

Henry Buckley was the *Daily Telegraph*'s correspondent in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. He arrived in Spain in 1929, six years before the outbreak of the conflict, and left Spain with the remnants of the Republican forces that fled over the Pyrenees following their defeat by Franco in 1939. After covering the Second World War, during which he was wounded at Anzio, Buckley returned to Spain in 1949, living there until his death in 1972.

‘The overwhelming value of this wonderful book is that it provides an objective picture of a crucial decade of contemporary Spanish history, based on an abundance of the eye-witness material that only a really assiduous resident correspondent could garner. For Hemingway, Hugh Thomas and others, [Henry Buckley] was a living archive of the [Spanish Civil] war. Fortunately for those who could not consult him personally, he left *The Life and Death of the Spanish Republic*, a worthy monument to a great correspondent.’

– **Paul Preston, author of *The Spanish Holocaust*,
from the Introduction to this book**

‘Henry Buckley was one of the best of a top array of foreign correspondents of the 1930s and after, the only first-hand observer to write an account of the entire history of the Spanish Republic. The book is a classic, written with great personal honesty.’

– **Stanley G. Payne, author of *The Spanish Civil War***

‘*The Life and Death of the Spanish Republic* is a compelling account of one time-locked country’s bid for democratic change, and of the human and structural obstacles to it. Henry Buckley, the war correspondent’s correspondent who mentored Hemingway, already knew Spain before the Nazi- and Fascist-backed military coup sent it spiralling into civil war in 1936; Buckley’s writing encapsulates the hugeness and implacability of ‘History’ in the fresh and direct detail of ordinary people’s hopes and fears. A clear-headed, humane assessment – with an almost unbearable immediacy – of hopes raised and dashed. One of the best books ever written on the subject in any language.’

– **Helen Graham, author of *The Spanish Civil War: A Very Short Introduction***

‘The Spanish Civil War was the central element of twentieth-century Spanish history. Throughout the almost eighty years since that summer of 1936, novelists, poets and historians have attempted to explain its causes and its consequences, the most bitter conflicts and the politics that drove them. *The Life and Death of the Spanish Republic* presents a clear, sharply defined first-hand portrait of this conflict. It is an exceptional testimony.’

– **Julián Casanova, author of *A Short History of the Spanish Civil War***

THE
LIFE AND DEATH
OF THE
SPANISH
REPUBLIC

A WITNESS TO THE
SPANISH CIVIL WAR

HENRY BUCKLEY

INTRODUCTION BY PAUL PRESTON

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INTRODUCTION

THE HUMANE OBSERVER: HENRY BUCKLEY

PAUL PRESTON

IT is said that when Hemingway returned to Madrid after the Civil War, he would always turn to Henry Buckley to find out what was really going on in Franco's Spain. When Hugh Thomas published his monumental history of the Spanish Civil War, he thanked Buckley for allowing him 'to pick his brains remorselessly'. William Forrest, who was in Spain during the war, representing first the *Daily Express* and later the *News Chronicle*, wrote that 'Buckley saw more of the Civil War than any foreign correspondent of any country and reported it with a scrupulous adherence to the truth that won the respect even of those who sometimes might have preferred the truth to remain uncovered'. Henry Buckley may not have written any of the most famous chronicles of the war like Jay Allen's account of the massacre of Badajoz or George Steer's account of Guernica. Nevertheless, in addition to his sober news items throughout the war and to the help freely dispensed to less experienced colleagues, he produced this book, one of the most enduring records of the Spanish Republic and the Civil War, a monumental testimony to his work as a correspondent.

Henry Buckley's *Life and Death of the Spanish Republic* constitutes a unique account of Spanish politics throughout the entire life of the Second Republic, from its foundation on 14 April 1931 to its defeat at the end of March 1939, combining personal recollections of meetings with the great politicians of the day with eye-witness accounts of dramatic events. It lucidly explains a complex period in vivid prose laced with humour, pity for human suffering and outrage at those whom he considered to be responsible for the tragedy of Spain. It summed up his work as a correspondent during the Spanish Civil War representing the *Daily Telegraph*. It was an ironic commentary on the experiences recounted in the book that, not long after it had been published in 1940, the warehouse in London containing stocks of the book was hit by German incendiary bombs and all the unsold copies were destroyed. Thus, this classic history of the war has been unavailable ever since.

Henry Buckley was born in Urms near Manchester in November 1904 and, after stints in Berlin and Paris, he had come to Spain to

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represent the now defunct *Daily Chronicle*. Henry Buckley was a devout Roman Catholic, with radical social instincts. It was human empathy, rather than ideology, that accounted for his support for the struggles of the industrial workers and the landless peasants in the 1930s. That is clear throughout the book. As befitted a conservative, he was an admirer of the benevolent dictator General Miguel Primo de Rivera, whom he described as 'a national Father Christmas'. Buckley was a determinedly honest man. He liked the dictator's son, José Antonio, although he was disturbed by the paid thugs who belonged to the Fascist party that he created, the Falange.

Buckley was disappointed by his first sight of Spain, and by the shabbiness and poverty of the peasants, yet was also fiercely self-critical about the audacity of reporting on a country of which he knew nothing in 1929. He writes throughout with a humorous awareness of his own deficiencies, describing himself, on leaving Paris for Madrid, as 'a rather crotchety and thin-blooded virgin'. Buckley may have been ignorant on his arrival but he set out to learn and learn he did. He disliked Madrid as 'bleak and draughty and monotonous' and was outraged by a situation in which 'one million Spaniards live at the expense of the rest of the nation'. Yet, as is shown by his account of the siege of the capital during the war, he came to love the city and admire its inhabitants. It seemed like a conservative Englishman speaking when he said, 'I feel that the democratic system adopted by the Republic when King Alfonso left the country was in no small part responsible for Spain's tragedy', but it was soon apparent that his view was based on the rather radical belief that the Republicans were insufficiently dictatorial to engage in a thorough reform of the country's ancient economy.

The overwhelming value of his wonderful book is that it provides an objective picture of a crucial decade of contemporary Spanish history, based on an abundance of the eye-witness material that only a really assiduous resident correspondent could garner. Perceptive and revealing anecdotes abound. With Republican crowds surging the streets of Madrid, Buckley, waiting in the bitter cold on the night of 13 April outside Palacio de Oriente, asks a porter what the Royal Family was doing. 'I imagined its members in anxious conclave, calling up friends, consulting desperately. The answer was calm and measured: "Their Majesties are attending a cinematographic performance in the salon recently fitted up with a sound apparatus."' The next day, he witnesses the future war leader but then unknown Dr Negrín calming an

impatient crowd by arranging for a Republican flag to be draped on a balcony of the Royal Palace. In Chicote's bar in the Gran Vía, 'a polished British-public-school-educated son of a Spanish banker tells him "the only future the Republicans and Socialists will have will be on the gallows or in gaol"'.

One of the greatest joys of Buckley's prose is to be found in his immensely perceptive portraits of the major political and military figures of the day which have profoundly coloured the later judgements of historians. On Julián Besteiro, the President of the Cortes whose misguided judgements stood in the way of agrarian reform, he wrote with morbid irony: 'he showed fine tolerance, quick to hurry to the support of the weak—in this case the representatives of feudalism who had ridden rough-shod over their opponents for many a century.' In the aftermath of the massacre by security forces of anarchist peasants at Casas Viejas in the province of Cádiz on 8 January 1933, Buckley describes Carlos Esplá, then Under-Secretary for the Home Ministry, as a 'superlatively inefficient and muddle-headed Republican' and goes a long way to explaining the weakness of the Republic because of its politicians' inability to deal with the high-handed brutality of the Civil Guard. Despite a lack of sympathy for his politics, Buckley admired the political efficacy of the CEDA leader, José María Gil Robles – 'truculent, forceful, an excellent executive and with considerable judgement in men and politics'. In contrast, he saw the revolutionary rhetoric of the Socialist leader Francisco Largo Caballero as utterly false and describes in satirical terms the vacuous oratory of Niceto Alcalá Zamora, the President of the Republic.

Henry Buckley knew every politician of note in 1930s Spain. He particularly admired Dr Juan Negrín, the wartime Socialist premier, but he was utterly bowled over by 'Pasionaria', the Communist orator Dolores Ibárruri. After meeting her in Valencia in May 1937 and being subjected to a passionate harangue, he wrote: 'But what a woman! She was, I think, the only Spanish politician I ever met; and I think I know most of those who have any call on fame during this generation, and she is the only one who really did impress me as being a great person.' He liked the moderate Socialist Indalecio Prieto and admired his untiring work as a minister during the Civil War, but was aware that not all of his feverish work was as productive as it might have been since he insisted on dealing with every minor detail even to the extent of personally examining journalists' applications for visits to the front.

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Of the illiterate peasant who became a general in the war, Valentín González, 'El Campesino', Buckley's view confirms that of other observers: 'He had the strangely magnetic eyes of a madman.' Writing of Campesino's great rival, the brutal Stalinist Enrique Lister, Buckley noted that he appreciated the importance of good food: 'He had a cook who had been with Wagon-Lits restaurant cars before the war and in the various times in various retreats in which I managed to pick up a meal at Lister's headquarters I do not think I ever had a bad one.' Buckley could also describe Lister 'handling the remains of an Army corps with coolness and considerable skill'. The greatest admiration is reserved for Negrín, not only for his dynamism but also for his essential kindness:

My chief impression of him was of his strong pity for human suffering. He would look at the newsboy from whom he was buying an evening paper and say 'Having those eyes treated, sonny? No? Well go to Dr So-and-So at such-and-such a clinic and give him this card and he'll see that you get treated right away.' Or out in the country, he would stop in small villages and talk to the peasants, look in at their miserable homes, peer behind the easy mask of picturesqueness which veils so much disease and suffering in Spain. Before leaving he would slip some money or a card which would ensure free medical treatment into the hand of the woman of the house. That was Negrín as I knew him.

This eye for the telling detail brings the politics of the Second Republic to life. During the run-up to the November 1933 elections, Buckley visited CEDA headquarters and noted the lavish quality of the posters used in Gil Robles's campaign. On 21 April 1934, he attended the rain-soaked rally of the Juventud de Acción Popular at El Escorial. The parading, saluting and chanting led Buckley to see it as the trial for the creation of Fascist shock troops. A turn-out of 50,000 had been expected, but, despite the transport facilities, the giant publicity campaign and the large sums spent, fewer than half that number arrived. Besides, as Buckley observed, 'there were too many peasants at El Escorial who told reporters quite cheerfully that they had been sent by the local political boss with fare and expenses paid'. On the eve of the miners' insurrection in Asturias, on the night of 5 October, Buckley was with the Socialists Luis Araquistain, Juan Negrín and Julio Álvarez Del Vayo in a bar in Madrid discussing the wisdom of Largo Caballero's revolutionary rhetoric. He describes how, during the siege of the

capital, the luxurious Hotel Palace was turned into a military hospital. After the Battle of Guadalajara, he interviews captured Italian regular troops who, far from being volunteers, were in Spain under formal military orders. At the end of May 1937, he hastens to Almería to examine the damage done by the German warship *Admiral Scheer* on 31 May 1937 in reprisal for the Republican bombing of the cruiser *Deutschland* two days earlier, and produces a grim description of the destruction of the working-class districts of this undefended port.

As a witness to such scenes, Buckley is overcome with moral indignation, although his sympathies for the poor of Spain were engaged as early as 1931. Reflecting on the situation of Alfonso XIII on the night before his departure from Madrid, he asks rhetorically: 'Where are your friends? Can anyone believe that this fine people of Spain have hearts of stone? No. If you had ever shown generosity or comprehension of their aches and struggles they would not leave you friendless tonight. You never did.' Although a practising Catholic throughout his life, Buckley wavered in his Catholic faith because of right-wing Catholic hostility to the Republic, commenting that, 'Much as I disliked the mob violence and the burning of churches I felt that the people in Spain who professed most loudly their Catholic faith were the most to blame for the existence of illiterate masses and a threadbare national economy.' His humanity was brought into conflict with his religious faith, as can be seen in his vivid accounts of the daily lives of near-starving *braceros* in the south.

To some degree, the greatest object of Buckley's indignation is the role of the British government and the diplomatic corps. He comments that, 'When I did talk to any of our diplomatic officers I found them very complaisantly disposed towards the Spanish Right. They looked upon them as a guarantee against Bolshevism, much preferable to have them in power than either Socialists or Republicans for this reason, and they would gently pooh-pooh any suggestion that the Spanish Right might one day side with Germany and Italy and we might suddenly find our Empire routes in danger.' After the bombing of the German battle-cruiser *Deutschland*, the German crew members killed were buried with full military honours in Gibraltar. After the German revenge attack on an undefended Almería, Buckley witnessed the funeral of one of the victims. Looking at the worn faces and gnarled hands of those who followed the coffin, he wondered 'how it is that so few people care how much the working masses suffer'. He was appalled that while the

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port of Gandía was bombed by German aircraft and British ships were destroyed, the Royal Navy destroyer standing nearby in Valencia was ordered to do nothing. Effectively, the picture painted by Buckley is one of the British establishment putting its class prejudices before its strategic interests. In this regard, he quotes a British diplomat who says that 'the essential thing to remember in the case of Spain is that it is a civil conflict and that it is very necessary that we stand by our class'.

While working for the *Daily Telegraph*, Henry Buckley established friendships with many of the most prominent war correspondents who worked in Spain, including Jay Allen, Vincent Sheehan, Lawrence Fernsworth, Herbert Matthews and Ernest Hemingway. Quietly spoken—one Spanish journalist commented that his speaking voice was 'almost a sigh'—Buckley was extremely popular among his colleagues, who called him 'Enrique'. The young American reporter Kitty Bowler made a trip to Madrid in October 1936 which she described as 'a nightmare', but it was made bearable by Henry Buckley. He rescued her from the unwelcome attentions of men in her hotel and she later wrote of him as 'the sweetest reporter in Spain. His everyday banter acted like a welcome cocktail.' The novelist Josephine Herbst met him in April 1937 and remembered him as 'a wonderful fellow, and with more background about Spain's past than any other correspondent in Spain'. Constanca de la Mora, in charge of liaison with the Republic's Foreign Press Bureau, described Henry Buckley as 'a little sandy-haired man, with a shy face and a little tic at the corner of the mouth which gave his dry humour a sardonic twist'.

Yet his quiet manner belied the courage which saw him visiting every front at considerable risk to himself. In the latter stages of the Battle of the Ebro, on 5 November 1938, he crossed the river in a boat with Ernest Hemingway, Vincent Sheehan, Robert Capa and Herbert Matthews. He commented later:

We were sent out to cover the news on Líster's front—Hemingway was then reporting to the North American Newspaper alliance. At that time, virtually all the bridges across the Ebro had been smashed by the fighting and a series of treacherous spikes had been sunk in the river to discourage all navigation on it. However, since there was no other way of getting to the front, the five of us set out in a boat with the idea of rowing along the shore until we got to the deepest part of the river, then crossing, and rowing back to the opposite shore. The trouble was that we got caught in the

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current and started drifting into the centre. With every moment that passed, the situation became more menacing, for, once on the spikes, the bottom of the boat was certain to be ripped out; almost as certain was that we would drown once the boat had capsized. It was Hemingway who saved the situation, for he pulled on the oars like a hero, and with such fury that he got us safely across.

Buckley was, of course, playing down his own bravery. Hemingway described him during the war as 'a lion of courage, though a very slight, even frail creature with (or so he says in his book) jittery nerves'. The eternally cynical Cedric Salter, who occasionally accompanied him in the last stages of the war, commented that Buckley 'was always quietly gay when things looked bad, but perhaps because he is made in a more sensitive mold than the others I always felt that in order to do the things he did required more real moral courage for him than from the others'. Salter's insight is substantiated by Buckley's own account. He recalled a conversation with several colleagues after a visit to the front. With considerable understatement, he wrote:

Our dangers came from long-distance shelling and from the constant bombing and machine-gunning of the roads behind the lines. The risk was actually not very great. I had no hesitation in saying that I always felt highly nervous when getting near the front. Nor had I any shame in confessing that when I lay in some field and watched bombers coming towards the point where I was lying and heard the 'whur-whur-whur' as the bombs came speeding down, was I ever anything but thoroughly frightened. Even more terrifying, I think, is being machine-gunned. You know that a bomb must practically fall on top of you in an open field in order to hurt you. But it is only rarely that any shelter against machine-gunning can be found when one dives haphazard from a car with the planes coming over and minutes or even seconds in which to throw oneself into the best shelter available.

After the capture of Catalonia by the rebel forces at the end of January 1939, Buckley, along with Herbert Matthews, Vincent Sheean and other correspondents, had joined the exodus of refugees. He and Matthews established themselves in a hotel in Perpignan and devoted themselves to reporting on the appalling conditions in the concentration camps improvised by the French authorities into which the refugees had been herded. They managed to intervene to rescue people that they knew from the groups being taken to the camps.

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Although he says little of his own role, Buckley's pages are alive with fury when he reaches his horrendous account of refugees arriving at the French frontier. He was outraged that Britain and France did not do more:

The whole world was excited about the rescuing of some 600 chefs d'oeuvres of Spanish and Italian art which were being guarded near Figueras after their long odyssey. But we cared nothing about the soul of a people which was being trampled on. We did not come to cheer them; to encourage them. To have taken these half million and cherished them and given them work and comfort in Britain and France and their colonies, that indeed would have been culture in its real sense of the word. I love El Greco, I have spent countless hours just sitting looking at the Prado Titians and some of Velázquez's works fascinate me, but frankly I think that it would have been better for mankind if they had all been burnt in a pyre if the loving and warm attention that was lavished on them could have been devoted to this half-million sufferers. Better still if we had hearts big enough to cherish both, but since apparently we have not, it would at least have been a happier omen if such drops of the milk of human kindness which we still possess could have gone to the human sufferers. Yet while men well known in Catalan and Spanish cultural life in addition to tens of thousands of unknown persons were lying exposed to the elements and an average of sixty persons a week were dying of sickness and disease among the refugees in and around Perpignan, the art treasures left for Geneva in 1,842 cases on February 13; they were well protected from wind and rain. Women and children and sick and wounded men could sleep in the open air, almost uncared for. But the twenty trucks of Prado pictures had great tarpaulin covers and the care of a score of experts.

In the summer of 1938, accompanied by the artist Luis Quintanilla and the American reporter Herbert Matthews, Buckley had gone to Sitges. Quintanilla introduced him to the Catalan painter Joaquim Sunyer. He in turn presented Buckley to a Catalan girl, María Planas. They fell in love and quickly decided to marry. Despite the fact that the Catholic Church was still proscribed in Republican Spain, Constança de la Mora used her influence to permit them to be married in a chapel used by the Basques exiled in Catalonia. After the Spanish Civil War, Buckley was posted to Berlin where he worked until two days before the outbreak of the Second World War when he was obliged to leave

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by the Nazis. After a brief time in Amsterdam covering the German invasion, he spent a year and a half in Lisbon before becoming a war correspondent for the *Daily Express*. Thereafter, he and María were able to see each other just once a year in Gibraltar. As a correspondent for Reuters, he landed with British forces at the Anzio beachhead and was very badly wounded when a German shell exploded near a jeep in which he was riding on the drive on Rome. As a consequence, he was left with shrapnel in his right side and was in acute pain for the rest of his life. Immediately after the war, he was attached to the Allied forces in Berlin and later was Reuters correspondent in Madrid and, during 1947 and 1948, in Rome before returning to Madrid.

In 1949 he came back to Madrid as director of the Reuters office, and he remained there until September 1966 apart from brief assignments to Morocco, Portugal and Algeria. On 11 January 1961, along with other members of the board of the Foreign Press Association, he was received by General Franco. In 1962, he covered the last stand of the OAS in Oran. He maintained his friendship with Hemingway and they would meet whenever the American novelist visited Madrid. After thirty years in Spain, the Spanish Government marked his retirement in 1966 with the award of Spain's highest civilian honour, the Cruz de Caballero de la Orden de Isabel la Católica, which was given to him by the then Foreign Minister Fernando María Castiella. In January 1968, Queen Elizabeth II of England appointed him Member of the Order of the British Empire, which was conferred upon him by the then British Ambassador Sir Alan Williams.

After 1966, Henry Buckley retired to live in Sitges but continued to work for the BBC as an occasional correspondent. He died on 9 November 1972. He was much loved and admired by his professional colleagues, Spanish and foreign, for his honesty and gentleness of manner. The Spanish journalists who knew him knew little of his experiences during the Civil War or of his friendship with Negrín. For Hemingway, Hugh Thomas and others, he was a living archive of the war. Fortunately for those who could not consult him personally, he left *Life and Death of the Spanish Republic*, a worthy monument to a great correspondent.

FOREWORD

YOU, the reader, may wonder why in the midst of the vast international conflict in which we are involved I feel it worth while to write of Spain. The book was in fact already finished when war broke out on September 3 but it is clear that its publication could have been relegated to more peaceful times if its sole value consisted in the record contained in these pages of the sad history of the Spanish Republic which was born with such high hopes and so peacefully on April 14, 1931, and which ended with the proclamation of General Franco on April 1, 1939, that the entire territory of Spain was now under the control of his totalitarian régime.

Yet I feel that it is tremendously important that we study the brief history of the Spanish Republic. Because I hold the opinion that the democratic system adopted by the Republic when King Alfonso left the country was in no small part responsible for Spain's tragedy. Democracy was tried and found wanting. Why did it fail? Surely now more than ever we who to-day are engaged in what is perhaps the greatest struggle ever entered on by our Empire should analyse and study the reason for Democracy's failure? Only a few weeks before we once again found ourselves at war with Germany, Lord Baldwin sounded a warning note to Democrats in a speech made in New York. He pointed out that Democracy could only survive as a system if it were constructive in character. In saying this the former Prime Minister stated a fact which however obvious it may seem to be, is only too often overlooked. A political system is not good just because the principles behind it are good. It is only good if it resolves the political and economic problems with which the nation which uses it is faced.

The men who took control of Spain when King Alfonso left his throne were on the whole capable and honest men. They were all, or nearly all, soaked in the Liberal doctrines of the nineteenth century. Their whole outlook was based on democratic concepts. They at once organised elections and submitted themselves immediately to the will of the Parliament elected by the people of Spain. This Parliament was a worthy body. In so far as four hundred and seventy men of vastly

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different ideas and up-bringing can work expeditiously as a body, that first national chamber of the Republic worked hard and intelligently in the preparation of the nation's future.

The task of the Republic was to convert a nation in a state of political collapse and which in so far as it had any economic system remained in its essentials a feudal régime, into a progressive twentieth-century nation with an economy founded on the possibilities of the land in relation to the swift march of science with its revolution in transport, manufacture of goods, agricultural methods and in the education and enlightenment of the individual.

Now Democracy did not come of its own easy accord in England. Oliver Cromwell dealt the final blow to feudalism amid a certain amount of upheaval. The French Republic of to-day is the child of the French Revolution. We have been through the mill in our time. If the British and French Democracies in 1931 had been alert and progressive they would have warned the young Republic behind the Pyrenees that it must rid itself of the feudal elements before it could hope to build something new. Then they would have pointed out that with feudalism expelled and with no strong middle class to take its place the Spanish State must at once plan a new economy on a national basis, leaving private initiative where this could give useful help, suppressing this when feeble capitalistic enterprise merely clogged all efforts of reform. All this would have cost much disturbance, probably also a certain amount of bloodshed, but it would have enabled the foundations to be laid for a new nation preparing to take its place in the European confraternity.

But no such advice as this came across the Pyrenees. The fat of our prosperity affects also the brains of Democracy. The Gods have been too kind. If there was any advice at all given from Britain and France to the youthful Spanish Republic it was to the effect that as little as possible should be changed. In Spain, as elsewhere, we hoped and wished not that much should happen but that nothing should happen.

So the Spanish Republicans failed. They modelled their young State on a nineteenth-century Liberal pattern without regard to the fact that certain defects were already very evident in the functioning of Democracy in places where it was long-established and ignoring the not inconsiderable feudal foundations on which they now proceeded to erect a structure of a very different character from that which the foundations were designed to carry.

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I watched the process year by year. I could see that something essential was missing but it cost me many years before some inkling of the fundamental wrong began to dawn on my mind.

The question now is whether we will see the danger signals in time. It is no use sitting back and throwing the blame on Fascism. We have to realise quickly and definitely that Democracy cannot be interpreted as meaning the indefinite maintenance of a status quo, of an existing state of political or economic affairs. If we accept this interpretation then Democracy will surely be pushed aside or at least adapted by force to new existing conditions, for history knows no status quo. It is vital and urgent that we overhaul and analyse our concept of Democracy. On the foundations of this creed we must evolve a new system—or systems, for the solution suitable to one nation will need much variation for some other land with different economic problems—which will enable the nation adopting such a new system to face effectively, and cope with, the dramatic economic changes brought about by the scientific discoveries which are revolutionising mankind and his world at a speed which few of us appreciate.

I hope that my presentation of Spanish happenings as I witnessed them from the fall of General Primo de Rivera onwards may cause others to reflect on the reasons for the tragic fate of the Spanish Republic. In searching for the reasons for the failure of the Republic we may perhaps stumble on truths which if applied to our own political and economic system may come at the right moment in order to help us to render the structure of the British Commonwealth impervious to the many attacks now being made upon it.

HENRY BUCKLEY.

London, December 1939.

Life and Death of the Spanish Republic

CHAPTER I

THE SPAIN I FOUND

NOTHING had prepared me for the grim aspect of the Castilian uplands in November, for the shabbiness and poverty of the peasants, for the smell of rancid olive oil at wayside stations. I felt bitterly disillusioned as the train crept slowly across the Peninsula from Irun to Madrid.

I have spoken to many travellers who have suffered from similar loss of illusion on their first visit to Spain. Such notions of Spain's geography as patient schoolmasters inculcate are heavily outweighed by a mass of songs and books which describe in detail love affairs apparently permanently afoot in orange groves to the soft strumming of guitars. Most northern Europeans become sentimental when Spain is mentioned and the Germans wax particularly effusive about 'Das Land wo die Zitronen bluehen. . . .' Perhaps it is in the nature of world affairs that while we enthuse about orange groves, the Germans become fervent on the subject of lemon trees. It is somewhat disconcerting to find that a very great portion of Spain is treeless and rugged; splendid in its wilderness and colouring—but not what one expected.

Moreover I have since discovered that an orange grove is singularly unsuited to flirtation; for orange trees are low bushy affairs and in walking among them it is no small task to keep twigs and branches out of one's eyes. Nor in nine years in Spain did I ever hear a guitar played in an orange grove.

However, such knowledge as this came later. On the particular afternoon in November 1929 as I made my first trip across Spain, disillusion saddened me greatly. As a practising Catholic with a moderate amount of fervour I regarded with distaste two very stout friars who occupied my compartment

and who not only were unable, or unwilling, to understand my stuttering Spanish, but who had not shaved for several days. That seemed particularly important to my somewhat intolerant Anglo-Saxon mind which found it difficult to reconcile spiritual fervour with a greasy and unshaven jowl.

Outside Madrid the rain poured down steadily and a mist which might have come straight off those Derbyshire Moors where I spent my boyhood, swirled in through the window. The train stopped for five minutes outside the terminus with the platform lights winking tantalisingly in the near distance.

This was my first introduction to an old Spanish custom formally observed at important termini such as Madrid and Barcelona. Each train must pass so to speak a period of quarantine before being allowed to enter. I can see that the system has its points. I presume that an office boy trots around to the stationmaster's office and tells him with fine Spanish courtesy and the compliments of the signalman that the 8.15 from Irun is here and please may it enter the station. Doubtless this functionary gives his consent and then proceeds to don his best uniform coat and hat. In this way an important train cannot catch the station staff in its shirt-sleeves, but the remedy is not one which appeals to the British traveller. Years later I lay in a ditch just near the point where the train stopped while shells crashed noisily and unpleasantly near and time seemed unimportant, but now I was anxious to reach Madrid and to recover quickly those lost illusions.

And in certain measure I did so. Plumed sentries on motionless horses loomed out of the night in front of the Royal Palace and small infantrymen in scarlet and blue with fixed bayonets guarded the entrance to the residence of Don Alfonso, whose picture I had seen hundreds of times in the Press and of whom my impression, picked up haphazardly from newspaper reports, was that he was a good fellow who did his best with a rather fractious nation. There seemed to be colour and romance after all in Spain. Ten minutes later I found that an excellent hotel room with telephone, private bathroom and two and a half meals daily cost but ten shillings. It seemed to me that Madrid had many good points.

When I look back I am amazed at the blithe way in which

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I arrived in Spain and promptly commenced to report happenings there with but the vaguest knowledge of what was going on. But that is the way things are done in our imperfect world. I suppose that if Europe survives the present efforts of well-meaning statesmen which seem unlikely to lead to anything other than complete disaster, then a day will come when the most learned men of the nations will be employed in diagnosing the financial, political and moral health of Europe's component states. It will then be as unlikely for war, revolution or economic crisis to catch the world by surprise as it would be if a building regularly passed as sound by a competent architect were to collapse suddenly.

I imagine that in the year A.D. 2000 the young journalist who arrives in Madrid will glide into the Norte Station in a luxurious motor-train which will have whirled him down from the frontier in four or five hours. Or he will land at Barajas Airport after a speedy stratosphere flight from London. He will arrive primed with data on Spain prepared by the learned men to whom I have referred above and the study of which will enable him to judge with fair accuracy the conditions in the country even before his arrival. Doubtless my young colleague of the future will have been examined and certified by some international body as a fit and competent person to undertake the highly delicate work which reporting on international affairs comprises if it is done intelligently and honourably. Such at least are my hopes for a future which seems very distant indeed in these days when Europe is in a fair way to return to the Stone Age in its customs.

However in 1929 here was I in my clean and comfortable hotel room complacently prepared to report Spain to the world. I had just worked for two years as a reporter in Paris.

Looking back on those two years in Paris I think that I could hardly have got less out of them. Religious prejudice prevented me even from obtaining a sexual education and I left Paris as I came, a rather crotchety and thin-blooded virgin. My work was very intense and exacting and left me with little energy to study literature, art, theatre and all the things Paris offers us with such generous open hands.

In Spain I ate better, big solid meals of good food. I worked

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less; read more. Life is completely different if you have two well cooked, substantial meals of good wholesome food daily. I put on weight and looked at Madrid. Philip II, who was responsible for the Armada, was equally responsible for Madrid. He chose as bleak and draughty and monotonous a spot as could well be found in Spain. There are now one million people there. The Good Lord only knows why. I hope that some wise Government will decree that Madrid shall not exceed 500,000 inhabitants. I was flabbergasted to find that the largest factory in Madrid employed 700 workers—imagine that in a city of one million. There is nothing productive there. One million Spaniards live at the expense of the rest of the nation; all on the strength of this being the capital. Washington, I believe, rules the United States with some 600,000 inhabitants to keep the bureaucratic machine functioning. Canberra has, I understand, only some 40,000 inhabitants but Canberra is apparently not a great success. Madrid bureaucrats lived, or existed, in shoals because a seat for the school lavatory in an obscure village near Cadiz could not be installed without a commission coming to Madrid to petition and negotiate said seat.

Absentee landlords built houses instead of growing wheat; prostitutes, pimps, abounded. Honest peasants without labour because the landlord had put his money into a great block of smart flats past which he could walk each day and feel a man of substance, flocked in looking for work of any kind. Madrid bled Spain in those days. Since then Madrid has bled heavily to save Spain; but God forbid that it ever achieve such bloated proportions again, for there can be no economic well-being in Spain with one million beings in Madrid feeding unproductively from the slender national income.

Do not, however, get the idea that I dislike Madrid. I am fond of it. Streaks of it are eighteenth and nineteenth century with much dignity and the rest is rather slap-dash twentieth century with many baby skyscrapers. I found in 1929 that central heating was general and that all the comforts even only now obtainable at high prices in London, such as lifts, electric refrigerator in the flat, could be had for little money there. Of course it was all wrong. All this money should have

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been returning to the soil instead of going into blocks of flats. But it was civilised living and heavenly after the primitive homes of Britain and France.

Life seemed so much more interesting in Madrid than in Paris, which is against all theories. Perhaps the altitude, over 2,000 feet, gives stimulation to the body. On the whole I think my new zest came principally from eating like a prince and working relatively little. I liked a drink, new to me, named Manzanilla, a light dry Sevillian wine. Each glass is accompanied by a 'tapa', or snack, which may be anything from tripe to boiled snails and a different 'tapa' should be taken with each glass. I learned that Spaniards wear themselves out sexually at an early age and for the rest of their lives wander about remedying their deficiencies by murmuring 'Beautiful . . .' to almost anything with skirts which passes them by on the streets. I wondered whether excess was as uncomfortable in results as chastity. I hoped not.

One night while strolling down the broad Calle de Alcalá, a friend drew my attention to a cloaked figure strolling past, leaning somewhat on his cane, a tired but still debonair man around the sixties. It was Primo de Rivera. I liked his looks and afterwards was sorry that I did not have a chance to talk with him before he fell, but events were moving quickly and in these troubled days for the Dictator there was no longer 'open house' for foreign journalists. It pleased me to see a Dictator who could stroll alone along the main street like a normal human being. I suppose he was duly shadowed but there was no obvious protective force and it was pleasant to see that he did not need to be surrounded by myriads of hulking, gun-swinging bodyguards as is the case with most of Europe's 'strong men' when they venture out in public.

Primo was a finished Dictator when I arrived in Madrid. Almost everybody, except Primo himself, knew this. Just before I reached the capital there had been a shooting party in the mountains given by Don Alfonso with the object of persuading Primo, during quiet walks, of the necessity of standing down and giving place to the aristocratic Duke of Alba. Primo behaved as you would expect a good-natured, elderly general to behave who has had enormous success in

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governing a nation single-handed for six years, who is worn down to breaking point by overwork and who cannot believe that the credits he has obtained almost without asking for are no longer forthcoming. He refused to hear of resignation.

Perhaps the comparison is not altogether nice but Primo in these moments reminded me of a bull near the end of the fight, stabbed by an incompetent 'torero' and with the latter's assistants or 'monaguillos', fluttering capes around its head so that it will move its head and neck and open one of the partial wounds which may then prove fatal. It is described in Spanish as 'making the bull dizzy' and it is an unpleasant spectacle to see a fine animal streaming with blood and surrounded by taunting, fluttering capes which it no longer has the strength to charge. Poor Primo answered his taunters in more and more stupid notes, poured gold out in an attempt to bolster the declining peseta, and continued blindly to believe that there must be a way out and that some day he would be less tired and then the solution would come in a flash.

There was no Balbo or Goering waiting around the Spanish dictatorial corner. Primo tried to form a Spanish Fascist Party with his Patriotic Union. It became an efficient machine for milking the Treasury and distributing the money thus obtained, but nothing more.

General Primo in September 1923 merely fulfilled the wish of every Spanish general to be the saviour of his nation; preferably not on a battle-field. He found the banks full of gold, the World War had been profitable to this distinguished sitter on the fence, political parties quarrelling among themselves and with Spain's leading politician, Don Alfonso. A disgruntled working class disliked all politicians, including the leading figure, and an aristocratic class completely out of touch with national life was of no importance to anyone.

With Spanish gold as backing, and with the United States bursting to lend money to anyone who would take it, Primo launched out on a great policy of spending. Roads, railways, reservoirs, sprang up over-night. Primo was intelligent; he cared for the workers, gave them high wages, collective contracts, paid holidays—all this for the town workers only, however. He co-operated with the French to hustle the

troublesome Abd-El-Krim out of Morocco. Spain was El Dorado for some years.

But enormous international bills began to come home to roost. There is quite a considerable time lag between the execution of a work of public utility and the repayment to the Treasury of the money expended in the form of new created national wealth which brings in increased taxation or an improved volume of interior or exterior commerce.

Primo had foreseen this coming shortage of money. He decided to take the Spanish State into business—and he selected the oil business. He turned the petrol and oil trade into a national monopoly. This made a great deal of money for the State and a great deal of trouble for Primo. The oil kings of the world do not take expulsion lightly. It would be foolish to say that they brought about Primo's downfall but we can have little doubt that when around 1928 the first effects of tremendous spending began to be felt, Primo had bitter enemies in powerful financial circles as a result of his ejection of the private petrol firms from Spain just at the moment when they were looking forward to bumper trade from the new motor roads Primo was laying out far and wide.

Rather than a Dictator, Primo was a national Father Christmas. It may be asked why the politicians, rarely in disagreement when there are large sums to be spent, had not used the available credits for which there was obviously profitable employment available. The answer, I think, lies in the fact that although feudalism had been dying for some centuries it still remained at the bottom the only economic system in Spain. The ABC of Spanish politics still remained Army, Bishops and Crown. The middle class had no strength. It ran Spain politically but with little vigour and always hemmed in by the ABC which prevented new solutions without having anything to offer suitable for twentieth-century acceptance. Universal suffrage and Parliament were in large part fictitious. Docile peasants suitably organised by expert political bosses returned this or that faction to Parliament. It meant nothing. There was a bloodless bourgeoisie at the Spanish helm, buried in innumerable and unimportant internal conflicts. To obtain executive action became almost impossible because

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each tiny faction leader wanted this or that concession before he would vote the issue in question. Primo could take a decision and put it into action and have an important work completed before Parliament would even have managed to get it on to the agenda paper. This was the secret of his success.

Moreover the ease of his accession to power, his relatively bloodless and moderate rule, inspired confidence abroad which bolstered up still further the national credit.

This very great Andalusian gentleman—in the best and only acceptable application of this word—had in synthesis seen that there was money available and he had spent it more or less in the national interests. Now much money had gone and credits suddenly disappeared with the swiftness of a May snowfall in England. There is nothing so volatile as credit. In one moment it is present in thick, rich layers. Hey presto, another moment, and not a trace is left.

To foreign eyes the financial situation did not appear tragic. The peseta had fallen from twenty-nine to the pound to thirty-four during 1929. This seemed unimportant. It is only when one understands that General Primo's whole success had been based on wide expenditure and that now retrenchment was necessary that his difficult situation becomes clear.

The old politicians, disgruntled at the way in which Primo had taken the reins of power and spent billions of pesetas without their intervention, agitated lustily. The working classes and petite bourgeoisie were relatively prosperous in the towns following the new high wages, with work available and six years of social and political peace. They now demanded that they have a say in affairs. The Army-Bishops-Crown combination had disliked Primo's independent way of doing things; it was rather frightened by the general discontent and falling peseta and inclined to throw Primo overboard. These were the principal contributory causes expressed in a very general way; it would need a whole and lengthy book to study the Dictatorship thoroughly.

Primo was a very tired old man, sick with diabetes, with enemies plotting everywhere against him, not overlooking the hand of the oil kings pulling strings on the international money markets. Even his youthful Minister of Finance, José

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Calvo Sotelo, turned against him. Primo had taken him up when he was only thirty and made him a Cabinet Minister. Now, even though he might disagree with the Dictator's financial policy, it was hardly a loyal act to abandon the tired old man to whom he owed everything and who obviously had not more than a few weeks of office before him.

CHAPTER II

DEATH OF A DICTATOR

I WENT back to the Norte Station early one morning of March 1930. The waiting-room was full of flowers, candles flickered, and on a draped catafalque in the centre lay the mortal remains of General Primo de Rivera, just returned from their last journey. Kneeling before the coffin was King Alfonso XIII in the blue and scarlet uniform of a colonel of the Spanish Army. I could see his face in the candlelight and it is an ugly face to look on. This seemed to me a moment for emotion, but Don Alfonso showed none. His face was a mask; the face of a man trained to hide what he thinks; showing cleverness, cunning perhaps, but not intelligence. He strode out in his hasty, jerky manner and there was more breathing space in the improvised chapel as a shoal of plain-clothes men disappeared also.

Primo was neatly ejected with threats of violence at the end of January and he went to Paris unheeded by anyone and died of exhaustion just as might happen to anyone of Primo's age who worked steadily eighteen hours a day on a responsible job without ever taking even a day off and with no recreations and at the end of six and a half years suddenly stopped work altogether. I know many cases of business-men who have retired and have died shortly afterwards. Naturally reports were circulated that he had been poisoned and similar nonsense.

The way of Primo's going was inelegant and reflected little credit on those involved. There was every evidence that General Manuel Goded was preparing a *coup d'état* against the Dictator in Cadiz and people saw in this a Palace intrigue. It may or may not have been, but Goded was made Under-Secretary for War in the Government formed to replace Primo so you may draw your own conclusions. Primo, pressed to go from every side, friendless, turned desperately to the Army

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and sent a circular message to the twelve Captain-Generals of the various military zones of the Peninsula in which these generals were a species of Chinese mandarin, asking if they still approved of his Dictatorship. All except the fiery General Sanjurjo replied formally that they were loyal to the King and to any Government he named. This appeal to the Army and its negative response gave Don Alfonso a chance to accuse Primo of having made the Army the arbiter of the nation's destinies instead of this power being invested in the King and to insist vigorously on his resignation. This time it was forthcoming. But it was all rather sordid and somewhat childish, for obviously it was the Army which supported General Primo in 1923 and the King had not complained then about it taking on itself the supreme power to decide concerning the national welfare.

World attention was now focused on Don Alfonso of Bourbon. Would he survive the fall of his Dictator? In the early days he associated himself ostentatiously with him. He presented him to King Victor Emmanuel of Italy with the words: 'This is my Mussolini.' It is said that the Duce was displeased. In the last years there was much friction. A phrase of Primo's to one of his friends: 'The King must not think that he can play his Bourbon tricks on me and succeed. . . .' was whispered about town.

On the day of Primo's downfall the old political leaders such as Count Romanones, Sr. Sanchez Guerra, Sr. Alcalá Zamora and others waited for a call from the Palace. They were as disappointed as was Lord Curzon of Kedleston on a famous occasion when he waited in expectation of a premiership which went to Mr. Baldwin. The King did not seek their advice either directly or indirectly. He appointed the Head of his Military Household, General Damaso Berenguer, as Prime Minister. The Minister of Education—later of Foreign Affairs—was the Duke of Alba. The Cabinet list was completed with friends of the King or friends of friends of the King.

In other words, Don Alfonso was going to rule himself and he could scarcely have chosen a worse moment.

I have never been able to understand the motives which

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induced Don Alfonso to scorn the politicians at a moment when he needed them more than ever in his life. He had abandoned them to their fate in 1923 and had given his blessing to the *coup d'état*. For six and a half years General Primo had ruled with the Army. The weak middle class of Spain had on the whole been aloof. It had profited but it disliked the usurping of what it considered its right to govern the nation. In previous moments of national crisis the King had always known that he had the Army behind him. Even that was not so sure now. The Army had become involved in the dictatorial adventure and disliked this on the whole very much. Primo had tried to introduce reform in the Artillery Corps and had found himself face to face with a mutiny.

The Church, of course, continued actively on the side of Don Alfonso but its capacity for giving active physical support was not great. Seven or eight hundred years of monopoly of religion in Spain had not left it a great deal of red blood. It had a certain amount of financial power for the seizure of the landed properties of the Church during the last century had led the clergy to invest their money in stocks and shares. Most of this was done indirectly, and always with the property registered in the name of a third party so as to avoid expropriation and to make it almost impossible to assess the property of this or that order or of any given diocese. So we now had the Church in Spain an active partner in shipping companies, railways, newspapers, broadcasting. In Madrid, Jesuit money played a part in the tram company, gas and electricity corporations, and the water company; according to reliable reports.

The lack of any strong bourgeoisie in Spain or of any large-scale industry prevented the existence of strong financial groups such as form what we call 'The City' at home or 'The Two Hundred Families' in France. The two richest individuals in Spain were believed to be Count Romanones and Don Juan March. Both belonged more or less to the middle-class circles which were now so offended at Don Alfonso's failure to hand back to them the executive control of national affairs.

As for the landed aristocracy, the Dukes of Fernan-Núñez, of Alba, and such families who had written their names large

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in Spanish history, their power in modern Spain was little. The Duke of Alba was the one figure among the old aristocracy who made some show of interest in national affairs. The remainder were decadent families, almost all absentee landlords leaving control of their estates to managers and bailiffs. The British aristocracy does at least get occasional doses of good coarse red blood when some lordling weds a chorus girl. In Spain the lordling would never dream of marrying the chorus girl or the typist. Such children as they might have would go to swell the working classes or petite bourgeoisie, while the lordling would in due course marry some daughter of an equally ancient family. These old families controlled vast areas of Spain but represented nothing in the national life.

At this critical moment also very few people had much idea as to what the working masses were thinking. Previously, no one in Spain worried much about this. The peasants either voted in the political machine as their local boss told them to or they had a very rough time for the green-clad Civil Guard could make life a most unpleasant affair for any peasant with independent ideas. The town workers were not quite so easy to handle and Madrid and Barcelona had on various occasions returned Republican or, in the case of the latter town, autonomy-supporting members of Parliament. But Madrid and Barcelona were two drops in the Spanish electoral ocean.

General Primo altered greatly the status of the Spanish working man as far as the towns were concerned. When he tried to extend some of the benefits to the landworkers he ran up against the opposition of the landed families and had to drop the matter. But the town workers with good wages and paid holidays—I think the only workers in Europe at the time to have this—were now a force to reckon with even outside Madrid and Barcelona. Primo worked together with the Socialists, or at least with some of the Socialists. Francisco Largo Caballero, a stolid trade unionist leader, even took office on the Council of State, a body largely concerned with social reform. It was one of the childish incidents so frequent in Spain that Primo had to give him special permission not to visit the King on appointment, as was the custom. Caballero

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would have compromised himself with the workers if he had gone to the Palace. And there is really little evidence that Alfonso ever tried to get into touch either directly or indirectly with the representatives of the workers. As far as I can learn, he never spoke with Pablo Iglesias, the pioneer of Spanish Socialism, nor with Caballero, nor Prieto. It was considered a great event and an act of almost extreme tolerance when the King and Queen on one occasion went to see a play by the great playwright and writer, Perez Galdós, and received this writer in the royal box. Because Perez Galdós was Republican in sentiments.

But although Caballero very sensibly worked with the Dictatorship some of the Socialists such as Indalecio Prieto, who had close contacts with middle-class interests and who were really Liberals in political sympathies, objected strongly. They foresaw Primo's downfall and did not wish to compromise the Socialist Party.

The new status of the town worker and the effect on the peasants of the building of thousands of miles of roads and railways were bound to have a great effect on the future. Roads meant motor-buses, this meant more movement and freedom for the country people. It meant also that they would want a higher standard of living. A peasant living in a lonely hamlet may accept philosophically conditions which appear intolerable to his brother living on or near a motor road along which luxurious motor-cars come and go and on which for a few pesetas he can go by bus in a short time to a market town which previously was a long journey on donkey-back.

Nothing could be the same in Spain again after General Primo fell. He had launched great schemes of modernisation in a feudal country and there would be much political fruit in addition to economic changes.

Bearing all this in mind it may be seen that Don Alfonso faced a very critical situation and that he made things much worse by offending the politicians. These gentlemen either openly or in private spared Don Alfonso not at all in their criticisms. The leader of the Conservative Party, the elderly Don José Sanchez Guerra, who staged a one-man revolt against Primo but had always been most loyal to the Crown, made a

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public speech in which he likened the King to a worm and announced that henceforth he could not serve him. Don Niceto Alcalá Zamora, a middle-aged politician and one of the leaders of the Liberal Party, announced that he had become converted to Republicanism. The more discreet pointed out in private conversations the risk the King was taking in attempting to liquidate the Dictatorship without political help. Naturally, it may be argued that as political incompetence had to a great extent provoked and made possible the *coup d'état* of 1923 it would be turning back the Spanish clock to call in the politicians again. But I think the chief arguments weigh the other way. Possibly Don Alfonso might still have fallen but he would have had more chance of staying on the throne if he had frankly given back control to the politicians and submitted to the result of elections. Even if he had had to go the Monarchy might still have been saved under a Regency.

The King's choice of premier was singularly unfortunate because General Berenguer along with Don Alfonso himself was very much involved in the disaster of Annual in Morocco in 1921 when General Silvestre and 10,000 men were massacred by Moors. General Berenguer was the High Commissioner and superior officer in Morocco at that time. The disaster was investigated with considerable slowness by a Parliamentary Commission which was to have presented its findings to Parliament in October 1923. The *coup d'état* of September 1923 rendered signal service to Don Alfonso and some Army chiefs by closing Parliament. How far General Berenguer was responsible or was a victim is not clear. What happened was that General Silvestre in the eastern zone acted practically autonomously and, there is some reason to believe, was encouraged to do so by Don Alfonso. But now when people were again speaking of this scandal and public opinion was being reminded of the coincidence that the *coup d'état* had occurred but two weeks before Parliament was to investigate Annual, it seemed rather bad politics to make one of the principal figures in that unpleasant affair the Prime Minister. Don Alfonso had never showed much regard for public opinion; he showed less than ever now.

CHAPTER III

JACA—A SUCCESSFUL FAILURE

IN December 1930 I was sent to Saragossa en route for Jaca where I was supposed to see two officers executed and report this event for a British news agency. I did not reach Jaca because at the Gran Hotel in Saragossa I found a telegram instructing me to return to Madrid where it seemed that even more important happenings than the shooting of two officers might be expected. I obediently boarded a train again and arrived at Madrid to find that the important happenings were over; so I had missed two excellent stories.

On the whole I was glad that I did not have to watch an execution. Especially such a foolish execution as this one. Cold-blooded killing is an unpleasant and repugnant act. Nothing was going to be gained by the killing of Captains Fermin Galan and García Hernández.

Since General Primo fell in January Spain had progressed to the stage of open revolt against feudalism as represented tangibly by Don Alfonso of Bourbon. On August 17, 1930, Republicans of all shades of opinion met in San Sebastian and signed the Pact of San Sebastian in which they agreed to work together for the overthrow of the Monarchy. The Catalan Autonomists also signed the Pact, with the exception of Sr. Cambó's Catalan League. The Socialist Party sent an observer, Sr. Prieto. The meeting and the Pact were, of course, kept secret at the time. Sr. Alcalá Zamora, who had only embraced Republicanism in April, led the revolt supported by other newcomers to this creed, the old guard Republicans, Socialists, Anarchists and a few military men who were sympathetic. This revolution began in Jaca on December 12.

Captain Galan was the most active of these sympathetic military men; so active in fact that he appears to have doubted the sincerity of his fellow-conspirators and he revolted two days before the appointed moment, apparently because he felt

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that in this way the others would be forced to join in and would have no chance of drawing back at the last minute. Galan was afterwards described as a Communist. Actually he was a very highly strung young man, violently rebellious against the injustice of modern Spain but with no background to guide him or to help him to discipline his emotions. If he was anything he was an Anarchist. As a suspect he had been sent to the frontier garrison of Jaca; Spain in those days being so carefree of foreign complications as to be able to regard frontier posts as the best place to send unreliable officers and men. He dragged his men into the revolt by his personality and also his fellow-officer García Hernández who was a pleasant well-meaning young man dominated by his friend. The revolt was easily suppressed by the military commander of the Huesca zone, General García de las Heras, who was himself one of the few casualties and who died some days later. There is reason to believe that this general was also implicated in the revolt but like the remaining officers supposed to rise he failed to do so.

Galan and García Hernández were shot on a Sunday afternoon after a court-martial held the same morning. This was against Spanish tradition which ruled firstly that executions should take place the day after summary trial and that in no case should a man be executed on a Sunday. A telephone engineer on duty in the Saragossa exchange whom I knew well told me that General Berenguer had called up Jaca several times during the morning and had spoken with the officer in charge of the court-martial. According to this engineer, the Prime Minister had insisted on the trial being concluded with the greatest speed and he also emphasised the necessity for exemplary punishment and the immediate carrying out of the sentence.

I mention this because after they were shot and the Government realised that this was a mistake, great pains were taken officially to emphasise that the court-martial had been carried out normally and that the Prime Minister and the King had limited their part to merely confirming the sentence. It was, however, well known that the matter was discussed at a Cabinet Meeting and that the Duke of Alba and several other

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Ministers protested strongly. But apparently General Berenguer insisted on a death sentence and immediate execution. And General Berenguer was merely the mouthpiece of Don Alfonso.

In theory, of course, Galan and Hernández were mutineers and must therefore expect the death penalty. But there were several angles to the situation. For instance, what was General Berenguer's position? He was the successor of a successful mutineer, General Primo. Berenguer's Cabinet had no legal standing, except in so far as the King had named it to liquidate the Dictatorship and to hold elections. It was now governing dictatorially and after ten months in office there was no mention of elections. So when General Berenguer accused a fellow-officer of mutiny he was rather in the position of the kettle which accused the frying-pan of blackness.

Anyway the men were shot and maybe it saved the conflagration spreading but what it certainly did was to give the Republican cause two martyrs and for the next weeks there was an enormous sale of pictures of the two men which made their way on to the walls of hundreds of thousands of humble dwellings and could even be seen in many middle-class homes.

The important event which I arrived too late to witness in Madrid, after missing the execution in Jaca, was confined mainly to an aerial demonstration by one Ramón Franco, pilot of the *Jesus del Gran Poder*, the first aeroplane to fly the South Atlantic. This young man, not to be confused with his brother General Francisco Franco who at this time was head of the Saragossa Military College and who since has achieved some publicity, accompanied by an excitable and irascible officer named General Queipo de Llano, seized the aerodrome known as *Cuatro Vientos*. He took off in a bombing aeroplane and circled over the Royal Palace for some time. Afterwards Franco said that the sight of little children playing in the Palace grounds deterred him from bombing the royal residence. Whatever it was that stopped him from doing so there is no doubt that a severe set-back to the Republican cause was thus avoided. To have dropped bombs on the Palace would have been a wanton and criminal act which would have aroused Spanish and world opinion in favour of the King and

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Queen. The aviators in the neighbouring military aerodrome of Getafe were asked by General Berenguer to chase their colleagues out of the sky. They declined politely but firmly. Sage aviators these. Before intervening they wished to see who would win. Finally several planes did go up in time to see Franco, Queipo and their friends winging their way towards Portugal.

The Jaca rising was over and after a week of skirmishing in the leading towns, where general strikes prevailed—except Madrid where it was not declared—Spain settled down again. The Government brought over from Morocco the Foreign Legion, mainly composed of Spaniards and not of the best kind of Spaniard at that, so they pretend that it is a foreign affair in order to excuse its excesses. This Legion dealt with customary toughness with some villagers on the Mediterranean coast who tried to impede their progress by pulling up the railway lines, and then was sent back to Africa.

On the surface it looked like a triumph for the King. But only on the surface. Very few people went to the Palace to show their sympathy. The middle class did not stir. The Army was more surly and divided than ever. But long queues formed outside the Model Prison on visiting days to show sympathy for that newcomer to Republicanism, Sr. Alcalá Zamora, and his fellow-conspirators. Showing a flair for doing the right thing which later on he seems to have lost, Sr. Alcalá Zamora on being arrested in his home asked to be allowed to attend Mass at his parish church before going to gaol. So he solemnly went to Mass with two plain-clothes men kneeling behind him and then off to the Model Prison. This was excellent propaganda for the Republicans and the unskilful Berenguer Government was handling things very clumsily by laying the blame of the rising on Moscow gold. The Duke of Alba told a British journalist that one Communist agitator had been caught near the frontier with 2,000,000 pesetas 'hidden on his person'. This quick-witted reporter suggested that to 'hide' two million pesetas on one's person would involve some physical difficulties. In the most favourable conditions it would mean secreting no less than 2,000 of Spain's large and relatively thick one-thousand peseta notes. This answer

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bewildered the noble Duke, obviously accustomed to use a cheque book rather than notes, and he hastened to change the subject.

I went to the Model Prison, which no doubt was a very modern affair when built in 1860 or thereabouts, and looked through the iron bars of the visiting-room at the various celebrities, who seemed quite pleased with life. They were so sure of success that they announced quite openly that they were busy drawing up plans for governing. The principal members of the revolutionary committee in gaol were:

Niceto Alcalá Zamora: Ex-Minister, violently pro-German in the World War, leading campaigner against Catalan autonomy, leader of a small parliamentary faction of the Liberal Party and thus one of the small group leaders who made government almost impossible in the days preceding 1923.

Francisco Largo Caballero: Principal figure of the Socialist trade union movement known as the General Union of Workers.

Fernando de los Rios: Professor of Philosophy of Granada University, a Socialist.

Miguel Maura: Son of Don Antonio Maura and a passionate young man who like Sr. Alcalá Zamora became converted to Republicanism after the fall of Primo and the failure of the King to call in the politicians.

The leading spirit was obviously Sr. Alcalá Zamora, though why this should be the case was a mystery to me. His previous record was against his present highly democratic and progressive attitude.

The situation seemed to me then that the Monarchy had not much chance of survival but I still did not see how it could be overthrown. I had not realised the great wave of pent-up feeling surging up in the land.

In my own little life, the Jaca rising brought me back into journalism and thus was helpful. For I had been teaching in a Language School since the *Daily Chronicle*, whose correspondent in Spain I was, had been absorbed by the *Daily News*, and believe me it is not funny to sit hour after hour asking pupils: 'Is this chair black?' and having them answer: 'No,

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the chair is white.' I did not, however, dislike the work violently; many of the students were pleasant and intelligent. One class I had included both an hotel porter and a colonel of the Civil Guard who was frequently in attendance on the King and Queen and wished to speak English fluently. A sentimental friendship with a German girl made the months fly easily by. The only hitch in the romance was her penchant for fainting dead away in my arms when kissed: a result due I am afraid to her weakness of heart and not to my prowess in this direction. One night when this occurred near her home I carried her to what I thought was a chemist's shop but which proved to be an undertaker's establishment.

During this romance I found that Madrid had excellent German restaurants where all kinds of wurst dishes could be had and capped by wonderful apple tart and cream.

CHAPTER IV

CURTAIN TO A RÉGIME

MUFFLED in a heavy overcoat I kept chilly and lonely vigil outside the Royal Palace on Don Alfonso's last night in Spain.

Occasionally, very occasionally, the big wooden doors swung open and a motor-car came out or went in. The exterior sentries had been withdrawn and I and a little Spanish reporter alone stamped our feet on the cobble-stones by the door and hoped for something sensational to happen. But nothing did happen; which in itself seemed to me the most remarkable thing of all.

I asked a grey-haired, long-coated porter who swung open the door on one occasion what the Royal Family was doing. I imagined its members in anxious conclave, calling up friends, consulting desperately. The answer was calm and measured: 'Their Majesties are attending a cinematograph performance in the salon recently fitted up with a sound apparatus.' If he had told me that the King and Queen in night attire were playing leap-frog up and down one of the long stone corridors of the Palace I could not have been more astonished. It was an amazing situation. The King's position and even his personal safety were in grave peril as a result of the previous day's municipal elections. As I walked down to the Palace I passed through the nerve-centre of Spain, the Puerta del Sol, where a turbulent crowd was cheering the Republic. The police were looking on. Some of the mounted men were off their horses and were exchanging cigarettes with members of the crowd. The Palace was cordoned off except to persons with some legitimate pretext for going there. Yet here in this lonely, isolated Palace the Royal Family was at the cinema.

Where are Spain's four hundred Generals? Where are the two hundred Grandees? What of this Spain which we are told is so catholic; where are Bishops, friars and faithful to-night?

These were the questions which ran through my head. I still do not know where they were that night. Since then most of these elements have deplored the loss of the Monarch; few of them did anything practical to attempt to save him or even to show their sympathy.

This night indeed Don Alfonso learned in full measure the truth that the harvest depends on the sowing. It was easy to see Canalejas expelled from the Cabinet just after your accession; it had been fun to see how Maura became furious and resigned just because you wanted to put a friend of the family into the post of Captain-General of Castile; how easy it was to see that Army demands were fulfilled after patriotic young officers had taught Catalan Democrats a lesson by wrecking the offices of *Cu-Cut*; and those days when you intrigued with Moret to overthrow Romanones and then intrigued with Romanones to overthrow Moret; and so through nearly thirty years finally winding up with the dismissal with very small show of gratitude indeed of old General Primo. To-night is harvest night, Don Alfonso of Bourbon. Where are your friends? Can anyone believe that this fine people of Spain have hearts of stone? No. If you had ever shown generosity or comprehension of their aches and struggles they would not leave you friendless to-night. You never did. You intrigued, you spent every ounce of your energy defending feudalism and not even feudalism respects you. It would still use you if it could, but it despises you. The politicians need you still. But they despise you too. They know you through and through and you know them through and through and you despise each other. And you never thought that this feudal Army which you helped so manfully to triumph over timid democratic attempts would abandon you without a sign of sorrow. It is hard indeed to be King of a nation for twenty-nine years, to have so many chances to incur gratitude, and to find that at the crisis there is not even a single officer or man who will break his sword and follow you into exile; not a woman of these great-hearted women of Spain who will come to your Palace to recite a rosary for your sake before its doors. Your moment of trial has come, Don Alfonso, and you are alone, judged and justly judged by a great people.

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Municipal elections had been held on the day previously, April twelfth. They had been conducted by a Cabinet of politicians such as Count Romanones, Sr. La Cierva—who in the old days used to send out horsemen to round up the villagers to vote and to drive them to the polls like so many sheep, all this in his political feud of Murcia—and there was Sr. García Prieto who was Prime Minister in 1923 and who announced twelve hours before Primo's *coup d'état* that a Dictatorship could triumph only over his dead body and the whole was presided over by Admiral Aznar who had been called from his naval base of Cartagena to become Prime Minister for some reason not clear to anyone. He told the Press quite cheerfully in later days how he spent the fateful evening of April 13, when his King was at the cinema, reading a French novel, *Rocambole*. It was, he said, a very interesting novel and he could recommend it.

It had taken Don Alfonso nearly fourteen months to realise that it would be hard to hold elections without the politicians; so he had handed over power to them. On Count Romanones's recommendation the original plan to hold parliamentary elections was set aside and municipal elections were called, in order, said the Count, that the Ministers might see which way the wind was blowing. They soon found out. The worthy Admiral Aznar, with the blunt ways of the quarter-deck, told the journalists the morning after elections: 'You want news? Well, what greater news do you want than the fact that a nation which went to bed Monarchist wakes up Republican?'

Since then innumerable typesetters have profited by discussions in books as to whether or not these elections really proved that Spain was Republican. The only figures I saw showed about 60,000 Monarchist councillors returned and some 14,000 Republican representatives. So if you have a mathematical mind you may say that the Monarchists won easily and that Alfonso ought never to have gone and that he was stampeded. What the actual final figures were, nobody can say. Some months later my inquisitive self was conducted into a dusty room in the Ministry of the Interior and a functionary showed me hundreds of brown paper bundles. These contained the final telegraphed returns of the elections. I

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asked why they had never been sorted out and counted. I was told that this would need the employment of a considerable number of clerks for some days and that unless some Minister gave the order there was no chance of this being done. I wonder if those bundles have escaped Franco's bombs and shells and whether anyone will ever have the curiosity to sort out and tabulate the returns.

Personally I do not care either way. I think that the elections showed that Spain wished to overthrow the Monarchy. In all the provincial capitals of Spain, except Cadiz, the Republican-Socialist coalition triumphed. It did not triumph in thousands of small villages. Because there was no liberty of vote in most of these villages. The peasants lived under the shadow of the landowners and woe betide the rebellious soul; he might well seek work in some distant place. Not only that but if he tried to indulge in political activity of any Left-Wing type he would be taken to the Civil Guard post and beaten with rifle butts.

Later, under the Republic, a British resident of Seville confided to me over manzanilla: 'Conditions are impossible down here nowadays. The Guardia Civil is not allowed to beat up the subversive elements among the peasants and it is hopeless to try to keep order here unless the police has a free hand.' This testimony is not strictly speaking necessary in order to convince investigators of the kind of conditions that prevailed in Spanish villages and hamlets before the Republic. The peasants voted docilely as part of the great political machine inaugurated under universal suffrage in 1890 and which functioned until 1923. In all that time there is no record of a single Government which carried out elections not receiving a majority. The Home Minister who inaugurated universal suffrage told his Cabinet colleagues cheerfully: 'What I did was only to use two-thirds of the votes and to keep one-third in reserve in case of necessity.'

The political machine was not functioning well now. Much had changed under General Primo. New ideas, as well as motor-cars, raced along these fine broad roads which now intersected Spain. In many villages the peasants voted Republican-Socialist despite the frowns of the local landowners and the

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Civil Guard. Emilio, an acquaintance of mine who was the village jeweller in Egea de los Caballeros in Aragon and a Republican, told me: 'It was the most imposing thing I have ever seen. The peasants and field workers came in to vote and announced loudly that they were voting for the Republic. The local political bosses were writing their names down and the Civil Guards on duty were taking note. If the Republic had not triumphed many of these men would have been discharged by their employers and would have been persecuted terribly.'

Since April 1931 there has been a spate of argument from Right-Wing sources to the effect that the municipal elections were never meant to have a constitutional issue. Possibly not. But remember that Count Romanones held them to 'find out which way the wind was blowing'. I think that it was due to this fact that the change-over from Monarchy to Republic was so smooth. Parliamentary elections would have been more bitter. There would have been the delay necessary to prepare the meeting of Parliament. I think that the forces which still held on to feudalism as a lifebelt would have had time to organise and prepare resistance. Whether this would have been in the long run a disaster I do not know. Possibly a little bloodshed at that time would have saved a great deal later on.

The municipal electoral results presented great difficulty if any attempt at repression were made. In the scores of towns and villages where Republican-Socialist councillors had a majority, these men were all taking possession and hoisting the Republican flag over the town halls. Some local, isolated outbreak could have been repressed. But for the Government after holding elections to have ordered the Civil Guards to bar the doors of the town halls and to have fired on the angry crowds which would have protested would have been too illogical a proposition. The Prime Minister summed the matter up when he said that 'Spain woke up Republican this morning.' It was impossible to think of trying to repress the popular movement in so many places simultaneously and people who write that Don Alfonso could have subdued the trouble by using force but that he did not wish to do so, may be right but I fail completely to see how it could have been