



EUZKO DEYA

THE VOICE OF THE BASQUES

20th SEPTEMBER, 1938

ENGLISH EDITION OF "EUZKO DEYA," PARIS
LONDON OFFICE: 19a, COLEMAN STREET, E.C.2

DICTATORS AND "SELF-DETERMINATION"

It is a curious commentary on the vagaries of this life that, even despite their abhorrence of democracy and all that it implies, the Fascist states in Europe to-day have shown a sudden turn towards democratic methods.

Hitler, whose hand has been stayed at least for the time being with regard to the Sudeten problem, swerves round and, with the simulated enthusiasm of a democrat, demands "self-determination" for these very unfortunate Germanic people. This term "self-determination" has almost immediately been translated into a demand for a plebiscite.

Quick to echo his master's voice, Mussolini now calls for the same remedy in Czechoslovakia. In an unsigned letter in *Popolo de Italia*, which is generally attributed to Mussolini himself, it is stated:—

"You, Lord Runciman, must simply propose to Benesch a plebiscite not only for the Sudeten Germans but also for all the nationalities which will ask for it. . . . Frontiers traced in ink may be modified. It is another thing when frontiers were traced by the hand of God and the blood of man."

The Basque people would wholeheartedly welcome this change in dictatorship policy if it represented a true change in spirit. It is their fervent belief that a people, however small they may be, have a natural right to determine their own destiny. But when listening to these eloquent appeals by the dictators on behalf of the Sudetens—and for that matter the other minorities in Czechoslovakia—a painful, an ugly memory is brought to their minds.

Both the Basque country and Catalonia called for and held a plebiscite, which resulted in an overwhelming majority in favour of "Home Rule." This rightful demand of the peoples was constitutionally recognised by the Republican Government and the autonomy of both countries was ratified.

Yet Hitler and Mussolini, now appealing to the democratic spirit of the world for a plebiscite for the Sudetens, are at the same time expending the lives of their young men and their capital resources in attempting to exterminate the

righteous results of the Basque and Catalan plebiscites—two peoples whose rights are equally great, if not greater, than those of the Sudetens.

As Mussolini has stated, Lord Runciman should propose a plebiscite "not only for the Sudeten Germans but also for all the nationalities which will ask for it."

The Basques and the Catalans who have long held the views now put forward by the Dictators passed the test of a national plebiscite and clearly showed to the world their national will for freedom and self-government.

The maintenance of national freedom and the avoidance of the harsh consequences of a centralised government was the sole aim of the Basques in their struggle against totalitarianism.

Had Germany and Italy kept out of the Spanish struggle, the national rights and liberties of these two countries, with their 7,000,000 people, would have been an established fact.

In view of their sudden support for that democratic medium, the plebiscite, perhaps Germany and Italy will induce General Franco to return to the Basques their national freedom which has been despoiled by methods much worse than anything inflicted against the Sudeten Germans by Czechoslovakia.

OUR VIEW CONFIRMED.

The Rome correspondent of *The Times* (20.9.38), commenting on Mussolini's view on use of plebiscites, senses the natural reaction of Basques. He writes:—

" . . . the value of the principle once admitted, its application can hardly be confined to Czechoslovakia. Signor Mussolini's words are likely to set fresh agitation stirring among the Hungarian and German minorities in Rumania and Yugoslavia, among the Ruthene subjects of Poland in Eastern Galicia, while General Franco will hardly appreciate them for their bearing on the situation of the Catalans and Basques in Spain."

PERSECUTION OF THE BASQUE CLERGY.

The religious nature of Franco's rebellion is difficult to understand unless one considers it as a war against the true precepts of the Church. Here are some fully confirmed details of the rebel treatment of the clergy in Euzkadi:—

Two hundred and fifty priests have been sent to prison since the Basque country was invaded, and about two thousand priests have been deprived of their living.

Nanclares de la Oca (Alaba), San Cristobal (Pampelume), Carmelo (Bilbao), Ondarreta (San Sebastian) and Burgos, are a few of the places where priests are being held prisoner and ill-treated without any charge being made against them.

Visitors to the prisons are forbidden, use of the Basque language is prohibited, letters are opened, and the priests are compelled to buy their own food.

In the Burgos prison the priests are not allowed to celebrate mass or read their prayer books. They are thrown among the worst of criminals.

Three hundred and fifty priests have been exiled to France and other countries. Among them are the Bishop of the Basque country, Monsieur Murjica, now in Belgium; and the Vicar of the Basque Diocese; three canons, the Rector, Vice-Rector, four spiritual directors and six professors, all from the Diocesan Basque Seminary of Vitoria.

At some of the Basque prisons a number of priests have been transferred to concentration camps or fortification works, where they are compelled to work as labourers.

Here is the story of fifty-three Basque priests now held prisoner at Nanclares, Alava. Recently

these priests were offered their freedom—upon certain conditions. The rebels presented to them for signature two documents: one an admission of guilt and a promise to reform; the other a "voluntary" application to practise their services in Castilian dioceses.

But these priests were unaware of any crime for which they should admit guilt, and they knew that their duty lay with their people. They one and all refused to sign either document, and so they still remain in prison.

A particular instance of the way in which Basque priests are treated may be cited in the case of Don Santos de Arana, a popular priest of San Juan (Bilbao). Father Arana had been sentenced to 12 years' penance a year ago by the rebel War Tribunal, on the charge of being a "separatist." Searching through his house later, the Fascists found 200 pesetas which had been realised by the sale of prayer-books. Thereupon, he was brought before Court again and sentenced to six years' imprisonment and fined 5,000 pesetas. Father Arana was accused of being "one of the Basque Nationalists who go to Church only to offend God."

Little wonder that M. Auphan, correspondent of the French paper "L'Action," writes of "the anguish of the Basque population before the entrance of Franco into Bilbao."

"The Basque people," he stated, "wondered whether the persecution of Franco's soldiers would be as bitter as was first feared. But when it was revealed how innocent priests were thrown into prison with life sentences their worst fears were realised."

DEATH OF SENOR DE GALBARRIATU.

Don Ramon de Galbarriatu, who died recently, was the Arch-Priest and Vicar-General of the zone controlled by the Government of Euzkadi during the war in the Basque Country.

In spite of his Fascist political leaning the rebel authorities did not forgive him for his association with the protest made by the Basque clergy

against the bombing of Gernika.

Sr. de Galbarriatu was fined and imprisoned by the rebels a few days after the fall of Bilbao. Although released later, the persecution against this Basque, but pro-Franco priest, continued, and Sr. Galbarriatu's health was broken by continuous vexation and hostility.

ARCHBISHOP CASTIGATES REBELS.

The immoral behaviour of the rebels and their German and Italian allies has reached such depths that the Archbishop of Valladolid in a Pastoral issued on 21st August, was forced to state:—

"How those faithful brethren, hearts that receive the Eucharistic Bread, Christians who are surrounded by the threat of death, give themselves away to the most outrageous sexual and voluptuous conduct. They have not the fear of God. They do not fear to offend the Heavenly Father; God's punishment does not frighten

them. Let us pray for the ending of this terrible flood of public immorality!"

That is what the Archbishop of Valladolid says, and yet it was at Valladolid where a Congress of Catholic Action was recently banned by the Spanish Phalangists.

The Spanish rebels, while taking drastic measures against the activities of Catholic Action, do nothing to prevent the shameful orgies of their followers. And, even despite it, Franco's revolt is described as "a religious crusade."

GERMANY'S TIGHTENING GRIP ON EUZKADI.

The following facts, which have been gathered from the rebel Press or by the Bayonne News Bureau, provide further indication of Germany's tightening grip on the industrial, social and military life of the Basque Country:—

During the twelve months from July, 1937, some 36,000 tons of hides have been sent to Germany from the Iberian Peninsula. Also large quantities of cereals, minerals, sugar, wood, oils, scrap iron, cork, wool and fruits, have been exported to Germany. The ports of Pasajes and Bilbao are loaded with Basque products for Germany.

Although this year's beet crop is extremely poor, German steamers are frequently seen loaded with sugar from the Basque factory Zucarera Alvaesa.

A new German Commercial Office (H.I.S.M.A.) has been opened at Pasajes.

All the Basque air lines are in control of Germans and Italians, to whom direct payments must be made.

Another instance of Germanic domination in the Basque country is the close attention the Germans are paying to Spanish industrial firms. German trade agents are continually visiting Basque firms in an endeavour to sell German goods instead of Spanish. It would be interesting to learn how much German trade has benefited by this invasion.

Foreign crews from foreign steamers at the Port of Bilbao are not allowed to go ashore. Exceptions are only made in the case of German and Italian sailors.

At Ablitas (Navarra) there is one of the best aerodromes the rebels have in the North. This

was completed by December last year exclusively by Basque prisoners-of-war, under the supervision of German "technicians."

A granite memorial is to be erected near the air-base at Gamonal in Burgos, on the spot where a German plane crashed a year ago. The names of the airmen who lost their lives will be carved on the stone.

Franco sent a delegation to the Nazi Party's rally at Nuremberg. The delegation, which numbered 21, included General Millan Astray and General Espinosa de los Monteros, leading Spanish Fascists.

Reports state that the rebels are shortly expecting two German Army Divisions at Bilbao.

A Lieut.-Colonel, a Commander, and three Sergeants of the German Army, appeared in a Basque village near the French frontier on August 26th. They had cameras and toured the surrounding hills on the French frontier.

Since the Germans gained control of the Basque military academies at Vitoria and other Basque towns, Basque conscripts are to be seen marching through the streets doing the "goose-step," with German instructors by their side.

Franco has awarded Von Paupel, first German Ambassador to rebel Spain, with the Isabel la Catalica Cross.

A special train crossed Burgos for Taragosa on August 27th. The train bore the following notice: "Reserved for the Condor Legion." The "Condor Legion" is the German aviation corps with headquarters in the Basque country near the French frontier.

NAVARRA SEES HER MISTAKE.

THE Basque region of Navarra is at last turning against Franco. When the Civil War started, Navarra supported Franco, and 30,000 Navarrese volunteers joined his forces, believing that they were fighting in a war of religion.

That was two years ago. The majority of the 30,000 Navarrese have perished in the war. That is a high price to pay for an unaccomplished ideal.

Navarra up to now has agreed to differ from the rest of the Basques regarding political ideals. While being staunch defenders of Basque Home Rule, they believed they would achieve their autonomy and the Kingdom of Navarra through Franco.

But life in Navarra is getting more difficult every day. The farms have been denuded of

labour through the young men being misled by the call to the rebel colours. They were promised a "quick victory" by the Franco propagandists.

Further co-operation with the rebels, however, is unlikely. Navarra has realised her mistake in taking up arms in a cause which was not hers. Navarra now appreciates that she should have joined the rest of the Basques in the fight for their country's autonomy, and against Castilian invasion.

Disillusionment is frequently expressed by Navarrese priests who were until recently pro-Franco in their opinions. They now recognise that "the Basque Nationalists (Basque Government) are the only citizens who took the right course from the start."

MASS EXECUTIONS OF BASQUES.

It has been fully confirmed that, since August 1st, 1938, a further group of forty-seven Basque citizens has been shot, including one woman. Twenty of these people were executed at San Sebastian. They included Manuel de Muxika, Señor Vega, and a former Mayor of Mondragon. At Derio (Bilbao) seventeen persons were executed on August 21st, and ten on August 26th, including a woman whose name is Etxabe.

When the Basque prisoners were transferred to

jails in Southern Spain and to the Spanish African colonies, as was announced recently by the Basque Government, a number of Basque prisoners under death sentence were left in Bilbao. Most of those now executed were in that group, and it is understood that further mass executions are planned.

Once again, the Basques call to the conscience of all civilised countries to prevent this senseless and needless execution of innocent people.

BASQUES AS SLAVES IN AFRICAN COLONIES.

It is now fully confirmed that a contingent of the Basque prisoners, recently moved by the rebels from Euzkadi to the Port of Santa Maria, Cadiz, have now been shipped to the Spanish Colonies in Africa, mainly to Fernando Po Island. There they are working with the natives in the coffee and cocoa plantations.

Among the victims are a number of doctors, lawyers and other professional men—some of them elderly—whose life-work has totally unfitted them for such work under these conditions.

This compares with the way in which the Basque Government not only protected all prisoners, but ensured their safe repatriation before the last stages of the war in Euzkadi.

REBELS' VIEW OF FOREIGN VOLUNTEERS.

If the results of their philosophy were not so often tragic, there would be something humorous about the rebel's views on the rights and wrongs of the Spanish War.

The world knows that Franco's revolt against the Republican Government could not have lasted for a week had not the Germans and Italians supported him with tens of thousands of trained soldiers and arms sufficient to subdue any powerful European country; yet this—an extract from the Franco paper, "Domingo"—is the rebel view of the few volunteers who fought for the Republican Government, and for the survival of democracy in Europe:—

"Foreign prisoners detained are numerous, and our authorities need not be told of the way to treat them. They do it humanely.

"There are many mines — lead ones, for instance—which have not been worked for a

long time because of the high cost of extraction.

"Why not put foreign prisoners to work in those mines with no other remuneration than the one these criminals deserve for coming to the Peninsula to kill Spaniards?

"It would be just to shoot them all. It cannot be wrong to spare them for a while to make them repay the harm they have done to us. The mines can be worked again with this cheap labour.

"There are several lead mines, zinc, sulphur or blenda, which could be worked for export or for our own needs.

"When these foreign bandits have rebuilt our churches, bridges and buildings, destroyed by them or by their allies, then they would have repaired just a bit of the damage they have done to a country which had done nothing against them."