



Arthur Getz

The War Crisis over Spain

An editor of "L'Humanite" analyzes the significance of the Geneva and London reaction to fascist policy

By Paul Nizan

THE facts of the case are clear. The Council of the League of Nations, after Alvarez del Vayo stood his ground in defense of the rights of the legitimate government of Spain, had just voted a resolution which acknowledged the failure of the Non-Intervention Committee and expressed regret at the foreign intervention.

Thereupon Europe was shaken by the grave German-Spanish incident which followed—loyalist airplanes bombed the German pocket battleship *Deutschland*. The next day, as reprisal, the companion ship *Admiral Scheer*, with a small squadron, shelled the city of Almeria. Women and children were killed during the bombardment, which began without warning. Then followed the negotiations.

Two themes predominated. Most attention was centered on the bombardment of Almeria and the conditional withdrawal of Germany and Italy from the London Non-Intervention Committee.

It might seem that the essential point was the first. The bombardment of Almeria constituted a patent act of war by Germany against Spain. The world was confronted here with a perfectly defined aggression. The procedure outlined in the Covenant of the League could now be set in motion. Neither London nor Paris, which play the basic role in the London Committee and at Geneva, entered upon this path. As a matter of fact, the minimum action would have been at least a formal "diplomatic" condemnation of the Third Reich. But London, which since the coronation conversations with Germany and von Blomberg's visit is working once more for a rapprochement with the Nazis, sets this alignment far above all considerations of justice. The Quai d'Orsay took a similar position in the matter.

The chancelleries therefore refused to exam-

ine the basis of the Spanish-German incident. The Spanish government declared that the anti-aircraft guns of the *Deutschland* had opened fire first on the republican planes, which merely replied. It emphasized that the *Deutschland*, a control vessel, had no "legitimate" mission to fulfill in Iviza, where the bombing took place. The French and English diplomats simply did not examine these very precise accusations. Everything continued as if London and Paris, while of course deploring the violence of the German reprisals, fundamentally admitted their legitimacy and considered that there had been a provocation on the part of the Spanish government. This, fundamentally, is the shame and scandal of London and Paris in the Almeria episode.

The second point, the resignation of Germany and Italy from the Non-Intervention Committee, then received sole consideration. Rome and Berlin sought certain conditions for their return. The two governments demanded that if any incident similar to that of the *Deutschland* should again take place, all vessels on patrol duty would then act as a unit.

It was upon this basis that the negotiations opened. The English government proposed a new plan of naval control by which Salamanca and Valencia would allot security zones to the control ships. In case of an incident, the commanders of the four nations in charge of control (France, Great Britain, Germany, Italy) would discuss the reparations to be demanded of the republican or insurgent government. Berlin replied that it would accept the first point. It rejected the second point and demanded that reprisals should follow immediately upon any incident without any preliminary consultations among the major States. Berlin therefore wants London and Paris to recognize beforehand the right to repeat the bombardment of Almeria.

This is going a little far, and no matter how conciliatory the French and British foreign offices are towards the two fascist states, it would seem difficult for them to go to such lengths.

Therefore, things are now at a stalemate. There was, of course, a solution, which lay in recognition of the aggression against Spain. In France, it was thought that the United States would do this by applying the Neutrality Act against the Third Reich. This great hope was swiftly disappointed.

Spain is waiting for greater justice. Giral, Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated June 6 that "we are not expecting from the Non-Intervention Committee, which so often done us harm. But we want about the Almeria aggression to be known to the entire world, and we are ready to intervene of the World Court to inquire into the aggression of *Deutschland* against the planes."

It seems that the German attack was a military and diplomatic display designed to restore the upper hand held by the rebels in Spain before the loyalist victories on various fronts of the war turned the tide in favor of the republic. Everyone knows that the German and Italian admiralities accepted the control plan because they saw in it a new opportunity to collaborate with the insurgents. Experience has shown that this collaboration has not prevented the republicans from proving their superiority. Hence the fomenting of incidents every time that the rebels have been in difficulties during the past eleven months. Each time the diplomatic action of the London Committee has restored the balance in their favor.

Are we going to witness this maneuver once again? This is the grave question which the world is confronted with in the Almeria incident.

Is Germany Ready for War?

The shelling of Almeria and the dispatching of a sizable fleet to Spain raise some questions about the state of preparations

By Martin Hall

LONG before a German naval squadron pumped hot shell into the streets of Almeria, indications were not lacking that Spain had become the focal point in Nazi international policy. For many months, the pros and cons of Nazi intervention had undergone vigorous debate among the people, within the government, and among the army leaders. In some key respects, the reactions to the Spanish conflict in these quarters provide a reliable barometer of the general state of affairs and opinion within Germany itself in respect to the future development of Nazi domestic and foreign policy.

The general press, both in Europe and America, has made a fetish of the idea that Germany is not prepared to wage war. From this followed the comforting illusion that the Nazis would not resort to war. If anything else was needed, the destruction of Almeria by Nazi gunners should go far to dispel this dangerous deception. The Nazis are prepared to begin war at this very moment. Whether it will be possible for them to emerge from a great war victorious is another question for which there is good reason to answer in the negative. The wrath of the people will end the war, though it is unlikely, as things stand now, that it is enough to prevent its outbreak.

In order to estimate properly the reaction of the German people to Hitler's intervention in Spain, we must bear in mind that the Nazis were not prepared for intervention for many years. But for the first time since Hitler came to power, the Nazis undertook a political act of major importance without being able to employ their usual propaganda technique for creating favorable mass sentiment. Diplomatic reasons originally compelled the German government to conceal its active instigation of the rebellion and its military aid to Franco. This made it impossible from the very beginning for Goebbels's propaganda ministry to apply its usual tricks for rousing mass enthusiasm.

Previous experience was useless in this instance. The Nazis had dared to stir up popular feeling in favor of the Rhine occupation without giving a thought to diplomatic considerations because they had correctly estimated the weakness of the French and British governments. But they could not risk this method in the case of Spain. They knew perfectly well that German interests in Spain had never been of sufficiently national character to rouse the people to patriotic fervor. Now there was no German territory to be "liberated," and no German colony to be regained. German big business had only two

real interests in Spain. One was to exploit the raw materials there; the other was to encircle France as a prelude to a German attack. And this precisely was the catch. The propaganda ministry could not openly admit either of these reasons.

For the most part, the Nazi leaders have exploited the argument that the insurgents deserved German assistance because Spain had gone "Communist" in the last election. In effect, the Nazi propaganda machine has tried to project into Spain the methods whereby the Nazis themselves came to power in Germany. After four years of cohabitation with Hitlerism, the German workers have progressively grown immune to this type of propaganda, though the chief means of showing disaffection is still passive. In respect to Spain, however, many active steps of solidarity with the Spanish loyalists must be recorded.

At the very outbreak of the conflict, collections of money were made in behalf of Spanish democracy in many plants in the great German industrial centers. Under present conditions in Germany, this was an act of heroic self-sacrifice. In the large Siemens munitions factories of Berlin and, later, in the Opel auto works at Frankfurt, workers were arrested for collecting funds. They were the first victims, but their fate did not halt the campaign. Collections for Spain became so widespread in the factories of the Ruhr district that the Gestapo became frantic. It made wholesale arrests among the Ruhr workers, particularly the miners. Heavy prison sentences were handed out. In Düsseldorf, the Gestapo adopted special methods to trap the workers. Stool-pigeons were sent to miners' homes while the men were away at work. Pretending to raise money for Spain, the provocateurs ap-

pealed to the wives. Wherever the women responded to these appeals, they and their husbands were immediately arrested. Obviously the Nazi authorities regarded collections for Spain with great seriousness, but the chief result of their repressive measures was to strengthen the campaign among the workers.

Then something equally significant happened. The voice of German labor was actually heard in the Nazi press. In April of this year, the Nazi editors of the *Ruhrarbeiter*, official Labor Front organ, complained editorially about "a pile" of disturbing letters which they had been getting from the workers in the district. The editors decided that "one must have the courage to take a stand on this problem." In this heroic mood they published three letters from Ruhr workers. Two of these protested against false reports in the Nazi press about low wages in the U.S.S.R. and about alleged G.P.U. atrocities; the third letter protested Nazi propaganda against Spain.

"All the papers," this letter said, "are writing about 'Red incendiary murderers in Spain.' This is not good because every exploited worker, being deprived of all his rights, takes this as an insult to himself. When one writes about Spain, one should first of all explain the reasons for these happenings. Then an honest worker will not feel insulted." Upon this the Nazi editors commented: "And here we editors stand like simpletons!"

The secrecy with which the Nazi authorities surround their Spanish adventure has resulted in large demonstrations in front of Nazi offices and of local Reichswehr headquarters. One such demonstration took place last January in Munich, another several weeks later in Düsseldorf. In both instances, women demonstrated against sending their husbands and sons to Spain as soldiers of the Reichswehr or as members of Nazi military units of the S.A. and S.S. A third demonstration of women took place in Hamburg, where a hospital had been established for wounded German soldiers brought back from Spain. The authorities made every effort to keep this hospital secret. But the story leaked out. Soon hundreds of women who had received no news from relatives fighting in Spain assembled in front of the hospital. They demanded permission to enter; they wanted to see whether their husbands, sons, or brothers were among the wounded. But Nazi police appeared on the scene and drove them back.

There have been other demonstrations, some of them open, for loyalist Spain. One of these was staged in front of the government



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