

## SPAIN TODAY

By MARYA MANNES

THE Lusitania Express from Lisbon to Madrid is not the only way to get into Spain, but it is the best preparation for Spain. It is one of the last *trains bleus* still running in Europe: a luxury train that exhibits signs of heavy wear and obvious neglect. The Express is always full of German agents, neutral and belligerent diplomats, diplomatic couriers with their pouches, priests and business men — a mixture that makes more for suspicion than congeniality. It is a climactic prelude to Spain, an atmosphere less of neutrality than of tension.

Getting across the Spanish border requires practical preparation. A Spanish visa is hurdle enough, particularly for an American and more particularly for an American journalist. Our own Embassy in Madrid seems to share the aversion of the Spanish Foreign Office for any observers whose reactions to the Spanish state might prove embarrassing. After the visa, which can take six weeks to obtain, there are ten more steps, all but one encountered in transit. Customs, passport controls, money controls, ration-card distributions, hotel trip-

tychs — all constitute papers which the traveler within Spain must never lack. As different sets of Portuguese and Spanish officials handle these various procedures, the night is a series of raps on the door and demands for presenting documents.

The final touch of preparation is at breakfast in the Wagons-Lits. There are two pictures over the door that were not there at dinner the night before: Francisco Franco and José Antonio Primo de Rivera. And there is a new picture to be seen from the window: the starved, baked earth of the Estremadura supplanting the fertile valleys of Portugal.

What you are not prepared for, though, is the air of opulence and gaiety that Madrid presents. There are no signs of destruction at first glance, and few signs of want. The people seem well-dressed and well-fed and full of the vitality that is unusual under oppression. The broad tree-lined avenues are serene in the sunlit air, which has a preternatural clarity.

The hotels are particularly impressive. They may be the last in Europe of their type and, unlike the Lusitania

---

MARYA MANNES has only recently returned from a four months' trip through Spain and Portugal. Articles of hers have appeared in various national magazines.

Express, they still look *de luxe*. The Ritz Hotel, which is right opposite the Prado and across the great square of the Cibeles, is a luxury product from its white façade to its white-spatted little bus-boys. The service is expert and noiseless. The marble stairs are scrubbed every morning, and the legions of waiters seem to float through the corridors on their coat-tails.

The clientele of the Ritz includes top-ranking native and foreign diplomats and business-directors, Spanish aristocrats whose houses are shut or being redone, industrialists from Barcelona, and a few well-kept mistresses. You can get a handsomely appointed room and bath on the court for seventy pesetas, although the average price is one hundred. On official exchange that would mean seven and ten dollars, on black market exchange, half as much. Meals are expensive. The "big" menu, which includes about six courses, costs thirty-five pesetas; the "little" menu, with only four courses, nineteen pesetas. By the time wine, a 12 per cent service tax and a large luxury tax have been added, your "little" menu bill comes to forty pesetas or more. At that, the food is superlative. You can have every red meat you want, any fish or fowl and a great variety of vegetables and fruit. The only shortages are in bread, which is soggy and coarse, dairy products and sugar. And even at the Ritz the olive oil is extremely inferior since the Germans took all the top-quality product available in Spain.

The management of the Ritz is responsible for its flawless efficiency as well as the curious air of hostility that permeates it. They are Belgians of long-standing pro-German sympathies. One of the head porters is an elderly Czech whose son is in the German Army. One of the doormen works for the Gestapo. A number of the waiters and valets are in Falange or German pay. From the moment of entrance into Spain until the moment of departure, the foreigner — particularly the democratic foreigner — is under surveillance.

Nearly all of this holds true of the Palace, across the way from the Ritz and under the same management. The hotel itself, however, is different in type; much larger, much less elegant and much more crowded. The lobbies are always full of people: clerks from the American Embassy, couriers, German business men, Spanish, Allied and Axis journalists, middle-class Spanish tourists. The Ritz has the top men; the Palace has the seconds. At the Ritz a woman may not receive men in her room at any time of day. In the Palace nobody cares. There is plenty of surveillance at the Palace, but the constant turnover makes that activity more difficult. The Ritz Bar in season is the social focus of Madrid. The Palace Bar is the professional hang-out.

Madrid is full of good restaurants, ranging from the high-class Horchers to little native restaurants like the Hogar Gallegos, where you get fish in Galician style. The Germans, especially of late when their prestige has

been falling, prefer to stick together in their own haunts: the Edelweiss and the Heidelberg. Here they can console themselves and plot survival over steins of beer and nostalgic German dishes which Germany itself has not seen for six years or more! On the whole, these Germans — business men and government agents alike — are not too unhappy in Spain. They are well-treated and well-fed and — most important of all — safe.

The Spanish worker, needless to say, cannot afford these restaurants as he cannot earn more than fifteen pesetas a day and even one moderate meal costs more than that. He subsists at home on tomatoes and fish and rice, and occasionally a very stringy chicken. In some of the poorer country districts this list is shortened. Only garlic remains the universal ingredient in all Spanish cuisine.

## II

Along with the hotels and restaurants and the look of the crowds on the street, the shops in Spanish cities add to the bright illusion of calm and prosperity. In Madrid, in San Sebastian and especially in Barcelona, the window-displays are alluring, particularly in leather goods and cosmetics. The workmanship on such things as leather wallets, handbags and cigarette cases is superlative. There are shops full of French perfumes, at very high prices, and of Spanish imitations of French perfumes, at very low prices.

Next in attractiveness are the men's

haberdashers. The Spanish man spends much of his infinite time on his toilette, and he has a large and handsome range of shirts, scarfs and other accessories to be worn with his excellently tailored custom-made suits. He goes in as heavily for cosmetics as the Spanish woman: perfumed hair pomade, cologne, perfume, colorless nail polish.

The small accessory shops for women — purveying costume jewelry, gloves and such — are inviting enough, but the Spanish woman has little to choose from in ready-made clothing. There is no such thing as a wholesale dress trade in Spain. The rich Spanish women either buy their dresses direct from Paris couturiers or have their own dressmakers copy French designs in imported Swiss or French silks. The poor make their own from shoddy materials. Fortunately, the Spanish woman — rich or poor — has an innate sense of style. The smart aristocrat is very smart indeed, and the girl on the street carries herself superbly. The Spanish woman is small and voluptuous until she reaches the middle-twenties. After that she is apt to be merely gross unless she can afford daily massage. The rich get fat from over-eating, the poor get fat from over-breeding.

Intellectual inertia among the women in Franco Spain is even more apparent than physical inertia. Even Spaniards admit that the vast majority of their women are simply not educated. There is no such thing as a public school program for the poor in

Spain, unless you call the Falange Youth movement part of one; and private schooling is supervised by a church which does not believe in developing feminine brains. There are exceptions in aristocratic families — girls who have been educated abroad, who have traveled and who are at ease in literature and in languages. But the typical upper-class Spanish woman can talk only of social gossip or domestic problems. She knows nothing of the world, let alone the conditions of her own country — and cares less. She is there for two very simple reasons: to amuse the male and to produce children. Those who do the former are not apt to do the latter, and vice versa.

This intellectual diminution of the female is not new to Spain, but it is certainly intensified by the Fascist pattern, which can survive only so long as men are kept in political bondage and women in spiritual bondage. Externally the Spanish woman looks much freer now than she did fifteen years ago. The girls on the streets with their long bobs and bare legs look almost as casual as ours, and industrial Barcelona has plenty of women in the clerical ranks of business. But fundamentally — in their life with their parents and later with their own families — they conform to an almost Arab scheme.

Franco and the Falange doctrines make much of the sanctities of family life. In actual practice today this translates itself into a parade of parties, dinners and infidelities. Judging from the number of men that populate the

scores of cafés from twelve noon until twelve midnight, the last place a Spanish male wants to be is home. The moment he is married, in fact, he must assert his virility and independence by cohabiting with not one mistress but a series of them. For this purpose he usually has a small apartment in another part of town where he can spend those evenings when café-life palls. The wife stays home, plays bridge, or takes a lover. The men and women neither work together nor play together: the spectacle of a married couple at the movies or at a café is almost non-existent.

Idleness has much to do with the constant need of the Spanish male to confirm his virility. The only people who work in Spain are the workers. This is not a wise-crack, it is simple fact. The industrialists of Barcelona and Bilbao may know what business pressure is like, but the Spanish bureaucrat — and Madrid is full of them — considers three hours in an office a pretty tough day. The ubiquitous officers have no war to fight. The thousands who live by black-market operations in cloth or butter or other commodities — the *Estraperlistas* — work sporadically, using wits more than time. The great majority of aristocrats do nothing all day. There is, then, only one way to use up excess energy and establish a sense of power.

All this is upper-crust, the life you see on the surface. These are the black-market millionaires, the Falange officials, the high army men, the old

Spanish families who have managed to keep their wealth. These are the people who have been on top the last five years, who have worked with the Germans and played with us, and whose one fierce animating force is to hold on to what they have. To them Democracy means Communism, and Communism means the end of the world. They are unified in only one emotion: terror of Russia.

### III

But there are other Spaniards in Spain — the majority. You see them crowding the streetcars, buses and trains to overflowing; you meet them seldom if you are a stranger. There is the chambermaid in your hotel who asks you for the Spanish news bulletins printed by Allied press services and who says: "It is impossible here, can I not go to America where people live decently?" There is the young Spanish reporter who says: "Isn't it fine, at last we can print résumés of BBC reports." When the Allies advanced, the Spanish press, so long partially subsidized by the German Embassy, found it necessary to make these concessions. Whatever the motive, the young man is excited at this move toward truth. There is the Spanish painter who is bitter because he is forced to paint heroic portraits of Franco in order to exist and whose best pictures are considered "modern" and therefore decadent. There is the workman in the third-class carriage who mutters: "This is an impossible

life, where the peseta buys nothing and a man has no liberty." There is the priest who says: "Franco has debased and corrupted all of Spain." There are tens of thousands in Spain who have not enough to eat and who feel as these do. But they are not armed, and Franco's police are strong. So is that part of the Army which would fight for Franco.

One of the most concrete signs of the opposition is the long queues of people waiting in front of the Casa Americana (the OWI) and the British Press Office for mimeographed handouts, in Spanish, of the war news. They are beggars, not for money but for the news; shabby, unshaven, hollow-eyed men and women, patient but dogged. The Spaniards are apt to call them Reds — *rojos*. It is the easiest way of disposing of them. These are the people — of many parties and beliefs — who fought against Franco and are therefore criminals. These are the survivors of prison sentences and shootings, or those who by a miracle of adroitness escaped Franco's law entirely. These are the unemployable. A *rojo* cannot find work. If he is maimed or ill as a result of the civil war, he can get no medical help. He is therefore dependent on his kin, who have little enough for their own needs.

Such, then, are the extremes in Spain: the sterile ruling class and the betrayed majority. In between are the Royalists. These are men — chiefly industrialists in Catalonia and an element of the aristocracy — who strongly oppose Franco and the Falange but do

not believe Spain capable of a republican government. They contend that the combination of Juan III, a pleasant young man now in Switzerland, and a liberal constitutional government would be the best bet for their harassed and unhappy country. They argue that another civil war would be fatal and must therefore be avoided at all costs. The general feeling among observers is that the Royalists may be too late. A year or two years ago, a monarchy might have been welcomed. Now, however, the people have reached a state where only a complete change will satisfy them. They do not seem in a mood to take a compromise, well-planned and well-intended though it may be.

Among these elements — Royalists and Falangists, if not *rojos* — move the diplomats of the neutral and belligerent nations. Theirs are the only handsome cars in Madrid, except for the black-marketeers'; theirs the winter-long social round of the capital and the summer-long social round of San Sebastian. Diplomatic life in Madrid is very formal and very stereotyped. Cocktails last from eight-thirty until ten-thirty; lunch begins at two and lasts through four; dinner is at eleven. The conversation is naturally multilingual and usually constrained, because nearly all political subjects are taboo. It thus boils down to gossip and rumor, for which Madrid provides a rich field. The more honest Allied diplomats will tell you that this can prove an almost intolerable strain. They also confess that even after years

it is still hard for a man to stay honest: the stencil becomes fixed. Furthermore, the more impressionable members of the embassy staffs are inclined to fall in love with the surface brilliance and gaiety of this Spanish life and forget the lines waiting for news of the war.

Madrid is not a funny place but there are funny things in it. One is the Velasquez Club, where members of the diplomatic corps of all nations go to play tennis and swim. At the head of the swimming pool is the German contingent: handsome, tanned men and pretty blonde female secretaries looking like posters of summer sports. On the sides are the British, French and American members. At the other end are the Japs, wearing black skull caps and carrying pink towels. The Spaniards circulate from one group to another. The Allied members are used to swimming in the company of Germans and pay no attention. When a Jap jumps into the pool, however, all the rest jump out, Germans included. The latter are inclined to take their briefcases to the pool with them. There is nothing much more ludicrous than a half-naked Gestapo man with a briefcase under his arm.

What is not so funny is my recollection of the electricity situation in Madrid. By September the shortage was so acute that all electricity had to be cut off four days a week. This meant that for four days no lifts, no lights, no radios, no iceboxes functioned. This meant, in turn, that food spoiled, communications were broken

and a lot of people not fit for it had to climb long stairs many times a day. Washing in an inside bathroom with no electric light was just one more problem. Drought was given as the main reason for this condition. Dispassionate observers gave several other interpretations, among them just abominable organization.

The money situation is a minor irritation but a constant one. Except for the tin centimos, there is only paper money in Spain. This paper money, especially in the one and five peseta notes, is of an unbelievable filthiness. It resembles the blackened and rotted lettuce in garbage pails, and is no more pleasant to the touch.

#### IV

But these are trivial things. They are merely pieces in the very complex puzzle that is Spain. The drive from Madrid to Escorial, for instance, spreads all the pieces of this puzzle before your eyes. The elegant boulevards of Madrid are only five minutes from University City, where the Loyalists held out for three years in the siege of Madrid. Here for the first time you can see the bitter scars of that war: the blasted ramparts, the gutted houses, the pits and trenches. On top of them rise the new buildings of the University. Farther along toward Escorial are more shattered walls, more ditches and craters. Then the road flattens out into the broad clear plain that leads to the Guadarrama range north of Madrid.

Once in the Escorial you sense the austerity of Philip II's suite and the cold magnificence of the palace. Down in the vaults lie all the kings of Spain in black marble coffins labeled in gold. Alfonso XIII's sarcophagus is there, but his body is not inside. In the church itself, very near the main crucifix, José Antonio, young founder of the Falange shot by the Loyalists, lies buried. Politics have thus invaded the church — against the will of many.

Back of the Escorial, on a foothill, stands a huge new hotel, the Philip II, where the clientele are the new rich of Spain, lacking the culture of the old Spanish families and the dignity of the plain Spanish people. Germans, who form a considerable colony in Escorial, are sprinkled among them.

The reactions of a stranger to Spain depend largely on time. If you are there for a short while, you see the surface — and that surface is bright and calm. It is only after the passage of weeks that you become aware of the darkness and confusion underneath. And if you travel at all, you find out that the opposition to Franco's Madrid is not only perpendicular — from those beneath him — but horizontal. The east and west coasts — the Basque and Catalan — are in violent disagreement with the seat of state. Spain is, in fact, a country occupied by its own government. Under that occupation it has become weakened and corrupt. And until that occupation ends or is ended, Spain is bound to be an infection spot for the whole continent of Europe.



# STALIN OUTWITS SHAW

BY RHEA G. CLYMAN

WHEN George Bernard Shaw and the Astors made their junket to Russia, in the summer of 1937, the Soviet Anti-Godless Society was still going strong. But Shaw, a newspaper man before he became the world's best known playwright, made certain that a satisfactory number of churches were still crowded with worshippers by slipping out and attending vespers as often as he could. Church visiting was not on the planned itinerary for the foreign guests, but Shaw contrived it by eluding his guides because, as he told this reporter, it helped him to recover from the lavish banquets tendered in his honor, and also from Lady Astor's ceaseless chatter.

At the interview with Stalin in the Kremlin, which climaxed the ten days' visit, Shaw mentioned his interest in churches. Then, in summing up his impressions, the Irish playwright made one of his witty jibes. "Mr. Stalin," he said, "as a Marxist I have nothing to criticize, but as a septua-

genarian I have two complaints. I have found your banquets too long and your church pews too short for comfort."

Stalin conceded that to a vegetarian and teetotaler like Mr. Shaw, Russian banquets might seem too long. But he could not understand the complaint about church pews. "We have no pews in Russian churches," he said. "Nor seats of any kind because Orthodox Russians want nothing except the bare stone floor to kneel on."

"No pews!" Shaw exclaimed. "But I found a seat in church last night, and it wasn't the bare floor, I am certain. What did I sit on then?"

"Mr. Shaw," Stalin said sternly, "you mistook a kneeling Russian for a seat. In the dim light of a church, that may have been possible. But don't make this mistake again. I don't like my people sat on, not by a foreigner at any rate."

And with this a very red-faced Mr. Shaw was dismissed.

