

THE POLITICAL TRANSITION IN SPAIN: AN INTERPRETATION*

Julio Rodriguez Aramberri

I

It may appear to be an impossible task to account for what has happened in Spain between 1975 and 1979; what was expected to happen at the beginning of that period has not occurred. The turn that events have taken is well known. In the spring of 1979, after elections to both the Constitutional Assembly and the legislature, and municipal elections, the government of the country remains in the hands of those who have exercised power for the last forty years. And yet there is one important difference: in **those** four years, the dictatorship has given way to a democratic State, and those who lead that State now enjoy the same legitimacy as those of any other Western European country. There are, of course, any number of objections that can be raised to that assertion—not least among them the fact that the first President of a democratic government was one of the last Ministers in **Franco's** regime; nevertheless, that transition has been realized in Spain.

Until now, there have been almost no attempts to interpret the new situation. The usual description, offered by both right and left wings in parliament—is that now at last, after 150 years of political agitation, all social forces have reached responsible agreement in producing a democratic constitution of national concord. This, they say, will guarantee a free and peaceful future, in which the

* This article only seeks to offer a perspective on the process as a whole: it is not a substitute for the detailed historical task that has still to be undertaken. Even in the general field of concern that it does cover, there are a number of questions (the problems of nationalities in the Spanish State; the concrete situation of the different social forces; terrorist activities, etc.) that have not even been posed. This essay is no more than an attempt to find the logic of the situation in Spain as a whole, together with some reflections on the problems that arise from it for anyone who attempts to approach the facts in the light of a Marxist method.

opportunity to govern will be open to anyone who can command sufficient popular support. This image of an as yet unknown future, however, does not explain how such an agreement came to be possible nor what social and political mechanisms produced it. Leaving aside the illusion of the stages of economic growth à la Rostow, and the chimerical theories of industrial society—neither of which enjoy very much favour any longer in this period of crisis—a Marxist critique must begin by explaining one fundamental question; how is it that a process of class struggle that most observers regarded as deeply menacing on the eve of Franco's death, should in the intervening period have been so attenuated?

On both right and left, the louder voices have concurred in interpreting the facts on what we might call a neo-Machiavellian basis. The common slogan is 'Nothing has changed'—though it takes on different nuances according to the political position of the user. For some groups of the extreme left, it means that we are still living under a dictatorship whose appearance alone has changed. It is true, of course, that there have been only minimal changes in the State apparatus; yet whatever yardstick of democracy one uses, there is no sense in which the Spanish State in 1979 is a dictatorship. There is a free opposition, a parliament, elections, civil liberties, etc.—all those elements that underlie a democratic regime.

Others¹ distinguish between the Franco regime and the present one by pointing to what they call the 'broadening of the political class', or governing elite, to include representatives of the left-wing parties. Such a view both ignores the form in which class domination is exercised, and leaves the specific character of the changes that have taken place unclear. Why, after all, did such a change not take place five or ten years earlier, given such social and psychological assumptions; was the ambition of the leaders of the left-wing parties and their aspiration to join the oligarchy not as real then as now?

Among those Marxists who have rejected simplistic explanations, the results have been equally unremarkable. The best-known attempt to offer an explanation, in fact, was made by N. Poulantzas²—and as such it merits some detailed attention. His analysis, an attempt to apply to a concrete case some of the categories developed in his *Social Classes in Contemporary Capitalism*, takes as its starting point the political crises in some States of southern Europe from 1974 onwards; these crises are situated in the context of the changing international balance of forces in the capitalist world. During the sixties, this change generated in these countries a process of dependent industrialization³, whose impact was considerable,

especially on the ruling classes; for its result was the division between the old comprador bourgeoisie and the fractions that Poulantzas calls the *internal bourgeoisie*⁴. Although monopoly capital has a strong presence in both, the first represents above all the agrarian and financial interests, while the second consists in its majority of industrial fractions. On the international level, the first is linked to US support, while the second is orientated towards the Common Market.

These fractions also confront one another on the political terrain, for the comprador bourgeoisie favours the continuation of military dictatorship in those countries, the internal bourgeoisie advocates a process of liberalization that will enable it to adapt the political machine to its own needs. The changes in Portugal and Greece between 1974 and 1975, and the changes that Poulantzas envisaged in Spain at the time he wrote his book, would be the result of the displacement of hegemony within the ruling classes towards the sector of the internal bourgeoisie—together with the creation of a new political framework. As far as the dominated classes were concerned, this change in the political centre of gravity would have important consequences for them, insofar as the internal bourgeoisie would be their ally in the transition to a democratic regime.⁵

This is not the place for a detailed analysis of the general hypothesis, rendered less relevant in any case by the passing of time. Yet it is worthwhile underlining some of its limitations. First, on the methodological level, Poulantzas suffers from an excessive desire, despite his insistence on the relative autonomy of different levels, to find an economic correlation for all transformations in the political superstructure. Undoubtedly, the economic changes that took place during the sixties in the countries of Southern Europe provide the backcloth for the events of the seventies; but to my mind they do so, above all, to the extent that they affect the global relations between classes rather than the transformations that occur from time to time within the ruling classes. By emphasizing the second aspect, Poulantzas exaggerates the internal divisions within the ruling classes while leaving aside one factor that is absolutely necessary for that analysis—namely, the relations between the dominated classes and the political organizations that represent them. Thus the fundamental role in events played by the Socialist and Communist parties is relegated to a secondary place.⁶

A second question concerns the existence or otherwise of this economic division within the ruling classes. Of course there are different tendencies; but these differences are not in my view (at

least the Spanish case) structural and economic so much as divergences over the political decisions to be taken and their foreseeable consequences. Poulantzas's demarcation between the old and the internal bourgeoisie and their concomitant financial/agrarian, industrial fractions with their different orientations towards the USA or the EEC are artificial in the case of Spain and do not correspond to reality.' It certainly does not enable us to understand the move of banking capital towards the Union of the Democratic Centre (UCD)—which in Poulantzas's terms would represent the internal bourgeoisie—not the corresponding distancing from Alianza Popular (which would seem more in accord with those financial interests); nor would it explain why the vast majority of the Spanish bourgeoisie as a *whole* feels itself to be represented by the UCD.

The third and final critique to be levelled at Poulantzas is that he sows illusions about the possibility of an alliance between the internal bourgeoisie and the dominated classes. Certainly there was in Spain an increasing tendency among a large part of the bourgeoisie to favour the democratic reform of the dictatorship. It was very careful, however, to set out clearly the limits of change and to emphasize that it alone would determine the rate and direction of such change, thus ensuring that the mass movement would not go beyond those boundaries. As we shall see, these limits were quickly accepted by the major parties of the left; an alliance would have been practically impossible on any other terms.

We have thus set out the basic theses that underpin the present essay. In the context both of the international economic crisis and the social transformations that were taking place in the 1960s, there had occurred in Spain a change in the global relation of forces between the two major classes, marked by an increasing paralysis in the Francoist State which favoured the mass movement. A political crisis was germinating which threatened to become a crisis of bourgeois domination unless it could be contained. If that bourgeoisie, on the other hand, was to retain power, then it must urgently find a new democratic legitimacy. Such a transformation could not occur on its sole initiative; it would have to be *the result of an agreement with the left*. That was the key issue.

Such an agreement could only occur within a democratic State—but not any democracy. It would have a strong right-wing orientation as a result of the limitations on the process laid down by the bourgeoisie, and be designed to ensure that it would recover the political initiative. These limitations were three, all concerned with the maintenance of the State apparatus and its continuing control

by the bourgeoisie. The first was the acceptance of the monarchic form of the State as a guarantee of institutional continuity. The second laid down the necessity that Spain should maintain its territorial unity—though the concrete form that it would take would have different bases than those laid down by the oppressive Francoist State. Finally, the reins of power would be kept in reliable hands during the process of transition; for the bourgeoisie did not propose to accept, except under extreme pressure, the formation of a provisional government to oversee the transition. Within these limitations, it was prepared to open negotiations with the forces of the left on many other aspects of the future organization of a democratic regime. The way in which those limitations came to be defined and, let it be said, the ease with which they were accepted by the left, give the transition to democracy in Spain a special character.

2

The death of Franco (on 20 November 1975) found both major classes of Spanish society unprepared. It was neither unexpected, nor had there been any lack of attempts to create alternative organizations⁸; yet neither the right, nor the mass movement—in which the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) and other left organizations played a central role—had either a political programme or the organization necessary to ensure an outcome in their favour to the crisis that occurred in the wake of Franco's death.

The vast majority of the bourgeoisie had remained loyal to the Franco regime; despite its inability to respond to the political crisis of the beginning of the seventies with anything other than further repression⁹, there was no internal rupture. There were, and increasingly clearly, differences of opinion over tactics; but the bourgeoisie as a whole remained united until the death of the General, and made no attempt to find a political alternative.

This should not be interpreted to mean that the right is absolutely incapable of evolving. The liberalizing, neo-democratic, reformist current was gaining influence, and argued the need for substantial political change. The bunker, the sector of the intransigents, was losing influence to the reformists; so already by that time it would be wrong to imagine that the only solution that they would be able to find would be at a 'continuism' along the lines of Caetano in neighbouring Portugal.

Within the bourgeoisie, there were only tiny sectors who had

fought against the dictatorship¹⁰. It is true that there had been a certain flowering of bourgeois and petit-bourgeois parties with democratic pretensions since the sixties; but all of them were prepared to wait for a change in the political framework which would allow them to occupy the centre of the stage. On the other hand, this bourgeois opposition combined a lack of energy with an enormous distrust of the mass movement and the Marxist left, though slightly modified no doubt in the case of the Socialists. With the two examples of Greece and Portugal before them, the bourgeois opposition knew that they were incapable of producing anything like the first, and feared more than anything a repetition of the second. That placed it in a mid-way position between the reformists of the regime and the left, without enabling it to play an independent political role.¹¹

The left, however, also lacked a clear political project or a unitary organization capable of imposing one. It enjoyed considerable strength, as a result of a forceful mass movement which exercised considerable political pressure. Yet that movement too was very contradictory in its composition and its aims; it embraced working-class and popular struggles, the national question and general democratic demands.

The struggles of the working class, and later progressively of white collar workers, revolved fundamentally around the maintenance of living standards and the improvement of working conditions. The illegal status of all organization and all resistance under the dictatorship, however, tended to turn them very quickly into struggles against repression. The inevitable police intervention brought demands for freedom for detainees, the right to strike, the disbanding of the police, etc., which almost immediately endowed any economic struggle with a political character. A similar thing occurred at the organizational level; without trade union or negotiating rights, the workers organized themselves into representative commissions and strike committees, closely linked to the rank and file through mass meetings, with the result that their struggles became increasingly radical.¹²

Another aspect of the mass movement were the actions that took place around the national question. For years, Franco's policy had been to persecute any autonomist expression, be it political or cultural; yet these demands had become increasingly insistent as the years passed¹³, and had built a strong organizational base.

Lastly, the mass movement developed around slogans of a general, political kind, at the head of which was the demand for a

total amnesty for political prisoners and exiles, and a demand for democratic freedoms. In this area too, the movement had grown from partial actions and a fundamentally student character to mass actions which made it possible to draw together all the different sectoral struggles.

In the 1970s, the mass movement developed an enormous strength, and realized actions which put the dictatorship in an insoluble dilemma—how to repress or to make concessions without reinforcing the movement still further? This was the sign for the great majority of the bourgeoisie to start arguing the need for political change. A solution had to be found to a political crisis which could, under its own impetus, develop into a crisis of domination.

And despite all its problems, such a solution was available. The political domination of the bourgeoisie had now to be situated in a new, democratic framework. A democratic regime would be able to find solutions for many problems that were intractable under the dictatorship. Above all, it would normalize production, limit workers' actions to their 'natural' economic level and would provide the employers with a real spokesman in their dealings with the unions. A measure of self-government for the nationalities and regions of the State would allay the danger of a breakdown in national unity, a danger that was clearly present in the very wide demand for self-determination that the whole of the left was putting forward at the time. Lastly, a democratic regime—or the promise of one—would de-activate the general actions, and allow the often antagonistic interests represented within the mass movement to express their differences freely. Democracy appeared to be the best way of holding back the movement and at the same time to restrain the uncontrolled opposition that a maintenance at all costs of the Francoist State could generate.

These limits coincided, furthermore, with the vision put forward within the mass movement by its political representatives. Since 1956, the PCE's whole policy of *national reconciliation* had been directed towards the creation of a democratic State like those in the rest of Europe. There had been different forms of political action argued to achieve these ends¹⁴; yet the goal was constant. The position of the Socialists was not very different. As the inheritors and defenders of the Republican tradition, they saw in the formation of a bourgeois-democratic regime the best means to reinforce their political position and to initiate the social reforms that would make it possible to advance towards the achievement of their maximum

programme. Finally, despite their intricate internal disputes concerning the true party of the proletariat, the Maoist organizations were equally unable to envisage the building of their Popular Republic on any other economic base but capitalism. If the differences regarding possible alliances, the rate of change or concrete tactics were enormous within the left, there was no such divergence over the ultimate objective. Save for a few hundred Trotskyists, the next phase of the Spanish political process was seen by all to involve the formation of a bourgeois-democratic State.

Thus, at least in theory, the foundations were laid for an agreement between the great social forces; but those foundations were as ambiguous as they were broad. There are many forms of articulation of political democracy; and, even within a single framework, the extension of democratic freedoms varies according to the global relations between the classes. Thus it is not a question of criticizing the democratic road in the name of a socialism which, as we have seen, hardly anybody believed possible; the problem is that the democratic process in Spain has been carried forward in such a way that the possibility that the present democratic framework will permit a resolute struggle for socialism is very remote indeed.

The issue may be clearer if we follow the distinction made by some writers on constitutional law, between a granted democracy, an agreed democracy, and a revolutionary democracy. For all its formalism, this distinction shows the solution to the problems of transition in Spain to have been the second—a pact between the major forces of right and left within the framework of limitations imposed by the former—as we have already shown. The history of these years is a history of confluence at that intermediate level, avoiding both a granting of democracy (from above) and a political revolution that would have involved the formation of a provisional government under pressure from the mass movement. Each phase of the 'Spanish political miracle' has centred on the attempt to reach such an agreement.

3

The first phase is characterized by the non-viability of a granted democracy, as demonstrated in the complex events which are briefly described below.

The first path chosen by the Spanish bourgeoisie, although uncertain of its results, led to a granted political reform—designed,

defined and tightly controlled by the existing power. The forces of the opposition would be given neither a voice nor a role to play. This solution was attempted by the Arias government of December 1975 to July 1976.

The idea, as it was expounded by Fraga Iribarne, one of its main exponents, was to form a regime similar to that of West Germany, with a strong executive and the exclusion of the PCE and other left organizations from political life. The initiative would be in the hands of the government and the Cortes; once the reform was drafted, the 'permitted' forces would be invited to participate; thus the reform extended no further than the democratic opposition and the socialists. Yet at no time were the time scale or the conditions of the reform made clear.

As far as the opposition and the mass movement were concerned, it was a totally unacceptable proposal, and the response was not long in coming. Between December 1975 and February 1976, Spain was in the grip of an almost total general strike¹⁵ whose demands were both economic and political (including demands for the resignation of certain ministers, for democratic rights, etc.), and which showed both the power and the determination of the movement. The general strike, led with great caution by the PCE especially, was the clearest sign that the plans of the government could not work. So that government found itself facing the same dilemma as the last Francoist governments—to repress or to integrate. The events of Vitoria and Montejurra¹⁶ showed clearly that they were not capable of the first; at the same time, the government lacked the initiative to carry through the kind of reforms that would be acceptable to the opposition.

Thus far from dividing it, the prospect of a democracy granted from above had only succeeded in uniting the opposition both organizationally and in common programmes. At the beginning of 1976, in Paris, Professor Ruiz Gimenez argued that 'democracy must come quickly if we are to avoid civil war'; his view clearly summed up the feelings of the democratic opposition and significant sectors of the bourgeoisie who remained within the regime, yet felt increasing desperation at the government's lack of initiative¹⁷ Neither Ruiz Gimenez nor anyone else in the circles in which he moved actually believed in the possibility of civil war—but his dramatic tone did give a clear message; that a different road to that proposed by the government would now have to be found in order to pre-empt and limit the effects of the political crisis to come. That

explains why, from then on, the bourgeois opposition showed itself better disposed to an effective approach to the left.

The consequence of the general strike and the events of Vitoria was the formation of a broad opposition front, Democratic Co-ordination (CD), at the end of March 1976. CD brought together the ex-members of the Democratic Junta and the Platform for Democratic Convergence—that is liberal and social-democratic sectors—independent personalities, Left Christian Democracy (Ruiz-Gimenez), the Carlist Party, almost the whole of the left (PSP, PSOE, PCE, MCE, ORT and PTE) as well as the two major underground trade union organizations, the UGT and the Workers Commissions (CC.OO). It was presented as a short-term agreement, to last until there was a democratic break with the regime and a constitutional government was formed. Such a break would come with the achievement of a set of minimum conditions: constitutional process, amnesty, freedom of organization and the granting of political rights and freedoms to the nationalities and regions of the Spanish State. The programme was close to that of the more moderate sectors and included no demands that would be incompatible with the maintenance of a capitalist system.

In formulating its understanding of how such a break would come about, CD talked about the need to mobilize the popular masses and form a provisional government. At no point, however, did this lead to any kind of united or co-ordinated effort at mobilization; on the contrary, in insisting that any such action required unanimous agreement, the initiative was left in the hands of the moderate groups and parties—organizations that would never have been able to set such activity in motion (even if they had wanted to) because they had never had the slightest contact with the mass movement. As far as the provisional government was concerned, it was never clear what its relation to mass activity would be. For CD's ambiguous nature was a sign of its intention to open negotiations with the government and the powers that be in order to avoid the danger of the break taking the form of a political revolution, as it had in Portugal.*

It is not surprising, then, that in the months that followed, the democratic break should have been attended with all sorts of modifying adjectives, the most popular of which were *agreed* or *negotiated break*. Between the granted reforms that had already proved not to be viable, and political revolution, the opposition as a whole, bourgeois and left, were opening the way to a negotiated solution.

A decisive factor here was the attitude of the PCE. For it held the key to the mass movement, and was in a position to determine its

extent and its terms of activity. If the PCE leaned towards negotiation in exchange for its legalization, the road to compromise was open; the PCE understood this perfectly, and showed itself disposed to agreement. At the end of June 1976, the Executive Committee of the PCE issued a statement in which it reiterated the need to abandon a politics of 'all or nothing' and supported the notion of 'an agreed democratic break' within the limits proposed by the CD. The statement ended in a way which unmistakably pointed to a conditional recognition of the Monarchy.¹⁹

During the period of transition, there was a frequently stated view that the defence of a Republican regime was no more than an overnight conversion to the current legitimacy. A modern State, went the argument, could be equally democratic whether it was a Republic or a Monarchy. If that was the case, then the PCE's policy would have been entirely reasonable; but the real problem was a very different one. The King was the visible head of a State apparatus that the right wished to maintain intact at all costs. To pose the question of a Republic was not merely to 'take an outmoded position, but to argue for the democratization of the State apparatus itself. In its whispered conditional recognition of the monarchy, the PCE was abandoning that demand; and everyone saw this clearly.

In May 1976, the options of the regime's reformists and the opposition came increasingly close. The CD's statement on the reform plans presented by the Arias government²⁰ showed that, although these were unacceptable, others would not be, and that it (CD) was prepared for a 'negotiated break'. Finally, it affirmed that the future provisional government could be the object of negotiation with those sectors of the existing power prepared to recognize democratic freedoms; which gave the existing government the initiative as far as defining the limits of reform was concerned. At the same time, CD suspended its call for mass mobilization and repeated its old minimum conditions for negotiations. The statement coincided in almost every particular with the proposals presented by J.M. de Areilza, at the time Foreign Minister, in the search for a national agreement.

The issues were thus clear and both sides had shown their willingness to seek agreement. Its concrete form had yet to be decided; inevitably, that task would fall to a new government.

the Constitutional Assembly) the pact found concrete form. It was not an easy manoeuvre, but with the formation of the Suarez government the right regained the initiative they had lost after the general strike at the beginning of 1976. In exchange, free elections were promised; the task of preparing and winning them fell to the Suarez government.

Adolfo Suarez was almost unknown when he was given this mission; a protégé of Carrero Blanco, under whose Ministry (of Information) he had been Director of Spanish Television (TVE), he became Minister of the (Francoist) Movement under Arias. He had made no change in its structure, nor was he identified with any political option other than that of saving the interests of his class. He is a type of politician that frequently emerges from the Spanish bourgeoisie at times of crisis, whose distinctive feature is neither the formulation of ambitious policies nor any great ability as a statesman, but the immediate defence of those interests and a prodigious capacity for manoeuvre and negotiation.

The negotiations would have to take place on two levels at once; on the one hand, the left would have to be convinced of the need for the reforms offered and their authenticity. And this required some immediate decisions in the political sphere. On the other hand, the right as a whole would require proof that the negotiations would be undertaken with firmness and without abandoning any of its fundamental conditions. For many representatives of the right, change was both necessary and dangerous, for nearly all of them had taken part in repression and/or corruption—the two great pillars of the dictatorship. That is why they demanded that the process of transition take place little by little and always at the initiative of the government.

Suarez had to take this very seriously. The issue of amnesty, for example, is instructive in this respect. As we know, amnesty was the most consistent demand through every action of the mass movement. In the end, amnesty was achieved in the form and within the limits set out by the government, that is through staged and arbitrary measures designed to ensure that they were never seen as the result of popular action. The first amnesty (July 1976) was to recognize this constraint by extending its clauses only to those who had neither participated in nor were accomplices of crimes of violence. The second decree, on the eve of the elections (March 1977), did include them; but the government reserved to itself the final decision on the release of those whose offences were considered the most serious. A total amnesty would come only with the

constitution of the new democratic Cortes (parliament) in October 1977, and even then there were exceptions to it which were accepted by the left, the most important of which was the exclusion of members of the Military Democratic Union (UMD)²¹. In every case, amnesty was the result of a government initiative.

Having promised elections and made its first moves in the matter of amnesty, the government would now set out to seek the explicit consensus of the different fractions of the bourgeoisie and the basic institutions of the State apparatus — fundamentally the army.

Little is known, other than unreliable rumours, about events within the military or the attitudes of its commanders during this period. The military bureaucracy, highly-disciplined, has allowed few leaks and the important decisions have been taken in the utmost secrecy. In any event, their effect has been an acceptance of political reform, apparently contradicting the image of an army disposed at any time to launch a *coup d'état*, an image frequently presented by the PCE and other left organizations. There are few real reasons to confirm this hypothesis, despite the obsessive way in which it has been repeated. To say this is neither to glorify the army nor to fall into the mythology of professionalism. In Spain as elsewhere, the army is the backbone of bourgeois domination, and especially during and since the Civil War, has exercised its repressive functions without scruple. Yet even an officer corps as carefully selected on the basis of its loyalty to authority and its opposition to democracy and socialism, as closed in upon itself and marginal to civil society as the Francoist army, is not totally impervious to either social pressures or the political decisions adopted by the ruling class. It was these hard political realities that pushed and continue to push the majority of the army towards the view that negotiated reform is the only realistic alternative, despite the strong reservations it may have internally about democracy. In terms of the arguments put forward in this essay, then, it is clear that the attitude of the army reflected the same global *political project*.

The project and the attitude could of course change, if repression appeared as the only alternative. But at the time we are describing, reform was the basic option. Thus the army and the bourgeoisie were prepared to accept a wider basis of negotiation if the left, through mobilizing the mass movement in order to strengthen its negotiating position, refused to bow without reply to the conditions imposed by the right. The illusion of an imminent *coup*, far from describing adequately the real relations of forces at the time, in fact served to justify the timorous policies of the left.²² It is in fact very

likely that, far from fomenting a coup, responsible mass mobilization would have broadened the field of democracy. On the other hand, the failure to demand the purging of those sectors who were in favour of a coup, thus allowing them to move with total impunity up to the present, is one of the most disturbing elements when one looks ahead to future social conflicts. It is still more disturbing that the left, in order to ingratiate itself with the supposedly constitutionalist sectors of the army, demands that it be given still more fire-power—conveniently forgetting how those professional capacities will be used when the occasion arises. At all events, in the autumn of 1976, after a series of meetings, the military gave the government the green light to proceed with its plans for political reform. The changes and reforms in the military that followed²⁹ thus consolidated this way forward; the obstacle represented by the Francoist Cortes, where the most extreme right elements were over-represented and might thus not vote in favour of the abolition of the dictatorship, was thus overcome. This once again testified to the unanimity achieved by the different sectors of the bourgeoisie. The Cortes approved the government's draft proposal for political reform, and it was subsequently confirmed by the national referendum of 15 December 1976. Thus the negotiations for political change—if there were any at all—would be conducted on a basis determined by the right, and the opposition would have to accept them in their totality.

Within the opposition, the winds of change were certainly not blowing strong. At the end of the summer, the opposition appeared to reach its organizational peak with the constitution of the Platform of Democratic Organizations (POD), which brought together CD and similar formations among the different nationalities and regions. The POD's programme, however, was the most minimalist yet. Behind the obligatory but consistently unrealized call for 'peaceful popular mobilizations' and the still ritual formula of 'democratic break', the statement was silent on the formation of a provisional government and accepted the continuing existence of the Suarez government. In fact, 'the meeting of united organizations expresses its willingness to negotiate with the existing powers of the State, among them the government, believing it to be essential that the negotiations should take place in a public and unitary way on the part of the opposition'.

In the months that followed, as government plans became clearer, even the minimum conditions for negotiation began to disappear. The opposition, while maintaining a lukewarm abstentionism

before the referendum which was designed to sanction government plans, finally formed a Negotiating Commission jointly with the tiny groups that were still not included in the CD or the POD, which would meet with the government and begin a series of still ill-defined negotiations. This was the famous Commission of Nine²⁴, which presented itself as the voice of the whole opposition and whose representation included organizations from the liberals to the Maoists; the latter—irony of ironies—represented by none other than Santiago Carrillo, general secretary of the PCE.

Now the opposition was going to the Moncloa Palace to negotiate what for years had been regarded as the prior conditions for any negotiation (amnesty, legalization of all political parties and trade union organizations, etc.). The acceptance of the limits set by the right could not have been clearer. The public character of the negotiations, which the opposition had always promised, was never ensured; and the negotiations went no further than approval of the electoral law²⁵ and the exploration of government intentions. This, then, was the outcome of the initial demands of the various organizations united within the opposition.

This attitude of negotiation and even of determined collaboration was further reinforced by the events of the so-called *semana negra* (black week) in Madrid.²⁶ For the left's conclusion from those events was that the government must be given further room for manoeuvre, while it should itself make no demands of its own. This attitude has been constant in the face of all terrorist actions ever since, actions which have occurred with suspicious regularity on the eve of important events or whenever the left dare to exhibit a minimum, but determined opposition to the government. So the government had the initiative; all it had to do now was to adopt a series of measures that would ensure that future elections would be held, and above all that the political parties would be given legal status. Here the thorny question was the legalization of the PCE, but after a series of evasive measures, the government finally decided to face up to it.²⁷ And it could not be said that, in doing so, it faced any insurmountable resistance.

Since then, the PCE has presented its legalization as a victory; it was that, but not for the reasons usually given. For the PCE argues that its legalization was a result of its good sense, its sensitivity and its realism; that it was the subjective triumph of an able leadership which managed astutely to overcome the various obstacles placed in its way. To accept this would be to justify the enormous concessions that the PCE had to make.²⁸ If we take as our starting point a very

different evaluation of the relations of forces between the classes, of the impossibility of effecting a democratic change in Spain without the legal presence of the PCE, then these concessions, far from being a subtle manoeuvre, appear rather as a contribution to forging a State in which elements which will always represent a real danger to the consolidation of democracy and the possible socialist future, will be left intact.

In the second place, the very legalization of the PCE shows how unreal was the threat of a *coup* to which we have already referred. If there was any occasion when the army could have risen or imposed its veto, it was when the PCE was legalized. Yet the army—though not without tensions—ended by accepting the decision and did not stage a coup. So it does not represent a victory for the intelligence or respectability of the party, but a 'necessary' consequence of the global political options of the bourgeoisie, which the army finally understood and accepted.

The legalization of the PCE, however, still left outside the legal framework the other organizations to its left as well as many others of a radical nationalist character—and above all, it let the government put itself forward as the intermediary. The stage was now set for the next stage—the elections. Certain prior measures were still necessary, however. First, the government moved to broaden the base of the amnesty which has already been mentioned;²⁹ immediately afterwards, it embarked on the dissolution of the National Movement. It is important to bear in mind the way in which this was done, for the issue did not exclusively concern the right. The funds of the Movement largely consisted of goods taken from the parties of the left and the trade unions after their defeat in the Civil War. The logical demand would have been that this wealth should be returned to its legitimate owners, who would have need of it in the coming elections.³⁰ Yet the left, save for some protests, made no move in this direction; in fact it accepted that the personnel of the Movement should be integrated into the Civil Administration of the State—which certainly would not weaken it.³¹

One question remained—and it was a decisive one; the political organization of the right. Up to this time, it seemed to have found itself in an impasse. Leaving aside the more extremist groups, only two alternatives existed, and neither of them seemed adequate to the task. On the one hand, the only important organization was Alianza Popular, a coalition of various Francoist sectors who continued to argue for greater control of the political process and whose solutions tended to coincide with those that had already proved impracticable

under the Arias government.³² An electoral victory by Alianza Popular, would necessarily result in the reproduction of the same crises and tensions that had characterized that government's last months. For the more far-sighted sectors of the bourgeoisie, this option led nowhere.

Elsewhere on the right, political and organizational confusion were rife, the result of the considerable weakness of the democratic bourgeoisie. The Spanish people in those days were witness to a proliferation of dozens of unknown sets of initials that emerged in the attempt to ensure a political future for eleventh hour democrats and professional careerists.

As ever, the solution to the dilemma was to come from government. In the weeks prior to the beginning of the electoral campaign there began what the mass media called 'the disembarkation of the old Francoists', set in motion from within the State under the personal direction of President Suarez. Thrusting aside the representatives of the small groups and their awkward attempts at organization, the Union of the Democratic Centre (UCD) was formed; it was a union of power rather than a party, drawing together the different wings of old and new bourgeois opposition and the reformist sector of the dictatorship, now legitimated as a result of 'having made possible the transition to democracy'. UCD thus became *the* party of the great majority of the bourgeoisie for the present, gathering its most important currents and personalities. It reinforced in Spain a tendency already known in the majority of advanced capitalist countries, to form a single political representation of the right, closely tied to the State apparatus, and a reflection of capitalist concentration on the one hand, and the incapacity and lack of political alternatives among the small and middle bourgeoisie on the other. Their different sectors accepted the mediation of a single leadership, disputed the benefits of the State among themselves and put their faith in a State machine which was the fundamental means of ensuring the electoral victories that were indispensable to its continuity as a party. With the formation of the UCD, everything was ready for the elections.

The electoral campaign was to bring little that was new. Despite events in Euzkadi,³³ it developed in a way that showed all parties to be prepared to respect the compromises agreed upon. With the exception of some groups on the far left, the rousing slogans of previous years were either silenced or radically altered. Nobody called the monarchy into question or called for the purging of the State; the demand for self-determination for nationalities³⁴ now

became a call for autonomous statutes. A deaf ear was turned to allegations of Francoist corruption; worse still, the left again accepted the fallacy that, at root, the campaign was determined by the option of dictatorship or democracy, and concentrated its fire on Alianza Popular, presenting UCD and President Suarez as sincere democrats prepared to fight for the democratic consolidation of the country.

Nonetheless, the election results were more complex than the campaign or the events prior to it might have led one to expect. Despite its control of the State apparatus and the mass media (the very powerful TV in particular)³³, UCD gained scarcely more than 30 per cent of the votes and did not obtain a majority in the Congress of Deputies, despite the advantages it had gained through the electoral law negotiated with the opposition. In relative terms, this represented a defeat for its policies and a sign of the desire for change among the majority of Spanish society. So even in the climate of demobilization imposed upon itself by the left, the vote reflected an undeniable desire to break with Francoism. Alianza Popular suffered a spectacular defeat for the same reason; and that is something to be borne in mind when we come later to weigh the question whether the Spanish political process could have proceeded in any other way. The rest of these votes went in Catalufia and Euzkadi to the bourgeois nationalist parties.

The left as a whole received 45 per cent of the votes, though the percentage was considerably higher in the industrialized areas. In Catalufia, Socialists and Communists surpassed the 50 per cent mark, while levante, Andalucia and Madrid emerged as clear centres of left-wing support. The largest section of left voters gave their support to the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) which unexpectedly became the second largest party in the country in terms of votes and parliamentary representation. The PCE achieved less than 10 per cent of the vote, with its support almost non-existent in places like Castille and Galicia, traditionally right-wing regions, but also in Euzkadi. The extreme left was literally swept off the board.

So the electoral results again gave the impression of a balanced relation of forces between the classes. The conclusion drawn from that by both right and left was that the politics of agreement should continue.

Assembly and the promulgation of the constitution were **also** marked by an agreement between right and left whose net result would be to benefit the former in terms of the relations of forces. The two fundamental instances were the signing of the Moncloa Pact of October 1977¹⁴ and the elaboration of the constitution throughout 1978.

An economic-social agreement, with all its political repercussions, was an imperative for the right. The Spanish capitalist economy, which had made such spectacular advances through the sixties, found itself by 1973 in a crisis caused as much by factors in the international situation as by specific local features. The very political instability of the previous two years had clouded the picture. Since 1973, the rate of profit had declined considerably, while the politico-economic struggles of those years ensured the growing share of the national income represented by wages. There were various symptoms of the crisis; above all an excess productive capacity which obliged firms to reduce their production, and even in many cases to close down, which raised the unemployment levels. It is difficult to calculate the numbers of unemployed (partly because there is no single agency empowered to measure them, partly because the statistical methods used are unsatisfactory, and because government deliberately sets out to reduce the official figures) but it is no exaggeration that there were between 800,000 and one million people out of work in Spain by the end of 1977. In the same year, inflation rose by 27 per cent, and there were times (the **June-August** period) when the consumer price index rose by 44.8 per cent. Spain's international position was also deteriorating sharply, as its balance of payments deficit reached five billion dollars. Private investment was holding back and the four years since the start of the crisis had seen a negative growth in investment by the private sector. Finally, the fact that the centre of the stage was occupied by political events whose resolution was a prior condition for any attempt to solve the problems added a temporary obstacle which severely aggravated the situation.

The Moncloa Agreements were the first serious measure taken to confront the situation; though there was nothing new in their content. They were simply a plan to stabilize the capitalist economy with a view to future **takeoff**. The measures were classical; to keep inflation down to 10 per cent in 1978 through a wage ceiling and the devaluation of the currency in order to increase the international competitiveness of spanish goods. It involved accepting a very high unemployment level with no corresponding gain except

unemployment benefits which still do not cover the whole working population.

The major difference was that this stabilization plan was the result of negotiations with all the political forces represented in parliament, and thus with the representatives of the wage earners too. These latter defended their acceptance of the conditions on the basis that they were getting something in return, the famous 'compensations' based on some promises in the field of education (the creation of 700,000 new school places) and of control of the most obvious centres of corruption (the Social Security) and/or political manipulation (creation of a Control Commission at the Radio and Television system, RTVE).

The left was not very demanding. One of the most striking things is the total absence of any reference to the return of their goods and funds to the free trade union organizations. Like the Movement itself, the vertical (Francoist) unions had impounded the funds of the pre-Civil-War trade union organizations and added to them through the contribution that every Spanish worker was obliged to pay as a result of his obligatory membership of those unions. These funds, which were vital for the development of a free trade union movement, and had often been demanded by the trade union organizations, were not even mentioned during the negotiations and remain in government hands to this day. On the other hand, the decision to sign the Agreements and the moderation of the left in general were justified by reference to the need to consolidate democracy because, if that were not done, the danger of a coup would again arise.

Unlike other political processes which still remain open to change, the Moncloa Agreements have the advantage that they can already be judged and conclusions reached about them. The balance sheet, a year after their signing, is clear. The Agreements achieved the objectives of putting capitalism back on its feet, as the right proposed; for the left, they brought no benefit at all. Inflation fell considerably in 1978, to a little more than 16 per cent; exports grew as a result of devaluation, the currency reserves increased, tourism expanded and the remissions from Spaniards overseas reached new levels. There were, and are, areas of concern, like the low level of private investment, and the unknown factor of the behaviour of the international economy. But at the time the Moncloa Agreements served to moderate workers' demands through the mediation of their political parties and trade union organizations, and persuaded them to accept the existing levels of unemployment. In its first year,

democracy yielded considerable profits to the bourgeoisie,³⁷ confirming again that it was in their own terms preferable to the pre-existing situation or any return to dictatorship.

The compensations granted to the left, despite their modesty, remained unpaid. Far from putting the workers in a better position, the Agreements marked a low point in the movement and helped to create a climate of social and political apathy that still persists. From then on the liquidation of the mass movement, which was already in the air before the elections, has now become a reality. What mass initiatives do take place will be the result of specific problems of one of the nationalities (Euzkadi particularly) rather than of any agreement to carry forward any generalized workers struggle.

The other major field of agreement between right and left concerned the elaboration of the constitution. Both in the way in which it was carried out and in its content, the constitution would crown a transition to democracy that was to the benefit of the right alone.

As far as its method of elaboration was concerned, UCD's principal concern was to prevent public discussion of the constitution; in this it was supported by the left which made no protest nor took any action against it. In fact, open discussion would immediately bring out the fact that democracy can include many different ways of organizing political institutions and freedoms, and that it was in the interests of the right to create the instruments most useful to them. On the other hand, in a public discussion, the left would have to take decisions. Up till now, the acceptance of each and every condition imposed by the right had been justified, as we have seen, in terms of the necessity to ensure free progress towards the elections. Once the electoral strength of the left had been demonstrated, however, there was no longer any need to continue in a subordinate position. Yet the secret meetings and the unpublished topics for discussion were quickly accepted and the issue was resolved behind closed doors.³⁸

The same occurred with the meetings of the Constitutional Commission whose task was to give concrete form to the text of the proposals. After a few meetings where the left's alternatives were systematically defeated, left and right agreed to keep back from parliament the real nature of their discussions. The opinions and speeches that were delivered had clearly been agreed beforehand, so that the sought-after parliament became no more than a backcloth against which unfolded a drama that was of no interest to anyone.

The left, having abandoned any politics based on the mobilization of the masses—an aspect of democracy at least as important as parliament—was condemned to listen impotently to empty rhetoric. The paradox was that it was precisely the left, which saw no other way but the parliamentary way, that was incapable of using parliament to put forward its own alternatives or, at the very least, its potential for opposition.

Thus the constitutional discussions came to an end, and the new constitution was approved and promulgated on 29 December 1978, in the face of a general indifference and a high proportion of abstentions that in places like Euzkadi reached 50 per cent of the electoral roll.

What can be said about the Constitution? Perhaps the best thing one can say about it is that it is a text that serves admirably the purpose of those who drew it up; it fulfils almost all the aims that the right had set out at the beginning of the period we have been considering. That is the reality behind the declarations that it is a Constitution for every Spaniard, the only political text of concord in Spanish constitutional history, the framework that will allow everyone to participate in the tasks of government if they have the necessary support, etc. Both in what it says and what it leaves unsaid, the text of the constitution both creates a body of democratic institutions and ensures that they cannot be used to initiate a transition to socialism. This is nothing new in bourgeois constitutions—it is their very nature; but in the Spanish case considerable precautions have been taken. By 'constitutionalizing' the Francoist State apparatus, and explicitly recognizing the situation of the various powers that be, the 1978 Constitution lays down a very restricted framework for democratic rights and institutions, and they will become even more restricted as long as the relations of forces remain favourable to the right. Throughout the period of transition, and up to now, terrorist actions have been made the excuse to bring about a real reduction of democratic freedoms and the concentration of special powers in the hands of the executive. Let us consider some of these aspects further.

The key article of the Constitution is Article 38, which explicitly lays down a market economy. Thus there is within it a sharp prohibition on any eventual collectivization of the means of production. It is true, of course, that the left today is very confused as to what it means by socialism, and that neither nationalization nor central planning are sufficient guarantees of its realization. Yet nor is this establishment of a market economy in a text that commits

the armed forces to its defence (article 8) anything other than a constitutional call for a *coup d'état* should any left-wing government threaten to carry the country towards socialism. In the light of this provision, the references to planning (article 38), the social function of the right to private property (article 33, 2) and of course the right to work of all Spaniards (article 35,1) are mere words, which will have to yield should they ever enter into conflict with the sacrosanct principle of the market economy.

Without in the least denying the importance of the existence of a democratic regime or the influence that it will have on the development of the workers' movement, it is clear that so long as the key principle of a market economy persists, the political rights of the citizen will always yield to bourgeois demands whenever a conflict arises.

But in the second place, the very implementation of the institutions and principles of democracy ensure a very restricted democracy. It is clear that, as far as functioning institutions are concerned, the Spanish text seriously limits the powers of the legislature and is less far-reaching than the Italian constitution of 1947, to take a neighbouring example. Furthermore, and most significantly, each and every demand of the conservative social forces is included in the constitution. Above all, it defines Spain as a parliamentary monarchy. It gives the armed forces a blank cheque in the defence of the institutional order. Finally, while separating Church and State, it recognizes the latter's influence in the areas of education and the family and this will have a negative effect on the school system, and on such issues as divorce and abortion.

The constitution also says much in what it omits; throughout the text and especially where conflicts are involved, it refers on more than fifty occasions to future laws that will be promulgated to develop the constitution. In fact, the effective regulation of democratic rights and freedoms has yet to be developed, and it not clear at this point what limits will be placed upon them. In any event, however many and broad future dispositions may be, the fact is that the police, the judges and the administration empowered to watch over them and set the limits in practice are the same ones that participated for years in the repressive policies of **Franco**.

To recapitulate: the process of political transition towards a democratic State in Spain was made possible by an agreement

between the majority political representatives of the two great social classes; this agreement has been shaped, in its limitations and its rate of progress, by the conditions imposed by the right. All this took place in an international framework which favoured and assumed precisely this kind of transition, and has contributed to it as far as possible.

For anyone who believes that the Marxist method is the best way to approach social and political processes, this poses a number of questions that are difficult to articulate, let alone to resolve. The first and obvious question is, could it have been otherwise? I believe we can say that it could; nothing was pre-determined. It is the relations of forces between the classes, and the conscious decisions taken by the different actors that have shaped the final outcome. If the left had behaved differently, the position of the Spanish bourgeoisie today might well be much less comfortable. It is the vacillations and the limits placed upon the process by Socialists and Communists, above all, that have been the determining factor in the present situation.

This requires further comment, and a further question: for what might the developments have been that we have argued were possible? To put it another way, did there exist in Spain a pre-revolutionary situation which would have made it possible to envisage a socialist revolution as its outcome? Here the answer is no. Despite the strength of the mass movement, despite its militancy and the new forms of organization that it had developed, we have already shown that none of its demands were incompatible with the maintenance of a capitalist regime. Further, the strategy of those organizations which were hegemonic within that movement specifically discounted such a possibility. To speak of a socialist revolution in Spain in the classical sense of an insurrectionary seizure of power and the general creation of workers' soviets, was mere rhetoric.

What then is left? The whole issue revolves around the ambivalent meaning of democracy. What we have argued is that, for a number of reasons, the two major forces of the left allowed the right to recover the political initiative, and thus allowed the transition to occur within very narrow limits as far as both freedom and the future march towards socialism are concerned. The major criticism to be made of these forces is that they did not offer radically democratic policies which could have weakened the right-wing alternative; they too easily accepted the continuing existence of institutions and mechanisms which not only would not help to deepen or consolidate democracy, but which could in a different

set of circumstances become its worst enemy. The refusal to take up the struggle to weaken and to clean up the State apparatus was the fundamental error of both Socialists and Communists. Their other mistake was to identify democracy and parliament, and consciously to abandon the use of the other equally democratic means—mass pressure and the autonomous organization of social movements; in fact they held back whenever they were able any attempts at direct democracy which they did not control. Finally, the refusal of both to consider an alternative united policy was another element that contributed decisively to the recovery of the political initiative by the right.

Socialist and Communists both have their own version of events. For the Socialists, it was impossible to go any further forward because of the internal limitations of the movement itself, which was never broad or combative enough to impose substantial political change. Even if that were the case, the truth is that the Socialists made very little effort to change that situation;²⁹ they preferred to channel their activity into seeking an agreement first, and negotiating later, presenting themselves as 'alternative candidates for power' at such time as the right and the UCD should go into decline and there was a need for changes. Albeit with gritted teeth, the Socialists accepted all the terms of the social consensus and made no effort to present firm and decisive opposition even on their favoured parliamentary ground.

The Communist school of thought starts from different premises: the limits on the process of transition were not so much internal to the mass movement, as external. The argument repeated *ad nauseam* is that if the process overflowed those strictly defined limits, the response would have been a *coup d'état*. We have shown to what extent such an argument is a rationalization. In fact the difficulties in carrying out a *coup* were not so much technical problems as the constraints imposed by the options that the bourgeoisie as a whole had at its disposal. The right needed the democratic agreement at any cost; it sought to achieve it under the best possible conditions and there is nothing to suggest that it would not have had to negotiate further had it found itself face to face with a determined opposition. Yet that is what the PCE never put to the test. Every condition put forward was accepted without question. And here a distinction must be made; while both major forces of the left must take responsibility for the present situation, the PCE is more responsible because its possibilities were greater. For during the period of transition, the PCE was the single decisive factor within

the mass movement. If the concrete objectives of a radical democracy (the purging of the State apparatus, recuperation of trade union funds, amnesty, etc.) had been supported by a resolute policy of mass mobilization, the agreement would have taken on a shape far more favourable to the left. The PCE, however, obsessed by the image of national collaboration in France and Italy between 1944 and 1947, preferred to accept the minimalist parliamentary road and thus allow the right to recover the initiative.

So the other face of the transition in Spain stems precisely from the fact that, persuaded by more or less plausible arguments, the left failed to pose its own alternative. It is not that it failed to offer a socialist project; that requires much further clarification as to what such a project should have been and how it could be realized. For beyond that, the left seemed to have no political solutions of its own *even to the problems of the present democratic phase*. This has often led it to renounce its role as opposition and become a political subordinate of right-wing governments. The result is the creation of the illusion that the class struggle has disappeared from the political sphere. Right and left seem to have the same objectives, and even propose to achieve them with the same or very similar methods. The left alternative is largely discounted, and the fact that the same situation has occurred elsewhere (in Italy and Portugal, for example) only confirms the fact that the European left is caught in one of the gravest crises in its history, which requires it to reappraise its strategy and its tactics.

Translated by Mike Gonzalez

NOTES

1. A reading of Jose Vidal Beneyto's book *Del franquismo a una democracia de clase* (Ed. Akal, Madrid, 1977) yields a similar conclusion, as in a more subtle way does his article 'Le revers de la médaille' in the special number of *Pouvoirs* (no. 8, 1979) devoted to the political transition in Spain.
2. N. Poulantzas: *La crisis de las dictaduras*: (Siglo XXI, Madrid, 1976).
3. *ibid.*, pp. 15, 21.
4. *ibid.*, pp. 45 ff.
5. *ibid.* pp. 61-7.
6. Poulantzas in fact refuses to take this factor into account: 'I will not attempt to analyse it, for it alone would merit a whole book. In fact, on the one side it involves the *objective co-ordinates*, both global and specific to that country, and on the other the strategy of the organizations of the left and in particular of the Communist parties that have been the spearhead of the struggles against the dictatorships'

(*ibid.* p. 100). But to refuse to consider this decisive factor of the process is to refuse to understand it, and in fact suggests that the central question in that process has been the divisions within the bourgeoisie.

7. A reading of one of the most recent and best documented books on the question—Juan Muñoz, Santiago Roldán & Angel Serrano's *La internacionalización del capital en España* (Edicusa, Madrid, 1978)—yields nothing to confirm Poulantzas's dichotomy.
8. In July 1974, fundamentally under the leadership of the PCE and including the socialists of the PSP and some independent personalities, the Junta Democrática was formed in order to achieve a democratic break through a National Democratic Action. The Junta was regarded with suspicion precisely because the Communists were at its heart. In June 1975, an alternative organization—the **Plataforma de Convergencia Democrática**—was formed, principally by the socialists of PSOE and the Democratic Left of Dr Ruiz-Gimenez. Other left groups later joined it.
In August 1975, as a result of new armed actions by the ETA and the FRAP (an organization with a Maoist orientation which then favoured a *people's war*), the government approved the Anti-Terrorist Decree-Law which gave considerable powers to the police, suspended the right of *habeas corpus* and the protection of the home, etc., and demanded urgent trials to deal with cases of terrorism, which were left to the jurisdiction of the military. The application of this Decree led to the five death sentences (three on ETA members, and two members of FRAP) with which General Franco ended a life of repression.
10. A rather exaggerated account of these sectors and (involuntarily) of its immense limitations can be found in J. Tusell *La oposición democrática al franquismo (1939-62)* (Ed. Planeta, Barcelona, 1977).
11. In fact, although the electoral fate of these sectors has since been uneven, the democratic opposition was the vehicle of moderation and responsibility within all the combined organizations of the opposition and a fundamental channel of communication between the major organizations of the left and the reformists within the regime.
12. On this subject, still to be analysed in depth, see the best contribution to date: J.M. Maravall, *Dictatorship and Political Dissent* (Maravall, Tavistock, 1978), and by the same author, 'Remarques sur le mouvement ouvrier dans la transition à la démocratie en Espagne' in the edition of *Pouvoirs* quoted above.
13. The most spectacular case is that of ETA in the Basque Country which, from a heterogeneous theoretical base (orthodox nationalism; the assumption of a Third-Worldist ideology of national liberation; references to a Basque socialism, etc.) posed the necessity for a move towards armed struggle, from the late sixties onwards. Despite a succession of schisms culminating in a split into two wings (military ETA and politico-military ETA) ETA has continued to argue for the armed road, and carried out the most spectacular acts of direct, minority violence ever known in Spain.

14. Basically, the differences between the PCE leadership and F. Claudin and J. Semprun (Federico Sanchez), which led to the latter's expulsion in 1964, were not concerned with the necessity of this strategy of reconciliation but with the rate of advance and the subjectivism of the Communist Party leadership. For it was argued that the leadership had failed to see how economic development had given the Franco regime more room for manoeuvre and that the drive towards democracy in Spain could not occur simply as a result of communist initiatives like the Peaceful General Strike which had so signally failed. See, on the question, F. Claudin, *Documentos de una divergencia comunista* (Ed. El Viejo Topo, Barcelona, 1978) and J. Semprun *Autobiografía de Federico Sanchez* (Planeta, Barcelona, 1977).
15. On the January strike and its political repercussions, see M.P. Izquierdo *De la huelga general a las elecciones generales* (Ed. de la Torre, Madrid, 1977). As examples of the position of the leadership of the Workers' Commissions at the time, see the articles by N. Sartorius in *Triunfo*.
16. In Vitoria, at the beginning of March 1976, after a long and bitter strike, the police opened fire on a workers assembly, leaving three dead and many wounded. In May 1976, in Montejurra, the ultra-right fraction of the Carlist party, with the full knowledge of the Civil Guard, the Governor of Navarra and the Home Ministry, occupied the mountain top that was the traditional scene of a Carlist celebration and fired on the crowd below, killing two and leaving more than twenty wounded.
17. At the beginning of May 1976, the American magazine *Newsweek* published an interview with the King in which he asserted, among other things, that Arias had been 'an unmitigated failure'. The interviewer (A. de Borchgrave) commented that 'what concerns the King most is that Arias's policies are polarizing Spanish political life, turning both right and left against the government'. The declarations were denied by the Ministry of Information and Tourism, but never by the King's Press Officer.
18. Throughout Spain organizations began to be formed in imitation of CD, with different components and similar programmes, albeit with different emphases, and usually more concrete in their references to the question of self-determination of nationalities (e.g., the Galician Taboa, the Catalan Consell, the Valencia Taula, etc.)
19. In May 1976, one of the best-known Communist leaders—Ramon Tamames—explained the economic criteria which should guide an eventual provisional government, a CD government, in which in any case the PCE would probably assume Ministerial responsibilities. For Tamames, the basic concern of that government must be to keep the confidence of the employers. From this he drew the conclusion that it would have to renounce any structural transformation or nationalization plans; should seek help from the IMF and the EEC; should decree an amnesty for tax evaders; and assist small and medium business, etc. With such a programme, there was little danger that a Communist spectre would haunt Spain.

20. In May too, Arias announced a confused series of reforms intended to inject into the old organic democracy of **Franco** a moderately parliamentary system. He also offered, subject to government approval, the legalization of political associations (he still refused to call them parties) provided the Communists remained beyond the pale. The Francoist Cortes was then to provide one of the finest exhibitions of absurdity in their attempts to draft a text that excluded the Communists without-naming them.
21. The Military Democratic Union (UMD) is the only clandestine democratic organization, as far as is known, ever to have functioned within the army. Although it claimed at its high point to have embraced hundreds of officers, the repression of its members involved only a dozen or so, all of lower rank; since then, nothing more has been heard of such activities.
22. Santiago Carrillo's theses on the military, developed in several places and **particular** in *'Eurocommunism and the State'* (Lawrence and **Wishart**, 1977) maintain that, in general, there is in the advanced capitalist countries a division within the army between the traditional sectors with an authoritarian mentality, and the professionals, better qualified technically and advocates of an efficient, modern army, at the service of the nation and its democratic institutions. It is precisely this latter section that, in Spain, has opposed the maintenance of Francoism and supported the democratic transition. As far as the left is concerned, the best way to bring about a convergence with this sector would be to support a rationalist policy to increase the professional capacity and technical efficiency of the army.

Carrillo's theses reveal a wrong analysis of the army in general and the Spanish army in particular. This is not the place to analyse it in detail. But as far as the first is concerned, it is sufficient to point out that until 11 September 1973, General Pinochet was one of the foremost exponents of this professional and democratic view. In terms of this theory, his behaviour since then is a mystery. In the Spanish case, the passive attitude of the army in the face of the end of the dictatorship was the product of a set of circumstances determined by the general interests of the class which the army, as an institution, serves; there is nothing to suggest that in a different situation in the future a Pinochet could not emerge from the most professional and efficient sectors.
23. The most spectacular change of personnel was the appointment of General **Gutiérrez Mellado** to the Ministry of Defence, who still remains responsible for military policy. At the end of 1976, the General initiated a series of reforms designed to separate the army from active **political** intervention and to give it a more professional image.
24. The Commission of Nine was formed practically at the same time as the opposition proposed abstention in the referendum on political reform, and its overwhelming majority were members of bourgeois parties. Further, Carrillo's presence at the negotiations. which the

government still found unacceptable, was avoided through a subtle piece of manipulation. The opposition representatives would attend the negotiations with the government in sub-commissions of four, which would avoid embarrassment for President Suarez, as Carrillo was not a member of any of them.

25. For the Congress of Deputies, the opposition accepted the system of proportional representation according to the **D'Hont** rules. Yet as the province was the electoral unit, the rules favoured (as would be seen in the subsequent elections) the over representation of conservative, rural Spain as compared with urban, industrial sectors. This gave enormous primacy to the majority parties and penalized those with fewer votes. Unless the left can present a united front at elections, which still seems a remote possibility, the electoral law will ensure that there is no socialist **majority** in parliament.
26. Between Sunday 23 January and Friday the **28th**, the following events took place: on the **23rd**, a student taking part in a **pro-amnesty** demonstration was murdered by a group of ultra-rightists: on the 24th a student was killed in a police charge; on the same day an ultra-right-wing group killed five people in the office of a group of lawyers working for the Workers' Commissions; on the 27th **GRAPO** (a terrorist organization claiming extreme left ideological positions) killed three policemen, and two more on the **28th**. **That** same week, for the first and only time, the newspaper *El País* published an editorial calling for the formation of government that included the opposition.
27. The PCE was legalized on Easter Saturday, 9 April, 1976, when most of its political leaders were on holiday. During the first few days of the following week, there was serious agitation by the right, from Alianza Popular to the extreme right, and several meetings of important army personnel. The crisis, however, went no further than the resignation of the Minister of the Navy, Admiral Pita da Veiga.
28. In **a Note** from the Army Ministry to all officers, dated **16 April** 1976, it was stated that the Army High Council, in response to the legalization of the PCE, had decided to inform them that this act 'has provoked a general revulsion in the army. Nevertheless, considering the national interest to **be** of a higher order, it is prepared to recognize the realities in a disciplined way. (*Cambio* 16, 25 April 1976). It added that the Council 'unanimously considers it an unavoidable obligation to defend the unity of the Nation, the Flag, the integrity of the institutions of the Monarchy and the good name of the Armed Forces'. These conditions were immediately accepted by the PCE whose Central Committee met and agreed to accept the Monarchy and renounce the (republican) tricolour flag.
29. The new amnesty measures gave the government the right to decide to grant amnesty and **allowed it** to exile those under sentence of death, which it did in subsequent weeks.
30. The Movement had several thousand functionaries, recruited from the most right-wing elements, and many of whom were armed. But above all it had at its disposal an important chain of mass media (thirty-five

newspapers, various magazines, a news agency **and** a chain of radio transmitters).

31. Perhaps one of the most grotesque features of the new democratic phase is to see the old functionaries of the Movement's Women's Section charged by the present Ministry of Culture with directing the various centres of social assistance, one of whose functions is to set in motion a timid programme of birth control. For years the Women's Section had argued that the woman's place was in the home and that families should be as large as possible—that no limits should be set on the number of children God chose to send parents.
32. In fact **Alianza Popular** considered it necessary to reduce the number of concessions to the left, of which they considered the government to have made far too many; since the legalization of the PCE could not now be retracted, at least a regime of law and strict order should be imposed. On the other hand, AP still had many supporters within the State apparatus, and a good part of its voting support came from the old Francoist bureaucracy.
33. Just a month before the elections, the celebration in Euzkadi of a pro-amnesty week was met with increasing police repression which left a toll of dead and wounded. In response, there was on Monday 16 May a general strike in all four provinces of the Basque country in which more than 500,000 workers took part.
34. We are not defending this slogan here; personally I believe that question of nationalities has to be posed in much greater depth than has been done by the parties of the left; in the Spanish case, indeed, they have discussed the issue in a totally irresponsible, if not openly demagogic way. Concretely, on the question of self-determination, the left has for years fallen back on the most exaggerated interpretations of its significance, often coinciding with the most radical nationalism, only at the moment of truth to accept meekly the weak measures for self-government or autonomy that the central power was prepared to concede.
35. The extremely important role of television in Spanish politics in recent **years is** revealed in statistics published in the magazine *La Calle* which showed that 79.4 per cent of those interviewed assiduously watched TV at least once a day. Given that the circulation of Spanish newspaper, at the same time, is very small (there are very few that sell more than 200,000 copies daily) and that more than half the population does not read even one book a year, it will **be** seen how **important** the question of TV becomes.
36. On the Moncloa Agreements, the most detailed analysis appeared in the journal *Argumentos* no. 18 (December 1978). While the majority of left-wing commentators attributes to them an exclusively economic character, Professor Fuentes Quintana, then Minister of the Economy and principal architect of the Agreements, points out that what is really important about them is their political rather than their economic effects (p. 51).
37. The share of wages in national income fell in 1977-8 for the first time

for many years.

38. After an extraordinary series of events, the draft of the text of the constitutional proposal was published in the magazine *Cuadernos para el diálogo*, in the face of indignation from the left's contributors to the proposal, who bemoaned the breaking of the gentleman's agreement to keep silence, which they had all faithfully kept to.
39. On the politics of the left in general, and of the PSOE in particular, the article by L. Paramio and J.M. Reverte merits special mention; its very title is a programme—'Sin **imaginación** y sin principios' (With neither imagination nor principles) in *Zona Abierta* no. 18.