The Foreign Press During Spain’s Transition to Democracy, 1974-78
A Personal Account

William Chislett

In 2002 the Elcano Royal Institute published his book The Internationalization of the Spanish Economy, in 2003 Spanish Direct Investment in Latin America: Opportunities and Challenges and in 2005 The United States and Spain: In Search of Mutual Rediscovery. He has also written five Working Papers on Turkey for Elcano and two on Cyprus and since 2004 has written a monthly essay on Spain for the Institute called Inside Spain (www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano_eng/Insidespain). He writes the article on Spain for the Annual Register (founded in 1758 by Edmund Burke). He contributed to the book produced in 2007 by the German Presidency of the European Union to mark the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. His last book on Spain (Going Places, Economic, Political and Social Progress, 1975-2008) was published in January, 2008, by Telefónica. The Open Society Foundation of George Soros published his paper in December 2008 comparing Spain and Turkey’s EU paths. He writes occasionally for the opinion page of El País, Spain’s leading daily, and for ABC.

In November 2003 he was a visiting scholar at Bilkent University, Ankara, and in April 2005 at the King Juan Carlos I of Spain Centre, New York University. He has spoken at Oxford, Princeton, Harvard, Chicago, Georgetown, Suffolk and Bogazici (Istanbul) universities, and at the 2009 Roundtable on Spain of The Economist. He writes a weekly column for the online newspaper El Imparcial and is a member of its Editorial Board. He is a member of the Committee of Ambassador Brands and Image of Spain (Foro de Marcas Renombradas Españolas). He is married and has two sons.

The archive of his coverage of Spain and some of that of Harry Debelius is available online at the Spanish Transition Foundation (http://www.transicion.org/41adocumental.php) and at www.williamchislett.com.
In memoriam Harry Debelius (1929-2007)
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1. The Spanish Media at the end of the Franco regime

The foreign press corps at the end of the Franco regime was not restricted as Spanish journalists were by repressive laws, but it had to contend with them as they formed the official working environment. Under Franco, the press was regarded as a ‘fourth estate’, ranking in importance after the National Movement (the only legal political party), the state run trade unions, and the political police. Like these other institutions, the role of the Spanish press emerged out of the 1936-39 Civil War, and was designed to keep the flag of Franco’s ‘crusade’ flying by consolidating the victories in the war. This concept of the press’s role was aptly summed up by one of Franco’s last Information Ministers, Alfredo Sánchez Bella, who told the Cortes (parliament) in April 1970 that information ‘is an instrument serving state policy’.¹

Thirty-six years after the end of the civil war, the media were still being used to defend Franco’s sacred cows: the inviolate unity of Spain, the Christian virtues of the Nationalists and the unquestionable rectitude of the authorities. One of the stipulations of the Federation of Press Associations under Franco ran: ‘As Spaniards brought up in the Catholic faith and as defenders of the glorious National Movement, our duty is to serve with zeal these religious and political truths…’.

A kind of freedom was theoretically granted to the press by Article 12 of the Fuero de los Españoles (Charter of the Spanish People, see Appendix). It had little meaning, however, in view of the pre-publication censorship laws enacted by Franco at the height of the civil war. Characteristically, this law was aimed at ‘awakening the press to the idea of serving the State’, and provided that all copy had to be taken to the Information Ministry to be approved before it could be published. Since it had been produced during a state of emergency, it should have disappeared once the war was won, but it remained in force until 1966 when it was replaced by the Law of Press and Printing.

When he introduced the law (see Appendix) to the Cortes, Francisco Abella Martín, the President of the Commission of Information and Tourism, said there ought to be no ‘confusing freedom of expression with freedom of the press… (expression) is the extension and practice of the individual to think. While freedom of the press… depends in turn on its worth as a technique’. Article 2 of the new Press Law, in essence, allowed anything to be published, with the proviso that it did not contravene the principles of the National Movement, the only legal political organisation, and the Fundamental Laws, which were the cornerstone of the regime. This Article remained in force until 18 months after Franco’s death.

With pre-publication censorship officially abolished, editors themselves were supposed to be left to decide whether an article was likely to incur prosecution or an order for withdrawal. But as the law also stipulated that copies of newspapers and magazines should be deposited with the Information Ministry just before going on sale, Ministry officials were still able to warn editors by telephone against publishing articles on certain subjects and this they frequently did. Thus there was still an effective form of

¹ Sánchez Bella would often lose his temper with the few foreign correspondents in Spain at that time, such as Walter Haubrich of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, accusing them of being ‘paid by the Moscow gold’. This was a reference to the gold shipped from the vaults of the Bank of Spain to the Soviet Union by the Republican government after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.
censorship that was technically post-publication, but that could still keep newspapers and magazines off the bookstalls.

An examination of some of the bans in the last years of Franco is very revealing of the paranoia that still existed on the part of a regime that had been in power for four decades. The regional newspaper *El Ideal Gallego* was fined 10,000 pesetas in 1971 for not having ‘observed the due respect for truth required by the Law of Press and Printing’. The newspaper had reported a workers’ demonstration at Bazán and had given the numbers of those taking part as 1,400; the civil governor of the area (a political appointee) had issued a routine statement to the effect that only 200 demonstrators had been involved. The indictment against the newspaper charged ‘patent exaggeration’ and accused it of ‘spreading alarm’.

The newspaper *Madrid* was fined 250,000 pesetas and suspended for two months in 1970 for printing a piece which had originally appeared in *Le Monde* on police control at Spanish universities. The sale of that particular edition of *Le Monde* had not been authorised in Spain either. *Le Monde*’s correspondent in Madrid was José Antonio Novais, whose life was made uncomfortable by the regime; as a Spaniard he did not enjoy the ‘protection’ afforded to correspondents who were foreign. *Madrid* was continually hounded by the authorities and was closed down for ‘administrative reasons’ by the Information Ministry in 1971.

Altogether the Commission for the Defence of the Profession (of journalism) listed over 300 such incidents in 1975, Franco’s last year; the list covered assaults on journalists, detentions and imprisonments as well as the suspension of newspapers. In one case, José María Huertas Clavería was sentenced to two years imprisonment for insulting the armed forces. In an article about prostitution in Barcelona for the daily *Tele-Exprés* he said that some hotels used by prostitutes were run by the widows of military men after the civil war (he only served eight months as he benefited from an amnesty after Franco’s death).

In the middle of 1975, the press also had to contend with an anti-terrorist decree, over and above the complexities of the 1966 press law. The decree, approved on August 22 in response to an escalation of killings by the Basque separatist group ETA and the Anti-Fascist Revolutionary Patriotic Front (FRAP), specified fines, suspension and imprisonment for journalists responsible for publishing reports ‘which defend, stimulate, approve or praise illegal organisations or their members’. Within a week of the enactment of the decree, five non-regime magazines were seized and a further two had to re-write certain articles. This provoked a letter from the editors of 12 magazines who jointly protested with ‘profound disgust’ at ‘the extent and vagueness of the repressive concepts’. *Cambio-16* (founded in 1971) came out on September 5 with a black cover and just two words: ‘Poor Press’, while its editor warned that ‘as from today it is impossible to know’ when a crime was being committed against the press law. The magazine had good reason to write thus: the very day after the anti-terrorist decree had come into effect, it failed to appear because the censors had objected to an article referring to a sign at a Barcelona pop concert calling upon Franco to repeal the

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2 Miguel Ángel Aguilar, then a young journalist, coined the phrase that ‘Franco, who until now had only felt responsible before God and History, also begins to be so before the foreign press’.

3 The regime would not allow the magazine to be called *Cambio* (change) and so it had to be officially registered as *Cambio 16* (after its 16 founders).
death penalties imposed under the decree on two members of ETA, and three members of FRAP. The five were executed on September 27. Cambio 16 then had to remove 35 pages from its October issue when it wrote of the international reaction to the executions.

The media consisted of the newspapers and news agency (Pyresa) of the National Movement, the official news agency Efe (founded in 1939), which by virtue of its exclusive contracts with the major world news agencies – Agence France Presse, Reuters, Associated Press and United Press International – held a monopoly inside Spain of distributing foreign news and photographs, RTVE, the state-controlled television channel, Radio Nacional de España and the non-governmental press.

By the time Franco died in 1975, the National Movement had 38 newspapers and 40 radio stations. The newspapers accounted for around one-third of the newspapers published in Spain, but had far more influence than that indicated by their total circulation (around 450,000). On average, each newspaper’s circulation was 12,548, compared with an average daily circulation of the country’s other newspapers of 33,500. The Movement was abolished on April 1, 1977 and its newspapers passed to the state. As well as the Movement’s newspapers (in 11 provinces the only newspaper available belonged to the Movement), the government press also included the newspaper Pueblo, the organ of the state-run trade unions.

The ‘independent’ press was divided into four main groups. The largest of these was the monarchist press: ABC and La Vanguardia. The second group was the Catholic press with YA as its main representative, some provincial newspapers and the news agency Logos. The news agency Europa Press was also in this group. Then there were publications like the Madrid evening newspaper Informaciones, probably the most liberal newspaper under Franco.

The newspaper-reading public was markedly small. In 1974, according to UNESCO’s annual magazine, World Communications, the ratio of 10 copies of daily newspapers sold per 100 people was the minimum figure for a ‘developed’ country. In Spain in 1976, the first year after Franco’s death, there were 106 daily newspapers, including the Movement’s press, with a daily circulation of 3.1 million; the population for the same year was 35.6 million. This gave Spain a figure of 8.8 newspapers sold a day per 100 people – below the UNESCO threshold. This compared with Latin American countries, but was far lower than Italy, France, Switzerland or the UK. In 70% of Spain’s 50 provinces the figure was well below 8.8, for in 23 provinces only one newspaper was printed.

Throughout the Franco period, there was also a strong underground and illegal press, ranging from Mundo Obrero and El Socialista (the official organs of the communist and socialist parties respectively) to students’ sheets and bulletins put out by ETA. The latter’s propaganda was normally published over the border in France and then smuggled back into Spain for distribution.

2. The Media after Franco

The first post-Franco government continued to be led by the 67-year-old Carlos Arias Navarro, a public prosecutor in Malaga after the civil war when many Republicans were
sentenced to death. He first became Prime Minister in 1974 after the assassination of Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco. The government retained the post of Information Minister. Adolfo Martín Gamero did his best to initiate change by relaxing the application of the Press Law, but the very fact that the post still existed revealed the control the authorities wished to exercise over the media. Those members of the government who wanted to liberalise the country had to contend with fierce reaction from the de facto powers, particularly the top brass of the armed forces who enjoyed Arias’ support.

Once the lid began to be lifted off, journalism became quite a hazardous profession compared to the fairly docile life of the Spanish journalist under Franco (well rewarded too, for those who faithfully served the regime). In February 1976, the anti-terrorism decree was modified and the clauses affecting the press removed. Right-wing forces, unable to get their own way, started to take the law into their own hands.

The most vicious assault was carried out on February 2, 1976 on José Antonio Martínez Soler, editor of the weekly magazine Doblón. He was seized and driven into the country where, bound and blindfolded, he was beaten on the head and soles of his feet. His crime was to have published a mild article about the Civil Guard in which he said that some were members of the banned Democratic Military Union. His kidnappers wanted a list citing names. But for the fact that Soler managed to break free after his kidnappers left him tied up, he would probably have frozen to death in the forest where he was dumped.

A serious clash with the press was averted in June 1976 when King Juan Carlos let it be known that he was not offended by a cartoon in Cambio 16, coinciding with a state visit to the US, which showed him dancing over the Statue of Liberty against a Manhattan skyline. The right, however, were offended and wanted to use the cartoon to suspend the magazine for four months under Article 2. Martín Gamero threatened to resign if the ban went ahead.

The press, particularly the magazines Cambio 16, Cuadernos para el Diálogo and Triunfo, focused on the need for democratic reforms. But there were always limits imposed. Cambio 16 published a feature on May 31 which included pictures of torture – long an explosive issue in Spain – and the Information Ministry immediately followed it up with an order declaring all information about and reference to torture materia reservada. The order was later revoked. A week later Cuadernos was obliged to remove in toto a dossier on torture in Spain. The magazine appeared with its original front cover showing blindfolded detainees, but it also carried an apology: ‘In this issue we wanted to inform you, calmly and objectively, about a very painful and delicate subject: TORTURE in Spain. It was our duty to a society which wants to take the road towards democracy and freedom. Obstacles beyond our control have prevented the publication of the report…’. The dossier, enlarged, was later published in September 1977 without any problems. By then the Royal Decree on Freedom of Expression had been issued (see Appendix).

The Francoist Right’s antipathy to the increasingly free press was well demonstrated on the first anniversary of Franco’s death, when tens of thousands of his supporters gathered in Madrid’s Oriente Square for a service for the repose of his soul. Local and foreign journalists were insulted and piles of newspapers burned.
It was in this mixed and uncertain climate that the independent newspaper *El País* was launched on May 4, 1976—with a former political prisoner and a former minister under Franco among its shareholders. The minister was Manuel Fraga, who had been responsible for the 1966 Press Law when he was Information and Tourism Minister and was Interior Minister in the first post-Franco government. The prisoner was Ramón Tamames, an economics professor and member of the Spanish Communist Party’s central committee. *El País*, sub-titled ‘independent morning daily’, played an important role in Spain’s transition to democracy, challenging the credentials of the first post-Franco government to do this on its very first day of publication.

It was an article in *Newsweek* by Arnaud de Borchgrave on April 25, more than calls by *El País*, that hastened the fall of Arias. Borchgrave (who had spoken to the King on an off-the-record basis) said Juan Carlos regarded his Prime Minister as an ‘unmitigated disaster’. The article was very widely quoted and represented the first ‘official’ sign that the skids were under Arias.

Press liberalisation moved into a higher gear when Arias was replaced in July by Adolfo Suárez (the young National Movement Minister). *El País* published the first-ever interview in a Spanish publication with Dolores Ibarruri, the octogenarian President of the Spanish Communist Party then still in exile in Moscow. A few months earlier, under Arias, the magazine *Guadiana* had had to remove its cover and six pages of an interview with the Party’s Secretary General, Santiago Carrillo, then in exile in Paris.

On October 18, another newspaper was launched, *Diario 16*, which came out with an editorial demanding the dismantling of the Information Ministry: ‘The Ministry lives on as flagrant proof that censorship, though muted, still survives’.

By the autumn of 1976, *Cambio 16, Cuadernos, Triunfo, El País* and *Diario 16* had become almost a ‘fifth estate’ to the rest of the establishment press. They were an alternative government constantly calling for amnesty, democratic reforms and, most important of all, a general election. On November 18, Franco’s last Cortes voted itself out of office by approving political reforms (overwhelmingly approved in a referendum on December 15) which paved the way for a general election in June 1977 (the first freely-contested election since 1936). *Diario 16* reported the move on its front page with the striking headline, ‘Adiós Dictadura’.

### 3. The Foreign Press

The foreign press corps at the time of Franco’s death was not a large one, as befitted a European backwater. The main news agencies Reuters, Associated Press and UPI had offices in Madrid, but few of the world’s main newspapers had staff correspondents. Notable exceptions were *The New York Times* (Henry Giniger), *Time* (Gavin Scott), *The Daily Telegraph* (Harold Sieve), *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Walter Haubrich), Kees van Bemmelen (*De Telegraaf*) and the BBC (Gordon Martin). Most made do with stringers/super stringers, for example: *The Times* of London (Harry Debelius), *Financial Times* (Roger Matthews), *The Guardian* and *The Observer* (Bill Cemlyn-Jones), *Le Monde* (José Antonio Nováis), *Washington Post* and *Newsweek* (Miguel Acoca), *Wall Street Journal* (Ana Westley) and *Christian Science Monitor* and *Chicago Daily News* (Richard Mowrer). Franco’s death produced a considerable increase in the
number of foreign correspondents based in Madrid. The Financial Times made Madrid a staff posting with Robert Graham, The Guardian enhanced its coverage by sending in John Hooper and the Los Angeles Times posted Stanley Meisler to Spain. I came to Madrid in the summer of 1974 and began to work for The Times in August 1975 as the assistant to Harry Debelius. Our office was in the building owned by the evening newspaper Informaciones. Debelius, the longest-serving foreign correspondent, had been in Spain since 1955 and worked for many media outlets including Voice of America, ITN and the BBC (see his obituary in the Appendix).

In June the conservative daily ABC had accused Debelius of participating in a ‘propaganda campaign against the unity of Spain’. This followed a piece on the front page of The Times that said the Basque underground movement was listening a lot to the Spanish service of the BBC which closely reported the state of exception in two of the Basque provinces. A Basque source was quoted in The Times as saying the BBC coverage was reminiscent of the coverage it gave during World War II to the resistance to Nazism. Foreign newspapers were usually unobtainable in the Basque Country if they carried reports on the situation, particularly those concerning the violent separatist organisation ETA. Debelius, I noted in the diary I kept for several years, feared the government would crack down on foreign correspondents in Spain and expel some of them.

Foreign correspondents were free to write what they wanted, but they were subject to a commercial censorship. The regime was able to control the distribution of foreign publications in Spain as copies of each one were sent from Madrid’s airport, as soon as they arrived, to the Information Ministry. The articles on Spain were then translated and given to senior officials, including the Minister in some cases, and the decision taken whether to allow the sale of the publications at newsstands. Distributors were then given permission, or not, to deliver the publications to newsstands. All the copies of an unauthorised newspaper were thrown away. Another tactic was to allow distribution, but to hold it up for several days. A newspaper published on a Monday was unlikely to sell on a Thursday. In the case of weekly magazines, a copy was sent directly to the Ministry and if permission was not granted to sell the issue the publisher did not send copies to Spain. The Times, Le Monde, Süddeutsche Zeitung and the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung were particularly affected and their correspondents agreed among themselves to publish at the end of each month the number of days when their publications were banned. This greatly displeased the government which liked the outside world to believe there was unrestricted distribution of the foreign press in Spain. For example, a special report on Spain in The Times of June 20, 1975 did not go on sale in Spain until June 23 as it took the censors until then to read all the texts.

Because the Spanish press was restricted in what it could report on, it was vital to have good contacts among the multi-layered opposition. This took many forms, ranging from visits to our office by the families of political prisoners to clandestine meetings elsewhere. We all assumed our phones were tapped and so a lot of information had to be gathered by arranging meetings. Franco’s Spain was not a closed and totalitarian dictatorship, where only official information was available. Free journalism could be exercised thanks to meetings and prudent measures that were taken.

Magazines, such as Triunfo, Cuadernos para el Diálogo and later Cambio 16, which valiantly sought to test the limits of the regime’s freedom of expression (they were
seized from news stands on several occasions), were also valuable sources of information—sometimes we used stories they could not publish. Most of the good Spanish journalists at that time were democrats and more than happy to cooperate. We had to be careful, however, about protecting the identity of sources if by naming them there was a risk of causing problems. A case in point was the banning of an article in Cambio 16 in September 1975 under the anti-terrorism decree. When I went to see Manuel Velasco, the magazine’s editor, he asked me to be careful when quoting him.

Franco was ailing in September and the killing of four policemen led to death sentences being passed on 11 political activists (five of whom were shot and six reprieved). The sentences triggered demonstrations throughout Europe. Yves Montand, the French film star, Regis Debray, the leftist intellectual, the writer Michel Foucault and four other people came to Madrid and held a press conference in a hotel to protest the sentences. No sooner had they started than plainclothes policemen entered and arrested all those present including myself (see the Appendix). The Frenchmen were immediately deported and the 25 journalists released after their names were taken—nine of us after we were taken to police headquarters in the Puerta del Sol as we did not have press credentials on us. The Association of Foreign Correspondents protested to León Herrera, the Information Minister, about ‘the manner in which journalists, who were doing their job of seeking out information at the news conference, were treated’ and called on the Interior Minister to ‘take adequate steps to ensure the free exercise of our professional duties’.

Some parts of the Spanish press used the foreign press to get around restrictions. For example, The Times reported that there were divisions in the cabinet over the death sentences and that some Ministers were prepared to resign. Informaciones quoted the piece on its front page. The piece prompted ABC to contact Debelius after he had given an interview to BBC radio. The rumour mill was very active in the last months of Franco: the American Broadcasting Company reported on October 21 that Franco had died (it took him another month). The Times reported on October 22 that ‘reliable sources close to El Pardo Palace household squashed persistent rumours that Franco was dead’.

Spanish news agencies were notorious for their manipulation of news under Franco. I was once at the receiving end of one distortion. A small part of an interview in The Times on October 20, 1975 with Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez, a Christian Democrat leader (and a former Education Minister, 1951-56, until he became part of the moderate opposition), and a leading socialist, Enrique Tierno Galván, was reprinted in Pueblo (see Appendix). What emerged bore little relation to what had been originally written. It was not a question of bad translation. Ruiz Giménez was quoted by Pyresa (the National Movement’s news agency, used by Pueblo) as saying ‘the centre and centre-left wish to create a united block against the communists to avoid producing the same situation as in the Second Republic when the communists, after excluding other groups of the moderate left, raised themselves to power’. Neither Ruiz Giménez nor Tierno Galván said anything of the sort and in fact spoke of the need for a ‘united democratic front’ (‘We have the experience of the Republic and the civil war and have learned a lesson. We must avoid fractionalism’, said Tierno Galván). At a time when opposition parties were starting to co-ordinate activities, it was not difficult to see the reason behind the distortion: to split the opposition and bolster the regime. The extract from interview, as published in the Spanish press, caused irritation among some of the opposition. No
apology was published despite my demand for one after an irate Ruiz-Giménez had telephoned me.

Two weeks before Franco died on November 20, the authorities ordered Spanish radio and TV not to give any technical assistance to the Spanish service of the BBC, which had been interviewing a wide spectrum of people about the situation. Foreign journalists were beginning to descend on Madrid as it was clear that it was only a matter of time before Franco died. The dictator’s condition has been steadily declining – communicated through a steady stream of medical bulletins over the course of a month–.

Little changed regarding press freedom in the aftermath of Franco’s death. An ironic cartoon in the newspaper Nuevo Diario on February 5, 1976 showed a bald man in dark glasses (the archetypal diehard Francoist) speaking at the Siglo XXI Club asking whether anyone in the audience was from The Times (see Appendix). When the answer came back as ‘no’, the speaker said, ‘well then, cross my heart and hope to die’. There were many jokes at the time about Spaniards reading the foreign press to find out what was happening in their own country. That same evening, Manuel Fraga, the Interior Minister, was interviewed by The Times and gave more information about political reforms in the pipeline than Prime Minister Arias had given. An editorial in ABC commented laconically that it was ridiculous for people abroad to know what was happening in Spain before Spaniards did.

Some people claim that the foreign correspondents helped Spain achieve democracy by holding a mirror up to what was going on. For example, the Finance Ministry published a book by Angel Viñas in 1976 about the Spanish gold shipped to Moscow during the Civil War by the Republican government. When the Ministry realised that the book tore apart Franco’s pet myth about the Soviet Union stealing the gold (it was converted into foreign exchange to buy arms), the Ministry halted distribution of the book and tried to collect 100 advance copies in the hands of civil servants and journalists. Several correspondents, including Jim Markham of the New York Times and Stanley Meisler of the Los Angeles Times, wrote at length about this censorship, and the Ministry relented, letting the book go forth. It was concerned about its image in the world, especially in the US, and so behaved when it saw itself in the mirror of the foreign press.

It was not until the 43-year-old Adolfo Suárez (the National Movement Minister) replaced Arias as Prime Minister on July 3, 1976 that the pace of reform quickened, although his appointment was negatively received in the foreign press as he was seen as the wrong man for the job. The Times report said it ‘came as a surprise after it had been widely believed that a more liberal man would be chosen’ and his nomination was a ‘victory for the reformist wing of the right, willing to move towards the dismantling of the dictatorship but maintaining strong ties with the past’. Suárez was to prove most

4 The foreign press also provided practical help. The Democratic Junta (Junta Democrática), formed by the Popular Socialist Party (PSP), the Communist Party (PCE) and the Carlist Party (Partido Carlista), was proclaimed in July 1974 in the office of Walter Haubrich, the correspondent of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. It was due to be simultaneously announced in Paris and in the Madrid restaurant Las Cuevas de Sésamo, but when the participants approached the place they saw police. Haubrich then offered his home as a safe location. See ‘La Memoria de la Transición’ by Charo Nogueira in El País, September 4, 2010.
people wrong, including myself (see the Appendix). Unbeknown except to an inner circle very close to King Juan Carlos, his appointment had been carefully orchestrated by Torcuato Fernández Miranda, the King’s former tutor and President of the Council of the Realm, the bastion of Francoism responsible for the short-list of three candidates for Prime Minister presented to Juan Carlos. Suárez belonged to the same ‘silent generation’ of Spaniards as Juan Carlos who were too young to have fought in the Civil War. He was ideally placed, as an apparatchik, to dismantle the regime from within and avoid a complete break with the past which ran the risk of provoking the extreme right.

Suárez moved Spain towards democracy, releasing political prisoners, granting an amnesty, abolishing the political courts, allowing greater freedoms in the regions and authorising political parties (but not, initially, the communists although they were increasingly tolerated). A referendum was held on December 16, 1976 to approve political reforms paving the way for the country’s first freely contested election in 41 years on June 15, 1977. The news item on the referendum that I helped to make for ITN’s News at Ten programme was denounced by the Spanish Embassy in London as ‘insulting and little representative’ (see Appendix). It was filmed in the village of Buendía (province of Cuenca) where I had and still have a house and which has been my microcosm of the tremendous changes in Spain. The London correspondent of El País informed readers that most of the report was filmed in a bar where villagers preferred to play cards than listen to Suárez’s pre-referendum address to the nation. It was perfectly representative of a vast swathe of the population living in rural areas with little idea of the political reforms taking place. I used the same village in May 1977 for a report on the elections (see the Appendix).

Interviewing the country’s main political players sometimes involved rather surreal circumstances. This was the case with Manuel Fraga whom the BBC wanted to film for a programme on Spain. Fraga invited the BBC team and me to a shoot one cold Sunday morning in January 1977. We met him in his full shooting gear at his home in Madrid and were told to follow his car, which we did at some speed until we reached a finca more than 150km away in the province of Cuenca. We were greeted by a donkey loaded with shooting gear standing next to a Rolls Royce. Other members of the shooting party included León Herrera, a former Information Minister, the Mayor of Madrid and the Civil Governor of Cuenca. We were all rather wary of Fraga and his shotgun when he turned to camera as he had a reputation for being a bad shot. Rumour had it that he had accidentally shot Franco’s son-in-law, the Marquis of Villaverde, in the backside during a shoot. Before lunch, oysters and fried squid were served from the back of a lorry. Fraga was also interviewed a few days later at the headquarters of Alianza Popular and took exception to what he termed the ‘biased’ questions of David Lomax. He particularly did not like being questioned on how his party could be called democratic when for so many years some of its leaders had served the Franco regime in senior positions. Fraga’s replies were brief and he refused to be taken up on any points.

The leading players in the disparate opposition assiduously courted the foreign press and always made themselves available. They did not always like, however, what was written about them. Santiago Carrillo, the head of the Spanish Communist Party (who had returned clandestinely to Spain in February 1976 and was arrested and imprisoned in December), made his annoyance known with a piece in The Times written by

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5 No one was proved more wrong than Ricardo de la Cierva who wrote a much-quoted article titled ‘¡Qué error, qué immenso error!’ (El País, July 8, 1976).
Debelius about his Civil War past. He asked me whether Debelius had been paid to write the piece. ‘Although Carrillo denies responsibility, few serious historians have much doubt about his role in the mass executions (of prisoners) at Paracuellos, on the outskirts of Madrid, four months after the Civil War began’, Debelius wrote. Carrillo, released from a brief spell in prison along with members of his central committee and allowed to participate in political life, was busy striving to create a democratic halo and win influence. José María de Areilza, a suave liberal (and a former Spanish Ambassador in Washington and Paris who broke with the Franco regime in the 1960s) saw the article and to my amazement asked me whether Debelius had joined the Guerrilleros de Cristo Rey or Fuerza Nueva, both far-right groups. As a result of this piece, Carrillo was reluctant to speak to the BBC. Luckily, my interview with him in The Times, published the day before Debelius’ piece, had not upset him (it made a passing reference to Paracuellos and quoted Carrillo as saying he had been responsible only for the decision to transfer the prisoners from Madrid to Valencia) and he relented and agreed to let the BBC into his home.

The Spanish Communist Party was formally legalised during Easter week, when many Spaniards were on holiday. Nevertheless, police still stopped me in the street and confiscated documents given to me at the Party’s first authorised press conference (see the Appendix). The security forces were a law unto themselves. Far more risky was meeting with ETA activists, something I managed to do the same week as the legalisation of the communists. This involved travelling to San Sebastian, contacting a lawyer, following a car over the border into France and then being taken to the Biarritz golf club to meet (I later learned) José Miguel Beñarán Ordeñana (Argala), one of the people who detonated a remote-controlled bomb which sent the car of Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco, Franco’s first Prime Minister, hurtling into the air and over the roof of the San Francisco de Borja church in Madrid. Argala met a similar fate in December 1978 when a bomb placed under his car blew up in Anglet, France –an action attributed to the Spanish secret police–.

After that interview, I returned to Madrid via Vitoria where Basque national day (Easter Sunday) was legally celebrated for the first time since the Civil War and so drew a large press presence. The police fought running battles with groups of Basques and foreign journalists were also (deliberately one suspected) in the firing line: a Belgian cameraman was hit in the chest by a rubber bullet and Gordon Martin, the BBC’s Spain correspondent, was in a flat with his microphone in one hand and a glass of whisky in the other when police fired at the window. He was left holding the microphone and a shattered glass. When a group of journalists tried to hand in a letter of protest to the Civil Governor of Vitoria they were turned back by police, one of whom said, ‘You have democracy in your country, but not in Spain’, adding (translated literally), ‘you come out of my nose’.

Obtaining an interview with the King (in November 1977), the person most sought after by journalists, turned out to be surprisingly easy. This may have been because I had met his father, Don Juan, the Count of Barcelona (in Madrid and at his home in exile in Estoril, Portugal) and he said he would set up an off-the-record meeting for a profile I wrote. In contrast, trying to speak directly with Blas Piñar, head of the extreme-right-

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6 The King, variously known as Juan Carlos El Tonto (Juan Carlos the Stupid) or Juan Carlos El Breve (Juan Carlos the Brief), particularly by communists, appreciated a joke told against him. ‘Why had he
wing Fuerza Nueva, who kept Franco’s ideas alive after his death, was impossible. A notary public by profession, Piñar made me submit my questions in writing and he signed each page of his answers as if he were notarising documents.

The gradual emergence of a free press made the job of foreign correspondents much easier. By 1978, Spain pretty well had a free press, although the armed forces were still extremely sensitive to any form of criticism. In March, a military court in Barcelona sentenced four actors to two years’ imprisonment for ‘insulting the armed forces’, although the performance had been approved by the Culture Ministry. Some of Franco’s press laws still existed, but were rarely applied, and the military were still allowed to try civilians for military offences.

The other institution that was sacrosanct was the monarchy, though for very different reasons. Criticism of its restoration or anything that could damage the monarchy was generally muted. Spanish editors, except for ultra-rightists, exercised self-censorship in this matter as it was understandably felt that Juan Carlos, the ‘motor’ of democratic change, had to be protected, and all those close to him. It was thus left to the foreign press to report some comments deriding communism made by Queen Sofia in an interview with the Vienna daily Die Presse in early 1978 (see Appendix).

One sign of the success of Spain’s transition was that some foreign newspapers closed their bureau as of 1978; the news coming out of the country ceased to be dramatic and headline-grabbing. This was the case, for example, of The Los Angeles Times whose veteran correspondent, Stanley Meisler, told a group of Americans at a farewell luncheon that ‘All the rats are leaving because the ship won’t sink’. Fortunately, it did not.

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been crowned in a submarine? ‘Because, deep down he was not so stupid’. How true this has proved to be. See ‘The man who would be the king’, The Times, November 2, 1977.
Appendix I.

Extracts from the Relevant Press Laws

A. The *Fuero de los Españoles* (Charter of the Spanish People) was issued on July 17, 1945. Its preamble stated: ‘The Spanish state proclaims as its ruling principle… respect for the dignity, integrity, and liberty of the person… Every Spaniard may freely express his ideas provided they do not constitute an attack on the fundamental principles on which the state is founded’.

B. Until 1966, pre-publication censorship was exercised. After 1966, the Press Law governed censorship. It was in force until 1977.

Extracts from the Law on Press and Printing March 18, 1966

1. **Freedom of Expression through Publications**
   1. The right to freedom of expression of ideas, recognised for Spaniards in Article 12 of the *Fuero*, is exercised through publications as expressed in the *Fuero* and this law.

2. **Limits of the Right**
   Freedom of expression and the right of publication recognised in Article 1 will have no limitations other than those established by the law. These limitations are: respect for truth and morality; obedience to the Law of the Principles of the National Movement and other Fundamental Laws; national defence requirements; the security of the state; maintenance of public order at home and peace abroad; due respect for state institutions and officials in criticism of political and administrative action; the recognition of the courts’ independence; and the safeguarding of people’s privacy and of families’ good reputations.

3. **Censorship**
   The Administration cannot exercise censorship in advance nor demand obligatory consultation except in a state of exception or war as provided for in the law.

4. **Voluntary Consultation**
   1. The Administration may be consulted about the content of any class or publication by any person who may be considered responsible for its distribution. Approval or silence on the part of the administration will exempt from all responsibility the distribution of the publication presented for consultation.
   2. Regulations will be established to determine the period of time during which administrative silence is applied and also for the required procedures to be completed before presenting a publication for consultation.

5. **Guarantee of Freedom**
   The administration guarantees the exercise of the liberties and rights governed by this law; prosecuting through the competent bodies and also through legal action any activity contrary to them and especially those which, through monopolies or other
methods, attempt to distort public opinion or obstruct free information, dissemination or distribution.

6. Information for General Interest
   1. Newspaper publications must insert and news agencies must distribute, with indication of their origin, notes communiqués and notices of general interest, whose publication the administration and public authorities consider necessary. They will be sent via the Director General of the Press, who will pass them on when he considers them ready for insertion.
   2. Such items of information will also be distributed among similar publications without discrimination and according to the regulations determined periodically.

7. The Right to Obtain Official Information
   1. The government, the administration and the public authorities must provide information about their activities to all newspaper publications and press agencies in the way legally laid down or according to regulations.
   2. Information on the activities of the above bodies and the administration of justice will be withheld when, by legal precept or by their very nature, their actions, activities or agreements are not public or when their documents or acts are declared confidential.

12. Depositing
   1. Before proceeding to the distribution of any publication it is required that six copies must be deposited in advance, according to the regulations specified: the amount of advance should never exceed one day or every fifty pages or fraction thereof.
   2. In the case of daily or weekly publications, ten copies of the publication, or reproductions thereof, must be deposited at least half-an-hour before their distribution, signed by the editor or his delegate. In the case of other periodicals the number of copies will be the same and the minimum time-limit six hours.
   3. The copies must be deposited with the Ministry of Information and Tourism, which will determine the regulations.

62. Right of Rectification
   Editors of periodicals are obliged to insert free of charge in the first edition whatever note or communiqué they receive from the administration or authorities via the General Directorate of the Press or the provincial delegations of the Ministry of Information and Tourism rectifying or clarifying information about particular actions within their competence.

64. Penal Responsibility, Prior and Government Measures
   1. Criminal responsibility will be demanded in the courts of justice in accordance with the provisions of the penal legislation and the proceedings contained in the procedural law.
   2. When the administration receives information of an action which could constitute an offence committed by the press it can, without affecting its obligations immediately to report any such action to the relevant authorities —at the same time notifying the Ministry of Justice— order the confiscation of the offending publication and also of the form for printing to prevent distribution.
67. **Very Serious Offences**

The following are very serious offences:

a. Activities which are seriously and clearly contrary to the liberties and rights declared in this law and to the limitations expressed in Article 2.

b. The distribution, circulation or reproduction in Spain of publications edited abroad which have not fulfilled the necessary requirements.

c. The publication of agreements or official documents which are classified as confidential information as expressed in Article 7.

68. **Serious and Minor Offences**

1. The following are serious offences:

   a. Failure to obey the regulations concerning insertion and distribution contained in Articles 2 and 62 of this law where these requirements are necessary.

   b. Any other offence against the legal regulations when there is a clear attempt to mislead public opinion or to cause a real and serious confusion.

2. A minor offence is constituted by any breach of the law or regulations which are not considered very serious as expressed in Article 67 or as serious as expressed in the previous paragraph of this article.

69. **Penalties**

1. The following penalties may be applied in the case of offences as expressed in the previous article:

   a. When the author or director is responsible:

      1. For minor offences: suspension from professional activities for 15 days or a fine of 1,000 to 25,000 pesetas.

      2. For serious offences: suspension from 15 days to a month or a fine of 25,000 to 50,000 pesetas.

      3. For very serious offences: suspension from one to six months or a fine of 50,000 to 250,000 pesetas.

   b. For company directors or companies:

      1. For minor offences: a fine of 1,000 to 50,000 pesetas.

      2. For serious offences: a fine of 50,000 to 100,000 pesetas.

      3. For very serious offences: suspension of publication for up to two months for daily newspapers; up to four months for weekly or fortnightly publications; and up to six months for less frequent publications. Suspension of activities of editorial firms of up to three months or a fine of 100,000 to 5,000,000 pesetas.

2. A fine may be imposed concurrently with any other penalty.

3. The decision about penalties will be noted in the corresponding registers.

Francisco Franco

C. Other penalties for infringement of the Press Law of 1966 were laid down by Article 165 (b) of the Penal Code.

Article 165 (b) of the Penal Code

Punishments of maximum imprisonment and a fine of between 5,000 and 50,000 pesetas will be imposed on those who infringe the laws of freedom of expression and the right to information by publishing falsehoods or information harmful to morality or good customs; on those who transgress the limitations imposed by national defence; security of the state and maintenance of public order within the country and peace.
abroad; or attack the principles of the National Movement or the Fundamental Laws; or show lack of respect to the institutions and people by criticising political and administrative action; and those who attack the independence of the courts.

D. Royal Decree of April 1, 1977 on Freedom of Expression

Article 1
Freedom of expression and the right to distribute information whether by written or spoken means will have no limitations other than those contained in the judicial ordinance of general character.

Article 2
1. Article 2 of the existing Press and Printing Law and Article 165 (b) of the Penal Code are repealed.
2. The powers of suspension given to the administration as expressed in Article 69 of the Press Law are abolished.

Article 3
Paragraph 2 of Article 64 of the Press Law will be replaced with the following:

2A. When the administration receives information of an act which could constitute an offence committed by written or spoken means of communication they will notify the prosecutor or the relevant magistrate who will immediately proceed to seize the publication.
2B. The administration may only order the seizure of written or spoken means of communication if they contain news, comment or information:
   a. Which are contrary to the unity of Spain.
   b. Which constitute an attack on, or disrespect for, the Monarchy or Members of the Royal Family.
   c. Which in any way attack the institutional prestige or respect before public opinion– of the armed forces.
2C. In the same way the administration may order the seizure of pornographic or obscene publications. Persistent publication of obscene or pornographic material will result in the cancellation of registration in the appropriate register.
2D. The administration will deem the breaking of an order of seizure a very serious offence.
2E. There is a right of appeal against the administrative acts above through the administration and a further appeal against the decision which the administration reaches in the courts.

Juan Carlos
Adolfo Suárez González
Prime Minister

E. At the same time, in the Royal Decree of April 1 an Article was introduced on libel which strengthened those articles in the Penal Code dealing with libel and slander. Article 5 states: ‘When crimes of slander are committed during an electoral campaign the punishments laid down in the Penal Code will be imposed to the maximum’.
According to the Penal Code the punishments are:
   Slander: prison sentence from four to six years, and a fine of 5,000 to 50,000 pesetas.
Serious Libel: Prison sentence from four months and a day to six months, or exile, and a fine of 5,000 to 50,000 pesetas.
Minor Libel: Fine of 5,000 to 100,000 pesetas.

Article 46 (2) of the Penal Code establishes that ‘an offence of slander or injury is committed not only when it is explicit but also through allegories, caricatures, emblems or allusions’.

F. The Amnesty Law of October 15, 1977
This amnesty was almost tantamount to a comprehensive amnesty for crimes of ‘political intent’ and covered the period up until June 15, 1977, the date of the first free general election in 41 years. Article 2 included in the amnesty ‘acts of expression of opinion carried out through the press or any other means of communication’.

G. The 1978 Constitution
This implicitly buried the 1966 Press Law.
Appendix II. Articles and Other Material

A. Press credential of William Chislett
B. The police arrest foreign and Spanish journalists on September 22, 1975 for attending a press conference given by Yves Montand.

Spain expels French group after executions protest

From William Christie
Madrid, Sept 22

Yves Montand, the French film star, and Régis Debray, the socialist writer, were among seven people expelled from Spain tonight for attempting to hold a press conference to protest at the death sentences passed on 11 terrorists. Journalists, including myself and other foreign correspondents covering the conference, were detained and handcuffed by the police.

M Montand had just begun to read a statement protesting at the sentences when five plainclothes policemen entered a lounge on the fifteenth floor of the Torre de Madrid hotel in the city centre. One told M Montand to stop reading and everyone else to stay seated.

M Montand demanded: "Are we prisoners?" "No, señor", replied one of the policemen. "You just have to wait here until I have received further orders."

More than 20 grey-uniformed police sealed off the entrance to the bar, stopping anyone from leaving. All those with French passports were separated from the rest of the people attending the conference. After about half an hour the seven were told that they would be escorted to the airport and put on an aircraft for Paris.

The statement which M Montand had wanted to read was signed by the former ministers, M André Malraux and M Pierre Mendès-France, and by M Jean-Paul Sartre the writer. It asked that "the fundamental rules of justice are respected by men in Spain as they are by those in other places."

About 25 correspondents, including myself, were escorted by police eight at a time to the ground floor where we were led through an avenue of security men and put in two grey buses with barred windows.

I and six others, including three girls without credentials, were taken to the security police headquarters in the Puerta del Sol by car.

At the headquarters our handcuffs were removed, our names and addresses were taken and our documentation checked. After about an hour, most of it spent waiting in a corridor, we were allowed to go.
Intelectuales franceses expulsados de ESPAÑA

SEGÚN LA POLICÍA
PRETENDÍAN LEER UN COMUNICADO INJURIOSO PARA LA JUSTICIA ESPAÑOLA

La nota oficial de la Dirección General de Seguridad dice así:

"En la tarde del día de ayer, por los servicios de la D.G.S., la Justicia Franco Madrid fue sorprendida una reunión no autorizada en el edificio Torre de Madrid, pl. 15, en el llamado Palacio de Madrid dedicado a cafetaría.

En la reunión participaban unas 25 personas, españolas y extranjeras. En el momento de la intervención policíaca había un hombre con el sombrero de "Ives Livi", que era conocido por su palabra pública de "Ives Muntan", quien se expresaba en términos injustos para la Justicia española.

Se comprueba que la reunión había sido promovida por un grupo de subditos franceses con la intención de difundir una declaración escrita por André Maubert, Pierre Mercier, Louis Aragon, Jean-Paul Sartre y François Jacob, en la que se ataca a las autoridades y al sistema político español, con pretextos de las sentencias dictadas recientemente por los Tribunales españoles. Se intervinieron unos 150 ejemplares de dicha declaración o manifiesto, unos en francés y otros en español, que los organizadores de la reunión habían traído para difundir.

Los nombres de los patrocinadores de este manifiesto figuran en documentos oficiales con la misma. A ellos se han unido, manuscritos, los nombres de algunas personas que han organizado la reunión y que se encontraban presentes en ella, las cuales fueron identificadas, resultando ser:

Ives Livi, conocido como "Ives Muntan": Regis Jules Débray, Claude Jean Marc Maurice, Paul Michel Foucault, André Jean Marie Lautrègue, Constantin Garzas, conocido como "Costa Garzas", y Jean Marie Gerard Lacouture.

Se procedió a la detención de estos subditos franceses y a su inmediata expulsión del territorio nacional, para lo cual fueron trasladados al aeropuerto de Barajas, desde donde salieron para París en un vuelo de la Air France.

Fueron identificados los demás asistentes, que quedaron en libertad en forma inmediata al justificar documentalmente ser periodistas o correspondientes extranjeros de manera acreditados en España.

Nueve de los asistentes fueron trasladados a la Dirección General de Seguridad por acusar de documentar en el momento de la intervención policial, pero posteriormente quedaron también en libertad al comprobarse su reacción con diversas medidas informativas españolas e extranjeras.

Solamente ha quedado retenida doña María Luisa Muñoz Obena, con amplios antecedentes y que alegó trabajar al servicio de la agencia Efe, sin ser periodista titulada, pendiente de investigación."
C. An interview in *The Times* (October 20, 1975) with opposition leaders is twisted in Pueblo to the regime’s advantage.
RUÍZ-GIMÉNEZ, AL "TIMES"

"EXISTE UNA OPOSICIÓN TOLERADA"

LONDRES, 22.—Tengo amigos en todas partes, pero nosotros no somos ni comunistas ni fascistas. Nadie me ha perseguido aquí ni he sido encarcelado por sus declaraciones que hiciera yo en días recientes a la B B C, aunque hubo quien me tachase de "traidor a la Patria", ha declarado el ex ministro Joaquín Ruíz-Giménez en una entrevista concedida al corresponsal del "Times" en Madrid, que ayer publicó el citado diario londinense. Señala asimismo Ruíz-Giménez, según informa Pyresa, que las fuerzas del centro y de centro-izquierda proyectan crear un bloque unido contra los comunistas, para evitar que se vuelva a producir la misma situación que en la segunda república cuando los comunistas, tras excluir a otros grupos de izquierda moderada, se alzaron con el Poder. El ex ministro español afirma también en otra parte de la entrevista que "en el Régimen español existe una oposición tolerada".

PUEBLO 22 de octubre de 1975
D. The cartoonist Sir Camara’s ironic view in *Nuevo Diario* (February 5, 1976) of the regime’s attitude towards the foreign press.

William Chislett

**Spain's Dubious Matador**

Already Spain's new Premier, Adolfo Suarez, is being spoken of as a younger version of Carlos Arias, the country's outgoing Prime Minister. More articulate and far more handsome than Arias, Suárez's dark matador looks are aptly suited to the bullfighting role he takes on in the country's hot political arena.

Suárez at 43 is Spain's youngest-ever Premier, relatively unknown and politically inexperienced. Arias's *faena* in post-Franco Spain for seven months was a disaster and his moment of truth came when King Juan Carlos summoned him to the royal Oriente palace to tell him that he now accepted his resignation, offered some time ago. The conflict between the King and Arias was an open secret. The King would have liked to appoint a more liberal man than Suárez, probably his Foreign Minister, Jose Maria Areiza; but the choice given him by the Council of the Realm, responsible for drawing up a list of three candidates, made this impossible. The council, bastion of Franquism, was prepared to see Arias go, but not what he stood for.

While villagers in Cebreros, Suárez's birthplace in the province of Avila, held a fiesta to mark the occasion of 'local boy makes good', the opposition, bewildered and confused, predictably condemned him as being incapable of dismantling the structure of the dictatorship. Socialists decided to give Suárez the benefit of the doubt and reserve judgment until his first government gets into action. The Spanish Communist Party condemned him outright. Marcelino Camacho, the leader of the workers' commissions, the underground trade union movement, put his finger on the main criticism when he said that the appointment of Suárez was probably an attempt to disguise the old regime under a younger face. Camacho made his remark after being fined £1,600 for addressing an unauthorised workers' meeting in a Madrid church.

The state-controlled television has already started to use the same technique on Suárez that it is using on the King, putting across their youthful family images. After all, the combined age of Suárez and the 38-year-old King is two years less than the age at which Franco died last November. Suárez is a dark horse. As minister of the fascist National Movement under Arias his credentials for calling himself a democrat —

which he did earlier this year — are hard to accept. The Spanish press made great play of his defence of recognising some political parties, when a Bill to legalise them was approved by the Cortes a month ago. But as the penal code still declares all parties illegal the reform is a sham. Suárez was portrayed as Daniel going into the Cortes lions' den — or 'bunker' as the entrenched Right is popularly called. Significantly, Suárez did not use the word political party in his speech, but stuck to the Franquista terminology of 'association'.

Suárez himself founded a political association in 1974, the Union of the Spanish People, allowed within the framework of the Movement. If he intends to base his government's programme on that association's programme then Camacho's remark is prophetic. The association believes in continuity, respect for the present constitution ('open to the necessary reforms') and the use of the armed forces to maintain law and order. No wonder he is regarded as a younger Arias. Suárez was only nine when the civil war ended, unlike Arias, who at 30 was busy earning himself a reputation as a military prosecutor at the time of the reprisals after the Nationalists' capture of Malaga — his nickname 'the butcher of Malaga' derives from this period. Even so, Suárez's ideology is rooted in the war and recently he beat Franco's playboy son-in-law, the Marquis of Villaverde, in the election for a vacancy in the ruling body of the Movement.
Suarez says he accepts the necessity of a left-wing opposition. The opposition is fed up with being told that it is needed while being clobbered for meeting, fined without trial, imprisoned and maltreated by the police. The same day that Suarez was chosen by the Council of the Realm as one of the three candidates, the police broke up an act of homage to a fascist turned social democrat. Opposition leaders gathered in Madrid's Eurobuilding with government permission to commemorate the first anniversary of the death of Dionisio Ridruejo, the Falangist poet who became a social democrat. Suddenly an official from the Interior Ministry arrived to say the meeting was now banned. Ridruejo's crime was to have deserted the Francoist cause and he was persecuted for his betrayal, dying penniless even though he wrote the Falangist hymn *Face to the Sun*. Not even his memory could be venerated and the meeting was given five minutes to disperse.

This is the climate in which Suarez takes over. More people have been charged with political offences in the first six months of this year than in the same period last year. People like Francisco Romero Marín, a member of the Communist Party's executive committee, have been in Madrid's Carabanchel prison awaiting trial since April 1974. Others like Luis Lucio Lobato have spent 24 years in prison for illegal association. And an amnesty is nowhere in sight. Suarez's nomination is a victory for the 'reformists' of the Right, rather than the hard-line 'bunker'. But the difference between Suarez's idea of reform and the opposition's is the difference between Francoism with a facelift and democracy as we know it.

*Madrid*
The matador who has outwitted all Spain’s political bulls

William Chislett assesses Sr. Adolfo Suarez’s first year as Prime Minister.

F. Rectification a year later in The Times, July 9, 1977
Londres: severa derrota de la extrema derecha

JUAN CRUZ, Londres

La prensa británica, que en general había apoyado el sí en el referéndum español, recogió ayer en caracteres destacados los resultados provisionales de aquella consulta pública. El Times y el Financial Times han coincidido en el mismo adjetivo —grande— para calificar el voto que los españoles le han dado a la propuesta de reforma democrática de su Gobierno. En el segundo de los periódicos citados se incluye un artículo de su corresponsal en Madrid, Roger Matthews, que define cuál ha de ser ahora la tarea de Adolfo Suárez. El presidente, dice, «debe conseguir a partir de este momento que los principales partidos entren en la corriente política del país». Sobre el futuro de los partidos políticos, el biógrafo de Franco, Brian Crozier, que es director del Instituto de Estudios del Conflicto, hizo ayer un análisis del pasado y del presente de España y terminó su artículo, publicado en el conservador Daily Telegraph, presentándolo al lector británico a las distintas tendencias organizadas de la política hispana. El tratamiento que la televisión independiente inglesa le dio al referéndum parece que ha molestado en algunos círculos españoles. La mayor parte de las imágenes fueron tomadas en un bar donde los parroquianos preferían seguir jugando a las cartas que escuchar la alocución que el mariscal dirigió por televisión el presidente Suárez. Sabemos que el agregado interino de prensa de la embajada de España en Londres ha enviado una carta a la emisora independiente británica protestando por lo que considera un tratamiento insensible y poco representativo de lo que ha ocurrido en España estos días. En círculos interesados en el desarrollo de los acontecimientos políticos españoles, consultados por nosotros en Londres, se ve el resultado del referéndum tanto como una victoria del Gobierno reformador de Adolfo Suárez como una severa derrota de la extrema derecha.
H. The same village features in *The Times* of May 4, 1977 about the campaign for Spain’s first free general election in 41 years.
State television is sole link with outside world in place where you must go 15 miles to buy a paper

Spanish village learns democracy

From William Chislett
Buendia, Spain, May 3

"No politicians have come here so far. We are hoping that when the election campaign starts on May 24 some will come and tell us what is going on," said Senor Manuel Ruiz, the secretary of Buendia, a small village 75 miles southeast of Madrid.

Buendia, with a population of 515, is surrounded by a mountain range on one side and by a huge lake on two others. An enormous eighteenth-century church, reflecting the past power and influence of the Roman Catholic Church, dominates the village. Houses with interlocking roofs are built down from it.

The unpaved, dusty streets have just been dug up to put in water pipes. Running water, however, will not be pumped through for some time, so the villagers still have to carry water back from their only well. There are few telephones and the nearest place where you can buy a newspaper is 15 miles away.

The village is typical of many in Spain. Villagers are not really aware yet that the country's first general election for 41 years is less than two months away. They know that something important is happening because the state-run television, the only link with the outside world, is already giving a lot of coverage to the pre-campaign skirmishing.

"If I do not know which party I am going to vote for," says Senor Ruiz, the village's wise man, "then you can imagine how confused everyone else is." We talked in his office in the town hall. Faded black and white photographs of General Franco and Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera, founder of the Falange and hero of the Franco regime, hung on the wall alongside a colour photograph of King Juan Carlos.

Villagers last voted in December for the Suarez Government's political reforms, which paved the way for the general election. A few stickers bearing "inform yourself well, and vote" were still pinned up in the town hall. It was a strange experience to watch the mainly agricultural population, a quarter of whom are illiterate, walk nervously into the old school and drop their votes in the glass-sided, 100-year-old urn. Senor Ruiz was the first to vote, then so he could show the three scrutineers how the system worked and he will be the first to vote in the June election.

To no one's surprise, the December poll in Buendia overwhelmingly in favour of the reforms, although few preferred to know what they were. Out of an electorate of 391, 329 voted; 291 for the reforms, 31 against, and seven cast blank votes.

When the last general election was held in February 1936, Buendia had a population of 2,000. Today's population is predominantly old, for most of the "silent generation" (post civil war) have left for Madrid or Barcelona. Records of these elections have either been lost or destroyed for Senor Ruiz could find nothing about them. He said he thought the result in Buendia was divided fairly equally between the left and the right.

Buendia was Republican until the very end, when Madrid fell to the Nationalists. About three-quarters of the population are old enough to have fought in or to remember the Civil War. Villagers are reluctant to speak about those years, although they do not mind telling a few stories.

Pepe, who keeps wine in the village casks and cultivates land, likes to tell how he was taken from the village to Cuenca, the capital of the province, and shot along with four other villagers by the "Reds" (Republican). He was a Falange and made his views known. His colleagues were killed but the five bullets aimed at him by the firing squad did not cause him serious injury and afterwards he managed to drag himself to a hospital where a German doctor looked after him. After the war, Pepe was the head of the Falange and mayor in Buendia.

Senor Leopoldo Palomino fought with the Republicans in Madrid and his brother, the baker, who was in another part of Spain when the war broke out, was on the Nationalists' side. Such family divisions were common.

Of the forthcoming election, Senor Palomino said: "The only thing the people here know about the Spanish Workers Socialist Party (for which he indicated he might vote) is that it was against Franco. They think the Christian Democrats are something to do with priests and they recognize the leaders of the Alianza Popular (the neo-Francoist coalition), because they were militarists."

In the Obispo bar, Senor Vicente Obispo, aged 23, who has studied in Buendia to help run the family business and sell land for "foreigners" to build houses, jokes about the election. "I'm going to vote for the partido vino tinto" (the red wine party). Villagers come in and out of the bar to drink the cheap wine, play billiards or stare at the television.

"We are afraid of the future," said Senor Ruiz, "because we don't know how to defend our ideas peacefully. In your country, if you belong to one political party and someone else to another one you are still friends. But here, if I belong to one and someone else to another, we are enemies. Democracy and freedom are fine things, but we have to learn their limits.

"We have a strange concept of freedom, as long as we can do what we like regardless of everyone else. Many people think that it means that you can park your car in someone else's front door. We have to learn how to respect the other person's opinion and to live with each other peacefully."
I. *Informaciones* on April 20, 1977 reports the confiscation of documents handed out by the Spanish Communist Party at its authorised press conference.

**WEST EUROPE**

The Períodis cartoon showing the reemergence of Señor Carrillo from his “sewer” into the political life of Spain.

Iberian peninsula bedevilled by anomalies of transition to democracy

**Franco era the target of lampoons in Spain**

From William Chaljub
Madrid, March 7

Records of General Franco’s last months are being sold here along with cassette of speeches by Communist leaders; in Portugal copies of Mein Kampf lie next to pornographic magazines. The anomalies of the transition in the Iberian peninsula from dictatorship to democracy are glaring.

After the Portuguese coup of April 25, 1974, the barriers were removed immediately and every kind of Left-Wing literature flourished, with posters and jingles praised revolutionary heroes.

In Spain the boom really started only last June, about the time of the first free general election in 42 years. Spain now has a flourishing magazine and newspaper industry. There are now 10 daily newspapers in Madrid, four of them started after General Franco’s death in November, 1975, and eight in Lisbon—there were 12 at the height of post-coup fervour but four have ceased publication.

“We had the same experience in Spain, but the Portuguese are now bored and everything has died down”, Sohime Alfredo Doque Costa, the former head of Ampp, the official Portuguese news agency, told me. In Spain the novelty has not yet worn off.

In Madrid you can buy General Franco’s recorded speeches, books about him, medallions and a set of colourful wall tiles bearing his last testament to his people: “Do not forget that the enemies of Spain and the Christian civilization are alert. Be on your guard and, against them lay down your lives...”.

In February the publishers Sudmeja started a weekly series called The History of Francia, which followed a series by one of Spain’s leading cartoonists, “Forces”, called The Last 40 years in which he depicted the Franco era hilariously. Both are selling well.

Under the dictator, cartoonists dared not lampoon politicians without running the risk of appearing before a court. Now even King Juan Carlos escapes the pens of cartoonists and satirical magazines like La Comedia make even Príncipe Físt look a little tame.

The most incisive cartoonist is Períodis of El País. His daily cartoons were recently assembled in a best-selling book with commentary by some of the people he deprecates, including Señor Saurás, the Prime Minister, who praises him to the skies. The book, for the interested, is the best record of the transition period and Períodis has the kind of following enjoyed by the Peróns in their day. Señor Saurás’s press seems to get longer every day and the columns upon which he sits higher or lower depending upon his standing with the opposition. Señor Santiago Carrillo, the Communist leader has emerged from his sewer and cast off his pointed ears, tail and pritchfork to pursue other politicians (the Franco regime sustained the myth of Communists as monsters). Politicians were swept figures in the dictatorship. Now they are vibrant and in the public eye. When Señor Carrillo was asked last June what would happen if the right-wing Popular Alliance won the elections, he replied; “I would have to return to the sewer of Períodis.” It is a surreal situation. Most of Franco’s press lines still exist but are rarely applied. The boom is not clear. The first issue of a blatantly republican fortnightly magazine, Acción Republicana, appeared in February without problems, while in the same week manifestos ordered the imprisonment, pending trial, of five journalists of Sabid, an extreme left magazine. A press has passed last April outlawed attacks on the monarchy. Political cabaret is becoming a hit, but it is eclipsed by rique shows in nightclubs where very little is left to the imagination.
K. Queen Sofia is censored, The Times, February 6, 1978

WEST EUROPE

Queen Sophia’s views on communism deleted

From Harry Debelius / Madrid, Feb 6

Spanish news media have almost completely suppressed politically explosive statements deriding communism made by Queen Sofia in Austria, it was learnt here today.

During the visit to Austria last week, Queen Sofia expressed disdain for communism in an interview written for the Vienna daily Die Presse, by Susanna Kubelka, and implied that communism and democracy were antagonistic.

It was the first public expression by any member of the Spanish royal family of such a clear opinion on any particular political opinion since the death of Franco. King Juan Carlos, by contrast, has avoided overt political statements.

Queen Sofia was quoted in Die Presse as saying: "Communism no longer has any real chance. It has gone out of style. There is not a single country which has been able to put into practice the theories which sound so wonderful."

"The differences between classes are more pronounced in communist countries than they are in democracies. What is the point then? Most people just want to work in dignity and accomplish something, and that is only possible in a democracy."

The editors of several Spanish newspapers deleted the monarch’s political remarks from reports filed from Vienna by their correspondents.

Other newspapers published condensed versions of her political opinions, tucked away in inside pages. Spanish radio and television news broadcasts completely ignored the comments.

A spokesman for the Zarzuela Palace denied that palace officials had pressed editors to play down the story. The director of one Madrid daily newspaper confirmed this. He told me that he had decided not to give prominence to the remarks because "Spain has no replacement for Juan Carlos."
Appendix III.


Harry Debelius, periodista

MIGUEL ÁNGEL AGUILAR

Harry August Debelius, corresponsal que fue del diario británico *The Times* en Madrid, ha muerto a la edad de 77 años el pasado domingo en la ciudad de Vigo, donde vivía retirado. Había nacido en Baltimore (Estados Unidos) el 3 de junio de 1929. Durante sus estudios de Literatura en la Universidad Johns Hopkins fue alumno de Pedro Salinas a quien atribuía haberle transmitido su enamoramiento por España. Publicó sus primeras colaboraciones en el diario *News Post*.


En los últimos y accidentados años del franquismo algunos corresponsales extranjeros cumplieron una función que les ha hecho acreedores del reconocimiento de cuantos estaban en el empeño de recuperar las libertades democráticas. Harry A. Debelius era uno de ellos junto a José Antonio Nováez de *Le Monde*, Walter Haubrich del *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* o Françoise Pellu de la agencia France Presse.

La Ley de Principios Fundamentales del Movimiento que el generalísimo había promulgado por su cuenta el 17 de mayo de 1958 empezaba diciendo “Yo, Francisco Franco Bahamonde, caudillo de España, consciente de mi responsabilidad ante Dios y ante la Historia...”. Pero esa Ley como algunos señalaron tenía una formulación inexacta. Franco se declaraba consciente de tener responsabilidades solo ante Dios y ante la Historia, lo cual excluía responder ante los españoles. Pero en la práctica había otra instancia, la prensa extranjera, capaz en ocasiones de pedir cuentas.

El régimen lo sabía bien desde los tiempos de la Guerra Civil y prodigaba a los colegos enviados por los medios de prensa, radio y televisión a Madrid como corresponsales un trato que alternaba la prodigalidad deferente y la brutalidad. Las expulsiones y campañas indignas contra los considerados réprobos o faltos de cale en elogio a lo que llamaban “la verdad de España”, trataban de disuadir a los más audaces.

Entonces para un corresponsal extranjero prestar oído y dar eco a las protestas a favor de las libertades democráticas significaba incurrir en las iras del Ministerio de Información con titulares tan temperamentales como Manuel Fraga o Alfredo Sánchez Bell. El caso de Philippe Nourry, de *Les Figaro*, devuelto en avión a París, la denegación de Nováez en las páginas del semanario *El Español* o las cartas de Ricardo de la Cierva a la redacción del *Frankfurter* contra Haubrich pueden servir de ejemplo.

El movimiento de protesta estudiantil, los sindicatos obreros clandestinos y las fuerzas políticas, que pasaban de vivir una cierta tolerancia al desprecio, según fueran las circunstancias, sabían bien que la carta decisiva para obtener algún respeto a la hora de ser detenidos era que sus actividades y sus nombres lograran un espacio en medios tan prestigiosos como era entonces *The Times*. Por eso cultivaban a Harry A. Debelius. Nuestro colega tuvo que batirse el cobre porque además le eligieron presidente de la Agrupación de Correspondentes de Prensa Extranjera y como tal comparecía ante las autoridades para dar la cara frente a los atropellos. Harry, los que estuvieron en sus manos te despiden agradecidos.
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