

Why Spain Is Torn Asunder

The fight of brother against brother goes on in Spain. As we go to press, the government forces appear to be gaining on the Aragon front while General Franco's fascist hordes seem to be making headway on the Asturian front. One army alone has no gains to chalk up—the army of women and children, of old men and halt men, behind the government and the fascist lines. On them air bombs and artillery fire continue to rain death and destruction.

It is a fight of brother against brother, with anti-fascist brothers aiding one of them, and Nazi and Italian fascist brothers aiding the other. With supreme hypocrisy, the democratic states have made a football of international diplomacy of Spain's misery, and the whole world is in on the war, aiding and abetting in one way or another.

It is not too much to say that these actions generalize responsibility for the horrors that mark the armed struggle on the Iberian peninsula. Mob atrocities behind the government lines appear to have abated lately, but their memory is fresh. We do not have to trust to memory to call into account the deliberate military atrocities—the mass execution of ideological adversaries—perpetrated by Franco's army at the command of his high officers. Even as we write they still go on.

Why is Spain the scene of men run amuk? As George Seldes has said, every fair-minded objective investigator of the Spanish situation

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this system differences in skill and intelligence between workers are emphasized. Such differences must find expression in earning power. Thus the equality of Marxist dialectic comes in conflict with natural law. It can't be done without a headache, from which the Soviet is suffering.

—F. C.

See: "Science of Political Economy," pp. 310-312.
"Progress and Poverty," pp. 206-210.
"Teachers Manual (P. & P.)," L. IV, Q. 29.

has written that the land question is the great problem of Spain. Almanac statistics show that 1 per cent of the population owned 51.5 per cent of the land. And this included all the better grades of land. Under the degeneration of land use which absolute private ownership brought about, the wealthier class, including the former nobility, held the 10 per cent of fertile land and most of the 45 per cent of moderately fertile land. Mining of the soil made 35 per cent of the remaining land infertile; it was this—the remaining 10 per cent is nothing but rock, perhaps not even suitable for breeding goats—upon which the 99 per cent of the population was largely dependent.

In 1929, the year for which fairly accurate statistics are available, there were 2,000,000 landless peasants who lived in a state of peonage or semi-peonage. Altogether there were 4,250,000 peasants owning 13.3 per cent of the land. These included the owners and their families, eking out a poverty-stricken existence from patches of ground far too small.

The total number of landowners in all Spain was about 1,023,600. Of these, 845,000 gained less than a peseta a day from their holdings and had to resort to day labor, at pitiful wages because of mass unemployment, for a living. About 160,000 lived precariously solely on the yield of their holdings. Some 9,700 landowners lived comfortably. The great latifundists, who in fairly recent times had gobbled up the little owners and who are Spain's one-per-cent, numbered in all the country 9,000 landowners!

The effects of this distribution followed universal pattern. As Pascual Carrion pointed out in "La Reforma Agraria," about 60 per cent of the land was left uncultivated and only about 27 per cent was cropped each year, although some 75 per cent of the people still depended directly on agriculture for a living. In some provinces illiteracy in rural sections reached 85 per cent. Conditions were hard. Few public services were afforded. The landless farm workers

who cultivated the great estates were at the mercy of the landlords. In the regions where small farms abound, share croppers and leaseholders who cultivated them were frequently dispossessed, as the Foreign Policy Association reported, on any convenient pretense.

A similar condition affects the other aspects of the land question. Whereas the absentee owners of agrarian land are almost wholly fellow-Spaniards with voting addresses in the country, the absentee owners of the other natural resources are often French, British, Italian and Dutch interests. Land speculation was not an unusual phenomenon in the municipalities; its only benefit was that it caused them to rush to take advantage of the limited social land value taxation measure which the Georgists of Spain pushed through the Cortes.

Outside of the municipal land value taxation law, which is permissive and not mandatory, the republic has made timid efforts at social reform—efforts the imperialist-democratic bloc have sought desperately to block. Since August, 1933, 4,289,215 hectares of land have been distributed to the poor, over four-fifths of this since the outbreak of the barbarian rebellion. This will bring temporary benefit, but greater difficulty in the long run, for it will create a new, diffused class of owners who, while a new cycle of concentration is started, will be a new bulwark to absolute ownership.

Spain is torn asunder by war. She still faces social revolution. Only the future will tell if she will pass that stage of growth peacefully, rationally, or if in that period too, brother will murder brother.

—W. L.

See: "Progress and Poverty," pp. 527-548; pp. 548-552. "Land Question," pp. 21-23; pp. 30-34. "Social Problems," p. 79; p. 150; pp. 230-231. "Condition of Labor," pp. 74-75. "Teachers Manual (P. & P.)," L. VI, Q. 25, Q. 33; L. VII, Q. 6, Q. 14, Q. 15, Q. 16; L. X., Q. 23, Q. 24.