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ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF A FETTERED EUZKADI.

THE Basques are essentially a business-like people. They realise that other nations, though deploring the present plight of Euzkadi, may not be prepared to intervene on her behalf and incur the risk of war unless their own interests are directly affected.

In our last issue details were given indicating how the security of Britain and France were endangered, from the strictly military point of view, by the rebel domination of Euzkadi. This threat, however, extends very much further, involving the very basis of international trade, which represents the core of every country's prosperity.

Euzkadi as a direct factor in international trade may not be of supreme importance to countries with so widespread industrial and trading interests as those of Great Britain. It is, of course, true Euzkadi bought many of her needs from Britain and that Britain buys considerable quantities of iron ore from Euzkadi, and possesses a considerable capital interest in the Basque mining industry. And it may be taken for granted that such supplies of ore, so essential in the time of emergency, would be cut off in the event of Britain being involved in a war against the Fascist powers.

But the trading importance of the Basque country does not end there. The following are some statistics recently issued in a Basque Government report. They show that out of the total possessions of the whole of the Spanish State, Euzkadi controls and owns:—

Mineral ore output	50%
Capital of commercial companies ...	60%
Economic banking power	70%
Profits of the Bank of Spain	32%
Deposits in public Savings Banks ...	33%
Production of metallurgical coke ...	65%
Production of steel billets	74%
Production of iron "blooms"	77%
Production of paper industry	70%
Production of the explosives industry ...	69%
Mercantile marine	53%
Fishing fleets	30%

These statistics do not include Euzkadi's large heavy engineering and shipbuilding activities, nor the activities of her 14 well-equipped ports, which handle 6,000,000 tons of goods annually. Before the war, Euzkadi exported some 1,500,000 tons of iron ore and produced some 400,000 tons of commercial iron each year.

These industries—and also the whole Basque economic system—are now controlled, directly or indirectly, by German "technicians." Need there be any doubt that the British Empire will be kept out of this profitable centre of trading activity, for the possession of which the Germans have taken so many risks?

Unless the Spanish rebels receive continued support in arms and man-power from Germany and Italy; or rather, unless Euzkadi is held under the direct force of the sword, there will be the serious dangers to peace which must inevitably result from a discontented Basque people.

Industrialists have learned, or should have learned by this time, that trouble in the Iberian Peninsula means a threat to peace, with a consequent breakdown in international confidence, and a falling-off in even the domestic markets. That such repercussions should occur because of the Basques' efforts to regain their liberties and rights is the last thing the people would desire, but their present subjugation would force them to adopt whatever measures were necessary.

If, on the other hand, Franco maintained control of Euzkadi so firmly that the possibility of trouble in any form was removed, then Britain would find herself faced with an acute danger to her Atlantic trade routes. Even if German and Italian troops were removed from the Spanish arena, Franco would be forced to pay close regard to the requests, or demands, of his former allies; and in any case a Fascist Spain would naturally support a Fascist Italy and a Nazi Germany. Anybody who cares to study a map will appreciate the strategic importance of Euzkadi, which, if equipped with submarine, air and naval bases, controlled by an unfriendly power (and evidence has already been adduced that such means of attack now exist under German control) could seriously embarrass Britain's Atlantic trade routes.

REBEL PERSECUTION IN EUZKADI.

A report on the rebel persecution of the Basque people during and since the war in that country has recently been prepared by the Government of Euzkadi. The report shows that 30,050 Basque citizens are at present imprisoned; 30,000 are in concentration camps, rebel labour corps, etc.; 50,000 are suffering active persecution up to deprivation of their civil rights; while 120,000 have been driven out of the country altogether; and 13,853 have been executed since the outbreak of the war on the 18th July, 1936.

These figures may be analysed as follows:—

BASQUES IMPRISONED:

Euzkadi—	
Biscay	15,400
Guipuzkoa	3,000
Alaba	1,100
Nabarra	5,250
Castille—	
Santander	5,300

IN CONCENTRATION CAMPS AND LABOUR BATTALIONS.

In addition to 15,000 soldiers at present in prison and included in the above figures, a further 30,000 have been forced to join the rebel ranks or have been sent to concentration camps and labour corps throughout the rebel territory. This is a flagrant breach of the Pact of Santoña, whose terms included complete freedom for all members of the Basque forces.

ACTIVE PERSECUTION.

The flimsiest pretexts have been sufficient to draw recriminatory action on the part of the rebel authorities now controlling the Basque country. Such action includes confiscation of property, fines of 10,000 pesetas or over, expulsion from home and employment, and the obligation to report at regular intervals, often daily, on parole.

REFUGEES AND EXILES.

The figure of 120,000 quoted above is chiefly composed of civilians evacuated to France and Catalonia, but includes also an estimate of refugees in various other countries, and those children remaining in Great Britain.

EXECUTIONS.

In the Region of Biscay alone, 953 persons have been executed during the past ten months. Of these, only 453 received some form of trial.

12,900 executions have taken place in the other Basque Regions—2,500 persons in Guipuzkoa, 400 in Alaba, and 10,000 in Nabarra.

It should be noted that the Region of Nabarra was seized by the rebels before the organisation of any defence by the Basque Government, and the execution of 10,000 persons there represents the massacre of civilians who had not resisted the rebel advance.

SUMMARY.

The above figures show that out of a total pre-war population of 1,200,000 Basques, 230,000 are now being penalised by the Franco authorities, with greater or less severity—amounting to over 19 per cent. of the total population.

Including the 15,000 combatants and 5,000 civilians killed during the actual fighting on the Basque front, those who have suffered the supreme penalty total 33,853. And of these 41 per cent. are victims of the "peace" now being maintained by methods differing little from those employed during the war.

These punitive measures have been taken against the Basques not on criminal but on direct political grounds. They illustrate clearly the determination of Franco to obliterate the patriotic spirit of the Basques; and they show that a "peace" based on a rebel victory in Euzkadi cannot be of a permanent nature.

Rebel "Celebrations" in Bilbao.

The "liberation" of Bilbao has recently been celebrated by its "liberators." How spontaneous were the expressions of gratitude by the people was shown by the fact that names and particulars were taken of occupants of all the houses in the streets chosen for the demonstration. Keys to houses, shops and flats were seized by the authorities to prevent any ingress or exit during the period of the demonstration and special guards were posted in the streets and in windows along the route.

But this did not prevent the Basques from having their own celebrations. A statue of General Mola, who led Franco's Army against the Basques, which had been placed in the Arenal of Bilbao, was beheaded during the night, and a placard hung round it, which read "The vanquished also want to celebrate."

(Bayonne News Bureau.)

Forced Labour in Euzkadi.

Ten hours and more a day in the mines and factories is the lot of the Basque prisoners sentenced to forced labour in their own country. They are then sent straight back to a prison and only released again to begin another round of toil. Their food is atrocious and, receiving no pay whatever, they are unable to do anything to ameliorate their lot.

(Bayonne News Bureau.)

HOW THE BASQUES FOUGHT FRANCO.

The behaviour of a country in times of war is a real indication of the nature of its people. For this reason the way in which the Basques, hopelessly outclassed in all the weapons of destruction, faced Franco's foreign legions is deserving of study.

In our last issue we described why the Basques fought Franco. The methods adopted against them—the total destruction of their open towns, like Gernika, and the indiscriminate slaughter of non-combatants—require no emphasis here, since memory of these incidents must still be fresh. But less is known of how the Basques reacted, of how they continued to observe the Christian principles of justice and humanity, whatever the provocation.

During the whole of the war, only 18 people were executed by the Basque Government, and in each case after a fair and legal trial for serious offences, such as espionage, in which the culprits had been virtually caught red-handed. Even when German airmen in the employ of Franco were brought down and captured when bombing the civil population, they were not shot but were granted all the privileges of prisoners-of-war, and were, in fact, later exchanged.

Euzkadi is the Motherland of the Basques. It will never be the lasting prey of German, Italian and Moorish colonists, nor of any others who have attempted to destroy the freedom of the Basques. The Basques will see to that.

Before Bilbao was finally captured by Franco, the Basque Government took special pains, and its members ran great risks, to make certain that their prisoners, who had been given every consideration during their incarceration, were safely returned over the Franco line.

The final stages of the war record yet another sacrifice which the Basques made to prevent undue suffering. On the fall of Euzkadi, the Basque Army, hampered by thousands of refugees, was forced to fall back on Santoña. To prevent the complete annihilation of these people, the commanders of the Basque Army sought honourable terms of capitulation with the rebels.

The terms, briefly summarised, were that the Basques should lay down their arms, maintain public order, and guarantee the lives and liberty of their political prisoners. The rebels undertook to guarantee the lives of all combatants and others; to safeguard the free departure from Santoña of Government officials and political leaders; to relieve all Basque parties to the Pact from obligation to bear arms during the war; and to guarantee the freedom from persecution of all Basques loyal to the Government of Euzkadi.

The Basques obeyed the full letter and spirit of the pact, but the rebels betrayed it. The soldiers and political leaders were imprisoned, and many of them were subsequently shot. The extent to which the population has since been persecuted is indicated on page 2, in the article entitled "Rebel Persecution in Euzkadi."

Though Euzkadi was defeated in struggling against overwhelming odds, the Basque people may still hold high their heads as having in no single instance betrayed the honour of their race and its traditions.

The ultimate strength of a country does not depend upon its size, but upon its spiritual valour. Euzkadi in her hour of military defeat still remains unconquered in spirit, and history will show that the might of her soul and determination was greater than the might of arms which conquered her territory in 1937.

The spirit of the Basques will never yield to force. For that reason Franco's rule in Euzkadi represents nothing but decrees by an army of occupation. It cannot possibly win the support of the people who have suffered so deeply for their ideals.

Franco may have material domination of the country and its riches, but the national soul of Euzkadi still lives, unfettered; and the future of the country—national freedom—has been written with the blood of its martyrs.

The only basis of permanent peace in Euzkadi is rule of the Basque people by their own freely-elected Government—a demand which was clearly expressed in the Basque plebiscite of November 11th, 1933, when exactly 84 per cent. of the total electorate voted for Home Rule.

Basque Property Confiscated.

The latest privilege of those suspected of pro-Basque Government tendencies in Euzkadi, is that of contributing to the rebel treasury by the proceeds of forcible sales of their property. Public auctions are regularly held in Vitoria for this purpose.

(Bayonne News Bureau.

FOREIGN INTERVENTION REVEALED BY SEIZURE OF BASQUE VESSELS.

How deeply laid the German and Italian plans were for intervention in the Spanish rebellion is clearly shown by the seizure at the very commencement of hostilities, in July, 1936, of all Basque vessels calling at German and Italian ports at that time.

Since then these vessels have been operated openly under the German and Italian flags, and other Basque ships captured since have been made over to his foreign allies by General Franco, presumably in payment for war materials and services rendered.

The total number is now about thirty, and details of some of them are given below:—

Original Basque Name.	*Owned by.*	*Home.*	*Flag.*	*Now Called.*
"AZKARAI-MENDI" ...	Sota & Aznar	Bilbao ...	German ...	"BLANCA"
"ARTXANDA-MENDI" ...	Sota & Aznar	Bilbao ...	Italian ...	"SIENA"
"AYALA-MENDI" ...	Sota & Aznar	Bilbao ...	German ...	"ELISE"
"JUPITER"	Compania Maritima Union	Bilbao ...	Italian ...	"AREZZO"
"INDAUCHU"	Compania Maritima Union	Bilbao ...	Italian ...	"SULMONA"
"ARANTZA-MENDI" ...	Sota & Aznar	Bilbao ...	Italian ...	"LECCE"
"ARATE-MENDI" ...	Sota & Aznar	Bilbao ...	German ...	"ELLEN"
"KAULDI"	Compania Naviera Bachi ...	Bilbao ...	Italian ...	"PERUGIA"
"BACHI"	Compania Naviera Bachi ...	Bilbao ...	Italian ...	"BOLOGNA"
"BIZKAYA"	Naviera Mundaka	Bilbao ...	Italian ...	"PADOVA"
"CILURNUM"	Antonio de Menchaca ...	Bilbao ...	Italian ...	"BRESCIA"
"URIBITARTE"	Antonio de Menchaca ...	Bilbao ...	Italian ...	"CORENZA"
"MARIA VICTORIA" ...	Viuda de Astorqui	Bilbao ...	Italian ...	"POTENZA"
"MANU"	Auxiliar Maritima	Bilbao ...	German ...	"MARION"

THE BASQUES AND EUZKADI.

The Basques, according to the Rev. Wentworth Webster, one of the greatest experts on this race, are one of the most handsome peoples in the world. They are tall, well-developed, strong and amazingly agile. Enthusiastic by nature, they are staunch enemies of any type of slavery and they enjoyed a system of democracy long before any other European country.

One fault of theirs, until about eighty years ago, was a lack of political consciousness. Their enthusiasm gave them an adventurous spirit, devoid of national feeling; and thus Basques have identified themselves with the life and work of other countries, such as France, Spain and the South American Republics. These are but a few of the Basques who have brought fame and honour to other countries: Bolivar, St. Ignatius of Loyola, Elkano, Las Casas, Legazpi, Vitoria.

Basque life is centred around the farm or "baséri." In fact, all Basque surnames are derived from the name of the farm from which the family concerned originally came.

The farm is the absolute property of the family, and under Basque law—now prohibited as a result of foreign imposition—the family property is both inviolable and unseizable.

The Basques have had an important influence on artistic development in Europe. Apart from their masters of the past, they can claim such modern painters as Zuloaga—whose pictures can be seen at the Tate Gallery and the Hall of King's College, Cambridge—Uzelai, Arrue, Arteta, and many others.

But the form of art in which the Basques excel is architecture. For example, the Alcazar of Toledo, famous to-day because of an episode of arms during the present war, was built under the direction of three Basques, Juan de Arandi, Francisco de Gernika, and Martin de Barrena.

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