This is a collection of seven letters exchanged between Spanish Republican leaders in Mexico City during the month of June, 1939. Three of the letters are from Dr. Juan Negrin, last premier of Republican Spain and head of the Spanish Republican Government in Exile. Three are from Senor Don Indalecio Prieto, one-time Minister of Defense for Republican Spain (from May 15, 1937 to April 5, 1938, and before that Minister of Air and Marine). One letter is from Senor Don Francisco Mendez Aspe, former Republican Minister of Finance and Economy. These letters form perhaps the best available background for an understanding of the issue that came to a head at Paris when the rump Standing Committee of the Spanish Cortes met on July 26.

The order of the letters is as follows:

1. Letter from Dr. Juan Negrin to Senor Don Indalecio Prieto, June 16, 1939

2. Letter from Senor Don Indalecio Prieto to Dr. Juan Negrin, June 17, 1939

3. Letter from Senor Don Francisco Mendez Aspe to Senor Don Indalecio Prieto, June 24, 1939

4. Letter from Senor Don Indalecio Prieto to Senor Don Francisco Mendez Aspe, June 24, 1939

5. Letter from Dr. Juan Negrin to Senor Don Indalecio Prieto, June 23, 1939, with a postscript dated June 25, 1939

6. Letter from Senor Don Indalecio Prieto to Dr. Juan Negrin, June 26, 1939

7. Letter from Dr. Juan Negrin to Senor Don Indalecio Prieto, June 28, 1939

Letter from Dr. Juan Negrin to Senor Don Indalecio Prieto,

Mexico, D. F., June 16, 1939

Mexico, June 16, 1939

His Excellency Senor Don Indalecio Prieto,

My dear Friend:

From New York and through the courtesy of Senor Mendez Aspe, I indicated my desire for an interview with you as soon as I arrived in Mexico, and I expressed the conviction that whatever misunderstanding might exist between us would disappear in the course of a simple conversation. I have never had any intention of injuring you, and I was convinced that there was no reason why you should feel injured by anything I did. But if neither my intentions nor my explanations sufficed to dispell a misunderstanding, I have always been ready to lay aside all personal considerations in order to make whatever amends you might demand.

I had previously sent you similar indications of how I felt, through Salazar and the Party Executive.

On my arrival in Mexico I found a letter in which you said that you considered that our friendship-- already severely strained by the end of April 1938-- was completely broken since April 1939. Allow me to observe that perhaps you are referring to your personal feeling of friendship toward me, not to mine toward you, which continue to be the same. Allow me to remind you also that it is only recently that you have noted this rift in our friendship, which you say originated in April 1938. During the proceedings attendant upon your demission from the Ministry of Defense-- and which witnessed both the intervention of mutual friends, as well as of the Executive body of the Party-- you recognized my right and my obligation to bring about the change of portfolio, if I felt it best for the interests of the country, and you repeatedly reassured me that you would feel neither offended nor oppressed.

Nor is there any indication in the correspondence of that time, which I have kept intact without the loss of a single one of your letters, of that sense of injury to which you now allude, and which you say has lasted a year.

Nor was I aware of this rift in our friendship during the few conversations we had after you were relieved of your post as Defense Minister at my insistence, or after you left the Government at your own. On the contrary, the last time we saw each other in Camprodon, before your departure for Chile, your cordiality, not to mention your effusiveness, far exceeded the habitual moderation of your expression of affection. One of two things has happened-- either you desired to hide or disguise your feelings until today, or impelled by one of those fits of passion so common to you, you are in error.

No, my dear friend, you cannot talk of a friendship that was ended by what happened in April of 1938.

At that time, I did what I felt right and was obliged to do. It was necessary to replace you in the Ministry of National Defense, and it was the right thing to do. Your morale was so broken that it was impossible for you to do credit to your singular capacity and your prodigious energy; and your unrestrained indiscretions were leading us to catastrophe. You ought to be personally grateful to me for the service I rendered you, and my gesture of sacrifice ought at least to merit your respect.

In regard to what happened in April of 1939, I believe that I am the one who has the right to feel oppressed and injured.

Once you were out of the Government (which I assume was still the Government to you) you made decisions or gave advice which, however justified or even praiseworthy they might have been in case of danger or urgency, represented, by and large, an assumption of authority that you yourself would have tolerated from no one.

But so far as I am concerned, I am not interested in entering into polemics or discussions of what is past. I am concerned with cementing a friendship which you alone have attempted to definitely destroy; and I also know that it is my duty to lay aside any considerations of personal sensibility in the interests of a union and a solidarity in the emigration, demanded by the best interests of Spain and our compatriots.

For this reason I have insisted, and attempted to bring about this interview through the kind offices of various friends, -- Salazar, Delgado de Torres, Sanchez Roman-- and I have assured them that the explanations I have to offer, and my frame of mind itself, would resolve an offensive situation.

You refuse to talk to me. It appears that you allege the existence of a certain incompatibility. If you think it exists, you ought not to refuse to state the reasons to my face. It is always more efficacious to discuss things openly, than to lend a ready ear to gossip, lies and distortions that can poison the firmest affections.

Moreover, aside from any purely personal relationship, there are certain points which affect our refugees and our personal responsibility, and it is precisely these matters which demand that we clarify the situation.

For all these reasons I beg you to abandon your intransigeant attitude, and to accept an interview of whose satisfactory outcome I am certain, if the good will and the good faith which are mine are shared by you.

With affection, as ever, and a cordial handshake,

Juan Negrin

Letter from Senor Don Indalecio Prieto to Dr. Juan Negrin,

Mexico, D.F., June 17, 1939

Mexico, June 17, 1939

Senor Don Juan Negrin

City

Dear Fellow-Member:*

This is an answer to your letter of yesterday, referring to mine of the 7th, in reply to the letter brought me from New York by Senor Mendez Aspe.

According to you it must be only recently that I noticed the rupture of our friendship, which occured in April 1938, since up till now I have given you no indication of it. Such carelessness surprises me, since I took good care to make you aware of it, and after I had told you of it I took several occasions to make it plain. Allow me to assist your memory so we may dispel the assumption that I desired to hide my feelings from you until now. Some time between May 10th and 20th-- nearer the 10th-- when Alvarez Del Vayo offered me the Embassy in Mexico and I talked it over with the President of the Republic and the Executive Committee of the Spanish Workers' Socialist Party, Julian Zugazagoitia, General Secretary of the Ministry of Defense (to whom I gave a detailed account of these interviews) brought me three invitations from you, to dine. I made courteous but firm refusal to the first two invitations. At the third, and to make the matter clear, I gave Zugazagoitia a message-- to tell you that our friendship, without being at an end, was sufficiently strained for me to refuse any intimacy, such as implied in an invitation; but that this did not mean that you, in your capacity of head of the Government, could not send for me at your office at any time. I presume that Zugazagoitia carried out this errand, but even if he did not, my three consecutive refusals, in whatever manner they were conveyed to you, sufficed to reveal a loosening of the ties of our friendship.

Now I would like to prove to you that you knew what my attitude was. Early in July you gave the following message to my son: Tell your father that since he does not want to come to me, I want him to invite me to eat with him at your house.

* The Spanish word correligionario, here meaning a fellow-member of the Spanish Socialist Party.

You should have interpreted my complete silence after this hint (which followed previous ones passed to me by Victor Salazar), as definite and repeated proof of the rupture of my friendship. If you did not think so, what sense was there in the mediation of mutual friends, who came to ask me to desist from my attitude? I refer, concretely, to Sanchez Roman, Portela, Bugega and Prat, none of whom knew, from me, of our strained relationship. In mentioning Prat-- so close to you as Assistant Secretary of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers-- I recall that on several occasions I also refused his very obstinate desire to unite us at his table.

We have seen each other exactly four times since April 1938. The first time was that very month, a few days after I had left the Ministry, when, being told that I wanted to talk to you, you were so kind as to come to Esplugas, where I explained my intention of making certain inquiries with a view to determining the opinion of the Franco Government as to the possibility of ending the war-- a project I abandoned immediately since you did not consider it wise.

The second time was at Cortar's funeral, when we were both on the committee with the Assistant Secretary and high officials of the Navy.

The third was at the official banquet given to Mme. and M.Auriol, to which you invited all the members of the Executive Committee of the Socialist Party, and from which I did not want to be absent lest our distinguished guests-- who had already personally requested me to be present-- should interpret my absence as an act of discourtesy.

Fourth, the 27th of November, when at Alvarez Del Vayo's plea that I postpone my departure for Paris, I left for the frontier and instead of going directly, I passed through Camprodon to see you, and to tell you that I had accepted the post of Ambassador Extraordinary to the President of Chile's inauguration, with the idea of sounding out the possibility of mediation on the part of the American countries, which might put an end to the bloody struggle in Spain. You offered some objections to the idea, but they were not enough to make me abandon it. Unfortunately, it was too late for such an idea to bear fruit. When I reached Santiago de Chile toward the end of December, Franco had already begun the offensive in Catalonia with great success, and later, when I went to the Argentine, to Uruguay, Brazil and the United

States, the collapse of the Republican armies from the Ebro to the Pyrenees had already decided the war in favor of the Fascists.

At the end of our inverview in Camprodon I started for the automobile. In the presence of your guests, the Caribineers, the chauffeurs and the men who formed the escort, you asked me to embrace you, and I did not refuse. On the contrary, I embraced you with great emotion, for I was embracing a man who, as I left Spain with my heart heavy with dark forebodings, remained there under the weight of crushing responsibility-- a man who, free from all restraint-- for he cast it aside or disdained it-- held the destinty of the country in his hands.

You say you have kept all my letters of that time. I am glad that a man who despises letters should have kept mine-- nearly all unanswered. If any are missing, I will send you copies. But it will scarcely be necessary, for perhaps you forget that this correspondence is not unpublished-- I read it all before the National Committee of our Party, and it was embodied in the report I made during those sessions. This report, as I stated at its beginning, has two omissions. First, my narrative does not include the date of April 5th, the day I left the Ministry of National Defense; and second, I restricted myself to the briefest outline of the events up to that time, refraining from any commentary. But even with these limitations, my report does not signify my acquiescence in your procedure. No one can find that in its text. When I learned from 'La Vanguardia'-- your shamefully personal organ-- of the solution that was to be applied to the crisis, I wrote and told you of my disagreement with your policy, and above all, with certain appointments, already known publicly and soon confirmed in 'La Gaceta', whereby tho most important commands were given to the Communist Party. This disagreement obliged me to inform the Executive Committee of my decision to absent myself from its meetings, so that I would not be giving any assent to a policy I considered highly dangerous; and it also impelled me to conclude my participation in the work of the National Committee at the very moment when the consideration of the April crisis came to an end. As this is a fact, and as fortunately it is all written down, I need not repeat it in detail, but merely recall it.

I did not question nor do I now question your right, as head of the Government, to dismiss a Minister. Nor does the personal issue, raised in your letter, matter. The ministerial crisis having been brought about by you, I took great care to act correctly, so as to reduce so far as possible the political struggle that caused the prolongation of the crisis for a week, during circumstances of tremendous gravity. Upon receiving the support of important representatives of the anti-Fascist forces-- and in this connection it may be pointed out that only that of the Communist Party was lacking, for in those days I had proof of solidarity of even the National Confederation of Labor--I advised everyone not to place obstacles in the way of my replacement. And when I had to give my opinion, officially, to the Executive Committee of our Party and to the President of the Republic, I did so on the same terms. Only I refused to permit the dissemination of false versions concerning my departure from the Government. Therefore, at the affirmation of the President of the Republic that you had submitted the problem to him because I had resigned, I denied the existence of such resignation, and in view of the version in 'La Vanguardia'-- a paper inspired by you-- that I had retired because of poor health, I told high officials of the Ministry, during the transfer of power, that this was not correct.

I do not wish to abandon the tone of moderation I have maintained in this letter, but I flatly contradict your statement that 'my indiscretions were leading us to a catastrophe.' This is totally false; it is an invention to cover up the fact that when you expelled me from the Government, you acceded to the demands of the Communist Party. In the short conversation I had with you during the afternoon of August 5th, I asked you for the names of people to whom I had made indiscreet statements. You mentioned only one, M.Labonne, and I replied that I did not know this gentleman, with whom I had never exchanged a word, in speech or in writing. I expressed my opinion regarding the course of the war only when it was requested of me before the Council of Ministers and the Executive Committee of our Party, before neither of whom could I have withheld my opinion, much less falsified it. According to my view of ministerial solidarity, it is inadmissable for members of the Government to try to deceive each other, and this applies equally to responsible directors of the Party, not only in such important matters, but in all matters.

In my statements in this connection to the National Committee on August 9th, I challenged you to prove your assertions. You did not attempt to prove them, nor will you ever attempt to do so, because, I repeat, to do so would constitute an absolute falsehood.

Certainly, as Minister of Defense, I wanted the public to know the truth concerning the course of the struggle, and I tried to do so through official bulletins and notes, refraining from all prophecy. Later this changed; there were many prophecies, which augured an immediate victory, and the truth about the enemy's advances was concealed. This made it possible for the Government to state, in a solemn note, its determination to remain in Barcelona, and a few hours later to order the evacuation toward the frontier of the Ministries and other official bureaus-- and for the great majority of the population of a city of a million and a half inhabitants, to learn of the Fascists' entrance when their music sounded in the streets-- and thus there fell into the hands of the enemy many official and compromising documents which there was not time to withdraw....And after all this you dare to say that I was heading toward a catastrophe! You dare to formulate such a supposition after having caused-- under your command-- so great a hecatomb, and through the mad policy of assuring the domination of one Party, having brought about the most disastrous possible end to our war, one which those of us stigmatized as pessimists could never have imagined! This reveals your strange psychology better than anything else. Even were you crowned with the laurels of the most glorious victory, you would have no right to impute to me what you do impute. But after presiding over such a colossal disaster, after causing-- through the exercise of personal power in the interests of a single group-- deep dissensions which led thousands of brothers-at-arms to fratricidal strife, and having before your eyes the spectacle of half a million Spaniards thrust out of their country, plunged in misery, subjected to the vilest humiliation, which the most elementary precautions-- frequently advised-- could have avoided-- after all this you dare to say that I was leading to a catastrophe! I have never known greater or more terrible sarcasm than the contrast between your immense responsibilities and your boastful attitude. An

attitude which permits you to condemn others capriciously, and to exact, as a reward, your recognition as permanent head of the Government.

Referring to my relinquishment of the portfolio of National Defense, you say: 'Personally, you should be grateful to me for the service I rendered you.' ...During a war, should the ministers who direct armed forces and the military chiefs be grateful to those who deprive them of office? Cowards and degenerates may feel grateful, as this is considered a punishment and sometimes a discredit. The Executive Committee of the Socialist Party notified me then- it is recorded in the minutes that my dismissal was a humiliation, to which it was necessary to submit so as not to occasion greater harm under those critical circumstances. And I must still be grateful!

You say, 'You cannot speak of a friendship ended by the events which took place in April 1938.' I have not spoken-- reread my letters-- of a friendship ended in April 1938, but of a friendship very much strained after April 1938. It would be false to attribute my attitude solely to the way the crisis of that month was brought about and solved. April marks the beginning of many things which shattered my friendship for you. After the conviction, sustained by several facts, that you had eliminated me for reasons contrary to those stated, there followed that famous note whose publication coincided with the projects to unify our Party, from which your demission as head of the Government in the near future could be deduced; a note in which the President of the Council of Ministers airily tossed off the word "traitor", and instigated the Army against those so stigmatized. There followed the campaign in 'La Vanguardia', aimed at the Army's exercise of the coercive force of its arms in decisions of the supreme powers of the Republic; there followed the shameful parade of military forces through the streets of Barcelona, to impose their will in the formation of the government; there followed the disgraceful deluge of telegrams to overwhelm the will of the Head of the State...

In respect to what has happened since April 1939-- perhaps the most important part of your letter, for the rest is buried in the ashes of history and has no remedy-- you express yourself briefly in contrast to your previous long dissertions,

which I have also answered at length with the hope that there will be no misunderstanding. In the matters to which you allude, I did not take anything upon myself. I gave advice to those who asked for it, and help to those who begged it of me. You say you would find this not only justified but worthy of praise 'in cases of danger and urgency.' The danger and the urgency existed in all cases, absolutely in all. Can you point to one in which these factors were not present? And, I repeat again, if I intervened, it was because those who appealed to me lacked instructions concerning the conduct that was expected of them. Undoubtedly, in the disorganization that reigned during the last few months, no one remembered to give orders relative to the safeguarding of important interests. No order of the Government was contravened, for the simple reason that no such orders existed. According to your judgment, my procedure constitutes an assumption of authority that I would not have tolerated in anyone else. You are mistaken. Were I to encounter a person whose goodwill and unselfishness had saved what my lack of foresight had imperilled, I would be grateful. But far from being grateful, you sent me a telegram of reproach. And when I replied at once, also by cable, explaining my action and the reason for it, and telling you of my success, I was answered by an offensive silence. To this I must add your disapproval of the proposal of our Party that I assume the work of receiving and establishing Spaniards in Mexico, and also the secret despatch of one who came to replace me in this work. Therefore our friendship, already greatly strained in April 1938, came to an end in April 1939. My work in Mexico has been unanimously approved by the Executive Committee of the Socialist Party, which regards it as correct; and also by the Permanent Commission of the Cortes which considered and proclaimed that I have 'proceeded correctly and honorably-- doubted by none, and inspired, as always, by the supreme interest of the Republic.' I have the approval of representative personalities of the Spanish Republic who are in Mexico. It is easy to understand why such valuable witnesses should cancel in my mind all traces of a contrary opinion on your part. The interference with which you reproach me had for its basis the salvage of resources with which to help the refugees, whose name you invoke in your letter.

My attitude is not the result of a sickly impulse, as you insinuate, but has been formed during the course of a year. Firm in this attitude, I decline the interview to which you invite me, although I am ready to answer in writing any questions you may wish to ask.

The fact of your having saved my letters concerning the events of April 1938 seems to reassure you. For me too these letters, which in no way contradict what is written here, constitute a reassuring guarantee. Let us assure ourselves the same for the future, and put everything in writing. This procedure will harm no one and will avoid that 'confusion of memory' of which I heard you speak on a certain occasion. I do not wish to confuse the memory of your words; nor do I wish, naturally, that the memory of mine should be confused.

Sincerely,

Indalecio Prieto

Letter from Senor Don Francisco Mendez Aspe to Senor Don Indalecio Prieto

Mexico, D.F., June 24, 1939

Mexico, June 24, 1939

His Excellency Don Indalecio Prieto:

My dear Friend:

For some time we have been considering a proposal to set up in Mexico an organization for the aid and protection of refugees, in which absolutely all Spanish Republican interests would be represented.

Autonomous in character, this organization would assume the said function of aid and protection, by means of administering funds which would have to be placed at its disposal to assist Spanish refugees. It would finance the establishment of enterprises that would spring of private initiative or technical elements that might adhere to such an institution.

Naturally the presidency of this organization must be vested in a person of considerable prestige who, in addition to the necessary gifts of intelligence and dynamic ability, will offer absolute guarantees of impartiality in his actions.

We would like you to be this person, so that together with certain others who will participate and whom we can agree upon, we may set into action the noble mission that is assigned to it.

I would be grateful to you if you would let me know whether you are in agreement with such a project, and whether you would care to accept the invitation I offer you with all respect.

Affectionate greetings,

Francisco Mendez Aspe

Letter from Senor Don Indalecio Prieto to Senor Don Francisco Mendez Aspe

Mexico, D.F., June 24, 1939

Mexico, June 24, 1939

Senor Don Francisco Mendez Aspe

City

My dear Friend:

I hasten to reply to your kind letter of today, in which you offer me the presidency of an organization you are planning to establish in Mexico for the aid and protection of refugees, an autonomous organization that would function 'through the administration of funds that would have to be placed at the disposition of said organization for said purpose.'

On June 2nd I formulated a proposal to Senors Giral, Barcia, Pozas and Gordon Ordas, to which these said ex-ministers of the Republic subscribed with me-- a proposal that would have the Permanent Commission of the Cortes (for the purpose of taking charge of these funds, which are, as you know, in my custody) either come to Mexico, name a delegation of its own members, or place these funds in the hands of a Commission of representatives of the Republic who are already in Mexico. And I was careful to state in writing:

> 'Being a member of the Permanent Commission of the Cortes, and reluctant to arouse the suspicion that I am seeking such personal intervention as would be automatically attributed to me should that body act in the manner proposed, and since my resignation is not possible inasmuch as it would have to be acted upon by the plenum of the Chamber, I would like to be represented by my alternate if the Commission or its delegation should come to Mexico. In this case my legal alternate would be the one to act in whatever concerns the business involved.'

This attitude I had previously indicated in a telegram to which I received no answer sent to Don Juan Negrin on April 7, in reply to a rebuff of his, and in which I said: 'Offer henceforth absolute abstention, as well as abstention from either spontaneous intervention, (which I have never done) or any which may be asked of me.'

I cannot, therefore, accept the offer you make me. The regulations prohibit such action on my part, and since they amply justify my resolution, I will forego the examination of other circumstances, such as that of the character of the projected organization and the nature of appointments to it-- matters which might also have required a negative reply.

I must express my gratitude for the invitation, and especially for the terms in which it was extended.

Affectionate greetings,

Indalecio Prieto

Letter from Dr. Juan Negrin to Sénor Don Indalecio Prieto

Mexico, D.F., June 23, 1939

with a postscript dated June 25, 1939

Mexico, June 23, 1939

His Excellency Senor Don Indalecio Prieto:

My dear Friend:

This is in reply to your long letter of the 17th, which reached me on the 20th.

If my slight interest in polimics were not sufficient to deter me from refuting it line by line, I would be further restrained by my firm decision not to enter a field in which you are the master, and from which, what with replies and counter-refutations we could extricate ourselves only with difficulty, and with no fruitful result. Such a struggle would only serve to feed your fury, and in your own best interests I prefer to avoid such a prospect.

But in order to make quite certain that the wide circle of readers who delight in your personal correspondence, do not interpret my silence as assent, I cannot refrain from confronting your opinions with my own. This I do only on those points that interest me most, and with no slightest intention of turning them into a controversy.

And if for the moment I refuse to rectify details or allow myself to be dragged into an endless discussion, it is because matters of more importance ought to involve all our attention. Yours as well as mine. As well as that of all Spaniards. And these affairs cannot be resolved if, rather than joining our forces and laying aside our animosity, we were to wrangle over disputes that would victimize those who await our assistance, and who deserve our aid.

Besides, why should we waste our time in discussions of small moment, if, when you regain your composure, you yourself will be the one to rectify the inaccuracies, the errors and the injustices with which your letter abounds?

I should prefer, my dear friend, to spend my leisure time in meditation, in study, and in the examination of my conscience-- activities of the spirit which, believe me, are not entirely worthless. On the contrary, they are more profitable and fruitful than certain sterile, not to say destructive, activities.

In short, if you insist on demonstrating-- and this is the reason for your letter-- that the decision to replace you as Minister of National Defense aroused in you a festering resentment that time, far from mitigating, has exacerbated, I bow to your obsession, lamenting.

But in respect to this, I would like to make the following clear:

My decision to replace you as Minister of Defense, which I neither concealed nor camouflaged, was entirely and completely personal. It was taken on the night of March 29-30, after an unhappy and violent personal struggle. It was a consequence of the Cabinet meeting on the night of March 29 (I cite from memory) during which, with your customary eloquence, your habitual pathos and the authority of your post and your person, you completely demoralized our colleagues in the Government by painting events in the colors of desperation, and by presenting as fatal certain events which later facts demonstrated were not inevitable. I remembered the tremendous impression that had been made upon me by the Council of War that had been held some days previously, and which had been attended by the entire General Staff. There, far from giving courage and stimulation to those who were burdened by the weight of their tasks and the pressure of events, you depressed them by the pessimistic tenor of your opinions, by your skepticism in the face of any favorable prospect, by your sinister predictions and by your lack of faith and enthusiasm. You left these men beggared and helpless by presenting to them, crudely and without cordiality, problems in magic, by shirking the responsibility for decision and appreciation when, in order to work calmly and efficiently they required to feel that they were supported and guided by the Command; especially in moments of anxiety when the strongest and most disciplined men need and appreciate an atmosphere of confidence and mutual enthusiasm in order to bring out their best efforts and to sacrifice, if necessary, their lives and their reputations.

I also recalled the conversation which took place between M.Labonne and me on March 27th, and which concerned the swift delivery by France of material that had been offered to me in principle, when during my visit to that country early in March, I succeeded in having the frontier opened. On being pressed to expedite

the fulfillment of that agreement, the French Ambassador asked me if I was not aware that 'the Minister of National Defense, Senor Prieto, considered the war already lost?' Such was the information-- he never told me, nor have I said that he had heard it directly-- that was in the possession of the man who, representing France in Spain, had to transmit our requests and advise that they be granted.

And finally there was that element to be considered in my decision-- that open secret that circulated in Barcelona and even reached the front-- that the real head of the Army, the Minister of Defense, whenever he saw anybody-- deputies and soldiers, politicians and functionaries, friends and acquaintances-- gave the definite impression that catastrophe was inevitable, thus spreading panic when it was exactly the time to attempt to calm the people.

Anyone who was in Barcelona during the latter part of March would find it strange, or would laugh outright, to hear you doubt my assertion-- so irritating to you-- that your 'indiscretions' were 'shameless.'

Friend Prieto, I do not have to summon witnesses. Ask anyone around you. Or why go so far? Ask yourself.

It would be a cheap political trick, a species of red herring drawn across the trail, to claim that I, whom you have so often criticized for not listening to your advice and acting without restraint, could have yielded to outside pressure or demands.

The decision I reached was neither exacted of me, nor even suggested to me by anyone, and if proof is required, my categorical affirmation of this fact will suffice for all men of good will who know me.

So far as that opportune act was concerned-- and I refer to your removal from the Ministry of Defense-- it checked a collapse that seemed inevitable within a few hours or days and which, all things considered, would have provoked just such a hecatomb as attended the surrender of Casado. And if a stop had not been put to the defeatism and the panic of the moment, we would have been sunk in shame and opprobrium equal to that which has overwhelmed the traitors of Madrid, and those who openly or secretly supported them.

When you withdrew the promise I exacted of you, to continue to collaborate with the Government, arguing an incompatibility with a man who had been Minister of Public Instruction since Senor Largo Caballero's first Cabinet, I told you that in the reallocation of ministerial posts, Don Jesus Hernandez would be relieved, and there would henceforth remain only one of the two Communist ministers who had, since September 1936, figured in successive governments. And so it came about. When you later brought forward another reason for your refusal--the announced appointment of Senor Hernandez as Commissar-General of the Army-- I assured you that the rumor was false, and to allieviate your personal resentment I told you that if it had not been false I would have rectified the matter so as to remove any obstacle to your continued collaboration. Thus I submitted to the demands of a Minister's whim when, as head of the Government, I had never over-ruled nor questioned a single appointment of his, no matter how unfortunate some of them might have seemed to me.

When you had exhausted these specious pretexts, you argued that your continued refusal to participate in the Government lay in a fundamental difference of political orientation, and you insinuated that you did not share my tactic of hiding reality from our companions in the Government.

This was an opinion that was false from root to branch. I held in reserve what amounted only to a 'de facto' secret, and always with the authorization of my colleagues. On many occasions I requested you to be silent at full Cabinet meetings about matters that concerned your Department, and which the Council could not handle in any way, arguing that such an indiscretion as you contemplated might well prove fatal. Our colleagues always honored my request, many times when the matter could not have been resolved by me, or when it concerned matters into which I did not care to intervene, even though I was the President. What frequently occured, my friend, was that many times my 'reality' did not coincide with yours, and hence my vision of things and my prophecies were not so gloomy. For there is also an element of strength and influence in prophecies that do not necessarily lean on the improbable and the lugubrious, but the other way; and this is greatest when will, action and morale play a part in the final result.

When did I ever give utterance in official bulletins to prophecies of immediate victory? Never! In my official notes and speeches I always said, 'We must win, and if we want to win we must resist, and stand ready to endure a long, hard and painful war.' I said this during the blackest moments as well as during those that looked most favorable. I also said it when certain voluble spirits were dripping optimism, and believed the time was ripe for a return to low-chamber politics. I know that many people interpreted my warnings and my demands for moderation and sobriety as astute maneuvers toward the seizure of personal power.

Hide the truth in war bulletins? What I did not do (with a sadistic desire to anticipate bad news from the enemy), was to invent a new style of war bulletin that gave birth to a psychosis of anxiety among the loyal, accepting as a certainty and disseminating to the four winds every unpleasant rumor, witholding with hypocritical evidence of control every piece of good news under the pretext of a high seriousness, and thus reducing the truth to a lie. What I did not do was to give up positions and places as lost-- three days before they were occupied by the enemy, because I had lent an avid ear to the first disconcerting rumor. Do not ask me for specific names and places at this time. If you want them, I will publish dozens. For among the documents that have been saved will be found irrefutable proof (in the declarations of prisoners and persons who escaped, statements by authorities and civil populations, enemy reports, correspondents' stories, Fascist and foreigners)-- proofs which constitute a voluminous commentary.

On the contrary, what I did was to put into practise a fact known to every cadet-- that the War-bulletin is an instrument of war. And thanks to that fact, so far from falsifying the truth, our new style of handling the war-bulletins helped prevent the progressive disintegration of the rear.

Psychology, although you may chose to ignore it or to deprecate it, plays a great role in war-time, and that weapon was used and handled with such success, that within two weeks after you were relieved of your post, the morale of the soldiers and the civilians made a right-about-face, which in turn made possible a change in the fortunes of the struggle.

I deceived no one, as you insinuate, nor have I wished to deceive anyone among my colleagues in the Government, my Party or the people. What I did was to avoid the pleasure of indulging an insane obsession of lack of faith in the outcome, the masses, in anything.

Any man who yields to such a fatal course or accepts it, of his own free will cannot serve to direct the destinies of his country, and would defeat the most capable and gifted army in the world.

Much has been made of my 'assignment' of favor to the Communists, to the prejudice of other parties in my appointments from the Ministry of Defense; an 'assignment' you imply proves me guilty of having used 'personal power exercised in favor of a particular group;' an 'assignment' that certain others who would like to salve their consciences, pretend with criminal intent to use as an excuse or a justification for the uprising of Casado, Mera, Val and their cronies.

I have always chosen my collaborators, whether in the Treasury or the Presidency, with no respect for their political coloration. The same was true of the Defense Ministry. I did not pick them from among my circle of friends, servants or proteges. I looked for competence and courage. I did not allow myself to be blinded, much less to be led by hatred or personal or party prejudices, nor was I influenced in favor of sects or political bosses.

Within the Treasury and the Presidency I conferred no posts upon a Communist. Not because I deliberately excluded them, but through purely fortuitous circumstances. The same cannot be said of the Ministry of War when Senor Largo Caballero occupied that post, nor of the Navy or Aviation and later Defense when you were in power. When I assumed the Defense portfolio, the proportion of Communists was considerable. If this was not so because of the merit they displayed, either your authority was slipping, you were under some strange compulsion, or you were yourself contaminated by the virus of Communism.

Let us examine my activities as Minister of Defense in this respect.

When I named Senor Cordon Under-Secretary of War I did so because of the information I possessed as to his energy, activity and knowledge. I was aware of

the fact that his difficult nature would present problems for me, and I soon learned that his political affiliation was being exploited by the perennial malcontents in order to make things harder for me. But for all his quirks Senor Cordon was an able man, and I am in the habit of standing back of my subordinates. Now that the war is over it is possible to say that thanks to him, the Army of the Land was able to accomplish an amazing job of recuperation, mobilization, instruction and reorganization. It is due to him that, with the cooperation of the General Staff, and within a few days after the Army of Catalonia had been virtually destroyed, following its disaster in the East, enough forces could be gathered together to reform a front, and more-- that within a few weeks we again took the initiative with actions in the Lower Pyrenees and the Balaguer Zone. It is to his credit as well to have furnished the General Staff (with the precious assistance of General Rojo), with the reorganized or new units that initiated the Ebro offensive.

On the rare occasions when you made concrete complaints about Senor Cordon, I always examined them and if I saw the slightest justification in them I rectified the error, nor did I conceal my severest admonition. Always I did what was necessary, both with him as with others on similar occasions.

I want to make this quite clear in view of the slanderous accusations that have been circulating about Senor Cordon.

I appointed Senor Nunez Mazas, Communist, as Subsecretary of Aviation, to replace another communist, Senor Camacho, who held the post while you were Minister. Senor Comacho did not seem to me to be adequate to his job, and there was a delicate and wellknown reason that made this substitution advisable. It was I who liquidated this dangerous situation (which you had made no effort to solve), after I decided that the existing charges did not warrant open action.

No objection to Senor Nunez Mazas has ever reached my ears. Except that, as it was then common, people traded on his political affiliation, even though they admitted the fairness and impartiality of his procedure.

I promoted to the Undersecretariat of the Navy Senor Jativa, Socialist, and a devoted admirer of yours. I have heard you speak enthusiastically of him, on various occasions.

Our colleague Senor Otero remained at his post in Armaments.

Upon the creation of a General Intendencia that acted as a sub-secretariat, I named Don Trifon Gomez to its head, a Socialist without Communist leanings, for the ability he had demonstrated as the director of the Quartermaster's Department.

Upon the centralization of the War Medical Service, I induced Senor Puche to accept the post of administrator. He was a distinguished professor who had served as Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Rector of the University of Valencia, posts in which he had demonstrated gifts as an administrator and organizer quite as great as he revealed as Civil Governor at the inception of the Republic, and in other scientific or political positions. Dr. Puche was not an adventurer, nor an armchair physician. His reputation in his own speciality among his Spanish colleagues and abroad, testifies to that fact. His tact, his fine breeding, his even and honest spirit fitted him for a post in which, in addition to technical competence, these other qualifications were more than necessary.

To the office of Commissar-General of the Army of the Land I appointed Senor Ossorio Tafall, a Left Republican who had been Subsecretary of the Interior during the dark days, and had always demonstrated great spirit and enthusiasm, in addition to a fine sense of conciliation and construction, qualities indispensible to such a post.

Upon the irrevocable resignation of Senor Lecina, I appointed Don Belarmino Tomas, Socialist and close friend of yours, to the post of Commissar of Aviation.

Our comrade Don Bruno Alonso remained in his post as Commissar of the Fleet. I confess my error and my sin.

I saw to it that proportional representation among the parties obtained in the under commissariats, although our own party retained considerable predominance.

Don Jesus Hernandez, Communist, was named Commissar of the Army of the Center a group in which (unless I am mistaken) all the other army commissars were Socialists with the exception of Incestal, an Anarchist. I also named another Anarchist, Senor Roldan, commissar of the Army of Catalonia.

In order to coordinate the activities of all the commissars, I appointed as special delegate Don Manuel Albar, distinguished member of the Socialist Party Executive Committee, and a man scarcely characterized by any special sympathy toward Communism.

I created a General Secretary of Defense, for there had to be a rank created between the Minister and the bureaus of the Department (aside from the General Staff), in order to coordinate their activities and control them both politically and administratively.

For this post, which ought to have been and could have been the administrative and political key to the Ministry, I designated our comrade Don Julian Zugazagoitia, ex-minister, and a man who had your confidence as well as mine. As general administrator I placed at his side a man who had been your private secretary in the Ministry of Defence, Senor Cruz Salido, a member of the Executive Committee of the Socialist Party and a friend who shares your phobia about Communism.

It is true that for reasons which are not relevant to the issue the Secretariat-General did not manage to function, but it is a fact that Salido's influence in administrative and political action was felt, and it was not in the benefit of the Communist Party.

There was appointed to the head of the Intelligence Service-- in order to rectify the atrocities of the Uribarri regime-- a party comrade who had been recommended by Senor Zugazagoita and by the Minister of the Interior, our friend Don Paulino Gomez, a Socialist who does not, I believe, sympathize with Communism. And with my consent he undertook a purge of Communists, aimed at reorganization of the Service.

As chief of the Navy command I placed a Communist, Senor Prados, whom I had known during the early days of the war and in whose favor I retained an excellent impression. All the furies were loosed about his head. And when I was later convinced of his relative partiality and his incompatibility with the chief and the commissar of the fleet, I relieved him of his post and replaced him with Senor de la Beraza, a very able man who had never occupied higher positions because he had been

unjustly suspected of rightist tendencies, and of a lukewarm affection for the Republic-- whereas he was merely a professional politician.

The Commands of the Land and the Air remained the same as in your own time, with the exception of slight variations that affected no change in their political complexion.

So far as the High Military Commands were concerned, unless my memory fails me, I was the only Minister who did not name a single Communist as leader of Army Groups or Armies. Consider the names of Carabia and Jurado, Group Leaders, Perea, Casado (1), Moriones, Escobar, Army Leaders. All were professionals. None was a Communist. In the case of Modesto, who may seem to be the sole exception, the name of the unit was changed by using a pair of scissors and splitting the Army of Maneuver, as happened in the case of Menendez who was not a Communist.

In command of Army Corps, and lower units, no minister, neither you nor Caballero, named so small a proportion of Communists as obtained during the period of my activity.

I always proceded, whether right or wrong, actuated by a desire to place the most capable man in the job, without respect for procedure or party affiliation, neither favoring a party nor punishing it by appointing incompetents from a hostile group. Perhaps on occasion, and for reasons of political convenience, I was harder on the Communists, who received few enough posts as it was-- and it was precisely because both I and my advisers-- whom I had inherited and retained-- considered them both talented and useful.

To resume-- were the Spanish Communists our brothers in the fight, or were we to have punished them and considered them lepers? And so far as their being considered noxious is concerned, why was not such discrimination practised before my accession to the Ministry in April 1938?

Your contention that the Communist Party was entrusted with the most important positions of power is, as may easily be seen, gratuitous and incorrect.

Through the machinations of those who believed we ought to 'end it all as soon as possible and however possible,' the Communists held fewer posts than a free

play of political forces would have granted them. And as final proof of this fact, I cite the Casado betrayal of Madrid, which would have been avoided if the preponderance of Communists in the command had been such as you allege (or simply what was owing them in return for the able fight they made in our behalf.)

To maintain, as you do, that I exercised a personal power for the exclusive benefit of a single party, is to make an assertion that cannot withstand honest examination. Such an assertion can only be explained on the grounds of tendencious information, or by a mind poisoned by passion.

I deplore the fact that you are either playing the game of those who, with notorious bad faith, have used this trick as a tactic to divert attention, or that you are lulling your tortured conscience and have thereby become a tool of Franco and his allies.

Now I would like to deal with the treacherous remarks about the end of the war that abound in your letter.

Whether through stupidity or blind egotism, I hope that fate will permit me to be kinder to myself than either you, Araquistain or many others who, no doubt had they been in my position, would not have been such a 'dreadful failure.'

Those with whom in my inmost being I am most severe-- and I have no doubt that history and the people will be even more so, in their time-- are those who first thrust Spain into this catastrophic war, either through petty ambition, ignorance, desertion or even lower motives; and who later, through their defeatism, their lack of morale and enthusiasm, their intrigues and petty political tricks, their absence in moments of sacrifice and their failure to fulfill their duty, have helped to facilitate Franco's victory. They inspired some and instigated others to the new military rebellion that gave the Fascists a decisive victory, and whose results have unfortunately confirmed my predictions about the significance of an ignominious surrender to the rebels.

If the impartiality of history is to declare me innocent of that responsibility, let it weigh in the balance every contrivance and intrigue that was prepared by those now tortured by their consciences.

Have you the impudence to impute to me the disastrous ending of the war?

Allow me to refresh your memory and inform you on matters you may not know.

Beginning in April 1938, and with the assistance of my collaborators and the people, we were able to rebuild an Army that had been destroyed; to arouse a morale that had been annihilated by the stupidity of politicians of evil omen; to reconstruct, within a few days' time, a front that no longer existed; to take the offensive again within a few weeks after that terrible disaster, in order to allieviate the situation for our Army of Maneuver in Castellon. The plan was achieved through the actions at Isona and Balaguer, and a victorious offensive was undertaken that will be immortalized by history-- the Ebro offensive, which was necessary in order to save Valencia and Alicante and the Central Zone and avoid defeat. This was accomplished.

In Catalonia we had to face the fatal combination of an atmosphere of defeatism that broke out periodically, thanks to the everlasting rascally imposters among the people, and was augmented by a wastage of war - material that could not be repaired because our supplies failed us--thanks to the policy of M.Bonnet. When finally these difficulties were overcome, there was not enough time left to avoid the final Catalonian collapse.

Drawing strength from weakness, I managed to retain the balance that all the rest had lost, to regain control over a general and insuperable panic that, for days and days, had plugged the frontier with frightened masses who huddled together for kilometers before they even reached it.

The opening of the frontier, whose closure by France had prevented both civil and military evacuation, was successfully negotiated.

It was possible to save the Catalan Army (and its slight material), which was interned almost as a unit in France with a discipline that no one had expected.

From the last Spanish house on the frontier, which was taken an hour later by the Rebels, I witnessed, for eighteen hours, the parade of the last forces to be interned in France.

I managed not to lose my head, and by the simple accomplishment of my duty saved the half-million Spaniards who today await our assistance.

A few hours after entering France I took an airplane to the zone that was still loyal to the Republic.

Once in the South-Central zone I tried to raise the morale, to readjust the various services to the new circumstances, and to rally our forces for effective resistance. The means that were taken-- pay close attention, even though you should be inclined to be as incredulous as you were about my analogous statement in April 1938-- would have permitted us to go on fighting up till now. To go on fighting because there was nothing else we could have done. For though we might not have won, we could have saved something-- at least our honor.

Deceived and betrayed, I escaped being shot or surrendered to the Rebels by breaking through the guards with which Casado had surrounded us.

With my colleagues I had to leave the airport, evading Casado's insurgents to whom our movements were apparently known, and to fly in broad-daylight over Barcelona and the Fascist coasts.

But before I left, my last message to the Casado rebels and my advice to the Army was that the struggle had to be continued-- that they had to unite and fight without discord until a full guarantee of no reprisals or persecution had been obtained. Without renouncing-- for we could not do it-- our role as a responsible Government, we urged everyone to submit to the situation, such as it was, for the purpose of presenting a firm and united front.

From Paris we continued to take care of the necessities of food, primary materials and fuel, in order to prevent the collapse of the Central zone.

Attempts were made to surmount all difficulties, so that materials of war might be provided despite the blockade of the ports-- anti-aircraft guns and pursuit planes, which were most urgently required. Tonnage necessary to evacuate between forty and fifty thousand people every fifteen days was contracted for, and through the agency of friendly intermediaries their admission into Algiers or Tunis had been arranged. The majority of the few who actually escaped the Central

none left in our ships. If more were not saved, it was owing to the fact that, 1- until the very last moment the agents who were working for the Casado rebels did not permit departure, 2- that with the precipitation of events thereafter, the French authorities restricted facilities for entering their territory, facilities which would have been effective had surrender not been hastened; and 3- at the end, the Fascist blockade prevented the departure of our unfortunate compatriots.

How can you ascribe the final disaster to me? Did I surrender? Did I advise surrender? Even after I was betrayed, did I not counsel unity? Did I not continue, through whatever means we possessed and with the resources and influence that we were able to mobilize in other countries, to plan and arrange means for evacuation and resistance?

Not only that, but stifling a just indignation over the crime that had been committed against our people, I kept silent and I have continued to be silent. It was necessary to reforge our unity in exile, now that we had been disgraced by not knowing how to maintain it in the struggle.

All the prudence I used seemed to no avail. I believed it preferable that a few guilty men should escape, rather than that through an excess of zeal for justice, our indispensible unity should have been jeopardized.

Ah, but an excess of equanimity, of self-restraint sometimes gives new impetus to the moles shivering in their burrows. It is better that kindness be not confounded with fear, nor magnanimity with stupidity!

Are you capable of ascribing to me 'the deep dissensions which led thousands of brothers-in-arms to turn against each other'?

You are raving! Who defended and practised unity among all Spaniards, and even wanted to see it extended to our enemies, preaching reconciliation when the turbulent state of public opinion made it dangerous to defend such a doctrine? Who endured calumny and insult in silence so that our forces might not be split even wider, and has maintained silence until now in deference to the mistaken or the misled, according consideration to the resentful and scorning the petty dealers in intrigue?

Those who are guilty, my friend, of the deep dissensions and the fratricidal strife of three months ago, of the mass-assassinations of the day, are not Casado and his tribe, but those who began to spread dissension and a movement toward rebellion two years ago; the sinister defeatists; those who through lack of faith and confidence in the people (whom they secretly despised) were the enemies best allies; those who through envy undermined the authority of the Government without daring to face it; those politicians 'on strike', knowing no art or trade, who being replaced by others (before the war as well as since the defeat), became manipulators of diatribe without a thought to the danger to which they were exposing the country or their fellow citizens. These are the ones who, with Casado and his gang, are guilty of the defeat and the crimes that preceded it and follow it. These are the ones who will have to be arraigned when we begin to hunt out the guilty, so that an atmosphere of demoralization and deceit may be obviated.

Pride, if you like, but a pride that was never more justified. I can still lift my head, and I am not afraid to look any man in the face.

But is it true that I have been a parvenu who climbed from post to post, or a peddler of graft?

Have I benefited or lost, since my duty as a citizen and a party-member led me to take an active part in public life?

Have I ever solicited any post for my own advantage?

Have I not always refused political position?

Search your memory.

Except for the post of Deputy, which in the last two elections I did everything possible to refuse, I never desired nor sought public benefit.

In September 1936 my Party agreed that I should accept the Treasury portfolio. I refused it vehemently. I did not feel adequate for the great problem, although I was inclined to attempt it. But I perceived the fact that our war had an international angle, decisive in its final outcome, and that for this reason a Large Caballero cabinet containing representatives of the extreme Socialist left and the Communists was a grave error; worse, I even said, than the

arrival of the Fascists at Getafe. I could not convince anyone of this, but my vision has never been proved at fault. For reasons of patriotism and party discipline, I finally had to accept.

With the assistance of my colleagues, first as head of the Treasury and later as head of Treasury and Economy, the miracle was accomplished. Yes, senor, the miracle of carrying on for three years a modern war with its enormous expenditures, a war carried on in an atmosphere of disintegration and disorder, and with a degree of confusion and disorganization of the Economy that makes one shudder to recall.

You must remember, from your own experience as Treasury head, what were the resources of the state so far as foreign exchange or material that could be converted into foreign exchange -- these are matters of public knowledge. For thirty-two months we resisted financially and economically, on the basis of these alone, and in spite of all the difficulties created by foreign Banks, litigation and embargo, without floating a single foreign or domestic loan, and with so little inflation that our currency rose only to 15% (inclusive of Treasury bonds).

We had to feed Spain in its least productive zone, and with a decreased yield, and we had to purchase primary materials and materials of war. And finally we had to carry on a war of the great-war type. Do you remember 1931, when problems of infinitely less moment were debated with desperation and impotence? Do you remember that during the months of September and October of 1936 our financial situation-- despite the fact that our resources were inexhaustible-- was critical?

Are you aware of the enormous magnitude of the problems that had to be solved?

You were Minister of the Treasury, and are you not astonished?

Certain it is that at least you are surprised. For a year and a half you were predicting economic asphyxiation, because already there was no money left.

I will reveal to you the secret of that success: I employed men of judgment and disciplined technical competence-- and was frequently censured by you unjustly; much study; some skill; a good deal of discretion and sangfroid in great measure.

In May 1937, against my will and my desire, I was elevated to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

Energetically, but tactfully, I restored to the State a sense of its own integrity. Spain returned to the role of a nation possessed of authority and order. I moderated the aspirations of the various parties and organizations, forcing them to see the fact that it was impossible to make war and bring about revolution at the same time, without risking the loss of both.

My policy succeeded in forcing the most extreme parties-- the Anarchists and the Communists-- to accept as fact, not fiction, the legality of the Republic, and to transform themselves into real supporters of the regime.

Mutuality, harmony and unity were my constant themes. And it happened that these principles took root in the people, and within a few months the sentiment of tolerance in our Zone had made fantastic progress. In the Fascist zone, perhaps they could reduce the hatred of some and attract the sympathies of others, but we were able to progress toward a good peace through mutual intelligence, or the demoralization of the rebel groupings.

I tried to convince the world of the historical significance of our war; that it was a struggle between two imperialisms, the totalitarian and the democratic. Our goal might be more remote, but such was the reality. Sympathy for our cause was aroused in ever wider circles and understanding was achieved among certain elements of foreign governments that had formerly been hostile to us. The results were slow but tangible, and if we were still at war today, in spite of Franco's recognition in France and England through the betrayal of their respective leaders, what doubt is there that, considering the present world-scene, and even without frontiers, our situation would be more promising today than ever?

I can be proud of never having shirked my duty, no matter how hard it might have been, in the posts to which I did not climb but with which I had been entrusted by others. I can be proud of always having acted as my intelligence, however slight it may be, counselled me, without allowing myself to be led, nor permitting myself to be used as the simple executor of what other, and undoubtedly more illustrious, minds pretended was more proper. I asked advice, listened to counsel and learned

my lesson, but when it came to attacking a problem where my responsibility was involved and the decision rested with me, I followed my own judgment alone. Perhaps I yielded too often to supplication or complacence, but never to profit, flattery or pressure.

It would have been enough for certain loud-mouthed critics to have displaced me and assumed a command they had forced me to accept under difficult conditions, a command I tried to exercise with dignity, although it was not possible for me to exercise it with sufficient strength.

There are those who would have liked to make of me an ideal strawman, an acquiescent marionette who would have played the game without knowing who pulled the strings. These I promptly disappointed. And for almost two years I had to suffer their tricks and their hatred. Until at the end they defeated me. For it was not the Fascists who defeated our cause. No. It was defeated by the intrigues of a group of scoundrels and political mountebanks.

Why did they not dare to replace me? Out of fear. I was with the people, I had confidence in our people, and because I believed in the masses I was able to inspire them with faith in victory, a victory that was necessary although it cost some sacrifice, and I forced them to admit stoically that 'with bread or without bread we must resist.'

And this very fact of having divined the will of the people, of vibrating in unison with them, helped to stiffen resistance and staved off the hecatomb for a year.

Resist. Why? Simply because we were aware of what capitulation would mean. I quote your words; we knew that 'the most disastrous possible end to our war would be such as never could have been imagined by the most confirmed pessimists.' A great truth! But the pessimists refused to see this, despite the fact that I kept repeating it to the point of boredom.

Why did they not see it? Stupidity, confusion, complaisance, avoidance of suffering? I do not know. But it is certain that many who lacked strength, who were sated with suffering, who were resigned to the loss of the war, continued to

live their own lives and regarded every day that passed without the expected liquid ation as an imposition on their peace of mind. Without a thought to the millions of unhappy people who could not save themselves! Without a thought to the tens of thousands for whom the millions of a Croesus could not have sufficed to provide sufficient accomodations, and a decent life in exile!

My friend, I am willing to concede my weakness, my mistakes and my sins. Perhaps no one knows them better than I. But no one can destroy my conviction that I have always tried to serve my country and my people, in preference to my own convenience, or the convenience of individuals or cliques.

How many can say as much?

Be frank and a little generous-- despite the enormity of the undertaking, I have not done so badly if you are willing to take into account the conditions under which the professional politicians handed me the job, and the way in which they obstructed my efforts.

In short, you may be certain that if, to the superiority of the enemey and to other material and political factors there had not been added envy, treason and cowardice within our own ranks, we would not today be witnessing the heart-breaking spectacle in which, my dear Prieto, I am not a factor but merely another victim.

It is possible that you do not understand me. Many times I have heard you say so. Perhaps this is because I cannot express myself clearly, but perhaps there is also the fact that all men are not made of the same flesh, nor ruled by the same blood, nor impelled by the same prejudices, and for that reason though we use the same words, they do not have the same meaning for us all.

I have written more than I intended, and I will try to be briefer. Pardon the length. At least I will have afforded you the pleasure of contemplating what you choose to call my arrogant pride (or something more graphic, if less kind), whereas it is nothing more than a desire on my part not to conceal my opinions with a hypocritical mask of false modesty.

But there is still one important point.

In March [February ?] of this year when our Government was still recognized

by France, England and the United States, the Minister of the Treasury and I, agreed upon a plan that had been minutely worked out and prepared some time before, attempted to put in a safe place, in countries or through processes in which our right to the funds of the Republic could not become the subject of litigation, every useful means whereby the misfortunes of our emigrated countrymen could be allieviated, without respect to class, or political group or color, much less friendship or personal sympathy.

Thanks to our foresight and diligence we were able to salvage resources whose extent could not have been dreamed of by those who were certain two years ago that the war was at an end through the exhaustion of our resources, and who insanely advised that, because defeat was certain, funds should be deposited outside the country-- when the war still could and should have been won. They did not consider that such movements-- as we have seen-- are very difficult to conceal, and if such a thing had become known the results would have been catastrophic. They did not consider the fact that while we were still at war, all our resources had to be devoted to that purpose, especially since the difficulties of moving them frequently made it hard for us to attend to the most urgent requirements of the civil population and the army.

Fortunately the decision in this matter rested in the hands of men who were not, perhaps, capable of being easily agitated, but who were perhaps not over-impulsive-- they were on guard against incompetent schemes, and were lovers of study, and avid of technical advice.

Thus, with caution and speed, but without haste or confusion, it was possible to save what we have saved, and to be buttressed by a judicial position which, considering the circumstances, was the best possible.

But these men were not able to guess-- and there is no test they could have applied-- exactly how far the unfaithfulness and disloyalty of certain guardians of this treasure were to upset their calculations.

The result of this error of ours has been, that a good part of these funds, through your personal intervention or through your 'advice', are in hands and places

we know nothing about, in your custody or at your disposal.

I urge you to let me know if you are inclined to give the necessary orders or 'advice', so that the sums, values and objects detained may be placed at the disposition of people who were responsible for their salvage and utility, people who are obligated to give an accounting to those who have the right to ask it.

I would be grateful for a specific reply, so as to avoid all misunderstanding.

In the presence of Dr. Puche and Senor Mendez Aspe you have declared-- after refusing to give an account of the disposition of these funds-- that this is a matter which you are directing personally, and that you will do nothing without receiving detailed instructions.

On the other hand you arranged a meeting of the Deputies who are here, and neglected to invite our comrade Senor Bugeda who, being an expert in certain matters that were misrepresented abroad, might have been able to clear up the mystery and upset your plans; you insinuate to them that my welcome in official Mexican circles seems to have been cold and scarcely cordial (which is entirely false); you make use of the confusion that your imposing personality and prestige produces in the minds of certain simple-minded friends; you take advantage of the natural discontent of those who cannot understand why-- since such 'fabulous treasures' exist-- they must suffer privation; for their distress does not permit them to be calm enough to understand that, 1- there are half a million human beings to be cared for, and not them alone; 2- that a defeated Government or its residuum has never been known to extend to its people, as we have done, means and assistance such as few states have been able to lavish upon their people after a victory; you try to induce the Permanent Commission of the Cortes (an organization you recognize or not, as suits your convenience) to come to Mexico, because it was your hope that, in view of your former oratorical powers, you could induce it to follow you, while giving it the impression that it was pushing you-- thus relieving you of all responsibility on your part; you discuss my person and my actions behind my back without daring to face me; you invite other people to be present at a date when you know I will be absent.

Would you tell me what all this means?

In your published report to the Permanent Commission, on which I will make written and documented comment before the same body, you reproduce a telegram you sent me on April 7th, from which I quote:

'6- I CONGRATULATE MYSELF PLACING FUNDS AT DISPOSITION SAID PERSONS WHO PERHAPS MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SAVE THEM EVEN IF THEY HAD ARRIVED IN TIME.'

Have you changed your mind?

It would not surprise me.

Finally, there is an alarming series of facts and coincidences that I want to point out, so that others may draw from them the conclusions they feel pertinent.

You 'advise' Senor de los Rios to remit valuable material here without taking into account the fact that the Government-- still the Government-- which was still in touch with him by wire, might wish to give him other instructions.

Senor de los Rios, even before the Casado uprising, refuses to honor the instructions and orders transmitted to him from Paris by the Foreign Minister, but treats your 'advice' as though it were an order.

Senor de los Rios accepts your 'advice,' and you act in accordance with instructions received by him, yet you are surprised when Senor Del Vayo, who represents the Government, calls your attention to such meddling.

You 'advise' Senor Zabala to retain funds which, in obedience to the orders of the Minister of the Treasury, should have been placed where he ordered them to be placed.

You 'advise' that payments be made and expenses incurred out of funds for which Senor Mendez Aspe and I shall some day be held accountable.

You 'advise' Senor de los Rios to recognize Casado, reference to which is made in the coded telegram sent from Washington on March 9 at 7:37 p.m., from which I quote the following pertinent sentence: 'CONSULTED COMRADE PRIETO WHO IN MY PLACE CONSIDERS HE WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME. FEEL DUTY BOUND TO AID HIM FROM HERE AS I DID YOU IN SAME HUMANITARIAN ENDS, etc.' This was an action which, as I have been

able to prove, produced great astonishment and confusion in the United States, and which was followed by the abandonment of the Embassy, which in turn provoked--- and I have it from excellent sources-- the recognition of Franco.

As a result of such 'advise' and its pernicious consequences there occured, contrary to Government instructions which reached their destination, the abandonment of other Embassies, creating a situation which was able to compromise the basic plans the Government set up for the assistance of refugees, plans in which a few more days belay in the official recognition of Franco would have meant the rescue of greater resources.

Another coincidence is the fact that in your letter you attempt to explain the Casado rebellion with the same arguments used by the insurgents.

Another coincidence is the fact that totalitarian propaganda has made such an impression on you that you use the same arguments as those with which the Germans, the Italians and Franco have justified the rebellion and the foreign intervention, by asserting that the main seats of power had been given to the Communists.

I make no deductions. But does it not seem to you that the coincidences have been exceedingly curious and frequent?

I am sorry that the interview I requested with you has been refused.

All that has been said, and much more besides, could have been said in a less trenchant fashion. But it would have been more useful if, to the reasons you set forth in your letter you had not added cafe-gossip. Short of allowing myself to be dragged into insidious calumny, I would have knownhow to take drastic measures of my own.

If it makes you feel more at ease to avoid the 'mystifications which memory creates,' it makes me feel more at ease to have saved your correspondence intact, and thus to guard myself against the 'mystification of loss,' which as you must know is more to be feared when you are dealing with an expert in mystification.

I have not desired to offend nor mortify you. If anything I have said offends you, be assured that it was not so intended.

If I had felt inclined to justify or defend myself, I would have remained silent, as I was silent when an attempt was made to turn certain culprits into accusers.

But we are not here concerned with me. This concerns the defense of a policy of unity and mutuality; a policy of no use to those who are ready to give up everythings for lost, and solace themselves with hopes of eternal repose; a policy which will save Spain if we direct our obligations in terms of action, and not in terms of resignation.

But this discussion is irrelevant to the question of my friendship. Reasons for anger, differences of opinion, my disapproval or rejection of certain of your statements or your actions, cannot mitigate the high esteem which you deserve as a person, nor cool a profound and disinterested affection which makes it possible for me to judge with equal sorrow and love the extravagances into which your enviable temperament of an ardent fighter leads you.

Reiterating my firm and unshaken decision to have done with all epistolary discussion, I remain, with all affection and a cordial embrace,

Juan Negrin

June 25, 1939

Postscript:

Desirous of defining my position at the risk of contradicting the opening paragraphs of my letter, I want to add certain explanations:

1-The message you gave Zugazagoitia was not transmitted to me. And Zugazagoitia did well.

2-The fact that Zugazagoitia, Salazar and Luis were not very successful in overcoming your resistance to the idea of dining with me, or inviting me to dine with you, did not surprise me much when I considered how easily you yield to a furious humor, whenever you are dominated by certain complexes and sunk in hypochondria.

3-I entrusted neither Sanchez Roman, Portela, Prat, Bugeda nor anyone else with the mission of mediating our mutilated friendship-- 'mutilated' was the word I used in the manuscript of my letter, not 'ended' as the typed version had it by mistake--. Not that I would have hesitated to entrust them with such a mission, had I suspected a deliberate withdrawal on your part. These friends, who are more perspicacious than I am, or who had more time than I to pick up idle gossip, guessed at the truth and spontaneously made an attempt for which I thank them, now that I have learned of it from you. No doubt they felt authorized to do so, since they knew that, for my part, I still preserved the same sympathy and affection for you.

4-I cannot reconcile such resentment on your part, with your acceptance of direct or indirect services or concessions, demanded on the strength of our intimate friendship, which I was loathe to break. Nor your acceptance of unusual considerations, advantages and favors which you deserved, but which are not customary, nor did you grant them to your predecessor.

5-When, learning that you wanted an interview with me I visited you in your house in Esplugas a short time after you left the Government, I did not reject your 'proposal to undertake certain lines of action designed to determine the Fascist government's ideas about the possibilities of ending the war.' On the contrary, I authorized it and I warned you to be careful lest you walk into a trap. But I told you that there could be no question of any official representation on your part, and that if, through carelessness or indiscretion any of this should be discovered, the Government would hasten to disavow it. This was both an elementary and a necessary precaution, even had the enemy's duplicity not been known to us. To have dispensed with the first would have given the enemy reason to doubt our firmness, and to bolster his own. To have refused to admit the second, would have meant breaking the morale of our people and delighting our adversaries. You refused to accept the task under such conditions, on the grounds that your prestige and reputation could not be questioned. How could I have considered such maneuvers indiscreet when, since July and August in 1937, I had had direct or indirect contact with the enemy myself- Spaniards, Germans, Italians and neutral adversaries!

It was my duty to do this, in order to know what the enemy was thinking, in order to throw him off the track, and to take advantage of any possibility of peace. For this reason I was informed of their proposals, and was able to predict what happened later when a frightful act of treason brought about surrender.

When my intervention was direct, I took adequate precautions. With success. When I used either Spanish or foreign intermediaries, I did so in such a way as to conceal the hand of the Government.

How elementary all this is, for the head of a Government!

But in case you do not know it, let me tell you that some days after visiting your house I knew of these interviews, and of other dealings, through a diary or memory-book found by our intelligence service in France in the automobile that belonged to L--- the old Falangist you used to use as a confidant, and whom I later became convinced was a spy-- as well as through documents and correspondence taken from couriers of his in Pau and other French towns which I don't remember.

6-When, before leaving for Chile you visited me in Camprodon, I raised no objections to your idea that the Spanish-American countries might make effort toward mediation. I merely expressed the little faith I had in the success of such an effort, a sentiment you shared with me. It was not necessary to be a prophet to foresee the result. It was enough to have kept track of the relations and bonds between Franco, Germany and Italy, to know the 'undercurrent' of totalitarian policy.

The only conditions I imposed were, as in the previous case, that if anything slipped out, I would disavow it, and that so far as the Spanish-American countries were concerned, your proposal must assume the nature of a personal suggestion. I agreed that only in the case of the President of Colombia, for whom you claimed a great personal friendship, might you speak more openly and sincerely, having previously assured yourself of his discretion.

7-The fact that the crisis of April 1938 was not resolved more rapidly resulted from my efforts to bring about your reincorporation in the Government, and from the vacillations of the Chief of State, who did not believe that I could or should do this.

8-It is not true that within a few hours after the Government had stated in a solemn note its intention of remaining in Barcelona, the Ministries and State offices were ordered to evacuate toward the frontier.

The last note was phrased in such terminology that the least perspicacious would be aware of the danger. Certainly in writing it we did not discover all our plans to the enemy, just as we avoided provoking a panic that would have precipitated the fall of the city by encouraging an uprising of the many Fascists still in Barcelona.

After this note was issued, the Government or a part of it remained in Barcelona for two or three more days. The evacuation of the Ministries had begun two weeks earlier. And other bureaus and certain industries started to evacuate even earlier.

Except for purely administrative archives-- enormous in volume and not particularly valuable, and of which a great many were destroyed-- practically all our documents were placed in safe keeping.

Every Minister received definite instructions in ample time. Everything of interest in the Treasury and the Presidency was destroyed.

The archives of the General Staff and the Ministry of National Defense were saved. Of the latter, there was very little to salvage since when you left you had already taken a good deal of them. On more than one occasion we had to come to you to collect certain data and attempt to reconstruct certain affairs. And I recall that the total disappearance of papers and documents was the occasion for enormous annoyance on the part of our mutual friends Zugazagoitia and Cruz Salido, which I tried and succeeded in minimizing. I trust that you have been able to prevent these documents from falling into the hands of the enemy.

Essential material of the Under-secretariats, the Intelligence Service and other bureaus of Defense, was either saved or destroyed. Tons of unimportant documents which could neither be destroyed nor transported, were left.

Only in the Ministry of State, owing to the fact that the Minister was in Geneva and the Under-secretary did not carry out my orders precisely, was anything

left-- and fortunately it was not the most important-- a camion of archives that could not be got out of the country.

We succeeded in getting everything either to France and subsequently to other destinations, or else we burned it-- with that one unfortunate exception, and perhaps another file that became lost in the haste of a retreat that was followed closely by the enemy. You were mistaken when you loaned an ear to Fascist propaganda.

9-It was 'furor narrandi' that led you to write that the greatest majority of the inhabitants of a city of a million and a half knew of the entrance of the fascists only when their music sounded in the streets. It is true that, as always there were some unaware of the situation, but the statement is so ridiculous as to fall apart of its own weight.

10-I note that your 'dismissal', the word you have used on previous occasions to describe your resignation, might be considered a punishment or mark of infamy that only cowards or degenerates could be grateful for. We will return to this detail at the right time, as well as to the fact that the Executive Committee made it plain that it 'implied an indignity.'

11-I reject the imputation that 'La Vanguardia' was my 'scandalously personal' organ. 'La Vanguardia' was the organ and instrument of governmental policy. There was no paper in Spain that adhered to a particular policy that was so moderate in its personal praise of a Head of Government, and that was at my command. But if there is anyone who should be silent on this score, it is you. I do not care to cite other newspapers of that period, or of other periods. I cite that same 'Vanguardia', in which you always received the homage due you, and were extolled beyond measure by virtue of your merits.

12-'The ignominious parade of military forces through Barcelona to impose your (my) will on the composition of the Government' is an <u>ignominious lie</u>.

The Minister of the Interior, the chief of the Intelligence Service and Senor Zugazagoitia, Secretary-General of Defense (I do not suppose you will suspect them of being accomplices) informed me of a plot which involved extremist elements

and others, apparently Fascists, designed to create disturbances in Barcelona. Necessary measures were taken and I placed at the disposal and orders of the Minister of the Interior, the necessary equipment and forces of the Army. In this way the plot was nipped in the bud, without bloodshed or violence.

Later I had reason to suspect that there were also active in that plot certain members of the immense olla podrida of the discontented, the ambitious, the despairing, the resentful and the traitors who composed the lowest political circles of our rear-guard, and that perhaps in 'certain circles' it was thought well to take advantage of any change in the regime in order to bring about a shift of policy that annoyed them through its continuity and was hated in silence for its spirit of resistance.

It is surprising that you, who are so well-informed in most things, did not know what everybody knew-- the meaning of that 'ignominious parade.'

13-I sustain the charge of traitor made by 'La Vanguardia' against those who, every time the situation began to clear up-- believing idiotically that everything was all right-- returned to their everlasting intrigues, and on one occasion took advantage of my stay in Madrid to put into circulation tales and rumors intended to create an atmosphere that was invidious to the morale of our rear-guard.

What happened three and a half months ago proves that I am right.

If there were those who believed there should be a change in orientation of the Government, there were two roads to follow: to ask the Chief of State to place the power in other hands, or to convince the political parties who supported the Government, of the necessity for change.

It is inadmissable in moments of great gravity that the usual game should be permitted-- that game of throwing a stone with one hand and then hiding the hand to attract the attention of the man in power, and then to stab him in the back.

14-Your statement that the Vanguardia started 'a campaign for the purpose of having the Army bring the force of its arms to bear on decisions of the supreme Powers of the Republic,' is false.

Every time I noted a certain disillusionment with the fact that I was not disposed to allow myself to be a weak toy in strange hands, I spontaneously offered every facility for replacing me.

If I was not replaced it must have been out of respect for or fear of public opinion and the people, or for some other reason, but not because of any threats on my part, whether direct or indirect.

Why should I have threatened anybody?

15-I wish to state that the last attempt made to achieve unity and reconciliation, despite the sacrifice of all pride and what remains of my personal dignity after suffering so much vilification, has been rejected by you.

Yesterday, the 24th, you were asked by Senor Mendez Aspe to accept the presidency of an autonomous organization which would represent all Republican interests, with people designated by common agreement, in order to carry out plans for the aid and protection of the refugees. That organization would have to take over the administration of funds required as much for the auxiliary personnel, as for the financing of enterprises arising out of personal initiative and technical elements that would be allied with such an organization.

You reply that you cannot accept this offer since it would involve your violating certain texts, and hence you refuse to transfer the funds that are in your custody to those responsible for their use and shipment. You no longer require to receive 'specific instructions', but on your own initiative and after consulting with various ex-ministers-- Pozas, Barcia, Giral and Gordon Ordas-- on the second of this month when you knew of my imminent arrival in Mexico, you sent word to the Permanent Commission asking it to come to this city in order to take charge of funds you are holding illegally; you set yourself up above the organization to whom they should be entrusted, in spite of your cabled statement that they were intact for the disposition of those who sent them, who are the only people responsible and the only ones who possess the inventory that was made in conformity with the strict standards of our Administration.

Letter from Senor Don Indalecio Prieto to Dr. Juan Negrin

Mexico, D.F., June 26, 1939

June 26, 1939

Senor Don Juan Negrin

Esteemed Fellow-Member:

I have just read your letter of yesterday, which was left at my house late last night. I intend to answer it, but Victor Salazar, who takes my dictation and transcribes it onto the machine, is away, and as I would like to reply at considerable length, I cannot do it by hand inasmuch as there would be twice as much work involved, since I would have to make an extra copy for myself. Therefore I will have to delay replying until Victor returns. No harm can result from the delay, since there is no reason for haste, and the moment Salazar returns I shall answer you. However, since your letter implies that your departure from Mexico is imminent, I beg you to let me know where to address my reply, if you cannot be reached here.

Cordial greetings,

Indalecio Prieto

Letter from Dr. Juan Negrin to Senor Don Indalecio Prieto

Mexico, D.F., June 28, 1939

Mexico, June 28, 1939

His Excellency Senor Don Indalecio Prieto

My dear Friend:

I am leaving today for Mexicali, and from there I am going to New York where I will be until the 5th or 6th. My New York address is attached herewith.

My Paris house, 24 Avenue Charles Floquet, is always at your disposal.

Although I feel that my efforts to obtain an interview with you have been fruitless, I continue to hope that your attitude toward me will soon change to a happier one, and I send you my cordial greetings.

J. Negrin

My best to Blanca, Concha and Luis