On July 18, 1936, the revolt of army chiefs at Melilla in Spanish Morocco touched off the Spanish Civil War. The surrender of Madrid to General Franco's forces on March 28, 1939, may be taken as the end of that war. During the period from July 18, 1936, to April 4, 1939, one hundred and forty editorials on the Spanish Civil War appeared in the three metropolitan Pittsburgh newspapers. There were fifty-three editorials in the Pittsburgh Press, twelve in the Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph, and seventy-five in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. This article is entirely based on these unsigned "local" editorials on the "editorial page"; editorial opinion as expressed by the "slanting" of news, by headlines, or in other ways was not considered.

Who's Fighting Whom?

The Post-Gazette early decided that the conflict was "social in nature, a clash between Fascism . . . and Communism." In October, 1936, the editors called the war "a straight struggle between Communism and Fascism," and apparently held to that conclusion throughout, although

1 Mr. Marshall is a Pittsburger whose interest in local history resulted in this by-product of his work, both as student and instructor, in the history department of the University of Pittsburgh.—Ed.

2 The Press (Scripps-Howard) and the Sun-Telegraph (Hearst) are afternoon papers, published every day; the Post-Gazette (Paul Block, publisher, 1927-1941) is a morning paper with no Sunday edition.
at the end of the war they did recognize that there were “divisions between Franco’s own supporters.”

The Press in July, 1936, looked on the revolt as “a showdown between radicalism and conservatism,” with the former demanding “liberty in social activity, and social changes,” while the latter desired “more order in public affairs and fewer strikes and labor disturbances.” “Just as the revolution of 1931 was to rid Spain of the tyranny, abuses and violence of the extreme right, the 1936 revolution is to rid Spain of violence, abuses and tyranny of the extreme left.” Four months later it viewed the struggle as a conflict between the Fascists on the one hand and the Communists, Anarchists, Socialists, and Syndicalists on the other. Early in 1937 the Press recognized that there were probably moderates on both sides, but added that “they are voiceless and powerless. Only ‘ultras’ have any real authority.” In March, 1938, it spoke of the Loyalists as “highly liberal if not radical in their opinions.” Near the end of the war the Press twice summarized the opposing forces: “Among the Loyalists are Moderates, Syndicalists, Socialists and Communists.” “The Rebels include Moderates, Falangists (Fascists), Requetes (Monarchists) and other groups.” Two months later the opponents of Franco were said to have “ranged from bourgeois Democrats and Republicans not unlike the people of the United States, to Communists, Anarchists and Marxists,” while his supporters “ran the gamut, from liberal Republican to Fascists, Monarchists, Carlists and Alfonsoists.” Between these two editorials was one interpreting the conflict from the beginning as a “struggle between Fascism and Communism.”

**Labeling the Sides**

The *Post-Gazette*, in discussing the difficulty of labeling the opposing forces, pointed out that the term “Loyalists” was confusing since we usually associate Communists with “combating the established order.” Since the rebel generals stated that they did not wish to set up a dictatorship, the designation of “Fascist” for their forces did not seem satisfactory. The editorial concluded that perhaps it would be best to refer to the sides as “red” and “white.”

In the first six months of the war the *Post-Gazette* generally referred

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3 *Post-Gazette*, August 10, October 24, 1936; March 29, 1939.
4 *Press*, July 21, 25, November 9, 1936; February 15, 1937; March 28, 1938; January 17, March 10, 29, 1939.
to the government forces as "Reds" or "Communists." From then on they were called "Loyalists," although at times with certain additions or qualifications, such as "so-called 'Loyalists'" and "Red-tainted anti-religious Loyalist government." The opposing forces were usually "Fascists" for the first year of the war. After that they were generally called "Insurgents." Other terms used were "Whites," "Rebels," "Insurrectionists," "Revolutionists," and "Nationalists." As early as August 6, 1937, the Post-Gazette called attention to "the fact that for some time the Franco forces have been referred to with lessening frequency as 'rebels' or 'insurgents' or even 'fascists.' In the reports now they usually are spoken of as 'nationals.'"6

The Sun-Telegraph was not troubled by any subtle difficulties in labeling the contestants. The government forces were "Communists" and "Reds," and strenuous objection was made to calling them "Loyalists," for, according to the editors, they were not loyal to God, law, order, peace, liberty, humanity or anything else except Marx and Stalin. In the few editorials on the war in the Sun-Telegraph little was said about the other side. In the last months of the war, the Franco forces were referred to as the "Spanish Insurgents."7

In 1936 the Press used "radicals," "Communists," and the "Communist-Socialist-Anarcho-Syndicalists of Premier Cabellero," but after that year consistently referred to the government forces as "Loyalists." Their opponents were generally "Fascists" in the first eight months of the war and "Rebels" thereafter. They were once referred to as "Insurgents" near the end of the war.8

Establishing the "War Guilt"

The Sun-Telegraph in February, 1939, stated flatly that it was "Red aggression and political penetration in Spain [which] brought on the terrible war." The next month the Press declared that "impartial history . . . will almost certainly record that Spain's democratic republic was crushed by Communist intrigue from within rather than by Franco's

6 Post-Gazette, August 7, 10, September 19, 30, October 24, November 20, 1936; January 1, 9, February 10, August 6, September 3, 10, 18, October 22, 26, 1937; March 28, April 5, May 26, June 24, July 16, August 22, 23, 1938; February 10, 27, 1939.


8 Press, July 21, August 6, November 9, 19, 1936; March 24, April 13, 19, 25, June 2, 6, 1937; March 17, 28, June 13, September 6, 1938; January 17, 1939.
forces from without.” The Republic, the editorial continued, had been democratic but the Communists got into power in 1936 and “pressed their advantage. . . . Then—just as happened before many times elsewhere in Europe where the third international attempted similar coups—came the reaction.”

AMERICANS IN SPAIN

The American tourists and business men in Spain at the outbreak of the war were not given any undue sympathy by the papers. The Press spoke of our sending warships to Spain to bring our nationals back as “a reversal of American foreign policy.” The editors hoped that those who stayed after being warned to get out wouldn’t be “shot . . . , or bombed, or gassed, or starved, or jailed.” But if they were, it would not be our government’s concern.

The Post-Gazette agreed with the State Department that the government’s responsibility ended when citizens refused to be evacuated. It recognized that it was a more difficult problem for those with business interests and added that such people “owe it to the country to work with the [United States] government to avoid diplomatic complications.”

By the end of 1936 a different group of Americans in Spain were the subject of editorial comment. This group was composed of those who volunteered for combat with the Loyalists. The Press did not become as concerned about this group as did the other two papers. In fact, it thought that “it may be very admirable” to fight for a foreign cause, but it held with the other papers that the volunteers could have no possible claim upon the United States government. It added, however, that it did not think the volunteers should be deprived of their citizenship by law as advocated by Governor Earle of Pennsylvania. Neither the Sun-Telegraph nor the Post-Gazette agreed. The former said that “no sympathy need be wasted on the adventurers if such a law is passed,” while the latter felt Earle’s suggestion would “find a wide and hearty echo.”

The Post-Gazette campaigned for the strict enforcement of the federal law banning enlistments for foreign armies in the United States. Both the Sun-Telegraph and the Post-Gazette saw fit to apply the term “Hessians” to some of these men who, the editors said, had no convic-

9 Sun-Telegraph, February 13, 1939; Press, March 10, 1939.
10 Press, July 23, August 6, 1936.
11 Post-Gazette, August 5, 13, 1936.
12 Press, January 2, 1937; Sun-Telegraph, January 15, 1937; Post-Gazette, January 14, 1937.
tions but were merely fighting for money. The Post-Gazette was sure that most of the American volunteers had “only a very hazy idea of what is really involved in the Spanish struggle.”

United States Neutrality

All three papers agreed that the United States should have nothing to do with either side in the Spanish War. The Sun-Telegraph even opposed the United States’ acting with other nations to issue a joint declaration of neutrality, for it would “be taking its first step toward war the moment it involves itself in the maze of European entanglements.” The Spanish War was additional evidence to the editors that the United States had been wise to refuse to join the League of Nations, for the League “could start a world war . . . by meddling in Spain” just as it probably would have caused one over Manchuria or Ethiopia had it taken a strong stand. Certainly the United States had no business “taking either side in the Spanish war, or any foreign war.” Perhaps the Sun-Telegraph’s attitude may best be shown in an admirable summarization of the argument of the isolationists: “Our business is to stay at home, and mind our own business.”

The Post-Gazette had little to say editorially on the subject of United States neutrality. It praised President Roosevelt for stopping shipments to the Loyalists in 1936 even if it were “extra-legal” for the government to do so. After this it showed little interest in the question, possibly because its position was in agreement with that of the government. In the fall of 1937 it criticised Representatives Jerry J. O’Connell (Democrat, Montana) and John T. Bernard (Farmer-Laborite, Minnesota) for raising the Loyalists’ hopes for United States aid by their speeches in Spain. When Representative O’Connell came to Pittsburgh in November to speak to the People’s Congress for Peace and Democracy under the auspices of the American League against War and Fascism, the Post-Gazette objected to the names of these organizations for the editors thought the real purpose of the meeting was “to break down American neutrality and cause us to intervene in a war.”

The Press, relatively speaking, was not extremely isolationist. But on the whole it was for strict neutrality and non-interference. As has al-

13 Post-Gazette, January 13, 16, April 5, July 20, 1937; January 25, August 20, 1938; Sun-Telegraph, January 12, 1937.
14 Sun-Telegraph, August 14, 1936; July 21, 1937; January 13, 1939.
15 Post-Gazette, January 1, October 19, November 30, 1937.
ready been mentioned it referred to our sending warships to Spain to evacuate our nationals as "a reversal of American foreign policy." Before the Neutrality Law was changed, it suggested that arms exporters follow the policy of bankers who check with the State Department before making foreign loans.\textsuperscript{16}

However, the \textit{Press} was willing for the United States to participate in the Inter-American Conference for the Preservation of Peace in November and December, 1938, and it hoped the Conference could "do something to end the orgy of slaughter" or at least "temper the excesses." But "of course . . . [this is] no bid for physical intervention." It believed that the people would approve of the change in the Neutrality Law permitting the government to ban shipments of munitions to Spain. After the embargo it called the seizing of foreign ships in Spanish waters "An Object Lesson," and pointed out that if American ships had been seized, we could easily become involved in the war.\textsuperscript{17}

Although the \textit{Press} doubted reports from Europe in April, 1937, that Ambassador-at-Large Norman Davis was about to launch a movement for peace and disarmament, it did not object to the idea. However, that was as far as it was willing to go. The same editorial added: "We should avoid every appearance of taking sides. In fact there can be but one side for us in this matter, namely the western side of the Atlantic and the eastern side of the Pacific."\textsuperscript{18}

In May, 1938, the \textit{Press} congratulated the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for shelving Senator Nye's resolution to lift the arms embargo. It argued that lifting the embargo would have been "a flagrant violation of the whole spirit of neutrality." Near the end of the war the attitude of the \textit{Press} toward the Neutrality Law appeared to change. The fact that "university professors, societies, civic clubs, press, pulpit, members of congress," and "other government officials" were advocating lifting the embargo, in order to aid the Loyalists in this "comparatively small war," indicated that the law would not work if there were a general European war. In addition the wisdom of the legislation was doubtful for it had put the United States on the side of the strong, the aggressor, and the rich.\textsuperscript{19}

\textbf{RELIGION AND COMMUNISM}

The \textit{Press} did not editorially mention religion in connection with

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Press}, July 23, August 12, 1936.
\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Press}, November 30, December 30, 1936; March 13, 1937.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Press}, April 3, 1937.
the Spanish War until the last month of that conflict, when it stated that in 1936 the Communists had secured control of the Republic and as a result, "Churches and convents were burned and desecrated. Thousands of priests and nuns were murdered." It was "the reaction" to such acts that had brought on the Franco revolt.20

The Post-Gazette's description of the Loyalists as "anti-religious," in 1938, was the only reference to this aspect of the war in the editorials of that paper. Nor did it use the war to attack Communism, with one very marked exception. In discussing the atrocities on both sides, the editors had observed in 1936, that "in simple fairness it is to be said that Communism plunged the Spanish nation into these depths of depravity."21

In contrast to these two papers, the religious aspects of the war and attacks on Communism were the subjects of half of the editorials on the war in the Sun-Telegraph. Two of the early editorials were concerned with the International Ladies Garment Workers Union's contribution of "$5000 of union funds to aid the Reds in Spain—'For the murder of priests and nuns,' according to Father Coughlin." David Dubinsky, president of the union, was one of the presidential electors for the Democratic Party in New York. The headings over these editorials, "Dubinsky's Friends" and "Raw Deal Aids Reds," were examples of the Sun-Telegraph's policy of branding the New Deal as Communist.22

In an editorial in September, 1936, the Sun-Telegraph stated that the "priests, nuns and revolutionary sympathizers," who had been reported killed in Spain, "were executed by Communists." Two weeks later an editorial told of the indignities committed by Loyalist guards on a statue of the Christ Child. The editors found it "inconceivable" that such acts could occur "in a civilized country." "Communism is reversion to the jungle, with its contempt for all the laws and morals of God and intelligent mankind." Early in 1939 the Sun-Telegraph's editors stated that "often in times past the Catholic Church has been the savior of civilization, and its present effort and activity [in Spain] is to save civilization again." This editorial, as quoted earlier, objected to "taking either side in the Spanish war," but nevertheless it concluded by advis-

20 Press, March 10, 1939.
21 Post-Gazette, September 25, 1936; March 28, 1938.
22 Sun-Telegraph, August 25, September 18, 1936.
ing that "all God-fearing, liberty-loving Americans should support the church in its sacred crusade."  

**Dress Rehearsal**

The editors of the *Sun-Telegraph* were not interested in the clash of European powers in Spain. In the one editorial commenting on the international aspects of the war, they mentioned the so-called pirate submarines in the Mediterranean in the summer of 1937 and concluded that "whether it is piracy or something else . . . does not concern us."  

During 1936 and 1937 the *Press* and *Post-Gazette* praised France and England for their efforts in the direction of non-intervention and the withdrawal of foreign "volunteers." However, by March, 1938, they had become doubtful of the wisdom of the policy of the western European democracies. The *Post-Gazette* decided that "John Bull is kidding himself if he does not admit privately that he is being given a very pretty run-around on the non-intervention myth." In fact the paper doubted if Mussolini had any intention of getting out of Spain at the end of the war.  

In the spring of 1938 the *Press* recalled that at the start of the war it was thought that France and England would "take a strong stand in support of the established Spanish government." But because England did not approve of "the political hue" of that government she "guided France in a policy of enlisting Hitler's and Mussolini's promises of non-intervention." Now when France needs all her strength "to check a threatened Nazi invasion of her ally, Czechoslovakia, she finds herself menaced by a prospective Nazi-Fascist base on her southern frontier." And England is "in great danger of being deposed as mistress of one sea that is vital to her empire."  

The *Post-Gazette* believed there was a limit to England's policy of non-intervention in Spain. The editors early pointed out that England appeared to be reconciled to a Loyalist defeat and was even willing to aid Franco indirectly in order to hasten his victory, although she recog-

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23 *Sun-Telegram*, September 10, 24, 1936; January 13, 1939.  
24 *Sun-Telegram*, September 9, 1937.  
26 *Press*, March 17, 1938.
nized that her own defense would be endangered by a puppet state of Mussolini's in the western Mediterranean. However, the editors said, there is a limit to appeasement; Spain is more vital to England and France than Ethiopia and China were. They thought the English policy was based on the opinion that since Franco would win, England should try to persuade him to insist on the withdrawal of foreign troops and to cooperate with the democracies. When the Blum government late in 1938 attempted to reverse this policy and announced that France would send aid to the Loyalists if England would do the same, the editors looked upon his statement as a gesture made with full knowledge that the English would never agree and added that it was fortunate for the peace of Europe that this was true.\footnote{Post-Gazette, September 18, October 26, 1937; June 24, October 1, November 10, 1938; January 28, February 10, 27, 1939.}

The \textit{Press} attempted to explain the stake of the various powers in Spain. Hitler frankly announced to the world that Germany wanted a Franco victory in order to buy ores in Spain. If, said the editors, the other powers were as frank, Mussolini would admit he wants the Balearic Islands, part of Morocco, and a friendly Spanish government to threaten English control of the Mediterranean in case of war; Stalin wants a Loyalist victory to strengthen Russia politically and to provide an ally if the Fascist powers attack him; England and France want a neutral Spain; Portugal wants to go with Italy and Germany despite her traditional friendship with England. The next year the \textit{Press} enlarged on the stake of England and France. Spain, the editors said, has long been "a friendly back-country" to England's Gibraltar and a weak, safe neighbor on France's southern border. But now a strong, unfriendly Spain would be a real threat to England's life line past Gibraltar and through the Mediterranean and to France's life line from Marseilles across the sea to Algiers as well as to France's unfortified southern border.\footnote{Press, June 29, 1937; March 17, 28, 1938.}

Early in 1937 the \textit{Press} believed that England and France would go to war to keep Hitler out of Spain and Morocco. Two years later, after the "Munich appeasement" and recognition of Franco's government by France and England, the editors still believed those two powers would fight "if Italy and Germany attempted to dominate Spain." But they were hopeful that Franco would not feel grateful to Italy and Germany
for the aid received and that French and British loans would keep him in line.²⁹

²⁹ *Press*, January 10, 13, 1937; February 28, March 7, 1939.