

SOCIAL INJUSTICE

The Real Cause of the War in Spain

by James F. Edwards

EVERYONE has asked the same questions, "How is it possible in a Christian country for human beings to slaughter one another in a fratricidal war that threatens the peace and security of Europe and the world?" "What are the underlying causes of the strife in Spain?" "Who is responsible for this catastrophe that has racked and tortured a nation noted in history for its art and architecture, its music and culture?"

Few have answered these questions satisfactorily. Few, outside Spain, know what preceded the civil war that began on that momentous day in July, 1936, when a crowd of so-called "rebels," under the direction of Francisco Franco, opened the campaign to restore to the Spanish people their liberties lost completely under the iniquitous left government. The answers to these questions may be readily given by reviewing the social conditions that existed in Spain long before a segment of Moscow was moved to the Iberian Peninsula.

Basically, the cause of the present civil war was *social injustice*. *Social injustice* led to the birth of radicalism and its concomitant evils.

Nearly two years before the war started, Caballero, former premier of Spain, stated to H. E. Knoblauch, distinguished author of "Correspondent in Spain": "Lenin declared that Spain would be the second Soviet Republic in Europe, and Lenin's prophecy will come true. I shall be the second Lenin."

Caballero, Alcala-Zamora, Lerroux, and others prominent in the radical cause, had witnessed the exploitation of the poor, the concentration of wealth, the grave injustices of the Spanish grandes and the numerous other evils that pierce the soul of a people; and they knew that here was fertile ground in which to plant the seeds of Marxism. From their plantings they hope one day to harvest the cockle of Communism.

Radicalism is not the cause of the civil war that still rages in Spain. Radicalism is the aftermath that led to the conflict. At most, radicalism was an intermediate cause. The chief reason lay in the condition of the masses which was as much a feudal system, in modern times, as the plight of millions in earlier centuries, held in the bondage of feudal lords. One has but to turn to a census taken of a

third of Spain in 1925 to decide that. That census indicated all the evils of concentrated wealth, of land ownership in the hands of the privileged few, of gross neglect and injustice toward the men and women who produced the wealth of the country. That census showed the total of individual land owners to be 1,126,412. Of that number 847,548 received a return of less than one peseta a day, the equivalent of less than twenty cents in our money; 146,710 obtained less than a dollar a day; 22,450 between one and four dollars a day.

There are still 9,004 families to be accounted for out of the 1,126,412 families in the 1925 census of this portion of Spain. These nine thousand families had a larger combined income than the combined income of the one million one hundred thousand families who received from twenty cents to four dollars a day from their land.

THIS is not all. The Spanish working class comprises seventy-two per cent of the population of the nation. Their average wage ranged from twenty-five to fifty cents a day. And they were unemployed for four or five months out of each year. Nor is this the whole story. In certain sections, land owners refused to employ men in their fields and hired women only, who were paid approximately sixteen cents a day. As late as last summer, this writer was told of instances where Spanish grandes employed as many as two hundred servants in their villas and paid them the equivalent of less than a dollar a month for their services. The authority for the statement was a foreign correspondent in Spain, who had lived and traveled from one end of the country to the other, witnessing battle after battle in the long siege to save the nation of Ferdinand and Isabella from communism, syndicalism and anarchy.

Out of this maelstrom of rank injustice another brain child of Karl Marx was born in Southwestern Europe, a new Soviet that was to rival its twin sister in Northeastern Europe. And Pravda, leading periodical of the U. S. S. R., could state of the civil war in Spain what it had added to a previous declaration of Lenin: "Our program is an all-embracing and blood-soaked reality." Pravda printed that statement on September 9, 1928. At last, Europe was witnessing the realization of the Marxian dream, in its extremities.

THE AVERAGE citizen of the United States may be horrified at the facts and figures relating to the social conditions existing in Spain long before the fratricidal conflict began. From afar off, it seems impossible that, in a Christian country, men were made to labor for less than twenty cents a day and women for slightly more than the cost of a package of cigarettes. To the American mind it appears incredible that nine thousand families should receive more than one million one hundred thousand families. Evidently, the American citizen has not examined a United States census as late as 1929 which presents the unbelievable fact that *thirty-six thousand* families in our own country had a combined income as

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Bombed out of her home, this anxious mother wonders what lies ahead.

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16 PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Liberty of conscience and education.
 Just, living, annual wage.
 Nationalization of important public resources.
 Private ownership of all property.
 Control of private property for public good.
 Abolition of Federal Reserve Banking System and establishment of a government-owned Central Bank.
 Restoration to Congress of its sole right to coin and regulate the value of money.
 Cost of living maintained on an even keel.
 Cost of production plus a fair profit for the farmer.
 Labor's right to organize.
 Recall of non-productive bonds.
 Abolition of tax-exempt bonds.
 Broadened base of taxation on basis of ownership and capacity to pay.
 Simplification of government and lower taxes.
 Conscription of wealth as well as men in event of war.
 Sanctity of human rights preferred to sanctity of property, with government's chief concern for the poor.

The Last Hope For Peace

NO ONE KNOWS when the seemingly inevitable war will break upon a horrified world.

Whenever it does break, it is reasonably certain that the present national administration will favor our participating as a belligerent, should the interests or the imperial territory of Great Britain become jeopardized.

We have the open statements of New Deal Congressional leaders—that our fate is tied up with the “democracies” of the world—and that “the British Empire is our first line of defense”—to support this reasoning.

Supporting it too, and more directly, is the recent statement of Anthony Eden to the House of Commons that his government and the government of the United States *had understandings which he could not reveal.*

Most directly supporting our reasoning, is the speech which the President made in Chicago last fall, when he pledged himself to positive action against aggressor nations and discouraged the people from hoping that our government might keep out of the next war.

It would be most unfortunate if the disaster of general war should break out before the people have the opportunity to speak out, articulately, in denouncement of Mr. Roosevelt's foreign policy.

The last opportunity, in all probability, that the people will have to direct their responsible leaders to keep this nation out of war, will be the Congressional elections to be held in November of this year.

In every Congressional district of the nation, citizens who believe that our participation in a general war for any purpose would merely repeat or magnify the folly of 1917-18, should form committees which will publicly challenge every candidate for office to state his honest beliefs about the preservation of our neutrality and our peace.

No voter should go to the polls without knowing how his Congressional candidates stand, independent of all party platforms, on the issue of “peace vs. war.”

In the light of the consistent attitude of the American people ever since the World War, there is no question that, if the issue can be raised, they will deliver an imperative mandate to keep this nation out of European and Asiatic massacres—*whatever the cost may be.*

Fitting Things Together

THE PRESIDENT wants the present session of Congress to break up at an early date and go home.

Why should this be true? The Rooseveltian custom, heretofore, has called for action in the face of crises.

Under our form of government, action necessarily comes through the Congress. The Constitution vests in Congress alone the legislative powers necessary to change and direct the policies of government.

Why is it then, that in spite of the continuing Roosevelt “recession”—a crisis potentially as serious as the crisis of 1929—the President wants the law-makers to get out of Washington as soon as they possibly can?

The answer can probably be found in the November Congressional elections and in the perilous state of international affairs.

The present Congress has rebelled more often than it has co-operated with the Chief Executive.

Congress reached the high point of its “insubordination” when it checkmated his determined drive to emasculate the Supreme Court. In so doing it branded the President as an aggressor against the liberties of the people. It scattered his straw-man mandate all over the nation.

So the President wants Congress to mark time until the people again can “speak.” All the forces and the people's money power of the New Deal will be at work, meanwhile, to defeat every Congressman and Senator who opposed the President's dictating will.

The President also has shown a Wilsonian eagerness to entangle this nation in the intrigues of Europe and Asia.

During such periods of hazard for our people, the President should be supported by the restraining influence of a convened Congress. Apparently he doesn't want such support.

It should be remembered that the Constitution placed the power to declare war in the Congress, the direct representatives of the people.

That power, however, can be completely nullified by an executive who, through diplomatic and publicity channels, succeeds in involving our government so deeply in the differences between other nations that the Congress is left no other course but to declare war.

We know the President's publicly demonstrated purposes and predilections. We know that he wants the Congress to adjourn at the earliest possible date. We are merely trying to fit the two things rationally together.

THIS YEAR marks the twentieth anniversary of the ending of the World War.

We read in the daily press that those twenty years have weeded out all but a handful of the leaders whose names were made great by the most horrible carnage the human race has ever known.

Disingenuous, sentimental stories are told of Marshall Petain tending the roses at his country place in France.

It is revealed that General Weygand, senile and sweetened, reads essays on “The Goodness of Virtue” to the French Academy.

Lloyd George, aged and subdued, mells under the sun of southern France.

Colonel Edward M. House is merely an old man, no longer gifted with the awful power to lobby a nation into disaster.

Still surviving among the few is the most hated man of an era made mad with hatred, ex-Kaiser Wilhelm. He lives retired in Holland with all the dignity, if not the power, of the days when he was democracy's arch-fiend.

EYES and EARS by MARK MEECHAN

Pershing is still busied about his war. He is head of the commission which keeps alive war's “sentimentalities” by building and maintaining war memorials in France.

Most of the rest of them are gone, those great names associated with mankind's greatest misfortune. But their memories are sacredly preserved—in the shrines where they lie buried, in the histories that color their living days with synthetic glory, in the press which finds them still of profound “human” interest.

There is another way, however, to look upon the twentieth anniversary of the World War. In some manner, the American people must be inspired to meditate upon and grow sentimental over not the dead but the living, not the dying but those springing eagerly and daringly into life's full bloom.

The twentieth anniversary of the last violent death offered “to make the world safe for democracy” dramatizes something far more important to civilization than the passing of the war lords of yesterday.

The twentieth year that rolls over the poppies and the crosses sprinkling the fields of France, challenges all men, ruler and ruled, to realize that a new generation is at the threshold of its destiny—and to interpret the rising of that generation as a benediction.

Fate has been at work these twenty years to give the human race another chance.

THE BABIES who were being born while American doughboys went over the top to win the Allies' war for them, are twenty years old this year.

They have brothers and sisters who are

twenty-five, and brothers and sisters who are fifteen—this year.

All these young millions, the pride and hope of our nation, know nothing of the horrors and the unpayable cost of war.

They are ripe for carrying rifles, manning machine guns, piloting bombers and maneuvering howitzers. Or they are ripe for turning their minds and energies to mastering the great social and international problems which their fathers and their grandfathers have signally failed to master.

To which labor will their eager minds and their strong hands be devoted? The twentieth anniversary of the battles of St. Michiel and Meuse-Argonne demands the answer to that question.

THE BATTALIONS of youth are on the march—to take up the more somber but more heroic pursuits of peace or to plunge into the blazing and degenerating glory of modern war.

This new generation is no better and no worse than the generation which is passing.

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