

Villar Flor, Carlos

Graham Greene and MI6 : the Iberian connection

Brno studies in English. 2021, vol. 47, iss. 2, pp. 183-204

ISSN 0524-6881 (print); ISSN 1805-0867 (online)

Stable URL (DOI): <https://doi.org/10.5817/BSE2021-2-13>

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/144884>

License: [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 International](#)

Access Date: 16. 02. 2024

Version: 20220831

Terms of use: Digital Library of the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University provides access to digitized documents strictly for personal use, unless otherwise specified.

GRAHAM GREENE AND THE MI6: THE IBERIAN CONNECTION

Brno Studies in English
Volume 47, No. 2, 2021

ISSN 0524-6881 | e-ISSN 1805-0867
<https://doi.org/10.5817/BSE2021-2-13>

CARLOS VILLAR FLOR

Abstract

Between 1976 and 1989 the English novelist Graham Greene (1904-1991) travelled to the Iberian Peninsula for relaxation in the company of his Spanish friend, the priest and professor of the Complutense University Leopoldo Durán Justo (1917-2008). He made a total of fifteen trips, almost always in summer, and the first of them inspired him to write what would be his major Hispanic novel, *Monsignor Quixote* (1982). Shortly after Greene's death in 1991, Durán produced the memoir of their friendship, *Graham Greene: Friend and Brother* (1994) and developed anecdotes he had already recounted in press articles, but did not give a detailed chronicle of each journey and chose to present an idealized account with many major gaps. One of these is the original reason why Greene undertook his yearly habit of travelling to the Peninsula. Was it his need to rest with someone who was at first almost a stranger, or was there another purpose? The aim of this article is to shed light on this issue, and to raise the possibility that, in order to give a convincing answer, Greene's link to the British Secret Service and his work as an agent or informant must be considered.

Key words

Graham Greene; MI6; Leopoldo Durán; Monsignor Quixote; Enrique Tierno Galván; Maria Newall

In the 1970s and 1980s the English novelist Graham Greene (1904-1991) travelled several times to the Iberian Peninsula to relax in the company of his Spanish friend, the priest and Complutense University professor Leopoldo Durán Justo (1917-2008). He undertook a total of fifteen trips, almost always in summer, and the first of them inspired him to write his main Hispanic novel, *Monsignor Quixote* (1982). The travelling custom began in 1976, but at first remained under the most discreet silence until 1980, when Greene received an invitation from the mayor of Madrid, Enrique Tierno Galván, to participate in a series of cultural meetings organized by the city hall. From that moment on, Spanish public opinion was aware that the celebrated author, acclaimed as the best living English writer of the time and a perpetual Nobel candidate, holidayed in Spain in the company of a Galician priest. In turn Durán, once exonerated from the duty of secrecy, began to send with some frequency articles about his travels with Greene to Sunday supplements and cultural sections of the main national newspapers, in which he

was listed as the friend, guide and inspiration to the writer (Bermejo 1981, Durán 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1988a, 1988b).

Shortly after Greene's death in 1991, Durán started work on the memoir of their friendship, which came to light in 1994 in English and two years later in Spanish. Entitled *Graham Greene: Friend and Brother*. It developed anecdotes Durán had already recounted in press articles, and expanded details on some of the trips. Although he had taken precise annotations in his personal diaries, he did not offer a detailed chronicle of each journey and instead presented an embellished chronicle and an idealized semblance of his friend. To date, Greene's various biographers have used *Friend and Brother* as their only source to document his travels on the Peninsula, and have not explored his specific movements or motivations beyond the enjoyment of friendship and rest as Durán presented it. Several commentators have called attention to how, in addition to inspiring *Monsignor Quixote*, Greene's friendship with Durán and their mutual confidences by the routes of Spain and Portugal helped to shore up the oscillating Christian belief of one who defined himself as a "Catholic agnostic" (Sherry 2004: 681, 697; Bosco 2005: 156). But neither the authorized biographer, Norman Sherry, was able to document Greene's Hispanic journeys beyond *Friend and Brother*, as he explicitly acknowledged (Sherry 2004: 702), nor did the other biographers (Mockler 1994 or Shelden 1994) go any further. Thus, Greene's travels in Spain with his singular friend were initially described from a one-sided, idealized and not entirely reliable perspective, which involved numerous contradictions and inaccuracies.

In particular, one of the gaps that Durán's text does not clarify is the original reason why Greene undertook his habit of travelling to the Peninsula. Although at no time does he address this issue, his general tone points to pure rest and enjoyment of friendship: "Our trips through Spain and Portugal had nothing to do with tourism. They were something entirely different. We described them as 'picnics': delightful jaunts in which we took our food with us and ate it in the fresh air of the countryside" (Durán 1994: 120). However, this description is rather misleading, not only to account for the activities carried out but also to explain the genesis of the travelling tradition. When Greene made his first trip in July 1976, the relationship between the two was not properly of friendship, as shown in their previous correspondence (Letters from Greene to Durán, 8/1/1976, 2/3/1976 and 12/4/1976, GUL, 1:13, 14 and 15) The aim of this article is to shed light on the reasons that prompted Greene to undertake the first visit in July 1976, invited by someone who was then almost a stranger, and to raise the possibility that, in order to give a convincing answer, Greene's link to the British Secret Service, and his facet as an agent or informant, should be considered.

Greene and the SIS

Graham Greene's long and productive career reveals that he was a writer eminently focused on his work, and that, assisted by his secretaries, literary agents, publishers and other advisers, he always took great care with the numerous ram-

ifications of his creative work. But, in addition to developing his varied facets as an author, Greene wanted to take sides in the international politics of his time, something for which his tenure in the British Secret Service during World War II may have prepared him. Indeed, he was recruited in the summer of 1941 by the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS, also known as MI6) to Section V (Counterespionage), and after a period of training was assigned to Freetown, Sierra Leone. He returned to England in March 1943 and from London headquarters (7 Ryder Street) was in charge of the counterespionage subsection of the Iberian Peninsula, under the direction of Kim Philby. Among his duties were to respond to messages from British agents infiltrated in Portugal, evaluate decoded information from Enigma messages, or catalogue known Axis agents and try to win them over for the Allied cause. In May 1944, according to his own testimony, Greene resigned, perhaps to avoid being appointed head of the Iberian section after Philby's reappointment as the head of Section IX, and went on to perform other duties in the PID (Political Intelligence Department) and the PWE (Political Warfare Executive) (Brennan 2016: 68, 78–79).

Thus, at the end of the war Greene admittedly left the SIS. His interest in visiting some of the most conflict-ridden points on the planet – Indochina, Kenya, Poland, China, Cuba, Haiti, Paraguay, Panama, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Hungary, Russia, etc. – was often justified by journalistic commissions, which in turn could provide inspiration to write successful novels. But there is evidence to suggest that Greene never ceased to be in contact with his country's international intelligence, even if he was just an informant. "Unauthorized" biographer Michael Shelden provides a Cabinet Office report stating that Greene, following his resignation from SIS in May 1944, "continued to serve SIS informally until the early-1980s. In exchange for expenses he gave his help to the organization in many places – most notably Vietnam, Poland, China and Russia. And whether a particular trip was subsidized by SIS or not, he routinely gave its officers information from his foreign visits when he believed it might be useful" (Shelden 1994: 33). Martin Pearce goes further and states that Greene was recruited as an agent in 1955 by Fergie Demster, stationmaster in Saigon and partner of the later head of MI6, Maurice Oldfield. Pearce does not provide further evidence of this statement, but notes that, in making his biography of Oldfield, he met with numerous SIS officers, secretaries and agents who must remain anonymous. If true, it would imply that Greene "re-engaged" as an agent and not only as an informant eleven years after his resignation (Pearce 2016: 148, 355).

Yvonne Cloetta, Greene's lover and companion in his last three decades, concludes in her memoir that Greene worked with the secret services until the end of his life. In the chapter "The baffling edge of espionage", her interviewer Marie-Françoise Allain, daughter of an ill-fated French spy who had dealings with Greene, records some revealing clues provided by Cloetta: Greene's missions in Indochina in the 1950s to contact Ho Chi Minh; General Lattre's conviction that Greene was a spy; contacts in Russia with double agent Kim Philby, of which Greene reported to the Foreign Office (and to the head of MI6); or the continued presence of (former?) MI6 members in the surroundings of the Cote d'Azur where Greene lived from 1966. Yvonne provides names such as Paul Paulson –

who was consul in Nice –, John Cairncross – suspected of having been the fifth double agent of the Cambridge Group, alongside Kim Philby, Guy Burgess, Donald Maclean and Anthony Blunt –, Ronnie Challoner, who closely followed the correspondence between Greene and Cairncross, or the Yugoslav double agent known as Popov (Cloetta, 2004: 144), to whom other names could be added such as that of his next-door neighbour R. Hudson-Smith, “a retired spy” (Richard Greene 2007: 319). A few days before he died, Greene, as a farewell, arranged for the sending of classified documents to various people connected to the world of espionage, including Marie-Françoise Allain and John Cairncross (Cloetta 2004: 114–115).

This facet of Greene is an open secret, but the verification of the ins and outs will have to await the future work of other scholars and the declassification of British intelligence documents. As far as his travels in Portugal and Spain are concerned, it provides a rather credible context for placing his first visit and the beginning of the travelling tradition that came later. The origin dates back to the summer of 1975. From Greene’s correspondence with Yvonne we can partially reconstruct a rather enigmatic scenario. Greene, who had been living in Antibes for almost a decade, spent a long time in London, busy on various issues related to theatrical and film versions of his works, and socializing with friends and acquaintances. But the letters also reveal some concern about his inactivity possibly regarding international missions. In one of them he states that he misses Chile, Cuba and Haiti, and that he would like to leave now for Panama or Hungary (Letter from Greene to Cloetta, 14/6/1975, GUL, Yvonne Cloetta Papers, 3: 6). At this time he also replaced his veteran personal secretary, Josephine Reid, with his own sister Elisabeth Dennys, who had worked in intelligence with her husband Rodney, and who had been responsible for Graham’s recruitment to SIS in 1941.

In June 1975 Greene recounted to Yvonne his interview with the Secret Service ‘C’, Maurice Oldfield: “I had to go up today to London to have lunch with ‘C’ of the secret service – we were by ourselves & it was most interesting” (Letter from Greene to Cloetta, 21/6/1975, GUL Yvonne Cloetta Papers, 3:10). There is evidence that Greene met regularly with Oldfield, who had worked in Cairo with Elisabeth during the war and whom Greene knew since the 1950s,¹ and it seems likely that they would regularly discuss security issues (Brennan, 2016: 106). Shortly thereafter Greene wrote back to Yvonne from the Ritz Hotel in London and informed her that he could not go to Hungary because “my Communist won’t be there till the end of July so I’m thinking more & more of Portugal to try and pass the time” (Letter from Greene to Cloetta, 2/7/1975, GUL, Yvonne Cloetta Papers, 3:7). The “communist” was most likely László Róbert, a Hungarian spy who may have acted as Greene’s liaison to Kim Philby since his exile in the USSR. In any case, this letter concludes that Greene, shortly after his interview with ‘C’, does not refer to leisure trips but to missions, and it is significant that he chose to approach Portugal as an alternative to not being able to travel to Hungary. Under these circumstances, he unexpectedly got an appointment to meet one of his scholars and admirers, a Spanish priest and university professor, Leopoldo Durán, on 20 August 1975. It opened up the possibility of establishing a contact in a country that had always attracted Greene.

Greene and Spain

Indeed, Spain had especially fascinated Greene since his youth, although his knowledge about the country appears to have been rather limited. The Iberian Peninsula was in fact the destination for his first trip abroad, when in the summer of 1920, and as an interruption of the six months of psychoanalytical therapy to which he was subjected, he travelled with his aunt Eva and some cousins to Lisbon, making a day stopover in La Coruña and Vigo. From that day he retained the memory of the tomb of Sir John Moore, whom he considered (wrongly for Mockler) a distant ancestor, and he mentioned Vigo in one of his early poems (Mockler 1994: 11).

His second novel, written at the end of his university years but never published, focused on a Hispanic motif: the protagonist was an Englishman who got involved in plots against the Spanish government driven by his love for a young woman from a group of refugees from the Carlist Wars located in Leicester Square. This novel, tentatively entitled *The Episode*, was rejected even by his own agent A.D. Peters, who discouraged even bothering to seek a publisher. Years later, however, and after embarking on his literary career, Greene rescued the Hispanic context in his fifth written novel and third published, *Rumour at Nightfall* (1931). His knowledge of the country remained scarce: he admitted that “all [he] knew of the Carlist wars was drawn from Carlyle’s *Life of John Sterling*” (Greene 1980: 19). The novel was a sales failure and jeopardized Greene’s fledgling career, who had given up his job to bet everything on literature. Fortunately, the next one, which might have been his last, *Stamboul Train*, gave him the success he needed to make his career take off irreversibly.

If in *Rumour at Nightfall* Greene subordinated the political interest of the Carlist conflict to the sentimental and melodramatic plot, there are echoes of this in his renewed interest in Spain after the outbreak of the Civil War in 1936. Although, perhaps as a recently converted Catholic, he remained rather lukewarm in his support for the Republican government, Greene backed the Basque nationalists as they fought Franco without abandoning their Catholic principles, opposed the implantation of a communist state, and kept military chaplains in their armies. Thus, when General Mola’s troops captured Bilbao on June 19, 1937, after the devastating bombings of Durango and Guernica, Greene decided to join the fight and travelled to Toulouse with the intention of contacting a pilot there (and owner of a café) that had contributed to breaking the blockade of Bilbao with his two-seater airplane. According to Greene’s testimony, the Basque delegation in London had provided him with a letter of recommendation on sealed official paper, but once in Toulouse he could not persuade the pilot to risk his life again, as he claimed that the Francoist artillery was becoming too precise, and thus Greene had to return home (Greene, 1980: 76). His biographer Norman Sherry speculates that he intended to issue a BBC statement condemning the Francoist siege, although he also concludes that Greene’s early withdrawal was due to the fact that he had just obtained a fixed salary as literary editor of the new publication *Night and Day* and did not want to risk losing it (Sherry, 1989: 611–613). However, Jimmy Burns states that there is no documentary evidence that such

a letter of recommendation was issued from the Basque delegation in London, nor has he found minutes of meetings related to the matter. Nor has he located any record among the BBC archives that prove Sherry's hypothesis (Burns 2010: 31–32). In order to account for Greene's withdrawal, Brennan also mentions the fact that his new boss at the helm of *Night and Day*, the conservative MP Victor Cazalet, was sympathetic to the Francoist cause, so it did not seem prudent to position himself against him (Brennan 2016: 45).

Two years later the Spanish Civil War found a place in Greene's fiction, although rather obliquely, in *The Confidential Agent* (1939). The protagonist is an agent identified only as 'D' who, in the context of fratricidal strife in his country, has been delegated by his government to secure a coal supply contract in England, where he must negotiate with an unscrupulous capitalist who is also willing to deal with the other side and grant it to the highest bidder. The mission of 'D' is hampered by the action of a rival agent, 'L', who has more means and personnel to neutralize him and take over the contract, indispensable to win the war. If the context is unmistakable, Greene's reluctance to provide nominal indications to expressly identify the protagonists on both sides and their link to the Spanish conflict is disconcerting. Would it be the same reason why he gave up his idea of going to fight at the Basque front? All that is open to speculation

During his time as an SIS agent between 1941 and 1944, Greene appears to have devoted himself more to Portugal than to Spain, although the two countries were closely linked for British intelligence, diplomacy and propaganda services on the Peninsula. With the end of the Spanish Civil war and the start of World War II, a priority objective of the British diplomatic effort in Spain and Portugal was to ensure the neutrality of both countries and to thwart any possible alliance with the Axis that could hinder the movement of troops and materials across the Peninsula, and lose Gibraltar and the Atlantic and Mediterranean ports. Greene's head in Section V of the Peninsula was the controversial Kim Philby, who had built a cover as a person akin to the Franco regime. In fact, he had been recruited by MI6 following his successful reports while serving as a correspondent for the *Times* in the Spanish Civil War (although his true loyalty was to the USSR from the start). At that time he had managed to be taken for a Franco supporter and as such had gathered inside information about the manoeuvres of the national side, of which he fully reported to the British secret service, and, in parallel, to the Soviets (Burns 2010: 39–45).

The United Kingdom prioritized the intervention of officials, officers and agents of Catholic religious sensitivity, as it was felt that this would make it easier to establish more trusted relations with the new Spanish rulers. Graham Greene and a large group of colleagues and friends possessed such a profile, including Tom Burns (1906–1995), a key figure in Greene's relations with Spain. In addition to being his publisher and major contact for his first ministerial services in wartime, Burns was the one who enabled Greene's second visit to Spain in 1946. With Basque descent on his mother's side, Burns had devoted himself from an early age to the publishing world, first in the Catholic publishing house Sheed & Ward since 1926, and ten years later in Longman. He had met Greene in 1929 and had since established a lifelong friendship. It was Burns who had encouraged

him to write about the persecution of Catholics in Mexico, commissioning what became his travelogue *The Lawless Roads* (1939), which he would then successfully fictionalize as *The Power and the Glory* (1940), and also got the writer to collaborate on the Catholic weekly *The Tablet*, of which Burns became a co-owner. At the outbreak of World War II, Burns entered the new Ministry of Information within the Catholic propaganda section, led by Dennis Cowan, and from there facilitated Greene's incorporation into the ministry's film division, where he was responsible for producing propaganda scripts.

In 1940 Burns was sent to Madrid with a delicate mission: the Ministry of Information and the Foreign Office had set up a network of press and information offices in Spain, North Africa and France under the direction of the British embassy. Its main task was to win the propaganda war and to gain time to prepare the counter-offensive, preventing Franco's Spain from joining the Axis and thus hindering allied movements across the Peninsula. Burns' official position between 1940 and 1946 was first secretary and press attaché of the embassy, but he also performed a secret job in collaboration with naval attaché Alan Hillgarth, Churchill's trusted man and key figure of British intelligence on the Peninsula. Burns used his many contacts within the Franco regime to obtain inside information, discover trading points, and recruit double agents for the Allied cause. His activity was so effective in those years that even a report by the Franco secret police came to identify him as "the Head of intelligent service [sic] in Spain and Portugal" (Burns 2010: 345).

In view of this context, it is suggestive that Greene's second trip to Spain (following his one-day anecdotal stint as a sixteen-year-old in La Coruña) was at the behest of Tom Burns. In *Monsignor Quixote's* dedication, Greene acknowledges that it was Burns who inspired "his first" (actually, second) visit to Spain in 1946, during which he most likely visited the British embassy. Greene's biographers do not consider it, but the author referred to it in an interview with the newspaper *El País* in 1982, coinciding with the novel's release: there Greene is said to keep "a dramatic image of the misery of those years," and is quoted as stating, "I lived in the house of an English diplomat [Burns?], and it was horrible to see the people who went there, at noon, not to beg for alms, but for a piece of bread or the remains of meals" (González Yuste 1982: 36).

Greene would return to Spain once or twice more before embarking on his series of journeys with Leopoldo Durán in 1976, although the dates are unclear. One appears to have been in the late 50s, when he visited Cordoba and Seville among other locations (Letter from Greene to Durán, 10/03/1978, GUL, 2:1), and perhaps there was another one (Molina, 1980: 20). We do not know whether these trips were integrated among his intelligence missions or there were other motivations. If Burns was still behind these trips, it must be borne in mind that, after his retirement from Spain in 1946, he had allegedly resumed his career as a publisher in England, but, as his son and biographer claims, he "maintained a secret informal relationship with the British and US intelligence services after returning to public life as a publisher, a cover for overseas travel and the securing of a variety of sources of information" (Burns 2010: 335). The similarity of the pattern followed by Greene, also a Catholic Englishman, in charge of the Iberian

Peninsula during wartime, and officially withdrawn from intelligence but active on other fronts, is striking. And it is also curious that Burns, who in the past had led to the creation of the unforgettable “Whisky priest” by commissioning Greene to Mexico, forty years later as editor of *The Tablet* added that the story of the monsignor descended from Don Quixote did not remain just a private joke between Greene and Durán. Indeed, it was Burns who consolidated the project by publishing three successive advances of the novel on *The Tablet* in the Christmas issues between 1978 and 1980.

Portugal y Maria Newall

Returning to the summer of 1975, in a June letter to Yvonne Greene stated that, although the film adaptation of his novel *The Honorary Consul* would not be filmed in Spain as originally thought, but in Mexico (Falk 1990: 195), he intended to approach Portugal anyway “to see Maria Newall” – who, in addition to being an old friend also seems to have been engaged with the secret service – and he adds, “The position seems interesting now” (Letter from Greene to Cloetta, 21/6/1975, GUL Yvonne Cloetta Papers, 3:10). Indeed, in Portugal the 1974 Carnation Revolution had ended nearly half a century of the *Estado novo*, but in the following months the consolidation of the democratic order was no easy task. Tensions between the three republican tendencies – conservative, socialist and communist – provoked an unstable climate that produced five provisional governments in two years. The summer of 1975 is known as “the hot summer”, marked by the fall of the government of Vasco Gonsalves, demonstrations in the main cities, occupation of Radio Renascença by radical forces, occupation of *latifundios* by landless farmers, and recruitment of armed guerrillas by landowners to defend their properties.

On July 10, Greene wrote to Yvonne and informed her of his intention to leave early to observe the Portuguese revolution, although at that moment he appeared to be suffering from a characteristic mood slump and complained about the “comedies I have to play”. He longed to meet Yvonne “when Portugal is over [though...] I’d cancel it with joy if you needed me for anything” (Letter from Greene to Cloetta, 10/7/1975, GUL Yvonne Cloetta Papers, 3:8). Again, it appears that the planned trip was not for mere pleasure, and Greene would be happy to cancel it if he could find a compelling reason. But he does not seem to have found it, and in the first half of August he made his planned trip to Portugal to meet Maria Newall, who resided in Quinta da Piedade, a beautiful house in the town of Colares, on the outskirts of Sintra.

Who was this lady that Greene would have to visit obligatorily during his future visits to Spain? Hers seems a fascinating profile. An English Catholic with a reputation for being a beauty, her maiden name was Mary Margaret Pollen. She married Commander James MacIndoe in 1916, with whom she had a daughter, Mary. They divorced in 1928 and three years later, in 1931, she married another officer, Lieutenant-Commander Keith W. Newall outside the Catholic Church. He suffered a scam at the hands of George Howard, Earl of Carlisle, and com-

mitted suicide in 1938 by shooting himself with a firearm – which, according to Nicholas Shakespeare’s testimony, his widow kept in her living room (Shakespeare, 2013). From 1940 to 1942, Maria joined the Mechanised Transport Corps (MTC), a uniformed women-only corps that provided transportation to military officers and foreign dignitaries during World War II and drove ambulances in the Blitz (Mosley, 2003). Maria ran her own ambulance unit, and at some point in the war she travelled on a ship that was torpedoed by the Axis on its way to the Middle East. During this period she fell in love with an influential jurist working as deputy director of the Ministry of Information, Walter Monckton (and who would become minister from 1951 with Churchill and Eden and appointed Viscount).² The relationship lasted a while, but in 1947, without warning, Monckton abandoned her for Bidy Carlisle, wife precisely of the earl who had conned Commander Newall. Bidy in turn divorced her husband and married Monckton that same year. Maria was shattered and, perhaps to turn the page, began a new life in Kenya. In 1949 she built a farm on her own in Najuru, and, according to Durán, in addition to being a farmer she was the head of the English nurses of the Red Cross (Durán 1994: 324). Greene met her in 1953, when he travelled to Kenya to cover the news of the Mau Mau Revolt and stayed at her home, and they are likely to have been occasional lovers.³ Correspondence with Greene reveals that in the mid-1960s Maria was living in Portugal, and from 1967 she settled in Quinta da Piedade, owned by the Marchioness of Cadaval.

Maria Newall’s role may be a key piece in understanding why Greene regularly undertook his trips around the Peninsula in the 1970s. The epistolary correspondence preserved at Boston College reveals that communication between them intensified from Greene’s summer visit in 1975 to witness the last revolts; until then they had exchanged little more than complimentary Christmas greetings. But from this meeting onwards Greene and Maria Newall seem to have been in renewed harmony. Why did this octogenarian and invalid lady, with a daughter and grandchildren in England, remain an expatriate in Sintra instead of living comfortably in her family mansion in Mickelton? What did she do there? In her letters she often mentions distributions of aid to refugees and humanitarian missions that she oversees (“I am sending this to England to await arrival”, or “I hope the Red Cross would send more help to Bengal” or “I hope the [Red Cross] are very busy in Turkey and The Sudan”). She also describes street riots, repression by the authorities, cases of political prisoners entering or leaving prison, or enigmatic shipments delivered by personal mail. Often the people are referred to by acronyms or pseudonyms, and at other times Greene is invited to “read between the lines”, or she says that she cannot be very explicit in writing.⁴ It is very significant that, while on holiday at her English family home in November 1975, when there was a military uprising and the consequent state of emergency, instead of remaining in safety at home, she was quick to advance a return to Portugal: “I hurried back last Tuesday 25th as I heard there was trouble brewing!” (Letter from Newall to Greene, 3/12/1975, BC, 29/38).

Maria Newall also received personalities from the Church, such as the papal nuncio in Portugal, and other bishops and cardinals. For her intense social activity it is possible that Newall benefited from the neighbourhood and friendship

of her hostess, Olga Nicolis of Robilant Alvares Pereira de Melo, Marchioness of Cadaval, owner of Quinta da Piedade, and sponsor of the musical arts. The Marchioness was friends with personalities of her time from various cultural, political or social fields: Marinetti, Gabriele d'Annunzio, Saul Bellow, C. Chanel, Maeterlinck, Eleonora Duse, Louise de Vilmorin, Francisco José, Pio XII, Frau Cosima (daughter of Liszt and widow of Wagner), the princess of Polignac, Kenneth Clark, Marconi, Duse, or René Huyghe (Cachado 2013).

The beginning of the summer tradition

As mentioned, in August 1975 there was an event that would change the life of the priest and university professor Leopoldo Durán: his lunch at the Ritz with Greene. Durán had sent his first letter to the writer in 1964, presenting himself as an admirer and manifesting his intention to study Greene's work from a theological perspective. The results of his analysis would eventually form two doctoral theses (one in English and one in Spanish of suspicious resemblance) and a handful of academic articles. In the long decade that this initial epistolary relationship lasted, Durán became more daring over the years, and intensified his correspondence by sending the varied publications resulting from his scholarship. Greene, meanwhile, who received hundreds of letters from readers and admirers on a monthly basis, kept an educated distance and on most occasions channelled his courteous answers through his secretary, Josephine Reid. It is even possible that the priest's insistence was not entirely welcome: thus, in an annotation addressed to his boss, Reid received Durán's new shipment with some apprehension and wrote on the margins of his letter: "This is the priest who sends the massive bound green leather books on you" (Villar Flor 2020: 12–21).

The first time Greene clearly took the initiative occurred in a letter in April 1975 in which he acknowledged receipt of the last consignment of articles sent by Durán, while informing him that he could visit Spain in June on the occasion of the filming of *The Honorary Consul*, and raised the possibility of a meeting (Letter from Greene to Durán, 7/4/1975, BC, 17/28). Durán, who had longed for this moment for years, showed unconditional availability ("I am at you complete at any time and for everything") and although such a filming project in Spain did not go ahead, from this moment onwards meeting Greene would become a priority (Letter from Durán to Greene, 21/4/1975, BC, 17/28). Indeed, his perseverance was rewarded when on 20 August 1975 (not 1973, as he wrongly states in *Friend and Brother*) he was able to meet his idol for lunch at the Ritz Hotel in London. The only account of this meeting comes from Durán himself, according to which they soon entered into lively conversation, about the Church and various Catholic orders and institutions, the writer's travels, his recent work, etc. (Durán 1994: 4–8). It apparently lasted five hours, from 12:30 to 17:00 (Diaries, X: 87), and although it may not have been the love-at-first-sight Durán intimated in his memoirs – they addressed each other as *Mister Greene* and *Father Durán* until the first trip in 1976 – it certainly paved the way for Durán to host the writer the following summer.

It makes sense that the political situation in Spain during that period may have become a decisive incentive for Greene to be interested in resuming the relationship, since just ten days after the death of dictator Francisco Franco he wrote to Durán to arrange an urgent visit, that same December (Letter from Greene to Durán, 1/12/1975, BC, 17/28). Durán, who did not seem willing to miss the opportunity to host his literary idol, accepted unconditionally, and although in the end Greene re-wrote to postpone it, he would take up the initiative in another letter of 8 January 1976, which reads as follows:

July would be, so far as one can see ahead, the best possible time, for one as I always want to escape, from here in the Summer. I would suggest July 12 – I have another friend in Madrid Christian Casanova (a most suitable name) a Chilean refugee who was secretary to Allende.

I am glad that things are going well with Spain. Even Portugal seems to be at last pulling herself together.

Now with time to plan I might go on from you to Portugal, for a few days to see my old friend at Cintra [sic] – or even to Cuba where I have friends whom I haven't visited since 1966. (Letter from Greene to Durán, 8/1/1976, GUL 1:13)

For the purposes of our starting hypothesis, it is significant that Greene mentions the names of Maria Newall – whom he had visited just six months back – and Christian (Cristián) Casanova, who in the 1960s had held senior political positions in Salvador Allende's government in Chile, and in the late 1970s, exiled in Spain, had close relationships with emerging Spanish socialist leaders who would be able to provide Greene with contact opportunities, as we shall see.

Shortly after receiving confirmation of Durán's unconditional availability, Greene informed Maria Newall: "I've half promised to go to Spain to stay with a priest who writes intelligent books about me, the second week of July. It would be nice if after looking round there I could come and see you at Sintra" (Letter from Greene to Newall, 17/1/1976, BC, 29/38). The distanced tone deflects attention from the fact that it was Greene who raised the visit. In his "looking round" Greene included a stop of clear political interest: soon afterwards he wrote to Durán indicating that he would be interested in visiting the Basque Country, then the most conflicted region of Spain due to the frequent attacks of the terrorist group ETA. But as the planned journey approached, Greene suffered from his characteristic mood swings and sometimes expressed little desire to set out. In a letter to Maria dated 11 June, he stated that he "shuddered at the thought" of his visit to Spain, but that he consoled himself with the possibility of exploring the "Basque territory", where also the climate would be cooler (Letter from Greene to Newall, 11/6/1976, BC, 29/38). A few days later he made it clear again that the trip was not for pleasure; referring to his visit, which had been delayed from the initial plan, he wrote that he would like to postpone it permanently. Again he emphasized that the most interesting thing was to observe the focus of greatest conflict, the Basque Country, which he had come close to visiting during the Civil War and now associated in his mind with the problem

of Northern Ireland, from which he had just returned: “I don’t think it would be nearly as horrible as the four days spent in Belfast” (Letter from Greene to Newall, 8/7/1976, BC, 29/38). Indeed, Greene had travelled there in the summer of 1976 and met with people of culture and politics, such as Gerry Fitt, leader of SDLP (Social Democratic and Labour Party), the most voted nationalist party in Northern Ireland during the Troubles, supporting a peaceful solution (Sherry 2004: 615). The conflict in Northern Ireland was one of the priorities of the SIS in the 1970s, and, despite being a national territory, Prime Minister Edward Heath had proposed that coordinated action by the two agencies, MI5 and MI6, be in place since 1970. Maurice Oldfield, head of the latter from 1973 to 1978, played an important role in discrediting the Northern Irish terrorist action and seeking a peaceful solution, and was convinced that there was a mutual connection and support between the Basque ETA and the Irish terrorists of the IRA and INLA (Pearce 2016: 264–265, 318).

To understand Greene’s possible role in Spain, it is appropriate to approach the *modus operandi* of Oldfield, possibly the person most likely to have been responsible for keeping Greene as an asset of British intelligence after the war, who was appointed ‘C’ after a long career occupying influential positions in the service. In the 1950s, when Greene was “reactivated” as an informant and perhaps an agent in Malaysia and Vietnam, Oldfield was the deputy director of the Far East station, and even oversaw his interview with Ho Chi Minh. According to Oldfield’s biographer, from his early positions he sought to combine classified intelligence work with ground recognition, “the diligent intelligence officer’s requirement of letting him see how the people lived, what their motivation and opinions were, and building unforced local connections at grass-root level”. For this work, he considered it essential to have external informants who could provide a counterpoint to the reports of payroll agents, anticipating that sometimes they could be pressured to produce novel material at all costs: “One of Oldfield’s most effective methods of securing intelligence was to use unofficial agents, or ‘Friends’, known to him personally, to back up (or occasionally contradict) what he was being told by his official salaried officers”. In this context, one of Oldfield’s preferred occupational sectors was journalists, who could enter places that were inaccessible to embassy or passport officials, the usual covers of intelligence agents. But it is very significant that Oldfield also frequently relied on priests as regular contacts: “Probably the most notable group in terms of the sourcing of agents by Maurice, though, was the clergy: in every country he travelled he would visit churches and get to know the priests and their assistants. [...] These people had their own networks across their communities that tended to encompass a wide cross-section of society” (Pearce 2016: 109, 113, 170–171). Oldfield was a man of Anglo-Catholic sensibility, and during his intelligence work to counter the riots in Northern Ireland he demonstrated a great capacity for dialogue with the Catholic clergy and even recruited clerics as informants who could give him names of people involved in the violence. Therefore, it makes sense that Oldfield may have strongly recommended Greene to take advantage of his contact with that Spanish admirer who, in addition to being a university professor, was a priest. As we have seen, Durán began the epistolary relationship with Greene in

1964, and for more than a decade this was practically one-sided, even if Greene asked his secretary to respond or acknowledge receipt to the priest's communications. It was in November 1975, a few days after Franco's death, that Greene made an unusual effort to take the initiative and propose an urgent visit to Spain.

In short, tourism or pleasure do not appear to have been Greene's main motivations for his first trip to Spain, and instead could have related to his desire to know the political evolution of the country from within and to inform the intelligence service. But soon new reasons will be added to repeat this visit and turn the Hispanic summer into an annual tradition. Judging by the correspondence that was exchanged between the two from 1976, Greene came to befriend Durán, and he proved to be an excellent host, able to mobilize several of his associates to obtain an excellent reception in various parts of the Peninsula. Durán's dimension as a scholar of Greene's work also had added value; although the author sometimes showed some apparent disdain for academic criticism, it was naturally pleasing to find praiseworthy comments about his work. In addition, Greene would appreciate the possibility of filling a vacant gap among his friendships of his last years, that of the *sympathetic priest*, who would be forgiving with his sins of the flesh but at the same time willing to give him sacramental absolution *in articulo mortis*. In the past he had frequented the friendship of priests for whom he had a personal affinity, such as Philip Caraman, S.J., or Thomas Gilby O.P., but for various reasons related to his love affair with Catherine Walston, Greene came to feel betrayed by both. So, it is possible that Greene saw Durán as the finest candidate to fill that gap for more than a decade. In fact, Durán's readiness to attend to him sacramentally in case of need arose from the first voyage of 1976, and would be repeated often in the future, practically on virtually every trip.

For his part, Durán expressed in his diaries a great enthusiasm for his possible apostolic mission with this new special friend. His priestly career had been quite atypical: theologian and teacher in centers of the Congregation of the Mission from 1936 to 1958, in the late 1950s he ceased to be a regular cleric and became incardinated to the diocese of Astorga as a secular priest, and from 1967 he obtained an exceptional license from the Bishop of Astorga that allowed him to unload himself from pastoral work and devote himself to literary research and later to college teaching. Greene's unexpected emergence into his life from 1976 would lead him to understand that he had a special mission: "Intimacy with me is something that confuses me, and makes me think seriously of my priesthood," he wrote in his diaries after the first trip (Diaries I: 15–16), an annotation interpretable as a genuine conviction that he was destined to exert some kind of beneficial influence on the wavering faith of his new and illustrious friend.

So, although Greene's priority when visiting Spain in 1976 was probably to observe its political developments, it seems that there soon was a change of interest. It is quite possible that he genuinely enjoyed the company of this "sympathetic priest", who organized his tourist journeys, provided lively conversation, idolized him, and reminded the writer that he was an exemplary Christian. The person who was once "the priest who sends massive bound green leather books on you" (in Josephine Reid's expression), soon became an esteemed friend. In addition, although he does not appear to have previous drinking habits, Durán was willing

to compromise and accompany him in his demanding alcoholic rituals, even at the risk of succumbing to the rhythm imposed by his guest. From this first trip, perhaps as a result of some miscalculated excess, Greene went on to regard this Spanish priest not only as an intellectual who analyzed his work with theological methodology, but also as his endearing “whisky priest”, with a very particular idiosyncrasy.

We do not know the degree to which Greene would report what he saw in Spain to his country’s intelligence services, but it is very likely that his main initial objective, the Basque Country as a focus of conflict, would disappoint his expectations. Instead of armed patrols through the ruined streets as explosions went off among the rubble, as he saw in Belfast, he contemplated placid crowds of tourists in swimsuits in the Concha de San Sebastian, or the delicacies of the Arzak Restaurant. In fact, on the remaining fourteen trips he did not pass through the Basque Country again, nor did he propose to do so. It seems that his priorities soon moved to a genuine enjoyment of rest and friendship, suddenly enriched by the inspiring outburst that came upon him on the 1977 voyage, when he realized that he should write a novel about Spain and about a character so peculiar, at least, as his new Spanish friend, who would eventually become *Monsignor Quixote*. Indeed, Greene returned from Spain in July 1977 with the ambition of turning his new friend into a literary character, recreating anecdotes from his travels with the comic background of Cervantine and Unamunian echoes and also offering impressions of post-Franco Spain, reflections on the collaboration between Marxism and Christianity, and some criticism of traditional Catholic doctrine. But of all the ingredients that make up the novel, perhaps the most prominent is that of the exaltation of friendship between two human beings above their ideological or religious divergences.

On this second trip of 1977, Greene established a mandatory stop of a few days in Quinta de Piedade, a custom that would be continued during future visits. One of the conditions Greene put on the itineraries drawn up by Durán was not to stay overnight in the same place, but curiously with Maria Newall he made an exception. Soon she would even feel entitled to convince the travellers to come alone, without the usual companion. Indeed, since Durán had no vehicle or driving licence, from the outset he secured the services of a companion-driver, recruited among well-known young people or former students, who was jokingly referred to as “the Third Man”, alluding to Carol Reed’s famous film scripted by Greene. The role of various Third Men in Durán’s accounts is minimal, almost insignificant. The first, Miguel Fernández Soler, lasted the first two summers, 1976 and 1977, and, although he got along well with Greene, for some reason Maria Newall was upset with him and perhaps this was the reason for his release. In 1978 the driver was Octavio Victoria, and from 1979 it was the turn of Aurelio Verde, perhaps the first of the companions to whom Maria gave her approval, or perhaps she surrendered to the refusal of the travellers to do without a driver who provided them with free service for 24 hours.

Casanova and mayor Tierno Galván

Just as Maria Newall's name appeared from the first references in Greene's correspondence to Durán over Spain, another enigmatic reference that emerges intermittently on his fifteen trips is Christian Casanova. As we saw, Greene mentioned him in an early letter as one of the two people he knew on the Peninsula and whom he wanted to greet on the 1976 trip. They had first met on one of his visits to Chile between 1971 and 1972, when Casanova was director of Cultural Propaganda and Foreign Information of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the government of Salvador Allende, and in 1975 he lived in Madrid, probably exiled from his country. The Chilean will reappear at the end of 1979 as the trigger for a decisive turn in the Greenean travels. At that time Casanova was in Paris and there he met with the recent mayor of Madrid Enrique Tierno Galván, and from the meeting came the idea of inviting Greene to the capital of Spain in the framework of the cultural activities promoted by the humanist mayor. At that meeting Casanova phoned Greene to explain the idea. It seems, from the echoes of the conversation recorded in Durán's diary, that Greene immediately accepted, pending the official invitation (Diaries, IV: 106). The events, framed within the impulse that the new mayor of Madrid intended to give to the cultural life of the capital, included receiving the silver medal of the city, attending press conferences, receptions and an open colloquium in the House of the Villa. If until then Greene had vehemently insisted that his time in Spain remained in absolute secrecy, in July 1980 he decided to accept a public invitation that would compromise not only the anonymity of this trip, but of future ones. The price for which he apparently sold his privacy seems too low: a plane ticket and a three-night hotel stay to attend the consistory events. During these three days he was the subject of constant media attention (Molina 1980: 20; Pereda 1980: 24), something that our author usually disliked, especially if it included the rude entrance of paparazzi into his hotel room.

However, it seems plausible to assume that Greene had a special interest in contacting one of the most influential elected leaders of the Spanish socialist party (PSOE), then on the rise, two years before it won the general election that would keep Felipe González as government president until 1994. In other Hispanic countries where Greene had exercised his peculiar political activity, his *modus operandi* consisted of strengthening personal ties with some leftist leader in power, and from that privileged position moving with some ease through the high political spheres of the country. He had done so in Chile with Salvador Allende – with the intermediation, precisely, of Casanova –, and also in Panama with Omar Torrijos, in Nicaragua with Daniel Ortega, and in Cuba with Fidel Castro (see Hull 2019). One cannot help wondering at Greene's exceptional social skills to engage in a considerable degree of friendship with Hispanic leaders without barely speaking their language, skills that, for example, enabled him to be present at the signing of the Canal Treaty in 1977 as a representative of Panama in the international delegation. And that same year it is remarkable that he approached Quinta da Piedade in the hope of being able to hold a meeting there with Mario Soares, the recent Portuguese prime minister and leader of the Socialist Party (Diarios, I: 46).

In 1980 Greene also got to know the first socialist mayor of Madrid since the Transition, and it could even be said that he entered into a sort of friendship with him. Durán, who accompanied him at all times, participated in this rapprochement – although he considered himself politically the polar opposite of Tierno, and saw with dread the social change that socialism was promoting – and in his accounts he echoes the good harmony that was created. However, in his diaries and subsequent memoir of these days Durán does not note Greene’s possible political intentionality in accepting such an invitation, and instead focuses on other personal issues that affected his outlook, such as the affronts, real or imaginary, that he was subject to in his role as friend and interpreter of the writer (Durán 1994: 193–200). This, coupled with his natural naivety or perhaps discretion, prevented him from interpreting the priorities of the writer, who on this visit intended to contact the leader of the opposition, Felipe González, and also the general secretary of the Communist Party recently legalized in Spain, Santiago Carrillo (Diarios, IV: 106). In this endeavor we may find traces of the networking that characterized Greene’s likely handler at MI6, Maurice Oldfield, who understood “the need to get to know opposition leaders in the countries he visited as much as serving government ministers, as such leaders were likely very themselves to take at charge some point” (Pearce 2016: 163). On the other hand, both Tierno’s and González’s trajectories opened up possibilities for one of Greene’s interests at the time, the collaboration between Marxism, Socialism and Christianity. We do not know whether Greene openly asked Tierno to introduce him to González; the official schedule was tight, and both leaders were political rivals within emerging Spanish socialism, so perhaps the Old Professor (as Tierno was popularly nicknamed) was not the best vehicle to reach the leader of PSOE. What is certain is that Greene sought to maintain that human bond with Tierno, and on his subsequent visits he never missed a meal with the mayor until the latter’s illness and subsequent death in January 1986.

Thus, this important step of Greene aimed at breaking through Spanish socialism, perhaps his most ambitious move to get involved in matters of Spanish politics, was facilitated by Cristián Casanova, one of his two initial contacts on the Peninsula. However, Greene did not achieve a similar degree of penetration to that in Chile, Cuba or Panama. On the contrary, there must have been some estrangement with the PSOE government following the project of film adaptation of his novel *Monsignor Quixote* in 1984. In its early stages, the Spanish government offered to finance the adaptation as a Spanish-British co-production, but in return imposed certain conditions, including the director being Spanish, and the name of Carlos Saura was considered. Although the English interlocutor was not Greene directly but Thames Television and its subsidiary Euston Films, the company that exploited the rights of the writer was Graham Greene Productions – of which his brothers Hugh Greene and Elisabeth Denny were co-directors (Letter from Denny to Durán (4/3/1987, GUL, 7:12) –, and he closely followed the project and even exercised his right to veto the first two scripts written by Peter Luke. Durán was called to a meeting with Thames executives as Greene’s delegate and defended the option to dispense with Spanish collaboration. Radio Televisión Española (RTVE) was the state entity that would have intervened if

the co-production had gone ahead, but Durán distrusted the director, José María Calviño, and he said so to the staff of Thames (Typed draft of *Friend and Brother*, GUL, box 17). In short, the collaboration with the Spanish government did not proceed, and it may have generated some bitterness that led, among other things, to RTVE never acquiring the rights to broadcast the film, which was permanently banished from Spanish screens.

Dangerous friendships

If we admit that espionage was among Greene's initial priorities, one might wonder to what extent he spied on Spain and Portugal throughout his fifteen trips between 1976 and 1989. But the main source for documenting these, the diaries and memoirs of Leopoldo Durán, offer no indication of this facet of the illustrious friend. For him, Greene came to rest, to enjoy the surroundings, wine, friendship... He could not even find anything mysterious on the obligatory visits to Maria Newall in Sintra. To him, Ms. Newall was just an old friend of the author, an exquisite lady of deep Catholic piety and enough culture to live up to their long and "heated discussions". In *Friend and Brother* he sketches a very endearing portrait of Maria, which at no point reveals clues about other possible dimensions. At least, not voluntarily; he does hint that, when Greene met her in Kenya in the 1950s, she was at the helm of the English nurses of the Red Cross, which adds to the image of her as a brave farmer who did not fear the Mau Mau revolt (the "Pistol Mary" described by Greene). Her connection with the Red Cross may be related to the humanitarian missions she oversaw in the 1970s in Portugal, as evidenced in her correspondence with the writer. And another interesting detail pointed out by the Galician priest is that the octogenarian lady, almost nonagenarian, who could hardly walk with crutches, "issued orders to her maids in a voice that was both imperious and kind. Her words sounded like a military command, [...] 'Yes, my lady, yes, my lady'. the maids would answer with great respect." But not only the maids, Greene himself was unusually docile:

His behaviour towards her was tinged with an admiration that bordered on wonder, and a cheerful obedience. Occasionally, she would reprimand him with a few sharp words and a smile, and Graham would accept her opinion. She was the only person I knew who could order Graham around in this way [...]. He was sometimes quite inhibited in her presence and would walk about on tiptoes, obeying her every instruction... (Durán 1994: 325).

In short, it is easy to imagine something enigmatic in Greene's visits to this resolute old woman who, despite her disability, preferred to rent or borrow the Quinta da Piedade from her friend and its owner the Marchioness of Cadaval, rather than live in her English family mansion; overseeing humanitarian missions and often receiving diplomats, ambassadors, nuncios and members of the nobility; who repeatedly insisted that Greene dispense with the Third Man, for, whoever he may be, he seemed to inconvenience the tranquility of the encounters. These

clues, along with the mysterious allusions in the letters of 1974 and 1975, lead us to suspect that some intelligence or diplomacy mission was carried out from the peaceful and florid Quinta da Piedade located in the vicinity of Sintra.

Although enigmatic characters pass in view to a greater or lesser extent, Durán's diareistic or memorialistic narratives focus primarily on the relationships and conversations between the two friends, in "he and I", and the other actors appear as mere cameos with little relevance or ability to surprise. Thus, in addition to those related to Maria Newall or Cristián Casanova, sometimes other intriguing episodes are sketched, such as the appearances in the most unsuspected places of the reporter and notorious Hungarian spy László Róbert, who even wanted to invite himself on the 1981 journey (Letter of Durán to Greene, 2/1/1981, BC, 17/34), or the presence of a committee of Sandinista Nicaraguans housed in the same Madrid hotel as Greene, who discussed revolutionary affairs with them. One could even speculate on the figure of Anne-Marie Comert, who worked for Argos Vergara, one of the publishers of Greene's work in Spanish. Durán records several interviews with Comert, daughter of an English father and French mother but based in Spain (Letter from Greene to Durán, 14/3/1983, BC, 17/36). Comert is one such figure that emerges intermittently in Durán's diaries without too many explanations being provided. Her appearances could be attributed to the professional negotiation between author and publisher to secure the rights of Greene's latest works from the hands of Caralt (Argos Vergara got *Monsignor Quixote* thanks to Comert's insistence). But when one investigates Comert's past, the fact emerges that a few years ago she was Anne-Marie Walters, a decorated Special Operations Executive agent who had operated in Nazi-occupied France (File "Anne-Marie Comert", HS 9/339/2). A new coincidence?

In any case, Greene's "informative" role – in the absence of a better term – in Spain and Portugal remain conjectures based on clues related to the timing of his journeys and loose threads from written documents about them, including the innocent or anodyne testimonies of Durán. Thus, for example, the repetition of talks on whether or not Spain should enter the (then) European Economic Community could be interpreted as a possible objective of Greene's observation on Spain.⁵ And while Durán does not expressly acknowledge the slightest espionage activity, it is very likely that he would have kept the secret in the event that he had been aware. Each of his diary booklets begins with a singular statement: "I swear that everything I write in this notebook will try to be as close as possible to what the two of us discussed. Avoiding, of course, even mentioning what should never be mentioned." The most immediate interpretation is that he omits intimate conversations or, more specifically, confidences and confessions, but it could also refer, by Greene's express wish, to his intelligence activity. It is obvious that Durán's diaries are written not only for personal consumption, but to be read by posterity. On the other hand, it is logical that the secret activity may have remained secret, and that it should continue so until the official files are declassified, if ever. In short, it will still take a few years to learn in more detail about what aspects of Spanish life Graham Greene informed his government of when he passed through Spain, and what possible repercussions his reports may have had on UK international politics.⁶

Notes

- ¹ Oldfield was the deputy director of MI6 in the Far East from April 1950 to the end of 1952. His duties were to rebuild British intelligence in foreign countries such as Burma, Indonesia, French Indochina and Thailand, in coordination with MI5, which in principle dealt with colonial territories (and therefore subject to national security) such as Malaysia, Borneo or Sarawak (Pearce 2016: 107). Greene's first journeys through the Far East dated November 1950, when he witnessed the communist insurrection in Malaysia. In January 1951 he moved to Saigon to cover another violent conflict between French colonial forces and communist insurgents. He moved with some freedom across Vietnam in the company of the British consul and head of the SIS in Hanoi, his friend Colonel Arthur Trevor-Wilson, with whom Greene had worked in 1943 in section V of the SIS. He returned more times to Vietnam, and in 1955 (the year in which, according to Pearce, Demster re-recruited him) managed to meet with communist leader Ho Chi Minh, a meeting about which he reported to Oldfield (Brennan 2016: 94). With such a background, it is no wonder that the French colonial authorities thought Greene was a spy, as he recounts in his autobiography *Ways of Escape* (Greene 1980: 161).
- ² Walter Monckton played a key role in one of the most serious diplomatic conflicts of the British monarchy at the time of World War II, the so-called Operation Willi, a Nazi conspiracy to detain the Dukes of Windsor – the abdicated king Edward VII and his wife – in Spain. Monckton, who had been the trusted person of Edward VII to manage his abdication, travelled to Portugal in July 1940 to convince the Duke to accept the appointment of governor of the Bahamas and thus disown Germany's proposals. This case, documented in Block (1984), links with the activity of British intelligence from the Peninsula and with the possible subsequent occupations of Maria Newall in Portugal. On the other hand, at the end of 1941 Monckton took over the allied propaganda from Cairo, coinciding with the appointment of Greene's brother-in-law, Rodney Dennys, as head of Section V of this station (Burns 2010: 419, Lewis 2010: 329). It is possible that both, in addition to Elisabeth Greene (Dennys), met Maria Newall there.
- ³ In this revolt the native servants of English settlers violently rebelled against their masters. Maria's farm was in the heart of the revolt, and at night she inspected her crops to check that they were not looted, sitting next to the driver in the front seat of the car with a revolver resting on her lap (Durán 1994: 324). Upon discovering that his servant had taken the Mau Mau oath, she threatened to shoot him if he broke the curfew. For these reasons, Greene referred to her jokingly as "Pistol Mary". In the diary Greene kept on his 1953 trip to Kenya, he records the day he met her, September 12, at a local club. He notes that Maria "out of dresses & out of scarf looked very lovely. Must have been so beautiful 15 years ago". The next day Maria tells him about his sentimental life over dinner (Greene, Kenya, 12/9/1953 and 13/9/1953, GUL, GG 1: 3). The suspicion that they had some kind of sexual relationship was first suggested to me by Nicholas Shakespeare (interview 28/9/2013). In turn, Aurelio Verde, Greene's companion-driver between 1979 and 1985, told me that Greene talked at times of Maria as "an old flame" (interview 24/6/2017).
- ⁴ Serve as an example a letter written on September 18, 1975, in which Maria recounts that she has supervised the arrival of six hundred refugees at the airport with a certain "Federico", and narrates the tragedy of two children of seven and eight whose parents were travelling on another plane that did not land. She then writes that "The D of P was let out of prison last week. I was given a list of things he had not done!!", and concludes by announcing that if possible she will go to the embassy in Paris for two or three days, and invites Greene to read between the lines (Letter from Maria Newall to Greene, 18/9/1975, BC, 29/38).

- ⁵ Among the priority interests of Oldfield as ‘C’, Pearce claims that “much of MI6’s time during the Callaghan years [1976-79] was spent gathering intelligence on other European countries”, with a clear approach to whether they met the necessary economic requirements to join the EEC (Pearce, 2016: 283).
- ⁶ I am particularly grateful to Christopher Hull (University of Chester) for his thorough reading of this paper and his insightful comments.

References

- Bermejo, José María (1981) Graham Greene a través de Leopoldo Durán. *Ya* 10/7/1981, 43.
- Bloch, Michael (1986) *Operation Willi: The Nazi Plot to Kidnap the Duke of Windsor / July 1940*. New York: Grove Press.
- Brennan, Michael G. (2016) *Graham Greene: Political Writer*. London, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bosco, Mark (2005). *Graham Greene’s Catholic Imagination*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Burns, Jimmy (2010) *Papa Spy*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Cachado, Joao (2013) Dona Olga, Marquesa de Cadaval. *Sintra do avesso*, post 1/2/2013”, <http://sintradoavesso.blogspot.com.es/2013/02/outra-atitude-de-comemoracao-do.html>. Accessed on 30/12/2019.
- Cloetta, Yvonne (2004) *In Search of a Beginning: My Life with Graham Greene*. London, Bloomsbury.
- Durán, Leopoldo (1982) Testigo español del *J’accuse* de Graham Greene. *Los Domingos de ABC*, 4/7/1982, 23–27.
- Durán, Leopoldo (1983) La aventura española de Graham Greene: De cómo nació *Monseñor Quijote*. *Ya dominical*, 16/1/1983, 4–9.
- Durán, Leopoldo (1984) Los ochenta años de Graham Greene. *Ya Dominical*, 30/9/1984, 4–9.
- Durán, Leopoldo (1985) De cómo nació la película *Monseñor Quijote*. *Ya Dominical*, 29/9/1985, 4–9.
- Durán, Leopoldo (1987) Mis vacaciones con Graham Greene. *El País Semanal*, 2/8/1987, 24–32.
- Durán, Leopoldo (1988a) Anecdótico secreto de mi amigo. *ABC Literario*, 16/7/1988, vi–vii.
- Durán, Leopoldo (1988b) Graham Greene: El gran escritor inglés cumple hoy 84 años. *El Faro de Vigo*, 2/10/1988, vi–vii.
- Durán, Leopoldo (1994) *Graham Greene: Friend and Brother*. London, HarperCollins.
- Durán, Leopoldo (1996) *Graham Greene: amigo y hermano*. Madrid, Espasa.
- Falk, Quentin (1990) *Travels in Greenland: The Cinema of Graham Greene*. London, Quartet Books.
- González Yuste, Juan and Rafael Conte (1982) “Graham Greene: el inglés impasible”, *El País Semanal*, 10/12/1982: 36–47.
- Greene, Graham (1980: 1999) *Ways of Escape*. London: Vintage.
- Greene, Graham (1982: 1983) *Monsignor Quixote*. London, Penguin.
- Greene, Richard ed (2007) *Graham Greene: A Life in Letters*. New York, W.W. Norton.
- Hull, Christopher (2019) *Our Man Down in Havana: The Story Behind Graham Greene’s Cold War Spy Novel*. New York: Pegasus.
- Lewis, Jeremy (2010) *Shades of Greene: One Generation of an English Family*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Mockler, Anthony (1994) *Graham Greene: Three Lives*. Arbroath, Hunter Mackay.
- Molina, César Antonio (1980) Graham Greene. No soy ambiguo desde mi catolicismo, sino desde la vida. *Ya*, 9/7/1980, 20.

- Mosley, Charles ed. (2003) *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage & Knightage, 107th edition*. Wilmington, Delaware, Burke's Peerage (Genealogical Books).
- Pearce, Martin (2016). *Spymaster: The Life of Britain's Most Decorated Cold War Spy and Head of MI6, Sir Maurice Oldfield*. London: Bantam Press.
- Pereda, Rosa María (1980) Graham Greene: Detesto todos los dogmas. *El País*, 11/7/1980, 24.
- Shakespeare, Nicholas (2013) A Talk at the Berkhamstead Festival, 30/9/2013, www.nicholasshakespeare.com/writings/essays/graham-greene/ Accessed on 30/12/2019.
- Shelden, Michael (1994) *Graham Greene: The Enemy Within*. London, Random House.
- Sherry, Norman (1989) *The Life of Graham Greene*, vol. 1. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Sherry, Norman (2004) *The Life of Graham Greene*, vol. 3. London, Jonathan Cape.
- Villar Flor, Carlos (2015) Graham Greene and Leopoldo Durán: Quixotic Companions across Spain and Portugal. *The Grove: Working Papers on English Literature* 22, 213–228.
- Villar Flor, Carlos (2020) *Viajes con mi cura: Las andanzas de Graham Greene por España y Portugal*. Granada: Comares/Universidad de La Rioja.

Special Documents

Georgetown University, Lauinger Library, Booth Family Center for Special Collections (former Special Collections Research Center), Washington DC, Leopoldo Durán Papers (GUL)

- Diaries of Leopoldo Durán (17 notebooks), GUL, box 43.
- Hand-written draft of Graham Greene: Friend and Brother (3 versions), GUL, 16:4.
- Typed draft of Graham Greene: Friend and Brother, GUL, Box 17.
- Letter from Elisabeth Dennys to Leopoldo Durán, 4/3/1987, GUL, 7:12.
- Letter from Graham Greene to Leopoldo Durán, 8/1/1976, GUL, 1:13.
- Letter from Graham Greene to Leopoldo Durán, 2/3/1976, GUL, 1:14.
- Letter from Graham Greene to Leopoldo Durán, 12/4/1976, GUL, 1:15.
- Letter (draft) from Leopoldo Durán to Graham Greene, 13/5/1978, GUL, 2:5.

Graham Greene Papers (GUL GG)

Kenya diaries, 12/9/1953 and 13/9/1953, GUL GG, 1:3.

Graham Greene – Yvonne Cloetta Collection (GUL YCP)

- Letter from Graham Greene to Yvonne Cloetta, 9/6/1975, GUL YPC, 3:5.
- Letter from Graham Greene to Yvonne Cloetta, 14/6/1975, GUL YPC, 3:6.
- Letter from Graham Greene to Yvonne Cloetta, 21/6/1975, GUL YPC, 3:10.
- Letter from Graham Greene to Yvonne Cloetta, 2/7/1975, GUL YPC, 3:7.
- Letter from Graham Greene to Yvonne Cloetta, 10/7/1975, GUL YPC, 3:8.

Graham Greene Collection, Burns Library, Boston College (BC)

- Letter from Graham Greene to Leopoldo Durán, 7/4/1975, BC, 17/28.
- Letter from Graham Greene to Leopoldo Durán, 1/12/1975, BC, 17/28.
- Letter from Graham Greene to Leopoldo Durán, 14/3/1983, BC, 17/36.
- Letter from Graham Greene to Maria Newall, 17/1/1976, BC, 29/38.
- Letter from Graham Greene to Maria Newall, 11/6/1976, BC, 29/38.
- Letter from Graham Greene to Maria Newall, 8/7/1976, BC, 29/38.
- Letter from Leopoldo Durán to Graham Greene, 21/4/1975, BC, 17/28.
- Letter from Leopoldo Durán to Graham Greene, 13/5/1978, BC, 17/31.

Carlos Villar Flor

Letter from Leopoldo Durán to Graham Greene, 2/1/1981, BC, 17/34.
Letter from Leopoldo Durán to Graham Greene, 18/3/1982, BC, 17/35.
Letter from Maria Newall to Graham Greene, 18/9/1975, BC, 29/38.
Letter from Maria Newall to Graham Greene, 26/10/1975, BC, 29/38.
Letter from Maria Newall to Graham Greene, 3/12/1975, BC, 29/38.

Bodleian Library, Oxford

Letter from Graham Greene to Dermot Mills, SJ, 16/12/1965, Bodleian Library, MSS Eng c7227-34.

National Archives, Kew

File “Anne-Marie Comert”, National Archives, Kew, HS 9/339/2.

Other sources: interviews

Shakespeare, Nicholas, interview in Berkhamstead, 30/9/2013.
Verde, Aurelio, interview in Málaga, 24/6/2017.

CARLOS VILLAR FLOR teaches English Literature at the University of La Rioja, and his academic production revolves around twentieth-century British novelists. Among other scholarly books he has published critical editions and Spanish translations of several Evelyn Waugh novels, the monograph *Character and Characterization in Evelyn Waugh's Fiction* (1997), the study *In the Picture: The Facts behind the Fiction in Evelyn Waugh's "Sword of Honor"* (2014, with Donat Gallagher), and an essay on the literary impact in Britain of the Jacobean route: *English Travellers and Pilgrims on the Road to Santiago in La Rioja* (2006).

Address: Carlos Villar Flor, Departamento de Filologías Modernas, Edificio de Filología, C/ San José de Calasanz, 33, 26004 Logroño Spain. [email: carlos.villar@unirioja.es]



This work can be used in accordance with the Creative Commons BY-NC-ND 4.0 International license terms and conditions (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode>). This does not apply to works or elements (such as image or photographs) that are used in the work under a contractual license or exception or limitation to relevant rights.