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The Editor,
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Sir,

OLD DECEPTIONS ABOUT SPAIN

Mr. George Villiers states in his letter that "in 1936 it was difficult for us to realise that the capture of the Iberian Peninsula was the first step in the Communist plans to occupy Europe by force". Such assertion is sharp-pointed, but perhaps it is also inaccurate and somewhat presumptuous, because it only ascribes to the British the myopia of the Communist danger threatening the Iberian Peninsula in 1936.

General Franco and his collaborators were then suffering from the same limitations. The manifesto of July 1936 by which General Franco opened wide the doors of the temple of Janus, does not mention Communism as the cause of the uprising. Nor is the slightest reference to the Communist danger, made in the minute of the Rome conference of March 1936, between the Duce and Marshall Balbo and the Spanish General Barrera and the Monarchist and Traditionalist representatives to prepare and finance the rebellion. Similar lack of perception to that of the British, Mussolini, Franco and his collaborators, was registered by the Russian and Spanish Republican Governments, who did not even take the precaution of entering into diplomatic and commercial relations - such as were established with Moscow by London and Paris. If the Communist plan had existed, such relations would have facilitated its implementation, in the same way as the contact with the Portuguese, Italian, German and Japanese Government agencies helped the rebellion of Franco and his collaborators. On the other hand, something similar to what happened to the British, to Mussolini, Franco, and to the Russian and Spanish Republican rulers, happened as well to those of us who studied the electoral results of February 1936 and saw that

out of a total of about 500 ^{electors only 15 were Communist} expected ~~15~~ ⁵¹ ~~several~~ ^{several} ~~Communists~~ ^{Communists} Mr. Villiers understands that the fact that we all - including himself - were living in Limbo as to the Communist danger that Spain represented in 1936, was due "to the propaganda that hid the true design". It is not denied that propaganda of such nature exists, of which the letter herein referred to is in itself a sample, but in order to apply it to the case proposed by Mr. Villiers it would be necessary to have an imagination more vivid than that required to build "castles in Spain".

For Mr. Villiers, the Franco uprising "was a defence of Christianity

against anti-Christ, or decency against bestiality". I feel that this language is not the usual one for discussion in this Country, not even making allowances for wishful thinking; but in this case it is really difficult and embarrassing - even for Mr. Villiers, the Christian gentleman - to include under the banners of the antiChrist and bestiality, the several hundred Basque priests - a list of which appears in various publication works - who were assassinated, imprisoned or exiled by General Franco and his regime. It is now well known all over the world the picture taken at the prison of Carmona, in Seville, in which a hundred or so Basque priests appear surrounding their fellow prisoner, Professor Besteiro, Speaker of the Spanish Parliament, who represented Spain at the Coronation of King George VI.

Mr. Villiers shows no ^{is}hypocrisy when he accepts that "certain ingredients of autocratic Government are necessary to keep these enemies at bay". Unfortunately there are quite a number of people who think as he does, and Mosley, McCarthy, Mussadeq, Franco and Malencov are not the only specimens. Fortunately, there was in this Country a great majority of people who thought otherwise at a moment which was so decisive for the world. That is why Hitler was defeated and that is why these lines may now be written.

To suppose as Mr. Villiers does, that the Spaniards living under the Franco regime - as the people in Eastern Germany - "are prepared to accept them" (the dictatorship), is to be away from reality. On the other hand, I am sure that Cervantes from the other life, is very grateful on behalf of Don Quixote for the fact that there is some one who admits - as Mr. Villiers very kindly does - that "the Spaniards are realists"!

Your correspondent Mr. Halliday Sutherland admits that General Franco is a dictator and that under the regime "the Press is controlled and political meetings are forbidden". But with a blind eye to "the democratic way of life" and leaving aside "moral principles", he asserts that "Franco's past association with Hilter is honourable". He is in his right to do so, but he is not when giving uncorrect figures, which are still not correct even if he says that they have been taken from Communist sources. These sources are not precisely the Gospels and we do not know of the instance of reference which gives the figure of 30,000 as the total number of Italians who took part among the Franco armies. On the other hand, the official Italian figures which were the basis for the assessment of the debt agreed upon by General Franco, reveal the participation in Spain of 120,000 men from Italy. Mussolini confirmed it, and on the other hand, already in January 1937 - the war in Spain lasted two more years - the book "Foreign Intervention in Spain", Vol.1, pages 222/226, gives a description of 84,500 Italian troops in Spain.

Mr. Halliday Sutherland's description of the British and other members of the International Brigades in Spain, as "Russian mercenaries" is not a very happy one, as it would not be to say that Mr. Halliday Sutherland is a General Franco mercenary,

I have to confess that I did not know that there would be in the world

anyone conversant in foreign affairs, as Mr. Sutherland no doubt is, who is capable of believing and asserting these days that German and Italian aid was not accepted by Franco and was not begun until after October 26th, 1936. I feel that Mr. Halliday Sutherland has won by his own right a place in the Limbo in which we have all been confined by Mr. Villiers.

Mr. Richard de la Bore puts strategy before any other motive and says: "To compare a Christian Right Wing authoritarian regime to Communist dictatorship is to ignore reality and facts". Indeed, there are differences between both these dictatorships. For Stalin, Franco was the black beast. For Franco, Stalin was the red beast. It is therefore a question of variation of colour of the beast. The dictatorship claiming to be Christian, invokes God to give an honest appearance to his regime, while the other dispenses with God. The first one is hypocrite; the other, cynic. It has been the privilege of a right wing dictatorship, the use of gas chambers and crematoriums. The Franco regime, instead of building gas chambers, used the bull-rings for mass shootings as those of Badajoz and Teruel. Liberty for us, as Christians and Democrats, is indivisible and all human liberties are bound together. That is why we are against all dictatorships, whether they are black or red. That is why General Franco has just put into prison the 18 last executive members of "Solidaridad de Trabajadores Vascos" - the Basque Christian Trade Unions, whose crime has been to join the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, which is an anticommunist organization. What is Christian or *anti-*Communist is good enough for Franco in so far as it serves the continuity of his dictatorship.

To submit the moral principles to strategy is what made Washington facilitate the entry of Franco into UNESCO. But nowhere else less than here may the fact be ignored or forgotten that when Nelson had to fight the battle of Trafalgar - which made it possible to defeat Napoleon and establish the Pax Britannica -, his order of the day was a profound moral lesson: "England expects that every man will do his duty".

Yours truly,

Manuel de Irujo

Sir:

Su corresponsal M. George Villiers afirma que "in 1936 it was difficult for us to realise that the capture of the Iberian Peninsula was the first step in the Communist plans to occupy Europe by force". Esa afirmación es aguda, pero tal vez peque de inexacta y algo presuntuosa, por atribuir "solamente" a los ingleses la miopía del peligro comunista mirando a la Península Ibérica en 1936. El General Franco y sus coadyuvantes ~~padecían entonces de igual limitación.~~ padecían entonces de igual limitación. El manifiesto de Julio de 1936 por el que Franco abrió las puertas del templo de Jano, no menciona al comunismo como objetivo de la sublevación; y en el acta de la conferencia mantenida el 31 de Marzo de 1934 en Roma por el Duce y el Mariscal Balbo con el General Barreira, los monárquicos y tradicionalistas para preparar y financiar la rebelión, tampoco se hace la mas lijera alusión al peligro comunista. Inopia similar a la padecida por los británicos, Musolini, Franco y sus colaboradores, alcanzaba a los gobiernos de Moscov y Madrid, que ni siquiera tomaron la precaución de trabar relaciones diplomaticas y comerciales -como las tenían establecidas con Moscov, Londres y Paris-. Estas relaciones, de existir el plan comunista, hubieran facilitado su realización, como facilitaron la rebelión de Franco y sus amigos las embajadas portuguesa, italiana, alemana y nipona. Y algo parecido a lo ocurrido a los británicos, a Musolini, a Franco y a los gobernantes rusos y españoles, nos sucedió a quienes contemplamos los resultados electorales de Febrero de 1936, al observar que, de cerca de quinientos diputados, resultaron elegidos una quincena de comunistas. El Sr. Villiers entiende que, el que todos -hasta él mismo- vivieramos en el limbo ante el peligro comunista que España representaba en 1936, se debe a la "propaganda that hid the true design". No negamos que exista ese género de propaganda, de la cual la propia carta comentada nos ofrece un modelo, pero sería precisa para aplicarla al caso propuesto por el Sr. Villiers una imaginación mas fuerte que la necesaria para hacer "castillos en España".

Para el Sr. Villiers, la sublevación del General Franco "was a defence of Christianity against anti-Christ, or decency against bestiality". Se nos antoja que ese lenguaje no es el usual en este país para las discusiones, ni aun descontado lo que entrañe de wisfull thinking; pero, en este caso resulta verdaderamente difícil y enojoso -aun para el caballero cristiano Sr. Villiers- incluir bajo las banderas del anti-Cristo y la bestialidad a los varios cientos de sacerdotes vascos, cuya relación nominal figura en varias obras impresas, que fueron asesinados, puestos en prisión o exilados por el General Franco y su régimen. Se ha hecho célebre y ha corrido el mundo la fotografía de la prisión de Carmona, en la cual, un ciento de sacerdotes vascos rodean a su compañero de prisión el profesor Besteiro, presidente del Parlamento Constituyente de la Republica española, que representó a España en la coronación del Rey Jorge VI.

No peca ciertamente de hipocresía el Sr. Villiers al aceptar el que "certain ingredients of autocratic government are necessary to keep these enemies at bay". Así piensa mucha gente -demasiada-, como Mosley, McCarthy, Musadeck, Franco y Malencoff -y no son las únicas especies-. Por fortuna, fueron inmensa mayoría en este país los que pensaban en ~~ese~~ momento decisivo para el mundo de distinta manera. Por eso fué derrotado Hitler y pueden ser escritas estas líneas.

Suponer como lo hace el Sr. Villiers, que los españoles sometidos al régimen franquista -como los de Alemania Oriental- "are prepared to accept them" (la dictadura), es desconocer la realidad. En cambio, estamos seguros de que Cervantes desde la otra vida agradecerá en nombre de Don Quijote el que haya quien reconozca, como lo hace gentilmente el Sr. Villiers, que "the Spaniards are rea-

