REPRESENT THE MEMBERS OF CATALONIA'S GENERAL UNION OF WORKERS BEFORE THE CHANCELERIES. (Signed: Miquel Ferrer, Secretary General; Joan Fronjosà, Joan Gilabert, Members of the Secretariat.

(A cable from the CATALAN SOCIALIST PARTY, signed by Ferrer, was received considerably mutilated by the Censor's office. The authorization was confirmed later by letter.)

FROM COLOMBIA:

COMMUNITAT CATALANA COLOMBIA AUTHORIZES NEW YORK DELEGATION CATALAN NATIONAL COUNCIL IN LONDON TO ACT ON ITS BEHALF IN PRESENTING CATALAN PROBLEM. (Signed: Antoni Trias.
COMMISSARY DELEGATION ENSENYANÇA COMMUNITAT REQUESTS NATIONAL COUNCIL LONDON IN NEW YORK TO PRESENT CATALAN PROBLEM. (Signed: Solé Pla, Vinyes, Rabat.

FROM CUBA:

IN ANSWER TO YOUR LETTER, WE ARE PLEASED TO AUTHORIZE YOU ON BEHALF CENTRE CATALA CLUB SEPARATISTA HAVANA AND LA NOVA CATALUNYA TO REPRESENT THEM IN PRESENTING NATIONAL CAUSE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TEXT OF THE DECLARATION OF THE CENTRE

CATALA OF HAVANA ON AUGUST 1943. (Signed: Josep Conangla, President. Carles Gubern, Director "La Nova Catalunya." Joan Torres Picart, Secretary.

(In a letter received from Santiago de Cuba, signed by S. Carbonell and J. Sais Julià, Chief Councilor and Secretary, respectively, of the Grup N.R. "Catalunya," they say: "WILL SEND FULL AUTHORIZATION WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PRINCIPLES OF CATALONIA'S FULL INDEPENDENCE ARE FOLLOWED."

FROM ARGENTINA:

WE FULLY AUTHORIZE YOU TO REPRESENT US BEFORE UNITED NATIONS IN SUBMITTING LIST CATALAN NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS. (Signed: Casal Catalunya; Associació Mutualista Montserrat; Protectora Ensenyanca Catalana; Comitè Llibertat; Radio Hora Catalana; Revista "Ressorgiment," all of Buenos Aires, and Casal Català of Cordoba, Centre Català Rosario, Centre Català La Plata, Centre Català Bahía Blanca. (Signed: Escolá, President. Juan J. Llorens, Secretary.

The Catalan Society of Economic Studies in Buenos Aires sent a letter confirming adherence to the contents of the cable sent by the Catalan Community of Buenos Aires, in which their name was involuntarily omitted.

ON BEHALF OF CATALANS MENDOZA WE AUTHORIZE YOU TO ACT IN ACCORDANCE YOUR TELEGRAM. — (Signed: Grup Patriòtic Català, Francesc X. Cortada.

FROM URUGUAY:

WE AUTHORIZE YOU TO PRESENT OUR PROBLEM BEFORE CHANCELERIES. (Signed: Casal Català, Hora Catalana, Associació Protectora Ensenyança Catalana.

FROM THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC:

"WILL SUPPORT WHATEVER ACTION IS TAKEN BY THE CATALAN NATIONAL COUNCIL IN LONDON, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLICIES HERETOFORE EXPRESSED BY THE AFOREMENTIONED COUNCIL." (Signed: Eduard Barba, Secretary Catalan Club.

FROM COSTA RICA:

"CATALANS ARE BEING ORGANIZED IN COSTA RICA, WILL SEND AUTHORIZATION IN DUE TIME." (Signed: Silvestre Isern.

FROM ECUADOR:

AUTHORIZE THE NEW YORK DELEGATION. (Signed: L. Vidal Guitart, Delegate of the Catalan National Council in Guayaquil.

FROM VENEZUELA:

CATALANS ARE BEING ORGANIZED IN CARACAS, SEND AUTHORIZATION ON THEIR BEHALF. (Signed: Dr. August Pi-Sunyer.

FROM GUATEMALA:

IN THE NAME OF CATALAN COLONY IN GUATEMALA CITY, AUTHORIZE NEW YORK DELEGATION TO ACT ON ITS BEHALF. (Signed: Enric Segura Guardiola.

APPENDIX No. 2b —

IMPORTANCE OF THE CATALANS IN LATIN AMERICA

From a report by Bureau of Latin American Research, 1714 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C., No. M-12, June 22, 1942:

NOTES ON THE CATALANS IN LATIN AMERICA (Organizations & Publications) INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Waldo Frank, in his book *Virgin Spain*, writes that "the Catalan of Spain is an outsider

within the gates". This truism is often overlooked or not comprehended, and people wonder why it is that when a native of the province of Catalonia is asked his nationality he replies "Catalan" and not "Spanish".

The "Catalan Question", just like the "Basque Question", has long been a main concern of the succeeding Spanish governments, but not until the close of the Spanish Civil War did the Catalan problem have any significance in inter-American affairs. Its extension to Latin America has been caused by the arrival there of thousands of Catalan refugees, who, although Spanish subjects, maintain enough of their Catalan individuality to warrant the study of their groups independently from the Spanish elements in Latin America.

The Catalans in Latin America, numbering about 75,000, are almost all members of Catalan centers or cultural organizations. They are all militant anti-Fascists, for Fascism represents the negation of their regional autonomy, and is also contrary to the liberal traditions of Catalonia.

The following notes on Catalonia and its culture have been secured in interviews with Catalan leaders in New York, and naturally give their point of view of the "Catalan Question". They are presented here merely to give background to the activities of the Catalan groups in Latin America and to the premises on which these activities are based. This office does not in any way pass judgment on these Catalan claims, for an analysis of the "Catalan Question" would require hearing the various conflicting sides.

POLITICAL HISTORY OF CATALONIA

Catalonia became a national entity in the 12th century. From the 13th to the 15th centuries Catalonia reached the peak of her political and cultural splendor. Confederated with Aragon, Catalonia preserved full sovereignty with an autochthonous dynasty and the Catalan king was the bond of union between the Catalans and the Aragonese.

Catalonia liberated the Balearic Islands from the Saracens, as well as the lands of Valencia, which became Catalan territory. Catalonian expansion continued to Sicily, Sardinia, Naples, Greece and Asia Minor.

The decadence of Catalonia began in 1410 when, at the death of the Catalan king, Martí the Humane, the Catalan-Aragonese throne was occupied by a Castilian king, Fernando de Antequera. The marriage of Fernando de Aragon and Isabela de Castilla united the two great peninsular realms. The discovery of America, made possible with Catalan money and Catalan effort, was carried out exclusively in the name of Castile. The Catalans were forbidden to participate in the colonization of the New World and were even forbidden to trade with it. But it must be pointed out that some of the greatest missionaries of the Faith and founders of missions were Catalan, like for instance Junipero Serra in California and Saint Xavier in the Philippines.

Catalonia rebelled against the increasing domination of Castile in 1640 and again in 1714. As a result of this second war Catalonia lost her political liberties and was integrated into the Spanish nation.

In modern times Catalonia acquired a new consciousness of her own national personality. In the 20th Century, through persistent cultural and political effort Catalonia obtained its autonomy with the advent of the Spanish Republic in 1931. The triumph of Franco in Spain has sunk Catalonia into political subjugation.

CATALAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

The Catalan language evolves from the Latin vulgate. It has its own definite personality as a romance language just like French, Italian, Castilian, Portuguese, Roumanian. As a popular language it is contemporary with the other Neo-Latin languages, but as a literary language it precedes the others by centuries.

The first documents written in Catalan date from the 11th century, and the first literary texts from the 13th. From the 13th to the 15th centuries Catalan was used in all public life. The "counts-kings" of Catalonia and Aragon used Catalan simultaneously with Latin in international relations.

The first philosophy in popular language is written in Catalan. The Catalonian Parliament was the oldest in continental Europe. Literature and science flourished in all their aspects with the use of Catalan. Ramon Llull, Arnau de Vilanova, Eiximenis and Sibiuda were medieval Catalan thinkers. Andreu Febrer was the first translator of the "Divine Comedy" and one of the great poets of antiquity.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF CATALONIA

The importance of Catalonia in European war strategies is discussed in a booklet entitled "Axis Plans in the Mediterranean," published in 1939 by the London General Press, and prefaced by Captain Lidell Hart.

Germany is seen as wishing to create a source of unrest for France on the Pyrenean frontier, the frontier with Catalonia, in order to force France to keep a number of army corps along this border.

The article makes reference to a book by Franz Pauser, called "Spaniens zum Mittelmeer und die katalanische Frage", (Teubner, Leipzig and Berlin 1938). The book forms part of the series "Macht und Erde".

Pauser points out how Catalonia could offer a land communication uniting France with her African empire, and writes "Actually Greater Catalonia would be a land bridge to Africa and to its human material resources. I would, in fact, signify the coalescence of the lands and races *de la plus grande France, la France des cent millions*".

Pauser goes on, "Even if the project of founding a 'Greater Catalonia' should come to naught, Catalonia proper in conjunction with the island of Minorca, which is still not in Franco's hands, would suffice to throw Italy's sea-power back on the Tyrrhenian basis and seriously endanger at the same time the Italian position in Sardinia." This last sentence contains the strategical reason of the January, 1939, offensive against Catalonia as a preliminary preparation of a larger move against France.

One page from the booklet deserves attention:

"If a free Catalonia could be of such importance for the security of France it is only natural that the German writers, pursuing the plans for the encirclement of France, should be against the recognition of any degree of liberty to Catalonia. General Franco is putting this plan into practice.

"According to Pauser Spain must dominate Catalonia because it is the richest country in the Peninsula from which much revenue from taxation out of wealth could be obtained.

"Another German military writer, Dr. Hermann Gackenholtz, who writes on 'The position of Spain's military policy', insists also on the strategic importance that a free Catalan state should have for France. 'Therefore,' he concludes, 'the Government of National Spain can never accept the setting up of a Catalan State,' . . .

"Italy also holds the same view . . . Dr. Giovanni Ansaldo, writing in 'Il Telegrafo' (Leghorn, January 17th, 1939), a paper expressing Count Ciano's views, states that Italy fights in Spain against French imperialism. According to him it has always been French policy, since Charlemagne, to set up a Catalan State whenever she was threatened from the Peninsula. Italy has in Spain direct interests perfectly contrary to those of France. Italy is interested in rebuilding the unity of Spain and in creating a vigorous state. The Italian interests are that Nationalist Spain should become master again of Catalonia."

CATALANS IN EXILE

The autonomous government of Catalonia had until the uprising of Franco dedicated every effort to the reconstruction of the personality of Catalonia. In the last thirty years all organisms and institutions, models of democracy and liberty, had been revived.

At the time of the civil war Catalonia was on the threshold of another period of full realization of its personality. Its government, its academicians and professors, its artists and writers, its men of science, doctors, technicians and specialized workers went to France as a result of mass-exile when Franco entered Catalonia. In France, Catalan culture and Catalan life found refuge. France absorbed men of science, professors, intellectuals and artists. These peoples, grouped about the exiled Catalan government, were maintained in a compact unity to preserve Catalan culture, and worked toward reconstruction under the auspices of the French government, universities and French intellectuals.⁽¹⁾

The collapse of France, however, made the position of the Catalan refugees in France very precarious, for many were threatened with being turned over to the Franco government. Indeed some were, including the exiled president of the Catalan "Generalitat" (Parliament), Lluís Companys, who was executed. Many were more fortunate, and after months in refugee camps, found their way to Latin America, where small Catalan colonies already were settled and had contributed to the development of the Latin American republics.⁽²⁾ But many are still in France.

The Catalans in Latin America, through membership in their various clubs and associations, present a fairly solid front. A Catalan Council has been formed in London, headed by Carles Pi i Sunyer, and it has been received unofficially at the Foreign Office. A United States delegation of the London Council was recently established in New York and is integrated by J. M. Fontanals, J. Ventura Sureda, J. Carner-Ribalta and J. A. Gibernau (secretary general). The above delegation was registered with the State Department on March 28, 1942.

In February 1940 a manifesto was issued by the New York Catalan Club, "Casal Català"⁽³⁾, and sent to all the centers in Latin America, urging that a congress of Catalan centers be held in New York to create a "Federation of Catalan Entities of America" in order to give the Catalans in exile a centralized directing body under the leadership of a prominent Catalan. Although almost all of the Latin American groups favored the proposal, they stated they were in no position to send delegates, so the congress was never held. The Catalan whose name was most frequently

¹ Catalonia in exile organized artistic manifestations which received great admiration. A graphic resume of Catalan art, "L'Art Català", was edited under the auspices of the Direction Generale des Beaux Arts, Ministère d'Instruction Publique de France.

² The role played by the Catalans in the history of Buenos Aires and Argentina during the campaigns of 1805-09 is traced in *Los Catalanes en la Argentina*, by R. Monner Sans (1927); the participation of Catalans in Cuban affairs up to 1898 is related in *Los Catalanes en América: Cuba*, by Carlos Martí (1918).

³ The "Casal Català" in New York publishes a new monthly paper printed in Catalan and English, called "Free Catalonia". It has among its purposes to interpret American policy to the Catalan colonies throughout Latin America, and in turn present to the United States the outstanding points of the "Catalan Question", and possible program for the reconstruction of the political structure of Spain after the war.

mentioned as the possible leader of the Catalans in exile was Pablo Casals, the cellist. Although no organized link exists between the Catalan groups in Latin America and the New York and London groups, they are all in close contact and try to coordinate their activities as much as possible.

CATALAN ORGANIZATIONS IN LATIN AMERICA

(The Bureau of Latin American Research ends its report by giving a list of the Catalan organizations, publications and radio broadcasting units throughout this Continent, but it has become obsolete on account of the many additions and reorganizations since June 1942, when the report was issued. For a fairly complete list of these organizations we refer the reader to the list of Catalan groups in Latin America given in Appendix 2a).

APPENDIX No. 3 —

SPAIN A PLURINATIONAL COUNTRY

From the essay "Suggested Bases for a British Policy to Spain", by William C. Atkinson.—
"The Fortnightly" review, London, February 1945:

Students of Spain know that there is no reality in that country more immediate and more persistent than the regional issue. Spain is still plural in a sense in which Great Britain has long ceased to be. Catalonia and the Basque provinces have their different languages, traditions of administration and of political outlook, cultural affinities, and economic interests, the whole constituting a sense of nationalism that is at its most live and explosive when Castilian centralism is most confident of having stamped it out. It is not incidental that these two regions are beyond question the most progressive, the most western in outlook, and the most politically mature in Spain; but the problem in the past has only been exacerbated thereby, for Castilian pride finds the recognition hard, and is slow to realize that it is often Castilian, and not Catalan or Basque, intransigence that prevents the integration of all three into a higher Spanish unity. Where elements in a nation are prepared to take up arms in defence of their rights, it is reasonable supposition that there exists a case for objective enquiry. Catalans and Basques would not take exception to the generalization of that criterion.

APPENDIX No. 4 —

PROCLAMATION OF THE CATALAN REPUBLIC

by President Francesc Macià
on April 14, 1931.

"People of Catalonia!

"In the name of the people I proclaim the Catalonian state which, with all cordiality, we shall endeavor to incorporate in the Federation of Iberian Republics.

"From now onward is formed the Government of the Catalonian Republic which will meet in the Palace of the Generalitat.

"Those who form the Government of Catalonia will now and henceforward be ready to defend the liberties of the Catalan people and to die for them. Let us hope that you, Catalonians, will be prepared, like all of us to die for Catalonia and the Republic."

(translated from the Catalan)

APPENDIX No. 5 —

PROCLAMATION OF THE CATALAN STATE by President Lluís Companys, on October 6, 1934.

"Catalans!

"En aquesta hora solemne, en nom del poble i del Parlament, el Govern que presideixo assumeix totes les facultats del Poder a Catalunya (i) proclama l'Estat Català de la República Federal Espanyola"

Translation: (In this solemn hour, in the name of the people and the Parliament, the Government over which I preside assumes all the functions of power in Catalonia (and) proclaims the Catalan State of the Federal Spanish Republic)

CATALONIA DEPRIVED OF HER NATIONAL RIGHTS UNDER THE
SPANISH MONARCHY, THE SPANISH REPUBLIC AND
THE SPANISH FASCIST REGIME

—From the Decree by Philip V of Spain, in 1714, invoking the right of conquest to abolish the Catalan liberties:

"Habiendo pacificado por las armas el territorio de Cataluña, toca a mi soberanía establecer gobierno en él."

(Having pacified by the arms the territory of Catalonia, it belongs to my sovereignty to establish a government in it.)

—From the Decree of the President of the Spanish Republic, of January 2, 1935, abolishing the Catalan home rule granted by the Spanish Cortes in 1932:

"Art. 1^o—Quedan en suspenso las facultades conferidas por el Estatuto de Cataluña . . ."
(The faculties granted to Catalonia by her Statute will remain in suspense . . .)

—From the Decree by Franco, April 5, 1938, definitively revoking the Statute (home rule) for Catalonia:

" . . . el Estatuto de Cataluña, en mala hora concedido por la República, dejó de ser válido, en el orden jurídico español, el día 17 de julio de 1936.

" . . . la entrada de nuestras gloriosas armas en territorio catalán (1) . . . plantea el problema . . . de restaurar . . . el principio de la unidad de la Patria . . . etc.,

(. . . the Catalan Statute, in an evil hour granted by the Republic, ended to be valid, in accordance with the Spanish laws, on July 17, 1936.

. . . the entrance of our victorious armies into the Catalan territory raises the problem . . . of restoring . . . the principle of the unity of the fatherland . . . etc.,)

SPAIN versus CATALONIA

Under the title *"España frente a Cataluña"*, A. Sieberer, an Austrian journalist, has published a well-informed book, from which we quote:

"In the XV century Castile had, within her domain established by force, riches, and success, all the peoples of the Iberian Peninsula . . . The simultaneous uprising of Portugal and Catalonia . . . was a sign of the exhaustion of the Castilian power. The peripheric forces started to surpass those of the center. Portugal gained her independence; Catalonia had to return to the Austro-Spanish yoke. The 1640 rebellion is a clear proof that Castile had not succeeded in her attempt to assimilate the Iberian peoples and merge them into an unified Spanish nation.

"Castilians have retained from their old days of glory a disproportioned arrogance. They consider themselves the backbone of Spain; they behave themselves as though they belonged to a higher degree of civilization entitling them to rule over the other races in Spain . . . As long as this arbitrary idea of values remains in the mind of the Castilians, there will be no peace in the country.

" . . . It is madness to try to impose oneself on a union among the different parts of a big state, when these nuclei have reached full age, and when one has no more the power to obtain it forcibly. This is the fruit of an unreasonable and whimsical spirit, devoid of the knowledge of reality and ignorant of the sense of how to use force. Here is the reason why Spain has lost all her colonies and keeps an unending agitation within the country.

"The incapacity of the Castilians to live in sincere community with brothers of equal rights; their incapacity to consider the ideals and peculiarities of others as rightful as their own; the incapacity of democratic self-sacrifice, are the causes of the decadence of Spain. Castile has not only spread the seed of discord with her unruly centralism, but has also deprived the development of the natural forces of the different peoples and of the very Spain itself. Castile's ideal is comparable to a gold head on a clay statue.

"This domineering spirit and this assimilating furore is still making victims. The field is smaller day by day, but Catalonia has been chosen as the principal victim."

¹Note the invocation of the right of conquest in identical terms as Philip V, in 1714.

THE POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE IBERIAN PEOPLES

The Catalan Society of Political, Economic and Social Studies, established in Buenos Aires, has issued the following statement, signed by Pelai Sala, President, Joan Cuatrecasas and P. Mas i Parera:

"The Iberian Peninsula forms a geographical group of peoples over which, at different times through history, one of them has tried to build a political unity. The results have been diverse. The fact that, in recent times, the attempt of establishing and consolidating such a political unity has been conducted under the form of an unitarian state, ignoring all ethnic and linguistic characteristics of the different Iberian peoples, has created much discontent and even violent reactions from the different groups towards the coadjutor for the Spanish state, namely, Castile.

"In Castile the idea of the absolutist state is preponderant and this has been the cause of wars and of an enormous amount of energies lost in trying to impose this sort of state. And since absolutism is no law, but force and compulsion, during the last centuries the Iberians have lived through a permanently latent revolt. This has given the nuclei which could have become normal vehicles for order and consolidation, an appearance of perturbing elements of the life of the Spanish state.

"Nevertheless, through her assimilative policy, Castile has succeeded in reducing to her way of life several of the peoples which in the Middle Ages had attained a more or less perfect form of state life of their own. But she has failed to reduce some others. That is why the attempt at political unity in the Peninsula started at the end of the XV century under the pretext of a catholic union, has not succeeded as its initiators and continuators had expected. An independent Portugal is the best proof thereof. On the other hand, the subsistence, through all vicissitudes, of living nations such as the ethnico-linguistic groups of Basque Country-Navarre, Catalonia-Valencia-Balearic Islands, and Galicia-Portugal, is another proof of the failure of the unitarian form which Castile has tried to impose to hold together the Spanish state.

"For the prosperity of each and all the peninsular nations—Castile, Catalonia, Basque Country and Galicia-Portugal—and for the normalization of their interrelation, it is most urgent to bring about a total reorganization of their political life, on the basis of (1) a true conciliation of the different claims to national sovereignty, (2) a real spirit of cooperation which would eliminate any hegemonic ambition of any particular group, and (3) a general sense of duty from every peninsular nation to contribute to the reconstruction and peace of Europe and the prosperity of the world.

"CONCLUSIONS: 1) Neither a Spanish unitarian state, nor a policy of precarious autonomic concessions, nor a complete separation of the different nationalities, would bring about the fulfilment of the mission reserved to each of the Iberian peoples in the present currents of international cooperation, human solidarity and universal democracy. 2) The political relations between the Iberian nationalities should be directed to promote a mutual collaboration of the different peoples, within a regime of reciprocal respect and trust, so as to allow each nationality to work out its destiny for the general benefit of the Iberian complex."

APPENDIX No. 8 —

THE POLITICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

From a Declaration by the Catalan National Council in London, signed by its President, Carles Pi-Sunyer, on August 24, 1944:

"We Catalans have a deep and serious conception of Spain, a conception emanating from our Catalan conscience and mentality.

"In the course of generations and in numerous ways we have tried to harmonize the indestructible reality of Catalonia's natural individuality with a political organization of the Peninsula which would make possible not only tolerance but also active collaboration. The Catalans did believe that the Spanish Republic would prove the kind of regime in which those aims would be attained, provided that loyalty prevailed. But events since then have made a profound impression on the Catalan soul. The last civil war and the subsequent fascist repression have irrevocably influenced, as deeply as the events of 1640 and 1714 did, the course of Catalan history. The bombing of our cities, the invasion of our soil, the violent repeal of our Statute (home rule)—which our people had obtained by plebiscite and the Cortes had sanctioned and incorporated into the Spanish Constitution—the abrogation of our laws, the banishment of our national language, the suppression of our culture, the attempt at dispersion of our industries, the murder of our President Lluís Companys, all these are atrocities which cannot be committed against a nation as vital and as conscious as ours, without generating fatal consequences. No

Spanish democrat can expect that the Catalans will delude themselves, or close their eyes to realities and stop struggling to make a recurrence of the tragic past impossible. Catalonia will never act in a spirit of rancor or vengeance, but the most elementary foresight and responsibility make it imperative for the leaders of Catalonia to bear the lessons in mind as a warning for the future.

"We are convinced that the time has come for a radical change in the political structure of Spain, and we Catalans will heartily help the statesmen with the vision and the will to create the new Hispanic Commonwealth. Therein the organic unity of its various member nations will find its expression through the independence of each and the interdependence of all of them. Each one of them must have the right to freely govern itself, and altogether must solve, on a basis of equality, the problems which are common to all of them.

"This is a solution which we Catalans deeply cherish and which, incidentally, is in perfect line with the principles of political organization now prevailing. Confederation, as a means of integrating related nations, has been a Catalan formula since the middle ages. And a Catalan—Pi i Margall—was one of the most illustrious exponents of Iberian Federation as a modern political system. May we add that the course taken by such great communities of peoples as the British Commonwealth of Nations, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Republics happens to fully interpret Catalan ideas on the matter and offers the solution, as proposed by Catalonia, to this most arduous of all the peninsular problems.

"We would like that the Spanish democracy, conscious of the significance and transcendency of the present moment, viewed our open and loyal attitude without suspicion, and that it would accept the sincerity, positiveness, fecundity and promise for the future which it contains. The old-fashioned unitarism, of non-Hispanic origin, which has so often disturbed the relations between the nationalities composing the Spanish state, is an equally mortal threat to Castile herself. The Castilians will be condemned to live under perpetual dictatorship if they are bent on preserving unitarism, for only a regime of force can keep the peripheric nationalities under domination.

"The cause of democracy in Spain is inseparably tied to that of freedom for its nationalities. Only in true democracy and liberation can the right political climate exist in which the solution of all Hispanic problems is possible. And neither democracy nor liberation can prevail unless relations between peoples are based on justice and not on the abuse of power. Our attitude is cordial, responsible and constructive. We offer our hand to the Spanish democrats and trust that they will offer theirs, so that, together, we can start on our way to liberate our enslaved homelands."

TO ESTABLISH ORDER IN SPAIN

From a Memorandum presented by the United States Delegation of the Catalan National Council of London, to the Bureau of Nationalities in Washington:

"In presenting this plan to establish order in Spain, immediately after the fall of Franco and the fascist regime, we must necessarily limit ourselves to Catalonia. Similar plans should be drawn up for the other territories of the former Spanish Republic.

"We firmly believe that no political reorganization of Spain is possible if the real political and ethnical structure of its territory is disregarded. Regardless of the official status and organization of Spain in past years, for the purposes of restoring order and for a political reorganization, Spain should be considered what it is in actual fact: a plurinational country. The former unitarian and centralized Spanish state will be territorially divided so as to give legal status to its different nationalities or peoples: Castilians, Catalans, Basques and Galicians.

"In recommending these drastic measures we do so with the conviction that it is the only way to cope with the complexity of the Spanish problem and because we know that any effort towards political reorganization based on any other terms will be doomed to failure. The action of the United Nations in momentarily establishing these territorial divisions will be fully justified, particularly if it is clearly stated that it is made for the purpose of simplicity and to enable them to guarantee order in these territories.

"It would be certainly an arduous task, if not altogether impossible, to pacify and reorganize from a central point such as Madrid the different territories of the Peninsula. Generally speaking, the problems of these territories are radically different and many times opposed to those of Castile.

"Another advantage in this division, would be the creation of the territorial governments through which it would be possible to establish finally a Confederacy of Iberian peoples, as one of the groups of the United States of Europe.

"In keeping with the above considerations, we hereby submit the following plan for the reorganization of Catalonia, to be put into effect immediately following the fall of the Franco regime.

- a) A provisional Catalan Government (exclusively integrated by Catalan leaders)

will be established in Barcelona. This provisional Government or Committee will be responsible to the United Nations alone for the maintenance of order in Catalonia and will work in full cooperation with the AMG. (On request we will supply a list of adequate Catalan leaders to be appointed to this Committee or Provisional Government).

b) The basis of operation for this Catalan Government will be the Constitutional Charter of Catalonia known as "*Estatut Interior de Catalunya*" as voted by the Catalan Parliament, this Charter or Statute to remain in effect until the right of self-determination is restored to the Catalans.

c) The provisional Government of Catalonia (which later could be the representative of the Catalan people in any proposed Confederation of the Iberian nations) will upon taking office issue a Proclamation to the effect that:

"The Provisional Government of Catalonia, fully supported by the United Nations, is established for the purpose of restoring order and peace. Individual life, private property, social relations and individual creeds, are guaranteed to all law-abiding citizens. All political or social parties and tendencies are declared legal and with freedom of operation, but their individual aspirations and programs will be momentarily subject to those measures taken for the preservation of order. The Provisional Catalan Government acknowledges the right of self-determination of the Catalan people and, as soon as the situation will permit, will put into effect the necessary plebiscites so that all national, political and social aspirations can be legally established in accordance with the will of the people."

An additional Proclamation will be made to the effect that:

"The Catalan provisional Government will proceed immediately to establish courts of justice to examine and try all cases of grievance dating from the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936, including the post-war period up to the present date, covering cases of property as well as personal injury. It is hereby declared that any one taking the law into his hands and guilty of an act of vengeance will be severely punished, even if necessary, by penalty of death."

d) The provisional Catalan Government will consist of the following Departments or Ministries: Presidency, Interior, Justice, Public Services, Economy, Labor, Education and Sanitation. The four main problems which the Catalan Government will solve immediately are: Food Distribution, Public Services, Public Order, Communications.

Identical Governments or Committees will be established in Madrid, Bilbao and La Coruña, for the other three territories, namely, Castile, Basque Country and Galicia.

THE CATALAN ATTITUDE TO THE QUESTION OF A ROYALIST RESTORATION IN SPAIN

From the statement issued by the Catalan National Council in London:

WHY THE CATALANS CANNOT BE PARTY TO A RESTORATION: THE MONARCHY CANNOT SOLVE ANY OF THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF SPAIN — ITS FAILURE WILL CAUSE ANOTHER REVOLUTION.

The Catalans past experience with the Monarchy, the part played against Catalonia by the Royalists in the Civil War, their ideas on the problem of the Nationalities, and the Pretender's proclamation from Rome and Lausanne, with their harping on the "unity of Spain" and the restoration of the "traditionalist or absolute Monarchy"—all these facts prevent the Catalans from having any illusions about the Monarchy. It cannot be democratic; neither can it solve the problem of the nationalities.

The Pretender so far has given no indication that a restored Monarchy will abate its traditional hostility to the non-Castilian nationalities. Even should its promises be fair, a monarchy, far less than a republic, can offer no guarantee that autonomy will not be abolished again by a dictator or a pronunciamiento.

A coup d'etat by a group of generals seems the Pretender's best hope of becoming King. The landed aristocracy of Castile seems to be the only class ready to give unanimous and whole-hearted support to the Crown. These are clear indications that the Monarchy, besides not being genuinely democratic, will not be able to solve the fundamental problems of Spain (such, at least, as Castilian militarism, or the agrarian problem of Andalucia, Extremadura and Castile).

A well known group of international financiers, and perhaps certain industrialists, will also support a restoration. But the Crown could not be promised any support from the majority of the people. To create a Royalist Majority in Parliament by means of genuine elections would be practically impossible. The Pretender, therefore, speaks of restoring the traditionalist or absolute Monarchy which "does not owe its power to any election, needs to compromise with no one . . .

all it needs is to consolidate its own authority" (Proclamation issued in Rome, 28th of February 1942).

There is in view no prominent leader, nor any large enough group of able and experienced politicians, who could make a success of a restoration. Sr. Ventosa, well equipped as he is, will never be accepted as leader by the Catalans, and still less by the Castilians. This last point is of decisive importance for a regime essentially Castilian like the Monarchy. Whatever the Royalists promise him, and whatever his initial advantages, the forces at work round the Crown will sooner or later produce the same results as before the fall of the Monarchy. Only another series of disappointments and failures will reward Sr. Ventosa's new attempts to cooperate with the Monarchy.

The Monarchy has ceased to be an ideal capable of firing the hearts and minds of most of the people of Spain. The Republican ideal, if wisely used by the Non-Royalists, will soon recover its sweeping force, specially as the people feel the Republic was their regime, and was only snatched from them by the Spanish upper classes in alliance with foreigners, the German Nazis and Italian Fascists. This fusion of national and popular sentiment, may, if mishandled, prove to be highly explosive material.

Some people seem to cherish the hope that if the King grants an amnesty to the larger number of people in prison and concentration camps, there will be an upsurge of gratitude and sympathy towards him. But this is grossly to misinterpret the Spanish spirit, and as a measure of practical politics it would prove a broken reed.

Neither prisoners nor their relatives have forgotten that the Royalists joined the falangists in the fight against the Republicans, that there have been Royalist ministers in General Franco's Cabinet, and that the Law of Political Responsibilities bears the signature of a Royalist (Traditionalist) minister.

The ideas of right and wrong, of justice and injustice, are felt deeply in the hearts of all the Spanish peoples. They will distinguish clearly between what seems to them a favor of what is a mere cessation of an injustice. Moreover, persecution only strengthens people in their convictions. People who have suffered for their Republican or Socialist convictions, or their Catalan or Basque patriotism, will not become supporters of a king merely because he grants them an amnesty. All the Spanish peoples have too much respect for their ideals.

The various proclamations issued by the Pretender have caused much misgiving. From their flowery phrases there emerge no concrete or constructive ideas for the future of the country nothing about to pacify the minds and hearts of citizens of all classes and bring them together; nothing on what policy to pursue in connection with the nationalities, or how to tackle the post-war economic and social problems; no solution for any fundamental problem such as the agrarian question, education, the Army, or the reorganization of the civil service; above all, nothing about any policy for keeping order. The silence on all these points suggests that the Monarchy intends to follow its old policy of minimizing existing problems, or shutting its eyes to them in the hope that thus they will vanish, or—what would be still worse—using the force of an absolute regime to suppress them.

The mere existence of a king on the throne in Madrid will not magically produce a solution for Spain. Monarchy and Republic have become only labels: the important things are the underlying forces, and their ability to find a solution for the problems affecting the organization and very existence of the Spanish peoples.

The passage of a few years will confirm what can now be foreseen—that another restoration of the Monarchy that has ruled Spain intermittently during the last 150 years will again end in failure and revolution. Another convulsion to expel a bankrupt absolute Monarchy that has been buttressed only by the upper classes, together with the upsurge of national and popular sentiment referred to above, taken in connection with the stirrings of revolution from other sources which are boiling up all over Europe, may prove most disastrous, particularly to the cause of the Democracies in Western Europe. The Catalan Democrats and patriots tremble at the realization that their country will be plunged into yet another revolution if the fatal Spanish pendulum is set in motion again.

TO SUM UP:—

The Monarchy will be supported only by the landed aristocracy of Castile, some generals, a group of international financiers, and perhaps some industrialists—but not by the majority of the people.

The Monarchy, therefore, will of necessity have to be an absolute and not a democratic regime. Such a Monarchy will be unable to solve either the problem of the nationalities or any other fundamental problem of Spain.

The Monarchy will after a few years prove a failure, and the Spanish peoples will be thrown into revolution again.

So the Monarchy will ultimately fail even in what is its fundamental purpose—to keep order and prevent revolution.

These being logically predictable developments, it is not in the interest of the Catalans to embark on the dangerous adventure of a Royalist Restoration.

HOW TO REPLACE FRANCO IN SPAIN

From an article in "Free Catalonia", published by Catalan patriots in New York. (13, Sept. 1944).

"One of the worries of the United Nations, specially the United States and England, seems to be how to find an issue to the untenable Spanish situation and specifically how to eliminate Franco and replace the falangist regime. This preoccupation is shown in the wild ideas that apparently have been considered in the last few months both in London and in Washington. We refer particularly to the plan of restoring the Bourbon monarchy in the person of Don Juan; to the implantation of an ecclesiastic-military directory headed by Cardinal Segura and some Spanish Darlan, and last but not least to the notion that the best solution might be the prolongation of Franco's leadership, with a nominally democratized regime to that of Portugal under Salazar.

"Fortunately, all these bright ideas have fallen of their own weight and the United Nations are again in the same predicament regarding the Spanish situation as they were six months ago.

"But there is a formula for replacing Franco and the falangist regime in Spain! It is no magic panacea nor any of those beautiful schemes that the eleventh-hour planners are offering every other day. Our solution is based on the intimate knowledge of the Spanish situation and the accurate appreciation of the reactions of the people in Spain.

"We know that the main concern of the United Nations is not, particularly, the ultimate solution that will prevail in Spain which will restore freedom and peace in the Iberian Peninsula. This ultimate solution will be the logical one, namely, the one derived from the principles of the Atlantic Charter and the regulations established in the Peace Conference or whatever the equivalent might be.

"At present, the problem is to find out the intermediary formula allowing a smooth transition from fascism to democracy, a formula the principal virtue of which should be to avoid a bloody revolution in Spanish territory. This is the formula we are going to suggest and we derive it simply from the will of the very Spanish people.

"But the success of our recommendation will depend on the willingness and the firm decision of the United Nations in settling, in an expeditive manner, the miserable situation of Spain. We do not mean by this that they should apply to Spain the "Bulgarian treatment" Russian style. It is not necessary. No declaration of war or break of relations need be issued against Franco. No army needs to be stationed at the Spanish border. It is only necessary that the United Nations let Franco know that the moment of his final bow has come.

"Some timid souls may suppose that Franco will insist on sitting a little longer on his dictatorial throne; that he will offer to behave and turn 100% democratic. To believe that this would be Franco's reaction would show a very poor knowledge of human nature and of the bully's psychology. Franco will be more than grateful to the Allies for such an elegant and safe exit. A passport to Portugal might be the momentary enticement, this however not absolving him for his crimes as a war criminal. Other means of persuasion may be the casual mention of the Spanish underground forces, of which he is already aware, and of the unadvisable convenience of his presence in Spain upon the popular triumph in a democratic election.

"Franco gone, the whole matter is to appoint the right people who are ready to accept the responsibility of the maintenance of law and order in Spain. The United Nations will not need to mingle in the internal affairs of Spain, but their mere support of the appointed leaders will cover any failing in the good sense of the liberated Spaniards. Some care, however, will be needed in choosing the leaders for the provisional ruling and administration of the Peninsula. We do not want to raise here the complex problems of legitimacy or those of the more or less extensive representation claimed by the different leaders. That is a matter that the people of Spain will themselves settle together with the appointed provisional men, in the same manner that in France this matter is being gradually settled.

"We are only speaking on grounds of practicability and in the very interest of the order we are to secure. In appointing the provisional authorities for the substitution of Franco and the replacement of the falangist regime, it will be necessary to bear in mind some basic problems in Spain. It is not a matter of personalities and not even of the political affiliation of the selected leaders. We refer mainly to the plurinational character of the Peninsula.

"It is not here the place to talk about the political aspirations of the Iberian nationalities (Catalonia, Basque Country, Galicia and Spain proper, the latter being formed by the Castilian speaking lands). But only the individual leaders of each one of these territories can actually make themselves responsible before the United Nations of the maintenance of law and order in their sector of the country. To attempt to keep order and organize new life in Spain even provisionally from a given point, i.e. Madrid, would be an invitation to failure. Besides, the patriotic and underground movements in the Peninsula are organized according to this basic division. Of course, all forces will join in a common action but the orders given to the population of Catalonia and the Basque Country, for instance, will not be truly effective if they are not given by their own

Catalan and Basque leaders. Therefore, the proposed formula could be summed up as follows:

- a) Diplomatic pressure on Franco by the United Nations, conminating him to give up his regime.
- b) Instauration of local governments in Castile, Catalonia, Basque Country and Galicia with the purpose of restoring law and order and effect the passage to democratic life.
- c) Referendums in Castile, Catalonia, Basque Country and Galicia to determine their aspirations in the political reconstruction of the Iberian Peninsula.
- d) Constitution of an Iberian Committee in which the Castilian, Catalan, Basque and Galician delegates, in equal rights, will discuss the formula for the new Spanish or Iberian State, in accordance with the manifested will of their peoples.

"We are sure that the results of this procedure will be a smooth passage from fascism to democracy, without the occurrence of a bloody upheaval; a general satisfaction in every sector of the Peninsula, at this first step towards freedom; and, finally, a Confederation of the Iberian Peoples (United States of Spain or Iberia) (into which Portugal can also be invited) and which will fit perfectly into the general reconstruction of Europe according to the plans of the United Nations."

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