

Spanish was their only means of communication

Part II

By MARIA WAWER

There were about 120 of us taking the course at Jaca. Most were either college students or young businessmen. We came from Canada (8 of us in all, as it turned out) the USA, France, Germany, Italy, Scandinavia, England, Austria and quite a few from Japan. Spanish was the only language common to all. We were grateful to have any common means of communication.

By Spanish standards, our course was expensive. By ours, cheap. Tuition, books, room and board cost \$120 a month.

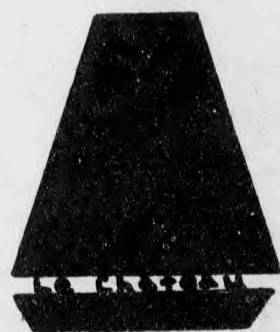
Our classes were small, and the profs really great people—very cultured, without the stuffy connotations the word usually has.

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My own favorite was the translation professor, who preferred to spend his time fielding questions about Spain. Old Bird Man, we called him. He looked like a highly sympathetic battered-up old eagle: small, shiny eyes, big nose, bushy hair. He had a great love for allowing much room for personal expression and technique. Paco Camino, who fought that day, has it. He got two ears for his efforts. (If a bullfighter has fought well, he might get a bull's ear as a prize, or two ears, or two ears and a tail, and so on. Such recognition is not given lightly.)

Later, dinner in a restaurant just a block from the ring. Nice place. Paella, fish, some pork chops, salad, a half bottle of wine per person, a gigantic ice cream dish heaped with fresh fruit and cream. \$1.15 in all. A person could live there and enjoy it. Afterwards, dancing in the streets, Spain, her culture, literature and history (this last point being a very sensitive one with almost all Spaniards. Censorship of history, both past and present, is very rigid). We learned a lot from him. I think he will always be a symbol for me of all that is cultured and highly civilized in Spain.

But one cannot study all the time. (Or who would want to, in Spain in the summer.) A group of us went to the bullfights during the famous Ferias de San Fermin in Pamplona. We saw the bulls being run through the streets at 7 in the morning on their way to the bullring, followed (or preceded) by hundreds of amateur toreros.

At 6 in the afternoon, the actual bullfight was held. Three matadors, 6 bulls. A little old lady next to me kept lamenting over the "cruelty" to the beast. Somewhat true. But those horns! This was no sadistic one-sided game. Both parties were in danger. Both would fight it out to the death. One of the matadores fight-

ing that day had just announced his engagement to a lovely Spanish girl. I felt more sorry for her than for either the "poor bull" or the "handsome matador". If he were killed or badly hurt (and it does happen) the glory would be his, but hers the pain. It takes guts to marry such a man.

A bullfight can be an ugly event: a messy kill, blood, pain. If performed well, both by the bull and the man, it is a thing of beauty: grace, strength, precision, deeply rooted in tradition, but firework displays, more good Spanish champagne. The Ferias lost a week, most of the shops are closed and the entire population seems to enjoy itself constantly during this period.

I made another trip, this time alone, back to Madrid, Segovia and Toledo. In Madrid, I spent one whole day at the Prado, which I found to be the best art gallery I have seen in Europe: well organized, and every painting a masterpiece. I find no trivia in those halls. It took me that whole day just to let Velazquez, El Greco and Goya sink in. Goya is superb, and in my opinion, the most Spanish of the three. Great extremes emerge in his works: courage, superstition, great intelligence, fear, love, humour, tawdriness, great nobility. He has captured these elements universal to mankind, but infused them with

his intuitive knowledge of the Spanish character.

One cannot claim to have seen Madrid unless one also indulges in some night-time bar hopping. Through the intercession of a friend in Jaca, I met a nice guy in the city, who showed me this side of "what to do in Spain in the summer, tourist or not." The old part of Madrid is glorious after 10 in the evening. Everyone is out on the street. The bars are crowded to overflowing, so no one sits. One must learn how to drink sangria standing up. The ubiquitous food is the tortilla: a flat omelet with potatoes, eaten hot or cold and very good. Small shrimp, orgambas are usually served with one's drink. In the smaller bars, one does not throw the shells onto a plate, but rather on the floor. The more popular the bar, the more shells are found lying around. One does not walk in but rather crunches in.

As far as cities go, Toledo is by far my favorite, a virtual exquisite museum of a town. The cathedral is one of the most beautiful in Europe. I did not see such opulence anywhere else. Toledo also has the oldest Spanish synagogue, beautifully but ironically decorated in a style with strong Moorish influence: The Alcazar, a fortress from the 11th century, later taken over by the Moors, subsequently remodelled by Philip II in the 16

century, saw its last battles during the 1936 Spanish War. A lot of relics from last war, including blood spots in the dungeon like have been preserved. But the of gems in the city of El G home, preserved as it was his lifetime in the 16th cen It's not a museum: one feels comfortable in it. One or two masterpieces hang there and cannot resist sitting down on floor and gazing at them hours.

One thing that cannot be mentioned are the pueblos in Upper Aragon. There were a few of them within walking distance of Jaca. 11th century churches still in use. 11th century houses where people still live. "Want to buy an 11th century pueblo, meester?" I kid you not. Due to financial difficulties countered in trying to eke out living in the mountains, people have abandoned entire towns which foreign companies are buying up to use as summer vacation spots.

I loved Spain. I loved the people. I loved the contrasts countered everywhere and everything. I am glad I did spend all my time hobnobbing with other tourists on the Camino del Sol: Spain deserves better than that. Try it. You'll like it.

Placement Interview Schedule

Monday, November 20, Mutual Life of Canada, deadline for acceptance of applications for Pre-Screening. Business Grads only. For Sales Management Training. Must locate in the Maritimes or Ontario; H. R. Doane & Company, interviewing Business Administration.

Tuesday, November 21, H. R. Doane & Company, interviewing Business Administration; Department of National Defence Canadian Armed Forces Recruiting and Selection Unit, career opportunities for undergraduates in Armed Forces. No appointment or application form necessary.

Tartan Room, Memorial Student Centre, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; National Research Council, deadline receipt of applications in Ottawa. Applications available at Placement Office. Honors Science Engineering.

Wednesday, November 22, A.D.I. Limited, interviewing Electrical, Mechanical Engineering Bachelor's Level.

Thursday, November 23, Dominion Bridge Limited, interviewing Mechanical and Civil Engineers - Bachelor's Level.

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