



The Voice of the Basques

3rd st. Year - Number 11

Basque Delegations

50, rue Singer — PARIS (XVI^e) — Tel.: JASmin 32-34

39, Victoria Street — LONDON S.W.1. — Tel.: ABBey 52-23

Madison Square Sta. — P. O. Box 42 — NEW YORK (10) — Tel.: CH 2-0378

February 1968

CONTENTS

News from the Basque Country

Basque President's Address.-

A priest Judged in San Sebastian (Basque Country).-

The "CATHOLIC HERALD" and Franco's Spain.-

NEWS FROM THE BASQUE COUNTRY

BASQUE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

TO THE BASQUE PEOPLE:

Several reasons impel me, as your President, to address this message to you on the threshold of the New Year of 1968, setting out some general lines of appreciation of the context in which the cause of our liberty now moves. It is along these lines that we must all plot the route over which we must move in order to attain our fundamental objective.

In the context of the world as a whole, the President of the Basque Government could not fail to take notice of the meeting, in the last quarter of 1962, of the Second Vatican Council. On this occasion the Catholic Church invited, not only its own prelates, but representatives of all the Christian confessions, excluding none whatsoever on the face of the earth. The Basque Government has never, as such, been able to declare its attitude towards a religious event of this nature. But the presence there of more than one hundred prelates of Basque origins or birth and the fact that, like my humble self, the vast majority of our people professes the Catholic religion, moved your President, in what seemed an opportune moment, to send greetings and best wishes for the success of the Council's intentions. The more so, of peace, accord and intelligence among all men, even those who are not believers, is the task and primary objective of the assembly.

In the international political sphere, on its part, changes have been registered. Different perspectives have been traced, situations which differ clearly from those existing when I last addressed myself to you, on the occasion of the twentyfifth anniversary of the destruction of Guernica. These changes have even affected the political situation in the Spanish State.

Of those changes which have taken place on the world political plane, it is not necessary to stress even for our own attention, the importance of recent events in Cuba. But it is not my intention to seek in distant lands any lessons nor any just inspiration for what is to be our own political task. For we have something of far greater importance very much nearer to us. It is the consummation military institutions.

The year 1962 has marked one of the final stages in the process of dissolution of the African task or mission which, since 1907, has absorbed and completely shaped the Spanish military system.

Structurally speaking, the crisis which now confronts this system is very much more important than that imposed on European armies by the nature of new nuclear weapons. We cannot fail to take into account that the situation of the Spanish Army in Africa allowed it, in 1936, to break out in rebellion against the Republic and achieve victory thereby. Henceforth, with the changes which are now in progress, the Spanish military will no longer be able to count on the facile transfer of Moslem contingents for their own purposes in the Peninsula. Which means that they are now placed in a wholly new situation in which the only way of ensuring that a military instrument can subsist in good spirit and morale will stem from an arrangement which the military must reach with popular forces.

The Basques well know what the Spanish Military adventure launched in Africa in 1936 had in store for us. Our people confronted it with notable resolution and displayed in the defence of liberty that complete solidarity which has always existed among the Basques. Nor did the advantage of surprise which allowed the military and their allies to mobilise forces of some strength in Navarra and to exploit local resources, change this picture as a whole.

At the present time, during a completely inverted phase in history, unlike that when the powerful totalitarian movement in Germany, Italy and elsewhere gave aid to such enterprises as that which we have described, our cause sees a favourable path in the new political orientations of the world. The year 1962 has seen continued development in the process of liberation of peoples. Among them it may be useful to cite, because of their proximity in space and time, the new State of Algeria and the inauguration of a democratic and representative regime in Morocco. In this process of evolution and in this atmosphere our own cause moves towards the last stages of liberation.

That our people feel the necessity to accelerate events is clearly demonstrated by the events of the year which is just ending. The working class maintained strikes, the significance of which was made plain to all; Basque priests have, in recent months, confronted processes of law as a consequence of protesting against ill-treatment and tortures inflicted upon prisoners by agents of the authorities, whom the responsible bosses of the Franquist system sought to cover and protect by all possible means; Basques in large numbers, from every region and from all sections of the social and economic structure, showed themselves at the Congress of the European Movement in Munich as adherents to the principles of freedom in which the integration of Europe finds inspiration. Moreover, while no proof has been adduced to show that they were either principals or accomplices in reprehensible

incidents, a great number of our youths have been imprisoned and subjected to trials by court martial, some of which have not up to the moment at which I address you, been fully reported. The young men have been the object of investigation and persecution on the part of the chief agents of governmental and judicial repression. Here, then, is additional proof of the inner conviction of the Franco regime that it is undergoing plain and profound crisis, with no means of justifying itself in the light of the general repulsion felt for it by the Basques.

All of us Basques find ourselves firmly united in the will to regain our liberty and we believe that integration in a democratic Europe is the normal course to ensure for ourselves a peaceful and prosperous future. Franco's Spain finds it necessary to face the highly important fact of European integration in process. Tardily, and long after the Government of Euzkadi (the Basque Country), in the light of the opinions to which it is wedded, had, fifteen years earlier, associated itself with the task of creating an united democratic and free Europe, Franco's Government appealed for preparations to be made for the incorporation of Spain in the European Economic Community, a fruit of the activity in which we have been constantly involved in the name of the Basques. That the admission of Franco's Spain in a Europe born to prevent any civil war between Europeans and to impede any reintroduction of totalitarianism in whatever form, with its array of institutions which affront Humanity however camouflaged under the guise of "national revolution", might be an impudent act of treason against Europe's own programme does not appear to have passed through the mind of the Franco Government when it made its demand. Perhaps the intention is to present a purely external appearance to show that the present Franco system is adapted to the political formulae of democracy. Perhaps some of the reforms in the economic sphere are intended to achieve the same object. We all know, nevertheless, that, at bottom, no purely evolutionary process in Franquism can produce any real step towards the defence of the freedom of man, towards his participation as such in the exercise of political power (universal, free suffrage, for example), or towards the recognition and liberation of natural communities -and, therefore, of the Basques.

To bring about the liquidation of this regime without any repression of economic levels and also without the recrudescence of a one-party system, the Basque Government is continuing its struggle alongside the democratic political movements and the free trade unions operating inside the Spanish State. This is the normal march of the liberation of the country along the paths of peace.

Basing itself on the will of the Basque Country and in its role as the legal political institution which represents it, your Government continues to beg of you your collaboration and your help, as you have given it in the past, with those means which are indispensable for its task. We must, of course, count for the purpose on your discipline.

Until the day, which I believe is not far off, in which your own, freely expressed will determine the paths along which Euzkadi will move and find its own destiny, in full harmony with the precepts of liberty which have been our inheritance since time immemorial and which were symbolised with its trees and its broken chains, with arms raised in the defence of justice on the coats of arms of what were until less than one century and a half ago, the Basque States.

25 December 1962

The President of the Government of Euzkadi

Jesus Ma. de Leizaola

A PRIEST JUDGED IN SAN SEBASTIAN (BASQUE COUNTRY)

San Sebastian (OPE).-- The judgement pronounced by the Criminal Court is as follows:

"In the City of San Sebastian, on the fifteenth of December one thousand nine hundred and sixty-two.

Hearing in oral and public judgment of case number thirty-six in the year one thousand nine hundred and sixty-two, followed by contempt and by urgent proceedings against the defendant, Don Nemesio Echaniz Arambarri, aged sixty-two years, son of Jose Luis and Maria Antonia, born in Azcoitia and resident in San Sebastian, of bachelor status, with instruction; by profession, priest; no criminal antecedents; of good conduct; having provisional liberty for this reason, the parties thereto being the Fiscal Ministry and the said defendant represented by the Procurator D. Luis Maria Saez de Heredia y Butron, the chairman being the Magistrate Don Manuel Macielor y Reparaz.

FIRSTLY: It having been proven, and so declared, that the defendant Don Nemesio Echaniz Arambarri, priest, domiciled in this City, addressed to His Excellency the Governor of the Province, Don Manuel Valencia Remon, the letter which is enclosed in the Folio of the Indictment, accompanied by the written note which appears in the folio following the same, both manuscripts being dated the twentieth day of September in the year one thousand nine hundred and sixty-one, the first of which states, in its text, in literal form as follows: "Your Excellency: It is possible that it may prove... (entire text follows)..." And the second manuscript being of the following literal tenor: "Your Excellency: Your predecessor..." Both manuscripts having been written, signed and endorsed by the person who is today the defendant. These writings, together with the letter which shall be transcribed later, appeared in transcription in issue number seven relating to January one thousand nine hundred and sixty-two of the periodical "Gudari" published in Caracas, Venezuela; the defendant pleads that he is not aware how such letters could have reached the editorial offices of the said publication; that he did no more than to give the scripts, in the form of a copy, to some intimate friend to read, all of this in confidence. That the aforementioned letter, also addressed to His Excellency the Civil Governor and dated the fifteenth day of November one thousand nine hundred and sixty-one, contained a text of the following literal tenor: "I have left..." No proof is available as to how these letters reached the editorial offices of the periodical in Caracas in which they were published. To the first of the said letters, and apparently to another addressed to him by the defendant, his Excellency the Civil Governor made reply with his two letters appearing in the Roll dated the eighteenth day of October and twenty-ninth day of December one thousand nine hundred and sixty-one, in the first of which, among other things, the Governor denied allegations of Police maltreatment.

SECONDLY: The Fiscal Ministry's definitive conclusions having resulted in the deeds under process being considered as constituting an offence of contempt as contained in Article 240, Paragraph the First, and punished as in Paragraph

the Second of the Penal Code, and the aforesaid accused, Don Nemesio Echaniz Arambarri, being considered responsible for the same, without the presence of circumstances mitigating criminal responsibility, demanded that there be imposed upon him the sentences of six months and one day of simple imprisonment and a fine of 2,500 pesetas, with legal incidentals and costs.

THIRDLY: The legal representative of the accused having produced in his equally definitive conclusions which accompany the letters contained in the roll eloquent evidence that His Excellency the Civil Governor did not consider that the concepts published by the defendant in his writings should constitute contempt; and considering also that in such writings, which obeyed strictly sacerdotal motives, there was nothing which might in law be qualified as calumny, mischief or threat; and, affirming that the defendant had no knowledge as to how the letters came to be published in the periodical in question; considered that the deeds did not constitute any offence, wherefore he demanded the acquittal of the defendant.

FIRSTLY: In consideration that the deeds which have been found proven constitute an offence of contempt against Authority, as provided for in Paragraph the First of Article 240 of the Penal Code and to be punished according to the following Paragraph; and given that the context of several phrases requires their being framed within the Fourth of Article 458 of the aforesaid Code; and there appearing also from their selfsame content the essential and deliberate intent of contempt and discredit for the person and Authority of His Excellency the Governor.

SECONDLY: In consideration that the accused, Don Nemesio Agapito Echaniz Arambarri, is criminally responsible for the said offence in concept of author thereof by reason of the direct, material and voluntary participation which he had in its performance.

THIRDLY: In consideration that the commission of the said offence attracts no mitigating circumstances of criminal responsibility.

FOURTHLY: In consideration that the cost of proceedings are understood to be imposed by law upon those criminally responsible for an offence.

In view of the Articles cited and those of 1, 3, 12, 14, 27, 29, 38, 47, 48, 49, 58, 61, 78, 109, 110 of the Penal Code and 141, 239 to 241, 741 and 742 of the law of criminal Judicial Proceedings.

OUR FINDINGS ARE: That we must sentence and do sentence the accused, Don Nemesio Agapito Echaniz Arambarri, as responsible author of an offence of contempt for Authority, without presence of circumstances to mitigate criminal responsibility, to the terms of six months and one day of simple imprisonment and a fine of two thousand five hundred pesetas, with accessory suspension from all public office, profession, trade and right of suffrage for the duration of the term of the sentence being subject to the event of non-payment of the fine to ancillary personal liability to one month's detention in lieu thereof, and to the payment of the costs of proceedings. We do declare the solvency of the prisoner, approving the warrant which to this end was issued by the Instructing Tribunal under date 23 February 1962.

Let this sentence be notified to the Ordinary of this place, as provided for by Paragraph the Fifth of Number Four of Article XVI of the Concordat with the Holy See of the twentyseventh day of August one thousand nine hundred and fifty-three.

Thus for this our sentence, certification of which shall be joined to the roll of the Court, we do pronounce it, command it and do sign.

....."

THE "CATHOLIC HERALD" AND FRANCO'S SPAIN

Towards the end of 1962 the "Catholic Herald" published a series of articles examining the Franco regime in Spain. As a consequence, a number of letters were addressed to the paper. This correspondence is now reproduced below.

The Labour Party addressed a letter to the "Catholic Herald" for purposes of correction, but the London weekly suppressed a part of it. The complete letter is also reproduced below. That part of it which was not printed for its readers is set out in italic.

Don Manuel de Irujo sent four letters to the "Catholic Herald" replying to points raised in the articles. Not one of these four was published. The editor of the paper replied to the first two, suggesting the form in which the rectifications might be set out and published. We are publishing here the four letters of correction together with the two received from the Editor. As the "Catholic Herald" refused to admit the fact of the trial of a priest in San Sebastian, we are printing in this bulletin a literal translation of the judgment passed in the case.

Don Inaki de Aspiazu, a Basque priest domiciled in Bayonne and attached to the Cathedral church there, also wrote to the "Catholic Herald". His letter has not been answered. Nor has it been published. It is given as the last of the letters, the text of which we reproduce here, to illustrate the conduct of the "Catholic Herald". For the rest, the reader may judge for himself.

The Editor,
The CATHOLIC HERALD,
67 Fleet Street,
London, E.C.4

27th November, 1962.

Sir,

The first of your series of articles by Hugh Kay under the heading, "Spain in Transition", will come as a surprise and a disappointment to those, including many Catholics inside and outside Spain who have been following events in that country. Certainly the first article smacks too much of an apologia - for which on doubt General Franco's Government will feel much indebted. Of course the "left" has been critical of events in Spain but not, as you suggest, for any reasons of racial antagonism but because we believe in the democratic form of society. Of course we look

differently on Germany and Japan - those countries turned their backs on dictatorship and followed the course of democracy.

Since there were reference in the article to the British Labour Party perhaps you would permit me to make three points, all concerning the position of workers in Spain:

(1) It is a complete travesty of the facts to refer to the "Communist" U.G.T. The U.G.T., or General Union of Workers is a powerfully anti-Communist body. They and their political wing, the Spanish Socialist Party (P.S.O.E.) have refused to co-operate with the activities of the Communists in Spain and have remained loyal members of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

(2) The Spanish Socialist Party is of course different from the British Labour Party, for it is operating within a totalitarian system in which political parties are illegal; but is, with the British Labour Party and other democratic socialist parties, affiliated to the Socialist International, of which Hugh Gaitskell is Vice-Chairman.

It is sheer nonsense to describe the Party and its courageous members as "essentially violent". To accept this fantasy is to fall completely for Franco's theory that the real democrats are not those who are struggling for freedom, but those who are oppressing legitimate opposition. Last week in Madrid a military tribunal passed sentences ranging from eleven years to three years on two groups of trade unionists of the C.N.T. for no greater crime than that they dared to meet together and to distribute leaflets calling for a free trade union movement. How far has Mr. Kay's liberalisation gone?

(3) In case your quotation from one of the Labour Members of Parliament who has visited Spain should give an impression that the British Labour Party is impressed by the liberalism of the Spanish Government, or its trade union movement, let me quote from a statement made by Mr. Len Williams, the General Secretary of the Party on 20th June this year. He condemned "the measures of repression and intimidation" taken against the workers who went on strike for higher wages and better working conditions, and expressed solidarity with those who were "demanding the liberalisation and democratisation of their country's social and political institutions".

I shall look forward with interest to the remaining articles in this series.

Yours etc.

David Ennals

Secretary, Spanish Democrats Defence Committee.

London End January, 1968

The Editor "CATHOLIC HERALD"
67, Fleet Street
London E.C. 4

Sir,

The "Catholic Herald" has recently published a series of articles on the Franco regime in Spain from a Catholic viewpoint. The overall picture is objective. The questions are well chosen.

But there is, perhaps, one consideration, as there is one question, which is missing; the consideration and the question stated by Father H. Raguer in "La Revue d'Histoire Ecclesiastique de Louvain", Vol. LVII, No. 2, of 1962. The Spanish Civil War, with all its crimes, its rancours, its heroisms, its idealisms, its half-a-million dead, took place between 1936 and 1939. In its course there was unleashed a religious persecution without precedent in modern history. Why? How to explain the fact?

In Spanish universities evolution is much preferred to revolution. It is a sensible preference. But St. Thomas considered it illicit for a tyrant to be destroyed when there is no other means of securing freedom from a tyranny which has become intolerable. And after him, every philosopher whose work has been of any consequence has upheld the same philosophy theory. It has been upheld, too, perhaps even more firmly than by the thinkers, by peoples. If Mr. Kay will re-examine human history, he will find examples. Man will always prefer evolution without violence to evolution with bloodshed. Recourse to violence occurs only where there is no remedy. Twenty-five years of personal, totalitarian dictatorship would appear to underline the idea that there is no other remedy.

Everyone in Spain is looking to the Common Market. A truth indeed. Some want the Common Market, as they want the American bases, to help consolidate the Franco regime. Others want the Common Market because it would offer entry for Spain into Europe, with all the advantages which such a move would promise, just as they are prepared to accept the American bases in order that Spain might join the Atlantic Treaty as a natural consequence of the solidarity of Western democracy.

Mr. Kay says that there is an element in Spain which hopes for the disappearance of the Franco regime and its replacement by a democratic regime. This, too, is true. Those who belong to this fraction include men who fought the war under Republican flags, with their sons and their grandsons; as do also a very considerable number of those who fought under General Franco, on the admission of Senor Ridruejo, one of the composers of the Hymn of the Falange Espanola.

Only one thing is lacking in Mr. Kay's assertion on this point: that this fraction consists of the vast majority of Spaniards. That is why Franco will not consult it in free elections.

Mr. Kay says that the youth of Spain is becoming impatient with the monolithic nature of the regime. Such impatience is, perhaps, a poor reflexion of the realities. On December 12th there was heard at San Sebastian Assizes a case against a priest, Father Echaniz, who was charged

with registering a protest because the police had inflicted the most barbarous tortures on a considerable number of such impatient young men.

Several hundred priests attended the hearing, thus demonstrating their solidarity with an accused, who had mefely preached the gospel. With these priests there went also several hundred more impatient young men.

The hearing was behind closed doors. No-one was allowed in the public seats. Eighteen of the impatient young men were taken by the notorious Colonel Eymar to Madrid, where they were subjected to savage beatings and brought before a military tribunal on December 21st. Lest Mr Kay have any doubts, allow me to give the surnames of the impatient young men in question: Angiozar, Etchaburu, Gorrochategui, Iriarte, Labaka, Lakuesta, Lassa, Narbaiza, Olaskoaga, Beobide, Treku, Kesada, Arrieta, Goikoetchea, Albizu, Azurza, Arzubialda and Betelu. All these young men are members of their respective parish youth groups. All of them practising Catholics and splendid young men. But, of course, impatient young men.

The articles you have published have referred to the great dignity of the strikes. Mr. Kay has every reason to write thus on those events. But the dignity if, perhaps, best assessed when it is appreciated that to go on strike is an offence against Public Order, as defined in Article 2 of the Public Order Law of 30th July 1959; Article 222 of the Penal Code of 23rd. December 1944 declares it an act of Sedition; and Article 2 of Decree of WQst September 1960 proclaims it an act of Military Rebellion.

A striker can be sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment for the mere fact of being a striker. The Government can fine him in a sum which he would have no hope of paying in a whole lifetime. It can deport him to a place where he can get no work and where he can die of hunger. Mr. Kay will have appreciated that these events do indeed call for serenity of observation. It is not surprising that he noted it during the recent strikes, when the Government did not disdain to use the powers it has placed in its hands for application at its imperious will.

If anyone told the Spaniards that he was going to El Pardo to ask for changes in the system of government, half Spain would follow him. That, again, is an acute observation by Mr. Kay. But I should like to offer a picture of how this half of Spain would continue on arrival at El Pardo. Mr. Kay will doubtless recall the delightful scenewhen two military detachments met on a Norman field in the Fourteenth Century. The leader of the English detachment invited his French opposite number to fire first. Not to be outdone in gallantry, the leader of the French detachment said, "After you, Messieurs les Anglais". I would dare to say to Mr. Kay that if he has ever nurtured the thought that this splendid Anglo-French performance might be repeated at El Pardo, he can discard it as fallacious.

There are some other things I should like to say to Mr. Kay through your columns. But I have already written at inordinate length and I may, perhaps, be allowed to return to your hospitality on a future occasion.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully
Manuel de Irujo

CATHOLIC HERALD
67, Fleet Street
London E.C. 4

4 January 1968

Dear Mr. de Irujo:

Thank you for your letter concerning our articles on Spain. I would be quite happy to publish your views but I would be very grateful if you could present them in a more informative and factual way. I think that the first page of your original letter is entirely irrelevant. I would be inclined to start with page 2 but here I would like you to be more precise in the facts that you present. In particular, I am referring to the court case concerning Fr. Echaniz. I would be interested to know what the 18 men you mention were charged with at the military tribunal. I would also like you to verify that the priest's trial was at the San Sebastian Assizes. According to our information, priests do not go before Assize courts unless on the most grave charges.

You make rather general statements -such as that the "vast majority of Spaniards" oppose General Franco- but give no supporting evidence for making them. If you could be more specific about the statements you make, I would be very glad to publish a letter from you. I am enclosing your letter for your reference if necessary.

Yours sincerely,

Desmond Fisher
(signed)
Editor

Mr. Manuel de Irujo
Basque Delegation
89 Victoria Street
London SW 1

London 7th January, 1968

The Editor "CATHOLIC HERALD"
67, Fleet Street
London EC 4

Sir,

You were good enough recently to publish a letter of mine in which I commented on the first articles about Spain by Mr. Kay. I should now like to make some observations on some of the later articles in the series.

The functionaries of General Franco's Government told Mr. Kay that Jose Maria Gil Robles and Dionisio Ridruejo are not Communists. They told him the truth. If only all else that the good functionaries of General Franco's Government told had been as true as this. And yet the truth told by them was only a half-truth. Let me tell Mr. Kay the other half of the truth. Gil Robles and Ridruejo, like the vast majority of all democrats, are more anti-Communist than they are anti-Franco.

Mr. Kay has deplored the tendency in General Franco's Government to call everyone who is a democrat, a Communist. The observation is correct, but not complete, either. To complete it one must bear in mind that the Government of General Franco and Communism have a common slogan: "Franquism or Communism". Each of them exploits the slogan from its own angle. But it remains a fact that both exploit it. Between them they establish the pendular system of political polarization by virtue of which the intermediate situations tend to be attracted to one of the extremes. Thus the most efficacious propaganda of Communism lies in the continuation of the Franco regime.

Next best in the propaganda aid to Communism is that provided by North American policy. The American bases in Spain have made more Communists than Stalin and Khrushchev together. None of us who lived in these islands during World War II has forgotten the introduction made by Churchill of the new allies of democracy the Soviet Russians under Stalin. My friends are the enemies of will not need to make any great effort to accept that this way of thinking is not exclusive to Mr. Churchill. If he has any doubts on this score, I would advise him to consider his doubts as the outcome of bad thinking.

In studying the danger of Communism in Spain, as is the case in the study of most other Spanish problems, foreigners are too much given to making for Madrid, as if Madrid reflected the rest of Spain. It doesn't. The people of Galicia and Catalonia, the Basques and the Castilians differ as much between themselves as the Scots, the Irish, the Swedes, the Dutch and the French. Like all others who approach these problems of Spain Mr. Kay should always remember that the possibility of Communist penetration in Spain is in inverse ratio to the personal quality of the countryman. Thus, for example, to think that Communism can draw on a vast following in Catalonia or the Basque Country is to dwell in the realm of imagination. The quality of the people is the best protection against Communism.

Franco has revoked the autonomous statutes of Catalonia and the Basque country. He has thrown into the wastepaper basket the results of the plebiscite in Galicia; he has forbidden the examination of the results of those held in Aragon, Valencia and Andalucia. And yet, every autonomous statute in Spain is an antidote to Communism, a much stronger one than any number of armoured divisions or nuclear warfare units.

One of the advantages which democracy has over the regime of General Franco is this: that democracy and autonomy, in substance, mean the same thing in Spain, where democrats would extend the Rights of Man to individuals and to peoples. Only one problem would arise: the limit to which political autonomy might stretch. The principle of autonomy itself would never be in doubt in such a democracy. The policy of the Franco regime, on the other hand, tends to cause renescent movements among the different peoples to become separatist and inclined towards direct, revolutionary action. This is, perhaps, the surest way of helping Communist designs.

To mention Jose Luis Aranguren as one the elements of philosophic opposition to the regime is accurate. To cite Ruiz Gimenez, a former Minister, in the same category is arguable, though not wholly outrageous. But I hope that Mr. Kay will forgive me if I say that the name Martin Artajo as an opponent of the regime is nonsensical. I myself had to reply, in the Jesuit periodical "America", to a propaganda article written by Martin Artajo in which the truth had been manifestly turned inside out. That article was written in the cause of the Franco regime.

There was a reply to my own article in the same review, not by Martin Artajo, but from the same chair, by the current Minister of Information, Senor Fraga Iribarne, who seems to be most admirable to Mr. Kay. It can be said for Martin Artajo that he always had certain respect for his own signature. On this particular instance the same thing cannot be said for Fraga Iribarne, as will be appreciated by reading his article.

Ten per cent of the population of Spain is the proportion allowed to the aggregate of Socialists, Anarchists, Communists and "Castrists". Mr. Kay will, perhaps, permit me to ask where the key for this calculation was found. One could say how many socialists there were in Spain in 1936, because they voted freely at the elections. But is there today any observer capable of establishing how many Socialists there are in Spain now?

Why, too, heap together Socialists, Anarchists, Communists and "Castrists"? The Socialists are Social-Democrats and of the West. The Anarchists are above all, anti-Communists. The Socialists are not theoretically dedicated to direct action; the Anarchists are. The former seek socialization of the economy; the latter, syndicalization. The only thing the Communists want is to be at the command of Russia.

In the specific order of things, what have these organisations in common, that the Catholic weekly in question should lump them together, as if they belonged to the same mass? By what right would anyone seek to measure by the same standard Messrs. Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin, merely because all three were in conflict with Hitler?

There are a number of other points in Mr. Kay's articles which call for comment. Perhaps you will allow me to deal with them on some other occasion.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

Manuel de Irujo

CATHOLIC HERALD
67, Fleet Street
London E.C. 4

8 January, 1968

Dear Mr. de Irujo,

I have already returned your first letter in which you comment on Hugh Kay's articles on Spain. Yesterday I received a second letter which

opens with the sentence thanking us for publishing your first one. I should just like to stress again that I would like you to re-write the first letter and I will hold the second one for the moment, although I feel that it is also far too long and verbose.

I would indeed be grateful if you could condense all your criticism into one short letter which would be more to the point than the correspondence I have received so far.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely

Desmond Fisher

Editor

* * * * *

12th January, 1963

The Editor "CATHOLIC HERALD"
67, Fleet Street
London E.C. 4

Sir,

I should like, if I may, to make some further comments on the series of articles about Franco's Spain which appeared recently in your periodical.

Mr. Kay has given an exact account of the explanation given by the Franco Government of the telegram despatched by Cardinal Montini in his bid to save the life of a terrorist charged with placing a bomb in a public square. A Catholic newspaper may, perhaps, wish to have the Cardinal's own explanation.

The Cardinal sought to save a human life and succeeded in doing so at the cost of Castiella, the Foreign Minister, saying of him that he had burnt his fingers. Some light may, perhaps, be thrown on the affair by the quip which gained currency in the lobbies of the Vatican Council about the telegram and its effects. Some Roman humorist declared that Cardinals could be divided into two classes: the "ultramontani" and the "ultramontini". The first category consists of the supporters of the Inquisition in any of its forms, and the second of the liberals, who, in trying to save human life, are quite capable of burning their fingers.

That the intellectuals and the workers are desirous of enjoying more liberty is a fact well observed by Mr. Kay. I must, however, say that I am made to marvel at some of the points in Mr. Kay's ample work. He has written at length about the Civil War and its consequences. But it does not seem to occur to him at any time to give a thought to this first principle: whether the War was a just war. If it was not a just war, everything connected with its precipitation and its prosecution was a sin. I know of not one single theologian of consequence who, on setting out to study a situation arising from a war, does not ask himself that first question. That the problem should be spoofed by anyone

directly or indirectly linked with the Franco Regime is perfectly natural. But this cannot, surely, be the attitude adopted by a British Catholic weekly.

To assert, as Mr. Kay does, that the judiciary in a totalitarian regime enjoys absolute independence in making judgments, seems to me to be as rash as the erection of a horizontal infrastructure within a vertical totalitarian system: the hope, as the paper has it, for tomorrow.

Every Spanish judge had instructions to treat as rebels in the Civil War precisely those who were not rebels. This instruction has been enforced to the letter, and it has cost the lives of thousands of men before firing squads. Much imagination is needed to regard as independent, judges who swallow a windmill without choking.

If one of them should dare to think for himself and resolve the problem of conscience for himself, as did Sr. Sanchez Movellan, President of the Victoria Court, he would find himself, as this truly independent judge did, removed from the bench. In this case it was merely a matter of not having sentenced a number of strikers as the Government would have wished him to have done.

Has the Press full freedom to report and discuss everything and anything? What Mr. Kay really means to say is that, despite this freedom of which he writes, the climate is such as to discourage publication of anything which might upset the Government. It seems all the same to me. Don Nemesio Echaniz, a priest from the province of Guipuzcoa, has just been sentenced to six months and one day's imprisonment in the first division because he dared to denounce the torture to which prisoners had been subjected. The trial was followed with great interest by the clergy, by intellectuals and by workers. Curiously enough, it is the Press which has betrayed no interest in the matter.

Not one line was given to the many and highly significant incidents connected with it.

Mr. Kay publishes figures given to him by General Franco's Minister of Justice: 1,350 political prisoners; 450 strikers detained; and three prominent persons subjected to sanctions for attending the Munich meeting. It is a great pity that he does not add the number of persons deported in connexion with the strikes. For if they are in fact so very few, how could publication of the data possibly injure General Franco's Government. It is not, of course, the responsibility of Mr. Kay that the Minister might have told him this or that. But it might perhaps, be prudent, once again, to verify the figures by other than official processes before quoting them. I shall refer here to only one of the groups mentioned; the three men punished for having gone to Munich. Following publication of the articles in the "Catholic Herald", Senores Casals, Prieto, Pons, Cervero and Navarro have been amnestied from their deportation to the Canary Islands. Deportees still in the Canaries are Senores Satrustegui, Alvarez Miranda, Miralles and Barros de Lis. In Switzerland, France, Belgium, Luxemburg and Mexico are to be found Senores Gil Robles, Ridruejo, Prados Arrarte, Infante, Cembrero, Baeza, Alonso, Ventura, Suarez, Carreno,

Ruiz, Navarro, Fernandez Castro and Martin Zaro. Mr. Kay will see how eddectively the Minister pulled his leg and caussed the readers of the Catholic Herald to be ill-informed.

General Franco has declared his intention to install Don Juan Carlos de Borbon on the Throne, Mr. Kay says. Unless Franco himself told Mr. Kay, we know nothing of this declared intention; no trace of such statement is to be found in the records. If, in fact, Franco has said anything at all, it was wholly to the contrary.

That the position of Protestants in Spain will change, is self-evident. It will change when the regime changes, because democracy will give honest application to the Rights of Man.

Mr. Kay is not very fair with the Basque clergy. He must allow me to say so. He is, moreover, badly informed. It is not true that the statement of the 889 Basque priests was inspired by the Vitoria seminary. More than eighty per cent of the signatures belong to the dioceses of Bilbao and San Sebastian; and only twenty per cent to the dioceses of Vitoria and Pamplona. Someone must have told Mr. Kay something about the Vitoria Seminary before the division was made of dioceses. At the present time every diocese has its own seminary, and often two.

It is not true that the priests' signatures were illegible. The Bishops were so well able to read them that they summoned the signatories to appear before their Court to ask yhem their reasons for signing the document. Let Mr. Kay note the 74 transfers imposed by the Bishop of Bilbao on 74 of his priests. There is no reason to doubt that the Bishop of Bilbao had any difficulty in reading the signatures. Nor is there any element of doubt about the transfers. They have been notified in the Official Bulletin of the Bishopric. I don't suppose that anyone will begin to think that the priests who were punished suffered on account of having repudiated their signatures.

It is obvious that the Basque priests live in contact with the people. That the corporeal feeling of the Basque country acts within them, is not in doubt. That these priests maintain contact with the entire population of the Basque country, without distinction of creed or religious favour, honours them; their conduct obeys the instructions of Pope John XXIII; and it is a practise to which Mons. Heenan, Archbishop of Liverpool, referred in his famous Pastoral Letter when he asked Catholics to unite with those not of the faith to work for the well-being of the community as a whole, in social services, in trade unions and in political parties, wherever Catholics might set an example of communal policy.

But why does Mr. Kay call them separatists? What would French-speaking Canadians think of the "Catholic Herald" if your newspaper should attack its clergy because they live in close communion with their people, as much French-speaking as the clergy? And what does he think that our clergy and all Basques will think of the "Catholic Herald" in the columns of which it was asserted that Guernica had been burned down by the Basques and which has not yet had time to rectify that piede of mendacious propaganda by General Franco?

I am, Sir, Yours faithfully
Manuel de Irujo

The Editor "CATHOLIC HERALD"
67, Fleet Street
London E.C. 4

Sir,

I have written to you a number of letters setting out in extension my comments on Mr. Hugh Kay's series of articles on Franco's Spain, and I am now taking up your invitation to submit my points in condensed form.

The evolution of any totalitarian autocracy such as that in Spain cannot be exchanged for democracy unless the autocracy ceases to exist.

The substitution of General Franco by the Count of Barcelona in such a way that, to quote General Franco himself, "the Movement shall follow the Movement", resolves nothing.

With the notable exception of the Communists, everyone in Spain wants the country to join the Common Market. The democrats want the nation to enter this European movement; the Franquists hope that the regime itself should join, so that it could continue to impose itself on the country with the full support of Europe.

If the Spanish people enjoyed any freedom, the vast majority would vote for a democracy.

To deny to Spain her ability to follow the paths of democracy which are being opened to African negroes only recently emerged from the jungle, is an extraordinary contradiction.

No Tribunals of Justice can be independent under any autocratic regime, and this is, of course, the case in Spain. The fact that thousands of court sentences on grounds of military rebellion have been visited on those who did not rebel against the Government of the Republic is undeniable in good faith. Spanish judges and magistrates are, for the most part, both competent and honest. Such litigation as is not influenced by the regime, produces fair judgment. In cases where the regime is interested, this interest dictates the finding and sentence.

Freedom of the Press exists only in such matters as suit the Government. On 12 December last a case was heard in San Sebastian against the Basque priest, Don Nemesio Echaniz, because he had addressed to the Governor a protest against tortures and other excesses against prisoners. Hundreds of priests sought to attend the hearing of the case; but it was heard behind closed doors, with a considerable cordon of police ensuring isolation and secrecy. Spain is the only country in the world in which the Police are mobilised against priests. Senor Echaniz was sentenced to imprisonment for six months and one day and a fine of 2,500 pesetas. Everybody in San Sebastian knew and took notice of it - with the exception of the Press. Such is the freedom of the Press in Spain.

Colonel Eymar, chief of the Brigade which specialises in the application of tortures, and instructing judge with jurisdiction throughout Spain, took eighteen young Basques to Madrid as prisoners. The Court Martial against them opened on 21 December and was adjourned on the same day for further hearing on 11 January, when Mr. Ernest Davies, representing the Parliamentary Labour Party, and other foreign observers arrived in Madrid. No mention of this was made in the Press. Such is the freedom of the Press in Spain as echoed in the "Catholic Herald".

Striking one of the Rights of Man, is a crime against "Public Order" in Spain; it is "Sedition" or "Rebellion", as the Government may decide, a crime punished with as many years' imprisonment as the Government itself may decide: anything between thirty days and thirty years. I have cited the relevant statutes in my earlier letter. I cannot be more concise.

The Spanish democrats who oppose General Franco and his regime - Christian democrats, Socialists, Republicans, Liberals and Autonomists - are as much anti-Communist as anti-Franquist. This character is clearly shown by the Government of the Republic and the autonomous Government of Catalonia and Muskadi (the Basque Country), the Union of Democratic Forces, the Syndical Alliance, and the Spanish Federal Council of the European Movement, which organised the well-known Munich congress. The efficacy of these Institutions and organisms may be open to question, but their character is not to be held in doubt.

The renascent Movements which are generally referred to in Spain as "Regionalist", and which Catalans, Galicians, and Basques term "Nationalist", constitute a democratic, anti-Franquist and anti-Communist front, a fact which appears not to have been appreciated by the "Catholic Herald".

Sr. Fraga Iribarne has surprised people who don't know him. Today he surprises only those who want to be surprised. He thought that he had managed to persuade the International Commission of Jurists not to publish its findings on Spain. He failed in this effort. That is all.

Mr. Kay has chosen to enter the lists in support of the Government of General Franco to say of the report of the International Commission of Jurists, that it is "inopportune". We are more interested in it being "true" than "opportune". We prefer to be regarded as importunate believers in the truth than opportunist liars. The report in question tells the truth. It is possible that Mr. Kay did not consider it "opportune" to call Trujillo an indecent tyrant when he was at the apogee of his power and when certain prelates visited his country and enjoyed his favour for pious ends. But surely and in truth, he should have been termed an indecent tyrant in those days no less than today.

It is not true that the manifesto of the 839 Basque priests carried illegible signatures; that the signatories made amends; and that the whole thing was elaborated in the seminary of Vitoria. The priests in question came from the four Basque dioceses, most of them from those of Bilbao and San Sebastian. In their statement the Basque priests honour their status

and that of the Basque people equally. In all humility, but with complete integrity, all the priests from the diocese of Vitoria confirmed this to their bishop when called by the diocesan tribunal to give a reason for their signatures.

Mr. Kay ends by saying that a single ten-minute interview on television with Sr. Castiella, the Spanish Foreign Minister, would transform the image of Spain which is held in Britain. The experiment could be made more complete by reading out some paragraphs of his work, "Reivindicaciones de Espana", dated on the day of the armistice imposed by Hitler on France, in which Sr. Castiella says of democracy in general, of Britain, France and the United States in particular, that they were lying "at the feet of the onrushing horses".

I am, Sir,
Yours faithfully
Manuel de Irujo

To the Editor
CATHOLIC HERALD
67 Fleet Street
London EC 4

Sir,

I have read in your periodical a series of articles on Spain written by a Mr. Kay.

I am a priest and am not, therefore, concerned with author's political assessments. But I do feel in duty bound to correct some of the errors which he has made in his references to the Basque clergy who, in the course of May 1960, addressed a statement to their respective Bishops:

1. The statement was not drawn up at the Seminary in Vitoria. This Seminary is not a separatist centre. The Bishop of Vitoria would not permit this or any other political bias. Not one of the Basque priest who signed the statement belong to the Seminary. Certainly there was a book written by three priests which was published with the permission of the Bishop and which was seized by the Police of the Franco regime. It was on the subject of economics, and it referred to the stabilisation plan. This fact of itself is evidence of the lack of freedom of expression in Spain even in such matters as publications authorised by the ecclesiastical hierarchy.
2. The list of priests who signed the statement was not illegible. If proof of this be required, one need only recall that the statement and the signatures were delivered to the Bishops in person by a number of secular clergy

and religious. Father Zubiaga, SJ. made the delivery to the Bishop of San Sebastian; Father Querejeta, presbyter, to the Bishop of Bilbao.

8. The priests who signed the statement do not subscribe to any separatist declaration in the text. They do denounce the absence of civil liberties in Spain; the intervention of the Executive Power in matters of justice, the unjust nature of penal legislation, and the use of torture as an instrument of Police investigation. They add that the Basque people have become victims of genocide, a fact which has been given historical demonstration. They affirm cultural rights in the face of the State. Not one of these propositions is of a separatist character.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

Ignacio de Aspiazu
Priest of the Diocese of Vitoria

* * * * *

* * *

*