Señor Suárez consolidates his support

Ruling political groups in Spain agree to merge into one party

from William Chislett

Madrid, Dec 4

Señor Suárez, the Spanish Prime Minister, has persuaded all but one of the parties represented in his ruling Democratic Centre Union to dissolve themselves and form a single party.

The political committee made up of representatives from the federation of 12 parties, which constitute the Centre, agreed over the weekend to form one party. The committee gave the parties until next Saturday to dissolve themselves. Any who do not, it said, will be “left at the margin of the Centre, given that there cannot be double membership”.

Only the Popular Democratic Party headed by Señor Ignacio Camunáns, the former Minister for the Cortes, who resigned in September, voted against the decision.

The Christian Democratic Party of Señor Fernando Alvarez de Miranda, the President of the Lower House, abstained in view of its decision not to disband “until the Centre adopts more of the Christian Democratic ideology”.

However it is believed that Señor Alvarez de Miranda will now go along with the idea, given the overwhelming support for unity. He is reported to have obtained some concessions from Señor Suárez, particularly regarding educational subsidies.

Señor Suárez called the decision “enormously important for the consolidation of democracy”. For months now, since the Centre was hastily formed before the June general election, there have been reports of “crises” in the Centre as Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, Liberals and the Prime Minister’s Independents vied for their voices to be heard.

Psychologically the decision is important for Spaniards have come to think cynically of the Centre as being little more than a loosely-knit collection of self-perpetuating interests. Politically, with a view to municipal elections and most probably general elections next year, the Centre should be in a stronger position. Fresh general elections are likely after the constitution is approved next year.

Compared to the left, the Centre is very badly organized, particularly in the provinces. The only way such a grouping can hold together is by the member parties burying their differences, which are slight anyway and more a matter of personality clashes.

Señor Suárez, who himself has yet to declare precisely where he stands politically, has managed to bring some order into the Centre and as a result it is quite likely that the minor government reshuffle which he hinted at in October will now go ahead.

The Centre also agreed at its meeting to reconsider Article 3 of the draft of the new constitution, which declares that Spain will no longer be a confessional state. The Roman Catholic Church attacked this article last week.

The left has told the church to mind its own business, but the Centre is having second thoughts because its support for a considerable lessening of the church’s influence could lose it votes to the right-wing Popular Alliance.

In Pamplona, extreme right-wing and left-wing demonstrators clashed yesterday during a demonstration called in favour of including the province of Navarra in a statute of autonomy for the Basque country.
King Juan Carlos receives Communist leader
From Our Correspondent
Madrid, Dec 5

King Juan Carlos received Senor Santiago Carrillo, the Communist leader, today in the Zarzuela Palace. The audience had apparently been requested by Senor Carrillo some time ago and it was the first time that a Spanish head of state had received a Communist leader since before the civil war.

The meeting was in line with other audiences which the King had accorded to political leaders. The fact that Senor Carrillo was the last to be received underlined the sensitivity which still exists in the military hierarchy over the legalization of the Communist Party.

Senor Carrillo has publicly declared support for the King on many occasions, although his party continues to favour a republic. The audience can be expected to enhance the position of Senor Carrillo, who has gone over backwards since his party was legalized last April to show his democratic principles.

It was learnt today that the King met the Archbishop of Madrid, Cardinal Enrique y Tarancón, last week to discuss the position of the Roman Catholic Church. The cardinal had complained bitterly that the new Spanish constitution proposed to declare the country a non-confessional state.

Left-wing political parties and trade unions in Andalucía called a strike for tomorrow to protest at the killing of a youth during a demonstration in Malaga yesterday in favour of autonomy.

Senor Manuel Jose Caparrós, aged 19, died when the police opened fire on a group of demonstrators who, according to an official statement, "cornered a platoon of police who with their riot equipment used up found it necessary to use their firearms".

The youth was a member of the Communist trade union organization, the Workers' Commissions. Another person was shot in the arm and 22 policemen were injured.

Altogether more than a million people took part in demonstrations throughout Andalucía yesterday demanding autonomy. In Galicia, in demonstrations. While negotiations are going ahead for Basque people took part in similar the north-west, about 500,000 que autonomy and the Catalan autonomy movement. Government, the Generalitat, has been restablished, Galicia and Andalucía, a way behind.

"Senor Josep Tarradellas, the President of the Generalitat, was due to announce the composition of his government later today based on the results of the general election in Catalonia where the Socialists and Communists won most of the seats.

Malaga, Dec 5.—Senor Francisco Cabo-Lopez, the president of the Malaga Provincial Assembly, resigned today in connexion with the shooting.

Hundreds of wreaths, wrapped with black ribbons, were placed during the night at the scene where Senor Garcia Caparrós was shot.—AP.

WEST EUROPE
Third day of protest rioting in Malaga
From Our Correspondent
Madrid, Dec 6

Left-wing demonstrators and riot police clashed in Malaga today during a one day strike staged in protest against the shooting of a young Communist worker by the police during Sunday's Andalucian home rule demonstrations. Police fired volley after volley of smoke and tear gas bombs, as well as rubber bullets, to disperse the demonstrators, particularly in the old quarter of the city.

Last night, after the shot worker's funeral, the headquarters of the extreme right-wing movement Izquierda Nueva were burnt down and the residence of the civil governor and the police barracks were attacked by several thousand stone-throwing demonstrators. Two policemen were seriously injured.

Neither of Málaga's two newspapers appeared today and most shops and bars were closed. Public transport was at a standstill and rubbish had not been collected from streets for two days.

Many balconies and windows were adorned with the green and white striped flag of Andulucía, with a black bow in the middle as a sign of mourning for the dead Communist.

The Cortes will study the causes of the violence in Málaga, the worst since the Civil War, at its next plenary session.

This evening, the Madrid newspaper Diario 16 appeared with the sensational headline "Arde Málaga" (Málaga burns), reminding those Spaniards old enough to remember the burning of the city during the Civil War in 1936.

Other newspapers have pointed out that Andalucía now has its first martyr for the cause of autonomy.

In other parts of Andalucía, there were work stoppages. A plastic bag containing over 60 lb of explosives was found this morning in the laboratory of a small Civil Guards barracks outside San Sebastián. The explosives were timed to go off five minutes after they were discovered.
Malaga violence leads to Government curb on all demonstrations

From Our Correspondent
Madrid, Dec 7

The Spanish Government is to ban or restrict demonstrations after the violence in Malaga which resulted in one death, numerous injuries and hundreds of thousands of pounds in damages to sacked shops.

A Government statement published here today after a Cabinet meeting said limitations would be placed on demonstrations, especially those having to do with regional autonomy and those organized by parties or groups not represented in the Cortes (Parliament).

Legislation regarding public assembly will be interpreted "according to especially strong criteria", according to the Government. The statement said that, in view of the favourable official attitude towards home rule, "new popular demonstrations or gatherings in the streets do not appear to be necessary".

The Congress of Deputies, or lower house, of the Cortes, will consider the Malaga violence in a special session probably next week, according to a decision taken by the rules committee yesterday. A congressional committee will be set up to investigate the Malaga incidents.

In another development, the organizing committee of last Sunday's "day of Andalusia", which filled the streets with home-rule demonstrators throughout the South, distributed a statement claiming that the Government's version of the events leading up to and immediately following the fatal shooting of a demonstrator in Malaga is incorrect.

The organizers said the police attacked those taking part in the unauthorized demonstration without warning, using vehicles and smoke bombs. The majority of those attending the gathering were unaware of the incident in which a youth tried to hang the green and white Andalusian flag alongside the Spanish one on the building housing the offices of the provincial delegation of the central Government; but they were subjected to riot police charges as they headed peacefully homeward after a speech which ended the gathering.

The statement denied that the police were surrounded and forced to use real bullets:

The use of firearms took place at the same time as the use of riot-control equipment, at a time when the forces of public order were not surrounded", it said.

The organizers said that, in addition to the young man killed by gunfire, there were two other people hit by bullets, as well as one person injured by a rubber bullet. Ten more civilians suffered fractures, contusions or other injuries.

Spanish general put under house arrest for writings

From Our Correspondent
Madrid, Dec 8

Military authorities have placed Brigadier-General Luis Cano Portal, the former chief of army publications, under house arrest for two months and one day for the "serious fault" of publishing an article, attacking the proposed reform of army regulations, in the right-wing Madrid evening newspaper El Alcazar without the approval of his superiors reports said in Madrid today.

The article, entitled, "Bring the regulations up to date: What for?" was published on November 10. The general signed with a pseudonym, "Sparos".

The article called a proposal to revise army regulations "madness", implying that it was part of a scheme for the "disintegration of the fatherland". The house arrest went into effect last Tuesday, according to informed sources.

In another action, the recently dismissed commander of the civil guard in the eastern province of Lérida, Lieutenant-Colonel Carlos Carbonell de Andrés, also a right-wing officer has been placed under arrest in a castle near Gerona, according to the Madrid evening newspaper Informaciones.

Three terrorists, believed to be members of the Basque separatist organization ETA, escaped from prison (£200,000) from a Madrid industrialist by holding him hostage in his own house for 15 hours, it was learnt today.

The threatened to kill the industrialist. They forced him to sign a cheque and write to the end of his bank saying that the person collecting the money was a friend and a leading member of the right-wing Popular Alliance.

Madrid, Dec 8.—About 40,000 Basque nationalists demonstrated in Pamplona today demanding the integration of the province of Navarra into an autonomous Basque region.

A radio station in Bilbao today quoted a communiqué from the Basque separatist organization ETA announcing that it would smash any obstacle to home rule.

In Malaga, the authorities today asked Señor Rodolfo Martín Villa, the Minister of the Interior, to declare the city a disaster area, after three days of rioting and looting.
Talks on Spanish police reform

From William Chislett
Madrid, Dec 9

The Spanish Cabinet met today to discuss the reorganization of the police forces after almost a week of demonstrations calling for autonomy in Andalusia, Galicia and the Basque Country. In several serious clashes with the police one man was killed and several injured.

The Moncloa political pact signed in October between the Government and all the political parties except the right-wing Popular Alliance, details reforms in the structure and responsibilities of the police forces, which have yet to be worked out and put into action.

They include the creation of two police sectors: a civilian one responsible for criminal investigations, and a military one made up of the civil guard and the riot police for the maintenance of public order and to guarantee the exercise of democratic rights. The civil guard, at the moment under the control of the armed forces, would come under the Ministry of the Interior in matters of public order.

Señor Rodolfo Martin Villa, the Minister of the Interior, visited Malaga yesterday, where on Sunday a young Communist was shot dead in a demonstration. This gave rise to further demonstrations causing more than €1m worth of damage to property. The minister said that the Government would pursue investigations.

He added that in certain circumstances, which he did not specify, the police were entitled to use firearms to defend themselves. He did not say whether the demonstrator was shot by the police, although he did not exclude the "possibility that he was".

The Cortes will discuss the Malaga incident at its next plenary session. The left is particularly critical of the police action. In September the Spanish Workers' Socialist Party, the main opposition party, unsuccessfully tried to pass a vote of no confidence in Señor Martin Villa for his handling of the police after the party's MP in Santander was manhandled in a demonstration. In Malaga another Socialist MP was manhandled by the police after identifying himself.

The military high command has circulated a statement to units about terrorism warning officers against making political capital out of politically motivated acts of violence and to keep the interests of the country as a whole at heart.

‘Impartial’ newspaper for Madrid

From Our Correspondent
Madrid, Dec 11

A new daily newspaper, El Impartial, made its first appearance in Madrid today, carrying on its front page an account by Señor Martin Villa, the Interior minister, of a secret meeting he had with Señor Pablo Caseliano, a socialist, and Señor Manuel Fraga Iribarne, leader of the right-wing Popular Alliance.

The newspaper takes its title from a republican newspaper founded in 1867 which lasted for more than half a century. The format is reminiscent of Pueblo and it is full of articles by journalists whose bylines became famous on that newspaper.

A leading article said the newspaper would live up to its name: "We do not want to add one more partial view to the many that already exist," it said. "We also consider it our obligation to avoid prejudice in our judgment about events within the legality of an open democratic system regardless of his ideas."

"This is going to be a free and independent newspaper and, from this position of freedom, we send greetings to everyone with the firm desire that we will be useful to the Spanish people."

The new daily carried little news and did not mention some developments that made headlines in other newspapers of the capital, such as the announcement that police records of the political activities of individuals will be destroyed. On the other hand it dedicated many pages to essays by or interviews with prominent politicians, including Señor Adolfo Suárez, a monarchist, Señor Pablo Caseliano, a socialist, and Señor Manuel Fraga Iribarne, leader of the right-wing Popular Alliance.

Madrid bomb in protest at Tenerife death

From Harry Debelius
Madrid, Dec 13

Canary Islands separatists exploded a bomb in Madrid today as demonstrators took to the streets in protest against the death of a student shot when police opened fire yesterday during disturbances on the island of Tenerife.

Riot police units arrived in the Canary Islands today to reinforce detachments of the security police and the civil guard. In Santa Cruz, the island's capital, and other towns in Tenerife police guarded government offices, newspapers and other key points.

During the tense night that followed the student's death, attackers fired from a car at a civil guard patrol car and a post near Santa Cruz.

The victim was Javier Fernández Quesada, a psycholog student who was 22. His parents arrived in Tenerife today and were expected to accompany their son's body home to La Palma, the neighbouring island of Gran Canaria.

The Madrid bomb caused damage, at a travel agency. According to the police only one of the seven sticks of explosives it contained went off. In telephone calls to newspapers and news agencies the movement for the Autonomy and Independence of the Canary Islands claimed responsibility. The caller identified himself as Antonio Cubillo, the movement's leader.
Canaries separatists shoot policemen

From Our Correspondent
Madrid, Dec 14

Canaries separatists shot two policemen in Tenerife today, in the aftermath of the fatal shooting of a student demonstrator by police on Monday.

The policemen are reported to be recovering, although a hospital spokesman in the island's capital, Santa Cruz, said that one of them may have to have an arm amputated.

It was the second day running that shotguns had been fired at policemen in the island from a car during darkness.

The extremist organization, Movement for the Self-Determination and Independence of the Canary Islands, claimed responsibility for the attacks in a telephone call to a local newspaper.

The two policemen were shot while they stood guard outside a Santa Cruz store to prevent looting following a fire which had been started a few hours earlier by a gang of youths throwing petrol bombs.

Specially trained riot-control police were flown to Tenerife from Zaragoza and Madrid.

As protests grew about the use of bullets by police in dealing with disturbances such as those that took place at La Laguna university in Tenerife on Monday, Señor Adolfo Suárez conferred this morning in Madrid with Señor Rodolfo Martín Villa, the Interior Minister.

In Salamanca one of the highest ranking members of the Civil Guard, Brigadier General Manuel Prieto López, said: "We are sorry about all the deaths, but we cannot just let ourselves be killed without using the means which have been placed in our hands".

The dead student, Javier Fernández, aged 23, was buried in Las Palmas, on the neighbouring island of Gran Canaria, yesterday afternoon.

Gang attacks Basque nuclear site

From William Chislett
Madrid, Dec 15

Four masked men armed with automatic weapons andgrenades invaded a nuclear power plant construction site at Lemontic, near Bilbao, in the Basque country today.

The attackers fired machine gun bursts and threw three grenades at a guard post on the site. Guards shot and injured one man. The other three fled in a car which was found abandoned shortly afterwards.

Police said they found pistols and a remote-control detonator in the getaway car. The make of pistol led them to believe that the ETA Basque separatist movement was behind the attack. The power station site has already been the target of several anti-nuclear demonstrations.

Basque political parties are threatening to call bigger demonstrations by the end of the year in favour of home rule for the Basque country unless the Spanish Government agrees to implement the terms of a negotiated settlement.

The Assembly of Basque Parliamentarians, made up of the elected representatives of all the Basque parties from the four northern provinces, ratified for the second time, as its text, the agreement reached last month in Bilbao on Saturday, the text of its joint agreement with Señor Montse Cárdenas, the Minister for the Regions.

The Basque National flag, was flown for the first time since the Civil War over the building of the Vizcaya delegation in Bilbao. This is a Francist institution, which so far has resisted flying the flag.

The stumbling block is the province of Navarra. Under the agreement, reached last month after tortuous negotiations, Navarra, long identified with the Basque cause, would join the other three strictly Basque provinces in an autonomous region while retaining some of its own identity.

But now Señor Suárez, the Prime Minister, is refusing to recognize the agreement under pressure from the Democratic Centre Union, which is strongly represented in Navarra, but not at all in the other three provinces, where the Basque Nationalist Party and the Socialists are strong. The Democratic Centre Union in Navarra has refused to form part of the assembly.

The assembly said it would not alter a single comma of the agreement and that it was up to the Government to offer concrete alternatives and quickly, otherwise it would call further demonstrations. Those already held have given rise to serious clashes with the police.

Historically, Navarra has long been associated with the main Basque provinces, although it was once a kingdom in its own right. It did not form part of the autonomous Basque state which was formed at the time of the Spanish Civil War, for while the other three provinces supported the republic the Carlist forces in Navarra took the side of General Franco.

As a result, after the war Vizcaya, Guipuzcoa and Alava suffered reprisals and fierce repression and Navarra became a right-wing bastion.

Spain to lift ban on the pill

From Our Correspondent
Madrid, Dec 18

The Spanish Government has decided to lift the ban on the sale and advertising of contraceptives imposed by General Franco.

The Cabinet approved on Friday a new draft law to replace the articles in the penal code outlawing contraceptives. For many years the stipulations of the penal code have been out of date. Many Spanish women take the pill and have been able to get round the laws easily.

Only last March a newspaper editor was charged with contravening the country's laws on disseminating information about contraception.
**Socialists challenge Suárez party**

From William Chislett

Madrid, Dec 20

Members of the Cortes rules committee were expelled yesterday from a meeting of party whips with the president of the Congress, the Lower House. The clash which resulted in the expulsion was interpreted here today as a declaration of war by the Socialist Opposition on the Democratic Centre Union of Señor Suárez, the Prime Minister.

As a result there will be a debate on public order at Thursday’s plenary session of the Congress.

The clash came when Señor Luis Guerra, the Socialist second vice-president of the Congress rules committee, asked whether there would be a debate on public order as a result of the criticism of the way in which the police and the Civil Guard had recently put down demonstrations in Malaga and Tenerife. Two students were killed.

Señor Alfonso Guerra, the Socialist party whip, also raised the subject. Both accused the Government of trying to manipulate the issue and stop a debate.

Señor José Pérez Lorca, the Centre’s whip, then reminded those present that last week they had agreed not to hold a debate on the issue. After angry exchanges Señor Pérez Lorca produced a copy of the regulations on the meetings of party whips which do not entitle anyone else to attend. The two vice-presidents and four secretaries of the Congress rules committee were then told to leave the meeting.

In fact these meetings have nearly always been attended by members of the rules committee since the Cortes’ first sitting.

The forthcoming debate on law and order is the second one since September when the Socialist’s motion of no confidence in the Minister of the Interior was rejected. The motion concerned the handling of a Socialist deputy by the police in a demonstration in Santander.

The Socialist with 118 seats in the Congress, compared to the Centre’s 105, are setting their sights already on winning the next general election, which may be next summer after a referendum on the new constitution.

The party has been playing more of a supporting role than an oppositional one as a result of the Moncloa pact between the Government and the Opposition over economic and political issues. The party feels that having agreed through the pact to help to consolidate the democratic process, it is time for them to move to the offensive.

The confrontation came while Señor Felipe González, the Socialist party’s secretary-general, was in Tokyo. There are internal differences within the party and yesterday’s confrontation might have been a sign that its leaders intend to try to satisfy both emerging wings, the “realists” and the “radicals”.

**Democracy to Spaniards’ liking**

From William Chislett

Madrid, Dec 21

Spaniards have got through their first democratic year feeling free, the main happier, and still fairly confused. They are looking forward to the new year which they believe will be better than 1977, according to the results of a series of opinion polls published today in the Christmas edition of the weekly news magazine Gabinete 16.

“Spain today is Vicente Aleixandre (the Spanish poet who won this year’s Nobel prize for literature) and Euro-communism, unemployment and sexual freedom, political leaders and punk music”, the magazine says.

The Manués (the people of the island of Manus) of New Guinea are famous for having gone in one generation from the Stone Age to the twentieth century. Spaniards are beginning to be famous for going from a dictatorship of 40 years to a democracy without revolution or war.”

Exactly the same percentage of Spaniards as Britons—82 per cent in both countries—are satisfied with their way of life, according to the Instituto Cinco, which interviewed 1,500 people in Spain this month.

Spaniards, however, have a lot more problems than the British. They seem to be surmounting some of them and are not very worried by the doomsday forecasts about the economy and the destabilizing effect it could have on the political situation.

Sixty per cent said they were happier now than 10 years ago. When General Franco was still in full control, Spaniards do not think that democracy is decaying in spite of the long years of discrimination under the Franco regime.

Thirty-eight per cent said that for them democracy meant more freedom; 23 per cent of those polled saw in it a chance for a higher standard of living; 19 per cent praised it for not having to put up with injustice; while 15 per cent approved of it for being allowed to protest. Only 6 per cent said that democracy meant nothing to them.

As expected in a country where law and order has been strongly enforced, disorder is the thing that most people—33 per cent—fear about democracy. Twenty per cent of those questioned feared growing unemployment most.

Contrary to the popular myth that Spaniards are lazy and spend a lot of time in bars drinking, the polls showed that the great majority are hard-working, putting in between 41 and 50 hours a week.

Seventy-nine per cent declared themselves Catholics but only 29 per cent said that they practised their religion, reflecting the gradual decline of the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in Spain.
**King urges Spaniards to remain United**

**From Harry Debelius**

Madrid, Dec 27

"There have been more achievements than failures in Spain's march towards democracy since General Franco's death," King Juan Carlos has told his people in a broadcast Christmas message.

Sitting in the Zarzuela palace, the King said on Christmas Eve: "There can be no doubt that we have come a long way in these two years by dint of effort and sacrifice, but also with decision, hope and optimism." He was shown in the pre-recorded television programme with Queen Sofia and their three children. "Prosperity, liberty and peace cannot be won without unity," he went on, adding: "Our task is to build an orderly future.

On the controversial issue of autonomy for various regions, he said: "From the integrating viewpoint of the monarchy...one can see the richness which had and plurality of the Spanish regions, different but not opposed to each other, but sharing the same national destiny..."

**Neo-Nazi boast of attacks in Spain**

**From Harry Debelius**

Madrid, Dec 28

Right-wing extremists have claimed responsibility for destroying a Basque priest's car and the Bilbao offices of the Spanish Communist Party over the Christmas weekend, reports said here today.

The Bilbao newspaper El Correo Español y El Pueblo said that a spokesman for the Adolf Hitler Commandos telephoned its editorial offices yesterday to claim responsibility for both attacks.

In Barcelona, about 400 right-wingers gathered yesterday to attend a Requiem Mass for victims of terrorism. They assembled on the church's steps, raised their arms in a fascist salute and sang the German hymn: Face to the Sun.

On Tenerife island, in the Canary Islands, led from Algeria by Spanish exile, is suspected.

In San Feliu de Llobregat early today, Basques suspected of hijacking a van with explosives.

**Basques suspected of hijacking second van with explosives**

**From William Fussett**

Madrid, Dec 29

Basque extremists struck for the second consecutive day today, hijacking a van containing 600 lb of explosives, after having released a second bomb, with 2,000 lb.

Five armed men forced the driver today to stop on the Santander to Bilbao road near Galtzara. Most of the explosives were a type of nitroglycerine.

The Basque separatist organization ETA, has not claimed responsibility for either of the bombings, but the hijackings bore the hallmarks of the group which recently increased its campaign of violence. Since November, ETA has claimed responsibility for three killings.

It was previously thought that only the military wing of ETA was taking an active part in the violence, but now it seems that the political wing is also involved.

ETA is known to be tightly knit, to have few militants, and to be poorly armed. This could explain the seizing of explosives.

The Madrid newspaper Informaciones tonight quotes Basque sources close to ETA as saying that ETA has started a new phase of its campaign against the old regime and which attack the Basque society.

The robbers came at a crucial time in the talks between the Government and Basque politicians over a degree of autonomy. Agreement was reached in November, but the Government claims that the parliamentarians of the ruling Democratic Centre Union in the province of Navarra, are not party to the agreement with the three strictly Basque provinces.

The Government appears to be prepared to grant limited autonomy to the Basque country with a special status for Navarra within it.

**WEST EUROPE**

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**Barros; Domínguez Reuter. El Pueblo also in the island, in the Air.**