

## The US Media's Double Standard

### The Case of Mr. Aznar, Friend of Bush

By VICENTE NAVARRO

Can you imagine the response of the U.S. media if the president of the governing party of Poland were to say that Stalin was the former Soviet Union's greatest leader? Or if the president of the German government had never condemned the Hitler regime, or if a founder of the governing party in Germany was a person who had written a prologue to a book denying the existence of the Holocaust? Surely the media would hit the ceiling immediately and call for these person's resignations.

Well, the U.S. government and the U.S. media have been welcoming a man who has done something similar, a man they have referred to as "a great friend of the U.S." and "a representative of the New Europe" (in Rumsfeld's narrative), and a man that leading Democrats (not to be perceived as less welcoming) have referred to in equally laudatory terms. Even the Democratic-controlled California Assembly gave him a standing ovation. His man's is Mr. Jose Maria Aznar; he is the president of the Spanish government and leader of the governing party, the Popular Party (PP). More critical media would have made some inquiries about the PP and about Mr. Aznar. Let's start with the Party.

The PP was founded by Mr. Fraga Iribarne, Minister of the Interior in Franco's fascist regime (in charge of Spain's political police); he is still the president of the Party. He has always professed great admiration for General Franco and has never condemned Spain's fascist regime, responsible for one of Europe's cruelest dictatorships (more than 200,000 Spaniards were killed or died in concentration camps during Franco's regime). Actually, Fraga Iribarne has defined the Franco government as Spain's best regime in the twentieth century. His most recent contribution to "setting history straight" was to write a prologue to a book (*The Historical Lie Finally Denounced* in Spanish

by a friend of his, Mr. T. M. Bereiro) that denies the existence of the Holocaust.

Such a gentleman has been the mentor of Jose Maria Aznar, choosing him as his successor as leader of the PP. In a poll in 1982, 54% of PP members thought the Franco regime had been good for Spain. Aznar was himself a member of the fascist party during Franco's rule, and he has never denounced or criticized that regime in which his father and grandfather played a critical and prominent role. When democracy was reinstated in Spain in 1978, Aznar opposed the new Constitution that established the new democracy. And he denounced the newly democratic municipality of Guernica (made famous worldwide by Picasso's painting of its destruction by Hitler's aviation) for changing the name of the town's main square from "General Franco Square" to "Liberty Square." Aznar wanted to keep the old name. Today, the Supreme Court of Spain, named by Aznar's government, is refusing to change the legal status of those killed by the Franco dictatorship (for opposing the dictatorship), who are still defined as criminals in Spain. Aznar has also disobeyed the instructions of the U.N. Human Rights Agency to find the bodies of those who disappeared during the Franco regime (more than 30,000 people). And just two weeks ago, Aznar's government approved the imposition on all primary and secondary school students of religion classes (basically classes on Catholicism), which will consume almost as many hours of the curriculum as mathematics.

How is it possible that none of these facts have been published in the U.S.? To what level have the U.S. media sunk? They have reported, sometimes critically, on Berlusconi, who governs in alliance with Fini, an admirer of Mussolini. But among Berlusconi's many faults we do not find a fascist past of which he is proud. Aznar is proud of his fascist past, and no one in the U.S. media has made any comment on this.

Quite remarkable!

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