

II. THE RECOGNITION OF FRANCO — A BLOW AGAINST PEACE

THESE days are difficult and trying. We are living through the days of violent paroxysms of a dying and decaying social system, a period of wars and revolutions that find their origin in the breakdown of the capitalist system, out of which the most reactionary section of the capitalists try to cut their way by a bloody dictatorship which destroys all democratic and cultural achievements of mankind.

Yesterday the American people were shocked by the action of our State Department in Washington, which with indecent haste rushed to present unconditional recognition to butcher Franco, puppet of Hitler and Mussolini, as the legitimate government of Spain.

Let us estimate this event frankly, and face all its brutal and awful implications and consequences. This act will be hailed by every fascist, every Tory, every reactionary in the world, as a victory for their cause and a defeat for the camp of democracy and progress throughout the world. And that is what it is. Nothing else can be made of it. This single act wipes out a large part of the great contribution which President Roosevelt had been making toward the organization of the peace forces of the world. President Roosevelt had courageously assumed a position of world leadership which electrified the masses of the capitalist democracies, by a series of declarations and actions—the denunciation of Nazi pogroms against the Jews, and their persecution of Catholics and Protestants; the message to Congress in January, indicating actions short of war to back up protests; the Lima Conference to organize the Americas against fascist penetration; the

emphatic refusal to recognize Hitler's conquest of Czechoslovakia, the branding of that act of international banditry, and the economic sanctions taken against German commerce; the beginning of economic help to China in her heroic resistance to Japanese aggression, by loans and credits.

These measures, small and inadequate as they were, pointed in a new direction, toward stopping the panic of retreat and surrender of the democratic forces of the world. They roused a great enthusiastic mass movement in their support everywhere. A new backbone of democratic resistance to fascist world conquest was being formed among the peoples. But yesterday the recognition of butcher Franco was flung into these democratic ranks by our State Department, like a gas-bomb, filled with the poisonous stench of the appeasement policy of Chamberlain and Bonnet.

Butcher Franco, at the head of Italian, German and Moorish invading armies, is committing the most monstrous crime of modern times, the massacre of hundreds of thousands of the best sons and daughters of Spain, after they have been defeated and disarmed, for the only crime of defending their democratic republic. This bloody moment is chosen, in great haste, to confer upon him unconditional recognition.

Butcher Franco, only twenty-four hours before, had put his signature to the War Alliance of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo axis, the so-called "Anti-Communist Pact," which openly proclaims that democracy is the "Communist" enemy. Before the ink is dry, Washington rushes unconditional recognition as a reward.

Butcher Franco, only 48 hours before, had announced himself, with the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo axis as his base, as the spiritual guide and protector of all Spanish-speaking peoples of the former Spanish Empire, of Latin America, on the model of Hitler's protectorate over the Sudeten regions of Czechoslovakia. Washington responds with unconditional recognition.

By this act Washington has compromised itself in the treacherous course of Chamberlain and Bonnet; it has stepped back again from

its position of leadership of the world democratic forces; it has broken its own doctrine of non-recognition of territorial conquests; it has multiplied manifold and overnight the menace of fascism in Latin America; it has put a premium upon international banditry, dishonored itself, further endangered American national security, and encouraged the war-makers to new assaults and outrages.

President Roosevelt, by yielding to this step, which has been long-prepared by the pro-fascist and pro-Chamberlain camarilla in the State Department, has shaken and placed in jeopardy his whole foreign policy of the organization of world peace. He has negated the effectiveness of the rearmament program, which will require to be again doubled to offset the multiplied fascist menace in Latin America and around the Panama Canal that results from the recognition of Franco.

This event serves again to point out the role of fascism's most important instrument—the "Fifth Column." That name sums up all the secret agents of fascism that work behind the lines inside the camp of democracy, to create diversions, difficulties, and divisions, to carry on spying and wrecking, to undermine and disintegrate the policies and leadership of the democratic camp, and, finally, when the propitious moment comes, to raise armed rebellion inside the democratic camp, to plunge the dagger into the back of democracy while it faces the attacks of the enemy in front. Every advance of fascism has been prepared and executed mainly through the work of its "Fifth Column."

The most vocal support to Franco in the United States has come from the articulate section of the Catholic Church hierarchy, although the Gallup Institute has disclosed that only 58 per cent of Catholic lay opinion supported this position, while 42 per cent favored the Republic, as compared with 74 per cent of the entire population taking the Republican side. But the Catholic hierarchy today faces a terrible responsibility; it justified the bloody destruction of the Spanish Republic on the ground that under its regime there had been murders of priests; today its chosen champions are in power all over Spain, and recognized by Washington; the Republicans are disarmed

and scattered, about a million are in Franco's prisons, and a massacre unparalleled in modern history is taking place—after the war has been officially declared at an end. What are the Catholic spokesmen for Franco in America saying about this unprecedented savagery? So far we have heard not a word from them. What are they going to say? History awaits their words, and will record them, or a continued silence, for all future generations.

The war of extermination waged against the Spanish Republicans by invading hordes of Italians, Germans and Moors is paralleled by a similar war of extermination against the Jewish people by the forces of fascism in all countries. The lot of the Jew in Europe is on a par with that of the Republican in Franco's Spain. Even in the United States, anti-Semitism is being cultivated at an alarming speed by the organizations and spokesmen of fascism. Anti-Semitism is an infallible barometer of the degree of the fascist menace in any country.

The Spanish Republic found but one firm and unwavering friend among the great powers of the world—the Soviet Union. Czechoslovakia in her hour of need found but one power ready and willing to carry out the obligations of treaties and international law in her defense—the Soviet Union. The Jewish people have found but one country where anti-Semitism has been driven out of public life and made a crime, where Jews have effective equality and freedom—the Soviet Union. The Chinese people have found but one great power which has unhesitatingly given them all possible moral and material support in their epic war of independence—the Soviet Union. The whole world has seen but one country which has successfully cleaned out the "Fifth Column" of fascism, root and branch—the Soviet Union. The people of the United States have found but one other great country, people and government, fully in sympathy and ready to co-operate with American efforts to organize world peace—and that is also the Soviet Union.

The United States is potentially the second great center of world resistance to fascist conquest. But how many inner dangers threaten the realization of this policy is revealed by our relations to Spain. It

is not only the open friends and conciliators of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo axis who threaten the American peace policy, such men as Hoover and Hearst, who parrot every argument and slogan that comes from the *Voelkischer Beobachter* in Berlin; it is the inner moral weakness of the anti-fascist leaders, which made it possible for America to fall automatically and unthinkingly into the shameful "non-intervention" comedy toward Spain, which denied the Republic her international rights, while leaving the axis powers free to intervene; it is the same thing, something rotten in the fiber of our democracy, which brought Washington to the hasty unconditional recognition of butcher Franco without even an effort to halt the massacres that shame Spain and her betrayers. We must frankly face this moral weakness, in order to fight against it and overcome it, in the preparation for the greater battles to come.

The most difficult days, the hardest blows against human progress and freedom cannot justify any moods of pessimism or passivity. History has never given us any guarantee, nor have the greatest masters of history, Marx, Engels, Lenin, or Stalin, that progress will be or can be an automatic and painless process, without defeats or setbacks, and without cost to the peoples of the world. On the contrary, we know that victory must be won in struggle, that the costs must be unhesitatingly paid, whatever they may be. The alternative is slavery and spiritual death. That profound truth was known to the founders of the United States, which alone made possible the emergence of victory from the long and terrible war of independence; it was known to the founders of the Soviet Union, and made possible that backward land's leap forward to vanguard of world progress, the hope and guarantee of humanity's future. It must be known to us now, to all the camp of opposition to fascist world-conquest, in the moment of world crisis when the new imperialist war, already destroying one-fourth of the world, threatens to engulf all lands.

Indeed, there can be no longer any doubt of the final destruction of fascism and its elimination from the world. The only question is how long it will take and how much it will cost. The people of the

United States, among the first ranks of the peoples of the world, have set their feet upon the path to that end, and nothing will stop them.

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