
Fallacies And Facts.

Often repeated in the press is this charge: that the Nationalists (or rightists) in Spain are fighting a rightfully-constituted government. Mr. William V. Montavon, director of the legal department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, explained, in a recent radio broadcast, how this "rightfully" constituted government by the leftists (or Popular Front) came about:

(1). "In the 1934 election entire leftist parties, among them those whose members had been most vociferous in the Constitutional Assembly, disappeared, were wiped out by an aroused electorate. The rightists won that election and organized the parliament.

"The leftists could not take defeat. They resorted to turmoil, revolutionary general strikes, and finally open rebellion against the legally constituted government of the Republic. Their rebellion had no widespread support and was quickly suppressed. Disorders continued. The turmoil became such that parliament could not function. The rightists were never permitted to preside over the cabinet. The parliament was recessed and new elections called.

"The campaign preceding the 1936 election was bitter. The independent and opposition press was subjected to great restrictions. Free use of radio was not permitted. The vote was heavy. Official returns showed a popular vote favoring rightist candidates... The leftists refused to accept defeat.

They seized the government by prevailing on President Alcala Zamora to accept the resignation of the cabinet and designate their man to organize the new government. This done they were able to manipulate election returns and give themselves an effective majority in the parliament.

"The first act of the Popular Front was to place all Spain under martial law. Doing this the Popular Front established for the record that its own accession to office produced a national emergency so serious that constitutional liberties and guarantees had to be suspended.

"Under the Constitution martial law may be imposed only for thirty day periods. Month after month the Popular Front came before parliament seeking an extension of its

power to impose martial law. Rightists opposed the grant of power, denouncing martial law as a cloak for mob violence. "On July 13, the Popular Front once more asked for an extension of power. Rightist leaders, Calvo Sotelo and Gil Robles, objected. That night men wearing the uniform of shock police arrested Calvo Sotelo. Next morning his murdered body was found in a cemetery.

"The Popular Front dared not face the debate that it knew to be inevitable in parliament. Parliament recessed. The debate continued before the permanent committee. The spokesman for the party of Calvo Sotelo told the committee that he and his party were through....

"Gil Robles, speaking for his C.E.D.A. party indicted the Popular Front government, held it responsible for the murder of Calvo Sotelo. Under the Popular Front since February, Gil Robles declared, a record has been made. It is a record of mob violence, burning of churches, desecration of wayside shrines, destruction of convents and other property, marchings of irresponsible armed militia, gangsterism, arson, robbery, kidnappings, assassinations, terrorism, all under martial law. And, charged Gil Robles, the Popular Front did nothing to prevent them. It is a record of democracy in bankruptcy, of anarchy, of political chaos, of tyranny."

Subsequent to these conditions came the revolution.

(2). Another charge frequently made is this: that the Church plunged Spain into a conflict because she objects to the separation of Church from State. And this is Mr. Montavon's answer: "In Spain religious denominations and congregations are treated as voluntary associations, but unlike other voluntary associations, they are subject to special laws. That is not separation. That is subjection, absolute subjection under a legal regime of exception... If unhappy Spain today is the battlefield for a little world war, responsibility lies not primarily on the Catholic people of Spain. Read the minutes of the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. It reveals where lies the major responsibility."

FOOTNOTES: (deceased) 2nd anniv. of father of John Sullivan (Mor.); aunt of John Toomey (Badr.); friend of Roland O'Shea; friend of Bill O'Toole (Car.). Ill, Ben Saeli (Fr.); Bill Sharp, appendectomy, (Alum.); Mrs. Paradise; the Degman family; William Meyer (Fr.).