

And no one looking at our epoch can write of courage without at least a passing word of homage to Dimitroff. He did what has been done by no other man in these years; he electrified the world. He had the bravery and the endurance to make the prisoner's dock a platform from which to address mankind. He embodied the claims of justice in the person of a single man.

I may end, perhaps, on a more personal note. Writing for the *Daily Herald* is not writing for an ordinary paper. It had a special significance for me because, in its early days, George Lansbury gave me my first job on its staff.

And there is one last thing it is worth while to say. If these articles have done nothing else, I hope they have brought home to the working class the realization of two things: first, that there is no short-cut to Utopia and that it will take all the thought and energy the working class can command to move forward to the socialist commonwealth; second, that it must achieve its own emancipation.

The working class has built great things—the trade-union movement, the coöperative movement, the Labor Party. It built them almost wholly unaided, by the light of its own experience of its own needs. The travail was a heavy one, the price in suffering immense. I am confident that it can build socialism in this country in our time if it has faith in its great traditions.

It has the power and the courage; it needs now thought and determination to bring them to final accomplishment.

UNAMUNO AT SEVENTY

By ERNST ROBERT CURTIUS

Translated from the *Berliner Tageblatt*, Berlin National-Socialist Daily

THE fact that the seventieth birthday of Don Miguel de Unamuno is a matter of moment not only to Spain but to Europe reveals the profound change that has come over Spain's attitude toward Europe during the last generation. After an interval of almost two and a half centuries we again hear the voice of Spain raised in the intellectual chorus of nations.

Spain played a leading rôle on the stage of European history in the second half of the sixteenth century. Spanish culture and life forms affected the entire continent. They even remained when the nation itself underwent a series of catastrophes. Not until the end of the Thirty Years' War did Spanish cultural supremacy begin to weaken and succumb to the national and intellectual imperialism of France. Spain

sank into the condition of the Sleeping Beauty. It was forgotten by Europe, and it forgot Europe.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century Spain again awoke to self-consciousness. At that time, however, Spain amounted to some four or five voices crying in the wilderness. The nation itself continued to slumber in a condition of involuntary inertia. Unamuno's first essays on Spanish character, such as *En Torno al Casticismo*, appeared in 1895. Ganivet's *Idearium Español* appeared in 1897, but it required the military catastrophe of 1898 to arouse an audience. It was then that Spain's general spiritual renaissance began, and it is still growing at full speed. Even the political crises that have shattered Spain since Primo de Rivera's dictatorship are symptoms of a national awakening and show that the growing pains continue and that the country has not yet assumed final shape but is manifesting its will to build a new future.

It was significant that Primo de Rivera unwillingly and unintentionally thrust the name of Unamuno into the bright light of world publicity. In March, 1924, he caused this man of almost sixty years to be sent to the rocky Canary Island of Fuerteventura. The world press sprang to his defense. Such intellectual antitheses as d'Annunzio and Romain Rolland joined in protest. Unamuno was then allowed to enter France. In Paris and afterwards in the little border town of Hendaye he awaited 'the day of liberation and justice.'

The revolution of 1931 opened the doors of his fatherland to him. His astringent, uncompromising personality held aloof and still holds him aloof from contemporary and party politics. Long before the War, he had compared the Spanish parliament to Master Pedro's marionette theatre, which Don Quixote hewed down. Nevertheless, Unamuno possesses an uncontested intellectual authority transcending politics. Spain honors and celebrates in him the awakener of its national forces, the representative of the Spanish spirit in two hemispheres.

Unamuno's work now runs back for more than forty years and consists of a single dramatic monologue charged with explosives. This form of exposition is the only one that suits him even in personal contacts. Anyone who has ever witnessed his white-haired head of fire dominating a whole company of people at table and bringing them to silence for hours knows that conversation with him and his philosophy is impossible. Speech pours from him like a roaring torrent. He does not need any foil, for he is his own counterpart. Philosopher and critic, prophet and poet, he does not entirely fill any one of these rôles. He himself constantly breaks out into all kinds of new forms in the dialectic of personal existence. A thinker who despises thought and ridicules science, a mystic who rages at church doctrine, a theologian who creates his own God, a foe of abstractions and systems, he preaches 'wholeness' when

he confronts the limitations of his own subjective humanity. Man, the man of flesh and bone (*El hombre de carne y huesos*), man as a suffering creature, not as a metaphysical idea—that is the theme to which he constantly reverts. His figure recalls the mystical realism of Spanish wood-carving, in which the naturalism of hair and flesh, of blood and glistening tear-drops seems to increase the distance between the believer and the saint. And just as these manifestations of the cult of the Spanish baroque are infinitely remote from the classical art of the Italian renaissance, so Unamuno's cry to mankind is equally remote from all humanity and all humanism.

UNAMUNO'S many books of essays show how intensively he has worked over the cultural substance of the European countries, Germany not the least among them. In his early writings he advocated the popular theme of the Europeanizing of Spain. Ten years later, however, in spite of all his pilgrimages through the halls of modern European culture, he emerged, fundamentally, neither a modernist nor a European. The two things that modern culture valued most highly—science and life—repelled him. The real Europeanizing of Spain therefore came to mean that the country should inject its essential substance into the European community. It should not only receive, it should give. And he appeared with the paradoxical solution—the Hispanization of Europe.

Spain's holy mission is the heroic idealism of Don Quixote, which runs contrary to all reason. To define this mission anew to his people Unamuno wrote his *Vida de Don Quijote y Sancho* in 1906. He did not produce an essay on Cervantes based on scholarly research but detached the novel and its hero from the author and the epoch. Cervantes derived his hero from the genius of his people; Don Quixote overshadowed Cervantes. To Unamuno this character is the personification of his nation's religious consciousness. Thus Unamuno set forth on his holy crusade to rescue the grave of Don Quixote from the hands of pedagogues and parsons, from barbarians and barons, from characters that exist outside the novel of Cervantes and that have come into possession of everything. It was a crusade for the madness of belief against reason. With keen and often challenging violence, Unamuno transformed the profoundly ironic story into a legend of saints and saintliness. He invested it with all the energy that went into his chief work, *Del sentimiento trágico de la vida*, published in 1913, which flashes with the same lightning that illuminates the skies El Greco painted.

Unamuno's tragic philosophy, which includes elements from Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, is much closer to us in our present situation than it was to pre-war Europe, when it was first propounded by an individual who knew that he was threatened by his own impermanence, by misery

and destiny. But now the thousand-year-old genius of Spain again suffuses this metaphysical wretchedness of existence with a glowing desire for eternity. Nihilism is not the last word, nor is sullen earthliness. Rather does the last word lie with the eternal, with the leap into what exists beyond time. Unamuno's humanity is devoured with a burning thirst for immortality. Reason must of necessity reject this violent demand. From rationalism living man can draw no other conclusion than suicide. What will remain? The tragic consciousness must be recognized and accepted. Then, on the basis of the consequent despair, a new consciousness will arise capable of controlling our life and acts. The sufferings caused by the contradictions of consciousness give birth to a love filled with mercy. It includes in its brotherly sweep all that is living, and in the mystery of pain it turns to the hidden god, 'the personification of the all,' 'the eternal unending consciousness of the world,' that has come to grips with matter, that is ringed about by matter, and that is trying to shake itself free.

Orthodox Christianity can see in such speculations only heretical philosophizing, and Unamuno, for his part, twists the dogma of the Church as powerfully as he warps the figure of Don Quixote. Yet he will not cast himself loose from the Catholic tradition and the piety of his country, for under its hard crust it retains the eternal human desire for immortality and it revolves around the passion of a suffering God. Both as a theologian and as a moralist, he walks on the razor edge between tradition and rebellion. He disillusiones those who live on commonplaces, but to those who are looking for deliverance he seems destructive. As for the emancipated politicians and the educators of the people, they cannot reconcile his indomitable pride, determination, and solitude with their mission.

Unamuno has never wanted to identify himself with any social movement. His is the cry of the preacher in the desert, powerful, rugged, witty, disturbing, and dominating, torn between desire for the seventh solitude and the need to dance in front of the despised rabble in the market place. He stands before his people and his time, a great man with all his contradictions. As the poet Antonio Machado sang of him, he has aroused the soul of his race with an iron cudgel. 'He has the breath of a strong people, which poured out of their homesteads and sought for gold beyond the seas. He announces the glory that is beyond death.' He should not be called the *præceptor*, for he hates everything that has to do with pedagogics, but the *excitator Hispaniæ*.

'We Basques,' Unamuno said to me in Madrid, 'are the alkaloids of Spain.' According to the dictionary, alkaloids are a vegetable substance that have pronounced effects on the central nervous system. They include many strong poisons, yet they are valuable as medicines. Some

kind of spiritual chemistry would be needed to explain this, but we know one thing—that powerful organisms gain new strength from such holy poisons and flourish. Only the weakling succumbs.

PRINCE SAIONJI

By HAKUCHO MASAMUNE

Translated by the *Japan Advertiser*, Tokyo American-owned Daily, from *Cbuo Koron*

ON JULY 4, the world was informed that, on the recommendation of Prince Saionji, the Emperor of Japan had commanded Admiral Okada to form a new Cabinet. The Prince's recommendation, being quite contrary to every political speculation and prediction, surprised the public as much as did the appointment of Admiral Viscount Saito, the retiring Premier, whom Saionji had likewise recommended some two years ago. Apparently, this was a case of a dark horse, if not a rank outsider, winning the race. But Saionji's decision was not so strange as it had at first appeared to be, for the public soon realized that the Prince had chosen the right man as Viscount Saito's successor. Now, although my knowledge of and interest in modern Japanese politics are but scant, this incident made me feel that Prince Saionji must surely be a man much out of the common.

A fair number of biographies and biographical magazine articles have lately been appearing about Saionji, a fact that shows he has been attracting a great deal of public attention. Of these, I find the one by Mr. Yosaburo Takekoshi is the most interesting and inspiring. Yet, in my opinion, none of them are comparable to Emil Ludwig's biographies of Napoleon, of William II, or of Bismarck. How delightful it would be were some Japanese Ludwig to write the biographies, not only of Saionji, but also of other prominent statesmen that adorn the pages of modern Japanese history.

An acquaintance of mine recently said, 'Prince Saionji's unique judgment of persons is due perhaps to the fact that he never married.' When I heard this I felt my friend had said what I had long wanted to say but could not. Men are ever influenced by their immediate surroundings. Friends and elders and subordinates influence men, but they are most strongly influenced by their women folk. Love or hate influences your judgment and moulds your outlook upon life. In this respect there are no differences between great and small. If you do not concur in this opinion, you are not the person to succeed as a biographer. Women are excellent beings to men; they are to be admired and petted. However, at the same time, it is they who blunt the judgment of men.