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CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY

COMMITTEE ON NON-REPRESENTED NATIONS

ANNEX TO THE MINUTES OF THE TENTH
MEETING OF THE TWELFTH SESSION
HELD ON 29TH MARCH 1961,
AT PARIS

Summary submitted by **MM.** Alberto Martin Artajo
and Manuel Fraga Iribarne,
of their statements before the Committee

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Mr. MARTIN ARTAJO who spoke in French for about 40 minutes dealt with the following points:

1. Spain supports European unity. However, unity does not mean uniformity and variety must be recognised and accepted where necessary.
2. It is difficult enough to know any country but to know Spain, with all its diversity and contradictions, is even more difficult. Nevertheless, the effort should be made, for Spain is open to all, be it tourists, press correspondents, businessmen or politicians.
3. The difficulty of getting to know Spain is increased by the activities of the Spanish exiles. Exile in itself gives a distorted view of reality since it takes no account of the passage of time and is blinded by passion.
4. We have had a civil war and it will take time to recover from its terrible consequences. Yet we should remember that the United States did not recover from its own Civil War until 1914-1918.
5. The present Spanish regime was authoritarian from the start as a logical consequence of the civil war. However, it is an open system, which, as the Head of the State himself has said, can be improved and is developing on the basis of an institutional democracy. Our critics say that we are progressing slowly. Well, we must be allowed to move at our own natural pace which is suited to the nature of our problems and our character.
6. The present regime took over from a situation which in 1936 - leaving any political judgment aside - was marked by anarchy and chaos. The murder of Calvo Sotelo and the 1934 revolution showed a complete absence of any spirit of national co-existence, Spanish socialism was controlled by communists and anarchists and there was a total absence of authority on the part of the Government which led to terrible excesses.
7. The civil war was the unfortunate but inevitable result of this anarchy. The regime headed by General Franco did not take the place of a democratic and law-abiding system but took over from chaos.

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8. The regime that emerged from the civil war, in spite of slight German and Italian influences, was not totalitarian but simply authoritarian.

9. Under this regime fundamental human freedoms are respected and only certain political freedoms are partly restricted for the common good.

10. These restrictions are necessary. For example, had trade union activities been completely free, these might have been dominated by the anarchists and communists who would have destroyed other more important freedoms such as the freedom to work and personal freedom.

11. All our legislation (from the Labour Act of 1958 to the Law of 1961 regulating the right of petition) represents a progress from the authoritarian rule which was necessary during the war, to more representative forms of Government and greater freedom.

12. In recent years, the Spanish Governments have represented the most important tendencies and shades of opinion in the country.

13. This also applies to the "Cortes" where only a small minority of representatives belong to the political organisation, and to the Press, which reflects the different shades of opinion.

14. As regards our trade unions, these are becoming increasingly independent and, though they are different from other European trade unions, both employers and workers are fairly represented thus enabling effective solutions to be found to labour disputes (collective bargaining, labour arbitration etc.).

15. The Spanish regime in its struggle against anarchy and chaos is fighting against the conditions that breed communism.

16. Spanish socialism is very different from European socialism. Being inherently subversive it has been taken over by the communists.

17. The relations between the Church and the State in Spain may be described as relations of co-operation. The one is not to be confused with the other. The Church is accused alternately of exercising a domination and of being dominated, which in itself shows that the attacks to which it is being

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subjected are without foundation. The "Concordat" is not a truce putting an end to a conflict or a dangerous way of blending two different spheres of activity. It is, in fact, a co-operation agreement.

18. The existing legislation on the press is not ideal. It is for this very reason that consideration is being given to its being amended in a well-balanced way which will satisfy the great majority of the country.

At all events, it is ridiculous to say that Spanish newspapers are written by civil servants. The fact is that the censorship is exercised in only a negative sense and is always limited.

19. Spain is not a "police state." Personal security is guaranteed, there is constructive criticism and individual criticism is both abundant and free.

20. The number of Spanish exiles is greatly exaggerated. At the moment it does not exceed 25 - 30,000, many of whom are no longer exiles but emigrants.

Most of them can freely enter and leave Spain. Since 6th October 1945 any exile who has not committed an offence involving bloodshed is allowed to re-enter Spain and may also return abroad unless he is discovered to have committed an offence which he failed to report.

21. As regards economic matters, the policy of a country should not be judged. In any case, Spain has abandoned autarky, which was at one time necessary, and now pursues a liberal and stable economic policy. The recession now seems to be over and recovery well on the way.

22. The average standard of living of the Spanish people has risen considerably in recent years. It is true that at the moment there is some economic stagnation due to stability. Wages have not risen but then neither have prices.

23. As regards foreign policy, Spain's clean record is well-known. Our only claim, Gibraltar, is stated in the most reasonable terms and our understanding attitude towards Morocco testifies to our realism and to our ability to adapt ourselves to circumstances. In short, Spain does not create international problems.

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24. This policy has won recognition. For instance in 1945 owing to the diplomatic "blockade" there were only three heads of mission in Madrid. Now there are more than sixty.

25. Spain's attitude to international co-operation is one of sincere goodwill. The same applies to European integration.

26. The future of the regime, which is not "ossified" but has live and developing institutions, is assured. The past 25 years have proved the error of those who have been waiting for a catastrophe. This is always the worst possible policy.

27. Spain, which is sure of itself, seeks co-operation with Europe, as a member of western civilisation and an opponent of communism. In solving its own domestic problems, however, it must be allowed to use its own judgment.

Professor FRAGA IRIBARNE said that there was no such thing as the Spanish problem. The only problem was that the rest of the world was ill-informed about Spain. Little is said about our favourable aspects but our unfavourable aspects are widely publicised. Hence it is necessary to explain the true position to those who do not understand us by supplying them with precise information. At all events, it is necessary to explain the following:

(i) The period of instability and civil wars lasted from 1808 to 1936, culminating in the last civil war which was the result of a state of illegality.

(ii) The outcome of this war was "dialectical" in the sense that the victors accepted many points of the social programme of their opponents. Tremendous economic progress was made, there was an enormous increase in industrial, electrical production, etc. and a very successful effort has been made in the educational field (figures supplied).

(iii) Furthermore, the Spanish regime does not claim to be a model one. It regards itself as open to improvement and capable of overcoming its defects. The speaker agreed with Mr. ARTAJÓ's argument, adding that the regime wanted all Spaniards to co-exist happily which does not mean an amnesty. In the realm of politics, forgiving does not mean forgetting.

Many questions were then put to MM. MARTIN ARTAJÓ and FRAGA IRIBARNE who explained many points including the following:

I. SPANISH DEMOCRACY? If democracy is taken to mean the existence of a law-abiding State, the defence of human rights and the right to representation, then Spain is a democratic state with some of its political freedom limited but not abolished.

II. A SINGLE PARTY? It would be truer to speak of a "national movement" a much broader notion allowing for the interplay of various tendencies within the framework of a few but fundamental common principles.

III. WHAT ABOUT THE PROTEST OF THE BASQUE PRIESTS? A detailed explanation was given of the separatist and obscure origin of this protest, the uncertainty regarding the signatures, the abuse of the good faith of many of the priests, the inadmissible lack of respect towards the Church hierarchy and the interference such a protest implies in questions which are purely political.

IV. POLITICAL PRISONERS? Extensive information was supplied concerning the number of persons in prison and the circumstances under which they had been imprisoned. There was freedom of thought and no-one was persecuted on that account. The only restriction is that, as in all countries, anyone attempting to disturb public order with subversive intent has to answer for his actions before a court. Such courts in Spain were special but not exceptional. The right of defence was always guaranteed and indeed had been seen to be fully operative in recent cases.

V. EXILES? Many details were given on this as well as an explanation of the policy of reconciliation pursued by the regime and the comprehensive legislative machinery set up for this purpose which has given excellent results. In reply to a question, it was pointed out that Mr. Madariaga could return to Spain, as indeed many others who held the same and even more advanced views had already done.

VI. PROTESTANTS? Statistics show that there are no more than 18 to 20,000 Protestants in Spain. Their right to worship is guaranteed and they have a sufficient number of churches and ministers as well as a Protestant training college. However, proselytism cannot be allowed for, in Spain, religious unity is extremely important from the political point of view as a central force which keeps in check the great number of centripetal tendencies.