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NEWS and FEATURES

REDS RUINED FARMS WILL HAY'S STATEMENT

FAMINE PERILS SPAIN

Work As Usual In Franco Area
Farm Methods In Catalonia
Try To 'Communist' Farms

By REV. DR. OWEN B. MCGUIRE

We have seen that during the civil war there was abundance of food in the territory controlled by the Franco government. We have seen that up to the fall of Valencia, also seen—and it must be admitted, and Barcelona, there was at least a sufficiency in the territory still controlled by the Red Government. And now, more than two years after the end of the war, it is beyond doubt that there is great scarcity, even threatening famine, in most parts of Spain. This requires an explanation. How explain it?

For the abundance in the Franco territory during the war we have already seen the reasons. Within five months after the outbreak of the war Franco had obtained control of nearly half the territory of the whole nation. Much of that territory had not been conquered by the army. In whole provinces—in the Northwest, in Galicia—the people themselves, aided by the Civil Guard (the name for the national police force) and by patriotic societies, rose up and suppressed or drove out the Reds. These facts showed that if it had not been for the aid of every description of traitor, Spain across the French frontier from France and Russia, Franco would have got possession of the whole country and ended the war by the spring or summer of 1937. But the point here is that in all the territory which Franco got possession during the first year of the war, work went on as usual. The people cultivated the soil, sowed and reaped and served, better in fact than they ever did before. They enjoyed perfect peace and order undisturbed, as they had been before by continual strikes and agitation. This, as we have seen, was conceded by the foreigners who traveled through that part of Spain, even by those who were inimical to Franco. Mr. Sedgwick, Editor of the Atlantic Monthly, expressed his amazement at the conditions he found there in the summer of 1937. It was difficult, he wrote, to believe that one was in a country engaged in war, in a civil war.

But how explain that there was sufficiency, if not abundance, in the Red territory that year and most of the next? The answer is that the Reds sowed and reaped. The sufficiency or abundance was not due to native labor, cultivation and production. It can be said with truth that during the civil war and for months before it, the Reds sowed and reaped, and if you don't take care of a farm and prepare it for the sowing, you will neither sow nor reap effectively. They were obsessed solely during that whole period with a mania to destroy, to set up a "new order" and destroy the old. But the order for farming remains forever the same so far as honest labor and husbandry are concerned. It is not affected by politics or "ideologies."

Take, for instance, what happened in Catalonia, the largest city of which is Barcelona. There are four provinces in Catalonia, and they had been among the most productive in Spain. There are no latifundia (large estates) in Catalonia. The system of land tenure which prevails in two-thirds of its territory is known as the Rebañales—a Catalan word that means the sowing. It is a species of share-cropping similar to that which has prevailed in Tuscany for generations, and is so named because the contract between landlord and tenant "ends" when the vineyards have to be renewed which is about twenty years from their planting. The estates consist of from five to ten or fifteen holdings. Usually the landlord retains one of the farms for himself, lives on and works it, compared to the land system in England, and to what was the system in Ireland, the Rebañales might be said to be ideal. I have seen it work in Catalonia and in Tuscany. I lived for five months on such a farm in Tuscany and it seemed to me the most satisfactory system after that which is called "peasant proprietorship"—where the farmer is owner of his farm. What is more, the Rebañales was exact with the system and (what surprised me when I first knew it) they preferred it to simple renting. I said to that farmer in Tuscany, "Wouldn't it be better for you to pay an annual rent and have all the produce for yourself?" "No, no," he answered, "decidedly not. When I have a good season or less a cow or horse, or when anything about this farm, made replacement, the landlord has to bear his share of the cost of renewal."

Land Tenure Cleared

During the civil war we got from the secular press, its news agencies and correspondents a different view of land tenure in Spain. Even in a Catholic periodical a militant Catholic writer said he had it on the authority of one who had been in Spain that all the land of Spain belonged to seven families! Such was the result of a night, able-bodied lying—and it is still going on about Spain had some other countries.

New at the end of the civil war those four provinces had become practically a desert—and this was true of other provinces that had been held by the Reds. When the war began hordes of "workers"—as if the farmers were not workers—swarmed from the big industrial centers, such as Barcelona, over the country. They were going to "socialize" the farms. The Reds set up "Soviets." They ousted the farmers, and assassinated those who refused to follow the party line. The leaders in this work of destruction were the Russians. "Communists" sent in to see to it that Spain be made a Soviet Union of the West; for Russian aid had been promised on that condition and would be withdrawn if the condition were not fulfilled. Of course, it could not be done by Russians alone, but for years before the war there were numbers of Spanish Communists in the pay of Russia building up "cells" and organizing for the day.

Chaos Reigned

Before the war had proceeded many months there was in Catalonia a civil war within a civil war and another within that. The second one, the Catalan Nationalists were at war with all the extremists; the Socialists were at war with the "authentic Communists"; and before long there was the bitterest of all the wars between Stalinists and Trotskyites. These latter were not really followers of Trotsky. On the one hand Stalin wanted his policy carried out in Spain. But on the other hand the Spaniards, wherever his politics, is an individualist and basically a Nationalist. He will not be dictated from without. All such, whether Communists or anarchists (of whom there was a large sprinkling) who did not follow the Stalin line were dubbed "Trotskyites" and treated as such by the dominant party. On a conservative estimate 2,000 of the Trotskyites were put to death in 1938.

At this point to be stressed from all this is that perfect chaos reigned in Catalonia. Those "leaders" spreading over the countryside, Russians or Spaniards, to "Socialize" the farms, knew nothing about farming, and the followers, ignorant of all economics, did not believe in hard work. They just believed that the millennium had come, as they were told it had already come in Russia. "The paradise of the workers" and that all they had to do was to enter in and take it.

You may imagine the result—or can you imagine—if you can—what would happen here in upstate New York as a result of the conditions I have been describing. Imagine that the Communists and fellow travelers who march into Union Square with red banners, clenched fists and singing the Internationale, came up state, ousted or assassinated the farmers and took over their job of producing food for themselves and the population of the big cities. If you cannot imagine the result, I think any experienced farmer can tell you what it would be. As in the days of Benjamin Franklin every experienced farmer can tell you what it would be. As in the days of Benjamin Franklin every experienced farmer will know the truth of the "saying" of Poor Richard: "He who by the plough would thrive Himself must either hold or drive" and must by training know how to do both.

No, the Reds did not produce what was needed during the civil war. Yet there was a sufficiency of food up to the last months of 1938. How this happened and what kind of a problem confronted Franco when the war ended and he had to provide for the whole country I will try to explain next week. I am writing this in New York City and some people, among them Catholic editors, have been asking me to explain it.

O. M. I. Founder

COURIER'S URGENT INEMA COMMENTS

BY JOHN SPRINGER

EDITOR'S NOTE: Listed on Class B, Objectionable in Part, by the National Legion of Decency, this week, are: "Bullets for O'Hara"; "Objective," "Marriage for Purpose," "Time in the Sun"; "This version of Time in the Sun is in the form of a short. There is eliminated from this version sufficient objectionable material to warrant a Class B rating." The feature length version of "Time in the Sun" has received a C classification.

A "weaking" weak if there ever was one, as far as pictures are concerned, it was hold-over, particularly the delightful "Tom, Dick and Harry," raucous, and pictures in their subsequent runs that made the movie weak worthwhile. The newcomers offered little. Particularly bad is "Manpower."

"Manpower"—A-2
About five years ago, Henry Fonda and Pat O'Brien, a picture called "Slim" a simple, honest and entertaining movie about the life of a line man. Margaret Lindsay played a girl both of them loved, but she was a routine triangle plot, nor were there any strained melodramatics.

Now they have culminated "Slim" from the studio vaults—but only his skeleton is left. You can see it if you really have to—under the title, "Manpower." It's pretty awful.

Poor "Slim" has become just an excuse for a mediocre piece, with George Raft and Edward G. Robinson glowering over Marlene Dietrich, who glowers not, neither does she give out any other expression. The picture has Robinson and Raft as line men—buddies who live together in a boarding house with other line men. They are all just a bunch of college cut-ups with many a cute prank.

Then Marlene comes into their life. She's a clip-joint hostess—a woman with a past Right away. Eddie goes for her, marries her. But then she falls in love with George. O. corniest of melodramas! O. tritest of triangles!

Robinson, being a good actor, tries hard with his stupid role. Raft is stiff and LaDietrich is indescribable. People like Ward Bond, Ed Arden, Frank McHugh and Alan Hale make their moments count—but their moments are brief.

"Ringale Maleis"—A-2
"Maleis" is getting to be a combination of Dr. Christian and Little Orphan Annie—always going around settling people's lives. "Ringale Maleis" her latest, is amusing in the early portions when Maleis is just good old wisecracking Maleis but about halfway through, the picture becomes as tawry as a radio "soap opera." That isn't what we want from our Maleis. Ann Roder is adept at her Maleis role. She still wears those "Stella Dallas-Sadie Thompson" clothes, although everyone with whom she comes in contact is smartly toggled out as Claudette Colbert. You'd think Maleis would learn. But then, I suppose, she wouldn't be Maleis. The picture has good supporting performances by George Murphy and Robert Sterling, a bad who is coming up.

Other Pictures
"Hurricane Charlie" (A-1) is a pretty poor Leon Errol picture reminiscent of those old time two reel slapstick comedies—but not over so soon. But the movie that takes the cake, the mud cake is "Snowed Out of the Campus." It's an inane musical—filled with songs but not tunes which serves as a comeback attempt for Rudy Kreiser, Harriet Hilliard and Gordon Oliver, and as a movie introduction to Oscar. It does nothing for any of them.

Will Hays Speaking
Here, with no comment necessary, are a few significant passages from the recent statement by the president of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America.

"There is no fear the industry will ever be far behind public demand in the production of entertainment for the nation. But it must be entertainment. The informational, educational and inspirational element on our screens are growing. That is as it should be. But when the public lays down its money at the box office, it is primarily for entertainment."

"Those who demand that the screen be subordinate to the wholesome function of recreation for any cause however sincere, are sadly mistaken. Significance is not achieved at the expense of entertainment. It is the result of entertainment. There are those who would use the films to bamboozle, rather than amuse, the American public. The screen has no room for such propaganda."

"The industry's determination to go forward, not backward, is proved by the common will to maintain the highest possible standards of self-regulation under the Motion Picture Production Code. There are a few—very few—on the fringes of the industry who think that if they could break the Code, they could improve the box-office appeal of the product. No real factor in the production, distribution and exhibition of pictures wants to depart from the standards of wholesome entertainment that now mark the industry's earnest effort for proper self-regulation. Only those in whom originality is dried up believe they need to pick up themes or treatments in the gutter. . . . Nothing that has to do with the moral content of pictures is too unimportant for the need of the greatest possible vigilance. . . ."

QUERIES and REPLIES

After All, Man is Only a Glorified Animal

Considered solely from the physical side man has little to boast of when compared with his brute. Like the animal, he too is subject to disease, decrepitude and death. Many animals, in fact, surpass him in physical endowment. He can neither swim like a fish, race like a hare, nor climb the autumn air like a daring swallow. His cry is not so loud as that of a lion, nor his song so sweet as that of a lark. As far as his physical powers are concerned man is not only an animal but a very poor and insignificant one.

But in spite of all this, man is not merely a glorified animal.

Man is infinitely superior to all the animal world. Generally he is superior to the birds, and he possesses something that puts him on a plane far above all the rest of the visible creation, and that one thing which makes him so different from the other animals is the marvelous gift of reason. It is the gift of reason that transforms at once this frail and feeble creature into the mighty sovereign of the earth. It is the gift of reason that makes him the ruler of the universe, that places the imperial crown upon his head and the scepter of authority in his hand, and proclaims him king of all creation.

By the aid of this priceless gift, man makes the very elements to be his slaves and servants. He can harness the wind and compel fire and flood to labor for him, setting a human soul, and seat him throughout the land. By the aid of reason he can hold converse with the most distant parts of the world through the telephone, radio.

By the exercise of reason, man subdues the forces of the material world but turns to his own good uses the plants and animal kingdoms as well. Thus it is God's good gift of reason that makes man to be man the crown and apex of creation and enables him to exercise wisely creature to lord it over the universe and lay all creation under contribution.

Man therefore is not the "mean and mangy thing" that Mark Twain would have him to be. In the eyes of the Church, man is the ensouled child of Adam, enjoys a dignity and distinction above all other creatures simply because God has given to him a human soul, and seat him in the image of His Maker, and endowed with immortality. "Thou hast made me a little less than the angels. Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, and hast set him above the works of Thy hands" (Ps. 8). (From the pen of Father Richard Felix, O.R.B., Defenders of the Faith, Conception, Missouri.)

FAMINE PERILS SPAIN

Work As Usual In Franco Area

Farm Methods In Catalonia
Try To 'Communist' Farms

By REV. DR. OWEN B. MCGUIRE

Perhaps We Learn

Famine Perils Spain Moved

Movie Guide

NEW FILMS REVIEWED
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Father Steps Out, A-1
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I Wanted Wings, B
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