

SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES

lose as much by not seeing the good that really is in us as by fancying that we see good that is not there at all. It is as right and due that we should thank **God** for the virtue that His grace has established in us as that we should ask His forgiveness for our sinfulness that hinders His grace. It is no derogation from the truth of this statement to recognize that, in point of fact, the nearer we draw to God the less will we think of either, for this indicates no more than that there is growing within us the realization that all our goodness is His and that our very wretchedness makes us the fitter objects of His mercy and power.

St. Francis de Sales did not confuse the Counsels with the Precepts: he was mindful of Our Lord's words to the young Ruler, 'If thou *wilt* be perfect.' But he let it be known that his manner of direction would be of little service to one who having faced the issue should voluntarily choose the lower level.

R. H. J. STEUART, S.J.

SOCIAL UNREST IN SPAIN

FEW, least of all the Catholic, will deny that the present social system with its manifest injustice cries out urgently for radical reforms, and it is to this task that some of the best Catholic minds in Spain are now applying themselves. The main problem is to win back the masses to the Church and to convince them that a true remedy for the social ills that afflict society is to be found in the papal encyclicals, and there alone. That the task is a difficult one will be realized from an analysis of Spain's political panorama as it affects the proletariat. At the present time liberalism, democracy, and 'reformist' socialism are engaged in a life and death struggle for survival. A clear-cut alignment of **social** forces is taking place through the gradual elimination of all intermediary or 'compromise' parties. The issue daily narrows itself down to the choice between 'in-

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tegral' Marxism and one of the brands of anti-Marxist Fascism; a Soviet workers' republic or a strong government able to alter the whole structure of the State and introduce a measure of planned economy. Social unrest is no new feature in Spanish history of the twentieth century, but never has it reached such aggravated proportions as to-day. The introduction of lay education has provided the revolutionary parties with a rich recruiting ground, a none too surprising fact if we consider that no less a person than Léon Blum, the French Socialist leader, once declared in a moment of frankness, 'Give me the lay school, and I guarantee to provide you with a generation of revolutionaries.' Again, intensive propaganda in favour of the Russian Revolution has been carried out for years, especially since the downfall of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship. The change of regime saw complete liberty of propaganda granted to all extremist and subversive elements. So, too, the deplorable condition of national education, revealed in recent statistics for *analfabetismo* (illiteracy), which give forty per cent of Spain's population as illiterate, extremely low standards of wages, the slight influence of Catholicism over the masses, are contributory factors to the present revolutionary mood of the workers. The agricultural population lives on the verge of semi-starvation amidst shocking hygienic conditions. Is it then to be wondered that the proletariat flocks into the rival camps of Anarchy, Socialism and Communism with their facile promises and specious programmes which appeal to the *simpliste* mentality of the embittered underdog?

The oldest of these groups is that of the Anarchists, who have flourished in Spain since the middle of the nineteenth century. The F.A.I. (*Federación Anarquista Ibérica*) was formed in 1910 as a continuation of the old *Solidaridad Obrero* movement begun by those followers of Bakounin who bitterly opposed the doctrines of Marx and Engels. Proudhon is considered the spiritual father of this creed, very concisely defined as pandestruction, for its aim is libertarian communism to be obtained by means of the social revolution. Its philosophy of life envisages a Godless huma-

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nity, owning neither country nor master, with State, religion, property and authority having ceased to be. From the first the party has put little faith in political activity, relying mainly on its favourite weapon, the general strike. The famous 1909 *Semana Trágica* in Barcelona, when so many lives were lost, was engineered by the Anarchists. During the Dictatorship clandestine tactics were employed with little success, but with the advent of the Republic came increased activity culminating in the great uprising of December last, when over a hundred were killed and two hundred wounded.

The F.A.I. contains the intellectual vanguard of the movement, whose followers are to be found in the ranks of the powerful workers' union, the C.N.T. (*Confederación Nacional del Trabajo*), affiliated in 1919 to the Communist International. Its membership, chiefly recruited in the Eastern provinces of Catalonia and Valencia, and Andalusia, reaches the half million. In 1931 control of the union was secured by the F.A.I., which in spite of its numerical insignificance lacks nothing in determination or audacity. This small group of fanatic idealists and professional gunmen ousted more moderate leaders like Angel Pestaña and Juan Peyro, and henceforward they directed the C.N.T. as they wished. However, moderates and extremists differ in little but the matter of tactics, that is in the choice of the opportune moment for declaring the revolution. The December rising of 1933 was typical of Anarchist 'direct action' by which a handful of intellectuals allied to many professional criminals stampeded the illiterate masses into revolt. The credulity of the rank and file becomes apparent if we consider the terms of a manifesto issued by the Anarchists in a small industrial town near Barcelona. 'We must destroy the State, giving the people arms which are the sign of liberation. With the powers of the State destroyed, men will all be equal. The Banks will all be seized and guarded, and their wealth held for the people. The poor must occupy the houses of the rich. The use of money is forbidden, and the carrying on of commerce. The **red and** black flag of Anarchy will **fly** over **all** buildings

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seized for the people.' Money for the revolution comes from the party funds swollen by the heavy *cuotas* (subscriptions) paid weekly by members of the C.N.T. Can we blame Spaniards who in the face of this unholy alliance of crime and ignorance advocate dictatorial methods as the only salvation for their distressed country? Certainly the tolerance extended to extremist propaganda is bearing fruit. An elder statesman of another day described Spain's problem in graphic phrase as one of 'School and Larder,' meaning education and work. If the educational level of the masses could be raised they would not be such an easy prey for those whose sole object is the undermining of the whole fabric of national life. Certainly an effective preliminary check would be the muzzling of the two Anarchist press organs, *Solidaridad Obrera* and C.N.T., both widely-read dailies.

Meanwhile, the consolidation of the Catholic forces of the nation, whose mushroom growth since 1931 has been an outstanding feature of Spanish politics, presents a strong barrier to the wave of revolution threatening to submerge the country. The promulgation of the Church's social teaching, at present being intensified, ought in time to effect that transformation of society the Supreme Pontiffs have urged. Until then how can we ask the worker to accept Christianity when he sees so very little of the Christian spirit being displayed by his employers, who instead of striving to improve conditions are considering the advisability of resorting to force to preserve the *status quo*.

The Socialist Party, led by capable and cultured men for the most part, has been welded into a strong and flourishing organization, imbued with an admirable party discipline at present threatening to break up. Issuing as it does from a materialistic conception of life and history, it considers Religion superfluous, and more especially revealed Christianity. Formerly it eschewed revolutionary tactics, even collaborating with Primo de Rivera, and stood as a staunch supporter of democracy. So it facilitated the coming of the Republic and collaborated in its early governments, leaving its mark on the Constitution which de-

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clares Spain 'a democratic republic of workers' and acknowledges the legality of forceful expropriation of property and the socialization of the national resources and economic enterprise. To-day secessions threaten the party owing to the part played, prior to the Republic, by the university professors, almost all of left-wing tendencies. These intellectuals, mostly partisans of a scientific socialism à la Bernstein, carried out a very effective proselytization of the student class, but they would be the last to subscribe to the violent methods advocated by the revolutionary section of their own party. Now that the Socialists have been defeated at the polls and the erstwhile democrats are preaching 'direct action' the bourgeois element is becoming alarmed and a split is not improbable, though strong party discipline may stave off the danger. Julian Besteiro, Professor of Logic at the University of Madrid, a convinced adherent of 'gradualism' and a staunch admirer of the British Labour Party, is the leader of this group. Opposed to him is Largo Caballero, the leader of the great Socialist union, the U.G.T. (*Unión General de Trabajadores*), whose membership increased rapidly after the proclamation of the Republic, till at the present time it is generally estimated at a little over a million. At a recent meeting of the executive committee of the U.G.T. (of which Besteiro was president) most of the officials resigned after severe criticism of their policy, and Largo Caballero and his supporters were elected to the vacant positions. The latter has threatened revolutionary action if further attempts are made to repeal the social legislation of the *Cortes Constituyentes*. 'We must fight in the streets,' he has said. 'We, as much as the Communist, state that Power is tyranny. When we assume power we too shall use it tyrannically, but not against the humble. Capitalism annihilated, power will cease to exist, that is, capitalist power, and we shall be completely allied both to anarchist and communist.'

These typical remarks show that the U.G.T. and the Socialist Party are now definitely committed to revolutionary tactics. Their intention is to launch the organized masses against the State, to seize power and impose a pro-

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letarian dictatorship. But the leaders know only too well that the Socialists alone cannot undertake an armed rising, for the Premier, Señor Lerroux, has declared himself prepared to use all the powers at his disposal to crush any such attempt. Hence the overtures to the Anarchists of the C.N.T. and to the Communists, and the usual hypocritical agitation for the formation of the 'united front.' But the obvious result of the proletarian triumph would mean the collapse of Socialism and the losing of the U.G.T., for their allies would not long be content to play second fiddle. How long, too, would the proletariat follow the Socialist banner? Would they not desert *en masse* to the cruder but simpler creeds? Soon the party would repent of having abandoned legal paths and risked its future in a venture of very doubtful success. The artificial nature of the movement may be judged by considering that those who now advocate the 'united front,' for reasons of political expediency, were the same who in a coalition government to which they gave three ministers did their utmost to stifle proletarian agitation fomented by their rivals. In the December rising the Socialists took no official part, though the continual incitement of the masses to revolution both in speech and press acted as a very powerful moral factor.

The Communist Party, while not as strong as its two rivals, is slowly recovering from the very severe blow dealt it by the Dictatorship when its activities were declared illegal. Under the able leadership of Pérez Solís, an ex-artillery captain and seceder from the Socialist camp, much lost ground is fast being made up. The formation of numerous 'red cells' within the two syndical groups may ultimately lead to control passing into communist hands. At present the tendency to eliminate the intellectual in favour of the manual worker is a marked feature which accounts for the secessions of disgruntled intellectuals none too enamoured of the crude and violent class-war propaganda which communism carries out. Under the leadership of Andrés Nin, an ardent muscophile, and admirer of Trotsky, the intellectual bourgeoisie formed a rival body known as the *Opposición Comunista*, whose main function is pro-

paganda work. Nin also founded the Catalan Communist Party, a small but important group, constantly being increased by deserters from the Catalan separatist parties, these latter not proving extremist enough for the young men 'in a hurry.' Here again propaganda among the student class is the objective. Finally, there is the *Bloque Obrero y Campesino*, another secession from the Communist Party headed by Joaquin Maurin. This group, totally independent of foreign or Spanish tutelage, pursues opportunist tactics within the limited field of Catalonian politics. No ideological differences separate it from the official C.P., save minor interpretations of tactics. Meanwhile, it serves as a very convenient halfway house between Libertarian and State communism. Under the leadership of the young intelligent and dynamic Maurin, whose knowledge of the Catalonian working class is unrivalled, the group is a very important factor and the possibility of reunion with the C.P. cannot be ruled out entirely. At the moment Maurin continues his alliance with the Catalan parties of the left.

The overpowering influence of Soviet literature on all these parties is important. The Communist Party has its daily organ, which can count on a 30,000 circulation. Numerically, the party is not strong—200,000—but fast growing discontent among the socialist masses is helping to swell its ranks; nor must it be forgotten that many of the students who during the dictatorship were imbibing polite socialism from their professors, are to-day turning to more extremist doctrines, abandoning gradualism for direct action, and naturally finding a more congenial spiritual home in communism. Division among the communist sects will certainly not prevent them from forming a united front against the common foe, capitalism. Moreover, the socialist dilemma forces that party to commit political hara kiri whenever it assumes office, for it then loses that 'class' characteristic which helped it to power, and its invariable failure to bring about the utopia promised, without causing national impoverishment and turmoil, causes its downfall. **When** it tries to compromise with its socialist convictions the masses accuse it of siding with the bourgeoisie, and **the**

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cry of traitor goes up. The rank and file cannot help but leave to follow other social Messiahs who promise even greater paradises for the proletariat. Thus communism must increase at the expense of its bastard brother, socialism. How far the realization of their weak position has led the socialist leaders to steal a little of their rivals' revolutionary thunder is an interesting speculation.

Latterly attempts have been made to reorganize the old, non-political, professional, *Sindicatos Libres*, and provided government protection is guaranteed whole unions are prepared to secede from the U.G.T. and C.N.T., for they object to being used as mere pawns in the revolutionary game of the leaders. The Basque and Navarrese associations (one hundred per cent. Catholic) still exist in a very flourishing condition, numbering 35,000. It is significant that last year's anarcho-syndicalist rising found no support in either of these regions. Prior to their disbandment three years ago, the *Sindicatos Libres* had a membership of three hundred thousand, and it is the convinced opinion of the leaders behind the movement for their revival that if they were guaranteed liberty from interference this number could easily be raised to the half-million by the end of this year. In Madrid, a socialist stronghold, their five thousand members, despite intimidation, refused to participate in recent strikes.

The Catholic body, by the founding of the **I.S.O.** (*Instituto Social Obrero*), a college for the formation of Catholic Labour leaders, has set about the task of winning back the working classes. Half a year's training in Apologetics, Catholic social doctrine, and syndication, qualifies the students to act as propagandists throughout the provinces, where the movement to strengthen the Catholic unions is proceeding rapidly. A similar work is being effected by *Acción Popular Agraria*, the Catholic party, whose policy like that of the disbanded German Centrum is based on the *Katholische Weltanschauung*, or Catholic conception of life. It must be stressed that the party led by Gil Robles is neither Monarchist nor Fascist, for he has expressly stated his allegiance to the regime and his disbelief in the

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efficacy of Fascism. His object is to effect a deep social transformation in a spirit of unbounded justice, tending towards the establishment of a corporate State. Certainly the present conditions of violence, indiscipline, and anarchy should cease, for even the Spaniard's traditional stoicism has been severely tried since that fateful day of April 1931, when Alfonso XIII left his country. The foreigner might well be inclined to agree with Balmes, who once said on a similar occasion that the Spaniards had lost everything except the habit of suffering.

RAMON SILVA.

WALES AND THE REFORMATION

THE Reformation in Wales has until recently proved something of an enigma to historians. It was common knowledge that the new doctrines were at first detested by the Welsh, that there was no nucleus of Calvinism, as in England, to give momentum and drive to the Reform movement, nor could there be a sense of antagonism between national prestige and the political expression of continental Catholicism. The English government, no less than the Catholic powers abroad, were fully aware of the possibility of an armed rising in defence of the old religion, though the extent of the danger was a matter of debate. It has been said of the Celts that 'they went forth to the battle but they always fell.' In this instance, however, it was precisely in so far as they did not go forth to battle that they fell. Catholicism withered, and the nineteenth century found Wales the home of a type of Protestantism of whose spiritual and literary qualities the poetry of William Williams of Pantycelyn and Ann Griffiths is sufficient evidence.

The historical causes of this religious and cultural revolution remained for a variety of reasons almost unexplored, so far as the general reader is concerned, until the appear-