

# THE WAR IN SPAIN

## A WEEKLY SUMMARY

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### THE NEXT MOVES

**D**URING this last week the British press was well sprinkled with contradictory statements in regard to the internal situation in Germany and the likelihood of an Anglo-Italian rapprochement (with which is coupled the possibility of the withdrawal of Italian "volunteers" from Spain). One must exercise caution in any attempt either to explain what exactly is happening, or to prophesy what the next moves shall be. It is not the custom of the Dictators to give away their plans beforehand. They act first and explain afterwards. In regard to Spain they have acted first and told lies afterwards. We know from travellers who arrived from Germany this week that in many places the nerves of the public are on edge; but that does not mean that the Hitler régime is threatened. Until there is violence, one must merely take it for granted that there is the usual undercurrent of discontent—and no more. It seems that Hitler has won the first bout in a struggle with the Junkers and military caste. If it is so, then it is not altogether a good thing for the friends of Republican Spain. The German military caste have never been too favourable to the Führer's Spanish adventure, and have often acted as a brake on Nazi participation. The question is whether Hitler, having thrown out the best of those military advisers, will now act upon the advice of the Nazi fanatics around him. The most one can conjecture is that he may hesitate to plunge deeper into Spain until, at least, he has ironed out the creases in German internal politics. Meanwhile, he will certainly continue to send material to Franco, because if he and Mussolini do not continue to send material, Franco will collapse. They may not wish to see that just now, after the blood and treasure they have poured into the Peninsula; and they must at least save their faces. The Dictator who does not save his face is finished.

It is even more difficult to judge what Mussolini will do; but it is almost certain that he too will continue to send material. They are both disgusted with Franco and, to judge by comments in serious German newspapers, they are a little dismayed by the growing efficiency of the Republican Army. The battle of Teruel continues, and Franco persists in throwing away men in his efforts—here and there successful—to re-take some of the lost ground. Meanwhile, the Republican Army has attacked in Andalusia and elsewhere. Franco's long-heralded offensive is completely frustrated, and he is reduced to the aerial terrorism to which we refer in another column. If Franco were to re-take Teruel to-morrow, the Republican operations in that sector would have achieved their end in having caused the distraction of the rebels' major plans.

The Nazi and Fascist Parties are bitterly anti-British, and they are the people who favour further gambles in Spain. Will the Dictators accept their point of view? That remains to be seen. In Republican Spain itself there are few illusions, although in Franco's zone doubts increase daily as disillusionment of another sort makes itself felt. For the difference is this, that Franco's whole adventure is tied up with German and Italian intervention; the Spanish Government is relying upon itself and Spaniards. The Madrid newspaper *Claridad* (Republican Left) writes as follows: "Not for the first time since the beginning of the foreign invasion of Spain has there been talk of an Italo-British rapprochement. Eighteen months of struggle have disciplined our nerves, and we put aside excessive credulity."

Another Madrid newspaper writes: "What has helped us is having faith in the victory of the Spanish people and their own resources. All other hopes would bind us to rely on the exterior, not only on the help of friends abroad, but on the generosity (*sic*) or the good sense of Italian and German Fascists. In our unlimited faith in victory, we have in mind always that the liberation of Spain should be the work of Spaniards."

Republican Spain is relying on itself. It has overcome all the weaknesses of Government of the early days of the struggle; it has created order out of the chaos into which it was plunged by the rebel generals' surprise onslaught; it has organised a magnificent army and equipped it in the face of great difficulties and with tragedy at the door; and it has made a war industry. There is now unity of purpose, and there is not one political party which is not collaborating with the Government. On February 10th the two greatest Trade Unions, U.G.T. (*Unión General de Trabajo*) and C.N.T. (*Confederación Nacional de Trabajo*) drew up jointly and published their revised programme of united action, which is co-related with the programmes for unity of action with the other unions. The Government of Dr. Negrín has proved itself to be one of the best and certainly the strongest Spain has had for half a century. The fact that the rebels have had to rely so strongly on outside help works two ways: in Franco's territory it has turned the masses against him; on the Government side it has fortified the people and unified them against invaders. Neither on Franco's side nor on the Government side do Spaniards wish to see Spain transformed into an Italo-German colony leaning on the hierarchy and with the remnants of the old army and aristocracy as acting-rulers for the foreigners. They want Spain for the Spaniards—that is all!

The propaganda story to the effect that Mussolini had intervened and would continue to intervene in Spain because he would not tolerate a Communist country in the Mediterranean (and also because he is determined to save the world from Bolshevism) has now worn so thin that only a few timid and rather ignorant old ladies believe it. There is no Bolshevism or extremism in Spain except in the Franco zone, where all forms of liberty have been abolished. There the laws which favoured peasants and the poorest workers have been completely abolished. Laws which protected small tenants from voracious landlords—vanished! Laws calculated to give agricultural labourers a bare living—cancelled. Those poor people—about 40 per cent. of the population—whom the Republic had begun to help (and whom it is now helping in the loyal zone) are thrown back on sunrise to sunset slavery in feudal conditions. Justice has become a job for the irresponsibles of the Falange, who liquidate every individual who would speak or write his thoughts. This is the "Christian Crusade."!

There has been a change in public opinion in England these last few weeks, because many men and women of unchallengeable integrity have gone to Government Spain and seen for themselves the honest efforts that are being made to evolve a tolerable and efficient political régime. The stupidity and cruelty of rebel thought has been demonstrated by the aerial bombardments of the last two months. Franco's supporters here grow ashamed, though they will not yet admit that his victory would be against British interests as well as against all liberty of conscience. There is hope that they will learn even this before long. For, truth will out—even if sometimes it is slow in showing itself.



## "President" Franco!

On February 3rd, the rebel general Franco took upon himself the title of "President of the Spanish State." It is a ridiculous and anomalous position because, in the first place, he has not been *elected* to such a post by the people of Spain or their representatives; nor can he claim that it is even due to the efforts of Spaniards that he has gained it by force; and, thirdly, he has not the support of more than about one-fifth of the people in the territory which he has taken from the Spanish people by his military rebellion. Incidentally, the two chief members of his "Cabinet" are the notorious Generals Martínez Anido and Jordana. The former's chief title to fame is that he suppressed labour troubles in Catalonia and elsewhere by methods of brutality such as had rarely before been experienced in Spain, and for which his name was and is anathema to every Spanish working man and woman. Jordana was a rather bad General in Morocco. The Minister of "Justice" is Count Rodezno, a reactionary and a famous exponent of *cacequismo*, or boss rule: he was a member of the Traditionalist Party in Navarre. The Minister for National Defence is Dávila, who has perhaps more in his favour than the others—he is a soldier who retired when the Republic supplanted the Monarchy. He succeeded Mola in the Northern Command and, with the aid of thirteen Italian Generals, was responsible for the conquest of the Basque country and the Asturias. This is claimed to have been a brilliant campaign, but there were so many foreign advisers involved that one is doubtful as to the exact percentage of glory due to Dávila. Mussolini, of course, claimed it as an Italian victory; and the facts seem to be on his side.

## 182,000 Foreigners

An American University graduate, who fought on Franco's side as a machine-gunner in the Foreign Legion, has informed the *Daily Express* that Franco's Army is at a standstill and that, if he does not obtain 200,000 more good soldiers, there is no hope for his "Crusade." The American witness gave the following estimate of the foreigners fighting for the rebels: Italians, 100,000; Germans, 10,000; Moors, 65,000; French, 2,000; Legion, 5,000 (English, American, Portuguese, Irish, miscellaneous). Total: 182,000.

"Of these," he said, "it is doubtful if 5,000 have their hearts in the war." The above statement corresponds to our own information, with one exception. We do not think that the figure for the Moors is correct; and it takes no account of the recently arrived Ifnis. Furthermore, we estimate that Franco would require at least 250,000 more trained *foreigners*—the Spaniards on his side are of very doubtful military value, because they have not his cause at heart.

## Meeting of the Cortes

In order to fulfil the Law of the Constitution, it is necessary for the *Cortes* or Parliament to meet at certain intervals. This Law the Government has observed strictly, in spite of all difficulties, since the outbreak of the rebellion. The latest meeting was on February 1st, and it is interesting to contrast this constitutional activity with Franco's anti-constitutional appointment of himself as "President" recorded above. The Deputies duly assembled, with the Cabinet and members of foreign delegations, at the Monastery of Montserrat outside Barcelona—this place was chosen as it was feared that the rebels might try to bomb Parliament if it met in the city. Dr. Negrin, Prime Minister, reiterated the resolution of the Government against any possible compromise with the rebels: "The war," he said, "cannot and will not end other than by the complete victory of the army which is defending the cause of the Spanish people." Referring to the international situation, he emphasised that Spain remained faithful to the League of Nations. He denounced the bombing of civilians, and gave an account of the Government's efforts to bring about a truce in this form of warfare. "These murderous attacks," he said, "and the destruction of Spain's beautiful cities, whether Madrid or Seville, meant nothing to the Legionaries of Hitler or Mussolini. The Government desired humane methods. . . . Manœuvres are in progress to obtain a peace which is not our peace, but we will have nothing to do with compromises which would change the form of the constitutional Republic which the Government defend. The Government have the resources for victory, financial and economic—and it matters not how long the war lasts: six months or two years." Speakers representing all parties voiced their support, and a vote of confidence was passed by the whole House.

## League of Nations

Señor Alvarez del Vayo, speaking before the Committee of twenty-eight for the reform of the League Covenant, gave the views of the Spanish Government. He referred to the League passivity in the face of aggressions. "I come to defend the

Covenant," he said, "not only against the declared enemies of peace, against the States which invaded Ethiopia, China and Spain, but also against the blindness of those who one day, perhaps, will become in their turn victims of another aggression. The League deserts its duty and slides down the slope of non-application of the Covenant, not because of its failure to be universal, but because the great powers and a number of smaller ones have forgotten that collective security is nothing, to employ the words of a great British statesman, before the Assembly on a memorable occasion, 'without firm and collective resistance to aggression.' Let us suppose then that some day some State attacks another. The application of the Covenant would be a supreme law for Spain. By virtue of this law, we would consider it our natural duty to refuse to the aggressor State anything that would facilitate a continuation of the aggression. Spain is rich in certain raw materials indispensable for war. They know it in Berlin and Rome. They know the rôle of pyrites. Well, by virtue of this fundamental law inscribed in the Covenant, which constitutes the soul of collective security, we would refuse to furnish pyrites to the aggressor State, while the victims of the aggression would have the benefit of obtaining it."

## Bombing of Open Towns

We have already referred in No. 4 of this Summary to the recent intensive bombing of civilian populations by Franco's alien aviators. The subject is so important that we shall refer to it again. This recent intense phase is nothing but an attempt to terrorise the loyalists. Here is a record of the activities of Franco's bombers since January 1st, 1938:—

### Civilians.

January 1st	..	Barcelona	..	49 dead	60 wounded
January 7th	..	Barcelona	..	7 dead	7 wounded
		Valencia	..	—	(numbers not known)
January 8th	..	Sagunto	..	1 dead	—
January 11th	..	Tarragona	..	1 dead	5 wounded
		Castellón	..	—	—
		Barcelona	..	18 dead	30 wounded
January 13th	..	Port-Bou	..	—	—
		Reus	..	3 dead	8 wounded
		Burriana	..	—	—
		Sagunto	..	—	—
January 15th	..	Barcelona	..	—	4 wounded
		Sagunto	..	2 dead	—
January 16th	..	Valencia	..	5 dead	40 wounded
		Sagunto	..	—	—
January 18th	..	Almanzora	..	—	—
		Benicasim	..	—	—
		Castellón	..	1 dead	52 wounded
		Valencia	..	6 dead	22 wounded
		Sagunto	..	—	—
January 19th	..	Barcelona	..	200 dead	342 wounded
		Castellón	..	1 dead	56 wounded
		Valencia	..	—	—
		Sagunto	..	—	—
January 20th	..	Cuenca	..	7 dead	19 wounded
		Gandia	..	—	—
		Castellón	..	8 dead	40 wounded
		Gerona (Pr.)	..	23 dead	51 wounded
		Reus	..	40 dead	—
		Sagunto	..	—	—
		Tarragona	..	7 dead	5 wounded
		Valencia	..	3 dead	18 wounded
January 22nd	..	Guixols	..	24 dead	50 wounded
		Valencia	..	38 dead	106 wounded
January 23rd	..	Laudete	..	—	—
		Figueras	..	14 dead	57 wounded
		Puigcerdá	..	21 dead	17 wounded
January 24th	..	Reus	..	38 dead	55 wounded
		Salou	..	—	—
January 25th	..	Barcelona	..	41 dead	77 wounded
		Badalona	..	4 dead	14 wounded
January 26th	..	Valencia	..	125 dead	226 wounded
January 30th	..	Barcelona	..	300 dead	500 wounded
February 2nd	..	Solana	..	8 dead	—
February 3rd	..	Reus	..	1 dead	2 wounded
		Figueras	..	9 dead	50 wounded
February 4th	..	Tarragona	..	1 dead	—
		Sagunto	..	1 dead	3 wounded
		Villanueva	..	—	53 wounded
February 5th	..	Tarragona	..	—	—
		Reus	..	—	—
		Punieda	..	2 dead	10 wounded
		Villanueva	..	—	—
		Geltru	..	—	—



### "Gentlemen and Ruffians"

Thus, during five weeks, rebel aviation achieved over 50 indiscriminate bombardments of open towns, resulting in more than 1,000 deaths and almost 2,000 wounded among the civil population, and others for which the figures are not available. But here is a sinister joke. On January 29th, the day on which Government Spain, on its own initiative, offered a truce in aerial bombing of non-military objectives, the Franco newspaper *El Correo Español* of Bilbao, wrote: "*In all phases of the war and in the rearguard, the difference between ourselves and the Prieto-Azaña horde is that between a gentleman and a ruffian. . . . Our gentlemen of the air attack only military objectives, take great risks to hit only those objectives and carry out their raids with the least possible hurt to the civil population.*"

### Non-Partisan Appeal against Bombing

This bombing of helpless civilians—old men, women and children, indiscriminately—has been so horrible and so calculatedly cruel in its choice of areas, that a non-partisan appeal, signed by men and women of every political complexion and in all walks of life, was delivered to the Prime Minister, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, to the rebel Agent in London and to the Spanish Ambassador. It will be recalled that Franco refused to desist from these aerial activities, and that the De Jure Government of Spain has signified its intention of refraining from the bombing of non-military objectives. In a letter replying to Lord Cecil, Sir Walter Layton and the Bishop of London, the Spanish Ambassador, stated: "The Spanish Government considers that its reply is contained in the two Notes published by the Minister of Defence, Señor Prieto, in Barcelona, on January 29th and February 3rd." In the first of these Notes, the Ambassador points out, the Spanish Government agreed to refrain from bombing towns far removed from the fighting lines if the enemy desisted from this practice, and in the second published its decision to refrain from further raids and to stop the preparations which were being made to reply to the bombardment of Barcelona. "The contents of these Notes," the letter continues, "were officially communicated to the Government of the United Kingdom, and I understand that, as a consequence, certain steps have already been taken. I can assure you that no one hopes more fervently than the Spanish Government that they may lead, with the shortest possible delay, to a practical result. Finally, I should like to convey to you the Spanish Government's deep appreciation of your appeal, which it considers in the light of an endorsement of an action that it had already taken spontaneously and on its own initiative."

### Another German Tribute

In another long study entitled "*The Formation of the Army during the Civil War*," the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of February 6th stated: "The growth of fighting value of the Barcelona militia is appreciable." After expressing himself as astonished that during six whole weeks the Nationalists have set themselves out to reconquer Teruel, the author of the article draws certain conclusions from the battle: "One fact has been demonstrated for the first time: on both sides, there are to-day organised military groups, advised by military technicians, who find themselves at grips; the number and variety of weapons has increased and what is very striking is that their tactical employment has greatly improved." Examining first the Republican Army, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* writes: "The time when each political organisation made war in its own manner appears to be ended. Also the epoch when artillery could not enter into action because the group which possessed cannons could not find themselves in agreement with the group which had possession of grenades. Prieto, responsible for military affairs in the Negrin Committee, has put an end to the confusion of those political formations. . . ." The *Frankfurter* describes the work of the Minister of National Defence "who has known how to impose discipline and give authority to the professional officers." If the Brigades had formerly a very definite political tendency, this is no longer the case and "the process of interpenetration and fusion is developing on such lines as to prevent the former political rivalries from awakening. . . . The strength of the Government resistance has grown vitally, according to all available evidence, thanks to this military organisation, always accompanied by skilful political enthusiasm. . . . To-day, troops which occupy trenches resist long, and often counter-attack to recapture lost positions. . . . *This growth of combative force, apparent all the time . . . ought to be borne in mind when people ask why Franco's army, well-disciplined and well-armed, has not yet been able to strike a decisive blow.*"

### Franco's Latest Recruits

The following details are now available about the recent landing at Cadiz of negro recruits from the Spanish possession of Ifni: On January 16th, 1938, some of Ifni's leading men arrived at San Fernando, where they had an interview with Franco's representatives, and negotiations were made for sending several thousand recruits to Spain. After these conferences a contingent of negroes from Ifni was embarked on armed Spanish boats, escorted by Italian destroyers, for Melilla. On their arrival at Melilla, the negroes underwent a short and rigorous training under German instructors. However, 2,000 of these recruits have been sent direct to Spain without undergoing training, in view of the urgent need of fresh supplies of rebels on the Teruel front. A contingent of 2,000 negro recruits has just arrived at Melilla for transfer to Spain in February. It is understood that the chiefs of the tribes recruited (in payment for which they have received Spanish and German "bank notes" from the rebels) have made the negroes believe that they were going to Spain to work on the land and that they would receive 12 pesetas a day in payment.

### Jesuits to leave Franco?

Following the recent important meeting of Jesuit Fathers in the Church of Azpeitia at Loyola (Guipúzcoa) in which the subject for discussion was the question whether the Jesuits should persist in their activities in rebel Spain, it is known that it was decided by a great majority that the Society of Jesus should leave Franco territory. Fathers Vilarino and Chalvau, well-known as fervent supporters of General Franco, were not present at the meeting. The reasons for the attitude adopted on this occasion by the Jesuit Fathers are as follows: The Pope had ordered dignitaries of the Church in rebel Spain to read, during the course of religious services, certain Papal Encyclicals, particularly those referring to the persecution of the Catholic Church by the Nazis in Germany. On the receipt of this order, Cardinal Gomaz went at once to General Franco to inform him on the matter. Franco commanded that execution of the Pope's orders should be delayed until he had carried out an important political mission. This was to consult with the German representative at Salamanca who, in turn, requested a delay to refer the matter to Berlin. Following these various consultations, Cardinal Gomaz was informed by Franco that the Papal orders referring to the Encyclicals could be carried out with the exception of the one referring to German activities with regard to the Church, "*which must not even be spoken of.*" Cardinal Gomaz submitted to the command of General Franco, and thereby gave rise to violent discussions and profound dissatisfactions in the heart of the Church. These were the reasons for dissensions among the Jesuits and the cause of their meeting at Loyola. On the other hand, the growing predominance of the Falange to the detriment of the influence of the Requetés (and therefore to that of the Jesuits) has also played a part in the decision of the Society of Jesus to retire from rebel Spain. This decision, however, is not final until the Pope, to whom it has been submitted, has ratified it.

### Books

Two books of great interest have appeared: *My House in Málaga*, by Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell (Faber & Faber, 8s. 6d.), and *Spain between Death and Birth*, by Peter Merin (The Bodley Head, 12s. 6d.). Both are first-hand accounts of the war in Spain, they are written by men of intelligence and, although biased in favour of the Spanish Government and the people of Spain (as against the *Junta* of generals, land owners and hierarchy influence) they make no attempt to interpret events from the view-point of a political creed or dogma. In fact, both Sir Peter and Mr. Merin may be regarded as types of cultured men who are more interested in humanity than in creeds, except perhaps they that both detest Fascism. *My House in Málaga* is one of the few books written about the war that comes into the category of first-class documents: it deals with a definite episode—Málaga—and it is a statement of what the author saw and experienced in that city before the rebellion, during the rebellion, up to the time when it was taken by the Italians—and a little after. No other Englishman had a similar experience, and in that lies the importance of the book. Sir Peter went to Málaga to live a life of peaceful retirement, and before he went he had taken no interest in Spanish politics. Gradually that complex panorama unfolded itself before his mind, and he came to realise exactly what Spanish politics mean and have meant: a struggle between a *people* and a comparatively small number of powerful and rich rulers. He analyses the responsibility for the present tragic state of affairs as follows: (a) The Church threw all its influence against the Republic; (b) The Republican leaders after 1931 were far too gentle and moderate in their treatment of their enemies. [Here Sir Peter is absolutely right. Had the Republic



reorganised the army from top to bottom, cleansing it of the old caste gang, and placing loyal officers in their place, the rebellion might not have occurred]; (c) "The complete lack of patriotism shown by the Rights"—they refused to accept the declared will of the people; (d) The British Government's diabolical policy of "Non-Intervention"—this, of course, waved aside international law in the rebels' interests, by preventing the elected De Jure and recognised Government from buying arms abroad to suppress an army rebellion. The "patriotism" of Franco & Company, as we have seen, is of the variety which will drag in any foreign interest to be used against the Spanish people. As for the kindness of the Republic to the Monarchists, we would draw attention to the picture on this page. Sir Peter's general narrative of events in Málaga from the outbreak of the rebellion until the arrival of the Italians ("not a Spaniard among them" he records) is fascinating, as is also his description of the Anarchists, their theories and behaviour—he did not find them to be the bomb-throwing, bloodthirsty gang they are often said to be. Also, the Spanish aristocratic lady who said: "... a Rolls-Royce is not any longer a luxury; it is a necessity"—this by a person living in Andalucía!—where the peasant population has been literally starved by those same landowners! A perfect indication of the mentality of the Francoists and what they stand for. No wonder the people of Spain believed in 1936 (and still believe) that it is better to die standing up fighting than to live on their knees.

Peter Merin's book is a blend of historical retrospect with an account of events after the rebellion. The book is written without a trace of fanaticism, and with a deep appreciation of Spain and Spaniards. The second part opens with a close account of what happened on those days of July, 1936, when "The plan of the Eight" was set in motion—the plan of Queipo de Llano, Mola, Cabanellas, Batet, Fanjul and Yagüe and Franco—with Sanjurjo in the background, and Moors and Legionaries as shock-troops to be used against the people. This is the most detailed account in English of that still somewhat obscure episode of history.

While on the subject of books, one ought not to overlook entirely Edward Knoblaugh's *Correspondent in Spain* (Sheed and Ward, 7s. 6d.), if only for the reason that he tells us that he obtained from Gil Robles, in May, 1936, some very definite hints that the rebellion was being planned, and that, if he wished to be "in on" events, he ought to postpone his vacation for a year. Also, the book is an interesting example of anti-Government propaganda, in that it never misses an opportunity of belittling the loyalists. He gives hair-raising accounts of assassinations and executions and winds up: "It was never my experience actually to see one of these executions."

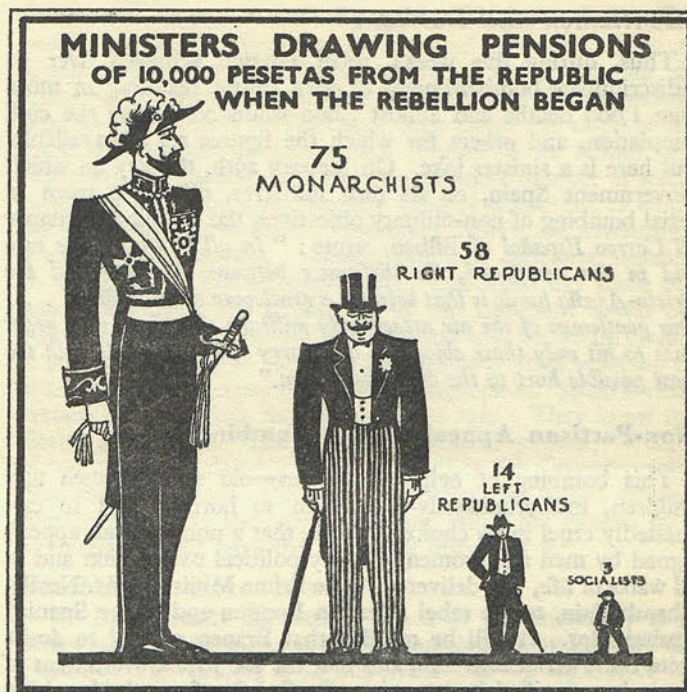
### Refugees and People Evacuated

In No. 1 (page 2) of this Summary, we gave figures of the number of refugees in Government territory, and we are able to confirm that, on February 10th, 1938, the numbers counted, classified, and placed in work or otherwise cared for, were as follows: refugees, 1,800,000; evacuated, 1,200,000. Total, 3,000,000. Refugees are cared for by the *Dirección General de Evacuación de Refugiados*. People evacuated draw the wherewithal of existence from work and industry specially created for them by the Minister of Labour. Many organisations have been created abroad to help others who have chosen to flee before the White Terror; and young Spaniards are serving apprenticeships in foreign factories—in Czechoslovakia, for example, many are to be found in the glass and crystal industries. A great number of refugees are working at war industries, and special maternity centres have been formed to help the mothers either of unborn children or those born after the arrival of the mother in loyalist territory. In addition to this 3,000,000, many male refugees have joined the new army, while others—men, women and children—are of an age or have resources which enable them to live without Government help. It is estimated that there are approximately one million of these "independents" scattered over loyalist Spain. It should not be forgotten that all such people were able to choose between remaining in Franco territory or leaving.

### Popular Front of 1936

Several correspondents have written to ask for the voting figures of the February election, which returned the Popular Front in 1936. They are as follows:—

Left Parties ..	4,838,449	Deputies returned ..	277
Right „ ..	3,996,931	„ „ ..	132
Centre „ ..	449,320	„ „ ..	32



There were also 12 deputies without party and 20 vacant seats after the final returns. The elections were held under the Presidency of Señor Alcalá Zamora (Catholic Right Republican) and Señor Portela Valladares as Prime Minister. Only 16 Communists, 1 Trotskyist and 1 Syndicalist were elected. The biggest Right Party to emerge was that of Gil Robles (Fascist) with 87 Deputies. It was a definite constitutional victory for the Popular Front, and one must never forget that the conditions and terms of the election were agreed to by the Conservative Portela Valladares and the Catholic President. The former has since publicly declared that the elections were completely constitutional. They were probably the fairest ever held, in spite of the powerful Fascist campaign involving the expenditure of many millions of pesetas to win votes for that party. The present Government of Dr. Negrin is the child of the February election.

### Fight against Illiteracy

The campaign against illiteracy—an inheritance of "Church Education"—initiated by the Minister of Education—is being pursued with great success. No less than 7,570 classes with 169,620 pupils have been organised. There are 4,496 classes of illiterates taught by Government teachers, and 407 classes taught by members of the mobile education brigades, who have 122,553 pupils. The latter have achieved marvels, especially amongst soldiers and men and women in remote agricultural areas. It is estimated that at this rate, in three years, only the very old, very backward or very obstinate illiterates will have remained so. There is no comparable activity in Franco territory.

### British Interests in Spain

On this subject the (very) conservative English *National Review* (February, 1938) writes as follows:—"The matter is of the utmost importance to Great Britain at this moment. We are short of iron pyrites and other minerals. Some of the producing companies in Spain are English, but the ores are under German control. . . . We have failed in true neutrality from the first and we are reaping where we have sown. The Germans have not wasted their efforts. They are not supporting General Franco for anything but their own advantage. All the talk about 'defeating Bolshevism' is simply issued for the benefit of mugs here and elsewhere. Germany saw a chance, she took it. If the war goes on she may even get colonies, for she is deeply dug into the overseas Spanish territories, and although General Franco may not wish to part with land, he may—like Philip V—be forced to do so . . . and if General Franco wins he may find himself in a position in which he cannot refuse German demands. In the meantime we are on sufferance even in those parts of Spain which have been developed by our own energy and with British capital, and we receive the minerals dug out of our own mines in dribbles and with German permission! Will the House of Commons kindly note the extraordinary incompetence with which our foreign policy is being conducted? They are the only body which can act." Our italics. We have already said as much. We do not believe that it is in Great Britain's interest to leave Spanish "strategic" minerals to the Dictators!