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29th June 1950

My dear Don Manuel,

Please forgive my not answering sooner your kind and interesting letter of June 5th. The only reason for this delay was my hope that, by now, I should have been to see you in Paris. But unfortunately pressure of work here has made me postpone my journey. I was particularly sorry about this, as I was specially anxious to have a talk with my great friend Juan Axpe whom I had not seen for so very long.

Your letter suggests, with typically basque tact, that this would be a good moment for me to become a little more active with regard to the situation in Spain. I entirely agree with your suggestion. Indeed, it has been on my mind for some time that I have become a rather ineffective ally during recent months. This was, of course, partly due to the many personal matters awaiting my attention after the election.

My immediate plans do not envisage a return to active British politics before about a year. That is to say, if elections here take place before the end of 1951, I shall not participate. But I do, of course, intend to reenter politics in due course. But, for various personal reasons, a breathing space became necessary.

This is one more reason why I should now be happy to devote some efforts to the cause of Spanish and Basque democracy, about which (I am sure I don't need to tell you this) I feel as determined as ever. I should therefore very much like to have a detailed discussion with you as soon as it is possible for us to meet - either in Paris (where I hope to come fairly soon) or in London (if you should happen to come here first). We can then decide on some practical things I might do.

My wife asks me to send you her warmest personal greetings, to which, with your permission, I should like to add my own to you and to your brother.

I look forward to seeing you again very soon.

Yours very sincerely,

Francis Xavier Bane

Please mark your reply-envelope "Personal"