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LIBERALISM AND COMMUNISM

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The Background of the
Spanish Civil War

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By

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The author of this remarkable article is Dr. G. Marañon, of the Spanish Academy. Physician, biologist and essayist, he collaborated with Perez de Ayala and Ortega y Gasset in forming a great republican association, which was spreading in Spain a year before the fall of the monarchy. Dr. Marañon's republicanism, therefore, stands in no need of proof and this gives an added significance to the article in which the author explains why most of the Spanish Liberals are hostile to the Barcelona - Valencia Government.

Liberalism and Communism

I.

THE revolution and war in Spain present a characteristic common to all the great historic events. While they are going on and for some time after, the judgments formed are coloured by passion, personal or party, and incidents which from the historical point of view are of secondary importance obscure the real meaning of events. I do not pretend to be free from this inevitable and largely unconscious passion, but I can plead in support of my claim to judge the matter objectively, that I have never belonged to what could be called a political party. As far as one's personal attitude is concerned, my scientific training has accustomed me to regard events calmly and above all to recognise error automatically. A man whose training has been political, *feels mortified if he has to admit that he was mistaken, but the man of science knows very well that he will make mistakes and that if he is to go on seeking the truth he must humbly and rigorously eliminate his errors.* This becomes a reflex action with him and he does not stop to consider whether former friends will accuse him of treachery and former enemies regard him with suspicion. Lenin, the greatest of the disciples of Machiavelli, used to say that in politics fidelity to the past often means treachery to the future. Machiavelli's psychology, far from being typically Latin, had a good deal that was oriental in it. We can accept this maxim, like a good many other of the Machiavellian maxims, if we remember what Machiavelli himself and his disciples failed to recognize, *that while a change of opinions*

may be justified, there must be continuity in action. The characteristic of politics, which are always and everywhere more or less Machiavellian, is that they deal with ideas rather than with behaviour, whereas for the scientist behaviour is everything. His own conduct will be regulated by his desire for truth and his refusal to concern himself with anything which is not truth.

II.

IF we ask a good many people to-day, whether Spaniards or not, the reasons for their friendly or hostile attitude to one or the other of the opposing parties in Spain, some will appeal first to their democratic faith, others to their traditionalism, still others to their militarism or anti-militarism, Catholicism or irreligion—to say nothing of a sort of literary and “Red” neo-Catholicism, which represents a very curious species in the ideological fauna of our time—their hatred of executions and air raids or finally their like or dislike of the leaders on the two sides. Very few will base their attitude on the real ground of the struggle and say: “I support the Reds because I am a Communist” or: “My sympathies are with the Nationalists because I am an enemy of Communism.”

That is the root of the matter and our interpretation of the situation must start there. My authority to write on politics may be challenged, and I should not attempt to defend it, but I cannot be denied the authority of an eye-witness of political events which have affected my country during the last quarter of a century. Neither can I be denied the credit of having kept aloof from public office and of having reaped nothing but material disadvantages from the conduct which my conscience has dictated to me. I hold, however, that it is the duty of the intellectual to speak out when he is asked to do so.

III.

FOR years after the Restoration, Spain enjoyed peace—for the Colonial and African wars were not national wars—and a liberty, which may have seemed imperfect at the time, but which is enjoyed by no country in the world to-day. During this peace, as always happens, the public power began to weaken and the spirit of renewal, which characterized this phase of Spanish life and made it glorious, ended, politically speaking, in a demagogy, which was accentuated by years of a sudden and unearned well-being—those of the European war and after. The Spanish people are very ascetic and perhaps the most sensitive in the world to the corruption of riches. Towards 1923 when General Primo de Rivera accomplished his *coup d'état* there was a feeling in all classes that “this cannot go on” and the dictatorship owed its triumph to the prevalence of this sentiment. At that time there was no talk of Communism, or if there was it was quite gratuitous. The agitation which had made dictatorship possible was associated with a slow process of dissolution of a strictly national kind which affected the whole of society from top to bottom. This process was pointed out by Don Antonio Maura, a great political leader who, though nominally Conservative, had a reforming spirit. He described it as a “crisis of citizenship” and tried to resist it. This loosening of the springs of authority resulted in a growth of the revolutionary force which was for years localized in Catalonia. Here it took the form of what may be called latent agitation and its victims could be indicated statistically with the same regularity as the victims of typhoid. In 1909 this state of affairs found expression in what has been called the “tragic week,” with the burning of convents and all sorts of violent manifestations in the traditional manner of Spanish revolution. After the horrors we have

seen in these days the events that aroused such passions then appear like the sport of schoolboys. The real seriousness of these events did not lie in the street fighting. It was the result—though we did not see it at the time—of the fact that the Spanish Liberal, who could now feel himself the equal of other European Liberals, had underneath his liberalism an attitude which was profoundly anti-liberal, for the simple reason that it was tinted red.

Spanish socialism had not yet become an extreme movement, as can be gathered from the docility with which some years later it adapted itself to the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera who found his opponents exclusively in the bourgeois elements. These included not only people of liberal connections but many who had always been Conservatives and even a section of the Army and the one with the most aristocratic tradition—the Artillery. I have unanswerable proofs that when the dictatorship came to an end an influential section of the Socialist leaders would have been prepared to collaborate with the monarchy under a new constitution.

Even when the monarchy fell and the republic came into existence, the visible influence of Communism was very restricted. Casting my mind back to the violent and active propaganda which preceded the elections of April, resulting in the change of régime, I find it difficult to see any traces of Communism there. I do not think the word was once mentioned during the meeting which was held in the Plaza de Toros a few days before the Madrid voting and swung the votes to the Left. When a member of the Government read the speeches that night he remarked that most of them were much more moderate than those delivered twenty years earlier on the occasion of the troubles in Barcelona by the leaders of

the Liberals, Governmentalists and Monarchists. The same impression was found in the memoirs of the Chief of Police at that time, General Mola, who was later to become so famous. Conscious as they were of the seriousness of the situation, the last governments under the monarchical régime—including several of my personal friends—did not dream of worrying about the menace of Communism. In fact, at that time, it hardly existed.

Meanwhile, the politicians and press of the Right were predicting a series of catastrophes if the republican movement should triumph, in spite of the fact that it was so pacific in character and led by Moderates and Liberals, some of whom, like Senor Azaña, were not even traditional republicans. It would be useless to hold forth on what might have happened if the Republic had not come into existence. In my opinion it was inevitable in the circumstances that it should, and in dealing with history we must never allow ourselves to pretend that we can know what would have happened if events had been different. What is beyond doubt is that the predictions of the extreme Right and of the Monarchists who opposed the Republic were completely fulfilled. We had continual disorder, unreasonable strikes, burning of convents, religious persecution, the exclusion from power of Liberals who had helped the movement but refused to lend themselves to class politics, and refusal of tolerance to people on the Right who in good faith were prepared to respect the régime, though naturally not burning with Republican zeal. The Liberals had listened to these prophecies with the supercilious attitude one might adopt to a would-be suicide. It would be a departure from elementary truthfulness to-day to conceal the facts. Centuries of success in the problems of government—a success which is not a matter of the past for the English and North

American democracies—had given the Liberal an excessive and sometimes petulant conviction of his own superiority. If you look at the statues in the streets of Europe and America you will see inscribed on them the names of Liberals. Whatever the political future of Spain may be there can be no doubt that at this stage of her history it was the reactionary, not the Liberal, who saw clearly.

These pessimistic forecasts of the prophets of the Right, however, were based on the intervention of hidden forces, such as Freemasonry, rather than on direct Communist action which seemed even to the most apprehensive to be theoretical or, to say the least of it, very remote.

IV.

RUSSIAN propaganda—the commencing date of which it is difficult to fix—became intensified on the change of régime when it was felt in Russia that the Conservative elements in the New State were being weakened. I remember that a few days before the burning of the Convents in May, 1931, I was walking along aimlessly in the evening behind three people who were talking politics in a loud voice. They were Communists and the note of confidence and the hopes they expressed would have impressed me if I had not been so thoroughly convinced that the national ideology was resistant to Bolshevik tactics. The day of the fires showed that I was wrong. The propaganda, though underground, had been enormous, though the actual number of adherents to Communism was very small. At the first general elections only two or three of their deputies were returned—how many times were we told this to calm our fears!—but the three hundred columns of smoke which ascended to heaven in all

the towns of Spain on the same day and at about the same hour, under conditions of peace and with no provocation in any way commensurate with such a barbarous retort, all this carried out with a technical skill quite unknown to the Spanish people, demonstrated that the foreign organisation existed and was impetuously making its first attacks. It is not from any personal vanity but in order that the truth may be known that I mention that the only protest in the Republican camp was that which I signed with two other persons who were bearers of illustrious names. No doubt isolated groups adopted the same attitude, but there was no general, decisive and energetic reaction by Liberals to these events. There were many Liberal-minded Spaniards who gave a tentative support to the Republic as a new régime which must bring with it political and social reforms, which were so inevitable that their necessity will have to be recognized by the Nationalist Government. These Spanish Liberals did not support it as an extremist class-movement destructive and dictatorial in the Russian manner and in face of these happenings they retired into their tents. That was the beginning of the slow agony of the new-born Republic. It should be pointed out that their withdrawal was not due to what was being done but to their disillusion at what was not being done. Without the support of "benevolent enemies" the Republic could not have survived. For several years the extremists laughed at those who contended that the Republic could only be consolidated by "broadening its basis" in a generous spirit. To-day these same extremists pretend a lively respect for everything which in fact they do not respect at all, including Catholicism.

There is a fault common to Liberals all over the world. It is a sort of partial colour-blindness which enables them to see black anti-Liberalism but not the red variety. To this

the Spanish Liberal added an old anti-clerical tradition. These special circumstances made him capable of all kinds of concessions and weaknesses. The anti-clerical Liberal was often in his private life perfectly orthodox. Once during a medical examination I counted the men who had religious medals round their necks and I found that most of them belonged to the bourgeois parties of the Left. When I mentioned this in a French review, it was assumed that I had made a slip and the word "Right" was substituted for "Left." But these Left-wing sympathisers with their religious medals would blush if they gave the impression before witnesses that they did not regard the burning of convents as favourable to public well-being. It is not fair to hold a few men responsible for this catastrophe which was the prelude to so many others. The responsibility rests on Spanish Liberals generally who failed to take account of the seriousness and the significance of the facts and who, by contributing to the impunity with which they were carried out, destroyed what was left of political authority.

From this point the Communist character of the agitation became more pronounced and was developed very skilfully so as not to alarm the public at elections and other demonstrations. The strength of the Communists always looked less than it was. However, in the end, the fact that the Right parties won the elections was made the pretext for a revolutionary bid for power in October, 1934. This is forgotten abroad where there is no special reason to remember the details even of recent Spanish history. Spaniards, who have not forgotten are amused at the puritanical horror of those who were prepared to make a revolution against perfectly legal elections, but who are shocked because a section of the people and the army rose in turn against the violences of the new

power, such as the murder of the Leader of the Opposition by three police officers. The "governmentals" of to-day are the "rebels" of 1934 and it is therefore better to talk at present of Communists and anti-Communists and to avoid the word "rebel" which raises serious problems of priority. The rising in the Asturias in October 1934 was a preliminary attempt at the Communist conquest of Spain. The choice of Spain was not entirely due to the special advantages offered in a country always somewhat disturbed, by a new régime which had lacked authority from the first. Nor was it entirely based on the old and misleading idea of a psychological resemblance between the Spanish and Russian peoples. It was founded on the fact that the victory of Communism in Spain would undoubtedly and before long, for geographical and racial reasons, bring about a shaking of European fascism and above all a rapid conversion to Communism of the greater part of Latin America. The preliminary stages of this conversion—the inveigling of American Liberalism—was then, and is now still more, advanced.

The Communist movement in the Asturias failed by a miracle, but two years later there was a second and formidable attempt. Nobody who has lived even a few hours in Spain or from outside the country has seen it other than through the ingenious and effective mirages of liberty, public good, democracy and constitutional republicanism, can doubt for a moment that the Red Spain which is fighting to-day is, in its political direction, totally and absolutely Communist. The militant Communists, who have been unmasked, have naturally no longer any need to hide their designs. The non-Communists, compelled by events to bear the yoke of the Red cause, still talk of defending a democratic public because they believe there are no limits to human credulity. Privately,

however, they do not deny that they take this attitude from fear or by a sort of ethical mirage which makes them subordinate conscientious duty to friendship or party compromise, when it is not a fear of "disappearance."

As I write these lines a man so little open to suspicion as Mr. Eden has made clear to the world the unmistakably muscovite character of the Red movement in Spain. Nobody in good faith, therefore, can misunderstand the nature of the problem. My inveterate Liberalism prevents me from withholding my respect from those who can still sincerely support this movement and who sympathise with it precisely because they believe that the salvation of Spain and of the whole world depends on Communism. What one cannot admit, except on a theory of bad faith or mental deficiency, is that this support and sympathy can be based on love of liberty, social peace, democracy, respect for freedom of thought and all the other noble ideas which have no part in the Bolshevik State.

V.

NEVERTHELESS, when we stated a little while ago that the number of Communists in Spain was small, we were not deceiving ourselves. They were and they still are a minority even among those who are fighting in and behind the Red trenches. Our mistake, like that of the other countries in Western Europe and America, was to estimate the social importance of an idea, in this case Communism, by the number of its professed adherents. If human nature were capable of learning from historical experience, it would be sufficient to recall that the Russian Revolution triumphed thanks to an almost insignificant group of Bolsheviks. Since, however,

individual conduct is largely based on personal experience, historical experience has no influence and probably never will have any upon the conduct of communities. The same thing happened in Spain as in Russia: a few men of action, representing a minority but well-organised and ready for anything, imposed their will on the majority.

The causes of this victory are now clear. Allowing for the undeniable organisation and discipline of the movement, it was based on a tactic which made use unscrupulously of all friendly forces of whatever kind with the proviso that they could be cast aside when victory was secured. It was a purely Machiavellian policy. When the revolution was already well advanced, Spanish Communism comprised few organisations if we compare them with the numerous organisations of the Socialists, Anarchists, and Syndicalists, or even those of the Left Republicans. There were only two or three Ministers representing the Communists in the revolutionary governments, including the present one, and the number of their deputies also, as we have said, was always small. Yet Communism has not only imposed its power on Red Spain but it has reduced to impotence the Socialist groups including some so powerful at the beginning of the movement as that of Largo Caballero who was for many months the hero of the Revolution, and the well-armed masses of Anarchists and Syndicalists who controlled the streets until last April and provided the most important body of soldiers. The chaotic condition of these forces made it easy for them to be overpowered by the strict Communist discipline. When the time is ripe these "Friends of the People" will proceed without the least ceremony to the "liquidation" of the Anarchists and Syndicalists who, it may be said in passing, are the most authentic expression of the national psychology in our revolution.

But they would not have been able to gain this extraordinary victory without another support which they had already exploited and very cleverly won over, that of Liberal opinion. While the conquest of Russia was carried out by exclusively working-class means, that of Western countries would be totally impossible if Liberal opinion were against it. Liberal opinion in our countries has left its mark on all social movements. It was the dominating influence in European and American thought during the nineteenth century and when its star began to wane, it received a new impulse and authority with the European war, won in the name of Democracy, and with the rising importance of the United States of America which expressed democratic fervour with the somewhat petulant impetuosity of youth. That is why in the years which preceded the present movement, Communist propaganda set itself to convert Liberals all over the world.

VI.

HERE, then, is another key to the problem. If it were possible, theoretically, to find a single cause for the present great upheaval of humanity, I should not hesitate to say that it is to be found in the great mistake of the Liberals of the world. They originally represented the humanist tendency in civilization—the most fruitful in practical and psychological results—and to-day the majority of them sympathise with the most anti-Liberal and anti-humanist of all the political ideologies that have ever existed, the Communist ideology.

It would take a long time to go into the reasons for this mistake, unprecedented in history. The Liberal was originally the broad-minded man, tolerant, and convinced that the progress of the world could not be achieved without an

irreducible minimum of liberty. The era of Liberalism really began with the Renaissance, during which all the politicians and a great part of the ideology of cultivated people found their inspiration in Tacitus, the prototype of the enemies of despotism and the first Liberal in the modern sense of the word. Centuries of struggle against despotism brought to birth two errors in the mind of the Liberal. One was that the enemy of liberty is always the single tyrant, the monarch, and the other that Liberal sentiment is to be found in the people and draws its nourishment from popularity. The first result of these errors was apparent in the French Revolution, for which Liberals paved the way in their efforts against despots and in favour of the people. Out of it there immediately arose the despotism of the popular tribunal and of the dictators drawn from the masses, from Robespierre to Napoleon. And the victims were inevitably the true Liberals, those who out of fidelity to their Liberalism, to its conduct rather than to its ideology, rebelled against the new despotism, were guillotined, or compelled to flee.

Then there came into existence the other type of Liberal, the bastard type, afflicted with a colour blindness which made him incapable of recognizing despotism when it was coloured red. It was this type which threw the mantle of its authority over the revolutionary cruelty, glorifying it and rendering possible in large measure all subsequent revolutions down to our own.

The characteristic of this Liberal—the false and far the most numerous type—is his infinite fear of not appearing Liberal. He is concerned for the most part not with the deeper meaning of Liberal conduct but with passing for Liberal-minded. The immense social prestige of Liberalism explains and is felt to justify this attitude. The hardiest of reactionaries

can hardly restrain a smile of satisfaction—how often we have noticed it!—when one says: “You are a Liberal at heart.” The Liberal on the other hand cannot bear without anxiety to hear any doubt thrown on his Liberalism. According to current ideas, not to be a Liberal is to be deficient in intelligence, for, as a matter of fact, a large number of men famous for their creative work were Liberals or at least had minds tinged with Liberal toleration. Not to be Liberal signifies moreover to be “an enemy of the people,” a phrase created by the French Revolution, which still maintains all its prestige in many minds. And that means, too, not to be modern, because many conquests of civilization have been made under the banner of Liberty. But Liberty has no fixed colour. It is not a question of ideas but of conduct. What a terrible mistake to have turned it not only into a question of politics but into one of class politics!

Communism with a keen intuition has very cleverly attacked these three breaches in the vanity of Liberals and has reduced them and has them at its mercy. Obviously, the negation of all Liberalism which is implied in the Communist régime would render it at first sight very difficult to reconcile with Liberal fervour, but the Communist, like all great propagandists, is not held up by contradictions. He knows that the co-efficient of collective credulity is practically without limits. The Liberal, in addition to this credulity, has a special kind of simple-mindedness when appeal is made to his favourite myths. From this point of view the modern world presents a surprising spectacle. At the very moment when, in Russia, dissentients from the rigid creed of the Government are being exterminated by dozens, and the leaders of anti-Communist groups are kidnapped in other countries, the Liberal continues to believe that Russia is the land of moral progress and the Mecca of Liberalism. The example of Spain

has carried this mistake to the limits of the incredible. One still finds there on the Red side Liberals who declaim with a truly Liberal eloquence against the dictatorship on the other side while they themselves are not only unable to express their thoughts freely, but are very often compelled to say to the newspapers what they are ordered to say. Last November a Communist said to me in Madrid: "You, who have always been a Liberal, will be with us." But that very day, the workmen's committee had forbidden the republication of one of my books because in one place I said: "I, who, thank God, have always been a Liberal." When I left Spain with the remark that this procedure did not seem to be very Liberal, I was declared to be "an enemy of the people" and a writer in an American country, a Communist and Catholic, described me in an article as "the new Spanish Torquemada."

Naturally there are many Liberals—all who are not blinded by red—sincere republicans for the most part, who have separated themselves from Communist Spain, precisely because it is Communist. Their position is strictly consistent with the attitude and conduct they have always observed and they have in no way "betrayed the people" as some people have accused them of doing. The flight of these Liberals from Red Spain is a rude blow to Communism in the mind of the western world which it is difficult for any counter-propaganda to nullify. Therefore attempts have been made to draw them back by all sorts of flattery, but without success. Even those who attended the Cortes at Valencia, so carefully prepared, were back in France forty-eight hours later. Among the verdicts which they passed privately is one well-known, which may be quoted since it compromises nobody; the régime of Red Spain is absolutely Soviet; there is no place there for a Liberal.

VII.

BUT there was another great danger of the Communist manoeuvre in Spain, that of its internationalism. The Spaniard, however advanced his ideas, has always been balanced by national qualities probably more than any other people in Europe. Spain is certainly a country of regionalism. I have often said that this is the purest and most active manifestation of the national soul and to realise this we have only to observe how the regional distribution exists spontaneously among groups of Spanish emigrants to America. They speak there of Italians, French, Germans, but when it comes to Spaniards, they talk of Castilians, Andalusians, Catalans, Galicians and Asturians. The necessity of taking account of regional characteristics in Spain has always seemed to me to be biological rather than political. Having said this I must point out that the error which has been made is to confuse the noble reality of regionalism with separatism. The national sentiment of Spain is made up of a regional spirit which is, in its turn, an extension of the Spanish family sense. That sense, so far from being enfeebled, provides regionalism with its sap and vigour. In any village in America, no less than in Madrid or in Barcelona, Spaniards meet as representatives of provinces in their regional centres like large families which hardly rub shoulders with others. But faced with the nation in danger they all unite, animated by the same zeal and perhaps the common peril will result in creating a sort of union.

A great part of the enthusiasm of nationalist Spain to-day is sustained by the idea of national unity in opposition to Basque separatism, so much misunderstood abroad, in which the ambition of an attenuated group of Basques has unhappily served as an instrument of Communist internationalism.

Catalonia, on the other hand, although it is officially with the Reds, has had the wisdom not to lend itself to this manoeuvre. This attitude will undoubtedly have a great repercussion at the end of the war and after. It should be observed, too, what has happened in Navarre, a country of deep-rooted regionalism which nevertheless has played a primary part in the present nationalist movement. When a movement for separatism was launched in the first Spanish Republic, by the movement known as "Cantonal" the leading representative of the Spanish Liberalism and Republicanism of the time, the great orator Castelar, made a famous speech in which he said that for the safety of the country he would renounce Liberalism, Democracy, and the Republic. Many men on the Left in Spain know that speech by heart—a finer and more modern utterance than the Marxist proclamations—and will recite it to-day with emotion.

Two months before the Spanish Revolution began, I wrote in an article which appeared in several European and American newspapers that if the Spanish Popular Front, which had just been formed, failed to give to its ideology and to its action a profoundly national direction, it would provoke a rising in Spain. There was no particular merit in this prediction, for on all hands one could observe the hostility of Spaniards in face of the notoriously Russian tactics of the pre-Revolutionary agitations, which were never sanctioned by our governments. The most important fact bearing on this, which nobody noted, was the attitude of the young people at the Universities who supplied the force of the Liberal shock movement against the dictatorship and the leaven of the agitation which paved the way for a change of régime. From the third year of the Republic it began to change its orientation and this proceeded so rapidly that at the time of the Popular Front elections, a

Socialist professor, who a little while before had been the idol of his students, found himself giving his lessons to a hostile audience. He told me that most of his pupils were anti-Marxists. Any of us Spanish professors could have confirmed these facts. To-day 80 per cent. of the students are fighting as volunteers in the Nationalist ranks. Many of them were brought up in a Liberal environment and belonged at the outset of their studies to Liberal and even Socialist and Communist Students' organisations. There are many young people, then almost children, whom we knew in prison during the dictatorship, who are to-day heroes, living or dead, of the anti-Marxist cause. What has changed them is undoubtedly the anti-Spanish character of the Popular Front propaganda.

The Communist leaders soon took note of the fact that this was the principal force working for General Franco, and that is why at the beginning of the war their propaganda exploited so largely the so-called outrage of the employment of the Moroccan army in Spain. I, who was in Red Spain at that time, was able to observe that this argument, of foreign inspiration, did not make the least impression on Spaniards. The comradeship in arms between Spaniards and Moors is a national tradition. Only those who naïvely believe that history began with themselves and that the past counts for nothing can be unaware that the most strictly national exploits such as the campaigns of the Cid Campeador and the Conquest of Granada, which made an end of the reconquest, were partly carried out with African soldiers. Every Spaniard on the Red side felt himself racially closer to the Moors confronting him than to the semi-Asiatic Russians who already filled up his rearguard.

The next argument to be produced was that of the invasion of foreign troops. The Red leaders, once convinced

of the necessity of giving their troops a national sentiment, wanted to transform the Communist war into a war of liberation. This argument has been very much more effective abroad than in Spain, as was to be expected. In Spain, those who are surrounded by Russians, Frenchmen, Czechs, etc., and who know by their own experience what their assistance is worth, are indignant at the idea that there are confronting them also foreign combatants. There is nobody in Spain who is not aware that the war he is waging is not a civil war but an international struggle. It has not, however, been in the mind of any Spaniard, Red or White, that when the war is over this assistance may be transformed into a territorial occupation.

Spain remembers the War of Independence against Napoleon—an eminently popular struggle, the spirit of which the Communists would like to revive—a war which was won with the help of a formidable English army commanded by one of the greatest generals of the age. She knows that when Napoleon had been conquered, the friendly army and its general left the country without retaining a single inch of territory. The Spaniard is equally aware that during the European war the English and Americans occupied whole departments of France and that they too left the country when they had conquered. On one side and the other of the Spanish trenches, nobody doubts that the object of the international soldiers who are fighting with the Reds and the object also of the Italians and Germans who are fighting side by side with Franco's soldiers, is quite distinct from any idea of territorial occupation. This occupation which so much frightens foreigners does not alarm Spaniards. We may be quite sure that if one of the various nations whose soldiers are in Spain thought of taking an inch of territory, Marxists and anti-Marxists would join forces to prevent it with the same energy with which they are

now fighting against each other. There is a piece of Spanish rock which the English took at a time now distant when our national sense was weakened. But there is not a Spaniard who does not still dream every night of Gibraltar.

What matters then is not the temporary aid in men and materials supplied by foreigners; that is a question which could be settled outside Spain by a few intelligent politicians who wished to come to an agreement. The important matter is that foreigners have tried to invade the national spirit. If there were not a single Russian soldier or gun on the Red side, it would be the same; Red Spain is spiritually Russian-Communist. On the Nationalist side even if there were millions of Italians and Germans, the mind of the people with its qualities and its defects, would be infinitely Spanish, more Spanish than ever. It is useless to attack with sophistries this absolute truth which, even before the struggle, constituted the strength of one of the parties and the weakness of the other. If the motto, *Arriba España*, shouted with such emotion to-day by many non-Fascists on the Nationalist side could be adopted by those who are opposing them, the chances of victory of the latter would be, by that single fact infinitely increased.

VIII.

THESE are the real elements of the problem: a struggle between an anti-democratic, communist, and oriental régime on the one side, and on the other, a régime which is also anti-democratic but is anti-communist and European, and to which only the all-powerful Spanish reality can give the true form. As Italy and Flanders, in the 15th and 16th centuries, were the theatre of a struggle between the great powers which

were to fashion the new Europe, so to-day the great forces of the world are fighting their battles in Spain, and Spain—it is her glorious tradition—is bearing the hardest part of an effort towards a victory from which all will profit.

That is how most Spaniards have regarded the problem and it is the attitude which should be taken up by the foreign onlooker (who perhaps is not so foreign as he thinks) whether he be Communist or not. The Communist formula is one everywhere and with it the attempt is being made to conquer the world. The anti-Communist formula is not necessarily Fascist. Italy, Germany, Portugal, Japan, and implicitly or explicitly many other countries in Europe and America, are anti-Communist. But with a minimum of common features, each is governed in its own way. There is room therefore for choice.

The problem would be quite clear but for the disturbing intervention of Liberal forces of which the great prestige and the immense blunder add to the confusion of world politics to-day. Blindness to the Red anti-Liberalism has led the Liberal to sell his soul to the devil. His punishment will be commensurate with his error, for Liberalism as a political force will perhaps not have any direct action in the years to come. It will, however, remain a spiritual force, by whatever name it may be called, that which it represented at the beginning and represents in its essence is the immortal driving power of human progress. One day no doubt it will spring up again purified from the dictatorships of to-day.

Spanish Liberals now know where they are, but those of the rest of the world are not yet enlightened. I am not writing with the idea of convincing them. In politics the only psycho-

logical mechanism of change is not conviction but conversion. One should always suspect the man who changes because he says he has been convinced. One day the Liberals of the world will experience a thunder-clap and a lightning flash and will fall to the ground. When they return to consciousness they will have learned once more the way to truth.

