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E D I T O R I A L

This number of CATALAN NEWS is appearing between the 11th September and the 15th of October, two historical dates for Catalonia. These two dates represent the attitude of the Spanish State to the Catalan Nation. The 11th September, 1714, was the end of a war to wipe out the traditional freedoms of Catalonia. The 15th October, 1940, saw the execution by firing squad of the Second Democratically elected President of the Catalan Autonomous Republic, Lluís Companys.

These two events show plainly the treatment that the Catalan people has received from the Spanish state. And now the world has been informed of two interesting things. One, that Franco has declared his intention of holding elections on the 12th November of this year. To anybody having the slightest knowledge of Spanish politics, it will be obvious that these elections are only wool to be pulled over the eyes of the United Nations, whose General Assembly is now meeting in Paris. That these elections will be democratic and will express the wishes of the Catalan and other Spanish peoples is such an obvious falsification that the only reason imaginable for holding them would be Goebels dictum: "The bigger the lie the better it will be believed".

General Franco's meeting with don Juan, Pretender to the Spanish Throne, on his yacht in the Bay of Biscay, is the second. The Catalan people can not accept any hash up which these two personalities have made. For obvious reasons, a solution to the present problem with conditions imposed by General Franco is unacceptable to Catalonia. From our point of view, any solution would be agreeable on the following basis: First, that the Catalan people regain their traditional freedoms; second, that the regime is Democratically chosen. Without these two conditions being fulfilled, Catalonia can not give her consent to any agreement whatsoever.

THE 11TH OF SEPTEMBER.

The 11th of September is a day of sadness for the Catalans, but it is also a day of pride. On the 11th September, 1714, Barcelona fell to the troops of Philip V and Louis XIV after a siege of 13 months. The regular troops who had conquered an Empire for the French King were held by the peasants, artisans and merchants of Catalonia led by Rafael de Casanova, the leader of the "Consell de Cent", the Municipal Assembly with autonomous powers, who was seriously wounded on the walls of Barcelona during their defence.

It has been stated, specially by Spanish historians, that the Catalans were not fighting for their country, but only for the Royal House of Hapsbourgh against the House of Bourbon. That they were fighting for one Royal House against the other is quite true, but they were doing so because one House was guaranteeing their centuries old rights, whilst the other was taking them away.

History is written by accidents. England, Holland and Austria were allied against France to support the claim of the Archduke Charles of Austria to the Spanish Crown, but as Charles father, the Emperor of Austria, died and Charles himself ascended to the throne the balance of power would have been broken, so the allies disbanded and convinced the Emperor to surrender his claim to Philip, the grandson of Louis the XIV. Charles demanded, as one of his conditions, that the rights of Catalonia should be preserved, but, as it happened, they were not. Instead, Menorca, one of the Catalan Balearic Islands, was given to Great Britain and a part of Northern Catalonia, now the Pirinées Orientals, was given to France.