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Washington, D. C.
March 21, 1939.

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Dear Jay:

I have just had a letter from my husband in Paris giving me certain facts about the situation both in Spain and along the border.

The situation of the refugees is no less tragic, he tells me. I am bewildered, frankly, by the failure of the American press to give anything like a clear picture of the condition in which these 440,000 people are living and the fearful prospects that await them. It seems to me that the utmost importance must be attached to Bonnet's maneuvers to get the refugees back to Spain. Bonnet knows only too well that he would not be returning them to their Spain but to Franco and his firing squads of his monstrous Law of Political Responsibilities. We know and he knows the fate that awaits them.

There has been much talk about the willingness of South American countries to take numbers of Spanish refugees but nothing definite has been put forth as far as I know and, in any case, the problem of transporting these refugees would be the major problem. ~~I know and, in any case,~~ What a wonderful thing it would be if President Roosevelt was to see his way clear to call on these countries in some tactful way to make definite proposals for taking them in and for the United States through its generous relief organizations to undertake the question of transportation. I am quite sure that if the suggestion were made the United States would not have to undertake the entire burden of transportation. Other collaboration in the way of ships would be forthcoming, I am sure, particularly from the British.

The immediate problem is how to prove to the French authorities that the Spanish refugees within her gates have not been forgotten by the whole world and are not to be left to the tender mercies of the Garde Mobile and the Senegalese. And particularly not to Franco.

There is another urgent problem - and that is the saving of the lives of the hundreds of thousands of good Republicans of all parties in what is left of Republican Spain. The treasonable behavior of Casado, Miaja and Besteiro makes it impossible for those of us who have tried to hold things together these thirty odd months to take any action. But a word from the right place to the authorities in Madrid and a few ships sent by the

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United States, France and Great Britain to Republican ports to take these people off when the collapse comes, would be of enormous value. Literally hundreds of thousands of lives would be saved. England and France could hardly do less after their direct intervention to overthrow Negrin who, as everybody must realize now, was not attempting to "prolong the war" but simply to make a united stand long enough to get guarantees from Franco in the one way that it would have been possible to get guarantees, by resisting ⁱⁿ such a way as to oblige him to prepare for the offensive that he clearly has no desire to make. If the United States were to take the initiative I am sure that the British and the French would follow.

But I am sure that you realize as well as I that steps to meet both of these tragic problems must be taken at once if they are to be taken at all. At any moment Bonnet might decide to send the refugees back to France and now that he and Daladier have been given full powers he could do it quickly with little chance of any effective resistance by the opposition. And at any moment the Casado surrender could take place and all those thousands of courageous Republicans who have fought so well and so gallantly for the independence of their country -- can anyone doubt this any longer? -- will be shot. They have fought too for the democracies of the world -- and can anyone doubt this any longer? and what a tragic irony it would be if they were to be shot because of the positive intervention on Franco's side of certain of these democracies and because of the indifference of the others.

I write you this because I am deeply troubled. I know that you will do what you can to bring this situation to the attention of your friends. I am continually struck by the number of people in places both low and high in this country who understand all the implications of the Spanish tragedy and who have done and are still doing so much to aid us. They will understand that these thousands of gallant men must not be shot and will understand too that they can be of great use in Latin America where men of proven courage and proven willingness to resist German and Italian Fascism must be very useful indeed.

Sincerely,

Constancia de la Mora.