



The present Spanish situation seen by the president of the Spanish republic, in exile

<https://hdl.handle.net/1874/35620>

THE PRESENT SPANISH SITUATION seen by the President of the Spanish Republic, in Exile

The anniversary of the glorious day of the 14th. April, which will live for ever in the memory of the Spanish people, presents itself today in a happier light than in previous years. In 1931, our people, who had not then undergone the terrible internal upheaval of civil war, showed that it was possible, without the convulsions of revolution, to change the historical course of the nation and to open the way to social justice and political equality. Twenty years later, in 1951, this same people has, in Barcelona, in spite of the tyranny which enslaves it, given yet another sign of its heroism, reaffirming for a brief moment the continued existence of those characteristics which earn the respect of their compatriots and the admiration of foreigners. Spain, equal to her reputation, tempered by suffering, has again shown that all calculation based on her apparent submission to dictatorship are erroneous and that no peace can exist in the country as long as right and liberty are still flouted and reviled.

This important occurrence, anticipating the anniversary of the Republic, has a significance for both the governments of democratic countries and for republican emigrés. I feel sure I am not mistaken when I affirm that international opinion has been convinced by the Barcelona strike that the Spanish people wished to show, nay to prove, that the regime that claims to represent it, is incompatible with all that Spain stands for. From now on, in all that concerns Spain, none of those who decide Western policy can any longer be deaf or blind, unless they are induced to remain so by some shortsighted tactical interest. We shall not have to wait long for the proof of my interpretation. The course of events is gathering speed and the hour of the great crisis approaches, the crisis which will decide the destruction or the salvation of the world.

Spain has calmly made her voice heard. It would be criminal and contrary to the interest of liberty and general morality to

ignore this appeal. In spite of the bitter disillusionment of the last months, I myself have not lost hope that the wisdom of British policy, the good sense of France, the democratic feelings of Italy and the moral rightness of those who govern North America will seek and find an agreement which will facilitate Spanish liberation.

Yet, I admit it is possible that a so-called realistic policy may again rear its ugly head and oppose the satisfaction which is Spain's right. So much the worse for everyone. Worst of all for the cause of democracy and for the future community of action in which our country could be an ally, but in which she will never play the part of a mercenary army.

To be sincere, I must point out the anxiety felt by the democrats in my country regarding the vacillations of Western diplomacy. In saying this, without obsequiousness or pride, I am merely doing my duty, though I know that our attitude and viewpoint may annoy some sections of public opinion. This would be a dramatic moment for any movement devoted to the liberation of an enslaved country ; here it is even more dramatic as it concerns Spain, for whatever her faults and weaknesses, she has shown her irrevocable will to conserve her liberty. That is why the demonstration made by the people of Catalonia contains a warning. Those who govern the world, should, I repeat, study it with care.

This warning is also addressed to the emigrés. The Spanish republican movement in exile has a double duty to perform : first to help the democratic movement inside Spain by impeding or making difficult the incorporation of the dictatorial regime into the community of democratic nations, and secondly, once national rights have been restored, by decreeing the abolition of all institutional machinery set up or modified in exile.

It is obvious that the fact that we are working for the liberation of our country gives us no rights to govern it. It is also obvious that the fact that we must in the future renounce our provisory power, does not exempt us from the duty of fulfilling our present obligations. To make the continuity of our office a condition of our services would have all the characteristics of an odious political manœuvre, and it would be a clumsy excuse to demand such continuity on the grounds that it would avoid inefficacy or stagnation.

Both the Spanish people and our duty towards history point unmistakably to the task which faces us : to work, but not to

hinder. I confidently hope that those emigrés whose courage and deeds have exalted our distant land will hear the voice of oppressed Spain, that they will assist either by means of direct aid by the example of their conduct the freedom movement which is being developed inside the country.

This work of liberation has an inevitable complement : the pacification of the country and the reconciliation of its different elements. No people can live in a state of permanent civil war, with families divided and social life destroyed. Such a social and political climate can produce nothing of value. Hate breeds hate and blood demands more blood. The priests of the religion of fratricidal war bring death upon a whole nation.

Liberty and national reconciliation must be our aim for the next anniversary of the 14th. April. I express this our desire from exile, beseeching all republicans and all Spaniards devoted to the service of their country, to strive their utmost to make it possible for the sacred principles of liberty — on which all human progress is founded — and national peace, to crown our common effort in 1951. This would be the finest example we could show to a distraught and anxious world, and the most solid guarantee of the reconstitution of Spain, whose interest demands sacrifices from her sons.

This is the task, a task already begun, which awaits us. Let us continue this task with resolution to the end. The eternal interests of Spain and the essential interests of world-wide democracy and liberty demand it of us.

Paris, April 1951.

Diego MARTINEZ BARRIO.