

Spain, 1808-1939. By RAYMOND CARR. London, 1966. Oxford University Press. Oxford History of Modern Europe. Maps. Tables. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xxix, 766. \$12.50.

Raymond Carr, fellow of St. Antony's College, Oxford, has produced a massive book that treats topics in the history of Spain during the long period of instability between Manuel Godoy and Francisco Franco. It does not pretend to be and assuredly is not a balanced survey. Rather it is a combination of social and political history, often at the cost, as he says, of coherent narrative and almost complete exclusion of foreign affairs. In the preface Carr advises the reader that the book is strongest in the middle and weak in research at both extremities, a modest admission that is only too true. From the high praise that the work has received in the press, this reviewer suspects that some of the enthusiasts have not looked carefully beyond the table of contents, which promises a great fare. None of the topics listed there, however, receives rounded coverage. The author assumes that his readers are intimately familiar with Spanish history and therefore merely alludes to events without relating them. A chronology at the front of the book is inadequate and does little to reduce the confusion that besets anyone studying this period.

Yet this is an important book, so rich in scholarship and interpretations that it commands admiration. Carr's thesis is that Spain's failure was fundamentally a political one. Thus he constantly analyzes the successive political situations and traces the economic, social, and cultural influences that affected them. He is always objective. His long study leads logically to the final paragraph: "The historic mission of nineteenth-century liberalism was, in its own customary phrase, the reconciliation of order and progress. The modification and modernization of a resistant traditional society is a task which tests the liberal tradition to the utmost limit. Confronted as they were on the right by those rigid men who would preserve tradition by force, and, on the left, by those doctrinaires who would take little account of the realities of social life and the limits of the possible, Spanish liberals had, perhaps, small chance of success" (p. 694).

After an analysis of Spain's economy and society in the decades before 1808, Carr summarizes the far-reaching effects of the turbulent period from 1808 to 1814. He somewhat rehabilitates Ferdinand VII and the "ominous decade" of 1823-33 so vilified by liberals. He covers the Carlist War only tangentially but the Carlist cause ably, and he offers perceptive comments on the political confusion during the reign of Isabel II. The revolutionary period of 1868-75 he

sketches very unevenly but rightly points out its considerable achievements and enduring influence.

By far the most rewarding part of the book is that which considers the reigns of Alfonso XII and Alfonso XIII, from 1875 to 1931. Carr presents a superb description of the system established by Cánovas del Castillo and justifies the deliberate alternation of liberals and conservatives under the parliamentary system and even the usually damned *caciquismo*, or local bossism. Chapters on the economy and society set forth a wealth of new and pertinent detail. The author minimizes or almost ridicules Krausism and the self-styled regenerators after the disaster of 1898 in Cuba. He traces the failures of the oligarchic parliamentary leaders in the twentieth century, as radicalism and Catalanism grew, and the Restoration consensus dissipated. Primo de Rivera is pictured as well-meaning and for a time moderately successful, and Alfonso XIII is treated with understanding. If they finally failed, so did nearly all other Spanish rulers between 1808 and 1939.

Carr summarizes the career of the second republic, a victim of internal forces which it could not tame and of over-confidence before the rightist threat. He does not believe in the "red plot" of 1936 but notes that a general revolutionary temper prevailed and stresses the point that the right was as strong as the left. Franco's victory he attributes largely to the continuity and regularity of Axis aid.

To this reviewer it seems that Carr minimizes one of the principal causes of Spanish political failure, the question of the throne. After 1833 no Spanish monarch or regent enjoyed the full support of the nation as legitimate ruler. Furthermore, the incapacity and misbehavior of Isabel II and her mother, María Cristina de Borbón, repeatedly wrecked efforts to build a constitutional system around the throne. One's confidence in his awareness of the royal problem is shaken by the statement—odd for an Englishman who specializes in recent Spanish history—that the last queen of Spain was a daughter of Edward VII.

Carr has a gift for words and apt phrases, and almost every page contains a provocative or arresting comment. But he often fails to dominate his material, so that the book is difficult to follow. It contains more than an allowable quota of minor errors and crotchets, such as spelling "Catholic" with a little *c* while capitalizing "Protestant" and the names of political groups. Even so, this work is a solid achievement and should long stand as a respected supplement to narrative accounts of Spanish history.

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