

Apreciado Don Manuel,

No sabe Ud. cuanto le agradezco su curiosa carta y felicitaciones, también a mi esposa por la suya. Estoy muy contenta que mi carta le ha agradado.

Envíe el artículo, primero a 'New Statesman', como la revista más indicada, pero me lo devolvieron, seguramente por tener ya planeado la serie magnífica de su propio correspondiente. El 'Spectator', como ya sabe Ud. suele tender a favorecer a Franco y parece interesarse más por cartas como la de Blake que la mía. Aquel, me fijó por su último párrafo sea 'amigo' de La Embajada, lo le contesté en seguida, como mejor me ocurrió estando sin <sup>otros</sup> datos. Pero siendo algo fuerte

no sé si me lo publicarán, ni día que envíe  
firmada por mí, en segunda de publicarse  
la mía, Para incorporar día idea que me  
ocurrió después de mandar el artículo - le parece  
sensato? Lo envío copias. No cree Ud. que no  
habría estado mal una carta de un vasco o español  
apoyándola, quizá con mas detalles?

Veo que está Ud aquí por un rato y le  
supongo muy contento con la meta

Saluz a los vuestros y muchos recuerdos carinosos  
para Ud y toda la familia, y un abrazo  
muy fuerte para mamá de

hand /  
Wednesday /  
Mr. Criswick  
Lynholde  
Dorset  
Dorset way  
Thorp  
8365.

Phon. Tokay 92, Hickory

THE SPECTATOR  
12-1-51

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JANUARY 12, 1951

### Franco's Spain

SIR,—Mr. B. Peter Blake does not seem to have read my letter very carefully, or he would have noticed that I was comparing the price of food in Spain with the average wages, the only real criterion of comparison. The fact that, to an American visitor, many articles in this country seem relatively inexpensive, as a result of devaluation, does not make those same articles any cheaper or any more attainable for the average British family, as any housewife could tell him.

As regards travel, whether or not there is a black market for tickets for foreign tourists in the agencies I do not know, but there certainly is for Spaniards, and travelling with them I experienced it myself, and related what I saw as many others have done—not all of us the “professional observers so-called” whom Mr. Blake dislikes. And, as it happens, we have our justification from a more renowned authority than Mr. Blake—Mr. Gerald Brenan, whose latest book, *The Face of Spain*, is reviewed in the *Spectator* of January 5th and who can hardly be said not to investigate his facts and comparisons carefully.

It is not the comments of conscientious observers such as he that harm good relations with Spain or any other country, but the cynical indifference to human suffering of those who prefer to shut their eyes to unpleasant facts like starvation, disease and corruption. And it is not unknown for such observers as these to be “professional” too.—Yours faithfully,

DOROTHY SHEPHERD.

5th January, 1951.

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Yours faithfully,

Dorothy Shepherd

32, Gordon Place,  
W. 8.

28th December, 1950.

The Editor,  
The Spectator,

Dear Sir,

55

Your correspondent Dorothy Shepherd is right to give a warning of Franco Spain's unreliability as an ally.

Nor should Franco's attitude of cynical opportunism during the last war be overlooked. At that time we had full diplomatic relations with Spain. Mr. Shackleton Bailey seems to have forgotten that Great Britain recognised Franco as the de facto and de jure ruler of Spain as early as 1939, but this does not seem to have stopped him embarrassing our Ambassador, Lord Templewood, and aiding the enemy, under a very elastic non-belligerency, whenever he thought it was to his advantage.

The Americans who are now gambling their money on his decadent regime do not seem to have learned the lesson of the wasted dollars they poured out to bolster up Chaing Kai-shek's corrupt rule as a barrier to Communism, with what disastrous results the United Nations are now experiencing in Korea. Franco could prove another Chaing Kai-shek, and Spain another China in the next Russian move against the West, if something is not done, before it is too late, to insist upon the establishment of justice and liberty under a regime freely chosen by the different peoples of Spain.

Yours faithfully,

M. Zachary.

## THE EDITOR 56

## Franco's Spain

SIR.—It is strange that the Western Powers, who by their recent vote at Lake Success have now recognised the strategic importance of Spain, do not consider that, by allowing Russia always to appear as the international champion of the Spanish people against the oppressor Franco, they are in reality pushing Spain into Russia's arms, by adding disillusion to the already existing misery and frustration in that unhappy country.

This summer I was invited to visit friends in San Sebastian. Staying with a family and speaking the language well, I had a chance to see Spain from the inside, as lived in by the man in the street and, above all, by the woman in the market. Bread is still rationed, dark and unpalatable, and even the largest ration of 350 grammes a day for the poorest people is insufficient, because they are unable to afford anything else. But there is plenty of white bread on sale in baskets outside the market, for those who can afford it, at 12 pesetas a kilo. Even at the present rate of exchange, 2s. for about 2 lb. of bread seems excessive beside our 5½d. But when the average working man's wage of some 20 pesetas daily is compared with an estimated 15s. a day in this country, the proportion of 9s. for a loaf is inflation beyond the wildest nightmares of our economists. And the white-collar worker is not much better off. An office clerk is lucky if he earns 1,000 pesetas (£9) a month, of which about 25 per cent. goes to the Government in various deductions. Eggs are 30-35 pesetas a dozen—a day and a half's wages. Butchers' shops are open only two days a week, and in any case meat costs 40 pesetas a kilo—two days' pay. Ham at £1 a kilo is beyond the means of an ordinary family. Alubias, the Spanish haricot and formerly the main dish of the poor, are now too expensive at 13 pesetas a kilo, more than half-a-day's earnings. No wonder that as soon as you sit down outside a café, pitifully thin children creep up and wait patiently in the hope that you will give them some scraps, like sparrows in Hyde Park, except that they are not so well fed. And evidence of the ravages of tuberculosis is so plain that it does not need the continuous official collections, for funds to combat it, to draw attention to the gravity of the problem.

Food and how to pay for it was the main topic of all the families I visited, mostly middle-class. I did not hear any of the much-publicised criticisms of British condemnations of Franco, which are supposed to arouse Spanish pride and indignation. On the contrary, I could not tell them enough about England, the far-off unattainable goal of so many Basques and Spaniards, who always try to hear the B.B.C. Spanish programme, even though reception is very poor and appears to be interfered with.

Like so much in Spain, the bread question is just another racket. Flour for the rationed bread is used instead to make white bread and fancy cakes, and the district officials collect a proportion of the bakers' profits. Then there is the train racket; apart from the black market in long-distance train tickets, I experienced another version for local trains. The ticket office in Irun suddenly refuses to issue any tickets for the San Sebastian train, and since anyone travelling without a ticket must pay double fare, all the people waiting to go home from their work must either pay up or wait for a later train, with no guarantee that the same thing will not happen again. The proceeds are divided between the booking-office clerks and the ticket-collector. It is a well-known, everyday occurrence, but no one dares to make any official protest.

For a Spaniard to travel outside Spain is a matter of the greatest difficulty. The door of the prison called Spain opens only reluctantly, after much greasing of palms, and is ever ready to close firmly again. A Basque doctor who for family reasons decided to return and risk the validity of Franco promises of leniency had his passport withdrawn when he applied for permission to come back to England to tend his dying brother, a British subject. Eleven years after the end of the civil war, long and tedious formalities and much bribing are still needed before the aged and inoffensive parents of exiles can obtain a permit allowing them to cross into France for no more than forty-eight hours to meet sons they have not seen since the evacuation of Bilbao in 1937. There is an Iron Curtain across the Pyrenees, too.

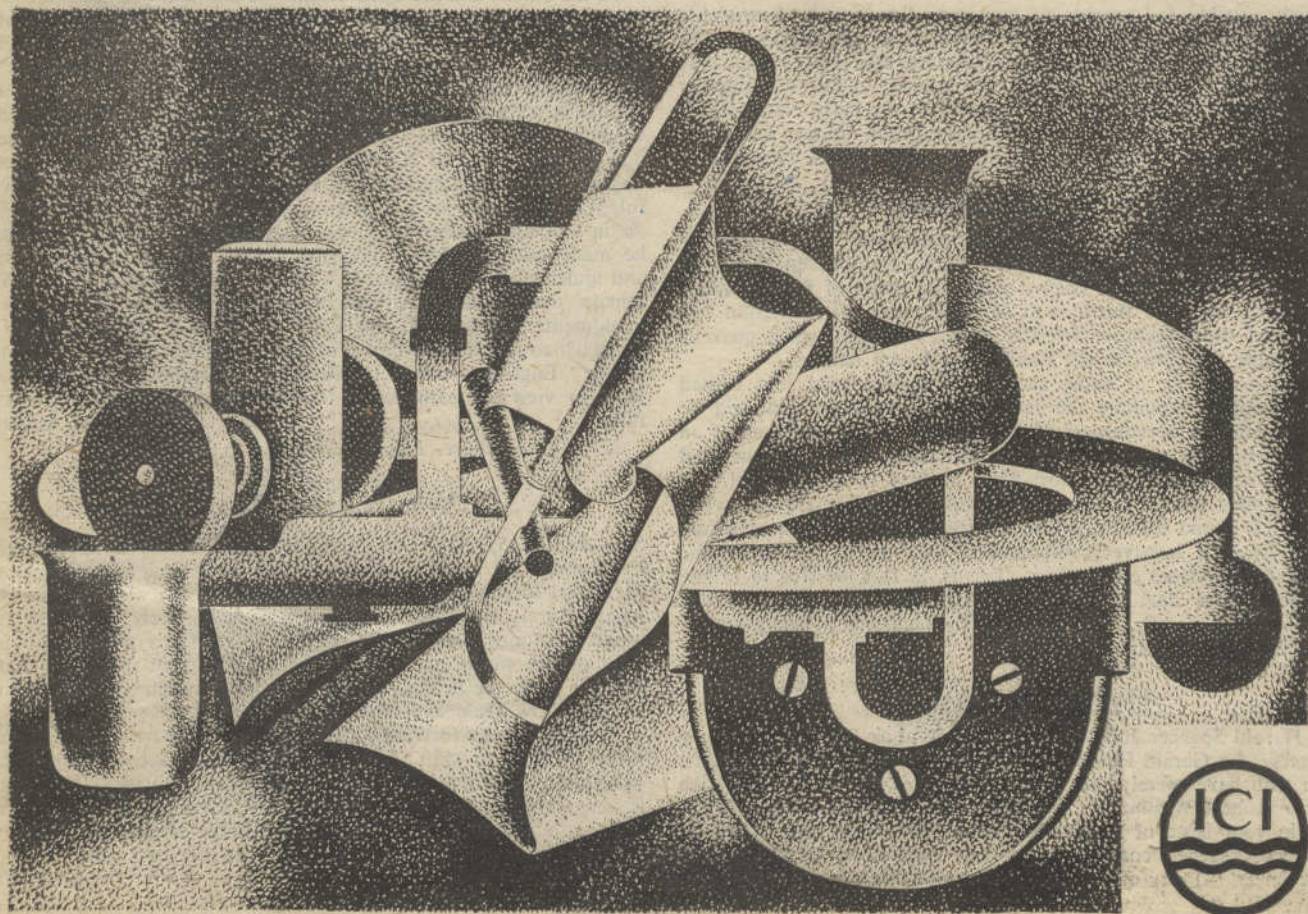
Compared with the war in Korea, the troubles of Spain are perhaps not news. They are certainly not new; it is sometimes forgotten that the peoples of Spain have been forced to endure them for fourteen years. The miracle is that they are still so courteous and hospitable. Franco propaganda is trying to exploit the gravity of the world situation to gain support for his régime, by presenting it as the bulwark of the West against Communism, strategically vital in any conflict between East and West. The reality is that his corrupt, undemocratic régime

# Achievements of an Industry

Genius for invention is inherent in the British people. In a previous series of announcements — "Ancestors of an Industry" — I.C.I. told the story of Britain's scientific pioneers from A.D. 1144. The present series is designed to describe some recent British chemical achievements, many of which have been the genesis of new products and processes which have

given fresh vigour to the nation's industry.

Such achievements have been sometimes the brilliant discoveries of inspired individuals, but are more often the work of teams of research chemists co-operating on a given task and working to a set plan. The announcements in this series are proof — if proof were needed — that the British spirit of initiative and enterprise is still alive.



constitutes the real danger of Communism, which only germinates and flourishes where there are hunger, want and injustice. That it has not taken hold already is due, not to Franco, but to the innate independence and faith of the people themselves. But the desperate welcome any liberator when the opportunity offers, without asking whence he comes or what is his aim, until perhaps too late, as other countries healthier than Spain have found out.—Yours faithfully,  
DOROTHY SHEPHERD.

SIR,—It is some time now since I advocated in your columns the wisdom of establishing good relations with Spain by a frank recognition of Franco as the *de facto* ruler of that country. We did not do so and, therefore, it is only natural that he should now be taking advantage of our present embarrassments, just as the Egyptians are trying to do with regard to the Suez Canal. No more deadly blow could be delivered either to our prestige or to our commerce than for us to lose command of the Mediterranean Sea and, having served afloat there for three years in the Royal Navy, it is possible for me to say unhesitatingly that, if either of the two entrances to it should ever pass entirely out of our control, we must descend to the position of a second-rate Power in world affairs. Surely then it is not too late even now to establish friendly relations with a Power whose ruler has certainly come to stay, however doubtful this might have appeared some years ago.—Yours truly,

J. H. SHACKLETON BAILEY.

*The Vicarage, St. Michaels-on-Wyre, Preston.*

### Travel to the Holy Land

SIR,—I have recently been revisiting London, and I was surprised to find how widespread is the misunderstanding of conditions in the country which used to be known as Palestine. There seemed to be a general impression that, since the country became divided between the States of Jordan and Israel, travel for tourists and pilgrims has become difficult, if not impossible. This, I am glad to say, is not the case. For two years the borders between the two States have been quiet, and there is little likelihood of violence breaking out again in the foreseeable future. Many Holy Year pilgrims did, in fact, continue their journey this year from Rome to Jerusalem, which can now be reached rapidly and in comfort from Cairo and Beirut. Six months ago the airport at Kalandia, seven miles to the north of Jerusalem, was reopened, and it is now able to take four-engined aircraft such as Curtis Commandos. Daily services link Jerusalem by air with Cairo and Beirut, and road communications with such neighbouring places of interest as Petra, Jerash, Baalbec and Damascus are excellent.

It is now possible for tourists to overcome the hitherto formidable barriers separating the Arab from the Jewish parts of Palestine. The formalities to be observed before passing from one region to another may take 48 hours to complete, but there is now nothing to stop the traveller from visiting in the same journey the majority of the Holy Places which are in Jordan and the minority which are in Israel.—Yours faithfully,  
MUSA HUSSEINI.

### No Appeasement

SIR,—The fiat has gone out: "There must be no appeasement." Surely this is a very dangerous generalisation. There are different kinds of appeasement. To buy off an enemy under the stress of fear is wrong and unlikely to succeed. But it is to be feared that the restriction will prevent any of those tentative friendly gestures without which quarrels cannot be made up, either in the family or between nations.

It was evidently fear of being accused of appeasement that caused the Government to repudiate the remarks of a speaker who said he could understand the nervousness of the Chinese on the approach of an army to their borders and power-plants. But surely this is just the kind of reasonable approach that is most likely to lead to a settlement.

There is a time for all things. Let us be prepared to appease when appeasement is sound diplomacy and Christian conduct. Let us refuse to appease when it involves compounding with wrong and when the impulse arises only from craven fear. Let us, in fact, be free to follow our conscience and deal with every situation on its merits.—Yours faithfully,  
J. H. MACDONALD STEVENSON.

*Gunn's, Liphook, Hants.*

### Flying Saucers

SIR,—Sir Harold Spencer Jones's review of our book *The Riddle of the Flying Saucers* by Gerald Heard may well satisfy your scientific readers, but those who have merely seen the objects which he denies may like to refer to Robert Waithman's excellent article on the subject which appeared in your issue of April 14th, 1950. Mr. Waithman, it should be mentioned, reached conclusions exactly opposed to those of your present reviewer. If any of your readers would like their credulity still

further stretched—on the most reliable of evidence—they are advised to read any of the books of that neglected genius, Charles Fort. An omnibus of his works was published in New York in 1941, and one of the constituent volumes, *Lo!*, appeared in an English edition in 1931, published by Messrs. Victor Gollancz. Saucer sceptics and believers cannot claim to be informed on the subject until they have studied Fort and his remarkable collection of anomalies.—Yours, etc.,

WAVENEY GIRVAN.

*Carroll and Nicholson Ltd., Publishers, Tudor House, Princeton Street, Bedford Row, W.C.1.*

### Church Unity

SIR,—I feel convinced that this correspondence is developing in a dangerous and futile direction. Mr. Murray-Walton's approach was disastrous: to use the words "intransigent" and "calling their bluff," at the outset, about people with whom you disagree, and members of your own Church at that, who possess, as Dr. Inge once admitted, more than their fair share of the scholarship of the Church of England, seems an odd approach to a discussion on unity. The Archbishop's wise direction that Convocation should not discuss the report for at least a year might be taken to heart by these eager controversialists.—Yours, etc.

*Beckington, Somerset.*

A. F. JUDD.

SIR,—In many districts, especially new areas where the Christian minority is drawn together and ancient squabbles seem less important than a united Christian witness, a great measure of unity is already achieved. Here we have inter-Communion services in each other's churches, we share each other's buildings, we plan visiting campaigns together, and Anglican and Free Church choirs go carol-singing together. We certainly have "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." All we haven't got is uniformity, and that would be very dull.—Yours respectfully,

N. S. POWER.

*Immanuel Vicarage, 28 Maypole Lane, Birmingham, 14.*

### The Christian View of Euthanasia

SIR,—Being by nature a rather lazy individual I was disinclined to write to you on your euthanasia comment of December 1st, even though much disturbed by it. However, in view of the congratulations your views received from one of your more progressive readers, may I express my own deep disagreement with those views?

To the atheist and the agnostic and the unthinking Christian euthanasia, in one form or another, has an obvious appeal. But the Church has always brought several arguments against it, and to the true Christian each one of them should appear utterly conclusive, leaving any further discussion a mere waste of time. The Christian believes he receives his life as a responsibility from God. He is only the steward of his life. God gave the life and God alone, in the fullness of His divine plans, may take it away. It is this alone that makes human life sacred. For anyone to directly interfere with the divine plan is obviously gravely sinful. Who are we to set our petty wisdom against the divine omniscience? As in so many similar questions, such as divorce, a very good case can be made out here for relaxing of views "under special circumstances and under adequate safeguards." But for the Christian there will always remain one invincible argument against so doing, the divine commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." It seems a sad reversal of values to attach so much importance, in another paragraph, to the maintenance of the "English Christian tradition" for keeping the Sabbath holy, and then to view sympathetically the legalising of murder.—Yours faithfully,  
JOSEPH M. MERRIMAN.

*313 Queens Drive, Liverpool, 4.*

### Where the Taxes Go

SIR,—In the *Spectator* of December 15th, I find a note condemning the number of tax-evasions, and later on I find a paragraph quoting Mr. Nigel Birch's disclosure of some of the money wasted by the Government. Surely the latter answers the former. Few of us like to see a waste of money, and quite rightly there are some people who feel that their money would be better employed if kept in their own control. I entirely subscribe to this view, and I wish I was in a position in which I could follow their example.

Your note puts forward an idea to prevent tax-evasion by employing more officials at still higher salaries. This of course aggravates the situation by spending still more money unproductively. The real solution is very simple. Cut down Government expenditure and reduce taxes.

In case my local Inland Revenue Officer should read this without approval, may I sign myself with, Sir, all the best wishes,

ANTI-SQUANDER.

## SPECTATOR COMPETITION No. 43

Report by R. Kennard Davis

*By the year 3950 English has become a dead language and details of its pronunciation have been lost; but the composition of rhymed English verse is practised in schools and colleges. A prize poem in English opens with the lines:*

*The feast was spread with luscious fruits,  
With wines and cakes and sweet biscuits.*

*A prize of £5 was offered for a continuation of this poem.*

I must begin by apologising for an ambiguity in the wording of the instructions, which left several competitors in doubt whether the limit for their work was ten lines or twelve. I did not disqualify anyone who contributed twelve original lines, though, as will be seen, the prizes happen to go to competitors who confined themselves to ten.

My main feeling, apart from amusement, as I read the gross or so of entries, was regret that so much wit and ingenuity must go unrewarded and even unrecorded. I hope that the authors enjoyed writing their verses as much as I enjoyed reading them! There were a great many brilliant false rhymes (sedately—philately; sabre—macabre; Porto Rico—Pimlico; seas—Boreas). The "feast" was variously identified as the banquet in *Macbeth*, the wedding feast disturbed by Young Lochinvar, Belshazzar's feast, and (by one daring competitor) Christmas Day in the Workhouse. My chief problem was to decide how much credit to award for feats of rhyming, and how much for plausible narrative, metrical correctness and similar qualities.

A considerable number of very promising sets of verse came from boys and girls of school age. Some of these stated their age; in other cases I inferred it from the superior legibility of their writing! Perhaps the Editor might consider setting aside a competition some day for the under eighteens.

I recommend that two pounds each be awarded to Rhoda Tuck Pook and Mrs. Mary Garden, and one pound to Colonel J. S. Baines. Excellent entries came from Captain C. P. Goodden, Rev. H. M. Hyde-Lees, Nan Wishart, Guy Kendall (who, I thought, rather overstepped the limit in rhyming Bordeaux with dukes!) and Mrs. V. R. Ormerod.

Couplets that particularly pleased me:—

Among the guests was Lady Agnes,  
Who much enjoyed the choice champagnes.  
Aunt Prue reposed upon a couch  
She brought from Ashby-de-la-Zouch.  
For vegetarians, spinach  
Was heralded by strains from Bach  
While others shared a dish of tripe  
Made from a famous chef's recipe.  
As up the stair so steep and spiral  
There climbs a general and admiral,  
And after them, in scarlet pants,  
Two handsome young li-eu-tenants.  
Such a feast had not been matched  
Since Cæsar dined on Pompey's yacht  
By apricots in cream enisled  
Even a saint may thus be misled.  
"Not bad, this show," he mildly notes;  
(He's English, and he likes litotes)  
Though someone called them indiscreet,  
And others too, too decollete,  
It was a very lovely fete.  
And water, too, from wholesome spas,  
Combine to make a merry Xmas!

## FIRST PRIZES

(RHODA TUCK POOK)

The feast was spread with luscious fruits,  
With wines and cakes and sweet biscuits,  
Champagne, which those who drink but tea  
View with a passionate nausea  
As threatening more ghastly fates  
Than the fell hemlock of Socrates.  
The gleaming silver speaks to some  
Of luxury in epitome,  
While bright as amethystine stones