

enemies of France and the Axis"; they finally relieved a German company in the Medjez el Bab sector on the 8th April, and on the 23rd suffered sixty-seven casualties. The return of Commandant Curnier, who commanded what was in theory a battalion, and of some of his officers, was exploited in Paris as a collaborationist occasion in the second week of the May; and the return of Estéva was similarly exploited, though Estéva, in replying to Ribbentrop's letter of thanks of the 20th, said he had simply been doing his "duty in obeying the orders he had received from his Government."

#### SPAIN AND PORTUGAL.

Acting presumably on the principle that if you are going to drop one brick you may as well drop two, the Spanish Government, instead of accepting philosophically the cold douche given by the Allies to their anti-bombing campaign, have gone further and changed the vague and "transcendental" appeals put out in the Falange press into a cut-and-dried plan conceived on the noblest humanitarian lines. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs have now issued a statement setting forth the Spanish Government's views and proposing the classification of military objectives and the establishment of "non-bombardable" zones. It recalls that in 1933 Spain submitted proposals to the Disarmament Conference to avoid the bombing of civilian populations, and that she is in a position now, "out of her Christian anxiety and peace-making desire" dispassionately to appeal to the consciences of all belligerents. It claims, moreover, that, during the whole of the present struggle, Spain has repeatedly urged that efforts should be made "to humanise the fighting—contrary to what has been stated lightly without taking the trouble of perusing the Spanish press."

For once truth is clear, however unpalatable it may be to the Spanish Government. And it is that no amount of trouble taken in perusing the Spanish press between August 1940 and June 1941 would discover any Spanish appeal whatever to Germany to remember the Spanish proposals at the Disarmament Conference which, of course, preceded Guernica, or to cease the indiscriminate bombing of British civilians which was then carried out as a deliberate act of war.

The publication of this statement, the present sincerity of which is not in question, follows three interesting observations made in Madrid last week. A high official in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs told the First Secretary of His Majesty's Embassy that he deplored the press campaign which had been launched by the Falange-controlled office of Press and Propaganda without consultation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Another official in the Air Ministry told the Air Attaché that he and his colleagues in the Spanish Air Force were indignant at the press criticism of airmen in general (an interesting professional reaction). The third statement was made by the Director of Press and Propaganda who, after twelve months' evasion of all official contact with His Majesty's Embassy, told the Press Attaché, whom he had invited to call, that the press campaign was finished. It had not been inspired by the Axis, he said, but had represented the consistent attitude of the Christian and European conscience of Spain.

If it is, indeed, true that the Falange started the campaign off its own bat—and the hostility between the Press and Propaganda Bureau and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs makes this quite likely—it looks as if the Spanish Government, in the statement issued by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, are attempting to make the worst of a bad job by giving its official blessing to this ill-conceived operation. They would find it difficult to persuade anyone else to join their permanent neutral committee to guarantee the execution of their scheme. The whole plan may be looked on as paving the way to a dignified and honourable representation at the Peace Conference. Allied circles, faced with this astonishing performance, will probably consider any one of Don Quixote's illusions to have been more dignified and honourable. The Spanish Ambassador, who called at the Foreign Office to complain of a cartoon in the *News Chronicle* of the 26th May, depicting General Franco as a crocodile shedding a tear against a background of Guernica, Warsaw, Rotterdam and Coventry, was certainly left in no doubt of British feelings about the Spanish miscomputation.

It seems that the Spanish Government has been impressed by the vigour of the British reaction (the gesture of the Director of Press and Propaganda is an index of this), which may help them a little farther along the path of true neutrality which in some ways they have been showing rather embarrassed signs of seeking. Not that they are showing more respect for British interests or aspirations in

Spain; on the contrary, the Government, or rather its minions in the Falange-controlled services, are being in small matters even more irritating than ever. It is the same story all over Spain, and whether this obstinate anti-British pin-pricking be the last fling of a doomed bureaucracy or merely national pig-headedness, it is difficult for those on the spot to put up with. But in larger matters, especially in the economic field, things are very different, and for the moment first things must come first, second and third. And it is not only we, but our enemies too, who have to complain of Spanish behaviour, e.g., though the photograph of Hitler still hangs in the hall of the Atlantic Hotel, Cadiz, the German Consul there is beginning to suffer from persecution-mania because the local chief of police every now and then puts a "Seguridad" sleuth on his trail. This is the individual who in 1941 was making nocturnal expeditions into the bay in a dark grey launch loaded with tins of food and bottles of drink for the German submarines he was supposed to be meeting.

During the past year warnings have been issued to the Spanish authorities that any fishing vessels found in the "sink-at-sight" area in the Bay of Biscay would be liable to be attacked without warning. A further warning has been given recently, and, in spite of Spanish protests that their fishing industry would be ruined and requests for postponement of the time-limit originally fixed for the 1st June, His Majesty's Government is adhering to its decision. It may be possible to assist the Spaniards by increasing imports of fish from other sources, but it is vital that our air operations against U-boats and the clearing of the Bay of Biscay of all enemy vessels should not be impeded by the presence of Spanish fishing vessels, in spite of the services occasionally rendered by these boats in rescuing crashed airmen.

It is early yet to assess the effect upon Spain of the Argentine revolt, but it will certainly bring no comfort to the Falange elements in the Spanish Government.

In Tangier there is another lull. General Uriarte, the Governor, has "pardoned" the Jewish victims of the recent arrests, which were made, he asserted, "as an example and a warning to a foreign consulate" (i.e., the French). His Majesty's Government have received from the Spanish Government a communication which explains away the recent incidents as being measures adopted by the Spanish authorities with desire to prejudice British interests, but rather in order to guarantee neutrality, Spain being resolved to defend her neutral status by every means in her power. The British press was wrong in thinking the contrary.

The High Commissioner, returning the visit of General Clark on the 2nd April last (see *Summary* No. 184), went to the Headquarters of the American Fifth Army in French Morocco on the 3rd June, and seems to have been impressed by what he saw. The Italians were annoyed that General Orgaz should have visited American forces, whose comrades were devoting their time to bombarding Italian territory, but were even more upset that he should have inspected some French "goums."

In Lisbon public transport has been considerably eased by a more generous distribution of petrol, and though most private cars are running on "gazógeno" the streets are once again full of gaily-tooting, dangerously-driven 8-H.P. Austin taxicabs. In the country, the lack of petrol has not affected the small farmers—and more than half the land is owned by peasant proprietors—who still rely mainly on the bullock cart. Indeed, owners of carts, who have a licence for carting, are profiting by the lack of mechanical transport and making good money out of hiring. The railways still burn wood, and the employment given in the felling of trees and the carting of timber for this purpose has in the north of Portugal helped to lessen the economic pressure of the war.

#### ITALY.

While nothing has yet occurred to modify the view that an Allied invasion of Italy would encounter a stiff resistance, there is increasing evidence that our bombardments from the air are filling the authorities with the utmost anxiety. Not only are our airmen doing immense damage to the military machine by their destruction of port installations, shipping and communications, but they are also weakening morale by causing disorganisation in the distribution of food-stuffs and by creating nervousness as to where the next blow will fall. One notable sign of the anxiety felt by the régime has been the change in tactics of the propaganda branch of the Ministry of Popular Culture. Whereas until quite recently great

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