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The Truth About Spain

Rudolf Rocker

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If there is any event that can bring about a rediscovery of inner strength on the part of organized labor and the libertarian elements of the world, it is the grand struggle against Fascism now being waged in Spain. After the unresisting defeat of the labor movement in Germany the effect of the heroic battle of the Spanish workers, peasants, and intellectuals against the Fascist bandits is that of a refreshing thunderstorm. It is the first time since Fascism made its appearance in Europe that the entire population of a country offered such a spirited resistance to the imminent danger. That is why the example of these struggles is international in its significance, far transcending in scope the frontiers of one country.

The desperate struggle is the common cause of all movements that do not want to fall under the bloody yoke of Fascism. Yet one must single out the surpassing promptness of action shown by the C.N.T. and the F.A.I., which from the very beginning imparted a momentum to the struggle, enabling it to banish the bloody spectre of Fascism from the gates of Catalonia.

It was the plan of the plotting militarists to seize all the important points by a strategy of surprise which would render

inevitable the fall of Madrid. The most important link in this plot was the crushing of Catalonia, the fortress of the revolutionary labor movement of Spain, so as to cut off the capital from all the large cities. Catalonia is the center of Spanish industry and also the most highly developed province in respect to culture and spiritual life. The fall of Barcelona, the largest city of Spain, would have rendered impossible any prolonged resistance to the Fascists. That is why General Goded flew in haste to Barcelona in order to lead the revolt in person.

But the vigilance of the C.N.T. and the unexampled bravery of its members frustrated those plans at the very beginning. In a few days the so-called "rebels" were utterly defeated. The victory of the workers in Barcelona led to the quick suppression of the Fascist revolt in Taragona, Lerida, and Mataré and the liberation of the whole Catalonian province from the Fascist hangmen. The workers' militia soon comprised 20,000 men, 13,000 of whom belonged to the C.N.T. and the F.A.I., 2,000 to the Socialist trade unions of the U.G.T., and 3,000 to the parties of the People's Front. Apart from that, Barcelona also equipped an army of 8,000 men, all members of the C.N.T., who, under the command of the Anarchist Durutti, set out for Saragossa in order to wrest the city from the hands of the Fascists.

There are so many fables circulated by the foreign press about the aims of the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. that it is necessary to give our readers a clear picture of these two organizations. We, of course, cannot at the present time go into the long and glorious history of the struggles conducted by these powerful organizations, or of the persecutions to which they were subjected. It would fill volumes. For the present we will only dwell upon the ideological significance of this movement and point out how this ideology operated in the tactics of these organizations.

The "Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo" (C.N.T.) was founded in 1910 and within a period of five or six years embraced a million organized workers in all parts of the

to heinous atrocities. It has assumed control over every phase of life, including the most intimate relations of the sexes, which even the worst despotism used to respect. Marriages between Germans and non-Arians have been declared a crime against the "purity of the race," and sexual ethics reduced to the level of cattle breeding.

And this situation is aggravated by the ever-present danger of war since Mussolini and Hitler came to power. Europe resembles an armed camp; each nation lives in constant suspicion and fear of its neighbors, for which the tyranny of Fascism is mainly responsible. This we have gained by defeating "Bolshevism."

The terrific struggle now going on in Spain is a sign of the times. Now the question is one of repulsing an enemy who threatens the very basis of civilization and freedom. Germany, Italy, Austria are bloody warnings. Woe to the world if the heroic struggle of the Spanish people should be stifled in the blood of the last defenders of freedom and social justice!

this the whole insurrection would have been ended long ago; for with the exception of some parts of Navarre, Old Castille and Leon, the whole Spanish population is against the rebels. The heroic stand of the people in every part of the country bears witness to the fact that Spain again has become the victim of the dark powers from abroad. If the Spaniards lose their battle, Europe will be doomed. It will be the beginning of a new Holy Alliance, the beginning of a reign of terror and barbarism all the world over.

Like Mussolini, Hitler, and their followers in other countries, the heads of the Spanish Fascists termed their crime against the Spanish people "a war against the danger of bolshevism." They know that the people of Spain are against any kind of dictatorship, but they know also that this scarecrow is an excellent means of frightening the Philistine. Even so-called liberals in foreign countries have been taken in by this bluff. Let them have a look at Germany and Italy where "Bolshevism" has been defeated by the new "liberators of humanity."

Not only Socialism and the labor movement have been crushed by Fascism: every one who dared to have an independent opinion, or even to remain neutral, has been crushed by Fascism "marching over the body of freedom," as Mussolini termed it. Art, science, philosophy and literature have been forced into its service. Thousands were slaughtered to secure its triumph in Italy, Germany, Austria and elsewhere. Innocent men and women, among them artists, writers and thinkers of international fame, were hounded into exile, private homes invaded, valuable libraries burned. Thousands have been torn from their families, thrown into concentration camps, tortured morally and physically, and many have been driven to slow death or suicide. In Germany this madness, aggravated by race hatred, particularly against the Jews, has assumed the most bestial forms. The barbarism of ages long past has been revived. Fascism has roused the lowest passions and incited the people

country. The organization was new only in name, but not in its tendencies and methods. The history of the Spanish labor movement is shot through with long periods of reaction during which the movement could lead only an underground existence. After each such period the movement was organized anew. The name changed, but the aims remained the same.

The first labor movement in Spain arose in Catalonia in the year 1840 when, in Barcelona, trade unions were organized by Juan Munts, a weaver. The Spanish government tried to suppress this movement, and sent General Zapatero, one of the darkest reactionaries in Spanish history, to Barcelona. In June, 1855, a great general strike broke out in Catalonia which developed into a full rebellion. The workers wrote upon their flags on the barricades: "Asociacion o Muerte!" (The right to organize or death!) The rebellion was brutally suppressed, but the movement continued its underground existence, until finally it wrested from the government the right of free association.

This first labor movement was strongly influenced by the ideas of Pi y Margall, the leader of the Spanish federalists and a disciple of Proudhon. Pi y Margall was one of the foremost savants of the country, a great and all embracing mind, whose works exercised the greatest influence upon the development of libertarian ideas in Spain. His political ideas had much in common with those of Richard Price, Priestly, Thomas Paine, Jefferson, and other representatives of English-American liberalism of the first period. He wanted to reduce the power of the State to a minimum and gradually supersede it by a socialist administration of economy.

In 1868, after the abdication of King Amadeo 1., Bakunin wrote his "Manifesto to the Spanish Workers," and a delegation of the Jura Federation visited Spain to invite the Spanish workers to join the "International Workmen's Association." Thousands of organized workers joined the new movement enthusiastically and adopted the anarcho-sindicalist ideas of Bakunin

to which the large majority of the Spanish workers have remained loyal to the present day.

After the revolution of 1873 was defeated and the first Spanish republic destroyed, with the aid of English and Prussian warships, the Spanish federation of the International was suppressed for many years. Yet it never lost its ground among the masses of the workers. In spite of the fearful reaction, the Spanish Internationalists organized a powerful underground movement and published their papers clandestinely during all the years of suppression. After seven years of terrible persecutions the special laws against the Spanish labor movement were abolished, and within a few months the whole movement was reorganized under the name "Federacion de Trabajadores de la Region Española." As far back as 1882, 218 local federations embracing a membership of 7,000 workers and peasants, were already represented at its convention in Sevilla.

There is no other movement in the world which has faced such relentless persecution as the anarchist labor movement in Spain. Hundreds of its followers were executed and tortured in the prisons of Jerez de la Frontera, Montjuich, Sevilla, Alcala del Valle etc.; but no reaction could ever stifle the spirit of resistance of the Spanish workers.

The present C.N.T. has grown out of those traditions and is the continuation of the former movements. In contrast to the anarchists of many countries, the anarchists in Spain based their activity from the very beginning upon the economic organization of the workers and peasants. A "pure and simple trade unionism" never existed in Spain.

The aim of the C.N.T. is two-fold. Under capitalism the organization seeks to raise the material and cultural level of the workers and peasants by direct action and education of the masses. But its real aim is the establishment of a new society based upon libertarian socialism. It is against any form of State capitalism and aims at a society of free communes united into a federation based on the common interests of economic and

"Many aliens who are now leaving the country should have been expelled long ago. They came from countries where Fascism is in power, carrying on espionage and serving as organs of contact between their governments and our generals who have sold themselves to foreign interests."

The New York Times (Aug. 28, 1936) published an interview with Indalecio Prieto, minister of the present Spanish government, in which he stated:

"Ten days before the Kamerun incident (the reported search of a German vessel by a Spanish warship) a German vessel landed its cargo of airplane and tank parts at Cadiz. The parts were taken to Seville in two freight trains composed of fifty-nine cars; all accompanied by fifty armed Germans. These Germans assembled the planes and tanks at Tablade Airdrome in Sevilla and handed them to the rebels, then joined Franco's Foreign Legion. I can prove all this just as I can prove the Kamerun landed its cargo of gasoline for the rebels at a Portuguese port after we had prevented it from reaching Cadiz."

When asked why the Spanish government did not lodge complaints with the League of Nations, Prieto shrugged his shoulders and replied quietly:

"Ethiopia presented her case to the League. You know what happened. I am afraid our Spain has become the Ethiopia of Europe!"

Everyone knows that the rebels have the moral and material support of Italy, Germany and Portugal in spite of the so-called agreement of neutrality and non-inter-vention. If not for

ters, they were crushed by foreign intervention. The Constitution of Cadiz by which Spain was liberated from the yoke of absolutism and the Church, and which had been reestablished by the heroic efforts of Riego and the Spanish liberals, was doomed when a French army, sent by the Holy Alliance, invaded the country, helping Fernando VII. to regain his "divine rights as a Christian monarch," and giving him the possibility to plunge the Spanish people into the most terrific reaction the world had ever witnessed.

In 1873 British and Prussian warships helped the monarchists to destroy the first Spanish republic, assailing the brave defenders of the Commune of Cartagena, and giving General Pavia a free hand against the republicans.

Today history repeats itself once more. According to documents which were discovered by the Spanish government in Madrid, it has been proven that the uprising was carefully prepared and supported from the beginning by the Fascist powers of Italy and Germany.

While the workers of Barcelona were fighting the rebels, a group of German political refugees, aided by members of the C.N.T., raided the offices of the "German Labor Front" and the Nazi party in that city, seizing all the written material they found there. Part of these documents have already been published in the Manchester Guardian and in the Bulletin of the C.N.T. The whole material will be printed shortly in a special volume. Thus it has been proven that the Nazis had covered the whole Iberian Peninsula, the Balearic Islands, and Spanish Morocco with a network of organizations for political and economic espionage. These groups were in continual contact with the Nazi headquarters in Berlin through the agency of the German Consul in Barcelona who, in violation of the Spanish laws, had carried on secret foreign propaganda for years. No wonder that many Germans left Barcelona in a panic after these discoveries. Rightly "El Diluvio," a daily republican paper close to the Catalanian government, remarked:

spiritual life. The C.N.T. is against any form of dictatorship, seeing in it only an institution for the suppression of the cultural life and the natural development of society. Its aim is not the conquest of political power, but the conquest of the land, the factory, the means of production, and the natural resources of the country. Its socialistic education of the workers does not consist in telling them to vote for political representation in the Cortes, but in teaching them how to administer the social life of the country, on the basis of cooperative work, for the needs and comfort of all.

The C.N.T. is not just an association of industrial workers like the trade unions in other countries. It unites within its ranks the syndicates of peasants, agricultural workers, white collar workers, and intellectuals. If, today, we see the peasants rising in arms and fighting side by side with the workers of the towns and cities against Fascism, this is the brilliant result of the great educational work done by the C.N.T. and its predecessors. The men and women of the C.N.T. understood that a social transformation is an impossibility without the help of the peasantry and the intellectual workers.

The same principles of federalism and free agreement represented in the ideology of the C.N.T. also underlie the practical work of the organization. It knows no trade union bureaucracy, and it furthers the self-reliance of the syndicates and its members in every respect. In the smaller syndicates all the work of the organization is done voluntarily. In the larger syndicates, which cannot get along without paid officials, the latter are elected for one year only and receive the same remuneration as the workers of their respective trades. Even the general secretary of the C.N.T. is subject to the same rule. This is an old tradition in Spain which has not changed since the First International.

This leads to a high development of personal initiative of every individual member. The technical organization of the C.N.T. may appear somewhat primitive in comparison with those of

the trade unions of other countries. But the C.N.T. created a spirit and generated an element of active fighters the equal of which cannot be found elsewhere. Spain is the classical country of solidaric action. The narrow craft spirit which is limited to one's trade only, and which is so frequently found in other countries, is unknown in Spain, One does not find it even in the Socialist unions of the U.G.T. One hears less about "class consciousness" and other familiar slogans in Spain, but the workers are most firmly bound to each other by links of solidarity, and the living spirit is of more value than a lifeless organizational technique. In Germany this technic was developed to its utmost, but when Hitler came into power eight million organized workers did not raise as much as a finger to avert the catastrophe. And therein lies the difference between the two types of organization.

The C.N.T. never went into any alliance with political parties. In time of danger it was always ready to fight alongside of other organizations, as it is now. However, it adheres to its specific attitude and does not give up any of its independence. But it does attempt, and this with particular success during the last few years, to come nearer to the workers belonging to the Socialist trade unions. The success of that policy is especially striking in cases where the workers of the Socialist unions opposed their political leadership, as was the case with the miners of Asturias. The C.N.T. undertook many successful actions together with the workers of the U.G.T. At the last congress of the C.N.T., held in Saragossa in the month of May, the delegates warmly supported the idea of forming an alliance with the U.G.T. for the purpose of common defense and attack. The present close cooperation of both organizations in the struggle against Fascism will render their relations even friendlier.

The C.N.T. is a tremendous factor in the spiritual and social life of Spain. It could not be suppressed in spite of the dreadful persecutions heaped upon it for a number of years. In the shaping of the coming social order of Spain, the C.N.T. will surely

The men and women of the C.N.T. and F.A.I. have realized that salvation lies in liberty. Autocracy is based on submission and therefore cannot serve the cause of freedom. Dictatorship is never a transitory stage for the achievement of some specific object, because it inevitably compels its representatives to resort to methods that gradually take them entirely away from their original aims, supposing even that they had at first been motivated by a sincere desire to serve the people. Moreover, political power inherently lacks constructiveness and therefore always develops tyranny.

Emancipation cannot be achieved by greater despotism. Every form of dependence results in a new system of slavery. Dictatorship in particular, excludes the possibility of improvement, because it suppresses criticism of its acts. People can be forced to perform certain tasks, but no amount of coercion can duplicate that which is achieved through inner need, sympathy, and love. There are things that even the mightiest government is powerless to compel—things that only social solidarity and voluntary action can accomplish. Compulsion does not unite; it divides and separates. Placing people under the same yoke does not bring them closer together; on the contrary, it alienates them from each other and breeds narrow selfishness and estrangement. Social ties can grow and develop only in freedom, as the result of voluntary choice and unconstrained effort. Only under such conditions can individual liberty and social unity become merged into a complete and inseparable whole.

And while the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. are carrying on their work of social construction their members are fighting on all the battlefronts. Even the republican government in Madrid had to admit that without the heroic stand of the C.N.T. Spain would have been doomed at the very beginning of the struggle.

* * *

It has been the tragic fate of Spain that every time the Spanish people arose against the unbearable tyranny of their mas-

“We appeal to you, friends of freedom. Do not believe the manufactured stories about murders, robberies and disorders in Catalonia! Remember that our fight is your fight! If we fall, Fascism will triumph in many other countries. Our victory will be the victory of the international fight for freedom against international Fascism. Our victory will be the victory of human progress. Workers and anti-Fascists of the world—help us! We are the vanguard of the international workers’ movement in our fight against the enemies of everything that is human. Do not allow lies to be spread about the heroic fighters of Spanish and world freedom. We need your sympathy and help. We are sure that at this moment of battle you will not forsake us.”

This is not the language of a “disorderly mob” as they were so frequently called by the reactionary press, but of men who are conscious of the great responsibility which history has placed on them, and who are ready to take the consequences of their actions. The wonderful work they are doing now, in order to reorganize the whole social life of Catalonia, to prevent criminal elements from taking advantage of the situation, and to provide the country with the necessary means to carry on the military resistance against the Fascist armies bears witness to it. And this constructive and creative work is the more admirable as it is based solely upon natural solidarity, mutual aid, and social justice, without recourse to the dangerous device of dictatorship.

Technicians, engineers, architects, men of science, teachers, artists, etc., are enthusiastically offering their assistance to the workers of the C.N.T. and F.A.I., and helping them in their gigantic task of social regeneration.

play a great and impressive role, its influence extending far beyond the organization proper.

A short while ago the communist deputy Jesus Hernandez, manager of the communist paper “Mundo Obrero,” made the following declaration:

“It is absolutely false that the present workers’ movement has for its object the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship after the revolution has come to an end. It cannot be said that we have a social motive for our participation in the war. We communists are the first to repudiate this supposition. We are motivated exclusively by a desire to defend the democratic republic established on April 14th, 1931, and revived last February 16th.”

This declaration may puzzle the communists of other countries. But Hernandez knows that the Spanish workers and peasants are not enthused about the dictatorship idea, and that the communist movement forms only a small minority, split, in addition, into three factions. He knows also that the Communist Party is not strong enough to be much of an obstacle to the aims of the powerful C.N.T.

Whether or not the heroic struggle of the Spanish workers, peasants, and intellectuals to save their country from the bloody yoke of Fascism will be confined merely to a defense of the present republic is another question. The murderous onslaught by a gang of military criminals on the life of the Spanish republic has created a new situation. Under such circumstances the natural development of social events has to take shorter ways and to adopt other forms of social progress. The admirable creative work which is now carried on by the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. in Catalonia for the reconstruction of the whole social system, is only the outcome of the present

situation. There is no doubt that the defeat of Fascism will lead to a new era in Spanish history. We may be sure that the workers and peasants of Spain, after their victory, will be able to carry to fruition their full emancipation and will not permit any miscarriage of the inevitable social transformation.

As to the “Anarchist Federation of Iberia” (F.A.I.), there is no essential difference between it and the C.N.T. Both organizations work in close harmony with each other. The F.A.I. is an ideological association which aims to uphold the anarchist traditions in the Spanish labor movement. It consists of a great number of active young men who are always ready to place themselves in the forefront of the social struggle. Every member of the F.A.I. is a member of the C.N.T. and is among its most active fighters.

Both organizations have published a great deal of libertarian literature and run large publishing houses. Apart from the daily papers, “Solidaridad Obrera” in Barcelona and “CNT” in Madrid—these two organizations published before the present events about 40 weeklies and five monthly revues. This alone shows the strength of that movement and the extent of its influence upon the workers and peasants.

Since the beginning of the present struggle quite a number of autonomous syndicates, such as the workers in the film industry, the writers, actors, and workers of all the theatres in Catalonia, and many others, have joined the C.N.T. and are taking part in the great struggle against Fascism and for social liberation.

The organized workers of the world who now follow the gigantic struggle of their Spanish brothers against the terrible menace of Fascism with so tense an interest must come to realize that the Spanish events cannot be regarded from a purely partisan point of view. The movement in every country possesses its own definite character, rooted in the traditions and the historical development of a people. The labor movement, and especially the Socialist movement, is not a church,

were driven into the bull ring and massacred in batches by machine gun firing.

In Sevilla, Cadiz, Granada, Saragossa, Huesca and many other towns in the hands of the rebels, thousands of workers have been slain for their resistance to gangs of armed thugs who committed treason against their own country, carrying on a war of extermination against the Spanish people with the help of foreign mercenaries.

All the newspapers have reported how the forces of General Franco, pushing on Madrid from the South, have slaughtered the peasants en masse, hoping thereby to prevent attacks in their rear.

In a manifesto to the workers of all countries, published by the Defense Committee of the C.N.T. and the F.A.I., they appeal especially to all conscientious journalists and reporters:

“It is not we who are the foes of order, but the militarists and Fascists. The heroic work of the C.N.T. and F.A.I. in combination with the workers of other organizations crushed the Fascist uprising in Catalonia. But Fascism has not been vanquished yet. Thousands of our comrades have surrounded Saragossa. We are putting up a terrific struggle to save our comrades there and in the rest of Spain. Our fight must be successful. Freedom must win over slavery.

“The hunger-driven workers of Spain are not looters and rapists. Even the reporters of the bourgeois press, in all but the most unscrupulous of Capitalist papers, have expressed admiration for the orderliness and respect for foreigners that the workers of Catalonia are showing. The unscrupulous are spreading their lies about the Spanish revolutionists. Particularly are they venting their spleen against the revolutionary workers of Barcelona.

by the large majority of the Spanish people, in order to free the country of the sinister influence of foreign ideas and the rulership of Moscow.

*And to express their love for the Spanish nation they conspired with foreign tyrants like Hitler and Mussolini and hired the Mo-
roccans of North Africa to devastate the land of their birth and to exterminate their own people.*

There is a vast difference between the popular nationalism of former days, as advocated by men like Mazzini and Garibaldi, and the flagrant counter-revolutionary and anti-social Fascism of our time. Mazzini's slogan, "God and the people," was symbolic of aspirations that animated the entire people. Though Mazzini's ideas contained the seeds of a new political bondage, he and his coworkers were actuated by noble motives. The patriots of those days drew a clear line of demarcation between the State and their national aims. They misread the meaning of historic facts, but their lives and acts were imbued with love and devotion to the people.

Such emotions are foreign to the men who transformed their native country into a slaughter-house for their personal political ambitions and their economic interests. General Franco told the correspondents of French and English newspapers that he is prepared to sacrifice half the population of Spain in order to establish his dictatorship and to wipe out the pest of communism. General Queipo de Llano declared that there will be no end to the present war until the last Marxist on Spanish soil is executed.

That this is not a mere boast has since been shown by the terrible events at Badajoz, where 3,000 men and women were slaughtered by the Moors and the Spanish Foreign Legion, a body recruited from the riff-raff of various foreign nations, principally Germans. Mr. Jay Allen, correspondent of the Chicago Tribune gave a horrible picture of his personal experience, telling the world how 1,800 unarmed men and women

which recognizes only one doctrine of grace. All the talk about a "United Front" or a "People's Front" is not worth a straw if we do not learn to respect the opinions of others, and judge them from the narrow point of view of a party doctrine.

* * *

While the heroic Spanish workers and peasants are sacrificing their lives on numerous battlefields to defend their country against the bloody onslaught of a merciless and barbaric foe, the hirelings of the reactionary press the world over revile them in the most infamous manner, accusing them of having committed every possible crime against the laws of humanity. By combatting these lies, and by keeping the public opinion of the world informed of the true course of events in Spain, we can help our fighting comrades most effectively.

The good puritans in this country are shocked by the burning of churches and the confiscation of church property in Spain. They cannot or will not understand that it is a matter of self-defense to deprive a terrible and ruthless enemy of the economic means which give him the power to carry on a war of extermination against the Spanish people, a war waged by a clique of military gangsters who betrayed their own country and hired the Moors of the Riff "to save Christianity." They have forgotten what their forefathers did in England, Holland, Sweden, and Germany, where they confiscated the entire property of the Church in their great struggle against Rome.

One has to know the role of the Church in Spanish history in order to understand the present events. In Spain the Church has never been a mere religious institution, but a formidable economic and political power which for centuries had the greatest influence upon the whole social life of the country. In its long and bloody history, the Church always has been the deadliest foe of social progress and the main center of every reaction.

During the endless wars against the Moors which lasted nearly 800 years, the Church became a tremendous factor and the principal tool of Spanish absolutism. For centuries Spain had been the most advanced country in Europe, the leading spirit in science, art, industry, and agriculture. But when the Moors were driven out of the country, and the nation was subdued under the tyranny of the Church and the Christian Monarchy this great civilization was destroyed with fire and sword. The rights and liberties of the Spanish towns and cities were abolished, after thousands upon thousands had been slain in their resistance against this new dreadful power. The land became a desert, its wonderful industries decayed, its spiritual life was stifled. By the end of the reign of the sinister despot, Philip II, Spain had lost nearly half of her population.

It was the Church and the representatives of royal despotism who invented that terrible tribunal, the inquisition, the main instrument, for the suppression of the Spanish people. According to a very careful statement, published by the Abbé De Montgaillard, from 1481 to 1781 nearly 330,000 persons had been burnt alive in Spain, and their property confiscated by the State.

During all these years of slavery and degradation the Church was the main factor in guarding the country against any cultural influence from abroad. On the list of prohibited books, published by the inquisition in 1790, we find the names of more than 7600 writers, amongst them the classical works of Horace, Ovid, Cicero, Plutarch, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio and many others. At that very time Spain had an army of 134,000 priests, 46,000 monks, and 32,000 nuns. The landed property of the Church was estimated at 32,500,000,000 reals which gave the clergy a yearly income of 500,600,000 reals. Besides that the Church possessed in buildings, horses, cattle, etc., property worth another 82,000,000 reals. Together with the many other sources of exploitation the yearly income of

ideas cannot be altered by mere force and brutal suppression. But while they tolerated the personal conviction of the individual they all had to fight the Church, because it always had been and has remained to the present day the political stronghold of Spanish reaction and the most uncompromising enemy of any change in the social life.

* * *

Fascism never had a clear and definite ideological foundation. It is a bizarre mixture, representing a crazy-quilt with patches borrowed from the most diverse sources. It has a different meaning in every country, having only one thing in common: the ferocious brutality of its methods and the absolute subjection of the individual to the power of the so-called totalitarian State. But there is one more trait characteristic of the followers of Fascism all the world over. They all speak of the "awakening of the nation" as they understand it, pretending, of course, that they themselves and no one else are the true interpreters of the national spirit. Every Black Shirt in Italy is the representative of the "Italian Nation"; every SS-man in Germany is the bearer of the "real German spirit"; every member of the Black Legion or the Ku Klux Klan in this country is the living incarnation of "true Americanism."

In fact, Fascism has made of nationalism a new political religion the dogmas of which are as sanctified as those of the Church. But modern history in Italy, Germany, Austria, etc., has proved that nationalism for them is only a cloak that conceals everything; its flag covers up every iniquity, every crime and outrage. If any further proof were necessary, it has been amply furnished by the recent example in Spain.

Cold-blooded hangmen like Franco, Mola, Gil Robles and the rest of them assure the world that it was only love of their country and of the people of Spain that compelled them to rise in arms against the republican government which was elected

known in Spain. Every progressive movement has had to fight the Church as its most powerful and most ruthless enemy.

In a letter to the New York Tribune—a paper which nobody will accuse of being in sympathy with the “reds”—Mr. W. Barry said very justly:

“The question of the burning of the churches is wholly explicable—much as I regret it as a Catholic and a lover of art. The Church in Spain, in contrast with our Church here, openly takes sides in political affairs. Happily a Coughlin is a rarity in our history, and we find that he not only does not represent the views of the Catholic Church in America in his political efforts, but his activities are strongly condemned in Catholic organs by learned members of the American clergy. In Spain it has definitely and as a body aligned itself on the side of the men who have converted their fatherland into a battlefield for personal gain, and, without going, into the ethical merits of their action, it cannot be expected that the people of Spain will watch impassively the blessing of the arms of professional soldiers being launched against them, and, as has been reported, even the joining of the rebel forces by members of the clergy, without losing respect for the lives and property of these priests.”

No Spanish revolutionist, from the early defenders of liberalism and democracy to the anarchist workers of the present C.N.T. and the F.A.I., has ever dreamt of attacking people for their religious belief. In the classical country of the Inquisition, the land of Torquemada, Escobar, and Loyola, where the slightest doubt in the dogmas of the Church had been punished with torture and death, they have learned this much, that religious

the Spanish Church represented 1,600,000,000. reals.¹ But the people lived in appalling misery and one Spaniard out of 72 was a beggar.

The French revolution introduced the first ideas of liberalism into the Iberian peninsula which conquered the intelligensia of the country. From then on the struggle against the Church and the Monarchy began and has never stopped since. In 1812 the Constitution of Cadiz was proclaimed which abolished the inquisition and paralyzed the power of the Church. After the defeat of the Napoleonic armies in Spain Fernando VII. came back to Madrid. He recognized the constitution of the people and promised by solemn oath to rule as a constitutional monarch and to defend the new laws of the country. For a few months Spain enjoyed the blessings of political liberty after three hundred years of clerical despotism.

But Fernando, whom Louis Philippe of France called “the most perfect scoundrel the world ever saw,” conspired with the Church against the constitution which he denounced as “an invention of the devil and a crime against the divine right of the monarchy and the Church.” A new period of reaction came over Spain. The constitution was abolished, the inquisition re-established, and 50,000 liberals were buried alive in the dungeons and chambers of torture of the dread tribunal.

In 1820 Rafael del Riego rose against the bloody tyranny of Fernando and marched with his soldiers upon Madrid. The provinces of Catalonia and Galicia followed his example, and all the liberal elements hailed Riego as the liberator of the country. Fernando, realizing the danger, changed his policy immediately and called himself a constitutionalist, accusing his advisors and making them responsible for everything. The Constitution of Cadiz was put in force again, the inquisition was abolished once more, and the jesuits were driven out of the country. The prison doors opened and released all the innocent victims

¹ One real is between six and seven cents.

of political persecution. Fernando made his famous speech in the Cortes cursing the enemies of the constitution and assuring the deputies that he had no other wish but to be “the highest servant of his beloved people.”

It was the beginning of a new era in the life of the country. The Cortes passed the “laws of education,” and schools were built all over Spain. But while the liberals were absorbed in their constructive work for the regeneration of the country, Fernando and the Church appealed to the “Holy Alliance” to get help from abroad against their enemies of the Liberal Party.

In 1823, two bishops and 127 prelates founded that infamous secret society which is known in Spanish history as “El Angel Exterminador” (the angel of death). This monstrous fraternity hired a whole army of thugs, in order to get rid of the outstanding figures in Spanish liberalism. From 1823 to 1825 more than 4,000 persons were assassinated by the agents of this diabolic gang of clerical murderers.

In the same year the Duke of Angoulême with 60,000 French soldiers entered Spain to help Fernando annihilate the Spanish constitutionalists. After they were defeated with the help of a foreign army, Spain was doomed again for many years. No country in the world has witnessed such a horrible period of reaction. The liberals were killed by the score. More than 50,000 persons filled the prisons of the inquisition. Riego, the liberator of his country, was executed in a shameful way. He was sewed into a sack and carried on a dunkey to the gallows, while a fanatical mob, incited by the priests, howled “Vivan las cadenas!” (Long live the chains!) All the schools created by the liberals were destroyed, and the inquisition ordered the burning of all books with the exception of those which were recommended by the Jesuits. Even as late as 1826 the city of Valencia witnessed an auto-da-fé, when the freemason Ripoll was hanged and his dead body burnt on the market place, because he expressed his disbelief in the dogmas of the Church.

In all the countless struggles of the Spanish people from the French Revolution to the present day, the Church always sided with the enemies of the nation, as it has sided now with the bloody cause of Fascism. That is the reason why the Church is so bitterly hated in Spain. Every intelligent Spaniard knows the sinister role it has played in the long course of Spanish history. The Church has destroyed one of the highest civilizations the world has ever seen; it has ruined the country and pauperized its population; it has stifled all social progress and created for centuries a realm of darkness and ignorance.

Every attempt to fight this ignorance by means of a freer education has been denounced by the Church as “a crime against the laws of God.” In 1851 Antonio Cervera founded a school in Madrid for the purpose of providing the workers of that city with an opportunity to acquire an elementary education. It met with immediate success, growing rapidly until it was attended by 500 ardent and diligent students. But Cervera’s noble attempt soon became the target of clerical attacks. A deputation of liberal Spaniards therefore appealed to the minister Bravo Murillo to sanction the school, but Murillo answered them with the cynical words: “There is no necessity in Spain for workers who can read and write, What we need is beasts of burden.”

Needless to say, the school of Cervera was suppressed like so many others. From the destruction of the liberal schools in 1824 to the infamous execution of Francisco Ferrer, founder of the Modern School in Barcelona, the Church always followed the same policy in order to prevent any anti-clerical education.

It is a deliberate lie to assert that the present burning of the churches and monasteries is the outcome of those “foreign doctrines of Marxism and Bolshevism,” as the hangmen of Fascism would have us believe. The fact is that the majority of the modern labor movement in Spain never has been inspired by the ideas of marxism and still less by the conceptions of Lenin and Stalin. Churches were burnt in every popular uprising, long before Marx was born or the general ideas of socialism were