CATHOLICS UNDER FRANCO

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The Spanish political situation which emerged in 1939, with Franco's victory over the Communist regime, marked the dénouement of that political, social and religious tragedy which the Second Republic, begun in 1931, had represented for the country. It is therefore imperative to refer, however briefly, to the role played by Catholics during the years immediately prior to the civil war, if we are to gain a proper understanding of their activity in the public life of the country during the past twenty years.

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THE SECOND REPUBLIC

If we can say that Spain has always been a Catholic country, this is not

because its government since the 16th century, when national independence was achieved, has declared it so, nor because its official life abounds in public manifestations of Catholicism. However important these factors may be, they are none the less secondary. The simple reason for Spain's Catholicism is that the immense majority of the population (99.5 per cent) is Catholic and that Catholicism is deeply rooted in the social structure of the country. To this is due the impossibility of the survival in Spain of any form of government that fails to take into account the Catholic make-up of the nation. This was understood in 1931 by the republican leaders themselves. The first President of the Republic, Niceto Alcalá Zamora, went so far as to hope for "a republic with the participation of the bishops, which would number the great Spanish saints among its national glories."

From the start, the hierarchy of the Church in Spain showed itself ready to recognize and accept the legality of the Republic established on April 14, 1931. And many active Catholics (except for such groups as the Carlists, or the monarchists of the Acción Española) were prepared to accept the new regime without reserve. A large part of these Catholics were gathered together in the C.E.D.A. (Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Rightists), whose leader was Gil Robles. For the most part they were men who had been formed within Catholic associations such as Acción Católica and the A.C.N.P. (National Association of Catholic Propagandists). Their attitude, besides being a logical consequence of the circumstances, also had its roots in the movement, developed within the A.C.N.P. during the latter period of the monarchy, in defense of the indifferent or accidental nature of specific forms of government.

Very soon, however, the political evolution of the Republic brought about a complete change in this situation. The new government, disturbed by anarchist and Communist outrages, proved itself incapable of maintaining public order and of creating a democratic atmosphere of freedom and concord. Referring to the violence of the Republic, Salvador de Madariaga writes: "Thus was that peace destroyed without which Spain can never hope to build for herself as strong a state as so strong a nation must possess."

The government's inability to guarantee civil liberties precipitated a series of legislative measures as drastic as they were ineffective. The "Law for the Defense of the Republic," passed six month after its inauguration, and the "Law for Public Order" made of the government the first violator of constitutional rights, and merited their rejection by the more responsible sectors of public opinion. Speaking of the "dictatorial powers" granted by the first of these two laws, The London *Times* (December 8, 1931) commented that it "would never have been tolerated under the monarchy," and that "its existence shows that the Cortes have failed in the task of finding a common ground on which all Spaniards might meet."

THE ROAD TO CIVIL WAR

The ineffectiveness of these measures and the increase in social unrest (there were 15,000 strikes in the five years of the Republic) paved the way for a series of real persecutions which reached their climax on the eve of the

civil war in the assassination by government police agents of the opposition leader, José Calvo Sotelo. Such measures aroused the indignation even of the republican Miguel de Unamuno. In a speech delivered on November 28, 1932, at the Madrid Ateneo, he protested: "Even the Inquisition was limited by certain legal guarantees. But now we have something worse: a police force which is grounded only on a general sense of panic and on the invention of nonexistent dangers to cover up this overstepping of the law."

The press was particularly hard hit, since the "Law for the Defense of the Republic" authorized the government to restrict any source of information which, in its judgment, "might disturb public order and peace." *El Debate, ABC, Informaciones, El Correo Catalán*, etc., had their issues confiscated on innumerable occasons; and a complete list of censured, fined or suppressed publications would fill several pages.

This unconstitutional limitation of civil liberties was coupled with a relentless religious persecution which had recourse to violence long before the outbreak of the civil war. The very arrival of the Republic was "hailed" in Madrid and other cities with the burning of churches and liturgical objects. One of the first legislative measures of the Socialist government was the secularization of education and the suppression of private schools. As an immediate result, 350,000 schoolchildren were left without any possibility of receiving instruction, since they had previously been attending private schools—all of which were Catholic.

A balance sheet of this abnormal situation can be drawn from figures given by Gil Robles during a speech delivered to the Parliament on June 16, 1936, in which he accused the government of condoning the acts of violence which the Socialists, Anarchists and Communists were committing throughout Spain: 160 churches destroyed, 251 burned or profaned; 269 persons assassinated and 1,287 wounded; and 69 locales of center and rightist political organizations pillaged and destroyed.

For an adequate understanding of this policy of violence, one must consider the evolution of the Socialist party around which the whole political scene of the Spanish Republic revolved. One of its main leaders, Largo Caballero, wrote in *El Socialista* on February 1, 1936: "I am a Marxist Socialist. Communism is the natural evolution of socialism, its last and definitive stage."

The crucial moment of this evolution was marked by the revolution of October, 1934. The preceding elections (November 11, 1933) had witnessed a victory for the parties of the right. The right won 207 seats in the Parliament, the center 167, the left 99. The political scene indeed seemed radically changed. The C.E.D.A. had become the strongest minority, the Socialists having lost one half of their parliamentary seats. Public opinion had voted a clear No to communism.

Salvador de Madariaga comments that "it was obvious from previous statements made by Señor Gil Robles in his most emphatic style that he meant to ask for the lion's share of any new government, as indeed, under a dispassionate parliamentary system, he had every right to do." But, after the governmental crisis of October 1, 1934, the united efforts of the President of the Republic and of Alejandro Lerroux (the Masonic

leader of the Radical party) "succeeded in buying him off with three portfolios (Agriculture, Justice and Labor), important in themselves yet by no means dangerous from the point of view of those who, from the left, professed to believe that the C.E.D.A. leader was preparing an attack on the Republican regime."

Thus Gil Robles consented to the formation of a coalition Cabinet controlled by those radicals who had first allied themselves to the Social-Communists in 1931. The weakness of his stand was to favor the left greatly. In fact, as Madariaga points out, no sooner was this news made public than the left launched its plan for revolt, and the Largo Caballero Socialists opted for the way of violence which was to culminate in the October, 1934 revolution, and which in Asturias took on all the appearance of a real civil war.

By this revolution, which was in violation of democratic principles and of the recently expressed popular vote, the Socialist party destroyed the legal basis of the Republic. This is the opinion of very many Spaniards, not only of those who later supported Franco, but also of many Republicans. Salvador de Madariaga, for example, goes so far as to assert that "with the rebellion of 1934, the left lost every shred of moral authority to condemn the rebellion of 1936."

During the troubled months that followed up to the national uprising, Largo Caballero did not in any way modify his political course, but rather progressively expedited the massive penetration of communism, of a brutally subversive communism, moreover, and one which made a proud show of declaring itself the irreconcilable enemy of democratic law and order, of the State and of the Church.

After the victory of the Popular Front in the elections of February, 1936 (a victory won by none too scrupulous means), the Largo Caballero faction violently opposed the other members of the party who leaned toward a more moderate policy, and, in July, 1936, it prevented the formation of a conciliatory government presided over by Martínez Barrios, the Grand Master of the Spanish Grand Orient. And finally Largo Caballero himself was nominated Prime Minister. Anarchy reigned supreme.

It is scarcely necessary to say that, during this period, and above all during the three war years, anti-Catholic violence increased beyond all measure, eventually reaching fantastic proportions. Besides the burning and profanation of churches and cemeteries, and the pillage of rectories, monasteries and convents, twelve bishops, one apostolic administrator, 4,266 secular priests, 2,489 religious, 283 nuns and 249 seminarians, as well as several thousand youths of Acción Católica, were murdered between April, 1931 and April, 1939. Eighty per cent of the clergy disappeared in nine dioceses. In the diocese of Malaga, 90 per cent.

REACTION OF THE CATHOLICS

The violence was, henceforward, uncontrollable. A reaction was necessary to stem the disorder and anarchy which now reigned throughout the nation. And, given the revolutionary and antidemocratic attitude adopted by the Social-Communists, this reaction could not be other than violent. From now on, it was a question of a solution *in extremis*, since

the problem presented by the Communist onslaught was one not of coexistence, but of existence. On July 18, 1936, the troops garrisoned in Morocco rose. The civil war was under way.

At the beginning of the Republic, as we have indicated, a large part of the Spanish Catholics had accepted the new situation and had shown their readiness to collaborate with the new regime in the fulfillment of their political and social duties. But the antidemocratic political developments, which we have briefly described, and the progressive intensification of the religious persecution could result only in a radical change in the attitude of the Catholics. After having tolerated every sort of transgression, the hierarchy (which in 1931 had recognized the legality of the Republic and advised Catholics to co-operate) realized the need for taking a public stand in favor of the Spain headed by General Franco. With the collective letter of July, 1937, signed by all but two of the Spanish Bishops, the Catholic hierarchy declared itself in favor of Nationalist Spain and against the Communist tyranny that had undermined the institutions of the Republic.

With the letter of the hierarchy, the allegiance of the Catholics to the new legal forces of government emerging with the advance of Franco's army became well-nigh universal. In fact only a handful of active Catholics stood by the Republic (with the exception naturally of the Basques who, geographically limited to three of the 50 Spanish provinces, constitute a separate problem). Angel Ossorio y Gallardo, José María Semprún, José Bergamin (at present living in Spain) and Alfredo Mendizábal (of the so-called "Third Spain") were among the few Catholics who remained faithful to Communist Spain, and who later accompanied it into exile in the moment of defeat.

CATHOLICS IN FRANCO'S REGIME

The victory of Nationalist Spain meant the setting up of a new regime under General Franco. The civil war had involved not only a defense, but also a new understanding, of all that the Spanish people hold most dear: their religious faith, their national traditions and liberties, their Western and Christian culture, their dignity as citizens.

The regime that followed on victory has in many ways failed to realize the aspirations incarnated in the war. But this frequently occurs in the story of human events. Original intentions and first impulses are always higher than subsequent realities. Nevertheless, as the new political order emerged, the Catholics were in their great majority solidly behind the new regime. The intolerant and antireligious policies of the Republic had not made any other attitude possible.

However, in the first postwar fervor, the army and the Falange showed hostility and distrust toward those Catholics who had accepted the republican regime. This explains how, at the start, no ministerial posts were held by Catholics belonging to those organizations which had provided personnel for the C.E.D.A., or to the other political organizations which had actively collaborated with the Republic. The active Catholics who figure in the government are there either as Falangists, like Pedro Gamero del Castillo, a member of the A.C.N.P., or as Carlists, like Count Rodezno and Esteban Bilbao.

Among others, in charge of the Ministry of Finance we find José Larraz of the paper *El Debate*, which had been suppressed under the Republic; and, at the Ministry of National Education, José Ibáñez Martin of the A.C.N.P. From the first moment in which the new state begins to take shape, however, many active Catholics of every tendency, especially from the A.C.N.P., are to be found on the lower levels of the Administration: as Subsecretaries, Directors General, Civil Governors, Mayors, etc. Already in 1939 one could list Enrique Calabria (Subsecretary of Finance), Máximo Cuervo (Director General of Prisons), Giménez Arnau (Director General of the Press), Mariano Puigdollers (Director General of Ecclesiastical Affairs), and so on.

The years subsequent to 1939 are marked, on the one hand, by a certain opposition to the regime on the part of Catholics belonging to the Carlist movement, and of some liberal monarchical groups, each discontent not to see the state evolve politically toward its respective position. On the other hand, the changes in the international situation in 1945 induced General Franco to seek a broader basis for his government by including Catholics who had collaborated with the Republic. Moreover, the hostility of the army leaders and of the Falange in their regard, and in regard to the organizations with which they were connected, had greatly diminished by 1945.

No better measure could have been chosen, to procure this broader collaboration in the government, than the nomination as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Alberto Martín Artajo, at that time President of the Acción Católica of Spain. Men formed in the A.C.N.P. who, as we have seen, were already working in the Ministry of National Education and in other ministries, now saw new posts open to them in embassies and other branches of the government. These included such prominent Catholic personalities as Fernández Ladreda (Ministry of Public Works), Ortiz Muñoz (Subsecretary of Popular Education), Tomás Cerro and Pedro Rocamora in the General Directions of Propaganda and the Press, etc.

It was in this atmosphere of close collaboration of the Christian Democrats with the regime that the Congress of Pax Romana, the international organization of Catholic graduates and undergraduates, was held in Spain in May and June of 1946. The president of this congress, Joaquín Ruiz Jiménez, in that moment embarked on an impressive political career: President of the Cultura Hispánica Institute that same year; Spanish Ambassador to the Holy See in 1948; and Minister of National Education in 1951.

In February, 1956, the agitation of liberals and monarchists with university connections, the dissatisfaction of the Falange and the reaction of the army leaders, precipitated a governmental crisis. One result of this crisis was the dismissal of Ruiz Jiménez who was then considered to be leaning too closely to the left and to the Catholic progressivists. Just a year later another ministerial crisis was to take place, this time resulting in the dismissal of Alberto Martín Artajo.

In the new Cabinet, however, there were still to be found Catholics belonging to the same associations of which Ruiz Jiménez and Martín Artajo were members. Among the

others was the present Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fernando Maria Castiella, until then Ambassador to the Holy See, in which post he was succeeded by Francisco Gómez de Llano, also a member of the A.C.N.P. and formerly Minister of Finance. The government also included some men formed in other Catholic organizations; for instance, economic expert Alberto Ullastres, a professor of the University of Madrid and a member of Opus Dei, who, together with Mariano Navarro, the Minister of Finance, is behind the present plan for stabilizing the Spanish economy.

SOME GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Looking back on the different Administrations which have succeeded one another over the past twenty years during the present Spanish regime, attention is immediately drawn to the fact that there has been active and constant collaboration with the regime on the part of Catholics, just as earlier there had been Catholics whose love for their country and for the Church, whose rights had to be defended, led them to collaborate with the Second Republic.

These Catholics, who are or have been in the government, or who hold other important public positions in Spain, come from the most varied Catholic organizations: Acción Católica, the National Association of Catholic Propagandists (whose constant mentor has been Bishop Herrera of Malaga), the Marian Congregations, some Third Orders, Opus Dei, etc.

It is logical that this should be so. We live in an age when Catholics, in response to the repeated exhortations of the Popes, seek to take an active part in the public life of many countries. This is a duty of social charity, which is often burdensome and thankless (as is borne out by the present internal vicissitudes of Italian and French politics). It is a duty which cannot in conscience be neglected, particularly when the danger exists that abstention on the part of Catholics may favor the political maneuvers of those whose aims are open to question.

Apart from this danger, which really exists in Spain today, as it does in Italy, France, Germany and many other countries, one must remember that the great majority of the Spanish people are Catholic, and that a large number of the men professionally and morally most qualified for public responsibility belong to or have been formed in one of the Catholic organizations which we have mentioned. When one considers the excesses with which the left or the right have blighted the life of so many countries in our own time, it is not difficult to imagine what might have happened in Spain if these active Catholics had withdrawn *en masse* from the public life of the country—out of fear either of compromising themselves, and being immediately labelled "collaborators," or simply of wasting their energy and prestige in unpropitious political circumstances. Such a withdrawal would have opened up the way to power for some extremist minority with an ideology scarcely or not at all reconcilable with the interest of the country and the Church.

It is for this reason that the active presence of these Catholics in the several governments which have so far served under General Franco's regime has always met with the approval of the hierarchy. For example, when Martín Artajo left office as

Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Primate, Cardinal Pla y Deniel, made a point of stating publicly that the political conduct of the ex-president of Acción Católica had always had his full approval.

However, in order to avoid those misunderstandings or generalizations which so often hinder a complete grasp of the complex Spanish reality, let us note here that both the hierarchy in Spain and the associations of the faithful to which these politicians belong have always asserted their absolute independence of the criteria and personal opinions held by these Catholics in the fulfillment of their public charges. This is not just a theoretical independence, proclaimed in virtue of doctrinal principles (the distinction between the religious and the profane spheres, between spiritual and temporal missions, etc.), but is also an independence in practice, i.e., when examined in the light of specific problems and facts.

Thus, for example, it becomes clear how, during the International Catholic Press Congress in Rome in 1950, *Ecclesia*, the weekly organ of Acción Católica, should have published an editorial criticizing the censorship of the press in Spain, precisely when the control of the press was in the hands of an active Catholic and member of the A.C.N.P., Luis Ortiz Muñoz. Many other similar cases could be given concerning educational questions, labor-union problems, etc.

Once this independence has been established, however, the hierarchy and the various associations of the faithful have always maintained that no reason has existed, nor now exists, to forbid Catholics to collaborate with the present regime. This is a line of action based on the traditional teaching, brought out by Leo XIII in the Encyclical *Libertas*, about the indifference of forms of government and about the political action of Catholics: "It is proper to take part in the administration of public affairs, so long as the particular conditions of the moment do not advise to the contrary. Indeed, the Church approves each person collaborating towards the common good, and working according to his capacity, for the defense and prosperity of the state."

Indeed, not long ago (August 30, 1959) the *Osservatore Romano* recalled this very doctrine, precisely in reference to Spain. It was this doctrine which induced the hierarchy, in 1931, to advise the Catholics to collaborate with the Second Republic, and later made them discourage this collaboration when, as we have seen, the attitude of the republican government showed that it was incapable of maintaining public order and respecting the rights of the people and the Church.

The many Catholics who have decided to accept public responsibility in the Franco regime have, therefore, done so freely and according to conscience, in the certainty that they have full right to do so and are acting morally. They know quite well that the regime has its defects, but they also feel convinced that their best contribution to the correction of these defects is to engage themselves personally in the task.

Besides, it cannot be denied, especially if one bears in mind the troubled years of the Second Republic, that the present state and the work of Franco and of those elements that have supported him have brought great benefits to Spain. They have brought about the re-establishment of order and of unity of a coun-

...ry once faced with anarchy and dissolution; the consequent advantages of a long period of peace (Spain had not known twenty years of social peace for a century and a half); neutrality during the last war, despite the maneuvers and pressures on the country, especially by Hitler; and the rescue of Spain from the fate of becoming a guinea-pig state for communism among the Western countries (as was the explicitly stated intention of Lenin and Stalin).

To this, one must add the respect for the freedom and rights of the Church—which undoubtedly has an important bearing on the political attitude of Catholics. This respect finds an expression, for instance, in the spirit and content of the 1953 Concordat, and in the flourishing of an intense Christian life throughout the nation.

The English writer Arnold Lunn, speaking of the Spanish civil war in one of his books explains his own favorable attitude toward Nationalist Spain by saying that when someone is 70-per-cent right (as he thought Franco to be) you can of course be in his favor, without this implying that you have abandoned all interest in correcting the defective 30 per cent.

Perhaps Lunn's attitude can serve as a final comment in this attempt to clarify the position of the Spanish Catholics who have supported the present regime.

OTHER ATTITUDES AMONG CATHOLICS

Up to this point, we have been examining the criteria and the reasons behind the attitude of those Catholics who have seen fit to collaborate with the present Spanish regime. We will now consider the position of those who have adopted the contrary attitude.

Here also we find men of varying political backgrounds, as well as members of all the Catholic organizations of which we have spoken (Acción Católica, National Association of Catholic Propagandists, Marian Congregations, Opus Dei, etc.). One may again apply the general considerations which we have already made concerning the independence of the hierarchy and of these several organizations with regard to the opinions and activity of these Catholics also, and concerning their personal responsibility for their acts; for, in their decision not to support Franco's regime, they too are making use of the freedom which the teaching of the Church acknowledges as theirs.

Given the scope of the present article, it is not necessary to describe the various currents which make up this political opposition. It would, in any case, be extremely difficult to do so. Since the natural free play of political tendencies does not exist in Spain, at least to any appreciable extent, such tendencies are enervated and devoid of real life. The result is that it becomes practically impossible to organize any of the groups around a central authority, the tendency being rather toward fragmentation into still smaller groups which, in many cases, have only a purely personal significance.

To this factor must be added another which is of particular importance and which alone can give some idea of what extremely imprecise limits distinguish the Catholic attitudes of support, or of opposition, with regard to the Franco regime. The fact is that the majority of these groups or persons have changed their position on more than one occasion

over the past twenty years, or have given varying expressions to their support or opposition toward the regime. These variations have been occasioned by the different changes since 1939 in the governmental structure or in the international political scene. Some who at first collaborated actively with the regime have later preferred to adopt a position of indifference or of opposition. In others, the process has been just the contrary. Only a few have consistently refused to give any measure of support to the regime.

This combination of factors makes it almost impossible to draw a clear picture of the opposition. It should suffice however to recall that in the ranks of the opposition are found Catholics (who, as we have stated, are members of the several associations of the faithful already listed) of all tendencies: from the liberal monarchists of the Unión Española to members of the old C.E.D.A., and certain intellectuals grouped around Gil Robles or Giménez Fernández; and from monarchical traditionalists to Falangists and conservative republicans. Nevertheless, it may be helpful to examine the reasons which led these Catholics to oppose the Franco regime.

The first consideration, of course, is that this regime can be reduced in the last analysis to a form of personal power. The purpose of the civil war was not the establishment of a dictatorship, but of a regime that would permit the Spanish people to live together in peace—which had become impossible under the Second Republic. The concentration of power, no doubt necessary during the war and even in the immediate postwar period, has been excessively prolonged, with the result that Spain has seen herself deprived of well-grounded and lasting institutions, and left dependent on the life of one man as the only guarantee of peace and order. As if this first consequence of personal power—the lack of basic institutions—were not enough to feed the prejudices of the opposition, it is joined by another and not less inevitable consequence: the restriction of political liberties.

The other criticisms which are directed against the regime all center on the same basic defect: the lack of adequate freedom of the press and of information, the political indifference of the country, the inconsistency which is held to exist between an advanced social legislation and its loose and ineffectual fulfillment, and so on.

The consideration of these and other like defects in the present Spanish political system has led the Catholics to whom we refer to adopt a position which, in an adaptation of Arnold Lunn's idea, could be defined as that of those who hold that the presence of 30 per cent of unacceptable elements vitiates the whole and renders it advisable to deny it any support. Naturally, this general attitude covers a whole range of expressions, from simple abstention to absolute opposition, passing through various stages of relative opposition or criticism toward one or several aspects of the governmental system.

FINAL OBSERVATIONS

From all that has been said thus far we can draw some general conclusions by way of summary. The first consideration that we should make concerns the peculiar characteristics of the Spanish political situation. These peculiarities, unfortunately, are not in general taken into

due account, because of a lack of proper knowledge and evaluation of their historical precedents (above all, the collapse of democracy in the Second Republic), and because of the United Nations' political and economic blockade, agreed upon in 1945 at the instigation of Russia, which caused the isolation of the country from the rest of the Western world. Not to take these peculiarities into account, and to forget what was the social situation of the country before the present regime, involves the risk of passing faulty judgments about the true political situation in Spain.

This risk is all the greater in that the press—we refer here to the systematic campaigns of the radical and Communist press—very often tends to disfigure the real picture of Spain by giving out tendentious reports which exaggerate the negative aspects and pass over the positive, or by spreading deliberate falsehoods. A simple examination of the presentation, places of origin, terminology and political coloring of the publications involved will show that here there is question of a systematic campaign, which may be more or less well co-ordinated but always responds to precise directives which normally originate from the same propaganda source that inspires Radio Prague.

It has not been hard to finance such a campaign with the money which the defeated Communist government took with it in 1939 to Russia, France and Mexico, and with the 7,800 boxes of gold (at that time equivalent to £63,265,684), the gold reserves of the state, which Negrín, the Minister of Finance, had shipped from Cartagena to Odessa on October 25, 1936. It is, therefore, greatly to be regretted that even some Catholics have at times naively taken up the echo of these Communist campaigns and have gone so far as to write, no doubt in the best of faith, that in Spain the hierarchy, the clergy, Acción Católica, Opus Dei, etc., are engaging in politics and, moreover, in politics of an "antisocial," "feudal" nature.

As we have already said, this complex of factors could lead, and at times has led, to judgments about the Spanish political situation which are absolutely groundless. Not infrequently, for example, one hears criticism expressed describing the Spanish regime and the Franco government as "totalitarian and tyrannical" —which constitutes an obvious exaggeration. A more objective and detached judgment would say that it is an authoritarian regime, of a paternalistic type, which is undoubtedly marked by a massive concentration of power in the hands of a single man, but is not in any way based on terror nor on coercion of the individual conscience.

There does, in fact, exist in Spain great freedom of individual criticism, so much so that we may say that this exercise of criticism in the "*tertulias*" (informal gatherings of individuals either in public places, bars, etc., or in their homes, in order to converse and exchange views) constitutes a typical aspect of Spanish political life. According to *Newsweek* (January 25, 1960), President Eisenhower, speaking of his visit to Spain, observed: "I found no fear in Spain. Everybody talked freely to me." His observation is exactly the opposite of the propaganda view that constantly presents the Spanish regime as a "police tyranny," or a "regime based on persecution." Such expressions originate, or easily find their echo, in

those who, for their part, seem rather inclined to overlook the regimes that are really based on persecution, the savagely antidemocratic and anti-Catholic regimes of the Communist countries.

It is, of course, true that a regime based on personal power is particularly exposed to arbitrary decisions and to misgovernment, even if the honesty of the person in power be beyond all question. Arbitrariness and misgovernment have not been lacking in Franco's Spain. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that this has been commented upon by certain sectors of the press in a somewhat exaggerated fashion, to say the least, especially if it is borne in mind that similar things have occurred and still occur in countries where the democratic and parliamentary tradition is of long standing.

For example, when the Liberal member of the British Parliament, Jeremy Thorpe, recently organized a press campaign in connection with the arrest of some Spaniards accused of subversive activities, an English reader wrote to the *Manchester Guardian* (January 28, 1960):

> It is right that we should object to any country which denies human rights to its citizens, but it seems that we must first put our own house in order. In Northern Ireland, 160 people are still interned after three years without trial. It appears that the government of Northern Ireland dissociated itself in 1957 from the relevant section of the Declaration of Human Rights on the grounds that the situation called for special powers. Perhaps Mr. Thorpe would like to take a trip across the Irish Sea, instead of trying to enter Spain where at least there is the formality of trial before internment.

Without entering into the justice or injustice of the cases involved, which is not the point here, perhaps the same could be said of the numerous detentions of French citizens, also accused of subversive activities. In actual fact, the proportion of detained persons in the whole of Spain is 51.49 per 100,000. Only two other European countries, Holland and Denmark, can show a lower figure.

When Spaniards read articles about Spain published in certain foreign papers they are very often seized with the impression that they are reading about some country other than their own, some make-believe land described with great wealth of imagery. For instance, when one reads in a Roman magazine that Quico Sabater—a bandit with a long record of murders to his name—is considered by the Catalonian people as a legendary political hero, one is left with a sense of stupefaction only comparable to what would be experienced by an Italian reading that Giuliano is regarded in Sicily as an heroic defender of the Bourbon monarchy, or that the "*banditi in tuta blu*" of Milan were successors to the ideals of the Risorgimento.

What really is lacking in Spanish political life—which, we repeat, is not dominated by any "terrorist" or "police regime"—is freedom of criticism of the government exercised through the organs of public opinion. This is what makes the public opinion of the country anemic and lifeless and, in general, indifferent to the decisions of a state which does not inform itself as it should of the

will and feelings of the people, and which sees an obstacle, and not a contribution, to the work of government in the critical reactions and comments of its citizens.

But, even more, the Spanish people find fault with the fact that the regime has not faced up to the problem of succession or taken adequate steps for its solution. By this problem we mean the transition from personal power to more stable institutions which can ensure the permanence of the positive achievements of the regime and, at the same time, bring the two necessary principles of authority and freedom into harmony.

There is a widespread desire among the Spanish people to see the present regime evolve, and the country progress, toward institutions based on more democratic formulae. Taking their inspiration from native tradition, these formulae would undoubtedly show particular features distinguishing them from those of other countries, just as the Italian political institutions are different from the American, and the latter different from the German or the English. But they would have to be built up on that same basic concept and approach that generally go by the name of democracy.

While on this subject, it might not be out of place to refer to certain expressions which are in current use among Spaniards in one sense rather than in any other, and which consequently give rise to misunderstandings and apparent differences between Spanish Catholics and those of other countries. We are thinking precisely of the word "democracy." Because of the use and abuse that has been made of this word, to the extent of its being applied even to Communist regimes ("people's democracies"), of which Spain has had sad experience, there are certain Catholics in Spain who are not too happy about a word which can have such an ambiguous and elastic meaning. For they believe that the term "democracy" has often been a cover for repressive and even tyrannical measures against the nation and the Church.

This is why it may happen that a Spanish Catholic and an Italian Catholic, for example, may use different expressions and terminology, even though they mean the same thing: an institutional regime in which the state is subject to the rule of law, and in which the freedom of opinion of the citizens and their direct intervention in the responsibility of public affairs are respected.

The immense majority of Spanish Catholics are united in these common aims: to secure for the country the permanence of the positive achievements of the present regime; to correct its defects; and to bring about its evolution toward democratic institutions as the basis of government. But, in practice, there is wide divergence of opinion as to the way in which these common aims should be realized. Some feel they can best be achieved by maintaining an awkward attitude of opposition, others by the no less awkward approach of constructive criticism and collaboration with the regime.

The reader will no doubt find himself wondering: "But does Franco realize the need for this evolution, and, if he does, does he want it?" Contrary to what one might expect, it is not easy to answer this question. Many Catholics, thinking of the good of the nation and of the Church, trust that the answer is affirmative. But their trust rests simply on one man's ability to look far enough ahead and

on his unquestionable sincerity of purpose.

Meanwhile, all Spanish Catholics, including those who count themselves among the opposition, are of one mind in excluding any recourse to violence, in hoping for a peaceful evolution of the regime, lest the country find itself swept again into the state of anarchy that gave rise to the civil war, a repetition of which would be both tragic and grotesque.

The advocates of violence are to be found in the exterior, in the radical opposition to the regime of those who left the country after the defeat of the Communist government. *C.N.T.*, for example, the organ of the Communists in exile, edited at Toulouse, wrote on January 31, 1960: "It will again become necessary, as an urgent hygienic measure, to burn a few more convents and monasteries. From time to time, fire has been the only purifying element in the hands of the people." As can be readily concluded, this is the extremist position, nourished by the most single-minded and brutal Marxist revolutionary orthodoxy, which would not hesitate to bring about the ruin of the nation as the first step in its ascent to power.

We feel that we have sufficiently described, at least in general terms, the nature and the implications of the several positions adopted by Catholics in Spain during the past twenty years.

In Spain also, just as in many other countries, an encouraging fact has emerged over this period: Catholics have become effectively conscious of their right and duty to take an active part in the solving of the problems of public life. Over and above any possible difference of opinions and attitudes, this development should encourage and unite all Catholics, whether Spanish or not. Because, as Leo XIII said in his encyclical *Immortale Dei* (1885):

> When discussion centers on purely political matters, on the best form of government, on this or that possible constitutional basis to the state, there can be an honest diversity of opinions. Therefore justice bears it ill that persons whose piety is acknowledged, and who are ready to practice the teachings of the Holy See, should be taken to task, for a fault as it were, because they think in one way rather than another about the problems to which we have referred.

It is certain, moreover, that whatever the specific form of government that follows General Franco's regime, the Catholics, on the basis of these common aspirations and responsibilities, will exercise a decisive influence on the approach to and solution of the major problems of the nation.

Diversity of opinions, common responsibilities and unity in the face of the essential problems: these, in our opinion, should be the constant characteristics of the future political action of Catholics in Spain. Let there be a variety of tendencies, just as there exists a variety of tendencies and currents among the several Catholic groups included in Italian democracy, but let there be undivided unity in the face of doctrinal issues when the moment comes for taking a practical stand. Since the Church is not, and never could be, a party, this unity of Catholics does not presuppose, nor lay upon them, any obligation to give their active adhesion to any single movement or political party.