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# Spain Is In Europe

By JULIÁN MARÍAS

BOOKS ABROAD published in its Summer number of 1951 an article by Robert G. Mead, Jr., entitled *Dictatorship and Literature in the Spanish World*. The subject is interesting and difficult. The general thesis of the article as well as certain points which the author makes attract our attention. The circulation and the prestige of the review in which the article appeared increase its scope; but, above all, it has a symptomatic value as an example of a widespread intellectual attitude. For that reason I believe that it deserves a sincere, thoughtful commentary.

The gist of the article is as follows: since 1939, that is to say since the end of the Spanish Civil War and the establishment of the present regime, certain characteristics have manifested themselves in the intellectual development of Spain and of Spanish America which are the direct as well as the indirect result of said regime. In Spain, the normal intellectual development has been interrupted, and the country has lost "the vast majority of her leading thinkers." One may speak of a "generación de los emigrados" and "any impartial comparison between these *emigrados* and the intellectuals remaining in Spain must be heavily in favor of the former." More than half of the university professors have left *the country* since the revolution. "Thus Spain lags far behind in contemporary science, while in the humanities the situation is not much better." "Aside from a few great figures (*all of whom are far advanced in years*) such as the scholar Menéndez Pidal, the philosopher Ortega y Gasset, and the few remaining men of the 'Generation of '98' (a group with essentially modern ideals), *most of Spain's intellectuals are to be found scattered throughout Europe and the New World, with the chief nucleus in Mexico.*" Those who have remained in

Spain have had either to make their peace with the regime or to eliminate all controversial topics, thus abandoning "original literary production of interest or merit." The publishing houses, Mr. Mead affirms, have also contributed to the decadence of national letters "by collaborating with the regime's campaign to eliminate *all mention* of those writers and scholars who sided with the Republic." The consequence of all this is "the *progressive* implantation of a tyranny of mediocrity in *every* sphere of the mind."

All of this in Spain. On the other hand, according to Mr. Mead, quite the contrary is occurring among the *emigrados* and other Spaniards who are living and working abroad. Leaving out the names of those who died in exile, Mr. Mead cites a list of Spaniards, almost all of them well known, some of them illustrious. Mr. Mead considers effective and valuable the work of these "Spaniards outside of Spain"—to use the happy expression of Marañón.

Finally, Mr. Mead raises the question as to the lasting influence of this situation on the intellectual orientation of the Hispanic world. His reply is that "Spain has lost *for all time whatever pre-eminence* she once had in that sphere." For various reasons, a repatriation of emigrados on a large scale is difficult, since the majority will not wish to abandon their new homes where they are rearing a younger generation which "in all probability will have little desire to return to *such a backward and undeveloped 'patria.'*" Instead of a presumptive intellectual axis Madrid—Buenos Aires, Mr. Mead looks to an area dominated by the Spanish culture of Mexico and the United States. (The italics are mine.)

So much for Mr. Mead's article. It is, alas, a picture of the Spanish intellectual situation and its possibilities with which

many will concur. It is, therefore, valid to ask how well informed Mr. Mead is and to what point his reasoning is well grounded, what his assumptions are, and, finally, what his purpose is. First, facts—which, as they say, are the most convincing evidence: It is indeed true that among the Spaniards living abroad, there are some of outstanding literary merit. Most of these are political exiles but not all of them—just as residence in Spain does not necessarily imply political affiliation. There are *many more* of them than Mr. Mead names. Without taking a census—although it might be useful—I give the names of other well known persons: the poets Jorge Guillén, Alberti, Cernuda, Altolaguirre, León Felipe; the philosophers José Ferrater Mora, García Bacca, María Zambrano; the writers Bergamín, Guillermo de Torre, Pérez de Ayala, the late Eugenio Imaz, and above all, Ramón Gómez de la Serna; the philologists Millares, González de la Calle, Corominas and Montesinos; the historian Sánchez-Albornoz; the educators Zulueta and Luzuriaga, and many others, all of these in the field of humanities. The Spanish emigration of intellectuals is, therefore, greater in number and more important historically than Mr. Mead would lead us to believe. This is obviously an intellectual, political, moral, and historical problem—note each adjective—of the first magnitude.

It is not fair to say that these intellectuals in exile are entirely lost to Spain, for their relation to it is considerable. It is even less true that “all mention” of them is taboo. (What might have been true ten or twelve years ago cannot serve as information to readers in 1951.) To give an example, in the *Diccionario de Literatura española* published under my direction (Revista de Occidente, Madrid, 1949) almost all the names mentioned above appear and many more, and furthermore, in many cases more space is given to them than to analogous writers resident in Spain. And this Dictionary is no exception. One has only to read the works of Valbuena, Torrente Ballester,

Díaz-Plaja or Blecua, from the long treatise to the brief manual designed for intermediate classes, to see that the authors in exile are not forgotten in the literary histories. They are often mentioned and their works discussed in the literary reviews.

Perhaps Mr. Mead will think that this is done because there are no others to write about. This is not the case. Many Spanish intellectuals today live in Spain, as one might expect, among its 28 million inhabitants. Spain is in Europe, whatever may be said to the contrary. And the Spanish exiles know this. Therefore, the subject is dramatic, impassioned, and can be treated only with unswerving veracity or with respectful silence.

Mr. Mead mentions no intellectuals living in Spain other than Menéndez Pidal, Ortega, Benavente and Eugenio d'Ors. Mr. Mead's deficient information obliges me to give the names of some intellectuals residing in Spain. Perhaps they will surprise the many who have honestly believed in the existence of a half dozen venerable oldsters, *rari nantes in gurgite vasto*, in the ocean of that universal mediocrity which Mr. Mead describes.

There are, to be sure, illustrious old men. In addition to those mentioned, Azorín, Baroja, Gómez Moreno, Julio Casares are among those belonging to the generation of '98 who are still living. But history does not end here. It is recognized that philosophy is having a moment of unusual brilliance in Spain, of which the rest of Europe is beginning to take notice. It is sufficient to mention with Ortega the name of Xavier Zubiri, author of a book (*Naturaleza, Historia, Dios*. Madrid, 1944) which is counted among the leading publications of the kind in this century—and there are others. Is the existence of a school of Arabists to be forgotten, of which García Gómez, successor to the late Asín Palacios, is the leading figure? Is it possible to pass over a group of philologists and literary historians which includes such men as Dámaso Alonso, Salvador Fernández Ra-

mírez (who has just published the best Spanish grammar to date), Gili Gaya, Lapesa, Valbuena, Astrana Marín, García de Diego, Entrambasaguas, Blecua, Oliver Asín, Díaz-Plaja, García Blanco and so many others? For the first time since the seventeenth century, and a few exceptions later, there are Hellenists and Latinists who are publishing translations directly from the classics, and there are studies such as those of Antonio Tovar, Pabón, B. Gaya, Fernández Galiano. In the last five or six years, two new translations of the Bible made directly from the Hebrew and Greek have appeared. Scholars such as Enrique Lafuente, Camón, Sánchez Cantón, María Luisa Caturra, María Elena Gómez Moreno, and J. A. Gaya are working in the history of art. Ethnological studies have been given new impetus by Caro Baroja; Valdeavellano, Sánchez Alonso, Aguado Bleye, Pericot are working in the field of history; Garrigues, Conde, Arboleya, Díez del Corral, Maravall or García Pelayo in juridical and sociological studies. As far as medicine goes, the list of first-class men who are working in the field would be extensive. Picking at random, I would name Marañón and Laín Entralgo, who are specialists not only in medicine but in history; Jiménez Díaz and Hernando, Arruga and Duarte, Rof and Grande, López Ibor, Germain, Sacristán, Lafora. Men such as Bachiller, Flores, Catalán, Palacios devote themselves to the study of mathematics and physics. And if one were to speak of literature, he would have to give a great number of names of both young men and middle-aged writers. For example, there are the poets Aleixandre, Gerardo Diego, Dámaso Alonso, Rosales, Panero, and other young men; there are novelists such as Zunzunegui, Cela, Carmen Laforet, Suárez Carreño, Agustí, Gironella; dramatic authors such as López Rubio, Ruiz Iriarte, Buero Vallejo, Valentín Andrés Alvarez; prose writers such as Julio Camba, Fernando Vela, Mari-chalar. . . .

But why continue? It is not my intention

to take a census of Spanish intellectuals of both sides of the Atlantic, and even less to rank them in order of merit. On both sides, they range from men of genius to those of merely estimable talent. I wish to emphasize two facts: first, that there are many persons in Spain who are devoting themselves to the different intellectual disciplines, and second, that their number—as might be expected *a priori*—is *enormously greater* than that of those living abroad.

I must mention one manifestation of intellectual life in Spain, and one pregnant with possibilities for the future, a point which seems to be of special concern to Mr. Mead. I refer to the foundation in 1948 of the Instituto de Humanidades, which Ortega organized with my collaboration in Madrid. It is important because it is an absolutely independent institution, without state intervention, subsidies of any kind either Spanish or foreign, supported only by the matriculation fees of those who attend its courses and discussion groups. With what result? The program of the Institute covered a range of topics of interest, some of which had not been studied before. Two books, one of them mine (*El método histórico de las generaciones*), the other by Dámaso Alonso (*Poesía española, ensayo de métodos estilísticos*), have already been published, samples of the activities of the Institute. What social repercussions did the Institute have? Let one statistical item suffice: these courses and discussion groups, which cost about as much for each lecture as an orchestra seat in the theater, often attracted as many as 200 persons. Ortega's first course had to be limited to 650, his second to 1,300—the seating capacity of the Barceló movie theater. Either Mr. Mead has not heard of this, or he considers it of nugatory interest to his American readers, whom he is supposedly informing about the activity of Spanish intellectual circles in the last few years.

The basic hypothesis which vitiates Mr. Mead's article is what we might call his political bias. I mean his belief that politics

are decisive and all-important in these matters. This same hypothesis may lead him to believe that the facts which I have cited on these pages imply a defense or a justification of the regime in power in Spain today. As if all that happens in a country could be attributed, for good or evil, to the government, as if the political regime were not a relatively superficial phenomenon, the effect of which, perturbing as it may be, is transitory and leaves untouched the deepest strata of a society. With only a change of sign, Mr. Mead would coincide entirely with the official propagandists and panegyrists of the Spanish regime, who maintain that it is the only important event in the last fifty years. I am far from thinking anything of this kind. If I understand what is happening in Spain, the causes of her grandeur or wretchedness, of her intellectual brilliance or deficiencies, of her perils and her hopes, I need to labor a little more, think somewhat more seriously and, first of all, get outside of Spain and consider what is happening in Europe and the rest of the world, for only there can one discover the true reason for what is happening in any country. I am sorry that intellectual life as we understand it in Spain is not so simple.

And with this, I come to the most important point. Mr. Mead evidently considers the supposed ailment of Spanish culture to be incurable, for what he proposes is to call it definitely concluded. "Spain has lost for all time," he affirms, "*whatever pre-eminence* she once had in that sphere." Spain is finished. A curious form of Hispanism! And so that it will seem less obvious, perhaps for reasons of friendship and "good neighbor policy," he heaps amiable praise on the exiles, a praise which in truth is less than just. With the Spanish government as pretext, Spain is to be eliminated

*forever*. Were this true, it would certainly imply too great an esteem for the present regime which would have had to be able to sterilize in twelve years an entire country for all the rest of time. As if this were possible! As if intellectual flowering ever coincided with good regimes; as if one had to wait to establish democratic governments, elections, United Nations, or indeed dictatorships, corporate states, or some other form of government in order to think, to dream, write pleasant prose, compose verses, paint, build pyramids or Gothic cathedrals, make the air vibrate with the music of violins, or investigate the structure of the atom or the attributes of God.

What results when we compare Mr. Mead's article with the true state of affairs? Exactly the opposite of his conclusions: we see the extraordinary, surprising vitality of Spain and the consequent hope for her future. All of this goes to show how right Ortega was in his diagnosis when he spoke not long ago about the "surprising, almost indecent health" of Spain. Her historic vitality is such that she can permit herself even error. There is no doubt that the emigration meant a tremendous mutilation of the intellectual life of Spain, although one cannot predict whether the balance of it and its consequences two centuries from now will be negative. What is amazing is that in spite of so great a loss, or near loss (we have seen that it is not so complete as is said), there still remains in Spain, as is logical, a great intellectual life, and in greater volume. There has been a sad, painful, distressing excision, which presents a problem which is increasingly acute. A flourishing and fecund Spain exists *extra muros*. (*Extra muros*, yes; but let us not exaggerate, for who puts doors to the open country?) And in spite of that, Spain is in Europe.

*Wellesley College*

