Mr. George Messersmith,
State Department,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Messersmith:

A friend in Paris has sent me the enclosed copy of a letter from Merry del Val to President Roosevelt, which, though marked "personal", was given out in Paris by the Franco people to a selected list of Latin-American correspondents for use in Latin America exclusively, according to my friend's information. I thought that while you had no doubt seen the original, you might be interested in the use to which the copies were put. I have no way of knowing whether any South American papers published the document.

I have known the Marquis for a great many years and suppose that you have known him too. In olden times when the Spanish aristocracy seemed hardly more than charming survivals of past centuries, I found them very engaging. That however was before they saw fit to resort to murder in defense of their interests which, as you must know, were hardly menaced in the first years of the Republic. I shall never forget the night in Madrid in late August or early September in 1934 when shots were fired from a speeding car on a group of boys and girls of the Socialist Youth returning from the Guadarrama Mountains. It was a Summer night. They were
dressed in white trousers and skirts and red blouses, true, but to me they represented the first efforts to free a youth that had so long been held down by the Church to futile and inhibited lives. They marched singing to guitars. A very impressive car, later identified as the property of young Merry del Val, the former Ambassador's son, sped by and from it a machine-gun had things to say. A girl named Juanita Rico was killed and her brother and several others were wounded. You can imagine the effect on the Republicans and Socialists of Madrid. Young Merry del Val, a Monarchist aviator named Ansaldo and one of Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera's sisters were named but nothing was ever done.

The murder of Juanita Rico was the first political murder in Madrid under the Republic, the first of a series of terrorist attacks by Phalanxists that led to what you know. There had never been violence of such a character from Socialist or Republican ranks. That was the beginning. I find it interesting to recall this episode in connection with the letter to the President from the elder Merry del Val. In comment I should like to say that though Goebbels has developed the technique of the direct lie, the Old Spain was never loath to resort to this technique. As you doubtless know, the lie qua lie was never reproved by Catholic teaching in Spain. That was one of the reproaches directed at the Jesuits by some of the orders in the years when it was still
safe for Catholics to criticize Catholic methods. (For the best and most forthright statement of Jesuit policy in this country do read Father Talbot's "Catholicism in America" in "America Now," that fascinating symposium on contemporary problems edited by Harold Stearns)

As you may know, I covered the early stages of the Spanish war from Gibraltar. I saw far too much. But since I find myself in the strange position of being obliged to prove that I saw what I saw (and I am proving it for publication with documents from Rebel sources almost exclusively *) I prefer to cite other authorities. There is Georges Bernanos who describes in "Les Grandes Cimitieres sous la Lune" (published here by Macmillan as "A Diary Of My Times") the White Terror in Majorca such as he witnessed it for nearly a year. I wonder just how the Marquis would reconcile his claim that everyone shot in Rebel Spain was judged by properly constituted courts with what Bernanos has to say. I shall never forget a piece in The Daily Mail of August 22, 1936 by Harold Cardozo, one of Beaverbrook's most versatile whores, who describes the execution of Republicans who were considered guilty of crimes "by collective consent." Nor the ABC of Seville, in the first weeks of the Movement, reporting the execution of generals who had failed to rise in support of Franco although they had done nothing to resist the Movement of National Salvation. These men were court-martialed and found guilty of "rebelion militar" (for having failed to rebel). Nine generals
that I know of were shot in this way for having failed to help save Spain from Communism. Admiral Azaro, aged Monarchist and one-time Minister of Marine, was executed for "rebelion militar" because he refused to turn over the dockyard at El Ferrol to the Rebels; he said that as an old man and a caballero he would not break his oath of allegiance but would simply go home and abandon his post to the Rebels. This wasn't enough.

Let me take this occasion to point out that the Gallup poll on the Spanish issue reveals an additional fact of considerable interest, under proper analysis. As you know, our Doctor of Public Opinion found that sympathies lay as follows: for the Loyalists, 76% as compared with 75% a year ago and for the Rebels 24% compared with 25% a year ago. What struck me most was the fact that where a year ago approximately one-half of the people polled favored neither side now only a third are undecided. "Among Catholic voters reached in the survey," said the New York Times, "three said that they were not in sympathy with either side. Those Catholics expressing a definite choice sided approximately six to four in favor of Franco." (58% for Franco and 42% for the Government). But if one analyzes the figures in another light, to find out how many Catholics out of the total polled actually side with Franco one gets, by my simple mathematics, only 38%. And that, I can't help but feel, is a very important finding. I have never felt that the Catholics in this country or any other minority had a right to ask us to pattern our foreign policy on their likes and dislikes but I grant that in this imperfect world likes and dis-
likes, particularly of powerfully organized religious groups, must be taken into account. But now, after the Gallup release, it will be impossible for our Franquist friends to claim — with honesty — that American Catholics are overwhelmingly pro-Franco and that therefore our "neutrality" must be maintained for a highly un-neutral purpose.

As you well know, Cardinal Mundelein has never come out for Franco and his admirable paper, The New World, makes refreshing reading after The Brooklyn Tablet, America and such hill-billy Catholic organs. I suppose you know who the people are who are so active in the DON'T RAISE THE EMBARGO campaign. I don't have to tell you about Laughlin. Nice fellow and no doubt an ornament at the Court of Alfonso the Thirteenth, though some would not admit it. But no one could accuse him of being a democrat. Hardly. I remember how badly informed he was in the Spring of 1931 in the weeks before the Fall of the Monarchy. I also remember his one-man war on the Republic, details of which will appear in my book. Some of said details are very, very funny. About Father Thorning and Merwin K. Hart I would like to say a thing or two. But this letter is already long enough and so I am appending a memo. I had the doubtful pleasure of debating Father Thorning at a Foreign Policy dinner in New York. John Gunther, Ray Swing, John Whitaker and Lillian Mowrer were there. All listened carefully and could discover no other basis for maintaining the embargo in Father Thorning's address apart from the fact that
the Generalissimo had a Christian mother and is fighting a "just war." In fact Mr. Whitaker felt impelled to get to his feet and enquire, in his best Chattanooga English whether there were any more reasons. There were none.

After all, aren't the Harts and the Thornings et. al. asking us to maintain the embargo for un-neutral ends, to enable their boy to win by continuing to handicap the Spanish Republic? Strange use for our Neutrality!

I suppose they would say that those of us who want it raised (the dangerous radical elements like Stimson, Dorothy, Lippmann, Colonel Knox, the New York Sun, the Portland Oregonian, the Washington Post etc. who have also found the Embargo unjust and dangerous) are actuated by our hope of a Republican victory. In my case that it is indeed so, in part. But I can argue sincerely and I hope effectively that the Embargo should be raised because it has worked a grave injustice to a friendly nation, because it has furthered the designs of certain Powers, and because it is fast discrediting (or, as some might prefer to put it, showing up) the ideal of neutrality via embargo, the embargo-peace dream.

The New York Sun put it very well, I thought, in an editorial (February 11, 1938) when it said, "It aids the strong against the weak and hamstrings the United States in the performance of its functions. . . . Recognition of the truth of this denunciation of the law does not require partisanship in the struggle in Spain; it calls only for acknowledgement of the facts."
I can't help but wonder if our friends of the various committees aiding Spain whose work I think has been so helpful aren't perhaps ill-advised in campaigning for the lifting of the embargo "to aid Spain." I have never felt that, as an American, I had a right to ask for aid to Spain, other than humanitarian, but I have the right, and I use it to, to ask that we correct a grave injustice, that we cease to aid Franco and his allies, that we become, at long last, neutral in the Spanish war.

Some day early in the week I would like very much to drop in on you and get your counsel. I was greatly cheered by what you said at the Council dinner six or eight weeks ago and overjoyed when the President said what he said in the Message. I should hate to see anything done by well-meaning individuals or organizations at such a moment that might prejudice the cause they mean to serve.

Might I call Tuesday or Wednesday and ask for an appointment?

Forgive the length of this.

Sincerely,

Jay Allen.

* I have finished a job on the "bullring massacre" at Badajoz in August, 1936, which it was my misfortune to cover. This has been dismissed as a simple lie by Franquist friends. I have gone back to Rebel and to Portuguese papers to prove it. And I find I have thrown myself open to a charge of much greater gravity, for a Chicago Tribune correspondent, than lying; I
am guilty, it would seem from my own findings, of the most serious offense on the Tribune calendar, namely UNDERSTATEMENT. I should like to show this job to Jimmie Dunn sometime.

P.S. Enclosed please find in addition to the Merry letter several memos which might conceivably interest you.