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THE STRUGGLE FOR CULTURE

In recent issues of SNL we have drawn attention to the ruination of Spain's economy by Franco-Falangism, and stated that the damage done by the exploiters will require a generation to repair. The only form of social assurance in which Franco has succeeded is that which has made certain of the ill-health of a generation. The spoliation does not end with material and physical things. Under the Republic considerable progress was made in a short time in elementary and other education - the problem of illiteracy inherited from the monarchy was being seriously tackled, and there is little doubt but that, in the ten years which have passed since 1936, had the reactionaries not plunged Spain into civil war, it would have been solved. To-day, education is worse than it was on the advent of the Republic, and this applies to elementary, secondary and university education. Franco's Spain is no exception to the general rule that Fascism destroys culture, though it has the ignominious distinction of having progressed further in this destruction than any other Fascist country. In Spain, intellectual life has been almost strangled and would be totally so but for some rare survivals of the progressive spirit. That these have succeeded in maintaining the old ideals has been surprisingly demonstrated in recent months. Humanism has not entirely perished. That this is so is due almost entirely to the clandestine activities of republican Spaniards. Spain provides an outstanding example of the humanist struggle against the general Fascist principle which, in practice, means that the intellectual is either mobilised on its side or obliterated. Of this fact, little or nothing is known in Britain or, indeed, anywhere outside the Spanish-speaking countries.

In 1944 there was formed in Spain a clandestine body known as the Union of Free Spanish Intellectuals. It consists of members of the learned professions, representatives of the arts and sciences, authors and journalists who cannot function in the Falangist State, and others of similar status or inclinations who are opposed to the Franco régime and favour the restoration of the Republic. The Union already has over two thousand members. Its original statement of aims was simple. It pledged itself to work for the return of that republican legality which guaranteed the free exercise of human liberties; for the guardianship of Spanish culture; and for the defence of spiritual and humanist values.

During the month of August this year the Union distributed a circular throughout Spain - in the Universities, Courts of Justice, laboratories and in all cultural centres such as the Madrid Ateneo, among teachers, writers, lawyers, doctors, engineers, painters, musicians, actors and so forth. Before us we have the text of this important document. It is to the following effect:

- We believe in the necessity for and possibility of a new Cultural Renaissance, one based on the harmonious development of the human personality, free from all constraint. We believe in a new generation having the will to forge for itself a better and more dignified existence. This is what we call our new humanism.
- We understand that the principles enunciated can only be realised under a democratic régime which guarantees the rights and the liberties of man, and also an existence freed from the material and spiritual agony which to-day stand in the way of the least cultural development in Spain.
- All this and our conception of Justice renders us totally incompatible with the autocratic régime of Franco and the Falange, and marks as the goal of our mission the concentration of all our energies in the Republican struggle against Fascism.

The Union publishes a clandestine Bulletin called Democ, and among the activities it has undertaken are the preparation of clandestine sheets and help for intellectuals in prison. It is a little early yet to judge the effectiveness of this campaign, but its importance needs no emphasis. We believe that before long the Union will have linked up with Spanish Republican exiles whose ideas and ideals are similar, and that this can hardly fail to be an important factor in the struggle against Franco, Falangism and reaction in general.

It is difficult for people in Britain and USA to appreciate how greatly Spain has suffered in the cultural sense because of Franco. One of the most disastrous consequences of the Spanish War was the severance of the fountain heads of culture, for every liberal or democratic writer, artist, teacher, musician or scientist felt that he or she could not function under Falangism, with the consequence that nearly all of importance joined the general exodus of 1939. The university staffs lost much of their personnel and all their best professors. Spain lost the élite of her intellectual life, but, if this was so, the countries which gave homes, security and work to these men and women have gained. Spanish America received most of them, and their record in Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela, Uruguay, Central America, and especially in Mexico, is one of which they and the true Spain can well be proud. Among the names of distinguished Republicans now in Spanish America are: Rafael Altamira, Felipe Sanchez Román, Cándido Bolívar, Luis Recasens Sitges, Gabriel Franco, Mariano Funes, José Pais, Joaquín Rodríguez, Pedro Carrasco and Gabriel Bonilla. These are mostly men of the older generation. To their names could be added those of many who left Spain as boys and are now adults who take a worthy place beside them. Under the able editorship of Jose Larrea is published the excellent cultural review Cuadernos Americanos. In publishing, the influence of republican exiles is great. Professors Martín Echevarria and Sanchez Arcas are the chief inspiration behind the publishing house 'Atlanta'. The distinguished writer Jose Bergamín directs Editorial 'Prensa', while another called 'Mundo' is directed by Martín Luna and administered by Gimenez Giles. Works published in Spanish America by representatives of Spanish culture in exile can already be numbered in thousands. There is hardly a country in which they are to be found - including Britain, France and the USSR - where they have not made their contribution. It is nearly always a fresh, original and vigorous contribution. This is a record of which Spain and those republican men of culture who have been compelled to live under Franco can be proud. It is a record which Franco's 'intelligentsia' cannot equal or even approach.

In comparison with countries of Spanish America, Britain has not many Spanish Republicans in exile. Yet, they have made their contribution here also - the names of Durán-Jordá, and Trueta in medicine and Torner in music may be mentioned among many. And there is the Instituto Español in London, a non-political and democratic centre which, since it was formed in the spring of 1944, has held high the banner of Spanish humanism and unostentatiously won the respect and admiration of everybody acquainted with its work, from its Chairman, Professor Gilbert Murray, to the least of its members. Elsewhere in this issue we give some account of its aims and its work. Here we need only say that not only has it succeeded but that it is determined "to amplify its activities, spurred on by the encouragement given by British educational centres, the collaboration of great British Hispanistas and, above all, by the fervent support of its more than one thousand members".

It was no doubt because of the immediate and permanent success of the exiled Republicans in matters of culture that Franco and his friends decided that something must be done abroad, or otherwise the world must inevitably think that the Falangist State has nothing cultural to put on show. Funds were allocated in the national Budget, reactionary and Fascist-minded professors and what not were mobilised to take over direction of the new 'cultural propaganda'. It is already working in some countries - see below "Falange in Chile" - and a start has been made in Britain with a grandiose Instituto de España possessed of ample funds and enjoying all the facilities which the Falangist State can provide - including a good supply of sherry! Without doubt it can put on show pictures representative of the art of the past, and it can have a library of works of Spanish classical literature to impress anybody. Of contemporary culture what? Almost nothing. It must trade on the creations of Spaniards who, if they were alive to-day, would nearly all be against Franco, who would either be exiles or who, if they were in Spain, would be members of the Union of Free Spanish Intellectuals. To what class of person in Britain will this Falangist-inspired Institute appeal? We leave our readers to provide the answer.

There is a great difference between culture and propaganda for the cultural heritage. Spanish democrats have proved themselves to be creators of the former, Franco deals in the latter, having nothing else to offer.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE : The Friends of Spain Parliamentary Committee has been increased by the addition of nine more names of MPs to the list of members. The Committee supports the Republican Government in Exile.

SPAIN AND UNO : An American correspondent writes: "The postponement of the meeting of the Assembly to 24th October has not materially changed the possibilities in regard to Spain, the question of which will probably be raised by Dr. Lange of Poland. The Spanish Republican Government in Exile has opened a publicity office in New York with the object of stating their case for the public. At the same time, a strong current of pro-Franco propaganda continues, though it is noticeable that the name of Franco is not used so much as hitherto and 'intervention' by foreign powers is attacked - the slogan is "Hands off Spain". In Spanish American circles around UNO, one often hears the opinion expressed that, as happened last time the question was raised, another deadlock would favour Franco, and that Britain and USA may be expected to manoeuvre to create deadlock, neither Power being the least anxious to disturb Franco until the question of Germany is settled by the Peace Conference - which, it seems, can hardly be before spring 1947. That settled, their policy towards Franco may change, though in what way nobody can yet suggest. It seems to be generally agreed in New York and Washington that Franco's position internally is steadily deteriorating. Wall Street reports that rich Spanish industrialists and landowners have begun to salt out their money, much of which is coming to USA via Cuban, Mexican and Swiss Banks and also from Lisbon. The question of whether the Soviet representative at UNO will again use his veto is much discussed, and the betting seems to be that he will not do so. In October, reliance will be placed on the Assembly to get over any obstacles raised by Britain and USA at the Security Council".

FOOD : A correspondent writes from Madrid: "The questions of food, high prices and shortages crop up in almost every conversation, not merely because they are burning questions everywhere outside the big hotels but because of the nation-wide campaign initiated recently by Franco. It is as plain as pikestaff to everybody that no propaganda campaign and nothing that the régime can now do will result in any great benefits to the mass of the people - in fact, since the campaign began not only has there been no noticeable decrease in prices but in some cases they have been increased. Official measures to stop Black Market activities are all directed against the smaller fry. The big operators, the Falange and the higher army officers who virtually control it, all go scot free. Furthermore, the official campaign - which relies upon local and municipal measures to remedy the situation - has in many places taken on a sinister turn. In order to distract attention from themselves, Falange, army and police are making a drive against people known to be hostile to the régime, the majority of whom are quite poor and few of whom engage in black market activities beyond purchase or barter to meet the modest requirements of themselves and their families. Thus, in many parts of Spain, uneasiness and fear are prevalent. Underproduction, which is more often than not due to the obstinacy of peasants and smallholders in not growing much above their own requirements - in order to avoid being swindled by the Falange and control officialdom - plus the evils resulting from large-scale speculators, plus the system whereby wholesale distribution is in the hands of rascals, are the chief causes of shortages, black market and high prices. To this can be added what is everywhere called the 'crime of the régime' in exporting foodstuffs and olive oil in such circumstances as the present. As usual, it is the poor who suffer. As at no time in her history, Spain is a country of very rich and very poor, those between not being numerous".

FALANGE IN CHILE : A correspondent writes from Concepcion, Chile: "We have in this country about 80,000 Germans of whom at least one-half are members of Nazi groups and organisations. The Nazis control 25 of the 45 German schools, and in the Nazi-controlled schools the Hitler Youth Movement flourishes under the inspiration of Youth Leader Kress. I have visited five of these schools lately (1946) and in all of them Hitler's portrait dominates the scene. Working in close collaboration with the Nazis is the Spanish Falange Exterior with headquarters in Santiago. Since the allied victory, the Falange, far from piping down, is more active than ever - especially in so-called 'cultural' activities, for which there is no shortage of money. The appeal of this propaganda is to the rich Chileans, to the landowner class and, of course, it works in close collaboration with the Catholic Church. All

'cultural' propaganda activities are directed towards influential people; the workers are ignored. This indicates what Franco's cultural policy will be elsewhere - in Britain, for example".

INSTITUTO ESPAÑOL : The Instituto Español, founded in the spring of 1944, has published its 'Record of Two Years' Work - 1944-46', obtainable from the Secretary (58 Prince's Gate, London, S.W.7.) and an inspiring record it is. The aims of the Institute are twofold: to spread among the British public a better and deeper knowledge of the different aspects of past and present Spanish life; and to complete the culture of Spaniards living in England as regards their own history and culture, and also to facilitate their learning of English. Its membership grows steadily and to-day is over 1,000, there is a well selected library of over 2,000 volumes with a monthly circulation of 300 books and, apart from the classes, there are weekly lectures in Spanish, concerts, 'Brains Trusts', receptions and holiday courses. Among those who have lectured in Spanish in the two years of its existence are the Colombian and Chilean Ambassadors, the Mexican Ambassador to USA, Professor Duperier the astronomer, Dr. Vazquez-Lopez of Imperial Cancer Research, Professor Don Pablo de Azcárate (formerly Ambassador of the Spanish Republic), Sir Henry Thomas, Professor Trend (Vice President of the Institute) and Professor Entwistle. The Heads of the Spanish Departments of the Universities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Durham and Leeds have given their collaboration. The atmosphere of the Instituto Español is one of friendliness and the outlook and attitude of its directors and teachers essentially humanist. The work ranges from the elementary to a high standard - in the courses of lectures often to a very high standard - and it covers a great variety of aspects of Spanish civilization. This spring there was a special course for students of Spanish at Secondary Schools. At first it was limited to 30 pupils, but the number of applications was so great that it was increased to 42. This course proved to be a wonderful success. Students came from Rodean, Cheltenham Ladies College, Croydon High School, Northampton, Spring Grove, Beckenham, Rutlish, Kingston, Flying Hall School, City of London College, Mitcham, King Edwards High School (Birmingham) and Midhurst Grammar School. No student of Spanish in Britain, whether a beginner or of university standard should overlook the Instituto Español.

ANTI-FRANCO CAMPAIGN : Franco's Radio Nacional has been complaining of the campaign of defamation which the press of the world pursues against Spain - it is against Spain and not Franco! - and draws attention to the two categories into which the campaigners may be classified: 1) Well-meaning but ignorant or sentimental people; 2) Followers or tools of Moscow. "Against these two tendencies", says Radio Nacional, "Spain appeals to the Catholic conscience in the world, and its support merits the gratitude of all Spaniards".

WHY THEY SUPPORT FRANCO : The Franco régime has fixed workers wages at rates above which they must not be raised. But, it does not set a limit on the profits of industrial undertakings. Recent profits of some private companies may be cited : Lebon Electricity and Gas, Barcelona - 10 million pesetas; Zaragoza Electric - 12 million; Catalan Railway - 15 million more than last year; La Naviera, Bilbao - 28 millions; Naval Constructions Co., - 30 million; Madrid Tramways - 55 million.

RADIO ZARAGOZA STATEMENT : A correspondent writes: "Radio Zaragoza usually limits itself to retransmission of Radio Nacional and a few local items. Listeners were surprised to hear, after an announcement of the result of the Greek plebiscite, a speaker declare that in Greece all changes of régime were arranged by the generals. The Central War School founded by Franco is at Zaragoza, hence the statement has aroused much speculation both as to its origin and authority, nobody being able to shed any light on either".

BOOKS : In SNL No. 272, we mentioned Rafael Altamira's new HISTORIA DE ESPAÑA, a great work, published by Editorial Sudamericana, Buenos Aires. We are glad to be able to inform our readers that this book is available from The Dolphin Book Co. Ltd., 14, Fyfield Road, Oxford, handsomely bound in cloth, price £2.10.0. The Dolphin Book Co. specialises in books in Spanish and are agents for Editorial Sudamericana and other publishers of books in Spanish.

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