

Issues in Spanish Conservatism

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I

In May, 1966, the Madrid journal *Punta Europa* commented on an address before the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences under the title of "The New Conservative Attitude." The editorial said in part that many Spanish conservatives would recognize themselves in the following proposals: ". . . in social matters the non-existence of social classes; in politics the end of ideologies; in institutional matters, government by technical experts; in economic matters, the unavoidable necessity of the rapid advance of social wealth; and in constitutional affairs, the authoritarian personalization of power (*la personalización autoritaria del poder*)." The editor concluded by asking if these ideas were simply the dreams of a new utopia. A notable Spanish critic, Gonzalo Fernandez de la Mora, wrote in the April, 1966, number of *Atlantida* the following summary manifesto of the new times: "I believe that to the extent we extinguish ideology and rationalize politics, power will become more and more saturated with authority. The received, the coercive, the absolute, the amoral and the arbitrary will become accidents that are seldom defended. Alternatively, there will prevail factors or forces determined by authority, which is to say merit, spontaneity, self-determination, the good, and the reasonable. I have here stated the political progress in our time: from ideologies we will move toward ideas, from liberty we will move toward security, from elections to government by knowledge and technical skill, and from power to authority. It is not certain that any other past time was better."

In these statements we have the doctrines of the contemporary conservative in Spain. These conservatives are monarchists, and they would favor the restoration of the son of Alfonso XIII, that is Don Juan, the Count of Barcelona, or his son, Juan Carlos. They would agree that the propositions they have defended are based on Spanish tradition that is at least as old as the reconquest and unification of Spain under the Catholic Sovereigns at the end of the XV century. Three events of historic importance took place in 1492, the final capture of Granada at the beginning of the year, the expulsion of non-Christian persons of Jewish extraction, and the discovery of America on October 12, which is now called "the day of

the race." The symbol of the day has no biological significance, but it does have strong religious or Catholic overtones for the Spanish traditionalist. These conservatives do not want any return to the Second Republic, and they do not want another civil war. But they may be quite hostile to General Franco as a personal ruler, since they are monarchists and look toward the restoration. In the end they would favor some kind of political system which would parallel the evolution of British politics from just before 1832 to just before the triumph of socialism in Britain. Though the trend in European thought is toward the common market, a free market, there is in almost any political position hostility toward American capitalism, and the word "capitalism" itself is usually associated with a denigrative adjective. But the currently emerging position of the conservatives is related firmly to the doctrines of traditionalism, formulated with decisiveness between 1931 and 1936.

II

Just as intellectual styles change, so the character of conservatism changes. No doubt the conservative appreciation of society has been delayed by the "Giant Ideology" (as Russell Kirk described it) of the generation after World War I, the Russian Revolution, the rise of fascism, and the Spanish Civil War. But the pattern changes and the symbols of the "movements" no longer evoke the political passion they once did. Communists and those who sympathize with them continue their world-wide effort to make Marxism meaningful, but it is doubtful that people in Western Europe are much moved, for example, by Lenin's *Imperialism*. Fascism is still about, but it seems to have few followers, and the socialism of Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries seems stuffy and lacking a "mythos" of the future. Some have said that we are now at the end of ideology, because our problem now is to make proper technical use of the industrial and scientific revolutions. This may be clearly so of the ideology of the period after 1918, but it is more probable that we are milling about in the preliminary stages of a new development of ideological thought. A.W.K.

The veralism of thirty-five years ago remains to obscure the discussion of Spain. Left-wing intellectuals and liberals, and communists still talk of Spain as if the Second Republic had just been born. As soon as the Spanish Republic was established in 1931 there was a crescendo of international enthusiasm for the new, golden age. People who should have known better read the idealistic phrases of the new Spanish Constitution just as if the formal provisions were already political and social reality. Spain was discussed as if there were no opponents of the Republic, no supporters of the monarchy, no real Catholics (except the condemned clergy), no conservatives or traditionalists, and just as if the moderation of the Second Re-

public were an assured fact. Communists had begun to think of Spain as the next place of victory for Marxism; it was regarded as the beginning of the conquest of Western Europe. A propaganda campaign seldom seen, marshalled nearly all of the intellectuals to the support of the new government. Intellectuals were content not to know what was really going on in Spain.

Events have shown the self-delusion involved in these approaches. The Republic was actually engaged in a brutal conflict, a sanguinary war, with a large percentage of the Spanish people. How many Spaniards opposed the Republic at the beginning we will never know, but by the last months of the Civil War the popular response to the victory was large and enthusiastic. To this Hugh Thomas in his mildly pro-Republican history of the war attests. [*The Spanish Civil War* (1961), 602-603.] What has been left out of most liberal discussions of Spain is precisely these things, the issue of popular response to the Nationalist Crusade, and the development of radio and wartime communication and propaganda, which was continually growing stronger through the information furnished by civilians who turned up in Nationalist territory. But the Republicans provoked the popular response by its savagery toward Spanish Christians, by a continuous infiltration of foreign communists, and by its failure to observe fairness in elections and in the rule of law. Political support and opposition gradually became a matter of civil war in the streets, the murder of political opponents (who were killed because they were alleged to have killed), the organized burning and looting of churches, and the reckless destruction of religious personnel and property. W

Spaniards and Prussians, it is said, are the two national groups who offered stubborn resistance to Napoleon. Almost immediately when the French invaded Spain and Joseph was put on the throne, the Spanish resistance began (May 2, 1808). Slowly but certainly the French position became untenable, but it is generally held that the "foreigner" on Spanish soil was the chief cause of patriotic fervor. The Civil War from July, 1936, to April, 1939, was much the same. The communists will never forgive their defeat, and aging Republicans in exile still plan to return victoriously to Spain. The left still talks as if the Franco regime may be overthrown by a popular uprising. But the twenty-four International Brigades brought a total of foreign mercenaries to Spain which reached an estimated figure of 40,000, though perhaps there were never more than 18,000 at one time. It is estimated 2,800 invaded Spain from the United States, and 900 of these were killed. Russians occupied posts of high power, though the number of Russian soldiers was small, perhaps no more than 2,000. On the other hand, the Germans provided more in generalship and supplies than personnel, and the large number of Italians, who perhaps equalled

the number in the International Brigades, were not regarded as efficient soldiers. The 40,000 Carlist volunteers were probably the over-all best soldiers in the Nationalist Armies. Apparently no Americans are listed as fighting with the Nationalist Armies, though the British poet, Roy Campbell, became internationally known for his efforts on behalf of the Nationalists. It is said that almost any Republican soldier was shaken when he was attacked by *tercios* of Carlist volunteers, who had confessed their sins, attended Mass, received Communion, and who, indeed, seemed to know what they were dying for. The Nationalists felt sure that the Italians and Germans would go home, but the Russian leaders of international communism were another kettle of fish.

The history of the years before the war shows the rise of numerous organizations of conservatives, rightists, monarchists, and traditionalists. Montesquieu once remarked that in the Roman Republic it was finally true that every public meeting was a conspiracy against the existing government. Such seemed to be the case in Spain, except that often the meetings of the various political groups, right or left, were used to commemorate those who had fallen by assassination or in street fighting. The savagery of Republican days is attested by the fact that some distinguished Spaniards who helped to found the Republic were among the *émigrés* or refugees. José Ortega y Gasset, Dr. Gregorio Marañón, and Pérez de Ayala, for example, repudiated their support of the Republic. The Republic was not in fact the system they had worked to create. In Paris in 1937 Dr. Marañón wrote his famous and much republished article in which he argued that the Republican government had become a soviet. This article has been published in the United States under the title of "The Liberal in the Looking Glass" by Long House in 1964.

III

The critics of Franco and the Nationalist regime often say there is no political theory or social judgment in it. The regime, they say, is purely personal, Machiavellian, and autocratic. Such remarks are made, it would seem, because one of the weaknesses of both the liberal and the communist intellectual is the incapacity to understand a conservative and traditionalist position which is and has been characteristic of Spain. Still, it must be stressed that the rightist ideology that developed in the 1930s is notably different in a number of ways from the positions of the present day.

Conservatism in its variety of forms, thus, must first of all be classified by periods of time. Historically, it was associated in the XIX century with the high bourgeoisie, and to some extent with the petty middle class of small traders and artisans. Against the bourgeoisie there was a rising tide

of left-wing thought, such as anarchism and socialism, along with the customary anti-monarchist and anti-clerical opinions of the "radical democrats." Naturally, such ideas were associated with the criticisms of the new industrial system. Others have pointed to landlords and the exploitation of the peasantry as a conservative force. The industrialism of the northern part of Spain from the Atlantic to Barcelona was, moreover, a source of both conservative and revolutionary thinking. The interests that may be cited from the economic and social history of XIX century Spain could not carry over effectively in the period after 1898, the time of the defeat of Spain in its war with the United States.

Some of the intellectuals of the "Generation of '98" later became traditionalists and conservatives, though at the outset their clinical examination of the reasons for the failure of Spain in the modern world were anything but rightest. Even those who were conservative in spirit seemed forced to admit that far-reaching reforms were necessary if Spain were to take its proper place in the world of the XX century. The point for thoughtful Spaniards has been that Spain under Philip II at the end of the XVI century held perhaps the largest empire of any power in history, and by '98 practically nothing was left, save a strip of colony in North Africa.

Why had all this come about? French thought which began to come into Spain was one answer: The Enlightenment could have saved Spain if it had been vigorously applied. Instead, it was easy to say in the period between '98 and the fall of the monarchy in 1931 that Spain had no reformation, no enlightenment, and no industrial revolution. The French-type thinker would say that Spain needed all three; and some in 1931, with the establishment of the Republic, said that at last the French Revolution in Spain had arrived and with it would come also some kind of Reformation. Clearly, also, it was socialism which would bring about a proper industrial revolution.

It is easier to specify the nature of a French Enlightenment for Spain than to indicate what was said in opposition. It was the Napoleonic invasion of Spain which set French thinkers back on their heels, though strange to say the Constituent of Cadiz was elaborating a new Frenchified constitution just at the time the city was under seige by the invaders. Though all seemed to rally to the independence of Spain from the French, many retained much of the spirit of reformism connected with the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era. Spanish leaders in the course of the XIX century made every effort to copy the political philosophy and politics of Great Britain and France. British empiricism, parliamentarism, and great wealth both exasperated Spanish leaders and filled them with envy. French liberalism and anticlericalism were both a supplement to British thought and the indication of a new path for the future.

The leaders of Spanish intellectual life faced two grim issues after World War I. From the days of the first *pistoleros* of about 1890 to the international revolution spreading from Russia after 1917, the revolution had grown stronger and more menacing. But in addition there was the failure of liberal reformism, whether monarchical or republican, from the *Constituyente* of 1812 to the crisis of post-World War I society. The dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera was only a momentary pause, Spanish policy seemed untriumphant in North Africa, and, finally, on April 14, 1931, Alfonso XIII left Spain rather than have the army attempt a violent dispersal of the Madrid mob. Under these conditions the mere restoration of order, and a legal state, were vast undertakings. Conservatism had to be reborn. And it was—in one of the most notable of modern assertions and restorations of the national tradition against its breach by the Second Republic.

I am speaking here of a period that extends roughly from the time of General Primo's dictatorship in 1923 to the outbreak of the Civil War in July, 1936. It was a period in which many intellectuals were discovering that they did not belong with the left, but somewhere else. Still, they did not wish to join what was considered the antiquated bourgeois-landlord-aristocratic conservatism of the previous century. What had to be done, it seemed, was to restudy the history of Spain from the time of its unification under the Catholic Sovereigns at the end of the XV century. Here one would study again the symbolism of Spanish literature—Don Quijote, La Celestina, and Don Juan. One would look at all of the cultural symbols in order to restate the foundations of historical continuity, but especially one would consider the Spanish monarchy of the Baroque epoch in the XVII century. All conservatives have been aware of the greatness and the decline of Spain. The bibliography on the subject written by Spaniards is voluminous indeed, and a few scholars seem to have explored it to write on "theories" of Spanish decline. Joaquín Costa in the XIX century proposed that in regenerating Spain, a double lock must first be put on the tomb of El Cid, the great champion of the past. The symbolism of Don Quijote is one of the most powerful of all, for he seems to symbolise the fatigue of the nation at the beginning of the XVII century, the first part of *Don Quijote* being published in 1605. Spain had tried to do too much, some thought, in defending Europe against the Reformation, in attempting the conquest of England, and in the establishment of its universal colonial empire. In Spain itself the failures of the nation in the XVII century destroyed for a time the appreciation of the values behind the effort of the monarchy and the people. People seemed to forget the "Golden Century" from about 1519 to 1665. Even the conservatives of the XIX century, like Juan Donoso Cortés, hardly referred to the past period of Spanish great-

ness. Nor did the disappointed intellectuals of the period after the American defeat return to this era.

It has been only in the XX century that such a return has taken place. [Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo], the great scholar, writer, and defender of the Spanish past, brought about the restoration of tradition, as a counterweight to the downgrading of Spain by those who have been inspired by French liberalism and who particularly ridiculed the lack of "science" in Spain in past generations. Probably Menéndez y Pelayo has had more to do with the restoration and love of Spanish tradition than any other modern Spaniard. He represented the swing from the literary to the political, and from the political to the emergence of the self-conscious conservatism of which we have already spoken. But whatever the Spanish conservatives and traditionalists dreamed of, it was primarily a cultural unity among Spanish-speaking peoples under the general heading of Hispanidad.

IV

Traditionalism in Spain has various meanings. The Carlists, that is, the Traditionalist Communion, like to claim tradition as their own, though Carlists concede that such movements as Spanish Action and Spanish Renovation established around 1934, were traditionalist in nature. [José Antonio], the son of Primo de Rivera, was the founder of the Falange, which joined forces with the rising syndicalist organizations of Onesimo Redondo and others. Probably the most notable of the publications of a traditionalist stamp was *Acción Española*, to which nearly all of the rightists and monarchists, as well as traditionalists, contributed. There were, indeed, many groups hostile to the Republic. One can cite the clergy generally, though some regionalist priests were republicans to the end, and they, like some Basque priests, received public attention far out of proportion to their significance. The Republic had reduced the armed forces, and thus in the dismissal of career officers with inadequate pensions, it provided many of the skilled officers of the later Nationalist Army. Regionalists in Catalonia and the Basque country saw the Republic as an opportunity to gain a political independence (rather than merely cultural independence), and they, like many labor groups, were doomed to disappointment. The "moderation" which the Classical mind praised so highly was impossible under the Republic of Ideology. One can almost say that the Republic and leaders did everything they could to destroy themselves. What seems to have occurred is that a revolutionary left-wing ideology overshot the mark in both parliament and in the police system it established.

Spanish traditionalism is similar to European traditionalism in general, but it has its peculiarities, in part because of the Carlist philosophy and in

part because of the sentiment of universalism produced by the drama of Spanish history. Traditionalism was the thought that was used to resist Hitlerism in Germany, and it was the system of thought that was used to resist the policies of the Second Republic. The reconstruction of traditionalism was the second form of modern Spanish conservatism, the conservatism which replaced the bourgeois-landlord-aristocratic conservatism of the XIX century. And it in turn is being replaced by those who see no further need for being agitated over ideological struggle. There are, thus, in broad outline three forms or styles of Spanish, traditionalist conservatism.

3 forms

One may suppose that the first proposition of traditionalism is that a nation is a kind of historical organism in which one must live with history out of necessity and not out of choice. Still, one has a duty to make the most of the social and the political tradition that is available. The wisdom of the present is in measure to understand the teaching of the past, for tradition is not mere custom; it is doctrine, a body of truth, or a body of admonitions against the difficulties of the present and the future. In Spain tradition is both national and regional, though Ortega y Gasset argued that the political cultivation of regionalism has been of recent date. Within the cultural tradition. [Hispanidad,] as Ramiro de Maeztru called it, there are many differences between regions. Still, Ortega would argue that Basque separatism was cultivated and artificial. Language and literature are something else again, for they do not necessarily involve any political aspiration. Catalonian separatism is no doubt different, but the language is not taught in the schools and there is scarcely any publication in Catalan, though it is used in religious services. The *fueros* or the rights and the case-law of regions, like Navarra, form a particularly solid base for the maintenance of regional tradition. In Navarra the use of elections is more extensive than elsewhere, since they arise from the formal or traditional system.

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However, the great unifying force is the Catholic tradition. A Spaniard may say to you: "It is the Church that has made Spain." Many of the historical achievements of Spain have been made under the symbol of religion. The feeling of universalism in Spanish history arises in part from the universalism of Catholicism. The missionary achievement of the years of colonization are pointed to by the traditionalist as one of the great achievements of any nation in any age. Furthermore, the traditionalist regards the ["black legend"] about Spanish colonization as an invention by northern Europeans to besmirch the glory of the Spanish achievements. A Spaniard will point to the Council of Trent, where Spanish theologians played a notable role in the definition of Catholic doctrine, as one of the more significant elements in the preservation of the Church in Europe.

Trent served, as well as the religious wars, to turn back the march of the Reformation, and the defeat of Islam in the battle of Lepanto in 1571 was the turning point in the rise and fall of Turkish power. Spanish conservatism is thus devoted to the preservation of the Church; the conservative may well feel that one can hardly be a Spaniard without being a Catholic first of all. Beyond this "race" is of no significance.

Next to the Catholic tradition, and perhaps a part of it, is the doctrine that society is composed of functioning groups. This doctrine clearly separates state and society, for the groups, such as guilds, syndicates, or *gremios*, are a part of society. They may rise into the control of the state, *i.e.*, those who rule, and they were reflected in the parliamentary structure of the middle ages. This representation extended down to the modern revolutionary view of one individual one vote in the choice of delegates. One might almost say it extended to the period after the French Revolution when the new political systems began to appear. This doctrine means that society with its groups and traditions of groups should have in reality the sovereignty of life. It should control the government. Spanish traditionalism, and especially Carlism, relies on such views for its regionalism and its social functionalism. It would cast the Spanish parliament in the old mold of the regional and gremial system of representation, rather than in the liberal system of the XIX century. And such a system would be constraining force on the monarchy and the bureaucracy. It would tend to make the abuse of power impossible, but it would also make power responsible to the authority which emerges profoundly from the inner forms of society.

It must be recognized, of course, that traditional truth stands in tension with the modern insistence on technics, or, indeed, upon the extreme application of the cybernetic revolution. A traditionalist will say that there is a danger that undue emphasis on technology and government by technicians can destroy both the Church and the *fueros* of the historic Spanish provinces. The industrialization of Spain must come, but it should come in these modern times as a Catholic and not as a Protestant industrial revolution in Spain. The new age must be both a traditional and Catholic age with an industrial society which dedicates much of its physical energy to the production of wealth.

V

There is no epilogue to write as yet to the resurgence of Spanish tradition. By law Spain is a monarchy, with at least four possible pretenders to the throne (Don Juan and his son Juan Carlos, and two Carlists, Don Xavier and his son Carlos Hugo who recently married the Dutch Princess, Irenée). Because of the strength of Carlism in Spain and its brilliant con-

tribution in the Civil War, I would consider a restoration unlikely in the near future. A Carlist once told me: "When Franco dies there will be simply another strong man." Abroad the shadow government of the Second Republic tries to continue among a few ageing intellectuals who lost their power in the Civil War. Younger intellectuals, former supporters of Franco and the Nationalists, have joined them on losing their status or means of making a living in Spain. In Paris they publish their journal, *Manaña*, though just what its editors and contributors want (other than the fall of the Regime) is not always clear. Probably they want a restoration of the socialism of the Second Republic, its anti-clericalism restored (and now the destruction of *Opus Dei*, the strong secular institute in Spain), and some sort of a democracy. But it would no doubt be a democracy in which the army would organize and control the elections to a new parliament, perhaps under the Spanish Constitution adopted in 1931 at the beginning of the Republic. José Aranguren has demanded that we forget the myth that people must be competent before there can be a democracy. At times there are anarchists with their explosives in Spain (including a Scottish youth who had re-organized the anarchist clubs in Scotland), and it is, of course, not a matter of public knowledge how many communists there are in Spain or how many the government thinks there are. The accounts of Paris journalism are not to be trusted on such matters. If the productivity of labor can be steadily increased, wages will rise and with them the standard of living. Under these conditions one may contemplate a restoration of the processes of political evolution which will lead to some sort of parliamentary order.