

La conteste Herria

July 16, 1974

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Dear Sr de Irujo,

your letter with the review enclosed was most joyously received. I was touched by your sympathetic understanding of my book.

I was in the Basque country in 1971. I met some of the Burgos lawyers and a few of the prisoners' families. I came home and was very much helped by Jon Bilbao, and also by your paper and some other papers, including the one in Argentina. I became very much involved and deeply fond of the Basques about whom I was writing. In Madrid I did see the trial transcript, and in San Sebastián had a chance to hear large parts of the transcript radio tape.

It doesn't seem possible that I will not return to the Basque country. Perhaps it is cowardly of me, but I am waiting for the death of the old general. However, if your president can go in to Gernika, I wonder if ~~an unimportant writer couldn't go and stay~~ in Bilbao for a few months.

Someone told me the other day that Arranza Arruti had been released from prison and that there was a rumor that Jone Dorronsoro had also been released and had crossed the French border. Do you have word of these events? You know, I feel that I know these young people and I do indeed continue a very great interest in them. I met the aunt and uncle of Mario the other day, and they gave me a good deal of news of him. The director of the prison in Casceres seems to be a fairly decent person; they say Mario has been allowed to translate a book, which they say they will send me. I would so much like those brave young people to know that some of us here in the US are thinking about them. Of course I would like to send them copies of my book but I suppose that is not possible nor advisable.

Speaking of book copies, Doubleday has promised me to deliver a copy each to LE MONDE and LE CROIX. I read the reports of the Burgos trial in both those papers and was

impressed and pleased with them, their obvious desire to tell what really happened.

I was speaking to Jon Bilbao about that the other day and said perhaps I ought to send a note to each reporter. Frankly, I don't remember the reporter on LE CROIX. On LE MONDE there were several. I notice looking at my chips that the reporter, or editor, who wrote a sort of summary report in LE MONDE was named Marcel Niedergang.

Well, Jon thought I should send these notes to you, that you would know to whom they should be delivered. So I am enclosing 2 notes simply addressing them, as you see, to the Editor. If you think it is a good idea to forward them to specific person I would greatly appreciate it if you would do that, sr. de Urujo.

We did deliver a copy of the book (the Paris Doubleday ^{upright} did) at the same time one was delivered to you, to Mme Giselle Halimi. But we have never had an acknowledgement. (I of course referred to her book on the Burgos trial.) Do you think I should write her again or is she perhaps too busy and another note wd be an intrusion?

Many thanks for your attention. If there is someone in particular you would like to have a book for I will send you some additional copies.

Incidentally, I did indeed read the book BASQUES IN PEACE AND WAR and found the stories fascinating. My use of the names was more or less accidental. I purposely tried not to use the names attributed in the book, which I supposed were noms de guerre. What, of course, has made this book fascinating to write is that it seems to continue to write itself. In the case of those names, taken at random, your remarks about them make those persons into living men. I guess they are really yourselves, those brave men in that book.

very sincerely and (may I say) affectionately,

Margaret Stedt

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