

CATALONIAN CORRESPONDENCE

Released by the Catalonian Committee of New York  
P. O. Box 158, Times Square Station  
New York City



No. 10

September 25, 1937

MUSSOLINI'S "MARE NOSTRUM"

Barcelona, September 10, 1937

IN HIS RECENT speech at Palermo, Mussolini stated, with the characteristic arrogance and bravado of a dictator, that Sicily is the geographical center of the Second Roman Empire founded by himself. He emphatically asserted that not a single foreign soldier would ever set foot on that island.

It is not Victor Emmanuel III, but Benito Mussolini, who calls himself the new Roman Emperor. His latest boast brings back to true Catalan minds the fact that once Sicily, the great Mediterranean island, became, by the express will of its people, a part of the mighty dominion of the Count-King Pere II the Great of the Catalan-Aragonese Crown. (1)

History tells us that several centuries ago, in August 30, 1282, to be exact, an army of Catalan Almogavars, which constituted the shock forces of the Catalan Mediterranean Empire, set foot on Sicily after defeating the troops of Charles d'Anjou, Pope Martin IV's protégé and ally. It ought to be stated, however, that the Catalans of that time had no Mussolini to contend with.

Who are those foreign soldiers of our time to whom Mussolini has directed his latest bravado? They are not, we are sure, Catalan Almogavars. The Italian dictator evidently had in mind the French of Tunis who are facing the Italian island of Sicily.

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(1) See Dr. F. L. Critchlow's excellent translation of the "Chronicle of the Reign of King Pedro III of Aragon" by Bernat Desclot, (Princeton University Press, 2 Vols.)