

Eroding Social Justice in Spain

The name of today's game is destroying decades of social progress. It's about money power over popular needs...

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Global Research, July 24, 2012
24 July 2012

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Global Economy](#), [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

Along with Greece, Spain represents the epicenter of decaying Western societies. Multiple rounds of social spending cuts reflect Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy's war on his own people.

Complicit parliamentarians go along. At issue is class warfare, transferring household wealth to bankers, other corporate predators, and privileged elites, eroding Spain's middle class, and destroying a whole youth generation and perhaps others to come. More on this below.

Spaniards protest angrily against what no one should tolerate. They're back after the latest announced austerity package.

On July 19, London's [Guardian](#) headlined "Spanish take to streets in protest as MPs pass (\$65 billion) austerity package," saying:

They raged in 80 cities nationwide. They're mad as hell and won't take it anymore. The Guardian downplayed turnout. Possibly millions participated. Around 800,000 rallied in Madrid. Other major cities saw huge crowds.

Police attacked protesters violently. "Angry civil servants had blocked traffic in several main Madrid avenues earlier in the day, with protesters puncturing the tires of dozens of riot police vans, amid growing upset at austerity, recession and 24% unemployment."

Youth unemployment is 50% and heading south. Spain is deteriorating in plain sight. Madrid marchers carried Spanish flags and banners saying "No to the cuts." "You have ruined us." "Hands up, this is a robbery."

In Mieres near Oviedo, eight firemen disrobed. A wall above them displayed a banner saying "With so many cuts we have been left naked."

On July 21, [Russia Today](#) said "rallies turn violent" as millions march for social justice. In Madrid, police charged protesters violently. They used batons, rubber bullets, and tear gas.

At least 15 arrests were made. Dozens were injured. In urban areas, trash cans were set ablaze. Barricades were erected to block police vehicles from entering.

Clashes continued daily since the latest mid-July austerity cuts were announced. Each turnout ups the stakes and gets more violent.

One protester said:

“There’s nothing we can do but take to the street. We have lost between 10 and 15 per cent of our pay in the past four years.”

Another said:

“We have to make some noise, because they’re making fun of us and of all working people.”

Coal industry subsidy cuts threaten around 50,000 mining and related jobs. Since May, thousand of miners struck, blocked streets and railroads. They and others vowed to keep struggling for justice. Police attack them violently.

According to Spanish sociologist [Carlos Delclos](#):

“If Mariano Rajoy had any sense of decency, or even a fragment of dignity that the miners and the protesters have, then he would resign, along with the rest of his government.”

“He’s broken every campaign promise that he’s made, some even at comical levels. His entire party was saying that raising sales tax was unthinkable and all that, and now we have a 21-per-cent sales tax.”

He thinks he can get away with anything. “What we are seeing is the impunity of a government that has a lot of people that pertain to groups that had affinity with the Franco government, the Fascist government, 40 years ago, and have never had to sit before trial since then,” he added.

Multiple rounds of cuts assure more coming. Social Spain is being destroyed. New measures call for raising the VAT from 18 to 21% effective August 1. Over \$800 million in domestic spending reductions is planned. Expect much more later.

At issue now is freezing public sector wages, cutting them for some state workers, slashing

unemployment benefits, raising the retirement age from 65 – 67, and linking eroding pensions to life expectancy.

In addition, closures and/or privatizing state industries, ports, airports, and rail assets are planned. Town councillor numbers are being reduced by one-third. Regional and local government authority is eroding. Trade union and political party subsidies face 20% cuts.

Sentiment across the country reflects rage. Protests continue daily. On July 16, Madrid streets were blocked. Firefighters, off duty police, civil servants and miners marched on Spain's parliament. Police confronted them violently.

Civil servants are especially hard hit. They took 5 – 15% previous cuts. They lost Christmas bonuses. They're 7% of their reduced annual income. Sick pay is lower. Fewer days off and less rights overall became policy.

Firefighters lost up to 30% of their income. One protesting nurse said:

"There are hospitals with whole floors that are not being used because they are firing and cutting jobs. We have little hope, but staying at home would just make it easier for the government to keep on doing what it wants."

Protesters include doctors, nurses, teachers, professors, students, cops, firemen, other civil servants of all stripes, unemployed and underemployed people in all age groups, and youths representing a lost generation being destroyed.

Since 2008 crisis conditions erupted, massive cuts in jobs, income, healthcare, education, pensions, and other social benefits were instituted. So-called reform involves dismantling public services entirely. It's also about slashing wages and pensions to the bone.

Growing unemployment, poverty, hunger, homelessness, and despair for some, rage for many others, reflects current conditions growing numbers won't tolerate.

Cutting Spain's deficit from 8.9% of GDP to 2.8% by 2014 is cover for waging ruthless class warfare. It's raging across Europe, America and Israel.

High-paying/full-time jobs are disappearing. Benefits are eroding en route to eliminating them altogether. Ruler/serf societies are planned.

People have two choices – rebel or starve. Fight back or face heart of darkness big brother conditions. Prioritizing monied interests over popular needs assures the worst of what Conrad and Orwell conceived.

“The horror! The horror!” reflects what at stake.

A Final Comment

On July 19, Germany’s Bundestag overwhelmingly approved bailout aid for Spanish banks. European Financial Security Facility (EFSF) funds will supply it.

Despite criticizing Chancellor Angela Merkel’s handling of crisis conditions, Social Democrats and Greens largely supported her. Germany’s Left Party voted no.

Spain gets \$123 billion. It’s coming in several tranches through yearend. It’s a down payment on what’s needed. Expect hundreds of billions more before crisis conditions end. Major Spanish banks are insolvent. They’re drowning in toxic debt. It’s impossible to repay.

Instead of being nationalized, shut down, or broken up, bailouts hand them taxpayer money. Eurozone countries contribute EFSF funds. Troika (EU/ECB/IMF) diktats control policy. Ordinary people have no say on how their money is misused and spent.

In June, Eurozone leaders agreed to allocate EFSF loans to Spain’s Fund for Orderly Bank Restructuring (FROB).

Conditions involve deep social spending cuts and regressive reforms. German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schauble defended the aid package. He said Spain’s financial sector faces stability issues. Other Eurozone countries are affected. Madrid is responsible for repayment. Taxpayers are stuck with the tab.

Parliamentary opposition was weak. Social Democrat leader Frank-Walter Steinmeier accused Merkel of not leveling with German voters and explaining the burden accurately.

German President Joachim Gauck said “(s)he now has the duty to explain in great detail what (her plan) means, also in fiscal terms.”

Thursday’s parliamentary vote came during its summer recess. It reconvened on Merkel’s request. On June 29, it adjourned.

Members left with Bundestag President Norbert Lammert instructions not to “swim to far out and make sure your carry-on baggage is within close reach.”

In other words, giving criminal bankers taxpayer money is prioritized over parliamentary fun in the sun and providing vital social services to German citizens who need them.

The name of today's game is destroying decades of social progress. It's about money power over popular needs. It's about exploiting people, not serving them. It transforming Western societies into dystopian nightmares.

Only public rage can change things. Key is mobilizing it before it's too late.

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