

Don Manuel: Este es el enunciado del libro que prepara la escritora gallega Mrs. CURTISS, (^{"Patricia MASON"}) que vendrá a verle a las 5 1/2. ("Los movimientos autonomistas en Europa").

Desea estar también con el Senda Heri, y después con los del Gobierno Republicano para conocer de nuestro lado el problema nacional vasco, y de los otros lo que de este piensa ^{de haber} en un régimen de libertad en España.

Como veis, Mrs. C. se ha especializado en las transformaciones de las mentalidades de individuos y colectividades hacia actitudes y actos criminales por frustración, o deses- peración, al no ser comprendidos ^{por} los Estados modernos y centralistas ("The making of a criminal"), y veo que hay bastante de esto en la evolución de nuestra juventud vasca hacia el extremismo.

Hasta la tarde. Pamen Agesta

There is, particularly in the Western World today, a fundamental political malaise. This ill exhibits itself in a variety of symptoms, symptoms in fact closely related although the connection is not always seen. I believe its roots to be in faulty government philosophy, based on a fundamental misunderstanding of how social groups form and how they are led: of how a healthy society works.

By no means the only symptom, but perhaps one of the most interesting, is the eruption of renascent little nationalisms in Europe and elsewhere. In the United States not only are black and white drawing apart, the blacks increasingly aware of their own culture and traditions; other ethnic groups previously thought to have been absorbed by a general American culture are now separating from the main stream. North of the border the F.L.Q. hardly needs to be cited. This sort of situation would not be surprising among the revolutionary minorities of Latin America, but in Western countries with a long tradition of democratic government, what is wrong?

In Europe small nations or cultures with long histories such as the Welsh are reasserting themselves politically. Movements more surprising than Plaid Cymru are however under way. The cultural clash which threw up the Albigensian Heresy and the Cathars is not apparently past history. Within the last two years a political movement of growing strength, 'Occitanie', has appeared on the French governmental scene. The Breton nationalist position is regarded by other Celtic groups as too hopeless to be of interest; yet it exists. Belgium is torn between Flemish and Walloon; Reggio Calabria is in a state of uproar; the Basques and even the industrious Catalans swell the ranks of Franco's political prisoners; and there are others.

This centrifugal pattern is also discernible in unofficial strikes, in sub-cultural groups such as delinquency areas (the subject of my last book) which have opted out of their parent culture. To a lesser extent it exists in the student movement. Where is the connection? To quote from the conclusions of my last book¹) (The Making Of A Criminal):- 'Nearly all modern governments of whatever political complexion have become so enamoured of centralised bureaucracy that they have forgotten the cellular origins of social organisation.' (This still applies when they decide to decentralise, witness the Maude Report.) 'Healthy societies have usually been based on vigorous growth at the root from which sprang naturally the relevant social super-structure. The phrase 'the Body Politic' conveyed an almost biological conception that the head, brain, or central government, having digested messages from the various limbs, and after reacting to external stimuli, would remit instructions down again to the periphery. The periphery was as essential a part of the same body as the head, not an inchoate mass of the administered.

1) p. 133

'When governments talk of decentralisation nowadays it is fashionable to employ the word devolution, thereby showing a basic failure to recognise that central administration should grow upwards from the base. Certain large industrial concerns, especially in the United States, less bedevilled by doctrinaire philosophy, run themselves on this more biological concept. For example the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, which is comparable in size and income to certain countries, has a small head office solely occupied with forward policy planning. In the field of labour relations in industry the firms on good terms with their workers have often recognised the spontaneous, informal group in the workshop as the best cornerstone for the formal structure of management. Such firms will accept the natural leader selected by the workers, whether he is a shop steward or not, as the channel for communication in both directions. Firms with bad relations are invariably hostile towards such natural leaders and refuse to deal with them. The latter situation is also sometimes to be found in the relationship between trade union executives and the shop steward movement.'

The same pattern is visible in the attitude of central governments to the new nationalisms. Whitehall deeply resents the indigenous leaders of Wales, cannot understand why the Welsh fail to appreciate their nursing by a Welfare State - a body which floods their valleys and recognises the Welsh language under the pressure of high explosive. The people of Southampton are also aware of their alienation but they have no indigenous culture or language to brandish in the face of Whitehall. One of the undercurrents in these little nationalisms is protest at government method and outlook. This is not to say that the same attitude does not exist elsewhere; it is just less easy to formulate. Many people feel they belong to nothing, but as a man in Southampton remarked:- 'You are lucky to have Plaid Cymru to vote for, what can we vote for in Southampton?'

I suspect that social ethos finds some of its nourishment in the small group at the base, the natural cell which contemporary government is not aware of and is hostile to when they clash. Protesters are either communists or anarchists. This is not to say the Communist Party does not exploit such situations, of course they do; but they cannot create the situation. The point is:-is faith in anything possible unaccompanied by a sense of belonging? Man cannot belong to anything so impersonal as the Welfare State. In Wales it is Plaid Cymru which attracts the intelligent and idealistic young, not the Chapel of yesterday with its insistence on dogma which bears no relevance to their problems. The Plaid Cymru office in Aberystwyth was visited in the summer by a group of skinheads from Wolverhampton. The officials were alarmed until the skinheads explained they had come to see them because they thought the Welsh were so lucky to have something to fight for.

The thesis of this book then would be to show the relationship between the divorce of government and governed to the symptoms mentioned above. The bulk of the book however would be devoted to a group of studies of individual autonomous movements:- Wales, the Basques, Brittany, Occitanie, and Flanders are suggested. I am well placed to undertake this group as I have personal and political links with them.

Anthony Sampson, in the conclusions of his book 'The New Europeans', says that he considers this to be one of the key political issues of our time. Inasmuch as lack of contact always breeds violence unless this problem is understood, we may have trouble even in the U.K. Sampson's thesis is that our type of Welfare State, with its impersonal bureaucracy, should disappear, merged into a federal Europe, but a federal Europe based firmly on the true remaining groups at the base.