Children in Franco Spain
CHILDREN
IN
FRANCO SPAIN

SPANISH NATIONAL COMMISSION IN DEFENCE OF CHILDREN
1952
In April 1952 an International Conference in Defence of Children was held in Vienna. Personalities of all philosophies, of all religious and political beliefs and of all nationalities deemed it necessary to call for effective collaboration of all those who are interested in children, in the future of mankind.

It is a tragedy that while scientific and technical progress could provide the means of satisfying the essential needs of an increasing number of individuals and peoples, of improving the material basis of their lives, of giving them education and a higher level of civilization and freedom, the misery of the peoples is becoming more and more acute. As a result of this, new social strata and more nations, whose ruin is being wrought day by day, are joining the oppressed of yesterday.

For the children all this means a series of privations which prevents their physical and mental development, which subjects them to diseases, rickets and premature death, which stunts their vital capacities, which can depress their intelligence and often leave them without school education and which abandons them to insecurity and temptation, resulting only too often in delinquency.

Spain is an example of this situation which has become alarming since it has suffered under the Franco dictatorship. This is shown in the present pamphlet written by Spaniards who were represented at the Conference in Vienna.

Naturally, Spaniards living in Spain were not able to attend the Conference. Even if they had not been forbidden to go,
they knew only to well that on their return nothing but the already overcrowded prisons would have awaited them. This picture of tragic misery in Spain and of its repercussions on children was drawn up by Spanish refugees in Latin America and Europe.

All they had to do in most cases was to make an examination of official documents. The misery of the workers is worse than ever could be imagined. The disproportion between wages and the cost of living becomes greater every day. Starving children faint in the streets. Those who have nowhere to live spend the nights in doorways or staircases, whenever they succeed in slipping into a house. Many of them become beggars. A continually growing number of children are sent to court for “offences against property”. New “reformatories for minors” were opened while the number of schools decreased. Infant mortality has increased to such a degree that in 1950 alone, 40,991 children under one year died. Among school age children, 75.6% are suffering from or show symptoms of tuberculosis.

According to official statistics, two and a half million children, that is 55%, receive no school education at all.

An examination of the various items of Franco's state budget reveals, taking into account the allocations made to the different ministries for war and purposes of repression, and deducting from the allocations for public education all amounts providing for the military training of children, that 4.5% of the state budget is allocated to public education and 80% to war and purposes of repression.
Education is in the hands of the Falange, who use it for purposes of military preparation. Thus all children who have escaped death, rickets and disease are prepared for the battlefield.

The authors of this pamphlet have every reason to draw the attention of the world to these crimes of the Franco regime against the children and the youth of Spain.

Professor HENRI WALLON  Professor MANUEL M. RISCO
The United States is turning Spain into a war base. In their war preparations, the privileged geographical situation of Spain, with her ports on the Atlantic and Mediterranean coast, acquires a particular strategic value for the establishment of military, naval and air bases.

The state budget of Franco Spain amounts to 22,000 million pesetas annually of which 4/5 are used for the establishment and improvement of these military bases, for increased war preparations and for extending the system of repression.

American military and technical commissions travel through Spain controlling and inspecting everything. Military missions organised and directed the manoeuvres in the Pyrenees, the Canary Islands, the Balearic Islands and elsewhere.

Franco offers to provide two million soldiers for war and has promised to equip 22 divisions. Taking into consideration that the equipment of these divisions will cost 220,000 million pesetas, ten times the amount of the annual budget of Spain, it is easy to figure out to what extent the poverty of the Spanish people will increase and how seriously the Spanish youth is menaced by the danger of being drawn into war.

The United States, taking advantage of the serious political and economic situation of the Franco regime, are speeding up their economic penetration of Spain. One of the methods favoured by the Americans consists plainly and simply of transferring into their own monopolies the widespread interests formerly owned by the Germans in Spain, which increased considerably during the period of Hitler’s domination of Europe.

This has enabled them to extend their penetration to those sectors of the Spanish economy where their positions were not very strong, such as in the mining and steel industries and to consolidate their positions in other sectors, such as the electrical industry and to take the chemical, pharmaceutical and rubber industries under their complete control.

The National Institute of Industry, with its 45 enterprises and 5,000 million dollars worth of investments is also under complete
American control. This institute was organised by the nazis and entrusted with the task of setting up war industries. In the same manner 67 other big enterprises have been taken over by the Americans.

This is a general outline of the surrender of Spain to the colonisation and war policy of the imperialists.

But it is not easy for Franco to carry out this policy. This is proved by the constant struggles and protests, the guerilla actions, the great general strike in Barcelona in 1950 and the strikes which followed it in Pamplona, Bilbao, Madrid and other cities in which the entire population took part and gave support and which made the regime tremble.

To break up the resistance and the struggle of the people, the Franco regime maintains a repressive apparatus of almost 150,000 men. Formerly those men were trained by nazis. Today the nazis have been substituted by specialised American police and secret service agents who come to Spain in large numbers.

The agreements established between the American imperialists and Franco constitute a tremendous aggravation of the situation of poverty of the Spanish people as a whole. For the Spanish children, who are condemned to poverty from the moment they are born, they constitute the most terrible tragedy.

So terrible is the tragedy that it can be said that everything characteristic for human beings during the first years of their lives has disappeared in Franco Spain: play, laughter, gaiety, in one word, real childhood. This joyous childhood life has been disappearing in the course of 13 years of misery and ruin.
In September and October, Franco organised military manoeuvres on the largest scale ever in the history of Spain. The photographs show a naval unit and a parade of armed motorcyclists.
CONDITIONS OF LIFE
IN SPAIN TO-DAY

The Franco regime has given birth to those "cities of misery" which impress foreign tourists so deeply and which are growing continuously. Thousands and thousands of children are born in these places, surrounded by dirt, germs and disease.

Even in the suburbs of the capital, in the districts of Vallecas, la Ventilla, Pinos Altos, la Elipa, Entrevisas, near the luxurious mansions of the privileged of the regime, 400,000 people live in shacks built of tin sheeting, cardboard or pieces of wood, or even in caves dug into the ground. The Falange newspaper "YA" describes these places quite openly:

"The suburbs of Madrid are a stinking mixture of tin huts, of plots of land covered with sordid shacks. The people living there are workers, poor people. These are towns without roofs, pools of misery, rats, typhoid, tuberculosis, promiscuity."

In Barcelona 200,000 people live under similar conditions and according to statistics 17% of the population of all Spanish cities of over 20,000 inhabitants live like this, making a total of 2 million people for the whole of Spain.

The housing problem, in spite of being so serious, is still not the worst problem. A wandering population has appeared in Spain
to-day, among them tens of thousands of children who have no other shelter than the bridges, sewers, doorways and park benches, where they are often brutally roused by the police who must see to it that poverty is hidden from the eyes of tourists, at least in the central districts.

The Franco regime is responsible for the fact that hundreds of children are born in prison, because fascist terror imprisoned their mothers. The Franco regime is responsible for the fact that hunger weighs like a stone on almost all Spanish children, that they grow up degenerate and die in an atmosphere of misery and terror, where pain and desperation create feelings of injustice and bitterness in their minds.

Of a total population of nearly 26 million inhabitants (1940 census), the children of both sexes numbered 7,200,000. If the population of Spain numbers 28 million inhabitants at present, as the Franco authorities maintain, the number of children should be around 7,750,000.

Of these children no more than 15% have enough to eat, live in comfortable homes, have medical assistance and medicines, toys and decent schools, laugh gaily. But in spite of their good material conditions, this 15% of the children, the sons and daughters of the economically privileged people, do not grow up in a healthy atmosphere, neither at home nor in school nor in social life.

Many of the parents of these children, since they are involved in the Franco regime, teach their children to despise the poor, to hate those who protest against a regime which gives these children a good bed, splendid food, toys and cars. In school they are educated along fascist methods which approve the exploitation of man and of the peoples. They are taught that they belong to a superior class which has a right to dominate inferior people.

This generation of children is intended to become part of the repressive apparatus of the state, they will be called into positions in the army and in the state administration which exist on the taxes which ruin the people and the middle strata in agriculture, industry and commerce.
Of the remaining 85% of children, some belong to the middle class which under the Franco regime leads a miserable life, with completely inadequate salaries or incomes.

But the greatest percentage are the children of industrial and farm workers, poor peasants and employees, who, together with their families, comprise the vast majority of the nation, fiercely exploited by the Franco regime and who have been suffering from hunger and misery for 13 years.

To understand how so much misery is possible, one must remember that agricultural production today is only 40% of the production during the time of the Republic; that there are 3,676,000 farm
workers of whom only 10% have permanent work, while 90% work only three months a year; that industrial production is now but 60% of the production during the Republic and that of a total of 2 million industrial workers half a million are unemployed, that while wages increased from 60 to 100% since the time of the Republic, the cost of living has increased by 873%.

The writer Gerald Brennan, an English intellectual who is by no means an enemy of the Franco régime and who visited Spain in 1950, described the situation in his book "The Face of Spain":

"Crowds of wretched, ill-clad, hungry people beg in the streets. Sitting down to drink a lemonade in a café, one is surrounded by children in tattered clothes, their faces covered with sores, some crippled, others with only one eye... Such is the young generation of Spaniards which the Franco regime is bringing into the world!"

Near Ciudad Real Mr. Brennan spoke to two peasants:

"'Beyond that hill' said the young man, 'the whole country for leagues around is covered with evergreen oaks. We used to go there when we were short of food and pick up the acorns to make them into gachas (porridge) or else bread. But if anyone goes there today the Civil Guard beats him and drives him off. The acorns are kept for the pigs...'."

"'Do you know what we have eaten today? A few scraps of bread and some bad oranges. Tonight we shall go home and the wife will have a little flour and beans cooked in water to give us. No oil, as our ration is finished. But the cruel thing is that this hunger is destroying family life. The children cry, their mother beats them and everyone scolds everyone else. There used to be a great deal of love and affection in our families, but there is little now. We are becoming brutalized.'"

The demagogic Franco propaganda which proclaims "the protection of the family" is simply ironic under a regime which brings nothing but misery to families and which forces even children and
In Madrid alone, there are 400,000 people living in caves, in slums and even in abandoned graveyards, as shown in our photograph.

old people who can hardly stand on their weak legs to work for a living. When the head of the family does not earn enough to provide a living for his family, when he is in prison or exiled, when he is ill or dies from weakness caused by too much work and too little food, it is obvious that there can be little harmony at home.
THE MOST TERRIBLE DISEASES MOW DOWN SPANISH CHILDREN

The living conditions and the neglect of public health make children an easy prey to all kinds of diseases. Infant mortality in Franco Spain increases from year to year.

According to official statistics, 595,073 children were born in Spain in 1949 and 558,923 in 1950, which shows a decrease in the birth rate of more than 36,000 children.

Most of these children were born to parents suffering from tuberculosis, syphilis or physical defects. Many of them are subjected to moral shocks which ruin their nervous system.

Tens of thousands of these children are born in the “cities of misery” without medical assistance. They suffer from a lack of mother’s milk or adequate substitutes, they receive no preventive medicines, they have no beds or clothes, no soap or water.

As a result, of the 40,991 children under one year who died in 1950 (apart from 20,000 more stillborn children or children who died after the first 24 hours), 11,297 were victims of congenital weaknesses, congenital organic defects or premature births.
The eyes of this child are a living accusation against the Franco regime.
As a result of insufficient and inadequate food, or rotten and infected food, 2,170 children died of avitaminosis and chronic poisoning and 10,156 of diarrhoea and enteritis. This last figure, representing 25% of all deaths among children under one year, is also an illustration of the lack of medicines available to children in Franco Spain.

The “STATISTICAL YEARBOOK OF SPAIN” 1951 issue, states: “...of every 100 children born alive and remaining alive during the first 24 hours, 10 die before the age of one year.”

Tuberculosis has reached terrifying proportions in Franco Spain. Even the press of the regime admitted that among the children in primary schools an average of 75.6% reacted positively to tuberculosis tests. In a school at Ronda de Atocha in Madrid, 192 out of 254 pupils were found to be suffering from tuberculosis.

Taking into consideration the fact that only those children go to school whose parents can at least afford to give them something to eat, one can easily imagine the tuberculosis rate among the 2,500,00 children who do not attend school, not only because there is a shortage of schools but because they have no clothes, because they must work for a living or to help the family.

The Mayor of Madrid stated that in less than one year 3,000 children suffering from tuberculosis had been picked up in the outskirts of the capital. This is how official information reveals to what extent tuberculosis has developed among children.

Another consequence the conditions of the Franco regime have forced upon children are the 18,000 CHILDREN SUFFERING FROM LEPROSY, this scourge of the Middle Ages which flourishes under Franco. In addition, 35% of all Spanish children have lice, which provoked terrible epidemics of exantema typhus to such an extent that this terrible deadly disease has become endemic in Franco Spain.
The recent National Congress of Psychiatrists revealed that the new generation born under the Franco regime includes 75,000 mentally defective children. The Falange newspaper "YA" explains it by:

"...anxiety neurosis, lack of social stability, economic crisis, cold war, constant worry concerning the next day."

The physical and mental reaction to hunger and Franco terror and the atmosphere of the Franco regime itself, which constantly bears down upon the delicate nervous system of the child, has unavoidable pathological effects which drive children to suicide, as frequently happens in Franco Spain.

Commenting on child suicides the "DIARIO DE BARCELONA" admits that:

"Never before has there been anything so TERRIBLE ..."

Only the Franco regime with its terror and hunger, poverty and repression can drive children into such a desperate situation that they commit suicide.

And while thousands of children die every year from the most terrible diseases, the Franco regime allocates 80% of the State budget for purposes of war and repression and progressively curtails the already small allowances for public health.
The "UNITED PRESS" correspondent commented in April 1951 on the situation of doctors as follows:

"The medical profession in most cases has no future, which is proved by the fact that many graduates do not exercise their profession..." "One arrives at the conclusion that there are too many doctors in Spain and that actually there are a good many of them unemployed having to wait a long time for a temporary appointment."

On the other hand, the following appeared in the newspaper "AFAN" with respect to country doctors:

"These men work with very limited means, little more than a thermometer, a stethoscope and a surgical knife. With these three most rudimentary instruments they must face whatever turns up... To be a country doctor in Spain is comparable only to being a missionary in savage lands. In fact, as far as medical assistance in the villages is concerned, we live now more or less as we used to live 30 years ago."

This dismal picture shows to everybody the extent of the lack of health measures and the tragedy of the Spanish children. All these evils, brought about by the existence of the Franco regime, weigh on the present and endanger the future of Spain.
SCHOOLS ARE TURNED INTO INSTRUMENTS OF FASCIST EDUCATION

Under the Republic and particularly during the war in Spain, schools became a real instrument for educating the people. Much progress was made in the building, equipment and sanitation of school buildings. Not only the professional training of teachers improved but also their economic situation. School curricula were modernised, services for the protection and education of children were created—holiday camps, canteens, distribution of clothes, hospitals, medical and health services. The Spanish Republic fought illiteracy by starting courses for adults through the so-called "Cultura Popular".

Between 1935 and 1939, 22,000 classes were opened, thus reducing the deficit left by the monarchy. Schools gained an ever increasing prestige and efficiency and during the final years a school attendance of 4 million children was recorded.

In 13 years of domination, Franco's fascist regime has destroyed the constructive work of the Republic and reduced the Spanish children and youth to their present tragic situation.
The children are subjected to intense fascist education. Tens of thousands like those shown in the photograph receive military instruction in the camps of the Falange.

In spite of the increase in the population during the last years, the number of classes decreased by 10,000 between 1939 and 1951. The number of children who attend school is now less than 2½ millions.

During the same period the number of teachers decreased by 15,000 and that of students in teachers' colleges in only one third of the 1933 figures.

The conditions of teachers are distressing. "El Magisterio Español", a professional newspaper, reports that 40% of the teachers had to be replaced, legally or not, because they could not live on their salaries. The Franco regime pays 23 pesetas a day to
a teacher and 35 pesetas to a Civil Guard. Today in Spain, there are three times as many guards as under the Republic, but 15,000 teachers less. As a result, illiteracy is a real scourge under Franco.

The substance of teaching itself, the curricula, the text-books the school atmosphere created by the Falange, are permeated with fascism. For instance, the plan of political education for children between 7 and 14 years of age includes the following points:

— "Spain as a whole, the situation of the Falange"
— "The National Trade Union Flag, its meaning and its origin"
— "The Fasces and the Arrows"
— "The J.O.N.S." (1)
— "Ramón Ledesma Ramosa,—founder of the J.O.N.S.—and the conduct of the State"
— "The Activity of Clandestine Falanges"
— "The 'Blue' Division" (2)
— "The Falangist Conception of the State"
— "Service and Discipline"
— "The Empire"
— "Present Mission of the Falange"
and other similar subjects.

The Franco regime furthermore contaminates the young generation with the poison of national superiority based on the "imperial history" of Spain and of hatred and contempt for certain peoples. They are taught to worship brute force and war.

The Franco regime exerts this influence on the children and youth not only in school. Children are gathered into organisations of premilitary character to prepare them for war and they are taught how to shoot.

The Falangist organisation "Frente de Juventudes", similar to the Hitler youth, is in charge of the fascist "politization" of the Spanish children and youth.

(1) "Juntas of the National Syndicalist Offensive", the first fascist organisation in Spain, created in 1931 and copied from Hitler's "S. A."
(2) Mercenaries who fought near Leningrad in the second world war.
In 1951, 40,790 children were instructed in the “Flechas”, “Pelayos” and “Cadetes” camps of this organisation:

17,636 “Flechas”
7,212 “Cadetes”
5,841 apprentices
8,323 schoolboys
1,778 young peasants.

All these young people and children were subjected to intensive military preparation and fascist propaganda.

The school teachers for their part, in order to be able to exercise their profession, are obliged to spend a period of probation in the camps of the Falangist organisation, S.E.U. (Spanish University Union), where they receive the title of elementary instructor, that is to say of fascist political and military instructor.

The professional examination required of teachers before they are appointed correspond to the cultural aims of Franco. There are two examinations: the first is a written on and consists of an essay on religion and Falangist education; the second is oral for which the same time is granted as for the first and which has to prove their literary, scientific and pedagogical knowledge etc.

It is in this way the Falangists put into practice their aims “to impose in education and national life the spirit of July 18th and of the generation of 36” (date of the Franco-fascist rising against the Republic) as well as the line given by their general secretary, Fernández Cuesta, for the intensification of fascist education in all government centres.
CHILDREN
ARE VICTIMS OF FRANCO
REPRESSION

The economic situation, loss of their parents and neglect force thousands of children who became victims of war and brutal oppression to work from a very early age. 700,000 children work in agriculture for two or three pesetas a day. More than 7,000 children work in the fishing industry, others near the furnaces in the glass factories or in the mines of Asturias, where they perform work suitable only for adults. In the textile industry there is one little boy or girl for every 6 adults. According to the labour laws, children under 14 years of age should not work in industry and so if a child has an accident no allowances are provided by law. 408,949 accidents were registered in 1949, 1,184 of which relate to children under 14 years and 29,618 to boys and girls between 14 and 17.

Thousands of children lead a wandering life, without home or family, leading a constant and hard struggle against the hostile world surrounding them. Some of them beg and are persistently persecuted by the police who send them to the institutions of the ill famed "Social Assistance". Others are sent to the law courts of the Franco regime, because they stole something to eat.
Instead of giving them food and education, Franco sends these children to asylums and reformatories which, due to lack of adequate personnel and their penal regulations must be considered as real prisons.

A Spaniard who succeeded in leaving Franco Spain and who had had the opportunity of seeing one of these institutions from the inside said:

“All the children are rickety, their dry, wrinkled, parchment-like skin makes them look like little old men and women. Their eyes are alive like squirrels’ eyes.

Their bodies are simply illustrations of hunger. 14 year old children are the size of 9-year-olds.”

Official statistics of 1949 give an idea of how the children have been treated in these establishments: The “Social Assistance” establishments of Valencia registered a mortality rate of 336 children out of a thousand; in Cuenca 342 of a thousand, in Valencia 497 out of a thousand.

In 1948, 7,302 children lived in these institutions and a further 176,732 were under police surveillance, which means that the terrifying number of 184,034 boys and girls had suffered from the repressive activities of the so-called guardianship courts of Franco Spain.

442 institutions for the confinement of children existed in Franco Spain in 1950. The President of the National Union of Guardianship Courts for Minors pointed out in a statement published by the “Agence France Presse” on September 9th 1951:

“... Delinquency is approximately equal for both sexes. Most of the offences committed by children were against property. The ages of the children vary between 13 and 15 years. The parents of these children were given fines up to 500 pesetas and prison sentences up to 30 days.”

In other words, the crimes committed by the regime against the children, against their inalienable rights, are presented as child-
ren's offences. This is done in spite of the fact that Franco himself admitted in a speech delivered in 1948 that:

"... a great part of Spanish society finds itself in a situation of poverty, lack of hygiene and cultural backwardness ..."

This proves that it is the regime and not the parents who are responsible for the so-called children's offences.

What are the children accused of in most cases? Mostly of offences caused directly by hunger. This is also recognized by the Falangist daily newspaper "ARRIBA" when it says:

"They ring the doorbells and beg, they slip into bars and restaurants, they stand near the church doors, in front of the cinemas, on the subway stairs... they are an impossible scourge... An increase in the tourist trade has been announced, so we had better clean out this leprosy."

This "leprosy" has never before existed in Spain. For it and for the real leprosy, reborn from the middle ages, the Franco regime bears full responsibility. It is also responsible for child prostitution, which has become so general in Spain that girls who have hardly reached the age of puberty are forced by their extreme poverty to sell themselves for a piece of bread.

For the Franco regime the worst criminals, who are persecuted most viciously of all, are those who fight against the regime, such as the apprentices in the factories and shops who go on strike to demand higher wages, who paste up anti-Franco posters and write slogans against war and the imperialists, who distribute propaganda.

Another serious problem is that of children born and reared in prison. It is easy to understand why there are so many of them, if we take into consideration the fact that there are thousands of female political prisoners.

A six year old child was brought to a hospital in Toulouse (France). He weighed 13 kilos. The person accompanying him told the tragedy of this little one. He had arrived from Spain two weeks
previously and had been born in prison, where his mother was serving a sentence for a political offence.

It is heartbreaking to read what one of these women, who recently came out of prison, wrote:

"My son was born and raised in prison and his condition worries me most seriously. The activity around him, the distances, the most ordinary articles which he does not know produce real fits of fear in him. Trembling violently he seeks shelter in my arms and implores me to bring him back to prison."
THE SPANISH PEOPLE
FIGHT TO PUT AN END TO
THIS SITUATION

The pages of this pamphlet reflect the tragic situation of Spanish children, as far as it is possible for it to be described. It is the most distressing consequence of the general situation of the country which has been reduced to ruin, poverty and anguish.

The Spanish people has not submitted and will never submit to the Franco regime, nor will it accept the surrender of Spain and the Spanish people to the war-mongers.

The anti-national policy of the Franco regime, which forces so many sacrifices upon the Spanish people, drives the country into economic disaster, servitude and war.

The strikes and demonstrations which took place in 1951 showed the will for peace of the Spanish people, its desire to put an end to the Franco regime and throw the imperialists out of the country, to restore freedom and democracy in Spain.

The Spanish people wants bread and schools, houses and clothes, health and joy for its children. It wants to do away with the terrible anguish of the parents who see the appalling situation of
their children. The Spanish mothers, who suffer the terrible pain of seeing their children die, because they lack bread and clothes and because they are unable to give them the things which could save their lives, who are horrified at seeing that the children to whom they have devoted so many sleepless nights and sacrifices are to be dragged away from them and used as cannon-fodder, ardently participate in the struggle to achieve a healthy, radiant and happy life for their children, the men and women of tomorrow.

Nothing and nobody can prevent the struggle against Franco and for independence from becoming stronger every day and including people from the most different social strata.

No hangmen and no foreign bayonets will be able to prevent the certain victory of the will of the people unanimously defending its right to life.

The solidarity of the peoples of the world with the just cause of the Spanish people strengthens its faith in victory. No man or woman with a clean and human conscience, no democrat can remain indifferent to the crimes of the Franco regime or refrain from feeling solidarity with the struggle of the Spanish people.

To make known the facts and data published in this pamphlet and compiled by the National Spanish Children's Commission, to popularize them among all men and women in the world who defend peace, democracy and the freedom of the peoples, will help to strengthen the protests against the crimes committed by the Franco regime every day.

Whoever helps the heroic Spanish people in its struggle for peace, democracy and national independence, for the overthrow of the Franco regime, helps to save the children from their present terrible life, desires for them a new, free and happy life in a democratic Spain which will be won by a people that does not resign itself to slavery and makes its contribution to the defence of world peace and the destruction of a dangerous source of war.
The Spanish people want bread and schools, housing and clothes, health and joy, happiness and peace for their children.