

A CATHOLIC LOOKS AT MOSCOW

Jose Bergamin, famous publicist, says in this letter to Soviet writers: "There is not a Spanish writer worthy of the name who does not feel your cause is his." He tells why.

In the days before Hitler's puppet Franco overthrew the people's government, Jose Bergamin was one of the leading Catholic writers of modern Spain; indeed, he was perhaps the most outstanding one. As editor of *Cruz y Raya*, he spoke for the vast majority of liberal, democratic-minded Spanish Catholics; and so it is not surprising that, when Franco came with his mercenaries, Mussolini with his "Arrows," and Hitler with his planes and bombs, Bergamin should have taken his stand with the people of Spain, his own people, against the foreign fascist invader. Nor is it surprising that, having dodged the firing squad and the concentration camp, Senor Bergamin should be at present a refugee in Mexico. In the following letter, many of his American friends will recognize the same warm humanity and passion for democracy which they came to know when they met him in this country, in the course of his speaking tour in behalf of the loyalist government three years ago. The letter was translated from the Spanish by Samuel Putnam.

To Ehrenbourg, Alexei Tolstoy, Babel, Svetlov, Pasternach, Sholokhov, Bedny, Golodny, Barto, Fedin, Stavsky, Savich, Rokotov, Apletin, Kelyn:

SHOULD not be true to our friendship, or to my own conscience, my dear colleagues and friends, if, in this hour which is at once so terrible and so glorious a one for you, your Soviet peoples, and that great cause which you are defending, I failed to assure you of my confidence and support. This confidence which I feel is the same that we shared in Spain, when those very forces of barbarism which today are invading your soil burst upon us, and your word so truly pledged was given in exchange for ours. At that time, you were on our side and by our side, always and unremittingly; and today there is not a Spanish writer worthy of the name who does not feel that your cause is his.

Your war is far more gigantic and frightful than was our own; but on the other hand, you do not have among you the traitors that we had, to deliver your country to the enemy. As you know, the Spanish people have not been conquered, but chained; yet you know that life has not been extinguished in them, and that all Spaniards who have not laid down their arms, now put their hope and trust in you; for we have not given up the idea of victory, for the reason that we are not traitors, either to our cause or to ourselves.

Those grievous hours that we spent together in Spain live in my memory. And then, like a cool breeze healing a burn, your lands and cities were offered me, lands and cities confidently given over to peaceful labor—a just peace that had been so hardly won through your brotherly efforts, and which had not its equal anywhere in the world.

I have always loved your country, your way of life, and your way of thinking. When

I was among you, for the first time in 1928 and later in 1937, I had a chance to see the work you were doing, to become fully conscious of it; and I did not hesitate for a moment, but putting aside all superficial ideological differences (I am not a man of ideas, I am not in the literal sense of the word an idealist, I am not an ideologist), I was able to share in brotherly fashion your human experiences. This is something that I feel honored to say.

I HAVE SEEN YOU serenely emerge from the trial by fire, from the living inferno of revolutionary, civil, and international warfare. Then, when I came back to your country nine years later, after having seen it amid the bloody rack and ruin, the visible anguished tokens of that mighty struggle which you had been through—when I saw it this second time, I still preserved in my mouth, pressed hard against my palate as I thought of my people in their distant awful agony, the enduring and infernal taste of a fire which becomes a living consciousness, and which in doing so consumes us to the bone with its purifying flame.

And so, when I was among you, in your Moscow, in Leningrad, I could not help feeling that I was little more than a dressed-up skeleton; for all was darkness and ashes. A Quixotic Spaniard whom you, in your mighty desire for peace and your eagerness for a true communion with Spain, took to your bosom. And as you threw your own homes open to me and smiled understandingly on my grief, your hand was warmly laid on mine, to bring new life and hope. Then it was I came to understand the spiritual force behind it all, that feeling of joy and confidence which filled your

cities, and which came tumbling down above the snows of Moscow in a veritable cataract of children's laughter—innumerable children!

And this happiness was fraternally shared with the little waifs whom we brought with us, to save them from death in our Spain. Yes, the snowy hand of Moscow thawed out upon my own in a cordial grasp of true and simple understanding and the most unfeigned good will.

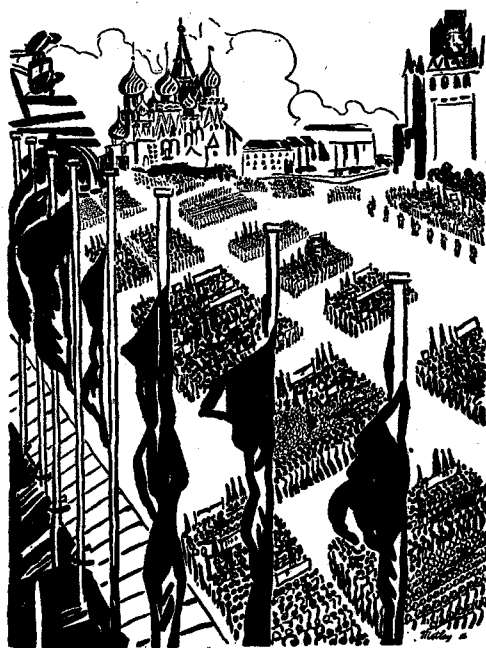
As I became aware of the miracles which you, through your unceasing heroism, had achieved; as I saw how, in a brief nine years, under the leadership of one man, Stalin, you had wrought this effective paradise—as I beheld all this, I was at a loss to answer, when you humbly begged me for my criticisms and objections, in order that you might improve your work. The only reply I could give you was a grief-stricken admiration; for the war and the sufferings of my people in far-off Spain kept hovering about like an invisible shade.

"Let us defend"—so runs your people's song—"the happiness of life and the joy of our children." Death and barbarism would now snatch from you this sweet prize which you, so justly and generously and with the most utter humanity, have won. Thousands of your best workers, like our own Spanish workers, the youngest and the strongest, have given and are giving their lives in defense of that truth which binds us all, now more than ever—workers and intellectuals alike—over and above our fragile ideas and any content they may hold; for in order to understand that nation which you once before saved, and once again are saving, in order to understand the work which you have done and are doing, all that is necessary is that we be men and think with our hearts.

COURAGE, then, my colleagues and friends! I am with you until the death. I hope and believe in your victory, which is our victory. And if these feeble words of mine, uttered by a Spaniard, may offer you a shadow of hope and comfort, take them, for they are yours. For do not forget: that truth which you are defending is "the happiness of life and the joy of your children"; true peace and freedom, for the future of the world and the future of humanity; man's freedom and that of the peoples all over this world of ours.

I am with you, colleagues and friends. I myself feel something of that terrible, yet splendid and joyful assurance with which you are carrying on this struggle; and I am filled with pride at being, not merely a Spaniard or a writer, but above all and first of all, your friend. I feel you near me; I am at your side. I embrace you.

JOSE BERGAMIN.



THESE MEN SAY

The following greetings were sent NEW MASSES on the occasion of the Soviet Union's twenty-fourth birthday.

Joseph E. Davies

Former US Ambassador to the Soviet Union

I feel very deeply the menace of Hitlerism to our whole outlook on what makes life worth living, and I find the greatest satisfaction in the courage and idealism of the Soviet government and the Russian people in resisting Hitler.

Pierre Cot

Former French Minister of Aviation

Soviet Russia has accomplished the greatest effort in the common struggle against fascist Germany. Thanks to the courage and the sacrifice of her soldiers she has given to the democracies precious time to complete their preparation. If the democracies do not make use of this time to provide all the armies fighting against Hitler with sufficient armament, they will not deserve that so many courageous men and women have given their lives in the struggle against fascism. Their duty is to speed up their industrial production and their help to Soviet Russia because Soviet Russia is actually the best fighter for the defense of civilization.

Lion Feuchtwanger

There is one road leading from the Fourth of July, 1776, the birthday of the United States of America, to the Nov. 7, 1917, the birthday of the Soviet Union, the same road leading from the Bill of Rights to the Constitution of the Soviet Union. What the Soviet patriots are now struggling against is the same stubborn feudalism which the American patriots combated. This feudalism has grown wilder and more barbaric. But though it adopts modern technique and dresses itself up with modern pseudo-science, it still remains the eternal yesterday, the mentality of the stone age struggling against the bronze age. So the fight of the Soviet Union against Hitlerism is the natural continuation of all the wars for freedom that the United States of America ever fought.

Nicolas Guillen

Famous Cuban poet

The spectacle of human development through the centuries is sufficient to prove to us that Hitler cannot triumph. In both physical and moral matters, human history represents a firm will for progress, against which all those attempting to stop it have been smashed.

The Cuban people—to speak in closer terms—resemble more than ever all the other peoples of the earth in two things of enormous importance. The first one is: they are fully conscious that their struggle is linked with the one carried on so heroically on the Eastern Front of Europe by the USSR. The second, they realize that Man will be able to save himself as a rational and thinking entity, only when Nazism is defeated.

Since the aggression against the Soviet Union started, our people undertook with unusual vigor



TO MY FRIEND PROKOFIEFF

The following is the brief speech made last week by Benny Goodman at the great meeting sponsored by Russian War Relief Inc. at Madison Square Garden.

I HAVE a friend in Russia. He is a great composer—all of you know his name. It is Serge Prokofieff. He was going to write a concerto for me—he hasn't time to finish it now—but I want to say this to him here in public:

The other day a Russian worker named Popov broadcast from an entrenched position outside Moscow. He said:

"If a single German tank gets through the defenses, we'll lay ourselves under the tracks and bar the road to Moscow with our bodies."

We know how many hundreds of thousands of Russian bodies have already barred the road to Moscow.

Prokofieff, if you live through the hell the Nazis have made of your land, as they've made of so many other lands, you'll take the words of the worker Popov and write a song of Russia with them—a song that'll lift the hearts of men and set their feet marching, a new *Marseillaise* that'll drown out the discords of Nazism everywhere.

Today New York hails Moscow as all America hails Russia. Prokofieff, tell Popov and all the people of Russia fighting to defend a free world that we are with them in thought and in deed and that our aid will be sent to them in an ever increasing flood until victory is won.

BENNY GOODMAN.

the task of helping the socialist country and those that together with it are victims of Hitler. If the reader were here in Cuba, touring our countryside and the cities of our island, he could see for himself how this help grows daily. It has become a marvelous cement, casting into a single block all the various strata of our population. From his high

position President Batista himself has given the example.

We cannot delude ourselves about the enormous peril hanging over the Americas. Unless the Nazis are stopped in time, Hitlerism will sweep like a tornado to the Americas where already we feel against our faces the flame of the European battle.