

PROPAGANDA TACTICS

BY LOUIS ARAQUISTAIN

From *El Sol*, March 17
(MADRID LIBERAL DAILY)

A LARGE majority of the Spanish press was excluded from the recent Latin Press Congress in Lisbon, and the few representatives of our newspaper world present were studiously ignored and humiliated. In one or two instances Spanish journalists were ostracized ostensibly for alleged hostility to the Portuguese Republic, but in no case was this more than a pretext. The real reason was that the men in charge of the Congress did not want Spaniards present, in order that they might carry out their programme with greater ease. That programme was: The Latin races for the French — with a few Portuguese to do the cheering.

We are all debtors to French culture and to the great Republic. No one disputes that. Even as sturdy a protagonist of Spain as Blanco Fombona has declared that the Latin Americans are 'the spiritual children of the French Revolution.' Of course, in America as elsewhere, there are disloyal sons of that great event. They also exist in France, for France, like Spain, is not a perfectly homogeneous community. Several civilizations and cultures, with diverse racial, cultural, and mental elements, coexist in every country, and are at times irreconcilably hostile to each other. And an entirely different cultural or racial element may predominate in one epoch from that which characterized the nation in an earlier epoch. We have abundant reason to question if the forces that control France to-day have much kinship — at least politically — with the forces that

guided the France of the Revolution. It certainly is difficult to recognize them in her Ruhr campaign and her foreign policy in general.

Not only preponderant opinion in the rest of Europe, but a powerful section of French public opinion, condemns the forces that now dominate that country. If we turn to the Spanish-speaking peoples both in Spain and in parts of America, — for instance, Venezuela, — we find that the 'spiritual children of the French Revolution' have wandered far indeed from the teaching of that great event.

But, quite independently of the political structure, there are cultural forms characteristic of different races of men. The content of culture is much the same everywhere, as we observe when studying such phenomena as popular religious concepts, myths, and folklore. But cultures differ sufficiently in form to constitute distinct species. For good or bad, there is such a distinct Spanish culture, which has slowly evolved through the course of many centuries, first in Spain and subsequently also in America. This culture has its own peculiar quality, largely independent of the political constitutions of the states in which it thrives. Even the Inquisition did not prevent the brilliant outburst of literary and artistic genius, in the Spain of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that still lends immortal glory to our name. It may be argued that the highest expression of a culture is not found in political institutions or scientific attainments. Even

if Spain were not credited with a single great scientific discovery, her literary monuments, her great masterpieces of painting and architecture, would entitle her to a high and distinctive place among civilized peoples.

It is this type of culture, handed down to us for nearly a thousand years, that is now menaced in America by Anglo-Saxon culture, which irradiates from the United States over the rest of the hemisphere, and by French culture, which is being so sedulously and skillfully propagated from Paris. Both cultures have their admirable points, as has the flowering of every great civilization. They are worthy of study and, to a certain extent, of imitation. But this does not mean that nations of true Spanish stock and tradition should renounce their native, typical culture, in order servilely to adopt that of a different race.

The irresistible instinct to survive found in every culture should deter France or any other nation from such a design as the Latin Press Congress was devised to further. We do not criticize its promoters for the hope they cherish of incorporating our Spanish culture into their own. But it would be inexcusably shortsighted for us — the Spaniards of the motherland and America — to assist these designs by voluntary acquiescence. It is natural that France should harbor imperial ambitions, but it is unnatural that we should resign ourselves to a subservient and colonial status. We can understand how France may wish to make her language the great world-language, but we cannot understand how any Spanish American can become a protagonist of that idea.

This brings us to the question of the press as an agency of culture. 'A Latin

press' — that is to say, a French, Italian, Spanish, Spanish-American, Portuguese, and Brazilian press — directed and inspired by France would be a mortal threat to Spanish culture, to say nothing of its possible blight upon our political life and all our social and economic activity. Yet this is precisely what the Latin Press Congress intends to accomplish. It does not aim at establishing a community of material and ideal interests, but at erecting a hegemony — a monopoly of all kinds of news service and press propaganda covering the whole range of thought and action, from the highest levels of intellectual endeavor down to trade-promotion and commonplace material interests.

Our transatlantic cousins already realize what a monopoly of this sort means. An example already exists in the equivocal news-agency established in Brazil — but actually operated from obscurer sources — that makes it its business to invent wild rumors and distort events that have to do with Spanish America. A French monopoly would be no better, especially if it were under the control of the great French newspapers, which are among the least reliable in the world.

Only a permanent Spanish-American Press Congress could accomplish what we seek. It should gather and distribute news on a coöperative basis without any ulterior object except the fundamental one of preserving, perfecting, and extending Spanish culture. Some of the leading men in the Spanish newspaper world are already taking steps to form such an organization. The idea is winning favor; but every precaution must be taken to see that neither its inspiration nor its object is misrepresented.

THE SOCIALISTS AND THE FRENCH ELECTIONS

BY LÉON BLUM

[The author is a Socialist Deputy and editor belonging to the Conservative wing of that party.]

From *Arbeiter Zeitung*, March 17
(VIENNA CONSERVATIVE-SOCIALIST DAILY)

THE Socialist Party of France has adopted new tactics for the coming election. These represent a complete break with its previous policies. Until 1919 the members of the Chamber of Deputies were elected from districts represented by a single member. There were nearly six hundred such election districts in France. The Socialists nominated candidates in practically all of these, and conducted the campaign, which was always a lively affair, chiefly with the idea of making new converts to their principles. If our candidate did not receive an absolute majority of the votes and failed of election on the first ballot — which unfortunately was the case in most instances — we were able to withdraw him and support a Radical or Republican candidate on the second ballot. We always did this without compensation, because we never made bargains with any other party. We rejected alliances that limited our freedom as Socialists, but we kept in view the fact that Socialism and Republican institutions necessarily go together. According to our creed, every Socialist is invariably a Republican — indeed, the only Simon-pure Republican in existence.

It was not always easy to pursue this programme of self-renunciation, because French bourgeois politicians are as much alike as peas. The differences between them are vague and shifting. They change their political platform so often that it is hard to tell one from

another. This often led to unfortunate and irritating incidents. But we invariably had the first campaign to ourselves, with a free hand to preach the evangel of Socialism unhampered, and to win new converts for our cause. From the Socialist point of view, the campaign for the first balloting was the only real campaign.

The new election law of 1919 has completely changed all this. That law establishes a limited number of electoral districts, each of which sends several members to the Chamber. All the candidates of any party or coalition are voted for on one ticket, and there is seldom more than one balloting. This law differs from other proportional representation laws in favoring to an extraordinary extent the ticket that receives the most votes. If a ticket receives an absolute majority, then all the candidates upon it are elected to the Chamber. But if no ticket has an absolute majority, the ticket having the plurality on the first ballot is awarded offhand a certain number of seats in the Chamber, which may vary from one third to one half the total, according to the voting-ratios.

Now that the ticket that heads the polls has such an advantage, the parties — and still more the individual candidates — have a powerful inducement to get on that ticket by forming coalitions with other groups. In fact, the present election-law is a great encourager of party coalitions. Let us, by way of