



*The Quest for Survival after Franco:
the Moderate Francoists' slow journey to the polls (1964-1977)*

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To my parents

Abstract

This thesis investigates the trajectory of the moderate members of Franco's regime (known as *aperturistas* and reformists) over more than one decade until the arrival of democracy in 1977. These moderates, who favoured, in differing degrees, the political reform of the regime, were part of a group of actors who paved the way for the transition to democracy. The period studied ranges from 1964, the year when the Law of Associations was introduced, to 1977, the year of the first democratic elections. The thesis attempts to explain how the acceptance of a democratic system by the moderate Francoists following the dictator's death was partly the result of their early advocacy of political reform. Their reasons for advocating political reform were rooted in (i) the economic and social development experienced in Spain from the beginning of the 1960s, and (ii) their wish to avoid the dramatic break with the dictatorship (*ruptura*) proposed by the democratic opposition in the 1970s. The *ruptura* option implied the destruction of all Francoist institutions, laws, and lifestyle, and, with them, the political elimination of the moderate Francoists themselves. Their political survival became at stake after the death of Franco in 1975. From 1975, therefore, many members of the regime supported the arrival of democracy (without the Communist's participation) merely as a strategy for their political survival. But, in the case of some moderates, their participation in the process of democratising Spain was a natural step after their long-standing advocacy of reform.

Important research has been done on the study of the moderate Francoists in the early 1970s, but the trajectory of their personal and political ideologies throughout the 1960s has thus far been largely neglected. During the transition process, the regime's reformists acted as a bridge between the hard-liners of the regime and a strong democratic opposition, helping King Juan Carlos, Adolfo Suárez and Torcuato Fernández-Miranda to implement the 1976 Reform Law that swept away the old structures of the regime. The thesis shows that the ultimate importance of the regime reformist in the transition to democracy, therefore, cannot be understood in isolation. It is beyond question, however, that the lack of a group of regime reformists would have yielded a different transition process.

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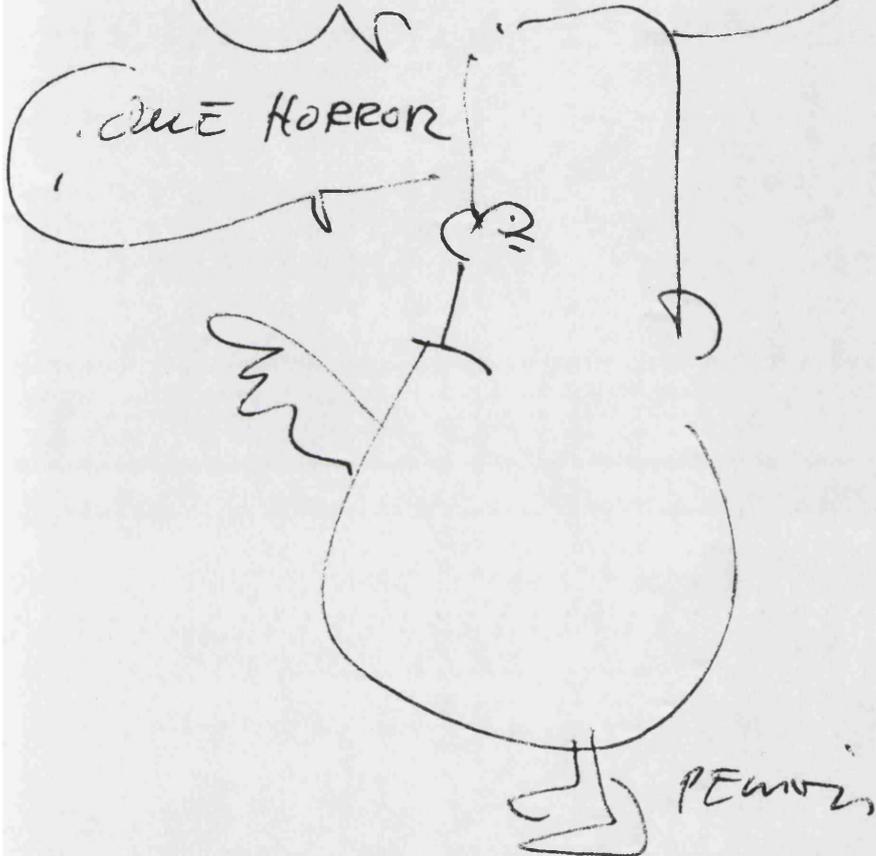
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Glossary of Acronyms

ACNP	<i>Asociación Católica Nacional de Propagandistas</i> (Catholic Association of Propagandists).
ADE	<i>Acción Democrática Española</i> (Spanish Democratic Action).
AECE	<i>Asociación Económica de Cooperación Europea</i> (Association for the Economic Co-operation with Europe).
AP	<i>Alianza Popular</i> (Popular Alliance).
APEPA	<i>Asociación para el Estudio de Problemas Actuales</i> (Association for the Study of Current Problems), later becoming
ANEPA	<i>Asociación Nacional para el Estudio de Problemas Actuales</i> (National Association for the Study of Current Problems).
AR	<i>Acción Regional</i> (Regional Action).
BOE	<i>Boletín Oficial del Estado</i> (Spanish Official Bulletin).
CEISA	<i>Centro de Enseñanza e Investigación, S.A.</i> (Centre for Teaching and Research, Ltd.)
CCOO	<i>Comisiones Obreras</i> (Workers' Commissions) – Communist linked trade union.
CEDA	<i>Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas</i> (The Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Rightist Groups).
CiU	<i>Convergencia i Unió</i> (Convergence and Union) Catalan Nationalist Party.
CSIC	<i>Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas</i> (Scientific Research Superior Council).
DS	<i>Democracia Social</i> (Social Democracy).
DSC	<i>Democracia Social Cristiana</i> (Social Christian Democracy).
EEC	European Economic Community.
ETA	<i>Euskadi ta Askatasuna</i> (Basque homeland and liberty).
FAMO	<i>Federación de Asociaciones del Movimiento</i> (Federation of Movement Associations).
FEDISA	<i>Federación de Estudios Independientes S.A.</i> (Federation of Independent Studies, Ltd.).
FNE	<i>Frente Nacional Español</i> (Spanish National Front).
FUDE	<i>Frente Universitario Democrático Español</i> (Spanish Democratic Front of the University).
GODSA	<i>Gabinete de Orientación y Documentación, S.A.</i> (Cabinet of Advice and Documentation, Ltd.)
HOAC	<i>Hermandad Obrera de Acción Católica</i> (Worker's Brotherhood of Catholic Action).
ID	<i>Izquierda Democrática</i> (Democratic Left).
JOC	<i>Juventud Obrera Católica</i> (Catholic Workers' Youth Movement).
LOE	<i>Ley Orgánica del Estado</i> (Organic Law of the State) Francoist Constitution.
MD	<i>Mundo Diario</i> (Daily World).
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.
OEEC	Organization for European Economic Co-operation.
PCE	<i>Partido Comunista de España</i> (Spanish Communist Party).
PDC	<i>Partido Demócrata de Catalunya</i> (Catalan Democratic Party).

PNV	<i>Partido Nacionalista Vasco</i> (Basque Nationalist Party).
PP	<i>Partido Popular</i> (People's Party).
PSOE	<i>Partido Socialista Obrero Español</i> (Spanish Socialist Party).
PSP	<i>Partido Socialista Popular</i> (Socialist Popular Party).
RD	<i>Reforma Democrática</i> (Democratic Reform).
RDC	<i>Reforma Democrática de Catalunya</i> (Catalan Democratic Reform).
SEU	<i>Sindicato Español Universitario</i> (Spanish University Syndicate), the official union.
UCD	<i>Unión de Centro Democrático</i> (Union of the Democratic Centre).
UDE	<i>Unión Democrática Española</i> (Spanish Democratic Union).
UDPE	<i>Unión del Pueblo Español</i> (Union of the Spanish People).
UGT	<i>Unión General de Trabajadores</i> (General Union of Workers) – Socialist linked trade union.
UMD	<i>Unión Demócrata Militar</i> (Military Democratic Union).
UN	United Nations.
UNE	<i>Unión Nacional Española</i> (Spanish National Union).
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
USO	<i>Unión Socialista Obrera</i> (Socialist Workers' Union).

TESIS, ANTITESIS
Y SINTESIS



A CRISTINA POLOWAKES. NIHIL OBSTAT.

Introduction

The transition to democracy in Spain has served as an example for other countries under non-democratic regimes, especially in Latin America and Eastern Europe, which regarded the 'reform from above' as the best method for striving towards a democracy.¹ In Spain, King Juan Carlos became Head of State after the death of Francisco Franco - the last of the European dictators of the inter-war period - in 1975 thus marking the beginning of a new era. The King's willingness to reform comprehensively the Francoist regime, and his disposition not to oppose the imminent arrival of democracy, were, undoubtedly, among the major factors that made possible the success of the transition to democracy. Other factors included the presence of a strong democratic opposition, which accelerated the process of change and helped to guarantee the implementation of a minimum programme of reforms. Likewise, regional and independent movements, the press, workers, students, the international community, and even some members of the Catholic Church influenced the population and kept the regime under constant pressure, to the extent of making impossible their plans to continue with the regime after Franco. Furthermore, the process was helped by the presence in the regime of some moderate members, known as *aperturistas* and reformists, who favoured, to different degrees, the political reform of the regime. In the moderates, especially in the reformist members of Adolfo Suárez's cabinet, the King found the right collaborators to implement his reform plans (the moderates were especially useful in the approval of the Reform Law drawn up by Torcuato Fernández-Miranda). It is among those reformists that the democratic opposition found regime interlocutors who were approachable and open to co-operation. Hence these reformists

became a bridge between the democratic opposition and the most conservative members of the regime. Finally, and above all, a significant role was played by the Spanish population whose unexpected political maturity after nearly forty years under a dictatorship was a key factor for the success of the transition process.

It is difficult to evaluate the importance of each one of those actors since their individual roles cannot be understood in isolation. Some scholars, however, have explained the success of the transition process as the result of the individual performance of some of these actors. For instance, Pilar and Alfonso Fernández-Miranda argue that it was King Juan Carlos who was ‘the “motor” of the change, the “entrepreneur” of the play, and the “pilot” who led the ship of the State with a firm hand during its journey towards the democratic shore’.² Simon Parlier, senior editor of Encyclopaedia Bordas (Paris), considers Adolfo Suárez to be ‘the key figure in the Spanish transition process, the lynchpin around whom the whole process was to unfold’.³ The French journalist Max Gallo believes that ‘it was not the [democratic] opposition [that was the force] which controls the Spanish people but renovated Francoism’.⁴ Likewise, the historian José Casanova stresses that ‘it is clear that the opposition had nothing to do with this project [the 1976 Law of Political Reform], nor was it an option available to them. [...] Once the Suárez government decided upon this option, all the initiative, which since Franco’s death seemed to belong to the opposition, now passed into the hands of the government [formed mainly by reformists]’.⁵ In my opinion, however, each one of the actors played a crucial role in the process but, in any

¹ Javier Tusell & Álvaro Soto, *Historia de la transición (1975-1986)* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1986), pp. 21-45, 104-108.

² Pilar & Alfonso Fernández-Miranda, *Lo que el Rey me ha pedido*. Torcuato Fernández-Miranda y la Reforma Política. (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1996), p. 13.

³ Simon Parlier, “Adolfo Suárez: Democratic Dark Horse”, in Martin Westlake (Ed.), *Leaders of Transitions*, (London: Macmillan, 2000), p. 137.

⁴ Quoted in, José María García Escudero, *Historia política de la Época de Franco*, (Madrid: Rialp, 1987), p. 124.

case, would have been insufficient alone. To that end, the presence and individual contribution of each one of the actors ultimately led to the consensus between the victors and the vanquished of the Spanish Civil War and hence to the peaceful arrival of democracy. As the historian Paul Preston explains, ‘a transition process based on a consensus between the progressive forces of the old regime and the traditional democratic opposition would be as near stable as could be reasonably hoped. In a sense, Spanish democracy’s survival of the daily bloodletting by ETA and the frequent efforts at a military coup has proved that to be the case’.⁶

In the year 2000, Spain celebrated the twenty-five years of King Juan Carlos’ reign and the arrival of democracy. Throughout these years, the interest of scholars on the Spanish transition to democracy has produced an important literature on the subject. Studies on the transition to democracy in Spain have, therefore, covered many aspects of the process: from general studies⁷, via the role of the main parties⁸ to biographies of individual protagonists⁹, as well studies of the process in a variety of disciplines¹⁰. Of

⁵ José Casanova, “Modernization and Democratization: Reflections on Spain’s Transition to Democracy”, in *Social Research*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (Winter 1983), p. 940.

⁶ Paul Preston, *Triumph of Democracy in Spain*, (London: Methuen, 1996), p. ix.

⁷ A few examples are (in chronological order of publication): José Amodia, *Franco’s political legacy. From dictatorship to façade democracy*, (London: Allen Lane, 1977); Raymond Carr & Juan Pablo Fusi, *Spain: Dictatorship to Democracy*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979); Samuel D. Eaton, *The forces of freedom in Spain, 1974-1979*, (California: Hoover Institution Press, 1981); Paul Preston, *Triumph of Democracy in Spain*, (London: Methuen, 1996 [first published in 1986]); José Carles Clement, *Historias de la transición, 1973-1981. El fin del apagón*, (Madrid: Fundamentos, 1994); Victoria Prego, *Así se hizo la transición*, (Círculo de Lectores, 1995); Santos Juliá *et al. Memoria de la transición*. (Madrid: Taurus, 1996); Charles Powell, *España en democracia, 1975-2000*, (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 2001).

⁸ Among others, Paul Preston, “The dilemma of credibility: The Spanish Communist Party, the Franco regime and after”, in *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 11, No. 1, winter 1976; Fernando Jauregui & Manuel Soriano, *La Otra Historia de UCD*, (Madrid, 1980); Eusebio Mujal-León, *Communism and Political Change*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983); Carlos Huneeus, *La Unión de Centro Democrático y la transición a la democracia en España*, (Madrid, CIS, 1985); Lourdes López Nieto, *Alianza Popular: estructura y evolución electoral de un partido conservador, 1976-1982*. (Madrid: CIS, 1988); Abdón Mateos, *El PSOE contra Franco. Continuidad y renovación en el socialismo español, 1953-1974*, (Madrid: Fundación Pablo Iglesias, 1993); Victor Pérez-Díaz, *La primacía de la sociedad civil. El proceso de formación de la España democrática* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1993); Pilar Ortuño Anaya, unpublished Phd Thesis, *The International Dimension of the Spanish Transition: European Socialists Parties and Trade Unions*, (University of Oxford, 1998).

⁹ Among others, Jose María Bernáldez, *El Patrón de la Derecha. Biografía de Fraga* (Plaza y Janés, 1985); Gregorio Morán, *Adolfo Suárez. Historia de una ambición* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1979); Charles T. Powell, *El piloto del Cambio. El Rey, la monarquía y la transición a la democracia*, (Barcelona: Planeta, 1991); Pilar & Alfonso

these works, historical studies on the transition generally begin in December 1973 with the death of Franco's right hand man, Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco. Carrero's assassination altered the trajectory of the regime and the positioning of many of its members. This is because Carrero was the principal guarantor of the continuation of the regime. His disappearance, therefore, exposed the Caudillo's advanced age and the inability of the regime to contain the socio-economic crisis. The event triggered the creation of political groups and alliances amongst regime members. It is then when the division of the regime between those who advocated the continuation of Francoism (*inmovilistas*) and those who advocated reform (*aperturistas/reformists*) became evident. But, this division had earlier roots. The purpose of this thesis is the study of the trajectory of the regime moderates over more than one decade until the arrival of democracy in 1977, a subject neglected until now. This study is essential to understand their contribution and positioning during the crucial time of the transition to democracy. As the historian Edward Malefakis argues, 'in Spain, [...] the events after November 20, 1975, would be completely incomprehensible if one did not understand what had transpired during the previous two decades. [...] Democracy in Spain was made possible only because it was preceded by a long period of what might loosely be called protodemocratization. This period is therefore as deserving of examination as the one following Franco's death.'¹¹ But, before explaining the contents and organization of this thesis, it is necessary to explain several fundamental issues such as the definition of

Fernández-Miranda, *Lo que el Rey me ha pedido*. Torcuato Fernández-Miranda y la Reforma Política. (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1996).

¹⁰ Among others, Jorge de Esteban, *De la Dictadura a la Democracia*. Diario de un periodo constituyente. (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, Facultad de Derecho, Sección de Publicaciones, 1979); Enrique Tierno Galván, *Leyes políticas españolas fundamentales, 1808-1978*, (Madrid: Tecnos, 1979); Antonio Hernández Gil, *El Cambio político español y la Constitución*, (Planeta: Barcelona, 1982); Alfred Stepan, "Paths toward Redemocratization: Theoretical and Comparative Considerations", in Guillermo O'Donnell *et al*, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, Part III, *Comparative perspectives*, (Baltimore, Maryland, 1986).

¹¹ Edward Malefakis, "Spain and Its Francoist Heritage", in J.H. Herz (Dtor.), *From dictatorship to democracy*. Copying with the legacies of authoritarianism and totalitarianism, (Westport-Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982), p. 216.

the terms *inmovilista*, *aperturista* and reformist, and the starting date of the division between *inmovilistas* and *aperturistas*.

The Francoist regime appeared to have been a monolithic system in which the *Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las JONS* (FET y de las JONS), also known as National Movement, prevailed as a unified party during the nearly forty years of dictatorship.¹² Nevertheless, despite the appearance of unity, the component elements of the coalition always competed for power and influence. Moreover, the members of the regime were divided in their attitudes towards the likely political complexion of a post-Francoist Spain. Although several *aperturistas* appeared as early as the mid-1950s, they mainly emerged during the economic boom of the 1960s as a result of the intransigent Francoists' reluctance to introduce reforms.

Franco's regime underwent important changes throughout its nearly forty-years of existence. The first cabinets tried to alleviate the critical economic situation, which had resulted from the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), by applying a drastic policy of autarkic measures. The international isolation of the Spanish economy and the sympathy of Franco's regime towards the Axis won the exclusion of the Spanish regime from major international institutions. But, in the mid-1940s, the collapse of the Axis obliged Franco to transform the image of his regime from the Fascist one that predominated during the Second World War to a more Christian one. By the early 1950s and the beginning of the Cold War, the image-change had paid off favourably for

¹² Franco, however, defined the *Movimiento Nacional* as 'the great anti-party'. See *Boletín Oficial del Consejo Nacional del Movimiento*, No. 53, Madrid, 4 de Diciembre de 1967, p. 917. On 31 March 1949 Franco said that 'those who maliciously consider us [to be] a party are mistaken, [since] we constitute an authentic *Movimiento Nacional*'. See *Franco ha dicho*. Primer apéndice. (1 enero 1947-1 abril 1949), (Madrid: Ediciones Voz, 1949), p. 33. The *Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las JONS* (FET y de las JONS), backbone of Franco's regime, became known as the Movement (or *Movimiento Nacional*) following the approval of the Organic Law in 1967. For a comprehensive study of the meaning of the Spanish party see, Juan José Linz, "From Falange to Movimiento-Organización: The Spanish Single Party and the Franco regime, 1936-1968", in Samuel P. Huntington and Clement

the Spanish regime, which suddenly appeared as a guarantor of Christian values. For the Western democracies, therefore, the threat of Communism taking over Spain was minimal under Franco. The gradual incorporation of the regime into the international community in the 1950s was followed by the controlled opening-up of the economy. The application of three economic Development Plans (1964-7, 1968-71, and 1972-5) by Opus Dei-linked cabinet technocrats resulted in the outstanding performance of the economy, especially during the 1960s. The economic recovery led to the emergence of a large middle class in Spain, and brought unprecedented prosperity to many Spaniards. Yet, the economic boom was not matched by a parallel programme of political reforms. The economic and social transformation brought to the surface the contradictions between Franco's institutions and the economic capitalist system that had developed in Spain.

The so-called 'real Spain' was enjoying better standards of living but was also starting to be conscious of the political limitations of the Franco regime. The access to foreign and, until then, forbidden political literature as well as a more critical tone adopted by the press from 1966 (following the approval of the Press Law), helped to raise the political awareness of the man-in-the-street. By contrast, the 'official Spain' (Franco's entourage and the most orthodox regime members) refused to accept the need for modernization for fear of provoking the debilitation of the system, and hence the loss of their own power. There were, however, some members of the regime who had become aware of the need for reform already in the 1950s. Sporadic cases of *aperturistas* among Francoist élite were followed by the emergence of an *aperturista* sector within the rank-and-file of the regime, mainly as a result of the economic and

social changes as well the regressive attitude of Franco's cronies. The political scientist Alfred Stepan explains the emergence of a moderate sector within an authoritarian regime in the following terms:

some major institutional power-holders within the ruling authoritarian coalition perceive that because of changing conditions their long-term interests are best pursued in a context in which authoritarian institutions give way to democratic institutions.¹³

In the 1960s, therefore, the regime became broadly divided into (i) *inmovilistas* or intransigent conservatives (also known as *continuistas*) and (ii) the more moderate elements of the regime known as *aperturistas*. The *inmovilistas* were intransigent conservatives who resisted change and wished to continue the Francoist regime after Franco's death. The *aperturistas*, by contrast, favoured a tightly controlled liberalization of the regime in order to meet popular demands for political modernization.

The composition of the *inmovilistas* and *aperturistas* changed according to the internal and external context over the years. In the internal context, the composition of these groups was conditioned by issues including: (i) the Caudillo's health (an accident suffered by Franco in 1961 had shaken the stability of the regime and put a question mark over its future, as had several hospital admissions in 1974); (ii) popular demands for change, especially led by workers, students, some members of the Catholic clergy, the press, and so forth, started timidly in the mid-1960s but became more open in the early 1970s; (iii) the growth of an active democratic opposition from the 1960s; (iv) and the emergence of the terrorist group *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA) at the end of the 1960s, which proved a destabilising factor for the regime with the assassination of

¹³ Alfred Stepan, "Paths toward Redemocratization: Theoretical and Comparative Considerations", in Guillermo O'Donnell *et al*, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, Part III, *Comparative perspectives*, (Baltimore, Maryland, 1986), p. 72.

Admiral Carrero Blanco, guarantor of the regime, in 1973. The composition of these groups also varied according to external factors including the attitude of the European Community towards the regime and the international economy.

In the 1960s and the early 1970s, the *inmovilistas* refused to accept the need for reform. But by 1976, one year after Franco's death, some of these *inmovilistas*, who were part of the Francoist Cortes, voted in favour of the reform law. It may be wrong to claim that these *inmovilistas* finally agreed with the *aperturistas*' thesis, but there was a realization that their plan to continue the regime without Franco was at best unlikely and at worst impossible. To that end, by 1975 it was clear, as José María Maravall and Julián Santamaría explain, that:

The political pillars of the regime were already crumbling. The church had withdrawn its valuable support. The old political factions within the regime were deeply fragmented because of their different views on a strategy for survival. Large sectors of the new industrial bourgeoisie saw the dictatorship as fully dispensable, considering it a political impediment to Spanish integration into the European Common Market. For their part, large sectors of the middle classes set their hopes on democracy. Most of the surveys conducted during this period demonstrated increasing support for democracy, particularly among the middle classes and educated people.¹⁴

The only way out of the general crisis was, therefore, to vote in favour of political reform. The Reform Law implied the elimination of the Francoist Cortes and the introduction of a democratic regime.

For their part, the *aperturistas* formed an heterogeneous group and therefore advocated different degrees of reforms that evolved with time. For instance, in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s some moderates favoured the introduction of timid changes in the political system. But, at the end of the 1960s, a new breed of young *aperturistas*, known as reformists, appeared on the political scene with more progressive

¹⁴ José María Maravall and Julián Santamaría, "Political Change in Spain and the Prospects for Democracy", in Guillermo O'Donnell *et al*, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, Prospects for Democracy, (Baltimore, Maryland, 1986), Part I, *Southern Europe*, p. 81.

plans. These young reformists supported the idea of a Western-European type – or at least a West German type - of democratic system (that is to say, a democratic system without the presence of the Communist Party). The reformists' refusal to accept the Communists was not uncommon. At the end of the 1960s, the Cold War still prevailed and many people in Spain (including members of the democratic opposition, e.g. the wing of the Socialist Party led by Rodolfo Llopis was hostile to the Communist Party) and abroad were sceptical about the Spanish Communist Party (PCE), which was perceived as an enemy by many Spaniards since the Spanish Civil War. In 1956, however, the PCE had accepted the idea of democracy and adopted a policy of national reconciliation.¹⁵ Since the change in Communist policy was not widely accepted a sincere, few reformists truly advocated full democracy (in other words, truly accepted the immediate legalization of the Communist Party and regarded it as essential for a proper democratic process) in the 1960s and early 1970s. Indeed, prior to the death of Franco, no reformist would have publicly advocated a democratic system embracing the Communist Party. Some of them publicly supported the legalization of the Spanish Communist Party before the democratic elections of June 1977 (e.g. members of the *Tácito* group declared their support for the legalization of the Communist party in April 1976). But, many reformists remained hesitant towards the Communists until their legalization in April 1977 and some even beyond.¹⁶

Some of these reformists were part of Catholic organizations from the end of the 1950s wherein, apart from other topics, they discussed the political problems of the country. However, they only became identified with the reformist sector at the end of

¹⁵ See Santiago Carrillo, "The Consensus-building Role of the Communist Party", in Monica Threlfall, *Consensus Politics in Spain*. Insider perspectives. (Bristol: Intellect, 2000), pp. 53-4.

¹⁶ The majority of Adolfo Suárez's government was formed by reformists and Santiago Carrillo, Secretary General of the Spanish Party (1963-1982), asserts that 'only four or five members of the [Suárez's] government personally backed the legalization of the Communist Party for the first elections. The rest were taken by surprise and either

the 1960s and early 1970s when some of them became part of the political scene. Some reformists became involved in different political groups while others got secondary positions in the government. Some historians have established a distinction between *aperturistas* and reformists. According to Charles Powell, the *aperturistas* were ‘more far-sighted and pragmatic elements of the Francoist élite [who] saw the *Ley Orgánica del Estado* as an excellent opportunity to carry out an *apertura* (opening) of the political system which would make existing institutions more representative and thereby encourage greater participation.’ The *aperturistas* emerged in the 1960s and, therefore, were pre-reformists. On the other hand, in Powell’s view, the young reformists came to prominence in the period between 1969 and 1974, and belonged to Prince Juan Carlos’s generation. That is to say that they were born shortly before, during or immediately after the Spanish Civil War (1936-9).¹⁷ Alvaro Soto and Abdón Mateos also regard the *aperturistas* as different from the reformists because the *aperturistas* advocated ‘limited democracy’ whereas the reformists favoured ‘democracy’.¹⁸ It would be more correct to say, however, that the *aperturistas* aimed at the controlled opening up of the regime whereas the reformists advocated a Western-type of democracy, or at least a West German type of democracy. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that, given their common loyalty to the Francoist Fundamental Laws¹⁹, what passed for a Constitution

resigned or accepted what was by then a done deal.’ See Carrillo, “The Consensus-building Role of the Communist Party”, in Threlfall, *Consensus Politics in Spain*, p. 57.

¹⁷ Charles Powell, *Reform versus 'Ruptura' in Spain's transition to democracy*. Unpublished D.Phil. Thesis. University College, Oxford, Hilary 1989, pp. 10, 16-20.

¹⁸ Alvaro Soto and Abdón Mateos, “El final del Franquismo, 1959-1975”, in *Historia-16*, No. 29 (Temas de Hoy, 1997), pp. 70-72.

¹⁹ As José Amodia explains, during Franco’s time the term Fundamental Laws was equivalent to the term Constitution. The Francoist ‘Constitution’ was, therefore, formed by the following Seven Fundamental Laws: in chronological order: 1. The Labour Charter of 9 March 1938; 2. The Law of the Cortes of 17 July 1942; 3. The Charter of the Spanish People of 17 July 1945; 4. The Law on the Referendum of 22 October 1945; 5. The Law of Succession of 7 July 1947; 6. The Law on the Principles of the Movement of 15 May 1958; 7. The Organic Law of the State (The proper Francoist Constitution) of 10 January 1967 modified Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 5. See José Amodia, *Franco's political legacy. From dictatorship to façade democracy*, (London: Allen Lane, 1977), pp. 36-7.

within the dictatorship, both *aperturistas* and reformists wanted to reform the political system only through procedures sanctioned within that system.

Given the very real difficulty of an accurate definition of the moderates, *aperturistas* and reformists, the clear-cut divisions cited above fail to categorize key politicians like Manuel Fraga Iribarne (and others like José María de Areilza and Pío Cabanillas). Indeed Manuel Fraga is a complex figure whose demands for reform evolved with time. Fraga was already one of the pioneering advocates of the reform of the regime from his position as Minister of Information and Tourism in the early 1960s, which may explain why Powell regards him as a 'precursor rather than a typical reformist'.²⁰ However, despite Fraga's advocacy of a tightly controlled liberalization of the regime (plausible in the period prior to Franco's death but insufficient after that), and his ambiguous character (a combination of authoritarian and reformist), one cannot neglect Fraga's leadership of the reformist cause from 1969 until 1975. Fraga was one of the first political figures of the regime to create a reformist group and a centrist political programme in the early 1970s, and many even regarded Fraga as the person who would bring democracy to Spain. In this study, therefore, I consider Manuel Fraga (as well as other key political figures) not only as part of the *aperturista* sector during the 1960s, but also as a very important figure of the reformist sector from 1969 until 1975.

In summary, this thesis differentiates the regime moderates as follows: (i) *aperturistas*: the majority of those politicians who favoured a tightly controlled liberalization of the regime and were involved in politics in the 1960s; and (ii) reformists: those *aperturistas* of a younger generation, who appeared on the political scene in the late 1960s and throughout the first half of the 1970s, and favoured a

Western-European type of democratic system (or at least a Western Germany type of democracy). Both groups of moderates, *aperturistas* and reformists, wanted to reform the political system without overthrowing Francoist 'legality'. In the early 1970s they all sought to come up with a political alternative to the 'democratic-break-formulae' proposed by the democratic opposition and, ultimately, to secure their own political survival.

The precise starting date of the division between *inmovilistas* and *aperturistas* is unclear. Rodolfo Martín Villa, Secretary General of the official University Student Union (SEU) in the early 1970s, recorded in his memoirs that the Francoist political class had clearly started to split around 1966-1967 over the Organic Law of the State²¹, which represented the culmination of Franco's Constitutional edifice.²² This is true so far as the splitting of the political class was more evident in the late 1960s than ever before. Nonetheless, as aforementioned, *aperturista* activities were happening during the 1950s. The first *aperturista* attempt at cabinet level was led by the Christian Democrat Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez in the mid-1950s. As Minister of Education, Ruiz-Giménez tried to reform the educational system, but Franco halted his plans. Despite this failure, the *aperturista* spirit did not fade away. Manuel Fraga records in his memoirs the differences between *inmovilistas* and *aperturistas* present within the Francoist cabinet meetings in 1962:

Two sides were soon formed during the Francoist cabinet meetings, one reformist and another one with opposing ideas. The first one included, above all, me [Fraga] and [Fernando María de] Castiella, frequently supported by [Jesús] Romeo Gorría, and occasionally by [Gregorio] López

²⁰ Powell, *Reform versus 'Ruptura'*, p. 19.

²¹ Rodolfo Martín Villa, *Al servicio del Estado*, (Barcelona: Planeta, 1984), p. 48.

²² With the LOE – or Francoist Constitution – the regime 'adopted a democratic appearance, obviously only superficial, but good enough to guarantee the survival of the regime.' See Jorge de Esteban & Luis López Guerra, *De la Dictadura a la Democracia*. Diario de un periodo constituyente (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, Facultad de Derecho, Sección de Publicaciones, 1979), p. 22. See also, Paul Preston, *Franco. A biography*, (London: Fontana Press, 1995), p. 729.

Bravo. [José] Solís also supported us on many occasions, but with personal nuances, and with the influence of the Movement and the Syndicalist Organization. [General Agustín] Muñoz Grandes and [Admiral] Nieto Antúnez regarded us with affection, even though they spoke with logic and prudence. [...] On the other hand, and with various nuances, were [Admiral Luis] Carrero Blanco, [General Camilo] Alonso Vega, [Jorge] Vigón, and with more moderation [General Pablo] Martín Alonso, [Laureano] López Rodó could not but support us sometimes, but in short, he played the game of Carrero and Vega, and provided them with arguments.[...] [professor Manuel] Lora Tamayo was closer to us [the reformists].²³

This thesis is not concerned with the role of the regime *inmovilistas*, but it is a study of the moderate elements of Franco's regime from the mid-1950s until 1977. This research relies primarily on memoirs of the main protagonists, journals and newspapers of the time, and documents from various departments of the Interior Ministry (National Registry of Associations; Registry of Commercial Companies; Registry of Political Parties). Oral sources have also played an important part on this research. Evidence from oral interviews with major participants has helped me to understand the political developments of those years. Their testimonies have been remarkably useful in forming an idea of the trajectory of the regime moderates in the pre-transition period. Secondary material has been essential to place the history of the regime moderates in a wider context. The use of these sources has provided the bases for the central hypothesis of this thesis. That hypothesis is that the role played by the regime moderates (especially the reformists) during the transition process - their disposition to apply the King's reform plan and their role as a bridge between the regime *inmovilistas* and the opposition - was largely the result of their early awareness and advocacy - either genuinely or as a strategy of political survival - of the need for political reform.

²³ Manuel Fraga Iribarne, *Memoria breve de una vida pública*, (Barcelona: Planeta, 1980), pp. 41-2. The Ministers cited above occupied the following ministries: Manuel Fraga (Information y Tourism); Fernando María de Castiella (Foreign Affairs); Jesús Romero Gorría (Labour); Gregorio López Bravo (Industry); José Solís (National Movement); General Agustín Muñoz (Vice-President); Admiral Nieto Antúnez (Navy); Admiral Luis Carrero (sub-Secretary of the Presidency); General Camilo Alonso Vega (Interior); Laureano López Rodó (Development Plan); Professor Manuel Lora Tamayo (Education). See Preston, *Franco*, pp. 704-5.

This thesis is structured chronologically in the following way: Chapter 1 is a review of the trajectory of Franco's regime and, therefore, the historical background that conditioned the division between *inmovilistas* and *aperturistas*/reformists. Chapter 2 (1964-67) begins with a brief review of Francoist legal system in relation to the right of association. This Chapter is a study of the alternative channels used by some members of Franco's regime to discuss the country's problems, including politics before the 1964 Law of Associations. The long-awaited 1964 Law (the first proper Law of Associations since the arrival of Francoism) gave the population the opportunity merely to create entities that had a cultural purpose - in the widest sense - not political ones. The practice of using alternative channels to discuss politics, which had been used before the 1964 Law, continued, therefore, after 1964. The *aperturistas*' eagerness to increase popular participation in national politics led them to regard the 'family' sector of the Francoist Cortes as their best bet because it was the only section that was elected, albeit on a highly restricted franchise. They aimed at promoting associations of heads of family, which would represent the population at the Cortes. Their battle to achieve a Law of Family Representation only succeeded in 1967.

Chapter 3 (1967-1969) reviews the outcome of the Organic Law of the State (the Francoist Constitution), the Law of the Family Representation and the Organic Law of the Movement. But, overall, this Chapter is a study of the first serious attempt by the regime to establish a network of political associations, albeit under the strict control of the Movement. It also deals with some events that occurred during the summer of 1969 (the appointment of Prince Juan Carlos as Franco's successor and the Matesa scandal which resulted in a cabinet crisis) and proved essential for the future trajectory of the regime. Chapters 4 and 5 study the positioning of the reformists from 1969-1973 in two parts. Part I, Chapter 4 concentrates on the emergence of Manuel Fraga, Minister of

Information and Tourism (1962-1969), as the leader of the reformist cause from 1969. This Chapter reviews his political career, and his political stance in favour of the political reform of the regime from the 1969 until his departure to London as ambassador in 1973. Part II, Chapter 5 studies the process whereby Prince Juan Carlos came to favour an evolution towards a European-style democracy. The Chapter also examines the fashion for political dinners wherein, in the absence of political associations, Spaniards, including regime members, met to discuss politics in the early 1970s.

Chapter 6 (1973-1975) examines the emergence from the regime of two major reformist political groups. One was the *Gabinete de Orientación y Documentación, S.A.* (GODSA), led by Manuel Fraga, and *Tácito*, led by a group of young reformists of Christian Democrat background. These two groups were to be the political core of the future two political parties formed by regime members. This Chapter also examines the disappointing 1974 Law of Associations presented by President Carlos Arias Navarro, and his attempt to organize a political association involving Manuel Fraga, José María de Areilza and Federico Silva, as representatives of several political tendencies within the regime. The failure of such an attempt led to the split in the *Tácito* group and the creation of an alternative political group – *Federación de Estudios Independientes* (FEDISA) - led by seventy-five Francoist personalities, including *Tácito* members, Fraga and Areilza. In the midst of a general crisis, Franco's death at the end of 1975 marked the beginning of a new era.

The final Chapter (1976-1977) studies Carlos Arias' second presidency and Manuel Fraga's performance as Interior Minister in the first government of the monarchy. Arias' failure to bring political reforms (especially those concerned with popular political representation) led to his dismissal in July 1976. The new President,

Adolfo Suárez, as a regime apparatchik was mistrusted at first, but he finally transformed the old regime into a democracy. Following his departure from the Interior Ministry, Manuel Fraga abandoned his long acclaimed centrist position to form the conservative *Alianza Popular* (AP), with old figures of the regime failing to attract the moderate electorate constituted by the majority of Spaniards. For his part, Suárez took over the leadership of Areilza's group, mainly formed by *Tácito* members, Christian Democrats, Liberals, and other centrists, to create a presidential party, the *Unión de Centro Democrático* (UCD). The Chapter also reviews Suárez's main achievements including the approval of the Reform Law in November 1976, the legalization of the PCE in April 1977, and the first democratic elections since the 1930s in June 1977. The role of the regime moderates in the transition process to democracy can only be understood by studying their trajectory during the two decades previous to the arrival of democracy in 1977. This thesis attempts to fill that gap in the literature.

Chapter - 1

Historical Background

General Francisco Franco emerged as leader of a coup d'état in 1936, which overthrew the democratically elected Republican government and pushed Spain into a bloody three-year-long Civil War. He led a coalition of Right-wing forces that ranged from traditional Monarchists, via conservative Catholics to the Fascist Falange. In April 1937 he forcibly united all these elements into a single party, *FET y de las JONS* or National Movement. In April 1939 the war ended with the victory of Franco's nationalist coalition. Franco became the Caudillo of a dictatorial regime, which lasted until his death in 1975. During nearly forty years of dictatorship, the Spanish economy and society underwent a series of irreversible transformations, which resulted from a combination of regime policies, external pressures and socio-economic development within Spain. This chapter is a brief study of the trajectory of Franco's regime and, therefore, the historical background that conditioned the division between *inmovilistas* and *aperturistas*/reformists.

1.1. 1939-1956: from economic autarky to economic recovery

From the mid-1940s until the beginning of the 1950s, Spain was immersed in a period of economic autarky. Although Spain did not participate in the Second World War, the Spanish people were still suffering the consequences of their own devastating Civil War, which had taken place between 1936 and 1939. In an attempt to restore industrial development, Franco's cabinet imposed a package of autarkic economic policies based on the model of Fascist states of the 1930s. For that purpose, drastic economic measures of self-sufficiency and domestic capital formation were applied with severe State intervention. These measures, however, proved to be inefficient and

resulted in economic stagnation. The overvalued peseta made exports unattractive, while imports were prohibited. Massive hunger was exacerbated by a reduction in real wages, and was only superficially mitigated by a large amount of foodstuffs imported from Argentina in 1946. The economic historian Joseph Harrison argues that although the majority of Spanish historians blame mainly external factors such as the post-civil war situation, severe drought and the resolution of the United Nations (UN) member States to suspend economic relations with Spain (due to Franco's refusal to introduce democratic reforms), much of the responsibility for economic stagnation lay at the hands of the Spanish policy makers.¹ In May 1947, a series of workers' strikes broke out in the industrial areas of the Basque Country, Catalonia, Madrid and Galicia, in response to their alarming living conditions. The regime, as Paul Preston writes, acted immediately and harshly and employers were ordered to sack the strikers 'without a second thought'.² The opponents to the regime tried to convince the international community that the strikes were proof of Franco's repressive regime. But, on the contrary, as Preston adds, the strikes convinced London and Washington of the need to reinforce Franco's position against a 'Communist-inspired mischief'.³ In any case, the right to strike was forbidden in Spain. During Franco's rule each worker was compulsorily registered with the official trade union of the sector they belonged to (each productive sector was regulated by a single union, the *Organización Sindical*, commonly known as *Sindicato Vertical* or Vertical Union). From 1940, the sindical organization reiterated that no other

¹ Joseph Harrison, "Towards the liberalization of the Spanish economy, 1951-1959", in Colin Holmes & Alan Booth (Eds.), *Economy and Society: European Industrialization and its social consequences*. Essays presented to Sidney Pollard, (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991), p.103.

² Preston, *Franco*, pp. 569-70.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 569-70

organization with similar aims was allowed under the Spanish union system. But, already a clandestine working class movement was emerging.⁴

Meanwhile, following the end of the Axis powers, Franco made a careful choice of Ministers for his new cabinet in July 1945. For instance, Franco appointed the Catholic Alberto Martín Artajo as Foreign Minister in order to present Spain internationally as a 'Catholic' rather than a 'pro-Fascist' country (ironically, Martín Artajo had himself fought with the Spanish Blue Division at the Russian front in the early 1940s). Yet, in 1946 Spain became internationally isolated. Franco closed the Spanish frontiers; the democracies withdrew their ambassadors from Madrid; and the UN excluded Spain from the organization.⁵ Thanks to Martín Artajo's intervention, however, Spain received a relief credit agreed under the Franco-Perón Protocol from 1947 until 1949.⁶ Besides the critical economic situation, other problems preoccupied Franco's cabinet in the mid-1940s. One of the problems was the presence of a Communist guerrilla force that operated in the Pyrenees, and although it did not represent a serious destabilising factor to the regime, according to the director of the official syndicalist newspaper *Pueblo*, Emilio Romero, it kept the regime busy. The other problem and perhaps one of more serious concern to Franco himself, was the warning launched by the supporters of Don Juan de Borbón, King Alfonso XIII's heir, demanding his proclamation as King of Spain thereby threatening the continuation of

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 701; Bardavío & Sinova, *Todo Franco*, pp. 484-5.

⁵ Raymond Carr, *Spain 1800-1975*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 714, 720-21.

⁶ Jose María de Areilza, in those days Ambassador to Buenos Aires, also played an important role in the negotiation of food relief for Spain. Areilza, a Monarchist who resigned from his ambassadorship to Paris in 1964, was to become an important figure during the period of the threshold to the transition. For further details on the Argentinian-Spanish deals see José María de Areilza, *Memorias exteriores*, (Barcelona: Planeta, 1984), pp. 30-2, 48-54.

the Caudillo as leader.⁷ Yet, from 1947 Franco started to 'act as sovereign in the newly proclaimed Spanish Kingdom'.⁸ On 6 July 1947, Franco had won the referendum on the *Ley de Sucesión*, or Law of Succession, by 93 per cent of the votes to his favour. Despite the questionable democratic validity of the vote, the new Law proclaimed Spain as a 'Kingdom' with Franco as perpetual regent. Furthermore, according to Article 6 of the Law, it was Franco who could appoint his successor, *a título de Rey o Regente*, at any moment. In that way, and ratified by the referendum, Franco secured a privileged position until the end of his life thereby leaving out any chance for Don Juan de Borbón to claim the Spanish throne. After the referendum Franco was 'in a state of total euphoria'.⁹

From the beginning of the 1950s, and following the period of international isolation, the fate of Franco's regime underwent an about turn. Fear of Communism had spread around the international community, and for once the totalitarian and clearly anti-democratic character of the Spanish regime was regarded, specially by the United States, as a guarantee for the repression of Communism in the Iberian Peninsula. Between 1951 and 1955 Spain became part of various organizations of the UN such as UNESCO in 1952. In 1953 Spain signed a Concordat with the Vatican and in 1955 Spain became full membership to the UN. But, the most important step was the so-called *Pacto de Madrid* with the United States also signed in 1953.¹⁰

The agreement with the United States gave Spain a push towards an unparalleled increase in production levels. The United States provided Spain with aid, mostly in the

⁷ Emilio Romero, *Tragicomedia de España*. Unas Memorias sin Contemplaciones, (Barcelona: Planeta, 1988, 8 Ed.), p. 70.

⁸ Preston, *Franco*, p. 573.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 572-3; Carr, *Spain*, pp. 720-1; Enrique Tierno Galván, *Leyes políticas españolas fundamentales (1808-1978)*, (Madrid: Tecnos, 1984), pp. 240-42.

form of agricultural surpluses, although some help also went to industry. For instance, the Spanish railways (RENFE) benefited from help consisting of locomotives, rails, and other material.¹¹ US assistance did not come without a catch, however. As mentioned above, while at the end of the Second World War the Spanish dictatorship appeared to be of a dubious Fascist character, by the mid-1950s, at the peak of the Cold War, Franco's Right-wing regime was suddenly regarded as a convenient ally. In turn, the agreement with the Americans boosted Spanish prestige, making Spain feel that it had become, 'to all intents and purposes a partner of the United States in the joint task of fighting Soviet imperialism'.¹² The United States gained the use of the strategically located Iberian Peninsula as a launch-pad for the reconquest of Europe in the event of a major Soviet invasion of Western Europe. The Spanish bases were quickly filled with American military personnel and atomic weapons facilities. Despite the still weak Spanish economy, it is clear that Spain benefited more from the deal than the United States.¹³

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Information and Tourism had been entrusted to the reactionary Gabriel Arias Salgado. From 1951 Arias Salgado had applied a heavy censorship which was widely criticised by the population including members of the Catholic Church. For instance, a series of articles published in the only uncensored Catholic magazine *Ecclesia* condemned the existing press laws and urged the Minister to relax censorship. That pressure had some positive effect.¹⁴ Franco appointed the

¹⁰ Amando de Miguel, *Sociología del Franquismo. Análisis ideológico de los Ministros del Régimen*, (Barcelona: Euros, 1975), p. 58.

¹¹ Harrison, "Towards the liberalization of the Spanish economy", p. 109.

¹² *The Annual Register of World Events. Review of the Year 1954*. Ed. By Ivison S. Macadam (Aberdeen, Longman, 1955), pp. 214-6. [Henceforth *A.R.*]

¹³ Ron Hadian, "United States foreign policy towards Spain, 1953-1975", in *Iberian Studies*, Vol. VII, No. I, spring 1978, p. 6; *The Listener*, 18 June 1959.

¹⁴ Cited in *A.R.*, 1955, p. 217.

liberal Christian Democrat Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez as Minister of Education in 1951. During his tenure as Minister, Ruiz-Giménez endeavoured to re-organize the Spanish educational system in the first *aperturista* initiative at ministerial level. But in the mid-1950s, a series of unexpected student demands halted Ruiz-Giménez's plans and led to a cabinet crisis. The student conflict began in January 1956 when Ruiz-Giménez received a letter signed by thousands of student members of the university club, *Tiempo Nuevo*, the opening of which had been authorized by the Ministry of Education a few months earlier. In that letter, which was signed by, among others, two men of strong Falangist background, Dionisio Ridruejo and Miguel Sánchez-Mazas Ferlosio, the students asked for permission to form a democratically-elected National Student Congress. After careful consideration, however, the Ministry sent the petition to Raimundo Fernández Cuesta, Minister-Secretary of the Movement. Fernández Cuesta, who was also in charge of the Official University Syndicate, or *Sindicato Español Universitario* (SEU), ignored the students' petition. The SEU then chose new candidates but, in turn, the students refused to accept them and chose their own. The elections for the student congress were suspended in Madrid, but students ignored the suspension and carried on with their vote. As expected, the students' candidates won the democratic election, which were once again annulled by the SEU. Students then occupied the university buildings, attacked SEU branches, and organized a massive demonstration in Madrid. Franco's police ended the mutiny with considerable violence. These students opposed the archaic political system, the absence of democratic elections, and the high level of censorship. Although they were not alone in expressing their grievances (Monarchists and Falangists had also criticized the government on several grounds), their opposition to the regime was far from organized and, therefore, did not represent a serious threat. Notwithstanding, the students' and workers' common political fight strengthened thanks

to the involvement of clandestine Leftist political parties in both students' and workers' affairs.¹⁵

These university events coincided with the anniversary celebration of the death of the Falangist Matías Montero causing the eternal battle between the Falange and the Catholics to resurface. In a street of Madrid, the Falangists met a student demonstration, and by the time the police arrived, the street had been transformed into a battlefield. As a consequence of this encounter, one young Falangist was seriously injured, and the authorities expected his comrades to take brutal revenge in the event of his death. In the meantime, the Minister of Information and Tourism, the reactionary Gabriel Arias Salgado, announced the regime's intention to apply, if necessary, harsh measures to halt a possible violent uprising. The Ministry of Information also condemned the Ministry of Education for its inability to stop the students from demonstrating, thereby revealing the latent differences among members of Franco's own cabinet. A large number of young demonstrators were arrested, including Javier Pradera, Miguel Sánchez Mazas, Dionisio Ridruejo, José María Ruiz Gallardón, Ramón Tamames, Gabriel Elorriaga, Julián Marcos, Enrique Múgica, Jesús López Pacheco, Juan Antonio Bardem, and Vicente Girbau (many of them would be protagonists of the period of transition to democracy after Franco's death). The detentions were followed by the dismissal of Ruiz-Giménez as Minister of Education, (and the resignation of most of his team), and of the chancellors of the Universities of Madrid and Salamanca, Pedro Laín Entralgo and Antonio Tovar, respectively, as well as that of the Minister-Secretary of the Movement, Fernández Cuesta and his Vice-Secretary, Tomás Romojaro. The

¹⁵ José María Maravall, *Dictadura y disenso político*, Obreros y estudiantes bajo el franquismo. (Madrid: Alaguara, 1978).p. 30; *The Listener*, 25 July 1957; *A.R.*, 1956, pp. 216-8

regime made its point.¹⁶ Gabriel Elorriaga, member of Ruiz-Giménez's team, explains that the resulting power vacuum left after the departure of the man responsible for a progressive Education department was filled with agitation and extremism. By not trusting its own Minister and his team, Elorriaga argues, the regime lost its opportunity to have a student body that was much more integrated in national politics.¹⁷ From then on, the Spanish universities remained an important focus of opposition to the regime.

The first *aperturista* attempt by a Francoist minister had failed. The dismissal of Ruiz-Giménez, a man who believed in the need for urgent reforms of the regime, made it clear that Franco was not prepared to accept such a challenge. Moreover, the events provoked by the students, and the arrests that followed them, made the population aware that the demonstrators were not part of a Communist, or even less a judeo-masonic conspiracy, as the regime had presented them. The demonstrators were simply young protesters standing up against the unjust repression by the dictatorship. According to the British historian Raymond Carr, this incident revealed not only 'the limits of tolerance and the inbuilt resistance of the regime to a process of *apertura* or opening up, and recurrent fissures in Francoism, [...] [but also that] the opposition would no longer be dismissed as an exile plot and it was no longer confined to the working class. University students came from respectable bourgeois families'.¹⁸

¹⁶ Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi, *Spain: Dictatorship to Democracy*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979), pp. 146-7. Years later Pedro Laín Entralgo wrote an article in the *Revista de Occidente* where he mentioned the incident denouncing the lack of academic freedom in the Spanish universities. Laín denounced the practice of '*depuración*' - specially from 1939 until 1942 - within the universities, and also the practice - until recently (paper written in 1966) - of demanding membership in the Movement as a condition to take part in the public examinations for a place in the university. See Pedro Laín Entralgo, "En torno a la libertad académica", in *Revista de Occidente*, No. 40, July 1966, pp. 71-80. In 1967, the other chancellor dismissed during the crisis of 1956, Antonio Tovar, wrote from the United States about his idea of a free university, which opposed the practice of the Spanish regime. See Antonio Tovar, "Un comentario personal sobre la universidad libre", in *Revista de Occidente*, No. 49, April 1967, pp.76-85. Manuel Fraga, member of Ruiz-Giménez's team also resigned with most of the Minister's team. See Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 26.

¹⁷ Quoted in Octavio Cabezas, *Manuel Fraga, semblanza de un hombre de Estado*. (Madrid: Sala Editorial, 1976), p. 72.

¹⁸ Carr, *Spain*, p. 722.

In February 1956, the appointment of the Falangist José Luis Arrese as Minister-Secretary of the Movement increased the number of new Falange members by several thousand. Arrese's team was determined to consolidate the internal structure of the Falange and to produce a new package of Fundamental Laws in order to restructure the State according to Falangist doctrine towards the end of 1956, and to strengthen the power of the Movement even further. Yet, more power to the Movement would diminish – even if slightly – Franco's powers. Franco, therefore, refused to accept Arrese's proposal. Arrese's proposal encountered great opposition also from representatives of the Catholic Church, the *Asociación Católica Nacional de Propagandistas*, the Monarchists, the Army, and the new public force, Opus Dei. The proposal failed, as did the opportunity for the Falange to impose its ideological predominance.¹⁹

The year 1956 also represented the emergence of Opus Dei as an important political force. As mentioned earlier, Laureano López Rodó, member of the strict Catholic organization Opus Dei and protégé of Franco's right-hand man, Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco, was appointed Technical Secretary General of the Presidency. His principal task was to put into practice the so-called Administrative Reform. With López Rodó's appointment, Opus Dei began its ascent of the ladder of political power and the process was initiated whereby Spain would eventually be integrated into the European economy. From the years of international isolation, Spain had moved forward and had finally been recognized as part of the Western world. Franco's aversion to Communism guaranteed the support of the international community, specially the United States.

¹⁹ Preston, *Franco*, pp. 651-3; Carr & Fusi, *Dictatorship to Democracy*, pp. 172-3; Bardavío y Sinova, *Todo Franco*, pp. 170-1, 543-544.

Economic autarky had created an impoverished and hungry population, but Spain seemed ready to open her markets (albeit under tight regulation) to the world.

1.2. 1957-1969: the period of economic and social transformation

The first cabinet of this period was the one appointed in 1957. In this cabinet Franco reduced the number of military men, although it was still high, and there was an important recruitment of technocrats linked to Opus Dei, university professors, and also those linked to the business world and to technical professions, such as engineers and architects.²⁰ The new cabinet announced reforms in the future administration of Spain as well as potentially significant proposals for Spanish industry. These proposals included 'the creation of an economic planning group to co-ordinate the nation's economy, a department of nuclear energy to study the peaceful uses of nuclear fission, and a special committee to study the modernization and the improvement of the State machinery'.²¹ The country's economy was entrusted to Mariano Navarro Rubio and Alberto Ullastres (both technocrats linked to Opus Dei), Ministers of Finance and Commerce, respectively, as well as to Pedro Gual Villalbi, a Catalan economist who was appointed Minister without Portfolio and President of the Council of National Economy.²² As a member of Opus Dei himself, Laureano López Rodó, who in December 1956 had been appointed Technical Secretary of the Presidency, supported the team of Opus Dei ministers.

²⁰ Salustiano Del Campo, José Félix Tezanos y Walter Santin, "La élite política española y la transición a la democracia" in *Sistema*, 48 (May, 1982), p. 28.

²¹ *The New York Times*, 26 February 1957.

²² For more details about Pedro Gual Villalbi, see Ignasi Segura, *Los catalanes de Franco* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1998), pp. 257-260.

So far as the economy was concerned, the arrival of the technocrats in 1956, as Preston explains, was followed by a period of 'disorientation', mainly due to the long preceding period of autarky, during which the previous problems of public debt, inflation and the balance of payments continued.²³ Thus, it was really in the early 1960s that the Spanish economy took off. The 1960s have been regarded as the most important of the Francoist era as they saw the end of the hegemony of the Falangist 'Blueshirts', of autarky, and of the prospect of a 'national revolution'.²⁴ The Falange had provided the theoretical framework, namely the so-called National Syndicalism, upon which the whole idea of Francoism was based. But during this period, its monopoly control over various sectors of society (including social services, local administration, the press) decreased substantially.²⁵ It is during this period that a number of people who were to play an important role during the pre-transition appear on the political scene. They included Laureano López Rodó, Federico Silva Muñoz, Fernando María de Castiella and Manuel Fraga Iribarne.

In their battle against the apologists for the autarkic measures, the technocrats introduced market reforms in order to restore the stability of the economy.²⁶ For that purpose, they undertook a novel operation of great importance to the Spanish economy: the approval by Decree (*Decreto Ley*) of the Stabilization Plan on 21 July 1959. The main architects were the Ministers Navarro Rubio, and, especially, Alberto Ullastres. However, it was mostly thanks to the perseverance of Navarro Rubio that Franco agreed, albeit reluctantly, to take a new economic line for Spain implying the complete

²³ Preston, *Franco*, p. 670.

²⁴ Miguel, *Sociología del Franquismo*, p. 63.

²⁵ *The Listener*, 12 May 1955.

²⁶ Harrison, *The Spanish Economy*, p. 11.

abandonment of the autarkic measures.²⁷ Following a period of severe austerity from 1959 to 1961, the Stabilization Plan helped to correct the deficit in the balance of payments by increasing direct taxation, especially from the working middle-class, encouraging tourism, exports, and the reception of foreign currency; and also helped 'the general conditions under which the economy was functioning'.²⁸

The new economic ideas implemented by the technocrats were brought to Spain through the collaboration of the Spanish authorities with American economists and technical staff from international organizations, such as the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) - of which Spain became a member in 1958. At that time, Spain also became a member of the IMF and the World Bank.²⁹ Furthermore, in 1959 the visit of the American President Dwight Eisenhower to Madrid was regarded as an important diplomatic step for the further integration of Spain into the international political arena. But perhaps the most delicate problem Spanish authorities had to face concerning foreign policy was the fate of their colonies in Africa. After a series of debates in the United Nations about the future of the Spanish colonies, Spain managed to keep control over Ifni and the Spanish Sahara (both in Morocco). This control, however, proved very costly, and was to result in a future dispute between Spain and its territories.³⁰

²⁷ Laureano López Rodó, *Memorias I*, (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, June 1990, 4th Ed.), pp. 182-4. For a detailed account of the contents of the Stabilization Plan, see "Memorandum que el gobierno español dirige al F.M.I y a la O.E.C.E.", transcribed in Angel Viñas *et al*, *Política Comercial Exterior en España (1931-1975)*, Tomo 3, (Madrid: Banco Exterior de España, 1979), pp. 1433-1442.

²⁸ OECD, *Economic Survey*, Spain, 1966, p. 6. See also Preston, *Franco*, p. 701; *A.R.*, 1958, pp. 284-7.

²⁹ Samuel D. Eaton, *The forces of freedom in Spain, 1974-1979*, (California: Hoover Institution Press, 1981), p. 5; Harrison, *The Spanish Economy*, p.12.

³⁰ *A.R.*, 1960, p. 288.

So far as the economy was concerned, the 1960s was the most prosperous decade of the entire Francoist period. The outstanding performance of the economy under the command of Opus Dei-linked technocrats led to the creation of a large middle class in Spain, and brought unprecedented prosperity to many Spaniards. During these years, Spain experienced a transformation from a quasi-rural society into a more industrialized one, which involved a staggering level of rural migration to the cities. Thus, from the beginning of the 1960s, employment opportunities in large cities, such as Madrid, Barcelona, Vizcaya and Valencia led to a total level of more than half-a-million migrants *per annum* to each those cities. Such a high level of migration not only changed social structures in rural areas, but also led to acute problems in urban areas, such as housing shortages.³¹ Furthermore, a prosperous European economy, especially in France, Switzerland and Germany, attracted a total of one and a half million to emigrate between 1960 and 1973.³² Emigration contributed to lowering the unemployment level that declined to below two per cent in the early 1970s. The workers' remittances to their families and the inflow of foreign exchange, largely from the expanding tourist industry as well as foreign investment in Spain, also contributed to the economic well-being of these years.

The economic boom of the 1960s raised income per capita from \$1,160 in the early 1960s to \$2,841 in 1975, reaching all levels of the society. For instance, as Eaton recalls, the percentage of families owning refrigerators and television sets rose from four percent in 1960 to nearly ninety per cent in the early 1970s. By 1970 nearly one third of

³¹ Roy P. Bradshaw, "Internal migration in Spain", in *Iberian Studies*, Vol.I, No. 2. autumn 1972, pp. 68-75. By 1965 the Spanish authorities had taken measures to moderate the unprecedented boom in the housing market. Thus, out of 467 requests for state-supported house-building submitted to the Ministry of Housing in 1964, more than 393 were approved, whereas of the 240 submissions in 1965 only 127 were approved. See also OECD, *Economic Survey*, Spain, July 1966, pp. 10-11.

³² Carr, *Spain*, p. 724. See also Gunther *et al*, *El Sistema de Partidos en España*, p. 32.

families had a car.³³ There was a substantial improvement in education levels and a social care programme, which included health care, unemployment benefits, disability compensation and retirement pensions.³⁴ By 1962, economic growth had not been felt yet in certain working-class sectors whose wages were still relatively low. In April and May 1962 several strikes broke out in the steel areas of Asturias and the Basque Country, and soon spread to Catalonia and Madrid. Both the Civil Guard and the armed police tried to halt the strikes, but the workers stopped when the employers agreed to increase their wages if only to avoid the loss of production time. This wave of strikes marked the beginning of a clandestine working class movement and, in turn, of the demise of the Falangist Vertical Syndicates.³⁵

The sudden Spanish openness to the world market had visibly positive repercussions. At the beginning of the 1960s, for instance, Spain was already ranked as the tenth most industrialized country in the world. Nevertheless, as Paul Preston argues, 'for a reactionary, agrarian regime like that of Franco, to make such a bid [for openness] was to sow the seeds of its own disintegration'.³⁶ Indeed, there was an important downside to the economic progress. Against the predictions of the technocratic ministers, who believed that the economic development would also bring social peace, the economic prosperity brought by the Stabilization Plan led to an increase in labour conflicts, in both the manual sector and the 'white collar' sectors (like banking). The rise in employment brought by industrialization was coupled with the growth of the clandestine sindical organization encouraged by Leftist parties.³⁷ But, as the sociologist José María Maravall has thoroughly studied, the workers' claims were not merely

³³ Eaton, *The forces of freedom*, p. 4.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁵ Preston, *Franco*, p. 701.

³⁶ Preston, *Triumph of Democracy*, p. 7.

³⁷ Carlos Huneus, *La Unión de Centro Democrático*, (Madrid: CIS, 1985), pp. 52-53.

economic but became increasingly political.³⁸ As will be explained later, the approval of the Press Law in 1966 doubtlessly contributed to the spread of political information amongst workers.

Indeed, as professor Francisco López-Casero explains, ‘these are the years of economic take-off, with great quantitative growth, but without real institutional or structural reforms’.³⁹ The contradictions between a capitalist system and the autocratic Francoist institutions, therefore, led to the emergence of a dichotomy between the so-called ‘real Spain’, which was enjoying better standards of living but starting to be conscious of the political limitations of the Spanish regime, and the ‘official Spain’, which refused to modernize the regime for fear of provoking its debilitation, and with it the power loss of a comfortably settled political class. Yet, already in the early 1960s, concern over the future of Spain after Franco had led members of the regime to consider the introduction of modernizing reforms, especially in the area of public representation. In those years, as is further explained in Chapter 2, the *aperturistas* tried to promote the family sector of the Cortes - which together with the municipality and sindical sector formed the ‘natural channels’ of the Spanish political system of representation - to increase popular participation in political affairs if only to avoid the emergence of a strong underground political force. Indeed, the early 1960s marked the emergence of a Leftist democratic opposition, principally the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) which became the main opposition party to the regime in the peninsula. Miguel Herrero de Miñón argues that the ‘official Spain’ wanted to monopolize the Right whereas the ‘real

³⁸ Maravall, *Dictadura y disentiimiento*, chaps. 2 & 3.

³⁹ Professor López-Casero explains that since the opening up of the Spanish economy in 1959, observers have distinguished three broad economic periods in Spain, that is 1960-1973, 1974-1984, and 1985 until today. Thus, the period referred to in the main text is the first one, 1960-1973. See, Francisco López-Casero, “The Social Consequences of Economic Development in Spain since 1960”, in *Iberian Studies*, Vol.19, Nos. 1 & 2, 1990, p. 59.

Spain', which advocated political institutions at the same level as its political and social development, was identified with the Left.⁴⁰

By early 1962 - the end of the first Development Plan - the pace of expansion was slowed down, mainly caused by the interruption of investment, which affected economic growth and substantially increased the number of unemployed.⁴¹ The workers soon felt the economic crisis. For instance, as already been noted, in May 1962, a miners strike in Asturias mobilised more than 100,000 men, and the shipyards and steelworks of the Biscay Province stopped production for nearly five weeks. Meanwhile, an important section of the Catholic clergy displayed a critical attitude towards the regime, especially with reference to the working classes. These Spanish priests blamed the Francoist government for failing to improve the economic and intellectual standards of an important part of Spanish society. Their attitude was clearly reflected in the Encyclical *Mater e Magistra*, published by the Vatican in 1961, and containing specific warnings to the Spanish regime.⁴² Yet, Franco did not listen to any criticism, not even that coming from his Holiness.

Franco's intransigence was again demonstrated during an incident in Munich in the summer of 1962. The Munich Affair - also referred to as the Conspiracy or *Contubernio*⁴³ - refers to a meeting held in Munich by the so-called "European Movement" between the 5 and the 7 of June 1962, which was attended by more than one hundred Spaniards. They came from both the Spanish peninsula and from exile and represented different political tendencies including Monarchists, Christian Democrats

⁴⁰ Miguel Herrero de Miñón, *Memorias de estío*, (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1993), p. 57. See also Maravall, *Dictadura y disentimiento*, p. 27.

⁴¹ OECD, *Economic Survey*, Spain, January 1969, pp. 50-51; OECD, *Economic Survey*, Spain, January 1970, p. 6.

⁴² *The Listener*, 28 June 1959; 8 August 1963.

⁴³ The word *Contubernio* means 'concubinage'. This strong expression referred to the shaking of hands of former political foes, that is members of both sides in the Spanish Civil War. See Juan José Linz, "Opposition in and under an authoritarian regime: the case of Spain", in Robert Dahl (Ed.), *Regimes and Oppositions*, (Yale: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 228.

and Social Democrats. The Communists and Anarchists were not invited to attend the meeting. The Spaniards who travelled from the peninsula included Joaquín Satrústegui, Jaime Miralles, Isidro Infantes, José María Gil Robles, Simón Tobalina, Fernando Álvarez de Miranda, Iñigo Cavero, Félix Pons, Jesús Barros de Lis, Dionisio Ridruejo and Ignacio Fernández de Castro. There were also Spaniards who joined the Munich meeting from exile in other countries. The conference was chaired by Salvador de Madariaga, a Spanish liberal not affiliated to any political formation, and also by José María Gil-Robles, leader of the *Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas* (CEDA).⁴⁴ The meeting concluded with the drafting of a document in which the participants advocated that a change of regime in Spain be made a condition for its entry into the European Community.⁴⁵

In Spain, Franco's cabinet reacted by suspending Article 14 of "The Charter of the Spaniards" (which established the right of free residence) for a period of two years. The participants in the meeting were consequently arrested and obliged to choose between confinement to the lesser of the Canary Islands, Hierro and Fuerteventura (an option chosen by Joaquín Satrústegui, Jaime Millares, Fernando Álvarez de Miranda, and Iñigo Cavero), or total exile (an option chosen by José María Gil Robles, Jesús Prados Arrarte, Ignacio Fernández de Castro, and Dionisio Ridruejo). The participants in the meeting were heavily attacked and insulted by the Francoist press, particularly the newspaper *Arriba*, and the official radio stations. Manuel Fraga, Minister of Information from July 1962, claimed speciously that 'we have sent them away in order

⁴⁴ Javier Tusell, *La oposición democrática al franquismo*, (Barcelona: Planeta, 1977), pp. 389-9. For a detailed account of the meeting and its further consequences see *Ibid.*, pp. 388-420. The Catholic authoritarian party, CEDA was formed in February 1933 under the leadership of Gil-Robles. The CEDA advocated the reform of the Republic from within and became the rightish opposition of Manuel Azaña's government. CEDA members collaborated with Franco's military uprising but soon after the coup, Franco distanced himself from Gil-Robles. The latter, however, remained loyal to Franco's regime for some time, but after the Civil War, he became a central figure of the monarchist opposition to Franco. See Preston, *Franco*, pp. 93, 95, 249-252. See also Angel Smith, *Historical Dictionary of Spain*. (London: Scarecrow Press, 1996), p.102-104.

to protect them from the just popular indignation'.⁴⁶ The reaction of the regime had a negative impact in both national and international moderate circles. Fraga records that José María de Castiella, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, confessed years later his intention to resign in the aftermath of the Munich Affair.⁴⁷ Franco, however, was aware of his overreaction and its possible consequences. As Preston writes, 'he might not have understood the finer points of economic theory, but his sensibility to threats to his survival was undiminished.'⁴⁸

A few weeks after the Munich Affair, Franco reshuffled his cabinet. The appointment of new young Ministers, namely Opus Dei technocrat Gregorio López Bravo, as Minister of Industry, and particularly Manuel Fraga Iribarne, as Minister of Information and Tourism, made observers believe that 'the era of liberalization had begun.'⁴⁹ (Manuel Fraga's ministry is further studied in Chapter 4). It seemed that the Caudillo was willing to introduce some degree of political reform to the regime, and to reduce the tension that had emerged between his oppressively authoritarian system and an increasingly modern and non-conformist Spanish society. But, while Franco devoted more time than ever to his hobbies of fishing, and hunting thereby neglecting Spanish politics, he and his regime were as tough as ever.⁵⁰ In Max Gallo's view, 'the significance of the reshuffle was plain: Franco had chosen the policy of development, to combine liberalization with repression'.⁵¹

The most important new feature of this new cabinet of 1962 was undoubtedly the creation of the portfolio of vice-president of the government, a position that had

⁴⁵ Linz, "Opposition in and under an authoritarian regime", p. 228.

⁴⁶ Fernando Álvarez de Miranda, *Del "contubernio" al consenso*, (Barcelona: Planeta, 1985), p. 36.

⁴⁷ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 48.

⁴⁸ Preston, *Franco*, p. 704.

⁴⁹ Max Gallo, *Spain under Franco. A History*. (London: George Allen, 1969), p. 301.

disappeared in 1938. Franco entrusted the new post to the Falangist Captain General Agustín Muñoz Grandes, ex-Chief of the Spanish Blue Division. It was believed that the purpose of the portfolio was the delegation of some of Franco's responsibilities to Muñoz Grandes. The General, who took direct charge of the co-ordination of the departments connected with national security, would be Franco's substitute 'in case of vacancy, absence or illness'.⁵² The reason behind Franco's unprecedented decision to delegate real power to someone else may be found a few months before the cabinet reshuffle of 1962. On 24 December 1961, the Caudillo suffered a serious shooting accident prompting him to temporarily delegate some of his powers to a man he could trust. Following the accident, controversial issues such as the Caudillo's succession, the general future of the regime and more specifically the completion of the Organic Law of the State (the Constitution) were suddenly at stake. Before being operated upon, the Caudillo told his friend General Alonso Vega, 'to take care of things' (*tened cuidado de lo que ocurra*). Franco's accident provoked clear anxiety among his unconditional supporters who reacted by gathering more tightly around him. In the wake of the accident, as Luis Ramírez points out, 'between 1962 and 1966, the defensive forces of the regime were maintained through a coalition of Falangists, Opus Dei and Christian Democrats. They spent four years building a legal apparatus which could work as a democracy (*que salvara la cara de la democracia formal*) with the view of preparing the mechanism for the succession in case Franco's condition proved mortal'.⁵³

The future of the Spanish regime was an issue that concerned not only the most fervent Francoists, but also the Spanish population as well as foreign observers.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Preston, *Franco*, pp. 706-7.

⁵¹ Gallo, *Spain under Franco*, p. 301.

⁵² *The New York Times*, 12 July 1962; *Le Monde*, 11 July 1962; Preston, *Franco*, p. 705.

⁵³ Luis Ramírez, "Morir en el búnker", in *Horizonte Español*, (I) 1972 (París: Ruedo Ibérico), p. 5.

⁵⁴ Laureano López Rodó, *Política y Desarrollo*, (Madrid: Aguilar, 1971), pp. 64-65.

Pressures to introduce democratic reforms came from both home and abroad. Western European countries, in particular, exercised strong pressure on Franco's regime to introduce democratic reforms if Spain wanted to become a member of the European Community, to which Madrid had applied earlier in 1962. Some members of the regime advocated that the entry of Spain into the European Community was a fundamental step in the development of the new political economy. While the debate over Spain's incorporation into the European Community raised hopes for reforms, it also exposed the disagreement between the Falangists and technocrats of the regime. Laureano López Rodó, and indeed all the technocrats linked to Opus Dei, believed that 'the Spanish economy must be linked to Europe. We are Europe and we must play our cards. And, since in the end, mutual convenience always prevails, the agreement will be signed'.⁵⁵ But, the majority of Falangists raised their voices against the idea of Europeanization. In an article published by the Falangist magazine *Es Así*, the 'Old Guard'⁵⁶ of the group attacked Franco's pro-European policy as a 'betrayal of the cause that made the Falangists fight a civil war'. The Falangists also took the opportunity to remind Franco of their objections to a Monarchical system, following the doctrine of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, founder of the Falange.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, expectations raised by the appointment of the new cabinet were soon overshadowed by a new demonstration of the repressive character of the regime. In 1963 while political detentions continued in Spain, the Spanish Communist leader, Juan Grimau, was sentenced and subsequently executed by firing squad for alleged war

⁵⁵ The Catholic magazine *El Ciervo* called for Spanish integration in Europe. See *El Ciervo*, No. 153. November 1966, p. 4. (The magazine quotes another call for the integration in Europe which came from the columns of the Falangist *Arriba* (10-10-66). López Rodó, *Política y Desarrollo*, p. 387.

⁵⁶ The 'Old Guard' or *Vieja Guardia* was the name given to hard-line radicals of the groups of veteran Falangist since 1949. See Preston, *Franco*, p. 609.

crimes committed nearly thirty years before (during the Spanish Civil War). His execution, on 20 April 1963, was universally condemned. The extremely large number of pleas made on Grimau's behalf by personages from around the world, including Pope John XXIII and Russian premier, Nikita Khrushchev, did not persuade Franco.⁵⁸ The regime appeared insensitive, and even though the final decision remained with Franco himself, some of his Ministers indirectly contributed to Grimau's assassination by not raising a finger to prevent it. Fraga, in particular, in his capacity as Minister of Information, authorised the distribution of leaflets in which Grimau's guilt was attested. Fraga's reactions led to serious doubts about his allegedly 'progressive' attitude within the regime, especially when he declared that Grimau was a repellent murderer. Paradoxically, when a few years later, in January 1969, Franco declared a 'state of exception' (*estado de excepción*) in the Basque Country in resort to violence, it was Fraga who pressed successfully for an early end on 25 March, claiming that it would damage the tourist trade.⁵⁹ The dichotomy in Fraga's character, that is a combination of the authoritarian and the reformist, has been apparent throughout his political career - as is further explained in Chapter 4. Also, in 1963, the government created the 'Commissariat for Development' which was entrusted to López Rodó. On 1 January 1964, and with no little opposition from the die-hard Falangists, the First Development Plan came into operation, just when the Stabilization Plan of 1959 had been completed. The liberal measures adopted by the First Development Plan yielded unparalleled results. Consumption, investment, exports and particularly tourism increased substantially.

⁵⁷ Quoted in *A.R.*, 1963, pp. 282-3.

⁵⁸ *A.R.*, 1963, pp. 282-3.

⁵⁹ Preston, *Franco*, pp. 708-9; Preston, *Triumph of Democracy*, pp. 10-11, 20.

On 7 July 1965 Franco undertook another cabinet reshuffle. The most important newcomers were the Christian Democrat Federico Silva Muñoz, later known as the ‘efficiency Minister’, a member of the Catholic organization *Asociación Católica Nacional de Propagandistas* (ACNP), who was put in charge of the Ministry of Public Work; Opus Dei members Juan José Espinosa San Martín, who replaced Navarro Rubio in Finance, and Faustino García-Moncó Fernández, who replaced Ullastres in Commerce. The main achievements of this cabinet were the promulgation of the *Ley Orgánica del Estado* in 22 November 1966 and the final approval of Manuel Fraga’s Press Law of 13 August 1965 (the Law did not come into effect until March 1966).⁶⁰ The Press Law represented the second important *aperturista* attempt at ministerial level (the first one was the failed attempt by Ruiz-Giménez to reform the educational system in the mid-1950s). The importance of the Press Law is further studied in Chapter 2.

In the meantime, in 1967 the Vice-President of the Government, General Muñoz Grandes, resigned from his post due to health reasons. His resignation was a blow to the Falangists who regarded the old General as a guarantor of a non-monarchist Francoism after the death of the Caudillo. But, the loss seemed irreparable to them when Franco appointed Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco as the new Vice-President since he was a supporter of a monarchy under Don Juan Carlos. Carrero’s appointment, therefore, exacerbated the rivalries between the Falangists and the technocrats of Opus Dei close to Admiral Carrero.⁶¹ Rivalries amongst members of the regime were made more visible by the approval of the Organic Law of the State, or Franco’s Constitution in 1967. The Law, which ‘aim[ed] to introduce the precise modifications in the already

⁶⁰ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 144.

⁶¹ Preston, *Franco*, pp. 721-2, 733-4.

promulgated Fundamental Laws in order to [...] perfect and accentuate the representative character of the political order'⁶², was regarded by some *aperturistas* as a legal tool to modernize the regime so far as popular representation was concerned. On the opposite bench, the *inmovilistas* refused to understand the law in such terms, and therefore, halted any attempt to reform the political system. The *aperturistas* were wrong, as the Caudillo had no intention of 'accentuating the representative character' of the regime. The Organic Law and the *aperturistas*' attempts to increase public participation in political affairs are further explained in Chapter 3.

In the social context, by the second half of the 1960s, the quite old-fashioned way of life of the Spaniards was being overturned by the spectacular influx of tourists. The tourists brought to the public awareness for the first time other ways of living further transforming a rapidly changing society. This new knowledge coupled with an unevenly distributed wealth, which raised discontent particularly among workers and students. This period in Spain, as indeed in other European countries, especially France, was marked by countless student revolts. The student population had grown from 64,000 in the academic year 1962-3 to 93,000 in 1966, which forced the creation of new classrooms and departments, principally at the University of Madrid.⁶³ In the winter of 1965, confrontations between students, professors and the police ended with the dismissal of several professors in Madrid. The *Revista de Occidente* published a survey in which six professors, Pedro Laín Entralgo, Antonio Tovar, Angel Latorre, Alejandro Nieto, Salustiano del Campo and Paulino Garagorri commented on the theme of the student revolts. They unanimously believed that the students' demands were due to the

⁶² B.O.E., *Ley Orgánica del Estado*, 10 January 1967 (Publication date: 11 January 1967).

⁶³ *Blanco y Negro*, No. 2844, 5 November 1966, pp. 36-9.

backwardness of the Spanish political system. The students demanded social reforms, but the regime refused to implement any.⁶⁴ The dismissal of the professors propelled further protests all around the peninsula and led the government into discussing the future of the SEU. In 1965, the regime decided to freeze the syndicate and substitute it with the *Delegación Nacional-Comisaría para el SEU*, an ambiguous organism led by Ignacio García López.⁶⁵ The years 1967 and 1968 were particularly eventful, and among other things included sit-ins, mass demonstrations and the closure of a faculty, which provoked the dismissal of the then Minister of Education, Manuel Lora Tamayo.⁶⁶

The frequent incidents at the Spanish universities, however, did not seem to sway Franco. The regime took only minor precautions, creating secret services at the university following the incidents with students in France in May 1968. Yet, the alleged 'suicide' of the student Enrique Ruano (Ruano fell from a window of a 7th floor flat while the police was searching it) provoked such violent uprisings in the universities of Madrid and Barcelona that the regime declared a 'state of exception' in both cities from 24 January to 24 March 1969.⁶⁷ As well as the student opposition to the regime, disagreements between Church and State worsened. More and more Catholic priests contested the regime especially over issues such as the power of Franco to appoint Bishops and the demands of the Basque citizens in their demands for autonomy, in which the Basque clergy was particularly involved. Demands for Basque independence

⁶⁴ *Revista de Occidente*, No. 68, November 1968, pp. 172-230. See also, Eustaquio Galán y Gutierrez, "¿Que Universidad? Reto al Problema Universitario" *Indice*, Encarte, No. 233-234, pp. i-vii.

⁶⁵ The new body lasted until 7 January 1970, when the regime decided to close the SEU definitely. See Bardavio & Sinova, *Todo Franco*, pp. 612-4.

⁶⁶ Professor Pedro Laín Entralgo openly condemned the unfair dismissal of university professors following the events occurred at the Madrid University in February 1965. See, Pedro Laín Entralgo, "La persona y el Estado", in *Revista de Occidente*, No. 54, September 1967, pp. 353-356. For more details about that one and other examples of student opposition to the regime in those years see, Enrique Tierno Galván, "Student Opposition in Spain", in *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 1, No. 4, July - September, 1966, pp. 467-486.

⁶⁷ Bardavio & Sinova, *Todo Franco*, pp. 545-9, 583-4.

went too far when on 2 August 1968, the terrorist group ETA - which campaigned violently for the independence of the Basque Country - assassinated a policeman in Irún. Once again, the regime responded to opposition by declaring a state of exception in the Basque country.⁶⁸ The terrorist activities of the Basque separatists of ETA coincided with the terrorist activities of the ultra-Right 'Warriors of Christ the King'. This group was formed by the followers of Blas Piñar's Neo-Nazi organization *Fuerza Nueva* in 1968, and its emergence, as Preston argues, was partly due to the increasingly Leftist direction the Church was taking.⁶⁹

Meanwhile, in the summer of 1969, Franco took his most important political decision to date. On 21 July he officially appointed his successor in the person of Prince Juan Carlos.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, Franco was still alive and, despite his ill-health, no change of regime would occur until his death. This he confirmed later on during his end-of-year speech in 1972. 'Here you will have me', Franco assured the Spanish population, 'with the same firmness as many years ago, for as long as God wants to let me go on serving the destinies of the *Patria* with efficacy.'⁷¹ Following Don Juan Carlos' appointment, the stability of the government was shaken by the publicity surrounding the so-called 'Matesa scandal'. The Prince's appointment and the Matesa scandal are further explained in Chapter 5.

⁶⁸ *A.R.*, 1968, p. 275; *A.R.*, 1969, pp. 271-274.

⁶⁹ Preston, *Franco*, p. 737. Further information on Ultra-Right groups can be found in *Horizonte Español*, (I), 1972, pp. 311-314.

⁷⁰ The technocrats in general, but Laureano López Rodó and Carrero Blanco, in particular, played an important role in the appointment of the Prince as successor to Franco. Laureano López Rodó, *Memorias II. Años decisivos* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, April 1992), pp. 379-493.

⁷¹ Quoted in Preston, *Franco*, p. 759. For more details about the speech see, Laureano López Rodó, *Memorias III. El principio del fin*. (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, May 1992), pp. 336-8.

1.3. 1969-1975: the last years of Francoism and the arrival of democracy

So far as the economy of the country was concerned, the Second Development Plan, implemented in 1968, began to bear fruit by 1969. The economy had overcome the slowdown in production of previous years, and was beginning to improve thanks to the export-led economic policies, which were complemented by a devaluation of the peseta. By 1971 the measures to reduce the remarkably high expansion in demand, introduced in 1969, helped to correct the balance of payments without disturbing production levels.⁷² Overall, one could say that the three economic Development Plans of the technocrats (1964-7, 1968-71, and 1972-5) contributed to an outstanding economic boom in Spain, although the performance of the last Plan was badly affected by the oil crisis of 1973. The main objectives of these plans were the economic development of Spain, the promotion of a market economy, greater integration into the international system, and improvements in social welfare.⁷³ In fact, during the early 1970s, Spain continued to make substantial progress, thanks to high levels of investment and exports, and by 1973 the levels of employment and production had risen substantially. For instance, unemployment in the construction sector decreased by 35 per cent from 1972 to 1973, and in the manufacturing sector by 27 per cent.⁷⁴ Furthermore, 1970 was a good year for Spain so far as international relations were concerned. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gregorio López Bravo, signed an extension of the agreement with the United States (first signed in 1953) for a further 6 years, agreement that was reinforced by the visit of President Nixon to Spain. Spanish relations with Western Europe, the Soviet Union, and the Arab countries, also improved

⁷² OECD, *Economic Survey*, Spain, January 1971, pp. 5-9.

⁷³ Harrison, *The Spanish Economy From the Civil War to the European Community*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), p. 15. For a detailed account of the main projections of both the First and Second Plan, and the target for the Third, see Table 11 in OECD, *Economic Survey*, Spain, January 1972, p. 39.

⁷⁴ OECD, *Economic Survey*, Spain, April 1974, p. 8.

so much that in the latter case the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser even used López Bravo's offices in negotiating the cease-fire in the Middle East.⁷⁵

Not everything was so positive, however. The government failed to implement the political reforms urgently needed to match the spectacular improvement in the economy throughout the 1960s, thereby creating a contradictory situation in Spain. The contradictions in the system were particularly felt by those Spaniards who had worked in democratic European countries. Many of these workers were active in trade unions and Socialist and Communist parties abroad, and continued their activities on their return to Spain.⁷⁶ It goes without saying that their awareness of democratic political systems had negative repercussions for the Francoist dictatorship. Moreover, the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s witnessed a considerable increase in the number of students' and workers' demonstrations as a result of repressive measures applied by the government. Such repression had the reverse effect of the one intended, and conflicts reached their peak in 1970. In fact, student protests in the Basque Country were so serious that the government declared a state of exception three times between 1968 and 1970.⁷⁷ The unparalleled number of 1,595 workers' conflicts was recorded mainly in the industrialised provinces of Asturias, Euskadi, and Barcelona in 1970. This number was only surpassed in 1974, when the number of protests reached the staggering figure of 2,290, and 3,156 in 1975.⁷⁸

The Church also continued to exercise considerable pressure on the regime. On 15 and 16 September 1971, 250 priests and bishops from all over the country urged the regime to allow, 'freedom of expression, association, assembly, participation in government and control of the common wealth by all citizens, respect for ethnic and

⁷⁵ *A.R.*, 1970, 176.

⁷⁶ Richard Gunther et al, *El sistema de partidos políticos en España*, (CIS, Madrid, Siglo XXI, 1986), p. 32.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33-4.

cultural minorities, equality in educational opportunity, true equality before the law [...], and an end to the use of physical and mental torture in police investigation'. Franco's response was to warn the Church not to interfere in State affairs, and no reforms were implemented. The Church ignored Franco's warnings.⁷⁹ The main spokesman of the Spanish Church, Cardinal Vicente Enrique i Tarancón, agreed to 'speak up for those without a voice to defend their legitimate aspirations', as it was clear that the Spanish citizens did not have the chance to do so themselves under the current legislation.⁸⁰ The incidents which more than ever united the forces of the opposition against the regime were the death sentences passed against three Basque terrorists in Burgos on 30 December 1970. This incident is explained in some detail in Chapter 4.

Despite this social crisis, some members of the government reiterated the existence of a democratic system in the country. During an interview with Malcom Muggeridge on BBC One in 1971, the then Minister of Industry and Opus Dei member, Gregorio López Bravo, stated, 'I understand that doubts still exist in Great Britain and some sectors insist on believing that a regime that is more authoritarian than democratic prevails in my country. This confusion is understandable in countries that have a parliamentary regime like the English one, unless Spain is studied with some care. What is certain is that our democracy exists, there is no doubt whatsoever of that, even though it is different from British democracy'.⁸¹ By contrast, other members of the regime believed in the need for the introduction of some political reforms. In 1970, a meeting of members of the supreme body of the Movement, the *Consejo Nacional* or National Council, took place under the presidency of the *aperturista* Fernando Herrero

⁷⁸ Maravall, *Dictadura y disentiimiento*, pp. 62, 81-2.

⁷⁹ *A.R.*, 1971, pp. 175-6.

⁸⁰ *A.R.*, 1972, p. 168.

⁸¹ London 1 February 1971, BBC One interview with Malcom Muggeridge. Quoted in Leslie Mackenzie, "The Political Ideas of Opus Dei in Spain", in *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 8, Number 1, winter 1973, p. 92.

Tejedor. Following the meeting, Herrero Tejedor demanded that the government, and more specifically the Minister-Secretary of the Movement, Torcuato Fernández-Miranda, speed up the process of legalising political associations.⁸²

The economic and social transformation of the country led to the increasing emergence of reformists within the regime who advocated political change, especially in the area of public representation. Between 1971 and 1973, two groups of regime reformists emerged. The first was a group of young men who had gathered around Manuel Fraga in the study group *Gabinete de Orientación y Documentación* (GODSA). The second group was formed by a young generation of intellectually capable Christian Democrats under the name of *Tácito*. These young reformists took issue with the backwardness of the regime - both groups are studied in more detail in Chapter 6. The emergence of these progressive sectors within the regime led the Ultra-Right leader, Blas Piñar, to stand as a defender of Francoism and its Fundamental Principles. Members of the Ultra-Right Warriors of Christ the King, linked to Piñar's *Fuerza Nueva*, conducted a series of terrorist attacks around the country. Audiences and speakers at meetings and conferences, bookshops where Marxist books were sold, and artists like Pablo Picasso all suffered the violence of Piñar's followers.⁸³

In the summer of 1973, for the first time in its history, Franco appointed a President of the Council of Ministers (hitherto the top figure below the Caudillo was the vice-president of the government, the position created in 1962 and occupied until 1967 by General Agustín Muñoz Grandes). The Caudillo, however, retained his position as Head of State, Supreme Commander of the armed forces, and Leader of the National

⁸² Powell, "Crisis del Franquismo", pp. 248-9.

⁸³ Ramírez, "Morir en el búnker", p. 12.

Movement.⁸⁴ After a loyal and impeccable career in service to the regime since its foundation, and serving as Vice-President since 1967, Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco, was named President. It followed the formation of a cabinet in June 1973. The novelty of Carrero's new cabinet was that after four years of there being considerable power in the hands of the Opus-linked technocrats, their power had now been greatly reduced. Laureano López Rodó was the only member of Opus Dei remaining. López Rodó was moved out of domestic politics to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where he could give a liberal veneer to a rather backward-looking cabinet. According to the sociologist Amando de Miguel, the technocrats contributed to laying the foundations of two irreversible processes: economic development, and, as already mentioned, the restoration of the monarchy in the person of Don Juan Carlos.⁸⁵ The three most important newcomers of this cabinet were Torcuato Fernández-Miranda (Vice-President and Minister-Secretary General of the Movement), Carlos Arias Navarro (Interior – known as *Gobernación* during Franco's time), and Antonio Barrera de Irimo (Finance). The most crucial task faced by the new Ministers was dealing with the rampant inflation affecting the underpaid working classes.

Meanwhile, during the first years of the 1970s, the terrorist activities of the Basque group ETA escalated. Both Franco and Carrero believed the government had failed to deal with the terrorist problem. As Preston points out, the situation got so bad that Carrero had secretly encouraged the activities of the Ultra-Rightist terrorist squads of *Fuerza Nueva*.⁸⁶ But on 20 December 1973, only six months after his appointment as President of the Government, the unexpected happened. ETA assassinated Carrero.

⁸⁴ *The Listener*, 14 June 1973.

⁸⁵ Miguel, *Sociología del Franquismo*, p. 83-90.

⁸⁶ Preston, *Franco*, p. 759.

With the disappearance of the most promising candidate for securing the continuation of Francoism after the death of its Caudillo, the regime suffered a major setback.

In January 1974, shortly after Carrero's death, a new short-lived cabinet was appointed. The new President Carlos Arias Navarro - previously Interior Minister, and, ironically, the person in charge of the security of the State when Carrero was killed - continued the policy of timid liberalization, but above all the maintenance of public order, even by repressive means. As is further explained in Chapter 6, Arias' new cabinet was appointed during one of the most difficult periods in the history of Francoism. The Ministers had to put up with repeated demands for progress coming from inside and out the country, the illness of the Caudillo, and with adverse economic conditions. But, now, however, there was not a single Minister of Opus Dei. Arias even managed without Gonzalo Fernández de la Mora, one of the most fervent defenders of Franco's regime. The regime had to endure a growing, although not yet united, democratic opposition. As Santiago Carrillo recalls, by 1973 the PCE was a strong organization that had its base in the clandestine union *Comisiones Obreras* (CCOO), and in student and intellectual organizations. The PCE was also present in companies, in the official union, at the university and in professional colleges. Other prominent groups of the democratic opposition were the Socialists led by Enrique Tierno Galván, and in Catalonia the group led by Joan Raventós.⁸⁷

Meanwhile, Arias Navarro announced the government's desire for modernization in his eagerly awaited speech of 12 February 1974. Allegedly Arias advocated the formation of political associations in order to encourage the *contraste de*

⁸⁷ Santiago Carrillo interviewed by Victoria Prego in Santos Juliá, *et al.* (Coord.) *Memoria de la transición*. (Madrid: Taurus, 1996), pp. 49-50.

pareceres or contrast of opinions. Yet it took the government an extra ten months to approve the controversial Statute of Political Association of December 1974, which only confirmed that the level of political freedom remained unchanged (the consequences of the failed Statute are further explained in Chapter 6). Beside the political problems, Arias had to face an economy which had not suffered from as high a level of unemployment and lack of economic activity since 1959.⁸⁸

During Arias' presidency, both the ultra-Right and the Basque separatist group ETA increased their terrorist activities considerably. The Church continued to be involved in promoting political freedom, social justice, and greater participation in national politics as well as advocating a revision in the regime for political prisoners. On 24 February 1974, the Vatican supported the homily read by the Bishop of Bilbao, Antonio Añoveros, in which he publicized the Church's grievances against Franco's government throughout the Basque Province. The Añoveros affair worsened the already tense relations between Church and State authorities.⁸⁹ Some members of a fundamental sector of the Franco regime, the *Comunión Tradicionalista*, also supported the Catholic Church's demands for change. According to Luis Ramírez, the *Tradicionalistas* made statements that condemned totalitarianism and supported the workers' demands and the nationalist claims of Catalonia and the Basque Country. Furthermore, dynamic sectors of the regional bourgeoisie of Catalonia, Basque Country and Valencia supported the integration of Spain into the European Community and the political opening up of the regime. In Catalonia influential sectors of the bourgeoisie were even willing to collaborate with the democratic opposition.⁹⁰ In 1974 social tension reached its highest point. But, the constant demands for reforms coming from

⁸⁸ OECD, *Economic Survey*, Spain, May 1976, pp. 5-6.

⁸⁹ Carr & Fusi, *Dictatorship to democracy*, p. 198; Preston, *Triumph of Democracy*, pp. 58-9.

⁹⁰ Ramírez, "Morir en el búnker", p. 13.

all parts of society contrasted with the passivity of Arias' government creating an uncomfortable feeling of impotence in the population. In July 1974 it was officially announced that the Caudillo was suffering from Parkinson's disease. Yet despite his enfeeblement, the Caudillo refused to transfer definitive powers to Prince Don Juan Carlos. The Prince substituted for Franco on two occasions for only a short while. Meanwhile both the democratic opposition as well as the reformists of the regime began feverish preparations for the post-Francoist Spain.

Following a lengthy illness, the Caudillo died in the early hours of 20 November 1975 leaving Prince Juan Carlos as heir of his regime. The Prince was proclaimed King Juan Carlos I by the Francoist Cortes two days later. It was hoped that the King would chose a reformist President for his new government, but Juan Carlos re-appointed Carlos Arias Navarro as President in December 1975. Don Juan Carlos could not afford to alienate Franco's hard-liners hence changes had to be introduced at a slow pace.⁹¹ The new cabinet, which had a combination of *immovilitas* and reformists, had the arduous task of solving the social and economic problems of the country. Given the social context, the reformist Ministers - namely Manuel Fraga (Interior Minister), José María de Areilza (Foreign Affairs Minister), Antonio Garrigues (Justice Minister) and Alfonso Osorio (Minister of the Presidency) - realized that there was no time to lose.

In those days, although the democratic opposition remained acutely divided, it was increasingly putting pressure on the regime.⁹² As is further explained in Chapter 7, in March 1976 various groups within the democratic opposition joined forces against the government and called for the rupture with the Francoist regime. But the reformists of the regime wanted to avoid the victory of the *ruptura* option at any cost. Thus, some

⁹¹ Preston, *Triumph of Democracy*, pp. 78-9.

⁹² Powell, *El piloto del cambio*, p. 152.



aperturistas/reformists, who had advocated different degrees of political reform since the mid-50s, favoured the quick implementation of a proper reform package if only to guarantee their political survival. Arias, however, refused to change the system. On 28 January 1976 Arias delivered a speech to the Cortes which confirmed that there would be no possibility of moving ahead under his presidency. Despite promises of modernization, Arias announced his intention to have a limited '*democracia a la española*' or Spanish democracy: a monarchic and representative democracy, socially in line with José Antonio Primo de Rivera's doctrine where there would be no place for terrorism, anarchism, separatism or Communism.⁹³ The regime was not willing to move ahead. Following the speech, Arias's unpopularity rose considerably.

A few months after Arias' appointment, therefore, it was clear that he would not lead the country to a democratic system. By June 1976 popular uprisings and an active democratic opposition created enough pressure to provoke a cabinet crisis. Given the circumstances, the King took the initiative and asked Arias for his resignation on 2 July 1976. Once again the monarch surprised everyone by appointing a near unknown Adolfo Suárez, Minister-Secretary of the Movement under Arias. Nevertheless, from the start, Suárez's new cabinet showed signs of a real willingness to change things. Among Suárez's main achievements was the approval of the Law of Political Reform by the Francoist Cortes in November 1976. With the approval of this law the members of the Francoist Cortes voted for their own dissolution. The law, which was ratified by the Spanish people in a referendum held on 15 December 1976, was followed by the holding of general elections scheduled for 15 June 1977.⁹⁴ (Suárez's appointment and presidency are studied in more detail in Chapter 7).

⁹³ *Cambio-16*, 2-8 February 1976, pp. 6-10; Carr & Fusi, *Spain: Dictatorship to Democracy*, p. 211.

⁹⁴ *El País*, 3 November 1976, p. 13; Abel Hernández (Ed.), *Fue posible la concordia. Adolfo Suárez*, (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1996), p. 60.

From the end of 1976, the race to the polls led to the emergence of a myriad of political parties representative of all political ideologies. The illegality of the Communists had been an issue of long-standing controversy. Thus, given the animosity with which most members of the regime regarded the Communist party, Suárez initially did not contemplate its legalization. But, by the Spring the presence of the PCE in Spanish politics proved unavoidable. To everyone's surprise, Suárez legalized the Communist Party on 9 April 1977.

Meanwhile, the members of the regime gathered around two main political parties. The first was the conservative *Alianza Popular* (AP) created by Manuel Fraga in October 1976. Since the cabinet crisis of July 1976, the ex- Interior Minister had shifted from a pro-reformist to a very conservative position. Fraga created the AP in coalition with six well-known figures of the regime, including some ex-Ministers, and wrapped the party message in a great deal of Francoist nostalgia. The presence of orthodox Francoists led many of Fraga's young followers to leave him, only a handful of them remaining. AP, therefore, attracted the most conservative of the moderates Francoists as well as many of the *inmovilistas* but failed in the first democratic elections. The second party was President Adolfo Suárez's *Unión de Centro Democrático* (UCD) which was created in March 1977. The UCD was formed by a large number of reformists who monopolized the political centre, including many of Fraga's young followers. The moderate programme of Suárez's party attracted the majority of the Spaniards who wanted a peaceful transition to a post-Francoist system, but demanded change. On 15 June 1977, the first democratic elections since the 1930s were held in Spain. Suárez's party won followed by the Socialists, Communists, and

Fraga's conservatives. The democratic elections marked the beginning of a completely new era for the Spanish population.

Conclusion

As seen in this Chapter, Franco imposed a dictatorial system in Spain that lasted nearly forty years until his death. The dictatorship underwent important changes throughout the years of its existence. These changes were predominantly socio-economic and were concentrated mainly in the 1960s. The outstanding performance of the economy under the command of Opus Dei-linked technocrats undoubtedly served as a catalyst for the creation of a large middle class in Spain, and brought unprecedented prosperity to many Spaniards. Yet, Spanish economists believe that the economic growth was not the result of the Development Plans but rather the result of tourism and return of emigrants, among other things.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the economic boom was not matched by an appropriate programme of political reforms. Lack of political reforms brought social unrest at the end of the 1960s, and particularly in the early 1970s. Spaniards took advantage of the relaxation of censorship introduced by the Press Law of 1966, and began to express political opinions, although still cautiously, through the press. The rise in student and worker conflicts was supported by a substantial part of the Spanish Catholic priesthood who, with the blessing of successive Popes, urged the Francoist regime to implement the necessary political changes to deal with the problems in Spanish society. Terrorism also increased during this time. But Franco remained reluctant to modernize his regime.

⁹⁵ Amando de Miguel (Dtor.), Fundación FOESSA, *Estudios sociológicos sobre la situación social de España*, (Madrid: Euramérica, 1970), unpublished Chapter 5 ("Vida política y asociativa") - censored by the Francoist authorities -, p. 96.

Lack of real popular participation in national politics led a number of Spaniards to organize clandestine political parties who stood in clear opposition to the regime. Some members of the Francoist élite also advocated popular participation in political affairs if only to avoid the emergence of a strong underground political force. As early as the 1960s, concern over Spain's future had led members of the regime to consider the introduction of reforms for modernization as the most appropriate method for a peaceful transition to a post-Francoist Spain. Painful memories of the Spanish Civil War taught Spaniards important lessons, and both the *aperturistas* and later reformists wished to avoid any friction between the regime and the democratic opposition. In the early 1970s Franco's age and ill health were a clear foreboding that the transition was imminent. Franco's death on 20 November 1975 was followed only a year later by the Francoist Cortes voting for its own dissolution. The year 1977 marked the beginning of a new political system in Spain.

Chapter - 2

Right of association: a theoretical right in Franco's dictatorship (1964-1967)

Spain began to develop rapidly from the beginning of the 1960s, the fruit of the economic recovery that resulted from the First Development Plan of 1959. This recovery had spectacular consequences for a Spanish population whose demands were increasing in an unprecedented way. Yet plans by the regime to introduce a series of economic (the various Stabilization Plans) and other reforms (the liberalization of the press by the Press Law of 1966) proved insufficient to satisfy the demands of a fast transforming society. Spaniards started publicly to display criticism of government policies through the press, from where they also demanded the right of citizens to participate in national politics. But Franco would not listen.

Francoist laws concerning public participation in national politics, or even political discussion, were very restrictive. On these grounds, Spanish people organized themselves in alternative ways outside the Movement. Thus, some people created political groups that were only mildly opposed to the regime, and were therefore, paradoxically, tolerated by the Francoist authorities. In relation to this issue, the political scientist Juan José Linz points out that 'in Spain, acts that at one point would have been severely, even cruelly, punished, today are openly tolerated, but might not be so tomorrow.' Thus, Linz argued, 'a regime with low ideological symbolic legitimacy, either internally or externally or both, but with considerable efficiency (a rising standard of living, economic development, etc.) and efficacy (a well-organized and loyal security

apparatus) may well prefer to allow a legal opposition rather than to persecute it as illegal.¹

The *aperturistas* wanted to apply a certain degree of reform, particularly with regard to increasing the permissible level of political participation, but via procedures sanctioned within the Francoist constitutional system. This was an arduous task given that political parties had been wiped from the Spanish political scene before the end of the Spanish Civil War, and the Francoist laws concerning political participation were, as aforementioned, very restrictive. As the Caudillo declared in 1937, 'the Red propaganda calls for democracy, freedom of the people, and human fraternity, accusing the National Spain of being an enemy of those principles. [But] that democracy [...] has failed everywhere. We have abolished implacably the old parliamentary system of multiple political parties with its well-known evils: inorganic suffrage and the struggle of conflicting factors (meaning ideologies).'² Thirty years later, in 1967, in the light of talks about popular participation in political affairs, the Caudillo reasserted that, 'if, as an excuse to the contrast of opinions, they are looking [to bring back] political parties, they should know that those will never come.'³

The history of legal political associations and parties in the Spanish system is, therefore, relatively new. The single party system established by Franco in 1937 lasted until his death, which gave Spaniards little chance to associate according to their political ideas. This chapter briefly revises the trajectories of cultural associations, political associations and parties during Franco's time. In this way, it might be easier to understand the limitations that both *aperturistas* and later reformists encountered given that they wanted to modernize the regime within the boundaries of its legal system.

¹ Linz, "Opposition in and under an authoritarian regime", pp. 211, 216.

² The *New York Times Magazine*, 26 December 1937.

2.1. Franco's legal system in relation to the right of association

During the Spanish Civil War, the Decree of 13 September 1936, approved by the insurgent side, outlawed political parties. This statement was reinforced by Point 6 of the 26 Points of the *Normas Programáticas* of the Francoist regime, which read as follows:

Our State will be a totalitarian instrument in the service of the integrity of the fatherland. All Spaniards will participate in it through its familial, municipal and unionist functions. No one will participate in it through political parties. All political parties will be implacably abolished with all the consequences thereof.⁴

As the sociologist Luis García San Miguel argues, the assurances of the Francoist authorities of public participation in national politics was just propaganda since such participation was clearly restricted to the regime's elite.⁵ The Principle of Representation was reiterated on various occasions throughout the dictatorship, however. For instance, the Decree of Unification of 19 April 1937 repudiated the system of 'party rivalries and political organizations' and, therefore, advocated the integration of the system of representation 'in a single political national entity [as] link between the State and the society'. On those grounds, in 1942 the Cortes were created as 'the higher organ of representation of State affairs in Spain'.⁶

In 1939 the regime had established that permission for meetings and mass gatherings - that is meetings of more than 20 people - had to be requested from the Interior Minister through the Civil Governor of each province. The purpose of the meeting, the speakers and the topics that were to be covered had to be notified to the authorities for their consideration. The date had to be planned well in advance and

³ Francisco Franco's speech in Seville on 27 April 1967. See *Representación, Participación y Concurrencia*, (Madrid: Ediciones del Movement, 1971), p. 14.

⁴ *Fundamentos del Nuevo Estado*, (Madrid: Ediciones de la Vicesecretaría de Educación Popular, 1943), p. 6.

⁵ Luis García San Miguel, "Estructura y cambio del Régimen Político Español", in *Sistema*, No. 1, January 1973, p. 88.

notified to the Civil Governor. Any gathering that took place without the proper authorization was considered illegal and consequently fined.⁷ The question of associations was also considered at the Law of the Security of the State of 1 March 1939. For instance, Article 28 of this law penalized those associations constituted with the objective of 'violent subversion or destruction of the political, social, economical or juridical organization of the State'. Articles 30 and 32, respectively, condemned those who organized a political group with the objective of 'destroying or relaxing the national consciousness', and also 'those [groups] constituted to attack in any way the unity of the Spanish nation or to spread separatist ideas'. Furthermore, Article 41 penalized those Spaniards who attempted the implementation of a regime in Spain based upon the division of the population by political or class groups'.⁸

Until 1964, the right to associate was ratified through (i) the Decree of 25 January 1941; (ii) the Charter of the Spanish People - or *Fuero de los Españoles* - of 17 July 1945; (iii) the Law of Referendum of 1945; and finally (iv) the Law of Associations of 24 December 1964.

Firstly, the Decree of 1941, which abolished the Law of Associations of 1887, regulated the exercise of the right of association on a temporary basis until the creation of a more definite regulation, which eventually came in 1964.⁹ Meanwhile the Interior Ministry officially controlled the creation of associations through the Civil Governors of each Province. The Governor had to have direct and accurate information about the

⁶ José María Martín Oviedo, "La representación política en el actual régimen español", in *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, No. 198, November-December 1974, p. 242.

⁷ *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, (Henceforth, BOE), *Orden circular dando normas sobre mítines, manifestaciones y actos públicos*. 20 July 1939 (Publication date, 21 July 1939).

⁸ Serrera Contreras, "Algunas dudas sobre la legislación de Asociaciones", in *Revista Crítica de Derecho Inmobiliario*, Año 1971, pp. 12-13.

⁹ Blanca Ollas de Lima Gete, *La Libertad de Asociación en España (1868-1974)*, (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Administrativos, 1977), pp. 207-8.

statutes of the associations as well as reliable knowledge about their promoters in order to authorize each one on an individual basis.¹⁰

Secondly, the Charter of the Spanish People of 1945 - one of the seven Fundamental Laws of the Francoist dictatorship¹¹ - guaranteed freedom of association as a right, but it also established the legal 'limits' of this right in Articles 16 and 33. Through Article 16 these 'limits' were determined by the content of the rest of the Fundamental Laws, that is to say the right of association was only recognized as a collective manifestation, and so long as it did not interfere with the functioning of the State. Moreover, as set out in Article 33, this right must not be allowed to threaten the social, political and spiritual unity of the State. In summary, unity and respect towards the Principles of the Movement were the main concerns of the Francoist regime.¹²

Thirdly, that same year the Law of Referendum, another cosmetic law, proclaimed the access of 'all Spaniards [to] collaborate in State affairs' and recognized that the rest of the laws should 'give new life and more spontaneity to the representations'.¹³

Fourthly, the long-awaited Law of Associations of 1964 – the first proper Law of Associations since the arrival of Francoism - replaced the Decree of 1941 but without introducing any major change. In fact, it was as restrictive as previous ones. In this law, as previously endorsed in Article 16 of the Charter of the Spanish People, the government confirmed that, 'the right of association is one of the natural rights of men'. But the limits established by the Law of 1964 implied that, if certain assumptions were given, the right of association would be invalid. Section 1 of Article 1 stated that the

¹⁰ BOE, *Decreto de regulación del derecho de asociación*. 25 January 1941 (publication date 6 February 1941). For references to this Decree see also, *Fundamentos del Nuevo Estado*, (Madrid: Ediciones de la Vicesecretaria de Educación Popular, 1943), pp. 400-2.

¹¹ The Seven Fundamental Laws of the Francoist regime were in chronological order: 1. The Labour Charter of 9 March 1938; 2. The Law of the Cortes of 17 July 1942; 3. The Charter of the Spanish People of 17 July 1945; 4. The Law on the Referendum of 22 October 1945; 5. The Law of Succession of 7 July 1947; 6. The Law on the Principles of the Movement of 15 May 1958; 7. The Organic Law of the State (The Constitution) of 10 January 1967 which modified Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 5. See Amodia, *Franco's political legacy*, pp. 36-7.

freedom of association would have to be exercised in compliance with the law for 'licit and determined' purposes; Section 2 of Article 1 stated that the real activities of the association should be set in its statutes; and finally, Section 3 of Article 1 clarified that 'illicit' purposes were understood to be those contrary to the Principles of the Movement and other Fundamental Laws, those sanctioned by the Penal Law, and those that could threaten moral, public order and the political and social unity of Spain'.¹⁴

As in the previous laws and decrees, the Law of 1964 excluded from its jurisdiction those associations that were part of the Registry of Commercial Societies; religious, workers (unions) and military organizations; student societies and any other type regulated by special laws. So far as student associations were concerned, they were banned two years after the creation of the official student union, SEU in the mid-1930s. The SEU became the only legal student association in which all university students were automatically registered when they entered university.¹⁵ Thus, it was not until the dissolution of the SEU in 1965 that student organizations were allowed again. In fact, following a series of student revolts at the major Spanish universities in 1965, a new regulatory law of student associations was passed on 27 July 1966. By this law, any student could be a candidate for office, the compulsory ballot was abolished, and the principle of majority was accepted. For the first time, these associations would be independent of the universities' academic authorities. According to the daily *ABC*, this law provided Spanish students with the most democratic and autonomous instrument of student representation in all Europe. For that reason, the regime believed it would be easier to distinguish between those students who made use of their right to demand

¹² Olías de Lima Gete, *La Libertad de Asociación*, pp. 235-6.

¹³ Martín Oviedo, "La representación política", p. 243.

¹⁴ BOE, *Ley de Asociaciones*. 24 December 1964 (publication date 26 & 28 December). See also, Olías de Lima Gete, *La libertad de Asociación*, pp.219-229.

change through the student bodies and those who organized subversive acts.¹⁶ Nonetheless, Laureano López Rodó, Commissar of the Development Plan from 1962, writes that the regulatory law was a 'hybrid, belated, and timid [measure] that did not solve the problems at the universities'.¹⁷

Like student associations, religious associations were not regulated by the Law of 1964. From the beginning of the dictatorship, freedom of association and assembly had been basically restricted to Christian circles (obviously on the understanding that the purpose of the meeting was religious). The 1964 Law did not change this practice. On the contrary, it emphasized that, the associations which have been constituted under canon law 'will be considered to be under the jurisdiction of this law [of Associations of 1964] when they exercise activities of different character [other than religious]'.¹⁸ Having said that, some of the most important Spanish political groups – formed by *aperturistas* and reformists - created between the 1950s and 1970s had their origins in large Catholic organizations such as the *Asociación Católica Nacional de Propagandistas* (ACNP) and *Acción Católica*. It cannot be said that these Catholic organizations were in opposition to the regime. On the contrary, they were collaborators [*colaboracionistas*] in the regime, but many of their members raised their voices in favour of a more pluralist society.

On the one hand, the ACNP, which was created by Father Ángel Ayala in 1908, 'was not, and had never been, [intended as] a political party, which explains why it never had a political manifesto'¹⁹, although it had 'an unavoidable political duty to

¹⁵ BOE, *Decreto del 21 de Noviembre de 1937*, (Publication date, 23 November 1937); BOE, *Ley del 23 de Septiembre de 1939*, (Publication date, 9 October 1939); BOE, *Orden del 11 de Noviembre de 1943* (Publication date, 15 November 1943).

¹⁶ *ABC*, 28 July 1966, p. 42.

¹⁷ López Rodó, *Memorias I*, pp. 520-1.

¹⁸ BOE, *Ley de Asociaciones*. 24 December 1964.

¹⁹ *Tiempo Nuevo*, No. 28, 8 June 1967; *Asociación Católica Nacional de Propagandistas*, (Henceforth, ACNP), Bulletin No. 849, July 1967, pp. 3-4.

fulfil'.²⁰ Indeed, the ACNP was a pool for Christian Democrat political groups including the *Asociación Española de Cooperación Europea* (AECE) that appeared in the mid-1950s, and later the *Tácito* group of thinkers in the early 1970s. On the other hand, the international *Acción Católica*, which arrived in Spain in 1903, became the most influential Catholic group in Spain in the 1940s.²¹ Years later, *Acción Católica* was the source from which evolved many specialized political groups, *Hermandad Obrera de Acción Católica* (HOAC) and the *Juventud Obrera Cristiana* (JOC), created in 1946 and 1947, respectively. The HOAC was a movement within the *Acción Católica* that specialized in worker's issues, and the JOC was dedicated to the education and evangelization of young workers. The critical attitude of HOAC and JOC towards the economic and social inequalities around them attracted young workers and radical Leftist groups alike. Members of HOAC and JOC were implicated in the general strikes which mobilized around three-hundred thousand workers as early as 12 March and 23 April 1951. Eventually, both sectors were detached from the orthodoxy of the Spanish Catholic clergy.²² As Paul Preston points out, Franco was infuriated by the supportive messages these organizations received from several countries, including France, Italy, Germany and Switzerland, and also the support of many Spanish priests – especially from the Basque Country – in favour of the workers. For Franco, therefore, the JOC and HOAC were 'not apostolic' organizations but rather they 'opened the way to Communism'.²³

The law of 1964 did nothing but exacerbate the discontent among some Catholics and Christian Democrats who, although linked to the regime in different degrees, had advocated popular participation in political matters, and perhaps had

²⁰ ACNP, Bulletin No. 783, July 1964, p. 1.

²¹ Stanley Payne, *Spanish Catholicism. A historical review*. (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), p. 194.

²² Carr, *Spain*, p. 702; Bardavío & Sinova, *Todo Franco*, pp. 16-18, 60-1, 342-3, 388-90.

expected too much from the new law. Indeed, the rights of association and participation in State politics were supported by John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, published in 1963. The Pope defended, among other things, the 'universal, inviolable and absolutely inalienable rights' of men including freedom of existence, right of freedom to choose the form of State, freedom of association and freedom to take part in the national politics of one's country.²⁴ John XXIII's document became known as the 'democratic encyclical'²⁵, and was to become a driving force for many Spanish Catholics.

A few months before the approval of the 1964 Law of Associations, the BOE (the Official Spanish Bulletin, *Boletín Oficial del Estado*), published an abstract of the law. The idea of the forthcoming law raised excitement amongst those interested in national politics. The liberal Catholic magazine *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, founded by the Christian Democrat Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez in 1963, dedicated the main editorial of its October issue to the proposed law. The editorial did not hide concern about the announced proposal, and called for a Law of Associations 'faithful to the basic demands of human nature'. 'It was not good enough', therefore, 'to declare that men have the right to associate freely for lawful purposes' (as cited in Article 16 of The Charter of the Spanish People), for it was also necessary to act by creating independent and autonomous entities which, within a flexible judicial framework, could act as mediators between the individuals and the State. 'It would be pharisaic', the article added, 'to proclaim the right of Association, and then exercise excessive control over them'. The editorial urged the cabinet to specify what they considered to be 'lawful purposes', and they advised the Ministers that so far as Christian morality, human values and the

²³ Preston, *Franco*, p. 702.

²⁴ ACNP, Bulletin No. 766, 1 January 1964, p. 8.

²⁵ ACNP, Bulletin No. 783, July 1964, p. 1.

constitutional basis of national coexistence were concerned, they were acting against fundamental human rights.²⁶

Although the Law of Associations of 1964 was the first proper Law of Associations since the arrival of Francoism, it gave the population the opportunity merely to create entities that had cultural purposes - in the widest sense – not political ones. These associations were entitled to organize lectures, cultural events, and meetings as well as publish bulletins and magazines, provided that events and literature were officially authorized and did not have different aims to those declared in their statutes.²⁷ On the basis of this, the theoretical recognition of the right of association did not, in practice, grant permission to associate and meet freely, let alone meet for political purposes. Fear of conspiracy against the regime was too great to allow the formation of democratic-style political groups. Notwithstanding, Franco could not stop the gradual emergence of those members of the regime who believed in the need for increasing popular involvement in national politics. By 1964, economic prosperity was already felt in Spain and with it the beginning of social changes. The disappointment of those concerned with politics led to the return to early practices of meeting in the borders of the Francoist legality.

2.2. Alternative ways of discussing politics

Before the approval of the 1964 Law of Associations, freedom to assemble was, as aforementioned, restricted mainly to Catholic organizations. Hence, the practical impossibility of forming not only political parties but political associations²⁸ as well, and the need for official permission for gatherings of twenty or more people (even if it

²⁶ *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 13, October 1964, p. 3.

²⁷ *Cambio-16*, 31 March - 6 April 1975, p. 36.

was for a family event) led to the use of alternative channels for the discussion of political issues. These channels included private gatherings, publications (newspapers and magazines), study groups or clubs (which normally were formed around a publication), trading or commercial societies and cultural associations. The arrival of the 1964 Law of Associations did not change this pattern since this law was as restrictive as the previous laws. For those who did not want to form proper political parties, thereby becoming part of the democratic opposition, the practice to meet through alternative channels to discuss politics continued, therefore, after 1964.

The objective of this section is to examine the variety of ways, other than political parties, wherein some regime members were involved before and after the 1964 Law. Some of those political groups that were formed by progressive Catholics, Monarchists and Christian Democrats developed into illegal political parties thereby becoming part of the democratic opposition. This section is not concerned with the trajectory of those political parties, as this thesis does not study the parties of the democratic opposition.

2.2.1. Private gatherings

There is obviously no record of all private gatherings - of friends or family - where their participants discussed politics. Nevertheless, some cases of private gatherings have been recorded even before the economic boom of the 1960s, and the 1964 Law. A number of people, mainly youths linked in various degrees to the regime, became aware of the political problems of the country in the mid-1950s, and even earlier. Their main concern was to discuss such problems and, to some extent, the

²⁸ The main difference between a party and an association is that, unlike associations, political parties participate in elections.

potential problems of a post-Franco Spain. Some of these people became *aperturistas* and some others – the most progressive – became part of the democratic opposition during the economic boom of the 1960s and as a result of the Francoists' reluctance to modernize the regime.

For instance, in 1949 some Monarchists and Christian Democrats got together as 'a political social group' in the so-called *Cafés de Rodríguez Soler*, or Rodríguez Soler's coffee sessions. These meetings took place at private addresses on Saturday afternoons and were organized by José Rodríguez Soler. Rodríguez Soler was a fervent Monarchist with a Christian Democratic background who worked as a lawyer in the Madrid guildhall. His political origins started in the youth sector of the *Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas* (CEDA), and he held important positions in Catholic associations such as the ACNP and *Acción Católica*. The idea of these *tertulias* (the name given to after lunch/coffee discussions) was not to create a political party or to resurrect the conservative CEDA, but rather to avoid a power vacuum in the post-francoist Spain. The ideology of the group was clearly conservative although there was a clear detachment from the regime.²⁹ 'The idea', Rodríguez Soler explained, 'was not to go against the regime but to act outside it.'³⁰ These *cafés* became quite important amongst progressive circles of the regime, especially during the first half of the 1950s. Some of the participants included Christian Democrats such as Fernando Álvarez de Miranda, Jesús Barros de Lis as well as future collaborators of the regime like Alfonso Osorio, who was also a Christian Democrat.³¹ As the historian Javier Tusell points out, the Francoist authorities consented to this type of 'opposition', although sometimes they

²⁹ Tusell, *La oposición democrática*, pp. 318, 322.

³⁰ Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 319.

³¹ Fernando Álvarez de Miranda recalls participating in political meetings - 'mainly of study and formation' - held by Germiniano Carrascal and José Rodríguez Soler in the 1940s. Álvarez de Miranda recalls these meetings were known as '*tertulias de los sábados*' or Saturday meetings. He took many friends of his generation to these *tertulias*. It is

advised the participants to limit their activities. From 1957 Rodríguez Soler's group entered a period of internal crisis which led to its re-organization and, subsequently, to the creation of the political party *Democracia Social Cristiana* (DSC).³²

Rodríguez Soler influenced the creation of other political groups. In October 1956, for instance, Jesús Barros de Lis, José Gallo and a group of university friends of Christian Democrat ideology formed the *Unión Demócrata Cristiana* (UDC). The UDC was not, in its beginnings, exactly a political party but a group of friends who had coincided in the *Cafés de Rodríguez Soler*. In 1957, however, they found a leader in the person of Manuel Giménez Fernández, ex-Minister of Agriculture of the CEDA and Professor of Canon Law at the University of Seville, and the UDC became a more serious political group.³³ Members of the UDC defined it as a 'centrist party [...] of radical inspiration and genuinely Christian'. With a view to a future Spain, members of the party proposed a federal Spain with a strong decentralised government for the transition from dictatorship to democracy.³⁴ Rodríguez Soler's initiative shows that interest in Spain's political future was already present at the highest level in the early 1950s.

Another example of private gatherings was the so-called *Cenas de los Nueve*, which have their origins in 1957.³⁵ The nine participants belonged to different political factions of the regime, but were united by a common concern about the future of the country. Alfonso Osorio, one of the participants, described the background of his friends as follows. (i) Federico Silva, a Christian Democrat whose aspiration in those

possible that he must be referring to the same meetings I mention above. See Fernando Álvarez de Miranda, *Del "contubernio"*, (Barcelona: Planeta, 1985), p. 12. Tusell, *La oposición democrática*, pp. 319, 322.

³² Tusell, *La oposición democrática*, p. 323.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

³⁴ Tusell & Calvo, *Giménez Fernández*, pp. 268-9. See also Álvarez de Miranda, *Del "contubernio"*, p. 62.

days was to become Minister of Franco's cabinet and who was closely linked to the Catholic organization ACNP. Like many Christian Democrats, Silva believed that the modernization of the country would only be achieved by collaborating with the regime.

(ii) Jesús Fueyo, professor of Constitutional Law and Director General in the Ministry of the Movement, favoured a totalitarian monarchy around Don Juan. (iii) Torcuato Luca de Tena was also a fervent defender of Don Juan and legislator at the Cortes with the regime. Years later, out of loyalty to Don Juan, Luca de Tena voted against the proclamation of Prince Juan Carlos as Franco's successor, and also against Suárez's political reform project. (iv) José María Ruiz Gallardón was a profoundly conservative democrat, although he always acted within the legal bounds set by the regime. (v) Fermín Zelada was a Christian Democrat who believed in the evolution of the regime from a conservative perspective. (vi) Florentino Pérez Embid was a well-known member of the Opus Dei and a clear defender of a monarchist system (in the person of Don Juan) but within the Francoist regime. He enjoyed good relations with Don Juan, and worked to improve relations between the Pretender and Franco in order to establish a monarchy during the regime. (vii) Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo was also a pro-monarchist (in the figure of Don Juan). (viii) Gonzalo Fernández de la Mora was one of the early ideologists of the regime, and indeed one of the most orthodox apologists of the regime. Gonzalo Fernández de la Mora was closely linked to the Private Council of Don Juan de Borbón at the end of the 1950s.³⁵ Finally, (ix) Alfonso Osorio defines himself as someone, 'of monarchical conviction, of Christian Democratic formation and of Liberal

³⁵ Alfonso Osorio, *Trayectoria de un Ministro de la Corona*, (Barcelona: Planeta, 1980), p. 16.

³⁶ Don Juan had established a Private Council as an advisory body in Estoril in 1947 although the origins of the council date from 1942. The decade of the 1950s was, however, characterized by the lack of a political leader and the failure to establish a dialogue with Franco and strengthen the hope of Don Juan becoming the future monarch. The council was twice re-organized in the 1960s. During the second restructuring, José María de Areilza was appointed Political Secretary, and it was then that Gonzalo Fernández de la Mora resigned from the council because of differences with Areilza. From then on, Fernández de la Mora became a strong supporter of Prince Juan Carlos. See Bardavío y Sinova, *Todo Franco*, pp. 154-7.

tendency'. Although he says never to have collaborated directly with the regime, he always believed it needed to evolve from within in order to become a democratic system.³⁷

The nine participants met for dinner at one of their homes at least once a month. Their main objective was to analyse the Spanish political situation and exchange information about it. During each dinner they discussed a specific topic which had been unanimously agreed. As Fermín Zelada recalled, some of the participants supported the current political situation while others adopted either intermediate or distant positions.³⁸ But their common ground (with the exception of Jesús Fueyo who favoured a totalitarian monarchy around Don Juan), Osorio emphasises, was the evolution of the regime towards a 'democratic system'.³⁹ Those are Alfonso Osorio's words today. It is hard to imagine, however, that such a conservative group of people advocated a 'democratic system' or even a German-style democratic system at the end of the 1950s. Yet, so far as this thesis is concerned, it is worth emphasising that (i) although the participants of the dinners did not advocate full democracy, at least they agreed on the need for modernization of the Spanish regime; and that (ii) the *Cenas de los Nueve* were an illustrative example of political discussions held by members of the regime in relation the future of the country as early as the mid-1950s. Furthermore, according to Osorio, it was during the *Cenas de los Nueve* that the participants learned to engage in dialogue and to respect different points of view. Their encounters became a kind of

³⁷ Testimony of Alfonso Osorio, 21 September 1999. Osorio's affirmation that he has never collaborated with the regime is misleading since he was Councillor of the Kingdom at the last part of the dictatorship. Equipo Mundo, *Los 90 ministros de Franco*, (Barcelona: Dopesa, 1971, 3 Ed.), p. 338.

³⁸ Marino Gómez-Santos, *Conversaciones con Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo*, (Barcelona: Planeta, 1982), pp. 102-104.

³⁹ Testimony of Alfonso Osorio, 21 September 1999.

institution and continued until 1965, when Federico Silva was appointed Minister of Public Works.⁴⁰

Other early examples of private dinners recorded by some of the participants were those organized also at the end of the 1950s, by a group of Christian Democrats and Monarchists. Some of the participants including Fernando Álvarez de Miranda, Iñigo Cavero, Pablo Castellanos and José Federico de Carvajal. Alfonso Osorio and Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo also attended some of these dinners. In those years, Joaquín Satrustegui, founder of the Monarchist *Unión Española*,⁴¹ also hosted some dinners that enjoyed the occasional presence of Alfonso Osorio. During my interview, Osorio made it clear that he only attended a few of Satrustegui's dinners. Their different political views may be the reason for Osorio's absences.⁴² Incidentally, some participants of these dinners such as Fernando Álvarez de Miranda, Iñigo Cavero, Jaime Miralles, Vicente Piniés, and Joaquín Satrustegui himself, shifted to a position clearly more identified with the democratic opposition to the regime.⁴³ Others like Alfonso Osorio and Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo were more identified with the reformists of the regime who emerged onto the political scene at the beginning of the 1970s.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ In December 1957, the young Monarchist and known industrialist Joaquín Satrustegui created, together with Jaime Miralles and Enrique Tierno Galván among others, a pro-Monarchist political party. *Unión Española* (UE) was presented to a selected audience at the Menfis Hotel in Madrid, on 29 January 1959. Eighty people attended the meeting most of whom were lawyers, doctors, university professors and industrialists. The manifesto of the new party recognized Don Juan as the rightful King of Spain, and advocated his immediate restoration to the throne, an announcement that took Franco by surprise. These Monarchists favoured a popular monarchy that would uphold their religious beliefs, permit freedom of association and speech, and establish a representative government for the preparation of laws and the administration of the country. The party dissolved in 1976, and its members joined other parties that defended their interests. For more details see, Guillermo Cortazar, "*Unión Española (1957-1975). Una plataforma de la oposición democrática frente al franquismo*", in Javier Tusell, Alicia Alted & Abdón Mateos (Eds.) *La oposición al régimen de Franco. Actas del congreso internacional que, organizado por el Departamento de Historia Contemporánea de la UNED, tuvo lugar en Madrid del 19 al 22 October de 1988. Tomo I, Vol. 1, pp. 396-397.*

⁴² Testimony of Alfonso Osorio, 21 September 1999.

⁴³ Tusell, *La oposición democrática*, p. 348.

2.2.2. Study groups and publications

Another way of discussing politics was in study groups and publications. There must certainly have been a number of study groups, organized merely as informal meetings, and hence there is no official documentation for them. Most study groups were created around publications and became very popular following the final approval of the Press Law in 1966. This formula, however, was also used before 1966 by groups attached to the regime. For instance, in the mid-1950s several study groups emerged from publications such as *Pax Romana*, *Arbor*, and *Estudios Políticos*. The common feature of these groups was their link with well-established institutions. Thus, the *Pax Romana*, presided over by Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez, was linked to the Institute of Hispanic Culture; the *Estudios Políticos* was mainly based at the Institute of Political Studies; and finally *Arbor*, the Opus Dei's magazine, used the *Ateneo* of Madrid as its base. These institutions served as a platform to disseminate the political ideas of the groups' members. These groups did not contest the regime's policies but rather discussed political issues within the framework of the Francoist system. Hence, the level of opposition to the Francoist regime of these study groups was at most very modest. At times, they even enjoyed the presence of members of the cabinet.⁴⁴

These early cases of study groups and publications exercised hardly any opposition to the regime. This pattern changed when Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez's created *Cuadernos para el Diálogo* in October 1963, two years before the approval of the Press Law. Although its first editorials were quite cautious, the magazine was soon recognized to be one of the leading platforms for the defence of democracy. Álvarez de

⁴⁴ Juan Ferrando Badía, *El régimen de Franco. Un enfoque político-jurídico* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1984). p. 90. See also, Carr, *Spain*, p. 764.

Miranda argues that Ruiz-Giménez's publication 'represented - although timidly at the outset - one of the first attempts of democratic opening up, [and] managed to gather a series of writers who were not affiliated to any party although their tendency was close to a progressive Christianity. The magazine cautiously proposed an openly democratic approach skirting the borderline (*manteniéndose en el filo de la navaja*). To demand more would have meant its immediate closure.'⁴⁵ Also, for García San Miguel, Ruiz-Giménez was a notorious example of a reformist who wanted to take advantage of the mechanism of the system to produce the change.⁴⁶ In sum, *Cuadernos* was, in the journalist Tom Burns Marañón's view, 'a microcosm of the opposition to the regimen where there were those who were to have a political career in the Right, and future leaders of the Left'. Moreover, collaboration in *Cuadernos* was compared with 'a campaign medal for Right-wing politicians during the transition'.⁴⁷

More progressive groups arose, however, following the approval of the Press Law in 1966. It is from this date, therefore, that there emerged a visible transformation in the Spanish press. Controversial articles began to appear in the newspapers, and publishing houses launched magazines of various political tendencies. As Information Minister, Manuel Fraga spent three years preparing the Press Law. The law was initially approved by Franco's cabinet on 13 August 1965, but the next step was to present it to the Cortes for approval which did not happen until March 1966.⁴⁸ Admiral Carrero Blanco and General Camilo Alonso Vega opposed the law to the end, but despite his own disbelief in the need for the law, Franco had already decided to ratify it. The

⁴⁵ Álvarez de Miranda, *Del "contubernio"*, p. 52.

⁴⁶ García San Miguel, "Estructura y cambio", p. 102.

⁴⁷ As Burns recalls, *Cuadernos* was mainly formed by Christian Democrats although it also had collaborators from very different ideologies including Social Democrats (Rafael Arias-Salgado, who was linked to Fernández Ordoñez's group), leaders of *Comisiones Obreras* (Marcelino Camacho and Julián Ariza), Liberal Monarchists (Joaquín Satrustegui). Furthermore, Pablo Castellanos was the representative of the Socialist party in the magazine, and Elías Díaz the representative of the Socialist sector represented by Tierno Galván. In 1972 the Socialist presence was

Caudillo told the members of the Cortes, 'I do not believe in this freedom but it is a step many important reasons oblige us to take. And, on the other hand, I think that if those weak governments of the beginning of the century could govern with press freedom in the middle of that anarchy, we also will'.⁴⁹ However, Franco, as Álvarez de Miranda recalls, 'knew that the level of newspaper reading among the Spanish people was low; the application of that same freedom of [information] to radio or television would have been another matter.'⁵⁰

By today's light the law is a restrictive document, full of threats and warnings. But, at the time, it constituted an unprecedented document marking the furthest point that the Francoist regime could go as far as reforms were concerned. Thanks to the liberalization of the Press Law, Juan José Linz argues, critics of the regime took the opportunity to write on delicate political issues such as the dangers of *continuismo*; the need for parties in a democracy; monarchism versus republicanism; electoral law, and so forth. Such liberalization, according to Linz, 'not only changed the style and content of some newspapers but allowed the publication of political essays by the legal or alegal - but not illegal - opposition. While [Dionisio] Ridruejo's *Escrito en España* (1962) was published abroad, Gil Robles's *Cartas del pueblo español* (1966), Manuel Jiménez de Parga's *Atisbos desde esta España* (1968), Rafael Calvo Serer's *España ante la libertad, la democracia y el progreso* (1968), José María de Areilza's *Escritos políticos* (1968), and the two-volume *España perspectiva, 1968 and 1969* were all published in Spain.'⁵¹ Having said that, as will further explained in Chapter 4, despite the relaxation

strengthened by the incorporation of Gregorio Peces Barba. See Tom Burns Marañón, *Conversaciones sobre la derecha*, (Madrid: Plaza y Janés, 1997), pp. 319, 322.

⁴⁸ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 163.

⁴⁹ Quoted in *Ibid.*, pp. 144-5.

⁵⁰ Álvarez de Miranda, *Del "contubernio"*, p. 53n.

⁵¹ Linz, "Opposition in and under an authoritarian regime", pp. 216-7.

of censorship some of these publications suffered a number of sanctions and even closures.

Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez claimed that, 'the Press Law of 1966 was the most important step taken towards the "democratization" of institutions and of the habits of Spanish public life. [...] It may sound strange perhaps', he added, 'that I say this when it is notorious that *Cuadernos para el Diálogo* has many scratches in its skin [caused by] some of the thorns hidden under this law. [...] But, it is no less true [to say] that, under the protection of this law, new newspapers, new magazines and new book series have emerged in our homeland [which have lead to] a new climate for information, criticism and promotion of collective dialogue.'⁵² The journalist Juan Luis Cebrián also agrees that Fraga's law constituted an irreversible step towards modernization, which undoubtedly contributed to the deterioration of the Francoist foundations.⁵³

Full freedom of the press was still unthinkable, but from 1966/7 it was possible to acquire an ample variety of publications even of a Marxist tendency.⁵⁴ On this light, Luis García San Miguel argues that although 'it is debatable if the openness was sufficient, no one can deny that it was considerable. From 1966 the Spanish newspapers acquired a different complexion. Their boring uniformity broke. The first debates took place, and [also] clearly different political ideologies emerged: a tendency towards democratization of the political system from within [could be detected] in *YA*; a democratic tendency slightly connected with Capitalism and various people from the opposition in *Nuevo Diario*; a certain social democratic [tendency] in [the newspaper] *Madrid*, [and the magazines] *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, *Revista de Occidente*, *Triunfo*, *Indice*, *El Ciervo*, *Destino*, and later *Sábado Gráfico* enjoyed an ample freedom

⁵² José Carles Clemente, *Conversaciones con las corrientes políticas de España*, (Barcelona: DOPESA, 1971), p. 206.

⁵³ Juan Luis Cebrián, *La España que bosteza*, (Madrid: Taurus, 1980), pp. 105-7.

of manoeuvre. And, what is perhaps more important, [is that] the provincial press removed its orthopedic corset and began to publish the first liberal-oriented articles'.⁵⁵

The testimony of Gabriel Cisneros helps to evaluate the real importance of the law. Cisneros argues that,

The approval of this law allowed the emergence in to the public light of the political pluralism existing within the regime, and to some extent - although very timidly - the political pluralism existing outside the regime.⁵⁶

So far as this thesis is concerned, this could be considered as the most important consequence of the law since one of the conditions for a representative system is a free press.

The approval of the Press Law, therefore, opened new channels of opinion through newspapers and magazines where people expressed their views individually or collectively. In 1969, few years after the approval of the law, a group of young progressives with a political vocation got together to write weekly newspaper articles on social and political issues. These articles signed with the name of *Juan Ruiz* appeared first in *YA* (from 3 October to 16 November 1969), and later in *Madrid* (from 24 November 1969 to June 1971). The collective was formed among others by Miguel Herrero de Miñón, Juan Antonio García Díez, the brothers Enrique and Luis María Linde de Castro, Carlos Espinosa, Paco Condomines, Eugenio Bregolat, Eduardo Martínez de Pisón and Andrés Amorós Guardiola, from whom the original idea had emerged. Years later, they all held important positions, not just in the political arena (mainly in the various centrist groups of the transition), but also in a wider range of

⁵⁴ Maravall, *Dictadura y disenso*, p. 26.

⁵⁵ Luis García San Miguel, "Estructura y cambio", pp. 95-96. See also Luis García San Miguel, *Teoría de la Transición*, p. 40. A preliminary assessment of the Press Law conducted by the French historian, Guy Hermet, in July 1967, only 18 months after the application of the Law can be found in, Guy Hermet, "La presse espagnole et la censure", in *Revue Française de Science Politique*, Vol. XVIII, 1968, No. 1 February, pp. 44-67.

⁵⁶ Testimony of Gabriel Cisneros Laborda, 13-09-1999.

fields including diplomacy, economy, ecology and literary criticism. They held a workshop at Andrés Amorós' house once a week where, as Herrero de Miñón recalls, they discussed the current political problems, 'with an openly democratic ideology, and also with a good dose of technical competence'. The main political concern of this collective was the issue of nationalism (not to be confused with the term regionalism). As Herrero de Miñón clarifies, 'they identified [themselves with] that rare species of loyal activist to their own national community whose loyalty obliges [one] to wish to improve it every day, and to point out [...] its defects and remedies'. The collective *Juan Ruiz* suffered the temporary suspensions of the daily *Madrid*, and ended with the final and controversial closure of the newspaper. The members of the collective travelled to Estoril to meet Don Juan de Borbón. They offered their support to Don Juan, and also to what he claimed to advocate; a traditional monarchy and a national democracy. In 1973, the Christian Democrat group *Tácito* followed the idea of *Juan Ruiz* but, according to Herrero de Miñón, *Tácito* was politically more conformist.⁵⁷ The *Tácito* group as well as other political groups that appeared in the early 1970s are studied further in Chapter 6.

2.2.3. Associations

It is not difficult to imagine the disappointment felt by progressive members of the regime when the much-awaited 1964 Law of Associations completely ignored political associations or those with 'political aims'.⁵⁸ In any case, some Spaniards used the veil of legality of 'cultural' associations to meet, in a quasi-legal way, to discuss politics but not many. As Amando de Miguel points out, 'a naïve observer could think

⁵⁷ Herrero de Miñón, *Memorias*, pp. 47-50.

⁵⁸ BOE, *Ley de Asociaciones*. 24 December 1964.

that since political parties are not permitted in Spain, one could expect an amazing blossoming of more “natural” associations (of heads of family, co-operatives, local or civic associations...). Unfortunately, this has not happened (apart from the sporting world).⁵⁹ That explains why some people continued to discuss politics in the same ways as before the 1964 Law. But let us see what the regime understood by ‘associations’.

Within the definition of ‘Associations’ the Interior Ministry classified ten types of entities, each one of which is itself sub-divided into various categories according to its activities.⁶⁰ From 30 April 1965, when the 1964 Law of Associations took effect, until 31 December 1974, when the Law of Political Association was approved, more than 11,000 associations had been registered and were active. Unfortunately, it is impossible to find out how many new associations were registered following the approval of the 1964 Law and how many which were registered under the Decree of 1941 had updated their statutes in order to comply with the precepts of the new law.⁶¹ But my concern was to discover associations that could have carried out illegal activities.⁶² Thus, with the help of Angel García del Vello (Chief of Service of the National Registry of Associations of the Interior Ministry until 1999) and later Carmen Aguilar Godoy, we tried to make word combinations, to see, for example, how many associations had the word ‘study’ in their titles. The computer found a total of 119 in

⁵⁹ FOESSA, *Informe Sociológico 1970*, Chapter 5, p. 9.

⁶⁰ The ten different categories are classified as cultural and ideological; sporting, leisure, and young; handicaps and illnesses; economic and professional; family, consumer, and elderly; women; philanthropic and assistance; educational; neighbours; and miscellaneous. It is worth noting that those associations registered in the National Registry are not lucrative. They are run with membership fees, and selling of publications, and so on. Those association created with the intention of profit must be registered at the Registry of Commercial Societies, which makes them subject to different Laws.

⁶¹ Some associations did not update their statutes straight away after the 1964 Law what makes the search even more difficult.

⁶² These illegal activities we refer to are the formation of a political group under the façade of a cultural association or simply the discussion of political issues, or even political propaganda against the regime.

the period 1965-1974. Or how many associations were registered under the category of Civic-Political in the same period. The computer found 11.⁶³

In any case this search seems rather pointless when one realizes that the statutes do not tell us whether or not members of these collectives used the cover of legal endorsement to carry out illegal activities. In fact that endorsement of the statutes meant that the associations met the conditions required. In any case, in the period 1965-1974, 0 associations were suspended. This number only means that even if an association was carrying out illegal activities (which was the case of some associations as we shall see later) they were not discovered by the authorities.

There is, however, a record of a commercial company - not an association - whose underground activities were discovered. The entity was registered as a Limited Liability Company - for profit - under the name of *Centro de Enseñanza e Investigación, S.A. (CEISA)* on 4 October 1965. The statutes of the society, which referred to the Law of 17 July 1951 were, 'the promotion and setting up of all kinds of intellectual activities - that is educational and formative - for young people, as well as the establishment, running, and development of centres and institutes of study. [The society] will also be able to develop any other activity that could be complementary to its objectives'. These statutes were signed by Rodrigo Uria González, Luis Sampedro Sáez, Vicente Piniés Rubio, José María Ruiz Gallardón, Guillermo Luca de Tena, Rafael Pérez Escolar, Juan Carlos Guerra Zunzunegui and Iñigo Cavero Latailla.⁶⁴ Incidentally, the last three names appeared in 1975 among the members of the progressive society FEDISA, which is studied in Chapter 6.

⁶³ These lists of associations were provided by request at the National Registry of Associations of the Interior Ministry in Madrid by the Chief of Service, Angel García del Vello, ex-governor of the *Unión de Centro Democrático* in the late 1970s for León (3 September 1998). The information has been later updated by Carmen Aguilar Godoy, current Chief of Service.

⁶⁴ Statutes of the *Centro de Enseñanza e Investigación, S.A.* Registro Mercantil, Madrid.

As Juan José Linz points out, CEISA 'has been intellectually fruitful' in linking 'students, particularly in the social sciences, to professors of different shades of opinion, from moderate to some radical younger staff members'. Yet, '[it] has not achieved some of its political goals. Some of the intellectual mentors of academic protest have had second thoughts about the course it has taken.'⁶⁵ In 1974, the society was fined by the Francoist authorities on the grounds of partisan proselytism conducted in the University of Madrid in clear opposition to the Spanish regime. The authorities claimed that, 'the meetings were illegal, and were dedicated to issues of a social-political character contrary to those of the ruling regime'. The purpose of these 'seminars' was, according to the authorities, 'to attempt the disruption of the exercise of rights recognized in the Fundamental Laws of the State'.⁶⁶ The company was fined twice before it was finally dissolved soon after. CEISA appears to be an example, albeit an isolated case, of a commercial society fined by the Spanish authorities for carrying out alleged illegal activities.

Many associations of different categories emerged following the Law of Associations of 1964. However, there are a few cases of recorded 'undercover' political associations that were created before 1964. That was the case of the *Asociación Española de Cooperación Europea* (AECE), or Spanish Society of European Cooperation, which emerged as early as June 1954 as a result of a wave of interest on the idea of an unified Europe. As Álvarez de Miranda recalls, 'at the beginning of the 1950s Barcelona became home to various institutes which, from a strictly cultural point-of-view, studied the realities of the unification of Europe. These organizations included

⁶⁵ Linz, "Opposition in and under an authoritarian regime", p. 213.

the Institute of European Studies, the Circle of European Studies of the French Institute also the Spanish Committee of the European League of Economic Co-operation. Whilst for some progressive members of the regime Europe was synonymous with democracy and modernization, for others it was more 'the task of the anti-Spain in order to favour the capitalist and Masonic powers'.⁶⁷

The AECE was formed by young Monarchists such as Alfonso Osorio, Juan Luis Simón Tobalina, Joaquín Ruíz-Giménez, Valentín Andrés Álvarez, José María Ruiz Gallardón, Joaquín Satrustegui and Fernando Alvarez de Miranda (some of them were regulars of the *Cafés Rodríguez* and the *Cenas de los Nueve*). Founders and participants of the association were young members of the *Círculos de Estudios* of the ACNP. These young people did not have serious problems in meeting since most of them, with the exception of a few like Alfonso Osorio, were well-known in Francoist circles, and came from families fully integrated into the regime.⁶⁸ Incidentally, the authorization of the association read that, 'the persons who form the commission are devoted to the regime, and are of good conduct'.⁶⁹

The AECE was used as a centre for the discussion of subjects such as the transition to a post-Francoist Spain. The *Propagandistas* of the AECE aimed at 'promoting and spreading the study of the idea of co-operation between the countries of Europe, as the most adequate means of guaranteeing social stability and long lasting peace, based upon an international Christian order, respect for human beings, social justice, and the co-ordination and better use of economic resources'.⁷⁰ Moreover they

⁶⁶ Víctor López Rodríguez, *El Derecho de Asociación*, (Madrid: Secretaría General Técnica, Ministerio del Interior, 1983), pp. 77-82. The same case can be found in Germán Fernández Farreres, *Asociaciones y Constitución*, (Madrid: Civitas, 1987), pp. 167-172n.

⁶⁷ Álvarez de Miranda, *Del "contubernio"*, pp. 24-25.

⁶⁸ Testimony of Alfonso Osorio, 17 December 1998.

⁶⁹ Statutes of the *Asociación Española de Cooperación Europea*. Registro Nacional de Asociaciones. Ministerio del Interior, Madrid.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

studied all possible benefits that the integration to Europe could offer to Spain in the cultural, political, social, and economic areas, following the guidance of Pope Pio XII, and of important pro-European Catholics such as Adenauer, Schuman, and De Gasperi.⁷¹

As Álvarez de Miranda recalled, the idea of getting closer to democratic Europe was regarded as the only way to escape the suffocating gag of Francoism.⁷² Thus these intellectuals, who defined themselves variously as Christian Democrats, Liberals, and Monarchists, aimed at defending the principles of democracy, monarchy, and Europe.⁷³ However, these principles did not appear in the statutes of the association since, according to Alfonso Osorio, the situation in Spain was such that an association with those principles would have never been authorized. Therefore, they excluded these principles from the statutes as well as the fact that their chief intention was to establish a democratic monarchy after Franco's era, in the person of Don Juan de Borbón. In any case, it is improbable that they all advocated the establishment of full democracy in Spain since, as mentioned before, the idea of the legalization of the Communist Party in Spain was not even considered in the 1950s. Perhaps they considered a German-type of democracy that excluded the participation of the Communist Party. In fact, Alfonso Osorio himself opposed the participation of the Communist Party in the first democratic

⁷¹ *A.C.N de P.*, Bulletin No. 551, 1 November 1954, pp. 5-6.

⁷² Álvarez de Miranda, *Del "contubernio"*, p. 26.

⁷³ Alfonso Osorio, *Trayectoria*, pp.15-16. The weekly *Cambio-16*, recorded the three main themes of the organization as being Europe, Democracy, and Socialism (instead of Monarchy). See *Cambio-16*, 31 March-6 April 1975, p. 36. Yet, according to Osorio's own testimony, *Cambio-16's* statement was not true, at least in the early period. It could be that the proximity of Socialist sympathisers with the remainder of the members of the organization could have prompted the idea that the association had changed one of its three pillars. In any case, Osorio said that it is very unlikely that the changed principle had been that of 'monarchy', because, above all, this was the main common denominator of the founders. Testimony of Alfonso Osorio, 17 December 1998.

elections in Spain as late as 1977 because he considered its legalization to go against the current law.⁷⁴

Despite their common attachment to the ACNP, AECE members had different political tendencies that soon became well-defined groups. On the one hand, there was the group of Francoist Catholics including Alfonso Osorio, Federico Silva and Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo; and on the other, a Christian Democratic group led by José María Gil-Robles including Fernando Álvarez de Miranda, Iñigo Cavero, Ignacio Camuñas and Jesús Barros de Lis.⁷⁵ 'The dialectic *'ruptura'* or reform', Alfonso Osorio recalls in his memoirs, 'and open repudiation of or critical collaboration with Franco's regime divided us'.⁷⁶ By the end of the 1950s, the direction of the association had been taken over by the progressive bloc of Christian Democrats. By that time, the AECE had become a real forum of political discussion where personalities of different tendencies, but mainly from the democratic opposition, met to discuss politics - in between scientific or informative talks. As professor Enrique Tierno Galván recalled, 'on many occasions, behind the façade of informative talks, there was political discussion or [rather] the political effort to unite against General Franco's' regime' (*en muchas ocasiones, detrás de la máscara de la información estaba el hecho de la discusión política o del esfuerzo por unirse en contra del régimen del general Franco*).⁷⁷ Still active in 1975, the association had by then clearly adopted an even more critical attitude towards the regime. They organized various lectures by the speakers associated with

⁷⁴ Alfonso Osorio also believed that the legalization of the Communist Party would alienate the armed forces and, in turn, would threaten the stability of the crown. Alfonso Osorio, *De Orilla a Orilla*, (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 2000), pp. 309-333.

⁷⁵ Álvarez de Miranda, *Del "contubernio"*, p. 21.

⁷⁶ Osorio, *Trayectoria*, pp. 15-16.

⁷⁷ Tierno Galván, *Cabos sueltos*, p. 333.

Socialist and Christian Democrats groups. The speakers included Luis González Seara, Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez, Enrique Tierno Galván and Dionisio Ridruejo, among others.⁷⁸

Following the 1964 Law, another association with a twofold objective was created. That was the *Centro de Estudios de Problemas Contemporáneos* created by the young Monarchist lawyer Antonio Gavilanes in 1967.⁷⁹ The idea of forming a political group began to brew in Gavilanes' mind during his university years but he never became a member of illegal university groups linked to the democratic opposition.⁸⁰ He believed in the need for a constitutional democratic monarchy after Franco that could satisfy the Church, the armed forces, financial powers and international powers (namely the United States that feared a Communist uprising) as well as the forces of the Left. On these grounds, between 1965 and 1966, Gavilanes attempted the creation of a study group to serve as a platform for the gathering of people of different progressive tendencies. This platform was to be the magazine *Convivencia* or Coexistence in which personalities of the democratic opposition including José Luis Aranguren, Enrique Tierno Galván, and Dionisio Ridruejo, had agreed to participate. Yet, Fraga, then Minister of Information, did not authorize its publication. The reason was simple. The name was too ambiguous for its time, and the people involved were not identified with the regime.

Nevertheless, Gavilanes' group persevered in their decision to create a discussion forum, but this time they wanted it registered as an association. From past

⁷⁸ *Cambio-16*, 31 March-6 April 1975, p.36.

⁷⁹ The information given in the following pages about the *Centro de Estudios de Problemas Contemporáneos* was entirely provided, unless otherwise stated, by its founder Antonio Gavilanes during an interview held on 21 September 1999.

⁸⁰ Some of these groups were the Socialist *Federación Universitaria Española* (FUDE), the *Agrupación Socialista Universitaria* (ASU); the Christian Democrat *Unión Democrática Española* (UDE), *Izquierda Demócrata Cristiana* (IDE), the *Partido Demócrata de Acción Demócrata* (PSAD); and the Communist *Frente de Liberación Popular* (FELIPE).

experience they had learned two things. Firstly, they should choose a rather bland name for their association, one with a general social meaning and secondly, its promoters should not be identifiable with the democratic opposition. The person chosen to register their new association was Juan Ignacio Gil Sanz, a personal friend of Gavilanes, who had previous links with sporting activities from their time at university. Gil Sanz presented the documents for the registration of the *Centro de Estudios de Problemas Contemporáneos* and this time the Interior Ministry authorized the approval of the association. According to the official statutes of the centre, its objective was, 'to promote studies on contemporary sociology and economy as well as those studies, based on the Christian Public right that could currently contribute in a constructive and positive way to the new generations'.⁸¹ But, this was simply a cover. As Gavilanes declared in 1972, 'since its foundation, the Centre has never been considered a cultural centre or an *ateneo*, but a political club'.⁸²

Once the official registration of the association had been obtained, Gil Sanz transferred the direction of the association to Antonio Gavilanes, Fernando Serrano Gos-Gayou, Alfredo Rodríguez Santiago, Juan Luis Cebrián, Ignacio Camuñas and Alberto Ballarín. They chose Antonio Gavilanes as President of the association. The next step was to find premises in which to organize colloquiums and other meetings. They found a tiny apartment in General Moscardó Street, in Madrid, which they managed to rent thanks to small donations by its members. But, because political meetings were still illegal, they presented themselves to the landlord as a group of university students who needed the place to study, and prepare public examinations.

⁸¹ Statutes of *Centro de Estudios de Problemas Contemporáneos*. Registro Nacional de Asociaciones. Ministerio del Interior, Madrid.

⁸² *La Vanguardia Española*, 29 June 1972.

The colloquiums, which consisted of a brief talk followed by a debate, quickly became popular but the smallness of the flat also became a problem. Once a week on the evening of the meeting, the little sitting room was packed with people who literally sat wherever they found a space. Gavilanes recalls that the sheer size of the meetings became dangerous, first because they could have been caught having meetings of a political character, and second because, given the tiny size of their office, the number of people jeopardised their own physical safety. The members of the centre could have run into trouble on a number of occasions, but for different reasons. For instance, on one occasion, Gavilanes invited General- Lieutenant Rafael García Valiño, ex-Captain General of Madrid, who was on bad terms with Franco due to personal circumstances, to attend Joaquín Satrústegui's talk. The General's visit to the centre coincided with the mysterious death of the young Communist university leader, Enrique Ruano, in police custody. Despite the presence of such a personality, and not without risk, those present stood up and kept a minute's silence for the youth and to their surprise the General did likewise. One could say his mere presence had great significance in terms of national reconciliation and how the times were changing. Gavilanes speculates that this perhaps could have been the first time since the Spanish Civil War that a prominent member of the Francoist armed forces (known in the Civil War as the Butcher of Navarra), stood and kept a minute's silence for a young man from the enemy's side.

A list of known progressive personalities gave talks at the centre. Among the speakers were Dionisio Ridruejo, Enrique Tierno Galván, Manuel Jiménez de Parga, Carlos Ollero, Raúl Morodo, Fernando Morán, Jeronimo Saavedra, Miguel Boyer, Roberto Dorado, Rafael Calvo Serer, Joaquín Garrigues Walker, Antonio Menchaca, Joaquín Satrústegui, Fernando Álvarez de Miranda, Luis Gómez Llorente, Hernando Baeza and Iñigo Cavero. The centre also invited the Portuguese Socialist leader Mario

Soares, although after making all the arrangements for his visit, the Interior Ministry did not authorize the lecture.

By 1969 the popularity of the colloquiums was such that members of the centre were obliged to look for larger premises. They found various places in Madrid. One of them belonged to the Chamber of Commerce at Plaza de la Independencia, and the other was the premise of the Circle of the Commercial Union at the Gran Vía. In both premises the centre held lectures which attracted a huge turnout. At times there were five-hundred people attending the lectures. Thus the centre organized small colloquiums on a weekly basis, and large lectures in the other premises every three weeks. The sheer size of the audience who attended the lectures obliged the centre to ask for permission from the Interior Ministry, who had to be informed in advance about the theme of each lecture, the speaker, the date and so forth. The owners of the premises where the talk was to be held always requested the written authorization of the Interior Ministry before letting people in. Otherwise, they themselves could run into trouble. Gavilanes tried to reduce political discussions at the lectures because a representative of the Interior Ministry - who was publicly presented together with other guests or personalities at the outset of the lecture as a warning signal to the participants - always attended them due to their public character. The seminars, on the other hand, were considered a private meeting of association members, for which no official representative was present.

Sometimes, however, it was difficult to contain the feelings of such a large audience. At the beginning of 1969 the Bishop of Huelva, González Moralejo gave a lecture to five-hundred people with the title 'The post-Conciliar Church'. During this lecture the young Socialist Carlos Zayas stood up and called for the need to legalize the political parties, including of course the Socialists and Communists. The presence of

members of the Francoist security forces, national and foreign intelligent services, representatives of a number of embassies, and the Bishop himself did not prevent the audience, this time mainly composed of Christian Democrats, Socialists and Communists (but not members of the regime), showing their agreement with loud applause. The presence of embassy representatives reflected international interest in the Spanish situation. Following these lectures, Gavilanes received numerous warnings from the regime and constant visits to his home by the police. The colloquiums and the lectures were often followed by dinners, which became very fashionable.⁸³

As seen so far, uncertainty about the future of Spain was openly discussed amongst the more progressive circles of the regime. Other questions such as, where are we going? and, by what means will the regime relinquish power? were posed more openly by the population, and especially by members of the democratic opposition, after the 1966 Press Law.⁸⁴ However, in 1965, an unprecedented meeting took place secretly in Madrid. Members of Franco's immediate entourage organized their first political dinner to discuss the post-Francoist issue. The participants included the orthodox Francoist Blas Piñar, then Director of the Institute of Hispanic Culture; members of the clergy and the armed forces; and even some members of Franco's own cabinet, such as Federico Silva Muñoz - Public Works Minister. It is interesting to note that Manuel Fraga did not attend that dinner because of his existing disagreement with Blas Piñar over political issues.⁸⁵

⁸³ The political dinners became the most popular event organized by the centre at the beginning of the 1970s, attracting the participation of political personalities of both the opposition and the regime itself. The development of these dinners is studied further in Chapter 4.

⁸⁴ *Indice*, Nos. 211-212, p. 5.

⁸⁵ Testimony of Pedro Pérez Alhama, Secretary General of the ANEPA, 12 September 1998.

During this secret dinner - allegedly Franco was unaware of the event - these prominent members of the regime discussed the future of Spain, and agreed to pave the way for a post-Francoist era in which they could secure the continuity of the system. To this end they decided to create the magazine *Fuerza Nueva* which could serve as a platform for the spreading of their ideas among the Spanish population. *Fuerza Nueva's* main promoter, the notary Blas Piñar, aimed at the creation of a pressure group to oppose the *aperturista* strategy of various groups of the regime, and the maintaining of the 'Monarchy of 18 July' (Franco's uprising).⁸⁶

Parallel to *Fuerza Nueva* there existed the so-called University National Brotherhood, *Hermandad Nacional Universitaria* - registered as a student association - which was led by Luis Coronel de Palma, and primarily defended the prominence of the Church in the Spanish education system, and particularly in the university. This brotherhood was closely linked to the regime and, although formally limited to Church-university relations, and especially created for the interest of parents, university students, staff and so forth, it sometimes tackled political issues in its main platform, the magazine *Avanzada*. Incidentally, as Pedro Pérez Alhama - secretary of the brotherhood - explained, some members of this brotherhood were also linked to *Fuerza Nueva*, and this small group regularly held private meetings at the Hotel Sideral in Madrid, where they discussed political issues. These meetings lasted until 1967 when Blas Piñar's reactionary attitude led to the schism of some of the participants from *Fuerza Nueva* who went on to create a new group.

⁸⁶ Incidentally, years later in 1977, *Fuerza Nueva* became a political party, despite Piñar's long standing aversion towards the concept of 'political parties'. Yet, the ultra-right tendency of the party failed to thrive in a society searching for moderation and a peaceful post-Francoist transition. The party managed to secure the election of a deputy for Toledo, who was Blas Piñar himself, but that was its entire achievement. Ultimately, the party was wound up in 1982. José Luis Rodríguez Jiménez, "Origen, desarrollo y disolución de *Fuerza Nueva*", in *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, No. 73, July-September, 1991, p. 265. See also José Luis Rodríguez, "The Extreme Right after Franco" in *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol. 24, Nos. 2-4, 1990.

The main figure of this new collective was Alejandro Rodríguez de Varcárcel, then Vice-Secretary General of the Movement, President of the *Consejo del Reino*, or Council of the Kingdom⁸⁷, and a known *continuista*, who decided to create the so-called Association for the Study of Current Problems, *Asociación Nacional para el Estudio de Problemas Actuales* (ANEPA).⁸⁸ ANEPA aimed at 'the gathering of men, who, through their organization, could ensure the continuity of the Institutions in a positive way. And secondly, the reiteration once again, of [their] enthusiasm to illuminate, and contribute to, the welfare of the country through politics'.⁸⁹ Basically, they favoured the implementation of timid reforms but as long as those reforms did not threaten the continuity of the regime.

As a prominent Falangist, Rodríguez de Varcárcel was considered by the Falangist daily *Arriba* to be part of the Falangist 'old guard' and the 'most important member' of ANEPA.⁹⁰ Hence the restless members of the Falange, who believed that he favoured the regime's adaptation to the new demands of the Spanish population, warmly welcomed his appointment as President of the Council of the Kingdom.⁹¹ Rodríguez de Varcárcel's understanding of these 'new demands' appears to have been

⁸⁷ The Council of the Kingdom was created by Franco in April 1954 with the idea of adopting a 'monarchical form of government'. Thus, under Franco's command the Council, which was made up of loyal *Movement* 'great and good', would determine the succession to the Caudillo. See Preston, *Franco*, pp. 529, 564, 754n. According to Raymond Carr, the Council of the Realm (or Kingdom) 'composed of the dignitaries of the regime, had one important function: the drawing-up of the *terna*, the list of three from which the Head of State must select a President of the Council of Ministers'. Carr, *Spain*, p. 706.

⁸⁸ The association never registered as such until 1974, following the approval of the Statute of Associations of December 1974. Thus, as soon as the statute was passed ANEPA was the first one to be registered at the Plaza de la Marina in Madrid, followed by Cantarero del Castillo's association. Testimony of Pedro Pérez Alhama, 16 September 1998. The association was first called *Asociación para el Estudio de Problemas Actuales* (APEPA). But by early 1970s, Pérez Alhama changed the name in order to include the word 'National' in its title. Hence for the sake of simplicity, and given that many people knew the association as ANEPA for most of its existence, I will refer to it as ANEPA. See Secretaría General del Movement. Ministerio de la Interior, Madrid. *Caja No. 171*, 18 June 1975.

⁸⁹ *Asociación para el Estudio de Problemas Contemporáneos, Monarquía. Futuro del poder político*, (Madrid, 1971), pp. 13-14.

⁹⁰ *Arriba*, 4 February 1976, p. 14.

⁹¹ López Rodó, *Memorias II*, p. 547. See also Romero's welcoming comment on Varcárcel's appointment in *Pueblo*, 27 November 1969, p. 3.

rather limited, however. In a note written in August 1968 in relation to the crisis of the Movement, he stated that, 'for the Movement, participation is forever the goal'. He insisted on the importance of underlying the need 'to strengthen a network of associations (*asociacionismo*) in two directions (*vertiente*): towards the majorities via family networks, and towards the minorities via the creation of selected associations of representative - intellectuals, professionals, etc. - from each province. [...] It does not mean [to create] associations for each tendency but one association for all tendencies, against the common foe'.⁹² On these grounds, given their advocacy of such a limited system of representation, it would be inaccurate to categorize ANEPA's members as *aperturista*. In fact, ANEPA's first two Presidents, Leopoldo Stampa at the outset and Enrique Thomas de Carranza from 1976, had both belonged to the ultra-Right *Fuerza Nueva*.⁹³ But it was in 1976 with Thomas de Carranza as President that ANEPA adopted a very conservative line.⁹⁴ On the other hand, under Leopoldo Stampa, ANEPA clearly advocated some kind of political opening-up. Alfonso Osorio says that ANEPA's members were clearly evolutionist and supporters of a democratic monarchy (again perhaps he is referring to a German-style of democracy), but their position was close to that of the regime.⁹⁵

From its creation in 1967, but especially at the beginning of the 1970's, ANEPA organized activities such as round tables, dinners, meetings, lunches, lectures and debates with the sole idea of preparing the transition to a post-Francoist society.⁹⁶ The

⁹² López Rodó, *Memorias II*, Anejo 28, pp. 623-626.

⁹³ *Fuerza Nueva*, Año VIII. No. 378 (6 April 1974). Thomas de Carranza remained as President until nearly the end of the society which coincided with the first democratic elections of 1977. In January 1977 the National Council of ANEPA voted two thirds in favour of the standing down of Carranza as President. José Ramón Alonso y Rodríguez-Nadales was elected provisional President of the association. See Registro de Asociaciones Políticas. Ministerio del Interior, Madrid. *Caja No. 171*, 13 January 1977.

⁹⁴ Carlos Argos recalls that, when in 1977, Thomas de Carranza became part of Manuel Fraga's *Alianza Popular*, Argos was shocked to hear Thomas' ultra-Right conservative ideas. During a conversation with Fraga, Argos questioned Carranza's presence in AP. Testimony of Carlos Argos, 14 September 1999.

⁹⁵ Testimony of Alfonso Osorio, 21 September 1999.

⁹⁶ Testimony of Pedro Pérez Alhama, 16 September 1998.

participants at ANEPA's round tables analysed through a conservative prism, the country's current problems and those that might arise in the post-Francoist era. ANEPA dealt with issues including the future of the monarchy in Spain; the relation between the Church and the State; political participation; regionalism; development of constitutional laws and political integration; professional participation and representation, and authority and liberty.⁹⁷

ANEPA's round tables became very popular and were attended by a large number of important personalities of the regime, including many *aperturistas* among whom were some who later played vital roles during the transition to democracy. These personalities included Alfonso Osorio, Fernando Suárez, Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, Miguel Primo de Rivera, León Herrera, Marcelino Oreja, Fraga Iribarne, Landelino Lavilla, Federico Silva Muñoz and Pío Cabanillas.⁹⁸ There were also some military men of different ranks, entrepreneurs such as José María Oriol y Urquijo, ex-Ministers such as García Hernández, José Solís and Fraga himself, and an important number of progressive *procuradores familiares* (*procuradores* were nominated members of the Francoist Cortes; the *procuradores familiares* were members of the Family sector who were elected by heads of household) such as Juan Manuel Fanjul, Eduardo Tarragona and Enrique Villoria Martínez. Not all of them, however, were ANEPA members. Thus, whereas Alfonso Osorio merely participated in one round table, Manuel Fraga was a member and at one point was also a candidate to occupy its presidency.⁹⁹

ANEPA's round tables and other activities had the merit of bringing together *continuistas* and *aperturistas* to discuss the problems of the country and their solutions to them. Indeed, as a platform for political discussions, ANEPA surely helped the

⁹⁷ *Asociación Nacional para el Estudio de Problemas Actuales, 40 Políticos ante el futuro*, (Madrid: Edipasa, 1974).

⁹⁸ Laureano López Rodó, *Memorias IV. El principio del fin*, (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1992), pp. 61-2.

⁹⁹ Testimony of Pedro Pérez Alhama, Secretary General of the ANEPA, 12 September 1998.

aperturistas to explain their views on the need for reform, and especially on the need for greater public involvement in national politics, and to debate them with the *inmovilistas*. It may be not far wrong to consider that these forums served to attract some *inmovilistas* to the *aperturista* camp. However, ANEPA was not the only association that allowed political debates between the *inmovilistas* and *aperturistas*.

At the end of the 1960s there emerged another association that was regarded as a smaller version of the regime itself. It was the so-called *Asociación Club Siglo XXI* that was created a few years after ANEPA in May 1969. The club was created by Antonio Guerrero Burgos as a meeting point to talk about post-Francoism, and was principally frequented by the Francoist elite - including prominent members of the armed forces, ex-Ministers and Ministers, such as Carlos Arias Navarro¹⁰⁰ - for whom the club had a distinctively strong conservative ideology¹⁰¹. Guerrero Burgos' aims were 'to promote the benefits of culture, favouring coexistence and peace within order'.¹⁰² The club became one of the most important political platforms from the beginning of the 1970s, and it continues to host important lectures today. Some of the first speakers included Manuel Fraga, José Kirkpatrick and Adolfo Muñoz Alonso in 1971; Federico Silva in 1973; Alfonso Osorio, José Miguel Ortí Bordás, Emilio Romero, Antonio Hernández Gil, Antonio Garrigues Díaz-Cañabate, Gabriel Cisneros Laborda, Rafael Pérez Escolar and Cruz Martínez Esteruelas in 1974. The lectures covered a wide range of topics such

¹⁰⁰ *Acta fundacional del Club Siglo XXI, 10 de Mayo de 1969*. Registro Nacional de Asociaciones. Ministerio del Interior, Madrid. This document was signed by twenty-one members of the regime. An example from the *continuista* side was Carlos Arias; and from the *aperturista* Pío Cabanillas.

¹⁰¹ Among the twenty-one founding members there were Carlos Arias Navarro, Antonio Hernández Gil, Juan Herrera Fernández, Alfonso García Valdecasas. Among some of its few *aperturistas/reformists* members there was also Pío Cabanillas. See *Acta Fundacional del Club Siglo XXI*. Registro Nacional de Asociaciones. Ministerio del Interior, Madrid.

¹⁰² *Statutes of Club Siglo XXI*. Registro Nacional de Asociaciones. Ministerio del Interior, Madrid. A list of members of the *Club Siglo XXI* according to professions is listed in *Cambio-16*, 9-15 December 1974, p. 27. According to the journal the largest groups were formed by military men (118), lawyers (111), engineers (52), industrialists (26), diplomats (19), academic professors (18), aristocrats (16), architects (12), and so forth.

as political participation, the Fundamental Laws, the Council of Kingdom, State-Church relations, the Cortes, Spain and Europe, and had a special emphasis on the Monarchy.¹⁰³

So far we have seen that from the 1950s and especially throughout the 1960s, Spaniards were already concerned about the political future of the country, and more specifically, post-Franco Spain. The restricted freedom of assembly and association led them to develop other ways of discussing politics. From private gatherings, via study groups and publications, to 'cultural' associations and political dinners, Spaniards found the way to talk about the political problems of the country and exchange their ideas about them. But, the Spanish people could not, in any way, have a real say in the politics of their country. Not even the members of the Francoist Cortes were able to make political decisions without Franco's prior acceptance. The Cortes were merely an administrative body. Notwithstanding, some *aperturistas* regarded its family sector as their only hope in influencing the decision-making process. Thus, given the lack of political associations, they sought to increase public participation in politics through the associations of heads of families, which they regarded as their best potential channels of public opinion.

2.3. The Spanish Family as political representation

In March 1960, Alfonso Osorio gave a lecture at the premises of the ACNP within the cycle of lectures about 'Family Representation'. According to Osorio, Franco had given the 'go-ahead' for the creation of family associations as channels of public

¹⁰³ The lectures are collected in Club Siglo XXI, *La España del Futuro y la Monarquía*, (Madrid: Fomento Editorial, 1972); *España, su Monarquía y Europa*, (Madrid: Fomento Editorial, 1974); *España, su Monarquía y el Futuro*, (Madrid: Fomento Editorial, 1975); *España, Monarquía y Cambio Social*, (Madrid: Fomento Editorial, 1976).

representation and opinion.¹⁰⁴ Franco's words of encouragement gave rise to an ongoing debate on this issue, which ultimately led to approval of the Law of Family Representation in the Cortes in 1967.

Francoist authorities had defined the Spanish political system as 'an organic democracy'.¹⁰⁵ The meaning of 'organic democracy', as Amodia explains, 'remains to be discovered. There is no official explanation, and a search through the constitution for a legal explanation contributes little.'¹⁰⁶ The closest meaning to 'organic democracy' is perhaps the one given by the Programmatic Norms of the regime whereby the Spanish system is defined as a 'democracy [that] would rest upon the natural representative institutions: family, municipality, and syndicate'.¹⁰⁷ This philosophy, which had been introduced by José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the founder of the Falange, was adopted by Franco's regime, and removed any chance of introducing political parties to the system. According to José Antonio - as he was commonly known - 'no one is born a member of a political party, [...] but, we are all born members of a family, we are all members of a municipality, we all do our best at work...'.¹⁰⁸ In the early 1960s, Franco reiterated to the Cortes that in 'our democracy [...] heads of households [family representatives] chose one third of the councillors of our municipalities, the syndicates another third, and the cultural and corporative entities the remaining third'.¹⁰⁹

In practice, however, this system of representation did not imply that the Spanish population had a say in the country's politics. In the syndical elections workers chose their representatives to speak on their behalf to their employer at an internal level

¹⁰⁴ ACNP, Bulletin No. 677, 1 March 1960, pp. 5-6.

¹⁰⁵ Martín Oviedo, "La representación política en el actual regimen español", p. 244.

¹⁰⁶ Amodia, *Franco's political legacy*, p. 93.

¹⁰⁷ Sixth point of the F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. Lecture given by don Victor Fernández González in the *Círculo de Estudios del Centro de Madrid*. ACNP, Bulletin No. 679, 1 April 1960, pp. 3-6. See also, *ABC*, 31 March 1963, pp. 48-49.

¹⁰⁸ *Fuerza Nueva*, No. 126, 7 June 1969, p. 13. See also, Adolfo Muñoz Alonso, *Un pensador para un pueblo*, (Madrid: Ediciones Almena, 1969), p.222.

and, therefore, the workers' representatives dealt only with work-related matters. In the municipal elections the duty of a candidate elected for the post of *concejal*, or town councillor, was merely administrative, and therefore carried no political responsibility.¹¹⁰ The family election, however, was regarded by some *aperturistas* as a possible channel to increase public participation at the Cortes. Manuel Fraga, in his capacity as National Delegate of Associations¹¹¹, took important steps for the strengthening of the family as a representative body in the Cortes.

On the one hand, in 1958, Fraga laid the foundations that would ensure families proper representation in public life. To that end, he first of all created a sub-delegation within his main Delegation of Associations called Service of Family Associations, or *Servicio de Asociaciones Familiares*, and put Gabriel Elorriaga, a journalist and university student who had directed the prestigious student magazine *La Hora*, in charge of the Service. Elorriaga brought with him a number of brilliant university students such as Juan José Bellod, Ernesto Pérez de Lama, Enrique Ramos, Jesús López Medel, Luis González Seara, Luis Borreguero and Octavio Cabezas, most of whom were to be connected to Fraga in ensuing years. Fraga edited a wide range of works devoted to family affairs. Among them was the periodical *Hojas de Información y Documentación*, which later became the monthly magazine *Familia Española*, directed by Gabriel Elorriaga. In December 1962, Fraga, in his capacity as Minister of Information and Tourism, declared the magazine to be of 'public interest'.¹¹² In February 1959, Fraga also organized the 'First Congress of the Spanish Family' in order to bring together people, institutions, and entities concerned with family-related problems. The outcome

¹⁰⁹ *Discursos y mensajes del Jefe del Estado*, (Madrid: Dirección General de Información, 1964), p. 210.

¹¹⁰ *ABC*, 23 March 1967, p. 32.

¹¹¹ The National Delegation of Associations had been created in July 1957 as part of the structure of the National Movement. Its aim was to encourage the creation of professional associations and associations of heads of families. See Amodia, *Franco's political legacy*, p. 137.

of the congress was quite positive. The 'concept' of family was widely acknowledged as being of vital interest, and the conclusions reached at the congress became the basis for the future Law of Family Associations.¹¹³

Following the Family Congress, on 1 April 1959, the General Secretary of the Movement created the so-called National Council of Associations, from which a network of family associations was to be set up. But, as López Rodó points out, 'evidently, these associations had nothing to do with the recognition of political pluralism'.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, Fraga encouraged the participation of family members in several public and private organizations, as well as the collaboration of experts, intellectuals and public authorities to develop family-related-topics for further study. With his team he prepared a proposal for a Law of Family Associations. Following the example set by the congress, the Catholic ACNP also organized a series of talks, called 'Family Representation', where they discussed the role of the Spanish family in national politics. These lectures boosted the hope of those who, like Federico Silva - elected Vice-President of the ACNP in 1960¹¹⁵ - believed that family associations must 'defend and promote the rights of the individual, as an integral part of a family, and the rights of families in all fields. [Thus, family associations] must implement the political representation before any political organization'.¹¹⁶

Yet, the proposed Law of Associations of Heads of Household, announced by the Spanish authorities in 1964, brought discontent even among the fervent defenders of family representation, including members of the Spanish clergy. As Federico Silva recalls, 'the government had sent a bill to the Cortes which proposed that all

¹¹² *Familia Española*, No. 100, February 1968, p. 28.

¹¹³ ACNP, Bulletin No. 679, 1 April 1960; Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 26.

¹¹⁴ López Rodó, *Memorias I*, p. 173.

¹¹⁵ Federico Silva, *Memorias Políticas*, (Planeta, Barcelona, 1993), pp. 78-79.

¹¹⁶ ACNP, Bulletin No. 679, 1 April 1960, p. 6.

associations of heads of households were part of the Movement [...]. From the Catholic Church's point of view, [this bill] meant the denial of the natural and supra-political character of the family'.¹¹⁷ sGiven that Silva had been appointed member of the committee that dealt with this question, the Archbishop of Valencia, Monsignor Marcelino Olaechea (also a *procurador* in Cortes) as well as many bishops asked Silva to oppose the bill. Thus, on 29 January 1965, Silva sent a letter to the President of the Cortes whereby, on behalf of the religious *Conferencia de Metropolitanos*, headed by Monsignor Olaechea, he expressed serious concern about the proposed bill. Silva argued that the bill did not respect the natural principles of the family as a basic cell of the society, and did not favour the unity of the Spanish people.¹¹⁸

Those points were important but there were others who questioned more fundamental issues. For instance, Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez believed that, 'it is not in the nature of the family to transform itself into a channel of political representation'. The Christian Democrats went further by adding that, unlike the so-called 'natural' channels, that is family, municipalities and unions, 'legally recognized political associations would be dedicated to the gathering together of men of different political persuasions to address the needs of common well-being, on the politics of restructure and socio-economic development, on the cultural promotion, etc., and they would also exercise a constructive criticism of the government's work'. Ruiz-Giménez concluded that political associations would only be possible in Spain, however, after a new Press Law (which as we already know, was passed in 1966), and a new Law of Associations were

¹¹⁷ Silva, *Memorias políticas*, p. 91.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 91-2. López Rodó reproduces a letter that Silva sent to Monsignor Olaechea in December 1964, explaining a list of proposed amendments to the bill. See *Enmienda a la totalidad de la Ley de Asociaciones de Cabezas de Familia entregada por Federico Silva al Arzobispo de Valencia, Mons. Marcelino Olaechea, de Diciembre de 1964*. Letter reproduced in López Rodó, *Memorias*, Anejo 57, pp. 754-758.

added to the statutes.¹¹⁹ Time would prove him right. In any case, Silva's note was passed to the Caudillo, and the proposed bill was never mentioned again.¹²⁰

Indeed, public participation in national politics and freedom of association were becoming issues of importance inside and outside the regime. For instance, during a worker's strike in the North of Spain in 1962 members of the Catholic JOC and HOAC published leaflets that referred to the Church's doctrine on worker's rights. The various points included proper salaries, right of association, right of workers to lead their own organizations and the right to strike. Yet, the police intercepted the leaflets before they could reach the workers. Ramón Torrella, member of JOC and years later Archbishop of Tarragona, had his Church licence suspended for more than one month.¹²¹ Also, in the mid-1960s, four to five-hundred university-linked men and women met to discuss freedom of association at a Capuchin friary outside Barcelona. The gathering was halted by the police, and some thirty-four of the participants were fined. But, their appeal was closely followed by university members across Spain, who organized demonstrations all over the country, especially in Madrid. The demonstrations went on from April until May. Moreover, the Church protested against the ill-treatment received by one of the detained students at the hands of the police.¹²² In 1967, during a lecture given in Malaga, Mariano Navarro Rubio, in his capacity as Governor of the Bank of Spain, talked about the still controversial issue of 'social participation'. In a moderate way, Navarro Rubio argued that 'participation in public duties could no longer be the exclusive responsibility of one group, or of the authorities. [...] Social participation had to be conducted through social groups, [...], which nowadays not only ask for protection

¹¹⁹ ACNP, Bulletin No. 783, 15 September 1964.

¹²⁰ Silva, *Memorias Políticas*, p. 93.

¹²¹ Bardavío & Sinova, *Todo Franco*, p. 389.

but for participation [as well]'. Navarro Rubio emphasized the need to find new formulas of expression to allow a proper 'contrast of views', and hence avoid the movement of opinions through clandestine or marginal ways.¹²³

On those grounds, and given the lack of political associations, the more moderate members of the regime sought to strengthen the power of the family sector in the Cortes in an attempt to achieve greater popular participation in national politics. Yet, the apologists of this system of participation had to wait from 1960 (when Franco had allegedly given the go-ahead) until the final approval of the Law of Family Representation, approved in the summer of 1967 (this law is studied in more detail in Chapter 3). The Spanish authorities declared that this law represented the wish to complete 'the system of our organic democracy and to improve the representative system, encouraging greater participation from the different social sectors in public duties.'¹²⁴ The Spanish system of representation, therefore, would be integrated by the Law of Family Representation, the Organic Law of the Movement and the Syndical Law, obviously all under the tight control of the regime.¹²⁵ This was another trick used by the regime to disguise the lack of real public representation at the Cortes.

Conclusion

Franco's dictatorship prohibited the formation of political associations and hence political parties. Until the 1964 approval of the Law of Associations, the right to associate was ratified through the Decree of 25 January 1941; the Charter of the Spanish

¹²² *A.R.*, A Review of the Year 1966, p. 280.

¹²³ *ABC*, 11 April 1967, p. 49.

¹²⁴ See Martín Oviedo, "La representación política en el actual regimen español", p. 244.

¹²⁵ After countless debates, and modifications, the Syndical Law was finally approved on 16 February 1971. This thesis will focus on those laws, which are directly related with the public representation on national politics. The workers would elect their representatives at the Cortes to defend labour issues. Thus, given the exclusive labour character of this law I am not going to study it further. For more details on this issue see, for example, Amodia,

People - or *Fuero de los Españoles* - of 17 July 1945; the Law of Referendum of 1945. Yet freedom of assembly remained very restricted. The Law of Associations of 1964 confirmed that, 'the right of association is one of the natural rights of men'. But the theoretical recognition of the right of association did not, in practice, grant permission to associate and meet freely. The 1964 Law gave people the opportunity to create entities with cultural purposes - in the widest sense. The possibility of participating in national politics via a network of elected political associations was consequently unthinkable.

The economic and social transformation that Spain experienced from the end of the 1950s, but especially throughout the 1960s, brought to the surface the contradictions between Franco's institutions and the economic capitalist system that Spain had become. Fear of provoking the debilitation of the system, and with it the power loss of a comfortably settled political class, led the regime *inmovilistas* to refuse the implementation of reforms. Some member of the regime, however, did not share such a regressive stance. These were the origins of the division between *aperturistas* and *inmovilistas*. The important point to emphasize is that whereas some observers like Rodolfo Martín Villa state that the Francoist political class had started to split around 1966-1967 (over the Organic Law of the State), such a division, although confirmed during the 1960s, dates from the 1950s when their stance pro or against the opening up of the system was beginning to be drawn.¹²⁶

Given the impossibility of forming legal political groups, people, connected in different degrees to the regime, developed alternative ways to meet in order to discuss the political problems of the country. These included private gatherings, publications (newspapers and magazines), study groups or clubs (which normally were formed

Franco's political legacy, pp. 144-159. Also *Cuadernos para el Diálogo* deals with the syndical problem basically since its first publication in 1963.

¹²⁶ Martín Villa, *Al servicio*, p. 48.

around a publication), trading or commercial societies, cultural associations and political dinners. Some of these people became part of the *aperturistas* and some others – the most progressive – became part of the democratic opposition during the economic boom of the 1960s and as a result of the Francoists' reluctance to modernize the regime. They all realized, however, that the Spanish people could not, in any way, have a say in the politics of the country. The legal ways to allegedly participate in the politics of the State were through the so-called 'natural channels' that is to say the family, municipality and unions, all represented at the Cortes. Yet, not even the members of the Francoist Cortes were able to make political decisions without Franco's prior acceptance. Having said that, the most moderate Francoists regarded the family sector as their only hope to increase popular representation at the Cortes through a network of associations of heads of families. The Law of Family Representation was finally approved in 1967 but it did not yield the expected increase in popular representation.

Chapter - 3

*In search of the 'Third Way'? (1967-1969)*¹

Despite the significance of the Law of Family Representation, the most important event in 1967 was undoubtedly the approval of the *Ley Orgánica del Estado*, or Organic Law of the State (LOE). The LOE was approved by Referendum on 14 December 1966, and promulgated by the Cortes on 10 January 1967.² The LOE stressed the separation between the Head of State and Government although it was not until 1973 that Franco delegated some power to Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco by appointing him President of the Government.³ The approval of this law marked the threshold of the period before the transition to democracy, whose beginning is considered by many observers to be the end of 1975, following Franco's death on 20 November 1975.

This chapter is a study of the first serious attempt by the regime to establish a network of political associations albeit under the strict control of the Movement. The enthusiasm felt by *aperturista* circles at the approval of the LOE had its roots in the potential of the law for introducing reforms, particularly in the area of public participation in political affairs. But, by 1969, their enthusiasm had waned. The Caudillo's evident reluctance to modernize his regime hindered any progress in the direction desired by the *aperturistas*. Nevertheless, a greater level of awareness of the need to introduce political associations was achieved among a larger number of Francoists. A legalized network of political associations would facilitate a peaceful

¹ Cruz Martínez Esteruelas explained the term of political associations as the 'third way' between political parties and a single-party system. Quoted in Juan Ferrando Badía, *Del Autoritarismo a la Democracia*, (Madrid: Rialp, 1987), p. 47.

² BOE, *Ley Orgánica del Estado*, 10 January 1967 (Publication date, 1 July 1967).

³ The separation of the Head of State and Government had been previously established on Article 2 of the *Ley Jurídica de la Administración* of 26 July 1957, but obviously neglected until 1967. See Amodia, *Franco's political legacy*, p. 47.

transition to a post-Francoist era. The predictions for the following years were, however, rather negative.⁴

3.1. The Organic Law of the State of 1967

At the end of the 1950s, Franco had received three drafts for a possible Organic Law. These drafts had been drawn up by Francisco Herrero Tejedor and José Solís, Carrero Blanco and López Rodó, and Manuel Fraga. Yet, Franco did not seem willing to compromise at that stage. Paradoxically, during the speech for the opening of the seventh legislative year of the Cortes, in 1961, Franco encouraged the *procuradores* to keep on working in order to 'complete and continue the work of the previous Cortes and complete our legislation with the Organic Law of the State, which would complete and frame the institutions of the regime, and the already enacted Fundamental Laws, in a harmonious system.'⁵ But, despite the Caudillo's encouragement, the Organic Law was not completed that year. Franco's contradictory behaviour and negative attitude towards the future of his own regime created uneasiness among his collaborators.

Throughout 1963 and 1964, Franco was pressed constantly on the subject of the Organic Law. But, it was on Friday 2 April 1965 when Mariano Navarro Rubio, Finance Minister, openly questioned Franco about the future of the regime during a cabinet meeting. He was not alone. Castiella and Fraga seconded Navarro Rubio's daring questioning. In fact, Fraga intervened by saying that, 'even though he thought of himself as the last (*último*) of the Ministers, he felt right to beg Franco, on behalf of thirty million Spaniards, to explain his plans for the future'. The Caudillo agreed with Fraga's suggestion but he claimed to need some more time.⁶ Franco's hesitation in giving a proper answer prompted Fraga to tell the Caudillo that, 'there is no time to

⁴ Dionisio Ridruejo *et al*, *España perspectiva*, 1972, (Madrid: Guadiana de Publicaciones, 1972), p. 25-41.

spare and I beg you to make use of what time we have'. To which Franco responded, 'do you think I do not realize? Do you think I am a circus clown?'.⁷

This pressure on the Caudillo hastened to his decision finally to promulgate the long-awaited LOE or Spanish Constitution. Of the three drafts presented to him in the 1950s, Franco chose the one by Carrero and López Rodó. Fraga's version advocated 'European freedoms, political associations and a Chamber elected by universal suffrage'.⁸ On these grounds, Fraga's draft was obviously refused. Incidentally it was Fraga himself who, as Minister of Information, launched an impressive campaign in favour of the referendum of the LOE that was to be held on 14 December 1966. There was not, however, a campaign favouring the 'NO' vote. Fraga's Ministry spread the idea that a 'NO' vote was a vote for Moscow. And, as if the propaganda machinery of the regime was not enough, the Caudillo himself appeared on television for the first time to ask Spaniards to vote 'YES' in the Organic Law referendum. What with blanket support by the media, the gratitude felt by some towards the Caudillo, and fears of reprisal felt by others, an impressive and unprecedented turn-out of eighty-eight per cent of the electorate was secured of which over ninety-five per cent voted 'Yes'.⁹ Such a spectacular result did not surprise Franco: he had expected it. The international press spread rumours that the referendum had not been cleanly conducted which led Franco to comment on the undemocratic nature of the press even in the face of truth.¹⁰

The so-called 'Constitution' completed the institutionalization of the regime, and confirmed the Monarchy as its future form, but it failed to clarify the identity of

⁵ *Discursos y mensajes del Jefe del Estado*, (1960-1963), (Madrid: Ediciones Españolas, 1964).p. 241.

⁶ López Rodó, *Memorias I*, pp. 519-20.

⁷ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 135. Translation taken from Preston, *Franco*, pp. 721-22.

⁸ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 86.

⁹ Preston, *Franco*, pp. 729-31. See also, Amodia, *Franco's political legacy*, p. 47.

Franco's successor or the future of the Movement. In other words, the most important issues for the nation were still unanswered. According to Stanley Payne, the law resolved the existing contradictions between the six Fundamental Laws, and eliminated traces of Fascist terminology within the regime. But, 'no basic changes were introduced, thus maintaining the structure and mechanisms on which the regime had long rested.'¹¹ That was 'the adoption of a democratic appearance, obviously only superficial, but good enough to guarantee the survival of the regime and to adopt the peculiar nature of an organic democracy.'¹² In other words, the LOE was the culmination of a series of 'cosmetically' democratic laws such as the *Carta Magna* of social justice in Spain, the so-called, *Fuero de los Españoles*, (approved in 1945), the Referendum Law and the Reforms of the Cortes, approved in 1946 and 1947, respectively.

The most optimistic members of Franco's regime, however, had reasons to believe that he was willing to modernize it. In accordance with the LOE:

The legal vitality and political vigour of the regime, [and] its adaptation to the current needs [...] provides, allows and advises completion and perfection of the fundamental legislation. [...] The additional dispositions aim to introduce the precise modifications in the already promulgated Fundamental Laws in order to [...] perfect and accentuate the representative character of the political order, that is the basic principle of our public institutions.

Among the main modifications, the law established:

The inclusion in the Cortes of a new group of *procuradores familiares*, chosen by the heads of family and married women, in accordance with the principle of equality of the political rights of women; to extend the representation to other Colleges, Institutions or Associations; [...] and in general, emphasize the authenticity of the representation.¹³

Despite the promising tone of modernization, Franco's idea was quite the opposite. The LOE did not allow the creation of political parties although, as the

¹⁰ Francisco Franco Salgado-Araujo, *Mis conversaciones privadas con Franco*, (Barcelona: Planeta, 1976), pp. 489-90.

¹¹ Stanley Payne, *The Franco Regime, 1936-1975* (London: Wisconsin, 1986), p. 514. See also Dominguez Ortiz, *Historia de España*, p. 214.

¹² Jorge de Esteban & Luis López Guerra, *De la Dictadura a la Democracia*. Diario de un periodo constituyente (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, Facultad de Derecho, Sección de Publicaciones, 1979), p. 22. See also, Preston, *Franco*, p. 729.

¹³ BOE, *Ley Orgánica del Estado*, 10 January 1967 (Publication date: 11 January 1967).

Caudillo asserted 'the exclusion of political parties should not in any way imply the exclusion of the legitimate *contraste de pareceres* [and] the critical analysis of the governmental solutions'.¹⁴ Which was another way of saying that nothing had changed because Spaniards had no way to express their points of views on governmental policies. The only substantial novelty of the LOE was the emergence of the figure of a President of the Government, which represented a timid yet important step towards a more modern political system (although in effect no president was appointed until 1973). According to Franco, however, 'the most important innovation of this law is to consider that political life must develop within an orderly fashion' within the Fundamental Laws. 'This measure', he explained, 'perfects the already very advanced *Estado de Derecho*.'¹⁵ Such a statement was a contradiction in itself since a dictatorial system cannot be, by definition, an *Estado de Derecho* or a democracy, and, given the many restrictions in human rights imposed by Franco's regime, Spain could be anything but a democracy.

The restrictions of the LOE, however, did not prevent there being a short period of hope among the most progressive members of the Movement, who saw the law as a platform for the introduction of at least some reforms. Among these was that of achieving greater popular participation in national affairs, and their principal goal, the legalization of a 'legal opposition'. In other words, the regime would support the legalization of political associations that had been created within the boundaries of the Movement.¹⁶ At the end of the 1960s, it was believed that the success of a law of political associations - albeit a limited law - was closer to being achieved than at any time before.

¹⁴ Quoted in Ferrando Badía, *El regimen de Franco*, p. 156.

¹⁵ Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 138.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

The approval of the LOE in 1967 was followed by the Law of Family Representation, the Law of Religious Freedom and the Organic Law of the Movement and its National Council.¹⁷ Throughout the 1960s Manuel Fraga and Fernando María Castiella worked together on the idea of creating a proposal for religious freedom in Spain. Not surprisingly, such a proposal was condemned by the most conservative sector of the regime. Franco's right hand man, Admiral Carrero Blanco, openly accused both Ministers of '*apertura a siniestra*' or 'opening to the Left.'¹⁸ Domestically, this incident brought to public attention the existing internal factions of the regime, that is the *inmovilistas* and *aperturistas*. Internationally, this incident exacerbated the tension between the Catholic Church and the regime, since the Vatican had on a number of occasions advised Franco about the urgent need for reform over issues like the Caudillo's privilege of appointing bishops at will.¹⁹ On 28 June 1967, Castiella's efforts were rewarded when the Law of Religious Freedom was finally approved.²⁰ Without underestimating the importance of this law, which obviously meant an unprecedented opening up of the regime towards more modern religious attitudes, and represented a breakthrough in the relations between Church and State, I concentrate on the Law of Family Representation and the Organic Law of the Movement. These two laws have a direct connection to the subject of this thesis as they refer to the relation between the regime and the population, and the latter's participation in state affairs.

¹⁷ BOE, *Ley que regula la participación familiar en Cortes; Ley Orgánica del Movimiento Nacional y su Consejo Nacional*; and *Ley que regula el ejercicio de la libertad religiosa*. 28 June 1967. (Publication date: 1 July 1967). The Movement's National Council merely acted as a consultative body for the national and international policies of the country. When the Cortes were created in 1942, the National Councillors became members of the Cortes, that is *procuradores*, and the Council became a 'high chamber' (like the Senate), but still with limited competences. See Bardavío & Sinova, *Todo Franco*, pp. 154-5.

¹⁸ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, pp. 115-7.

¹⁹ Preston, *Franco*, pp. 718-9.

3.2. The Law of Family Representation

On June 28 1967 the LOE institutionalized the first of the 'natural' channels of participation, that of the family. The Law of Family Representation had a twofold objective. On the one hand, it was to complete the organic system of representation through natural entities (family, syndicate and municipality), and, on the other hand, to 'democratize' these channels – namely the family one - by giving them greater representation.²¹ The Law established that, out of a total of 560 *procuradores*, 108 (20% of the total number) would be from the family sector, or *procuradores familiares*. There would be two *procuradores familiares* for each province - regardless of the number of inhabitants²² - who would be chosen in an unprecedented direct, fair and secret ballot of adult men, heads of households and married women. The number of voters amounted to a total of 16,415,139.²³

So far as the voting system was concerned, the approval of the Law of Family Representation was one of the most 'democratically' advanced steps taken by the Spanish regime in terms of participation. Hence many of the potential *familiares* - as they were commonly known - regarded this sector as a possible platform for the introduction of reforms. The election of *familiares* was, according to an editorial of the daily Monarchist *ABC*, 'the first truly political election in the thirty years [of the regime]'. The editor argued that, although Spaniards had had the opportunity to vote in

²⁰ A summary of the content of the speeches that, in relation with the project of the law of religious freedom, Fernando Herrero Tejedor, and Tomás Allende y García-Baxter gave at the Cortes is in *ABC*, 27 June 1967.

²¹ *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 50, November 1967, p. 24. See also Martín Oviedo, "La representación política", p. 244.

²² It is interesting to note that the total amount of members of parliament differs in each of the sources consulted. The amounts given oscillates between 548 and 565, and consequently, the amount of *procuradores*. See next footnote as an illustrative example.

²³ In 1967 the 548 members of the Cortes, elected or appointed, were divided into various groups: 25 deputies for professional associations; 150 for the Syndicates - workers and employers (elected through indirect elections); 113 representing the 9,032 municipalities, and 53 provincial councils; 108 representing the families (only sector elected through direct elections), another 110 *procuradores* were ex-officio - cabinet, university rectors, and so forth - and 24 of them were appointed by Franco. The government was not accountable to the Cortes. See Juan J. Linz, "From Falange to Movement-Organization", pp. 169. See also, *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, Nos. 47 & 48, August-

the Referendum of 1966, and also regularly voted in syndical and municipal elections, in neither of these was a representative chosen for the Cortes. For instance, in the Referendum of 1966 Spaniards voted for or against the LOE. On the other hand, as mentioned in Chapter 2, in the syndical elections the election of a candidate was internal and, the elected workers' representatives did not have a saying in national politics but only in professional matters. The same applied to the municipal elections where the *concejal*, or town councillor, was merely an administrative position, and therefore carried no political responsibility.²⁴

Yet, the Law of Family Representation did not escape the critics. Some believed that because the ballot was restricted to heads of household, adult men and married women, it excluded an important number of Spanish citizens, especially women. The monthly *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, for instance, argued that the electoral norms regulating the Law of Family Representation were restrictive and discriminatory.²⁵ Even old-time apologists for the system of family representation, such as Laureano López Rodó and Federico Silva, believed that this system was insufficient. They agreed on the need to open a path for the opposition (they were probably thinking of a controlled, moderate, opposition to the regime rather than a real opposition as represented by the Socialists or Communists) to participate in national politics, and they therefore favoured the establishment of a pluralist order.²⁶

The eligibility to become a candidate for the post of *familiar* was one of the factors that clearly demonstrated the lack of democratic representation. Apart from a list of administrative requirements that the candidate had to fulfil, - like being connected by

September 1967, pp. 12-14. For a detailed chart of the composition of the Cortes see Amodia, *Franco's political legacy*, pp. 97-100.

²⁴ *ABC*, 23 March 1967, p. 32. This view had been similarly supported by Ruiz Giménez years earlier. See *A.C.N. de P.*, Boletín No. 783, 15 September 1964. Lecture also published by *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No.18, March 1965, pp. 5-12.

birth and/or residence to the provinces they were representing - the candidate had to meet at least one of the following conditions. They had either to be, or have been, a *procurador*; or be nominated by five *procuradores*; or be nominated by seven regional deputies; or, alternatively, they had to collect the signatures of no less than one thousand heads of family or married women (or 0.5% of the provincial census) in support of his candidacy in the province in which they wished to stand.²⁷

More than sixty per cent of the candidates to *familiares* were, anyway, either current *procuradores* (or had been in previous legislatures) or enjoyed official support. As a result, their few independent opponents rarely defeated them (the exception being the candidate Juan Manuel Fanjul Sedeño, who was voted in despite being an independent candidate).²⁸ This was particularly evident, as they had to finance their own campaigns. Those candidates who were supported by official funds, or by a powerful pressure group, generally succeeded in their candidacy. Understandably, there were many citizens who, unable to collect several million pesetas for the electoral campaign, had no real chance of candidacy, let alone election.²⁹ As far as one can see, it was clear that the candidatures, although officially open to everyone, were destined for the privileged Francoist elite. Thus, the renowned and most democratic law so far, that

²⁵ *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 50, November 1967, p. 24

²⁶ López Rodó, *Memorias II*, p. 149.

²⁷ BOE, *Ley sobre las normas de las elecciones a procuradores familiares*, 26 June 1967 (Publicacion date:); *ABC*, 31 March 1967.

²⁸ Amodia, *Franco's political legacy*, p. 109. According to *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, however, the number of *procuradores* with parallel official posts was 80 per cent of the total. Thus, in 1967 out of 108 *procuradores*, 31 had been directly designated to posts in the local, provincial, or central administration; 36 were active militants of the FET y de las JONS, or provincial councillors of the Movement, current holders or ex-holders of syndical, and Movement posts. None of these were included in the previous section; 3 *procuradores* of the then current Legislature, which was about to expire, and were not included in previous groups; 4 Presidents and directors of the family associations, at national or provincial level, not included in previous groups; 3 second lieutenants, not included in previous groups; 4 directors of the *Cajas de Ahorro*, and of the National Health Service, not included in previous groups; plus 24 of other professions. The addition of these six groups gives a total of 81 *procuradores*, in other words, 80% of the total. See *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 50, November 1967, p. 26. For more details on Manuel Fanjul see also Bardavío y Sinova, *Todo Franco*, p. 250.

²⁹ Eduardo Alvarez Puga, "Los 'familiares', una limitada apertura", in *Dossier Mundo*, September-October, 1971, pp. 9-12. The *familiar* Eduardo Tarragona claimed to have spent 2,037,049 pesetas (around £12,000) in his campaign in Barcelona. See *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 50, November 1967, p. 22.

of family representation, collapsed from within since its basic constituents, the registry for candidates to *familiares*, was not accessible to everyone.

The election of the *familiares* was announced for the 10 October 1967. One of the most positive aspects of this election was that it brought to the Cortes a large number of *aperturistas* of the so-called 'generation of Prince Juan Carlos' (that is those born shortly before, during or immediately after the Civil War - the Prince was born in 1938). Among them were young figures such as Adolfo Suárez, Alfonso Osorio, Fernando Abril Martorell, Tomás Allende, Pío Cabanillas, Rodolfo Martín Villa, Gabriel Cisneros and Marcelino Oreja. This new breed of moderate Francoists, although fully integrated into the regime, was to play a decisive role in the success of the transition to a democratic system.³⁰ Thus, many *familiares* were regarded as *aperturistas* with a few exceptions such as Jaime Capmany.³¹ Yet, the *familiares*, like the other groups in the Cortes, were not independent of the Francoist executive. As seen above, a substantial number of *familiares* held parallel official posts within the administration, which tied them to the will of the executive, thereby diminishing their decision-making power.³² Amando de Miguel argued that in an authoritarian system, like the Spanish one, the *procuradores* (in general) could never - as a minority group - have become an autonomous power by themselves. However, at an individual level the *procuradores* may have enjoyed special privileges because they belonged to other spheres of power.³³

³⁰ López Rodó, *Memorias II*, p. 118.

³¹ Testimony of Alfonso Osorio, 21 September 1999.

³² The *procurador* Juan Manuel Fanjul complained about the lack of power of the *procuradores* to speak to the cabinet. He argued that Franco's Ministers had massive power which made it impossible to use the normal objections and interventions that could be used by other *procuradores* in order to secure debates in favour of proposal or against. *Dossier Mundo*, September-October 1971, p. 74.

³³ According to Amando de Miguel, the spheres of power the *familiares* belonged to were the following: 18% had important posts in public limited corporations; 26% claimed to have important decorations; 40% appeared in Who's

A group of around sixty *familiares* who resented their lack of decision-making powers at the Cortes decided to organize their meetings outside Madrid, away from the Cortes, although the executive had full knowledge of their movements. On 20 January 1968 they met in Pamplona, and later in cities like Salamanca, Zaragoza and Barcelona. They earned the nickname of *Cortes trashumantes*, or 'the wandering Cortes'.³⁴ The government stopped authorizing these meetings, and their adventure soon came to an end. These meetings had become very popular because the press wrote about them, and it was through this publicity that people began to learn of political affairs unknown to them until then. In September of that same year a meeting of *familiares* in Ceuta was halted by the Interior Ministry, which would not authorize it. From then on, their meetings were held at the Cortes behind closed doors. The regime stopped these meetings as well because they addressed political problems where the Cortes merely dealt with technical problems. It was believed that 'political discussions' should not be on the *procuradores*' agenda.³⁵ So, if political discussions were not allowed by the Spanish population or even by *procuradores en Cortes*, on whose agenda were they allowed? The *familiar* Eduardo Tarragona resigned in protest at the lack of trust shown by the executive.³⁶

The initial enthusiasm and interest that had emerged from the meetings of the *familiares* faded away due to tight control and lack of independence. A situation that also affected prospective candidates for the 1971 elections. Thus, in 1967 there were

Who; 65% had already been *procuradores* in previous legislatures; 67% had university degrees; and 72% had managerial positions. Thus, de Miguel argued that, regardless of their success in being elected or re-elected *familiares* they still belonged to a powerful minority. See FOESSA, *Informe Sociológico 1970*, Chapter 5, p. 35.

³⁴ Some observers also called this group of *familiares* '*Cortes Gastronómicas*', since they regularly met in a restaurant in Madrid. See *Don Quijote*, No. 3, Madrid, 24 October 1968, p. 5.

³⁵ *Mundo*, 1-VIII-70, p. 22..

³⁶ García Escudero, *Historia de la época de Franco*, pp. 126-127. Strong reactions by some *familiares* against the suspension of the Ceuta meeting can also be seen in *Don Quijote*, No. 5, 7 November 1968, p. 4.

328 candidates for 108 seats, whereas in 1971 the number of candidates declined to 250. According to José Amodia, the understanding among some prospective candidates that the family sector was not an engine for change within the regime - as it initially appeared to be -, prompted feelings of disillusionment and a lack of interest that led to the decrease in the number of candidates.³⁷ There were also other reasons, however. In 1975, Alfonso Osorio declared his intention not to stand as candidate for Santander again because he disagreed with the way 'the electoral system has worked until now'. In other words, not allowing the defence of ideological positions, but merely personal ones.³⁸

As a group, the *familiares* may not have exerted great influence upon the regime, yet they achieved something perhaps more important. According to Alfonso Osorio, the *familiares* managed to make the 'well informed man-in-the-street' aware of the existence of a progressive current within the regime willing to modernize the political system.³⁹

3.3. The Organic Law of the Movement

As we can see, the first attempted institutional reform based on the ordinances of the LOE failed to bring the long-awaited increase in real public participation in national politics. Although the system of suffrage was the most democratic so far, the overwhelming majority of the *familiares* candidates came from the Francoist pool. In other words, no real chance was offered to the common citizens who were not directly attached to the Movement to pursue a seat as *familiar*. The same line followed the

³⁷ Amodia, *Franco's political legacy*, p. 107.

³⁸ *Informaciones*, 11 Octubre 1975, p. 9.

³⁹ Testimony of Alfonso Osorio, 21 September 1999.

reform of the Movement itself, which was perhaps the most controversial of those reforms approved on 28 June 1967.

The initiative to reform the Movement was not new, however. As seen in Chapter 1, in 1956 José Luis Arrese, in his capacity of Minister-Secretary of the Movement began to work on the political reform of the regime, that is the separation of the State and the government. According to Linz, Arrese attempted 'to give the Movimiento a more permanent, institutionalized, and perhaps democratized role in the constitution of the state'. But, although his 'proposals represented a revolutionary change in the system', these changes insisted on continuity.⁴⁰ Arrese's proposal failed but the wish to reform the Movement remained, particularly among the *aperturistas*. But, it was not until 1967 that the new Organic Law of the Movement was finally approved.

Article 1 of the new Organic Law of the Movement and its National Council of 1967 - which had allegedly been drafted as early as the spring of 1958⁴¹ - the National Councillors specified:

in virtue of that established in the LOE, the National Movement, communion of the Spaniards in the Principles promulgated by the Fundamental Law of 17 May 1958, states [that] the political order [is] open to the totality of the Spaniards and, for the best service to the homeland, promotes political life in a regime of ordered concurrence of opinions.⁴²

In case there was any doubt, the then Minister-Secretary of the Movement José Solís, confirmed that 'the Movement is the antithesis of a political party, because it is the expression of the whole society rather than the anarchization, and diversity of a party

⁴⁰ Linz, "From Falange to Movement-Organización", pp. 153-155.

⁴¹ See García Escudero, *Historia de la época de Franco*, p. 130. The project of this Law could have been elaborated by Fernando Herrero Tejedor, then Vice-Secretary General of the Movement, in the early 1960s. Herrero proposed a new definition of the functions of the Movement. Among these functions Herrero Tejedor proposed the authorization of family associations and also of married women within the Movement. Thus, even though this measure was initially approved, it was later abolished in 1965 due to violent protests in the Cortes. See *Historia de España: Ramón Menéndez Pidal*. Dirigida por José María Jover Zamora. Vol. XLI. Tomo 1. *La época de Franco* (1939-1975). Política, Ejército, Iglesia, Economía y Administración. (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1996).p. 129.

system. The Movement is a new formula that covers the whole of the regime as the communion of all Spaniards, as the institution of our system of representation, as the organization of services for the Spanish community'.⁴³ But, even Carrero's protégé, Laureano López Rodó believed that the definition of the Movement contained in the new Law was rather regressive, and warned the Caudillo of its contradiction of the allegedly reformist spirit of the LOE. The new law was, according to López Rodó, clearly regressive. It re-enforced the power of the Movement going against any possible modernization of the regime.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, the essence of the Law revived hopes for a greater participation in national politics. Gabriel Cisneros wrote in *Pueblo* that the 'plurality of opinions' that the statute referred to undoubtedly meant the unequivocal arrival of political associations. A similar interpretation was given by Pedro Calvo Hernando from *Nuevo Diario*, who believed that the Law implied, 'at least in theory', the end of the oligarchy-minority phase and the freedom to constitute associations.⁴⁵ Yet, outburst of hope for the establishment of a system formed by real political associations vanished soon. The National Councillor, and former National Chief of the Official Student Syndicate, José Manuel Ortí Bordás, seemed to have a more accurate understanding of the meaning of the Law. Also in *Pueblo* he wrote that since 'the Movement was open to all Spaniards, they all have the right and must have the opportunity to participate in its task. [Thus] the concept of participation replaces that of affiliation, incorporation or militancy. [...] If the thesis of the proposal succeeds, what are to coexist are not different ideologies,

⁴² BOE, *Ley Orgánica del Movimiento Nacional y su Consejo Nacional*. 28 June 1967 (Publication date: 1 July 1967).

⁴³ *Tiempo Nuevo*, No. 32, 6-VII-1967, pp. 26-27.

⁴⁴ López Rodó, *Memorias II*, p. 202.

⁴⁵ *Pueblo*, 19-X-1968, p. 3; *Nuevo Diario*, Dominical, 20-X-68, p. 9.

but the different nuances to be found in the Principles of the Movement'.⁴⁶ Yet, in real terms even such a limited thesis would not have been easy to apply. Franco had no wish to alter the system of representation of the Cortes, which was organized not by political parties but by interests, such as those of the syndicate, municipalities, family and corporations.⁴⁷ In any case, the function of 'channelling within the Principles of the Movement the contrast of opinions (*contraste de pareceres*) over political action' - as stated in the new Organic Law of the Movement - could not be automatically applied. This function had to be strengthened and regulated by yet another Organic Statute of the Movement.

On 14 November 1968, the Second Section of the National Council met to discuss the second and third points of the Organic Statute of the Movement. These points dealt with 'the participation of Spaniards in the Movement', and with 'the associative entities of the Movement' respectively.⁴⁸ These issues, although present for a long time, provoked a passionate debate insofar as they touched on one of the most sensitive points of the regime; that is the possibility to transform the one-party system into one composed of political groups. In the corridors of power the real debate amongst the *aperturistas* was, according to Gabriel Cisneros, 'whether political associations would be mere artefacts within the Movement, or they would be germs of future political parties, within a limited pluralism'.⁴⁹ Undoubtedly, as the director of the daily *ABC* foretold in January 1970, the content of the statute started off what was going

⁴⁶ *Pueblo*, 17-X-1968. See also *Don Quijote*, No. 4, 31 October 1968, p. 4.

⁴⁷ Emilio Romero, *Cartas al Pueblo Soberano*, (Madrid: Afrodísio Aguado, S.A., 1965), p. 24, cited in Miguel, *Informe Sociológico 1970*, Chapter 5, p. 36.

⁴⁸ BOE, *Estatuto Organico del Movimiento Nacional*. 20 December 1968 (Publication date: 4 January 1969).

⁴⁹ Testimony of Gabriel Cisneros Laborda, 13 September 1999.

to be the most polemical 'issue' of the beginning of the 1970s, the issue of political associationism.⁵⁰

A total of thirty-five *procuradores* of diverse Francoist backgrounds discussed the articles of the Statute. Thus, there were old time Falangists, like the several times Minister of Franco, Raimundo Fernández Cuesta; young Falangists, like Rodolfo Martín Villa and Miguel Primo de Rivera; and others not so involved in the Movement, such as Gregorio Marañón Moya. From their different perspectives, therefore, these councillors addressed their main question, 'whether political associations would finally be allowed?'⁵¹ The climax of the debate was reached when the discussion centred on Article 15 of the Statute, by which the population was allowed to form associations - always within the ideological framework of the Movement in order to maintain control. Even a limited concession provoked reactions from the hard-liners. Fernández Cuesta, for instance, opposed any type of association that could threaten the return of political parties. He argued that 'the diversity of opinions in national politics was not new. It has existed in all governments of the past years without the need for associationism. [...] I favour the concurrence of criteria, [and] the more the better. Through associations, if that is the wish, but [in such a way] that those associations do not defend [political] ideologies, [and] do not have a political aim'.⁵²

The most orthodox Francoists shared Fernández Cuesta's view whose main fear was the revival of a party system. But, as Ortí Bordás recalled, 'the Constitution that the Spanish country has overwhelmingly approved does not permit political parties'.⁵³ Their insecurity was, therefore, not justified because Franco would never approve, let

⁵⁰ *El Movimiento y el Asociacionismo*. Declaraciones del Ministro Secretario General del Movement, Torcuato Fernández-Miranda, al Director del Diario "ABC" el día 11 de enero de 1970 y comentarios de prensa. (Madrid: Ed. Del Movement, 1970), p. 21.

⁵¹ *Mundo*, 30-XI-68, pp. 17-20.

alone legalize, such a system. But, Gabriel Cisneros observed that discussions of the Statute were presided over by more profound fears. 'Fear of divorce from the deep reality of the country, fear of disappointing the hopes [built up] around the Statute, [...] fear of provoking indifference among the young people, and fear of throwing legitimate discrepancies off the playing field, and beyond the wall of legality'.⁵⁴

Cruz Martínez Esteruelas, National Delegate of Associations to the Assembly of Provincial Delegates of Associations, attempted to ease the tension with an explanation that satisfied the *inmovilista* side particularly. He defended the position that, unlike political parties, which have their own ideology, associations would be created in accordance with the Principles of the Movement, and within it, which meant that they would be only minor variations of the same ideology. In other words, there would be a contrast of opinions, not of ideologies. On these grounds, according to him, 'between the one-party system, and the pluralism of parties, [...] there is a third way: the associations'.⁵⁵ This may explain why Martínez Esteruelas believed that the ultimate power of the Movement surpassed both the single-party system and the system of political parties. 'One only has to look at the world', he said, 'to realise that the type of democracy based on the classic party system is reduced to a few countries and all of them are under revision'.⁵⁶

During the course of the debates, there was agreement not to prohibit associations that had electoral aims. If there were to be political associations, they should have electoral aims. Otherwise, according to the *procurador* Diego Salas

⁵² Jover Zamora (Dtor.), *Historia de España*, Vol. XLI., p. 130; Eduardo Alvarez Puga, "El Asociacionismo político español", in *Dossier Mundo*, No. 1., May-June, 1971, p. 14.

⁵³ *Mundo*, 21-VI-69, pp. 8-9.

⁵⁴ *Mundo*, 30-XI-68, p. 17.

⁵⁵ Ferrando Badía, *Del Autoritarismo a la Democracia*, p. 47.

⁵⁶ *Mundo*, 8-VI-68, pp. 15-18; *Mundo*, 14-XII-68, pp. 16-17.

Pombo, it would be like putting 'doors in the countryside' (*puertas al campo*).⁵⁷ Some councillors even demanded a proper distinction between the terms 'associations', 'entities' and 'brotherhoods'. This variety of terms, however, did not prevent many Councillors to acknowledge the existence of new currents of thought, and consequently the urgent need to open the regime to those tendencies. Miguel Primo de Rivera, member of the Council of the Realm and nephew of the ideologist of 18 July 1936, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, was one of the most eagerly awaited speakers. Primo de Rivera argued that the refusal to accept the new currents of thought meant *inmovilismo*. 'The regime', he explained, 'is supported by the personal power of General Franco, and the moment he is gone, everything will collapse if there are not thriving institutions in place by which the political system can be supported.'⁵⁸

Incidentally, at that time the weekly *Actualidad Española*, linked to the liberal branch of Opus Dei, published a special report paralleling Primo de Rivera's thesis with the title "*Estos son los cerebros de la corrientes políticas*", or "These are the minds leading the political currents". The report discussed the existence of different ideological affiliations of some members of the regime. According to José Antonio Valverde, the author of the report, there were at least seven ideological groups, themselves sub-divided. These were the Falangists (Manuel Cantarero del Castillo), the Syndicalists (José Solís); the Christian Democrats (Alberto Ballarín Marcial); the Leftist Democrats (Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez); the Monarchists, who themselves were divided into Juanistas (José María Pemán) and Carlists (Carlos Hugo Borbón de Parma); the Socialists (Enrique Tierno Galván); and finally the forces of the new generation (Political clubs such as *Centro de Estudio de Problemas Contemporáneos*, *Club*

⁵⁷ Ferrando Badía, *El regimen de Franco*, p. 168.

⁵⁸ Alvarez Puga, "El Asociacismo político español", pp. 8-9.

Jovellanos, Horizonte-80).⁵⁹ It is noticeable that neither Opus Dei nor Don Juan Carlos appeared on this list.

After a few weeks of intense discussions, the Organic Statute of the Movement was approved on 20 December 1968. José Solís, Minister-Secretary of the Movement, assured the members of the National Council that; 'with the reform of the Movement [...] we are to offer a possibility of political freedom within a unity of principles and objectives'. But, the statute allowed associations only to be created 'for the development of family participation in public life, and for the defence and promotion of the interests of Spanish families' (Article 13 of the Statute). Other types of associations permitted were those for the defence of different professions, cultural values, and so forth (Article 14).⁶⁰ Everyone wondered what had happened to the forgotten political associations. In real terms, the Statute was, according to an editorial of Ruiz Giménez's *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, 'overtly restrictive, and it is to be feared that the situation will worsen, since the Secretary General of the Movement is empowered to draw up a statute of associations.' The editorial was blunt, and surely reflected the opinion of many readers. Among other things, it wrote that 'to announce [...] evolution and openness that does not then occur begins to be a risky and dangerous game for the future coexistence of Spaniards.'⁶¹

The rounds of endless debate had not yet finished. Certain ordinances of the Statute had yet to be redefined in order to allow the creation of political associations. Obviously, orthodox members of the regime took all possible steps to allow the existence of a network of political associations, even within the Movement. The Second

⁵⁹ *Actualidad Española*, No. 854, 16 May 1968, pp. 29-33.

⁶⁰ *Boletín Oficial del Consejo Nacional del Movimiento*, Año XIII, Madrid 12 December 1968, No. 61, pp. 1024, 1027-1033; BOE, *Estatuto Orgánico del Movimiento Nacional*. 20 December 1968 (Publication date: 4 January 1969).

⁶¹ *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 62, November 1968, p. 8-12.

Section of the National Council, therefore, had to elaborate yet another law which determined the conditions under which the associations could be formed. Once drawn up, the basis of the new law had to be presented to all members of the National Council, then await for possible amendments, and once approved, be blessed by the Caudillo: a substantial time lag which could only be explained by fear for the development of proper opposition forces. Thus, as Amodia explained, 'the Movement's National Council could not allow any association, even when acting within the limits of the official doctrine, to develop into a threat to the organization of the Movement'.⁶²

Meanwhile, this painfully slow process was translated into the impatience of the population, which itself was reflected by the press in countless articles. These articles were published by the most progressive newspapers and journals including *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, *Mundo*, *Don Quijote*, *YA* and *Madrid*. According to one of these journals, the press itself was one of the groups covering the institutional vacuum in the national politics. In other words, given the lack of an official institutionalized opposition, the press was acting, in most cases in a moderate way, as the opposition to the regime, which was tolerated perhaps because it had no real access to power.⁶³

3.4. The Legal Basis of Associations within the Movement

During three hot days in June (26, 27, and 28) 1969 the Movement's National Council met to elaborate the so-called *Anteproyecto de Bases del Régimen Jurídico Asociativo del Movimiento* or the *Legal Basis of Associations Within the Movement*, by which, as mentioned above, the procedure for the creation of political associations would be re-defined. Following the usual verbal battle between the *inmovilistas* and

⁶² Amodia, *Franco's political legacy*, p. 138.

⁶³ *Mundo*, 10-II-1968, p. 11; 17-II-1968, p. 11.

aperturistas reflected in a total of 667 interventions, the National Council approved the introduction of a rather limited type of association, the 'association of opinion'; in other words 'opinion without participation'.⁶⁴ On the *aperturista* side there were *procuradores* like Alberto Ballarín Marcial, who made a sound argument in favour of political associations. He claimed that, 'we must avoid the formation of a parallel, and clandestine Spain, [therefore, we must] offer, not a police order to control them, but an alternative, a channel of integration'.⁶⁵ Even Emilio Romero, director of *Pueblo*, the newspaper of the official syndicate, defended the need for political associations. 'I am very afraid', Romero said, 'that the ground [that lies] beneath public opinion collapses if political access to the government is not regulated'. In contrast, the hard-liner Fernández Cuesta argued that, 'when there are associations of a political nature, regardless of their ideology, we have a political party, and [I] oppose that'.⁶⁶

On 3 July 1969, José Solís presided over the session of the National Council during which the proposal was finally approved. Chapter XVII of the proposal dealt with the rather timid 'associations of public opinion' rather than 'political associations', which in fact were not mentioned anywhere in the proposal. During his presentation of the proposal to the National Council, Alejandro Fernández Sordo, asserted that 'the reality is that there is an internal dynamic in this Movement that allows, thanks to its political stability, an authentic evolution without involution that takes us to the existence of new horizons, without erosion either of the Principles, or of the Fundamental Laws [of the Movement]'.⁶⁷ But, if Fernández Sordo's statement about an authentic evolution was sincere, why did the council approve the ambiguous

⁶⁴ *Mundo*, 5-VII-1969, pp. 10-12. The divisions between *continuistas* and *aperturistas* (or *reformistas*), which as mentioned in Chapter 1 dates from the mid-50's, as it was observed by *Madrid* with the occasion of the LOE. See *Madrid*, "Continuistas y Reformistas ante la nueva constitución", 29 November 1966.

⁶⁵ Ferrando Badía, *Del Autoritarismo a la Democracia*, p. 47. See also, Alvarez Puga, "El asociacionismo español", pp. 16-20.

'associations of public opinion', instead of the long-demanded 'political associations'? Yet, the growing impatience of some members of the regime was such that, while still waiting for Franco's ratification of the law they began the formation of commissions - as required by the Law - which would set the basis for each of their future associations of 'public opinion'.⁶⁸

The first to sign its act of constitution was the so-called *Acción Política*, or Political Action, in August 1969. Among its ten promoters were *aperturistas* such as Pío Cabanillas (sub-Secretary of the Ministry of Information and Tourism), Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo (general director of *Española de Explosivos*), Juan Manuel Fanjul (*procurador familiar*), José García Hernández (National Councillor of the Movement for Guadalajara and *procurador* in Cortes), and Joaquín Viola (*procurador familiar*), all of whom had great expectations in the future of the association. It is difficult to define the political ideology of this association although it was supposed not to have any. But, while allegedly being unconditional supporters of the Caudillo, its organizers claimed to favour a representative, Catholic and social monarchy as ordered by the Fundamental Laws. The common ground of the members of this group was their great concern over the future of the country.⁶⁹ Yet, the advocacy of a representative system 'as ordered by the Fundamental Laws' was not particularly adventurous.

The next proposal was presented by the young Falangist Manuel Cantarero del Castillo. The principles of his *Reforma Social Española*, or Spanish Social Reform, were based on the Falangist *Agrupación de Antiguos Miembros del Frente de Juventudes*, or Group of Former Members of the Youth Front, which already had thirty

⁶⁶ *Mundo*, 5-VII-69, pp. 10-12S

⁶⁷ *Boletín Oficial del Consejo Nacional del Movimiento*, Año XIV, Madrid, 17 July de 1969, No. 65, p. 1149.

⁶⁸ A special report on the first projects of associations of 'public opinion' was published by the team of Alvarez Puga, "El asociacionismo español", pp. 18-20, 28-32.

⁶⁹ Alvarez de Miranda, *Del "contubernio"*, p. 69.

thousand members. Thus, Cantarero, who regarded himself as 'Falangist with a decisive Socialist vocation'⁷⁰, had the opportunity to build perhaps the largest association so far. And, even though he wanted to contribute to the new system with a politically advanced association, he was certain that there was too much distrust and narrow-mindedness for it to succeed. That limitation could explain why four of Cantarero's followers, who were themselves *procuradores*, voted against the statute of 3 July 1969.⁷¹

The Christian Democrat group of the *procurador* Alberto Ballarín Marcial drew up another proposal for an association. *Democracia Social*, or Social Democracy, 'will represent', Ballarín declared, 'a very much needed centrist position that will be constructive to our country, [where both] Rightist and Leftist extremist minorities abound'. Its principles, all of them socially-oriented, included the recognition of political plurality, freedom of religion, effective implementation of Human Rights in Spain, free basic education, administrative and economic decentralization of Spain into regions (autonomies), and the correction of the regions' inequalities.

The ultra-Rightist Blas Piñar led the last of the four pioneering proposed associations. Piñar, who voted against the creation of associations at the National Council, claimed that this association of public opinion was created against his will. Allegedly, sympathizers of Piñar's magazine *Fuerza Nueva* (see Chapter 2 for its creation) wished to form an association to defend their ideas publicly. To that end, they persuaded Piñar to modify his opposition to associations and create his own. The remnants of Spanish Ultra-Right who formed *Fuerza Nueva* (name also given to the

⁷⁰ Rafael Herrera interviewed Cantarero del Castillo. See *Mundo*, 28-VI-1969. Although Cantarero was identified with the Falange, he defended a sort of Social Democracy within the Falange. Some of his books on the subject are, Manuel Cantarero del Castillo, *Tragedia del socialismo español: un estudio de los procesos socialistas en España*, (Barcelona: Dopesa, 1971) and *Falange y Socialismo*, (Barcelona: Dopesa, 1973).

⁷¹ *Mundo*, 28-VI-1969.

association) defined the ideology of their association as 'Christian-National', and called for the unity of all Falangists, as they feared that 'the enemy is now perfectly organized, and if in the face of this [we] continue to be separated, divided amongst different associations, [we] can consider ourselves defeated'.⁷²

There were other groups like *La Comución Tradicionalista, Distrito Centro de Madrid* and the group led by the lawyer and civil servant at the Ministry of Commerce, Manuel Funes Robert. These all had the potential to become political associations. But the group which had the most potential for becoming an association - and the last to be announced during that summer - was the one created by the engineer and founder of the *Agrupación Científica Económica y Social*, Joaquín del Soto Hidalgo, at the end of August 1969. The association would be called *Democrática-Político-Social-Económica*, an unusual name for an association whose ideals were based upon unconditional collaboration with the Caudillo. Public order, equality of opportunities, and national unity, were among the seven principles outlined in its proposal.⁷³

Meanwhile, by the autumn of 1969, the proposed *Bases del Régimen Jurídico Asociativo del Movimiento* was still awaiting Franco's signature. Observers wondered what was stopping the Caudillo from giving the go-ahead to a proposal that had been approved unanimously by the National Congress of the Movimiento. He himself had stated that 'the ideas must be debated because through dialogue emerges [...] the remedy that coincides with the precise solution', although he was doing nothing to encourage such debate.⁷⁴ While observers played with various hypotheses to explain this delay, they understood it was the consequence of a deep political problem. From

⁷² *Mundo*, 16-VIII-1969, pp. 10-11.

⁷³ *Mundo*, 30-VIII-69, p. 8. It is interesting to note that although these associations were supposed to be merely of 'public opinion', they all had clear political terms in their names.

the approval of the proposal in July 1969 until the autumn of that year, a couple of events influenced the Spanish political landscape that had a direct effect on the fate of the proposal of political associations. The first event, and perhaps the most important of the two was Franco's official appointment of Don Juan Carlos as his successor on 21 July 1969. Later, the eruption of a financial scandal involving some members of the cabinet led to the second event, an inevitable government change in November.

This cabinet reshuffle clearly hindered the trajectory of the already approved *Bases del Régimen Jurídico Asociativo del Movimiento*. And, although at first sight the actual appointment of Don Juan Carlos as Franco's successor would not appear to be a factor that would change the trajectory of the approved bill, it was believed that the success of the campaign in favour of his candidature - principally orchestrated by members of the Opus Dei, and other Francoists like Torcuato Fernández-Miranda - could have been threatened by the existence of a legalized network of associations.⁷⁵

3.5. Juan Carlos: Franco's official successor

One of the principal questions that remained a mystery for many years was Franco's choice, among the Monarchist Pretenders, of a successor as Head of State. The Monarchists wondered which of the Pretenders, Don Juan or his son Juan Carlos, would succeed Franco as Head of State. Don Alfonso de Borbón (son of Don Juan's elder brother, who had previously abdicated in favour of his brother Juan), and the Carlist branch of the Borbons were regarded as the least probable of Franco's choices. But, the Caudillo had probably made his decision long ago.

⁷⁴ *Boletín Oficial del Consejo Nacional del Movimiento*, Año XII, Madrid 4 December 1967, No. 53, p. 918.

⁷⁵ José Luis Alcocer, *Fernández-Miranda: agonía de un Estado*, (Barcelona: Planeta, 1986), p. 54.

In 1965, while the issue of succession was still unclear, during an interview given to *The Times* Manuel Fraga, Minister of Information, asserted that Prince Juan Carlos was to be Franco's successor. 'It is more and more accepted - the Minister said - that when General Franco's regime ends, Don Juan Carlos will become King of Spain'.⁷⁶ A controversial statement that, according to Preston, Fraga would not have made without Franco's authorization.⁷⁷ In fact, on 26 March 1966, the Caudillo confessed to his cousin when the latter asked him about his thoughts on succession that, 'anyway, [it will be] neither Don Juan nor Don Hugo; neither are on the shortlist, because the first wants [to establish] a liberal monarchy, and the second is not Spanish, whatever his followers say'.⁷⁸ According to the 1947 *Ley de Sucesión*, Franco had a free hand in the choice of his successor. Yet, it was not until 15 January 1969, that, during a private meeting, Franco told Prince Juan Carlos that he would be the one succeeding him. Although it seemed that the choice had been made, Franco had not decided the date for the appointment. In March 1969, during a conversation with the Caudillo his friend general Camilo Alonso Vega insisted on the importance of appointing the Prince as successor. Alonso Vega's eightieth birthday was imminent, and allegedly Franco's colleague asked him to appoint the Prince as a birthday present for him. Although Franco was three years younger than Alonso Vega, the issue of age was unavoidable, and at that stage, worrying. Some weeks later, the Caudillo was giving direct instructions to Carrero to begin the preparations for the appointment, perhaps influenced by Alonso Vega's plea.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ *The Times*, 20 November 1965, p. 7.

⁷⁷ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 150; Preston, *Franco*, p. 725.

⁷⁸ Franco Salgado-Araujo, *Mis conversaciones privadas*, p. 465.

⁷⁹ Alfonso Armada, *Al servicio de la corona*, (Barcelona: Planeta, December 1983, 2nd Ed.). p. 128.

On 8 January 1969 - following the expulsion of the Borbon-Parma family, the Carlist contender, from Spain - in an interview with Carlos Mendo, director of the EFE agency, Don Juan Carlos declared his readiness to remain faithful to the Caudillo's regime and the principles of the Movement. Such a controversial declaration pleased the most conservative sections of the regime, namely that of Carrero and Opus Dei, whereas it surely deeply concerned the democratic opposition. Although the authorship behind the Prince's declaration was not disclosed, Fraga cleverly hid his own name between the lines of his memoirs.⁸⁰ Yet, López Rodó implies that he wrote the text.⁸¹ The Prince's declaration set the political course for that year, and coincided with the launching of the so-called *Operación Príncipe* - slyly orchestrated by Carrero Blanco and followed largely by the technocrats of Opus Dei, principally López Rodó - which ultimately gave the young Prince the succession. On 21 July 1969 the victorious 'candidate of the Movement' - Don Juan Carlos - became the successor to the position of Head of State with the title of King.⁸²

Prince Juan Carlos, however, was in an uncomfortable position. On the one hand the democratic opposition did not trust him, and regarded him merely as Franco's puppet. For them, the Prince's position seemed clear to them since he had sworn loyalty to the Francoist Fundamental Laws as part of the list of conditions laid down in Article 9 of the Law of Succession.⁸³ On the other hand, the Prince did not have the full support of the orthodox Francoists, and even less of the 'republican' die-hard Falangists. Juan Carlos' appointment was only celebrated by Carrero's entourage and by most of

⁸⁰ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 236.

⁸¹ López Rodó, *Memorias II*, p. 382.

⁸² *ABC* was forced to write the headlines '*Ha triunfado la candidatura del Movimiento*', which Juan Ignacio Luca de Tena, *ABC's* director, refused to accept. See Gómez-Santo, *Conversaciones con Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo*, p. 115. Full details on the *Operación Príncipe* are recorded by Laureano López Rodó, one of its main organizers. See López Rodó, *La larga marcha hacia la monarquía*, pp. 377-500. See also, Raúl Morodo *et al*, *España Perspectiva, 1970*, (Madrid: Guadiana de Publicaciones, 1970), pp. 29-30.

⁸³ Amodia, *Franco's political legacy*, p. 54.

the *aperturistas*. Gabriel Cisneros, for instance, claims with a degree of hindsight that at that point they [the *aperturistas*] were convinced that a non-parliamentary and non-pluralist monarchy was totally unthinkable. He, at any rate, was convinced that the Prince would not favour such a system. 'The *aperturistas*', Cisneros asserted, 'never wished to anticipate the process of establishing a parliamentary monarchy until the physical disappearance of General Franco, basically because they wished the process to be as undramatic as possible'. Thus, they wanted 'to bring as much of the future as possible to the present'.⁸⁴ Anyhow, Franco would halt any attempt to open up the regime.

Nevertheless, for some members of the democratic opposition, namely some Christian Democrats, Liberals, and Conservatives, Don Juan seemed to be their preferred candidate. Don Juan was less involved with the regime, and, therefore, less dependent on it than Don Juan Carlos, who had obviously been groomed by the Caudillo.⁸⁵ Moreover, it was believed that Don Juan supported democracy and pluralism within the monarchy. Therefore, for them the reality of a democratic Spain lay ultimately in Don Juan's hands, who from private council and secretariat in Estoril (Portugal) maintained contacts with pro-Monarchist personalities in order to promote his return as monarch of the country.⁸⁶ Don Juan's secretariat, which had been headed by the Christian Democrat, José María Gil-Robles, and by the ex-Minister of Franco's first government, Pedro Sainz Rodríguez, was currently headed by the Conde de Motrico, José María de Areilza. Areilza had been an important ambassador for Franco (Buenos Aires, Washington, Paris), but resigned from his last post in Paris after the

⁸⁴ Testimony of Gabriel Cisneros Laborda, 13 September 1999.

⁸⁵ *Mundo*, 5-VII-69, p. 18.

⁸⁶ Testimony of Antonio Gavilanes, 21 September 1999.

Munich and Grimau affairs in 1963 (in future years, Areilza was to join Fraga in the latter's political formation).⁸⁷ Thus, in Estoril Don Juan received visits from many Spaniards concerned with the future of Spain, for at that time Don Juan was still the historic heir to the Spanish throne. But for Franco, that was out of the question. In fact, according to King Juan Carlos himself, the Caudillo's hatred of Don Juan could have been because 'Franco saw my father as the only person who could contest the legitimacy of his own power. [...] He must genuinely have seen him as a dangerous liberal who might turn everything he, Franco, had done upside down. [...] When my father said, "I want to be King of all the Spanish people", Franco translated that as, "I want to be King of the victors and the vanquished alike".'⁸⁸

From 1965 Antonio Gavilanes, (later president and founder of the *Centro de Estudios de Problemas Contemporáneos* in 1967), visited Don Juan, accompanied by Monarchist university students and professors on a number of occasions. Through the mediation of Don Juan, Gavilanes also maintained close contacts with Don Juan Carlos with whom he also discussed the country's future.⁸⁹ In fact those who enjoyed the confidence of the Prince, and had talks with him were convinced of the Prince's wish to establish a democratic monarchy under his reign once the Caudillo had passed away. Gabriel Cisneros, for instance, was said to have taken the *aperturista* line early on in his political career, as Don Juan Carlos' democratic aspirations had been clear to him for a long time. Cisneros confessed that his personal political trajectory was conditioned by his early knowledge that the Prince would favour a democratic system after Franco.⁹⁰ Manuel Fraga, who seemed to favour the Prince as well, defended the monarchy as 'the

⁸⁷ José María de Areilza, *Crónica de Libertad*, (Planeta, Barcelona, 1985), pp. 19-21, 42-44.

⁸⁸ José Luis de Vilallonga, *The King. A life of King Juan Carlos of Spain*, (London: Weidenfeld, 1994), pp. 104-5.

⁸⁹ Testimony of Antonio Gavilanes, 21 September 1999.

⁹⁰ This conviction appears to be shared by Alfonso Osorio, Gabriel Cisneros and Antonio Gavilanes. In 1972 Antonio Gavilanes declared in *Mundo* that he saw 'in him [Prince Juan Carlos] a king of European character, adapted

unifying and integrating State force within the inevitable plurality of [Spanish] society' during a speech given at Club Siglo XXI in Madrid in November 1971.⁹¹

Yet, according to a survey carried out by the sociologist Amando de Miguel in 1970, there was a significant part of the Spanish population that favoured a republic. To the question of which political system they would prefer should the position of Head of State become vacant: 55% of manual workers interviewed preferred a system like that under Franco; 23% of lawyers preferred a Borbon monarchy; but, 76% of university students, 53% of lawyers, 45% of office employees and 43% of medical doctors preferred a republic.⁹² On the other hand, another sociologist Sergio Vilar argues that whereas in the 1960s no one, with the exception of the Monarchists, favoured a 'crowned democracy', throughout the 1970s increasing numbers of democrats accepted this option. For instance, in those days the *Partido Socialista Popular* (PSP) founded by the Professor of Constitutional Law, Enrique Tierno Galván, was the first leftist group that accepted the monarchy.⁹³

In fact, by the 1970s the majority of the Spanish ruling class favoured a future monarchy under Don Juan Carlos, many of them, particularly the orthodox Francoists, believing he could guarantee the continuation of the Francoist regime. Thus, given that the population had no say in national politics, the ruling class decided for them even if the Republican option was allegedly favoured by a large number of Spanish people. On 22 July 1968 the majority of *procuradores* in the Cortes voted in favour of Don Juan Carlos' appointment. A day later, the Prince accepted the post and swore loyalty to both

to the new Spanish circumstances, able to produce under his Head of Stanship, a prudent and necessary political openness'. See *Mundo*, 5-III-1972, p. 15.

⁹¹ Cabezas, *Manuel Fraga*, p. 172.

⁹² Miguel, *Informe Sociológico 1970*, Chapter 5, p. 79.

⁹³ Sergio Vilar, *Historia del Antifranquismo*, (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1984), p. 461.

the Principles of the Movement and the Fundamental Laws.⁹⁴ Although the Prince's entourage believed in the monarch's democratic aspirations, as mentioned above, the act of swearing loyalty to Franco's Fundamental Laws of the Movement led many others to regard him as Franco's puppet. Undoubtedly, however, Don Juan Carlos' appointment can be regarded as the most important event for the future of the country of all that occurred in the summer of 1969.

3.6. The Matesa scandal and cabinet crisis

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the summer of 1969 also saw the exposure of the so-called Matesa scandal, which ultimately led to the cabinet crisis that October. On 10 August, the *Maquinaria Textil del Norte S.A.* (Matesa) collapsed when it was alleged that some members of the conservative Catholic group Opus Dei were involved in the misuse of government funds. These funds were used for the financing of enterprises abroad as well as for personal bribes.⁹⁵ Various Ministers - members of the Opus Dei - were tainted by the scandal in the company, which happened to be directed by Juan Vila Reyes, also a member of the Catholic group. The Ministers affected were Faustino García Moncó (Commerce), Juan José Espinosa San Martín (Finance), and Gregorio López Bravo (Industry), together with the Governor of the Bank of Spain, Mariano Navarro Rubio. In Carrero's view, the Matesa Affair was 'an unfortunate and serious incident which, successfully aired by the media, has caused a great disturbance in the public opinion'.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ López Rodó collected a couple of anonymous (undated) letters sent to the *procuradores* asking them to vote against the designation of a successor to Franco. López Rodó, *La larga marcha*, pp. 642-643.

⁹⁵ *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 71-72, August-September 1969, pp.8-9. A thorough study of the Matesa affair can also be seen in a special report elaborated by *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 73, October 1969, pp. 13-21.

⁹⁶ López Rodó, *Memorias II*, pp. 516, 692.

From the Falangist sector, Manuel Fraga, Minister of Information, supported by José Solís, Minister-Secretary of the Movement, allowed the free publication of information related to the incident. Thus, the Spanish press gave, in an unparalleled way, reliable and critical information about the Matesa affair.⁹⁷ Both Fraga and Solís believed that such a press campaign would benefit their own reformist plans. However, public disputes between members of the regime seriously offended the Caudillo.⁹⁸ In fact, it was because of the rivalries between the Falange and Opus Dei members that the scandal was revealed. Admiral Carrero had already condemned Fraga's Press Law for being responsible for a moral, religious, and political deterioration, and for the flood in all bookshops of Marxist works and novels of what he regarded as the most unrestrained eroticism.⁹⁹

But in light of the scandal, Carrero advised the replacement of the four Ministers involved in the attack, that is commerce, finance, information, and *Movimiento*, since their open opposition to other Ministers of the regime was, in effect, an attack on the regime itself.¹⁰⁰ Fraga categorically denied Solís' and his own involvement in the campaign to publicize the scandal.¹⁰¹ But Carrero believed that Fraga's propaganda had left a negative impression in the international community. The outcome of the incident was a cabinet change in which Fraga, Solís, Espinosa San Martín and García Moncó - the last two Opus Dei members - were dismissed and López Rodó and López Bravo remained in the cabinet. Under Carrero's presidency, the newly-appointed cabinet of

⁹⁷ *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 71-72, August-September 1969, pp.8-9.; *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 73, October 1969, pp. 13-21.

⁹⁸ Preston, *Triumph of Democracy*, p. 23.

⁹⁹ López Rodó, *Memorias II*, p. 317; Preston, *Franco*, pp. 744-7.

¹⁰⁰ López Rodó, *Memorias II*, p. 516. On 11 September 1969, Federico Silva Muñoz, Minister of Public Works, sent a report to Franco about the reaction of the national and international press to the Matesa affair, which was characterized as 'the most virulent that Spain has suffered in the past thirty years'. Silva's note to Franco is reproduced in *Ibid.*, pp. 682-90.

¹⁰¹ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 251.

July 1969 was formed by a compact Opus Dei-linked team. López Bravo was even promoted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹⁰²

Thus, on 29 October 1969, the 36th anniversary of the foundation of the Falange, Franco created his fifteenth cabinet with the help of Carrero, who acted as an adviser in the appointment of new Ministers. By this time, Franco was increasingly delegating responsibility to Carrero Blanco, Vice-President since 22 September 1967, who was really beginning to assume the role of Prime Minister.¹⁰³ Carrero's influence - and, according to Fraga, that of Fernández-Miranda as well¹⁰⁴ - was clearly felt in this cabinet reshuffle, where Fraga was replaced by the Opus Dei member Alfredo Sánchez Bella. Solís was also replaced, but whereas until 1969 the Minister-Secretary of the Movement was also responsible for the syndicates, from this cabinet reshuffle onwards the general secretariat of the Movement and the syndical organization were split. Thus, Torcuato Fernández-Miranda, and Enrique García del Ramal (Minister without Portfolio, in charge of the Official Syndicate), respectively, replaced the controversial José Solís.¹⁰⁵

Among the other changes, García Moncó and Espinosa San Martín were also dismissed, as was Castiella, after twelve years as Minister of Foreign Affairs. By contrast, technocrats and members of the Opus Dei were promoted - López Bravo becoming Minister of Foreign Affairs and López Rodó remaining Minister in charge of the Development Plan. The controversial Catholic organization now controlled the Ministries of Information, Education, and Foreign Affairs, plus the four Ministries of Finance, Commerce, Industry and the Development Plan. Carrero's new cabinet gained

¹⁰² For a picturesque description of López Bravo in his role as Minister of Foreign Affairs see Marciel Niedergang's article in *Le Monde*, 4 August 1973.

¹⁰³ Preston, *The Triumph of Democracy*, pp. 15, 24.

¹⁰⁴ *Políticos para unas Elecciones. Manuel Fraga*, p. 56.

¹⁰⁵ *Equipo Mundo, Los 90 ministros de Franco*, pp.287-288.

the nickname of '*monocolor*' or 'monochrome government' because the six Ministers linked to the Opus Dei outnumbered the four of Falangist backgrounds although Carrero himself never became a member of Opus Dei.¹⁰⁶ In other words, the 'blue' of the Falangists was replaced by the 'grey' of the technocrats.

The disputes over the Matesa scandal, mainly between the Falangists and the members of Opus Dei exposed problems of unexpected proportions within the regime. Preston has argued that the scandal reflected not only the fight over the spoils of power, but also the acute separation between the already existent currents of opinions within Francoism. Thus, complex network of interests developed within the regime which, like satellites, orbited around a common concern, which was how to survive after Franco. The technocrats of Opus Dei and their sympathizers believed that an efficient administration would permit the continuation of the regime through a peaceful transition to a Francoist monarchy under Don Juan Carlos. That is why they organized the *Operación Príncipe* although the Prince himself did not share Carrero's plans for the future.¹⁰⁷ Others, like Fraga and Solís, believed that, given the social tension and the increasing demands for modernization, a thorough reform of the regime was vital if it wished to survive the transition to a post-Francoist era.¹⁰⁸

Thus, with the flood of technocrats in the new cabinet, the opening up the regime appeared to be guaranteed. For instance, the new Minister-Secretary of the Movement, Fernández-Miranda, - a Falangist by background like Fernando Herrero Tejedor and

¹⁰⁶ The close relation between Carrero and López Rodó dates from the 1950s. In those days, Carrero and his wife went through serious problems in their marriage - allegedly she was unfaithful -, and due to the epoch, and the condition of Carrero as Admiral of the Spanish Navy - in other words very religious and conservative -, he sought spiritual support to overcome his problem. Thus, he was directed to the then Professor of Administrative Law of the University of Santiago de Compostela, Laureano López Rodó, prominent member of the Opus Dei. Through close, and constant assistance, López Rodó seemed to alleviate the Admiral's problems. Thus, ever since, Carrero's gratefulness to López Rodó was extended to many members of the Opus Dei. That may explain the significant number of Opus Dei members at Carrero's cabinet. Testimony of Antonio Gavilanes, 21 September 1999.

¹⁰⁷ Charles Powell, *Juan Carlos of Spain. A self-made monarch* (London: Macmillan Press, 1996), p. 52.

¹⁰⁸ Preston, *Franco*, p. 746-747; Amodia, *Franco's political legacy*, pp. 84-86.

Adolfo Suárez but allegedly close to Opus Dei¹⁰⁹ - hindered a full implementation of the proposal of associations of 'public opinion' already under way. In fact, the lack of ratification of the approved statute did away with the already announced proposals of associations. The first association to announce its dissolution was the first one to have appeared, that was *Acción Política*, followed by the rest.¹¹⁰

As mentioned above, politically 1969 started with the launch of *Operación Príncipe*. In the social context, however, the year could not have had a worse beginning. On 25 January, Franco had declared a state of emergency in the whole country, in response mainly to what he called 'minority actions, systematically directed towards disturbing the peace and public order of Spain. [...] The defence of peace, and the progress of Spain as well as the exercise of the rights of the Spanish people, a unanimous wish among all social sectors, [...] oblige the government to put into practice efficient and urgent methods in order to eradicate these actions in a definite way' (*que corten esos brotes y anomalías de modo terminante*). The state of exception was decreed for three months. This was a significant step backwards so far as modernization was concerned. Censorship had returned and already fragile rights including those of meeting, freedom of residence and expression were totally suspended.¹¹¹

Astonishingly, in February, Carrero Blanco explained to the Cortes that, 'the emergency measures cannot be in any way interpreted as restrictive of citizens' freedom, because, in reality, [it] represents completely the opposite, as it has to do precisely with

¹⁰⁹ José Luis Alcocer argued, however, that 'it had been said that he [Fernández-Miranda] was [a member] of the Opus, or that was close to it, because he had formed part of the government of 29 October 1969. Inside, and applied to his person, to speak of him as [a member] of the Opus only meant that he was not [part] of the Christian Democracy, [and] that is another issue'. See Alcocer, *Fernández-Miranda*, p. 20.

¹¹⁰ *Mundo*, 24-1-1970, p. 12.

the defence of the freedom of the Spanish population. Freedom within the law [is] what the government wants, because its main obligation, I repeat, is to protect the freedom of the population'.¹¹² No one could complain publicly, with the exception of the international press, which, in general, criticized the measure. Social tension was therefore escalating as a result of the regime's stance. The journalist and director of the regime's newspaper *Pueblo*, Emilio Romero, however, in an attempt to justify the Francoist authorities, accused the students, economic groups, and the press, of bearing a 'grave responsibility' in the application of the state of exception.¹¹³ From the last years of the 1960s, however, the regime had been using repressive measures against student revolts. From 1968, and following the incident that provoked the dismissal of the Minister of Education, Manuel Lora Tamayo, the regime imposed the permanent presence of the so-called *policía universitaria*, or campus police, on permanent basis.¹¹⁴

A year later, Raúl Morodo, Assistant Professor of Constitutional Law and member of the *Partido Socialista Popular* (PSP), argued that the declaration of a state of exception had had clear underlying political reasons. There had been pockets of student revolts in various Spanish universities, but they had been easily controlled. Morodo believed that the student revolts had merely been an excuse. According to Morodo, the regime had sought to hold back the climate in favour of political modernization that already existed in the population. It was also necessary to stop the mushrooming of centre-right sectors - perhaps embryos of pro-democratic political associations - which aimed at achieving a European-like system in Spain. Thus, as mentioned earlier, if this 'opposition' to the regime succeeded, it could threaten the

¹¹¹ Morodo *et al.*, *España Perspectiva*, 1970, pp. 17-18.

¹¹² *Informe del Vice Presidente del Gobierno sobre el estado de excepción, en el Pleno de las Cortes de 7 de febrero de 1969*. See *Diario de Diarios*, 8 de febrero de 1969, No. 1.457, pp. C-18-21.

¹¹³ Morodo *et al.*, *España Perspectiva*, 1970, p. 20.

Operación Príncipe. In other words, as Morodo explains, 'the [state of] exception was the pre-requisite for the designation of Prince Juan Carlos,' and therefore, the elimination of any group favouring a Regency solution.¹¹⁵

However, the speed at which Spanish society was changing would not be easy to hold back, nor would it be easy to satisfy the population with cheap excuses to deny its political participation. Thus, one could say that the first proposals of associations of 'public opinion' - and indeed anything related to the issue of associations - that emerged after the approval of the basis, had been halted chiefly as a consequence of both *Operación Príncipe* and the cabinet reshuffle. Commentaries criticizing this new delay mushroomed in the press. The Catholic daily *YA*, for example, urged the new Minister-Secretary of the Movement to speed up the process of creating associations.¹¹⁶ But, Fernández-Miranda (ironically, the man who was going to lay the basis for the future democratic system in Spain) did the opposite.

The political confusion in Spain prompted a group of one hundred and twenty seven progressive Spanish intellectuals and professionals to send a letter to the President of the Government in which they listed a number of demands to him and to the whole cabinet. The signatories included Oscar Alzaga, Manuel Giménez de Parga, José Luís Aranguren, Pedro Laín Entralgo, Julián Marías, Gregorio Peces-Barba, Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez, Ramón Tamames, Raúl Morodo, Enrique Tierno Galván, Miguel Boyer and Jesús Barros de Lis who were all part of the opposition to Francoism, especially during the early 1970s. The group complained that during the 1966 Referendum there had been no alternative to the official programme although they had requested in writing the

¹¹⁴ Giner, "Power, Freedom and social change in the Spanish University", in Preston (Ed.), *Spain in crisis*, p. 208; Bardavío & Sinova, *Todo Franco*, p. 422.

¹¹⁵ Morodo *et al.*, *España Perspectiva*, 1970, pp. 22-23.

authorization of a legal opposition. But, among other points, they urged the cabinet to recognize and respect truly autonomous and representative unions for both workers and employers. Likewise, they urged the cabinet to recognize and respect the right of associations, which in the Western world meant the existence of diverse political parties, and to legalise them through norms that would avoid their unworkable proliferation. Nevertheless, their disagreement with the Francoist authorities did not prevent the signatories of this letter declaring their readiness to collaborate so long as government policy moved towards a peaceful democratic coexistence among Spaniards.¹¹⁷ As was to be expected, the letter was ignored.

3.7. Fernández-Miranda's proposal for associations

Towards the end of 1969, Fernández-Miranda called for a meeting of the National Council, where he wanted to discuss a proposal for the restructuring of the Secretary General of the Movement. In his proposal, the Minister called for the old "Delegation of Associations" to be replaced by one for "Family, Political Action, and Participation". Fernández-Miranda argued that if they decided to deal with the issue of associations in a serious way, it would have to be based on a total, absolute, and rigorous loyalty to the principles of the Movement and the Fundamental Laws. This proposal was to be presented and discussed in the Congress on 15 December 1969.

During the presentation of his proposal, Fernández-Miranda denied that the abolition of the National Delegation of Associations was a step backwards. On the contrary, the abolition of the Delegation was justified by the creation of a new Delegation of the Family, a National Delegation of Political Action and of Participation.

¹¹⁶ YA, 16-XI-1969.

¹¹⁷ The complete text of this letter was published in *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, January 1970, pp. 20-21.

According to the Minister the new Delegation 'would remove them [the associations] from a 'sewing box' (*cajón de sastrer*) where all associations are mixed and confused'. Moreover, the Minister explained that the new Delegation would be like the one dictated by Article 21 of the LOE. The article encouraged the 'authentic and efficient participation of the natural entities, and of public opinion in political tasks. This would contribute to the creation, improvement and development of any necessary measures for the channelling, within the Principles of the Movement, of the contrast of opinions in political action'. Any political organization of any sort, outside of this representative system, would be considered illegal. The Minister promised that a blueprint of the proposal would be officially presented in the forthcoming months for the assessment of the council.¹¹⁸ Some councillors disagreed with the Minister's explanations, and were convinced that, instead of speeding up the process of associationism, the Minister was actually doing the opposite. In fact, José Luís Alcocer, Fernández-Miranda's biographer, believes that the Minister 'was convinced that political associations were not going to be of any use, not even to establish a preliminary bridge to the arrival of parties after Franco's death. [...] The scheme was, therefore, very clear: political associations with their own aims were not possible within the regime'.¹¹⁹

Meanwhile, four National Councillors made speeches in relation to Fernández-Miranda's proposal in the Congress meeting of 15 December. They were Francisco Labadie Otermín, Alberto Ballarín Marcial, Luís Hertogs, and Manuel Fraga. Whereas Luis Hertogs lamented the lack of old-time Falangists in the National Delegations of the Movement, and Francisco Labadie claimed the need for pluralism as the basis of the

¹¹⁸ *Boletín Oficial del Consejo Nacional del Movimiento*, Año XV, Madrid 4 de March 1970, No. 67, pp. 1202-1206. See also *El Movimiento y el Asociacionismo*, pp.14, 18, 117.

¹¹⁹ Alcocer, *Fernández-Miranda*, p. 54.

Movement, Ballarín Marcial and Manuel Fraga clearly favoured the emergence of political associations.¹²⁰ Thus, without underestimating Ballarín's speech, it was the one given by a resentful Fraga, already ex-Minister of Information, which attracted more attention. Fraga took advantage of this opportunity to speak before the National Council, and outline his particular political programme. Some extracts of Fraga's speech illustrate quite clearly the main concerns of the reformist sector, and indeed of many Spaniards. Among other things, he said:

The proposed text [...] suppresses the National Delegation of Associations, and does not include even once in all its text the word association or associations. [...] This Council has just approved the definitive document, that is to say, the Legal Basis of Associations Within the Movement precisely in its full final session of 3 July [...] Many of us in the Movement believe that the process of openness and political development must continue at any cost. Those men [who] have fought for family representation, for the freedom of ideas and their expression; those who have expounded the problem of freedom of religion, or those who have presented the Organic Law as the path towards institutionalization and openness (not to the left, but to the future). [...] The Organic Law entrusted us to ensure the development, the exercise of Spaniards' freedoms, and to stimulate an authentic participation in political life, thus recognizing that this means a natural contrast of opinion. [...] Article 16 of the Fuero de los Españoles recognised the right of association for legal aims. [...] These rights can be regulated, limited, or even suspended, but they cannot be denied. [...] Spain has today, because of Franco's peace and the consequent economic and cultural progress, a very large sector of responsible [people]. [Spain also has] a growing middle class that is capable of thinking in a moderate and prudent political [way]. We are far from the experiment of universal suffrage a century ago, in a country where the illiteracy rate reached 90 per cent of the population. [...] Today a centrist policy is possible in Spain, open and decisive, which releases us from the traditional dialectic swerving between the right and the extreme left [...]. This is what the country expects, and this is what we were already giving it, and now it will not be denied. But, how, without associations, are we going to integrate those young generations that, because of age and development, are on the outskirts of the system. [...] How could the Administration isolate itself by depriving itself of the perpetual initiative [of young generations], and keep the population passive?¹²¹

Fraga also asserted that the problem of associationism was very serious, and therefore:

¹²⁰ López Rodó, *Memorias II*, pp. 564-5.

¹²¹ The complete speech is recorded in Manuel Fraga, *El Desarrollo Político*, (Barcelona: Bruguera, 1975), pp. 267-274. Paradoxically a year before the speech in 1968 Fraga published a book entitled *Horizonte Español* in which, after mentioning all Francoist Laws, he wrote: 'In this order of Fundamental Laws, full of flexibility, [the regime] has establish an organic and flexible representation through the Cortes, and the referendum system, and through the family associations, the unionist organizations and the municipal and regional unities.' See Manuel Fraga, *Horizonte Español*, (Barcelona: Grijalbo, 1968), pp. 24-25.

No one should think that this Chamber will be the same if it withdraws before this fundamental problem, and it swallows its own unanimous agreement of July. Neither we nor - even less - the country would regard, and respect it, in the same way.¹²²

Fraga described his own speech as 'important, and of a tone hitherto unknown.'¹²³ However, although it openly questioned fundamental issues and their serious consequences, the speech did not convince the councillors, and moreover provoked an angry comment from the Caudillo. During a private conversation with his cousin, Franco confessed that he was 'hurt because the words of this ex-Minister reflect an inappropriate passion for someone who had held a post of absolute confidence for years, and who ceased for political reasons and not for poor performance'.¹²⁴ Thus, whether or not it was due to the Caudillo's opinion of Fraga's speech, the ex-Minister lost this battle to Fernández-Miranda.

Having said that, Fraga's message to the Council made a good impression on many, and received a good press in newspapers like *ABC* and *YA*.¹²⁵ But, for Emilio Romero, director of *Pueblo*, Fraga's performance was very negative. Romero condemned Fraga's passionately progressive ideas, which would have been so useful during his long and fruitful time at the Information Ministry. Among other comments, the journalist made a special reference to the repressive Press Law, and mentioned the amount of sanctions, fines, and closures that the Spanish press had suffered since the approval of this law.¹²⁶

During the period between the announcement of the new proposal (December 1969) and the presentation of the text (May 1970) the issue of political associations

¹²² *ABC*, 16-XII-1969, p. 23.

¹²³ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, pp. 260-1

¹²⁴ Franco Salgado-Araujo, *Mis conversaciones*, p. 552.

¹²⁵ See *YA*, 16-XII-1969, pp. 14-17; *ABC*, 16-XII-1969, pp. 23-25.

¹²⁶ *Pueblo*, 16-XIII-1969, p. 3.

inevitably remained in the limelight. In April 1970 a group of National Councillors wrote a note to Fernández-Miranda signed by the *aperturista* Fernando Herrero Tejedor, a well-known supporter of associationism although strictly within the Movement. In this note, the councillors explained to the Minister that, even though they were aware that the approval of the new proposal would imply a new delay in the process of associationism, they still agreed to back it, but on the condition that the delay was short. They argued that it was neither caprice nor impatience, but rather that they were conscious that there was no time to lose.¹²⁷

At the Cortes, on 1 April 1970 the group of *procuradores familiares* designated a commission to draft a bill on political associations. During a meeting held nearly one year later, on 15 February 1971, the commission agreed on the need to institutionalize political pluralism. In other words, they sought to apply Article 34 of the *Fuero de los Españoles*, by which the Cortes would vote on the necessary laws for the implementation of the rights recognized in the Fuero, like, for instance, the right of political association (recognized in Article 16).¹²⁸ The majority of the *familiares*, more than any other group so far, tried to open up the Spanish political system, to have a more dynamic Cortes. They were not entirely successful in the task of modernizing the regime, although their voices were heard at the Cortes and reported in countless articles.

In March, Emilio Romero's 'personal radar' told him that a proposal for the political associations was ready¹²⁹, but the blueprint was not presented to the Movement's National Council until 21 May 1970, ten months after the approval of the

¹²⁷ *Diario de Diarios*, 28-II-1970, No. 1.782; *Ibid.*, 3-III-1970, No. 1.785; *Ibid.*, 6-III-1970, No., 1.788. See also Ferrando Badía, *El regimen de Franco*, pp. 220-222. [I checked *Madrid* from 4-III-1970 to confirm Ferrando Badía's reference but, as with a number of other of his references, I cannot find them].

¹²⁸ *Diario de Diarios*, 2-IV-1970, No.1.810; Ferrando Badía, *Del Autoritarismo a la Democracia*, p. 53.

¹²⁹ *Pueblo*, 11-III-1970, p. 3.

previous proposal of July 1969. A team of four members, of which Herrero Tejedor was allegedly the head, had elaborated this blueprint. Although it was regarded as better than initially expected, it did not escape criticism.¹³⁰ The Catholic daily *YA* considered Fernández-Miranda's proposal 'useful as a starting point', but, 'in general, we believe that the blueprint is too restrictive, and cautious'.¹³¹ The proposal had far too many limitations, and, like the one proposed by Solís, only allowed the creation of associations strictly within the framework of the Movement. Solís believed in the regime's democracy - the so-called 'organic democracy' -, which, according to him, it would allow the unlimited participation in politics of the population.¹³² However, that definition was not accurate, since, as the journalist Pedro Calvo Hernándo explained, an 'organic democracy is only open to those who think in a determined way, in other words, it is a discriminatory democracy'.¹³³ In conclusion, according to Charles Powell, Fernández-Miranda's proposal 'was more ambitious in its ends and restrictive in its means than that of Solís, although Solís' proposal prompted the emergence of various political associations.¹³⁴

One of the fiercest critics of the Minister's proposal was the monthly *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, which wrote that, 'for those who believe that Spaniards have the right to meet and associate freely, this proposal will not only be classified as insufficient, but as totally unacceptable'. The same editorial also argued that the proposal had a twofold objective: first, to modernize the 'organic democracy' for Europe with the creation of political associations, which would be the Hispanic equivalent of the ill-fated political

¹³⁰ *Diario de Diarios*, 24 & 25-V-1970, No. 1.855. (Informaciones, p. 9)

¹³¹ Various articles in *YA*, 26, 27,28, 29 January 1970.

¹³² *Gaceta Ilustrada*, No. 744, 10 January 1971, pp. 14-19.

¹³³ *Mundo*, 10-III-1973, p. 9.

parties; and secondly, to revitalize the image of an already out-of-date, monolithic regime.¹³⁵ Catholic groups also believed that the blueprint did not seem to respect the right of association as defined by the *Pacem in Terris*, and their many reservations meant the population also distrusted the proposal.¹³⁶

In the same way, and using their right to appeal, Alberto Ballarín and Manuel Fraga, together with forty-four other councillors, suggested a number of amendments for Fernández-Miranda's proposal. Ballarín demanded, among other things, that the minimum number of members for an association be reduced to one thousand (instead of the proposed ten thousand). The councillor believed that in this way representation would be greater, and would prevent large cities, like Madrid and Barcelona, from having associations, which, because of their greater number of members, could monopolize the national scene.

Fraga's suggestions confirmed what he had already defended during his speech of 15 December 1969. The ex-Minister urged prudent, but serious, conditions for real representation, and gave a number of suggestions of political and judicial character. Fraga also suggested some changes relating to the constitution, aims, and responsibilities of political associations. Yet, his prime complaint - probably shared by many - was that the great task of 'adequately articulating the conflicting opinions, as well as the promotion of associationism within the National Movement' - entrusted in the Statute of the Movement in 1968 - had not yet been applied.¹³⁷

One may wonder whether there was a serious plan to stop the process of associationism, and if Fernández-Miranda was the man in charge of putting it into

¹³⁴ Charles Powell, *Reform versus 'Ruptura' in Spain's transition to democracy*. Unpublished DPhil Thesis. Oxford University, 1989, pp. 18-9.

¹³⁵ *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, Nos. 81-82, June-July 1970, p. 3.

¹³⁶ Lecture celebrated at the Institute of Social Studies of the Company of Jesus, *YA*, 30-VI-70, p. 19.

effect. Yet this reasoning does not appear sound. Today, in retrospect, Gabriel Cisneros believes that, 'from the outset Fernández-Miranda tried seriously to take over the process, by giving it a clearer direction.' Cisneros - then National Delegate of Youth, a position directly under the jurisdiction of Fernández-Miranda, Minister of the Movement - recalls that around January 1970 during a meeting with Fernández-Miranda that took place in the Prado de Jaramilla, they (Miranda's team) tentatively elaborated a statute of political associations, with the intention of setting up the basis for a limited pluralism. However, this attempt was abruptly halted as a result of worsening relations (*distanciamiento*) between Admiral Carrero and Fernández-Miranda, and evidently, Fernández-Miranda abandoned, or at least, postponed indefinitely this possibility [of allowing a limited pluralism] until better opportunities came (*a la espera de mejores oportunidades*).¹³⁸ In fact, Carrero's persistent pressure on Fernández-Miranda hindered the development of a law of political associations, since Fernández-Miranda declined to present his new bill to the Movement's National Council.¹³⁹

On these grounds, following the deadline to present suggestions for the blueprint there was yet another period of political stasis. But Spaniards did not give up hope, and those interested in politics continued to organize lectures, workshops, and so forth in preparation for future events. Members of the ACNP, for example, organized a lecture entitled, 'The right of association with political aims'. The speaker, Juan Luís de Simón Tobalina, gave a clear speech, which was based mainly upon the mandate of the Catholic Church. Simón Tobalina underlined that the most important fact of modern times was the conversion of the 'subject into a citizen', which implied his right to

¹³⁷ The Catholic daily *YA* published in three articles a synthesis of Manuel Fraga's suggestions for Fernández-Miranda's project of associations. See *YA*, 27, 28 and 30-VI-1970. A summary of Ballarín's suggestions was also published in *YA*, 27 and 30-VI-1970.

¹³⁸ Testimony of Gabriel Cisneros Laborda, 13 September 1999.

¹³⁹ Powell, *Reform versus 'Ruptura'*, p.19.

participate in state affairs instead of obeying whatever was dictated by the authorities. Simón Tobalina argued that, on those grounds, political associations were needed to channel the wishes of the population to the state.¹⁴⁰ Similar conclusions were reached during a round table discussion organized by ANEPA one year later, in November 1971. The speakers - Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, Juan Manuel Fanjul, Rodrigo Fernández Carvajal, Alfonso García Valdecasas, Rafael Ruiz Gallardón, and Fernando Suárez González - 'agreed on the urgent need for political associations, of which there were no news, although Ministers talked about them'.¹⁴¹

Indeed, at that stage, it seemed incredible that the government had managed to freeze such an issue before such an expectant, and already restless, population. Even Prince Juan Carlos claimed that, 'if the associations are genuine I agree with them, otherwise that is another door that closes for me' (*si las asociaciones son de verdad, a mí me parecen bien; de lo contrario, es una puerta más que se me cierra*).¹⁴² For the future King the introduction of a network of associations would ease the transition to a democratic regime after Franco. Already in 1966, the Monarchist Manuel Jiménez de Parga had said that 'without political parties, the monarchy would fall under the pressure groups that divide as much as those [political parties] and operate in an anonymous and irresponsible way. [...] The King must delegate the government to a team that truly represents all political tendencies. The Left, the Centre, and the Right will have to be there, in the first cabinet'.¹⁴³ Yet, when the Prince spoke to Franco about Fernández-Miranda's Bill of Associations of Political Action and Participation, then being elaborated by the National Council, the Caudillo said he would ask the Council to withdraw the proposal. López Rodó recalls that Don Juan Carlos answered

¹⁴⁰ *YA*, 30-X-1970, p. 12.

¹⁴¹ *YA*, 3-XI-1971, p. 11.

¹⁴² Pilar & Alfonso Fernández-Miranda, *Lo que el Rey me ha pedido*, (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1996), p. 67.

the Caudillo, 'who can guarantee that there will be no political parties in ten years time? It is better to outlaw one [association] and allow the rest'.¹⁴⁴ The Prince's effort was in vain, however.

On 18 November 1971, at the opening of the X Legislative year, Franco reiterated his views on the subject to the Cortes. 'All associationist proposals', the Caudillo said, 'that, marginalizing the organization of the National Movement, shelter the hope of returning, sooner or later, to the formation of ideological groups that would lead us to political parties, will never be possible.'¹⁴⁵ Fernández-Miranda's proposal of associations was 'forgotten' anew by Franco. An atmosphere of uncertainty overshadowed any hope for modernization of the Spanish political system, to the frustration not only of the democratic opposition but of the most progressive members of the regime as well.

The population demanded participation in political affairs, and as Alvarez Puga wrote, 'on the Spanish political horizon of 1971, the hour of associationism seems to have struck. The discordant voices of those who do not wish for political associationism for fear of the [political] parties, or any other reason, can be counted with the fingers of one hand'. The journalist added that 'nearly all newspapers and magazines have dedicated some of their editorials to political associationism. Also, there have been surveys published, [and] the stance of the public opinion with respect to associationism does not admit any doubt'.¹⁴⁶

The most important sociological survey carried out in Spain was the one conducted by the Foessa Foundation, the so-called *Informes Foessa*, and directed by the

¹⁴³ *Indice*, Nos. 214-5, 1966, p. 7.

¹⁴⁴ López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, p. 179.

¹⁴⁵ *Discurso de Franco ante los componentes de la X Legislatura de las Cortes*, 18 November 1971, in *Mundo*, 25-XII-71.

¹⁴⁶ *Dossier Mundo*, May-June 1971, p. 25.

sociologist Amando de Miguel. The survey of the year 1970 revealed that of those interviewed the majority of university students (80%), lawyers (76%), medical doctors (63), office and shop workers (61%) did not believe that a democratic system was possible without political parties. Thus, apart from A-level students and workers, who favoured a system with no political parties at all, the rest of the mentioned groups overwhelmingly preferred a pluralistic political system. Amando de Miguel, however, thought that there was general apathy towards politics, which could have been the result of the deficiency of the Spanish system itself, in terms of education, information, participation, and so forth. It was the young adults, especially university students, who were more inclined to participate in politics.¹⁴⁷ Franco's reluctance to open up his regime was such that Chapter 5 of the 1970 Foessa report, which incidentally dealt with the political and associative life in Spain, was suppressed by the Francoist authorities and never published. The Foessa Sociological Reports had a good reputation for being objective, and in general were acceptable to the regime. However, the controversial nature of the topic and the extreme transparency with which it was dealt led the authorities to stop its publication. This decision only confirmed Amando de Miguel's view about the deficiency of the Spanish system in terms of information and education.

In conclusion, discrepancies between Carrero Blanco and Fernández-Miranda as well as the Caudillo's reluctance to speed up the political reform of the country led to a complete stoppage in the development of political associations. In his year-end speech of 1971, the Caudillo reiterated his 'continuation of the task to unite the Spaniards in new forms of participation'.¹⁴⁸ By 1972 the failure of Fernández-Miranda's proposal was a fact. The journalist Federico Ysart published an article called 'The failure of

¹⁴⁷ Miguel, *Informe Sociológico 1970*, Chapter 5, pp. 69, 78-90.

¹⁴⁸ *Mundo*, 13-I-1973, p. 10.

political associationism', in which he summarised the trajectory of the proposal of associations in terms of the words carefully used by the regime. 'To sum up', he said, 'at the outset, there was 'pluralism' (*pluralismo*); then came 'associationism' (*asociacionismo*); later 'pluriformism' (*pluriformismo*) and today nothingness.'¹⁴⁹

The consequent annoyance of the population was clear. From the Church, Monsignor Gabino Díaz Merchán, disciple of Cardinal Vicente Enrique i Tarancón¹⁵⁰, declared before Franco himself that it is 'everyone's responsibility to give efficient form to political participation, where all Spaniards feel respected as persons, and where we could bring loyal contribution for the common well-being.'¹⁵¹ His words were ignored. A few days later the post of delegate of Political Action and Participation was eliminated, and there was no reason to believe there would be a new post instead. This implied the disappearance of the Delegation as a whole and the return to the form of representation allowed by the organic democracy: that is through family, municipalities, and syndicates.¹⁵²

Reports in the press were painfully monotonous throughout these years of pre-transition. The most controversial articles and interviews with political personalities could not avoid the issue of political participation and associations. The same articles appeared year after year but with a tone of desperation and frustration, which obviously increased with time. As the Spanish ambassador Manuel Aznar Zubiragai told Manuel Fraga, 'nothing happens, and that is the bad thing' (*No pasa nada, y eso es lo malo*).¹⁵³ The number of members of the regime who were aware of the urgent need for reform of an obsolete system was increasing considerably. The political evolution of the regime

¹⁴⁹ *Mundo*, 2-IX-72, p. 15.

¹⁵⁰ Cardinal Vicente Enrique i Tarancón, born in Burriana (Castellón) in 1907, was a leading figure within the Catholic Church in favour of a democratic regime in Spain, particularly influential in Spanish politics during the mid-1970s.

¹⁵¹ *Mundo*, 16-IX-1972, p. 10.

was clearly being outpaced by the socio-economic evolution of the population, and this imbalance was destined to become a serious problem.

Conclusion

As we have seen in this Chapter, the period between 1967 and 1969 witnessed the emergence of a series of laws that seemed to promise the reform of the Spanish political system, in relation to the question of associationism. The approval in 1967 of the Organic Law of the State and the Law of Family Representation and the Organic Law of the Movement revived hopes for greater participation in national politics. Yet, all of them failed to modernize the system of representation. It was clear that the orthodox Francoists wished to delay the introduction of political associations for fear of losing control over the nation's country. But, after an intense three-day debate in the summer of 1969 the Movement's National Council approved a bill (the Legal Basis of Associations Within the Movement) by which political associations could be created within the boundaries of the regime. It only needed Franco's signature, but Franco never ratified it. Yet, the fact that the National Council (specially the *aperturista* sector) voted in favour of the bill implied awareness for the need of greater participation in national politics, if only to 'avoid the formation of a parallel and clandestine Spain'. Franco's reluctance to modernize the regime proved very frustrating for the *aperturista* sector of the regime as well as for the rest of the population. For instance, one hundred and twenty-seven intellectuals and professionals sent a letter of complaint to Carrero Blanco where, among other things, they urged the cabinet to recognize and respect the right of association.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 23-IX-1972, p. 9.

¹⁵³ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 273.

Meanwhile, during the summer of 1969, the Caudillo's plans to guarantee the survival of his regime after his departure were confirmed. Following the successful *Operación Príncipe*, orchestrated by Opus Dei members of Carrero Blanco's entourage, the Caudillo appointed Don Juan Carlos as his successor. Many believed that the future of Francoism was secure in the Prince's hands although some people claimed later to have known at the time that the Prince already had plans to reign over a democratic monarchy. Yet, for many, Don Juan Carlos was merely Franco's puppet, and therefore a threat to the modernization of the country. Following Don Juan Carlos' appointment, the stability of the government suffered a serious setback when inner problems of the regime were brought to public attention during the Matesa scandal. The scandal brought to the limelight the acute separations of the different currents of opinion already existent during the regime. The regime revealed its weaknesses and that infuriated Franco.

In the autumn of 1969, Fernández-Miranda's proposal of replacing the old 'National Delegation of Associations' by one of 'Family, Political Action and Participation' (allegedly to have a better organized system of associations) was yet another lie to delay any reform of associative character. The debate over the approval of the Minister's proposal intensified the unresolved fight between *inmovilistas* and *aperturistas*, and a group of Councillors sent a note to the Minister urging him not to delay the process of associationism. But, their plea was made in vain. Once again Franco ordered the council to withdraw the proposal, and the issue of associations was frozen. It was clear that Franco refused to advance, but it was also clear that a feeling in favour of reforms was now more widely spread among members of the regime, and that those who believed in the need for reform began to speak louder than ever.

Chapter - 4

The positioning of the reformists (1969-1973). Part I

Manuel Fraga as pioneer

At the end of the 1960s a number of key regime figures emerged who defended different alternatives for the transition to a post-Franco society. Broadly speaking, whereas the reactionary ideology of Franco's right-hand man, Luis Carrero Blanco defended the continuation of the regime under the reign of Don Juan Carlos, Manuel Fraga advocated a tightly controlled liberalization of the regime. Other promisingly progressive figures, who had been, or were still part of the regime, included Pío Cabanillas, Antonio Garrigues Walker, Alfonso Osorio, Marcelino Oreja and José María de Areilza.

Yet, as pointed out in the introduction, of these political figures it is Manuel Fraga who, from the end of the 1960s to the start of the 1970s, stands out as perhaps the most important progressive politician of the regime. In the 1960s Fraga was identified with the *aperturistas*, and in the 1970s with the reformists. In fact, an important number of the young reformists had been Fraga's disciples. Following his dismissal from the Ministry of Information and Tourism, Fraga's political stance in favour of the opening up of the regime made him the main promoter of reform and change without rupture, and the only serious alternative to the cabinet of Carrero Blanco. Fraga even became known as *Fragamanlis*, being compared to the Greek politician, Constantinos Karamanlis, who following the dictatorship of the colonels brought democracy to Greece.¹ But, following Franco's death in 1975, Fraga shifted to a much more conservative position, preventing him from becoming the leader of the transition. Fraga's new conservative stance made many of his young followers leave him to join a centrist party, the *Unión de Centro Democrático* (UCD). Fraga, however, was the first

¹ Testimony of Carlos Argos, 14-9-99. *Triunfo*, No. 677, 17 January 1976, pp. 8-9.

to elaborate one of the first and most complete political programmes in 1976. This programme served as the political foundation of one of the main political parties formed by members of the regime, *Alianza Popular* (AP). However, Fraga's centrist programme did not match the Francoist rhetoric and coalition partners he later chose for his AP. His main achievement was to attract the Francoists to the AP, and from there direct them from a dictatorial regime to a democratic one. In order to understand Fraga's role in the key period 1969-1973, it is necessary to examine his earlier political career. Accordingly, the next section briefly outlines Fraga's political trajectory from the origins of his public life until his political activities as an ex-Minister in the early 1970s.²

4.1. Manuel Fraga's political trajectory

The appointment of a new cabinet in July 1962 awakened interest in Spanish politics both at home and abroad. In France, for instance, the journalist Jean Creach wrote in *Combat* that 'a positive step had been taken with the appointment of the new Minister of Information and Tourism. [...] Fraga's creative capacity, dynamism, and sense of the great historical perspectives cannot disappoint the hope that the Spaniards have put in him'.³ In the United States, Fraga was regarded as 'one of the most brilliant of the younger men joining the cabinet, [and] has a considerable reputation as a lawyer, scholar, writer, and political expert. He is widely expected to ease Señor Arias Salgado's rigid censorship of the press, books, plays, films and ideas. He has been a

² Fraga's personality and political trajectory have been examined in a number of articles and books. Among them are Rogelio Baón, "Fraga y su poliedro", in *Manuel Fraga, Homenaje Académico*, (Madrid: Fundación Cánovas del Castillo, 1997), Vol. I & II, pp. 72-119.; Jose María Bernáldez, *El Patrón de la Derecha. Biografía de Fraga* (Plaza y Janés, 1985); Pilar Cernuda, *Ciclón Fraga*, (Madrid: Eds. Temas de Hoy, 1997). There exist various hagiographies of Fraga written by Octavio Cabezas, *Manuel Fraga, semblanza de un hombre de Estado*. (Sala Editorial, Madrid, 1976), and García Escudero, "Aportación de Manuel Fraga al pensamiento conservador". For a more critical view on Fraga's political trajectory see Vence, *Doctor Fraga y Mister Iribarne. Una biografía temperamental*, (Barcelona: Ed. Prensa Ibérica, 1995).

key promoter of the Inter-parliamentary union, which has furthered friendly relations between Spain, and parliamentarians in the US, Britain, France, and West Germany'.⁴ For Max Gallo, '[Fraga] Iribarne's appointment meant a triumph of a new style, a blend of efficiency and shrewdness. The era of liberalization had begun.'⁵

Fraga's youth and energy as well as his promising reform plans clashed, however, with his authoritarian character. This dichotomy was present throughout Fraga's ministerial life and his political life as a whole. Fraga, according to Bernáldez, would announce a liberal and aperturist measure but apply another one - on many occasions forced by the circumstances - more reactionary and regressive.⁶ Proud of his contradictory reputation as both authoritarian and liberal, Fraga said once that 'a journalist defined me best, when he wrote that, despite being bossy, during the years I [was in power], I ordered more freedom'.⁷ Fraga's complex character stemmed mainly from his family and his professional life.

Manuel Fraga Iribarne was born in Villalba (Lugo) in 1922. Villalba was the commercial centre of twenty-nine hamlets, called parishes, where the main source of income was farming and agriculture. Fraga's grandfather was a carpenter and a builder, and Fraga's father a rural labourer who, like many of his contemporaries, was forced to emigrate to Latin America - in his case to Cuba - in search of employment. Fraga's mother had twelve children, Manuel being the eldest. To Manuel, his mother Doña Maria personified energy and character. Fraga recognized that the firm and serious side of his character came from his mother, who originated in the low French Navarre. The

³ *Combat*, 18 July 1962, quoted in Cabezas, *Manuel Fraga*, p. 102; Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 34.

⁴ *The New York Times*, 13 July 1962.

⁵ Gallo, *Spain under Franco*, p. 301.

⁶ Bernáldez, *El Patrón de la Derecha*, p. 53.

⁷ *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 189, 11-17 December 1976, p. 27.

more talkative and perhaps romantic side of his character was more Galician.⁸ In Rogelio Baón's view, the humble background of the future leader of the conservative political force in Spain is more characteristic of a socialist political leader. But in Manuel's case his situation, the influence of his parents and, of course, of the social context helped the young Manuel to develop a more conservative political preference. Baón observes that being the first of twelve brothers, as well as his father's later position as Mayor of their village, developed a strong sense of responsibility in him that would be present throughout his adulthood.⁹ This sense of responsibility was demonstrated during his time in military service where Fernando Alvarez de Miranda, one of his colleagues, remembered Fraga's ability to reconcile 'the most authentic of the Prussian spirit with outstanding academic knowledge'. Yet, he also remembered Fraga's authoritarian proclivity that strongly marked his personality despite deeply human feelings that he tried to suppress'.¹⁰

At the end of 1945 Fraga gained top marks in an examination for lawyers of the Spanish Parliament - *Letrado de las Cortes* - and one year later, in 1946, gained also top marks at the Diplomatic School. In the summer of 1947, Fraga was posted as a diplomat to the Institute of Hispanic Culture. The Institute had recently been created in December 1946, and was directed by Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez. Fraga combined this job with that of State lawyer, and lecturer in the Faculty of Political Sciences at the University Complutense of Madrid.¹¹ The opportunity to enter public life was given to Fraga by his teacher, PhD supervisor and friend, Fernando María Castiella, who

⁸ Carlos Sentís. *Políticos para unas elecciones: Manuel Fraga Iribarne*. Perfil humano y político. (Madrid: Editorial Cambio-16, 1977), p. 31.

⁹ Baón, "Fraga y su poliedro", pp. 73-5.

¹⁰ Álvarez de Miranda, *Del "contubernio"*, pp. 15-16.

¹¹ Bernáldez, *El Patrón de la Derecha*, p. 31.

recommended him to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alberto Martín Artajo, for the post of Secretary General of the Institute of Hispanic Culture. Having already worked at the Institute for nearly four years Fraga seemed ideal for the job. Liking the suggestion, Martín Artajo offered Fraga the job, which he started in the early months of 1951. Although this post was more diplomatic than political, it gave Fraga the chance to meet members of the Spanish ruling class, and also to build important links with high-ranking Latin-Americans.

While Fraga's public career was flourishing, the social situation in Spain was clearly deteriorating. The beginning of the 1950's was marked by a wave of strikes and street disturbances not seen since the Spanish Civil War. In 1951, a ministerial change brought the Social Democrat Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez to the Ministry of Education boosting the hopes of the most progressive Spaniards, and in 1953 Manuel Fraga left the Institute of Hispanic Culture to become part of Ruiz-Giménez's team. Ruiz-Giménez offered Fraga the general secretariat of the National Council of Education, presided over by Wenceslao Fernández Oliveros, whose task consisted primarily of encouraging the participation of foreign students in Spanish cultural events.

During this period, Fraga took on an increasing number of public posts. As well as his position at the department of Education, Fraga became general secretary of the First University Assembly, member of the Spanish Commission for the Latin Union, director of a course in contemporary problems at the University Menéndez y Pelayo of Madrid, and also secretary of the Spanish Commission of Co-operation with UNESCO. But, his duties at these posts were more bureaucratic than political. Fraga's first real political post was offered to him by Ruiz-Giménez in 1955. The Minister appointed Fraga Technical Secretary General of the Ministry of Education, a post that only lasted for a year. Following disturbances at the university, Ruiz-Giménez was dismissed from

the Ministry. A large part of his team followed him in solidarity, including Fraga. Among the students arrested were José María Ruiz Gallardón, Gabriel Elorriaga, and Ramón Tamames, all future collaborators of Fraga's study group GODSA.¹² Fraga's support for Ruiz-Giménez could have alienated the hard-liners of the regime, but he was not yet a figure to attract the attention of the Establishment. On the contrary his energy and ambition, his devotion to work, his absolute fidelity to the regime of the 18 of July (date of Franco's coup in 1936), and also his favourable reputation among Francoist personalities had made a rather good impression. Following his resignation, Fraga portrayed himself as a mere bureaucrat whose destiny was not in politics. This relieved him of any political responsibility.¹³ Years later, however, he noted in his memoirs that it was during this period that he realized politics were in fact his first priority. From that point on, he claimed, he committed himself to reforming the regime as a whole, as he believed that the reform of individual sectors would be doomed to failure.¹⁴

In the autumn of 1956, Diego Salas Pombo, Vice-Secretary General of the Movement, offered Fraga the post of delegate of the exterior sector of the Falange. Fraga refused it. His refusal, as well as pressure from other people, made the post disappear altogether. Fraga showed interest in the directorship of the Institute of Political Studies, but the position was not available. Perhaps it was Fraga's insistence that made Salas decide that since the directorship was a political position he could create a sub-directorship responsible for the institute magazine, lectures, publications, and so forth. Fraga could not have the directorship, but he was appointed deputy director of the Institute on 18 December 1956. It was a step closer to his desired post.¹⁵

¹² Baón, "Fraga y su poliedro", p. 81.

¹³ Políticos para unas elecciones, *Fraga*, p. 40; Bernáldez, *El Patron de la Derecha*, pp. 33-4.

¹⁴ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 26.

¹⁵ Cabezas, *Manuel Fraga*, p. 76.

From the beginning of his time at the institute, Fraga helped José Luis Arrese, the Minister-Secretary of the Movement, to elaborate a reform proposal for the separation of the State and the government. José Luis Arrese began to work on the political reform of the regime with the collaboration of the Institute of Political Studies. The Institute was put in charge of documenting and elaborating the texts needed to support Arrese's thesis. Arrese delegated this job to young Manuel Fraga. Years later, Fraga explained that during his time as deputy director of the Institute, he intensively thought about a profound reform of the Fundamental Laws. He also sent Franco a report on the development of his research emphasizing its long-term implications - which in fact was the political reform of the regime - at a time when few dared to talk about such a delicate issue to the Caudillo.¹⁶

In February 1959, Fraga organized the First Congress of the Spanish Family, which strove for greater political participation by Spanish families in national politics. The congress served as a platform for the preparation of a Bill of Family Associations. This proposal, however, was halted by opposing interests but laid the foundations for the future Law of Family Representation of 1967. Fraga spent three years at the Institute in the course of which he was also appointed Legal Advisor to the Cortes thereby becoming a *procurador*. But resistance to Fraga's liberal ideas came from the Delegation of Associations as well as from the Delegation of Syndicates, and made him consider moving to the Institute of Political Studies. Aware of his inability to overcome the resistance from the Delegation, he asked José Solís, then Minister-Secretary of the Movement, once again for the directorship of the Institute of Political Studies. Solís, who fully understood Fraga's concerns, appointed him director of the Institute as soon

¹⁶ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 26. See also, Carr & Fusi, *Dictatorship to Democracy*, pp. 172-3.

as he had the opportunity, which finally occurred in the spring of 1961. That was, according to Fraga, the only post he asked for throughout his political career.¹⁷

*4.2. Minister Fraga, 'representative of the new generation'*¹⁸

The announcement of Fraga's appointment as Minister of Information and Tourism found him at his long-desired director's desk of the Institute of Political Studies in July 1962. This new post represented the peak of his political career under Franco, and he approached it with his usual energy and enthusiasm. During the speech in which he ceremonially took possession of the Ministry, Fraga defined his stance as follows: 'I come to defend the honour of Spain, that it is from those who, from within or outside, want to sully it'.¹⁹ Moreover, as Fraga himself recalled, 'during the ceremony, I declared myself Liberal, like Vives and Marañón. A significant declaration in those days, but problematic as it will be seen'.²⁰

Under Fraga's leadership, the Ministry of Information and Tourism was quite successful. The chaotic state of the Ministry itself was soon transformed into an efficient institution where there was no place for those high-ranking civil servants who had for years been receiving a salary but never turning up for work.²¹ Fraga had decided that 'the information side of the Ministry would become an instrument for political openness, and cultural promotion, and that the tourism side would become a strategic sector for the social and economic development [of the country]'.²² During his seven years as Minister, Fraga devoted himself entirely to his work, and his collaborators

¹⁷ Cabezas, *Manuel Fraga*, p. 82; Fraga, *España en la encrucijada*, p. 188.

¹⁸ According to Fraga himself, the German Von Papen told him that he was the representative of the new generation of Spaniards. See Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 96.

¹⁹ Álvarez de Miranda, *Del 'Conturbenio' al Consenso*, p. 37.

²⁰ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 33.

²¹ Cernuda, *Ciclón Fraga*, p. 74.

²² Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 33.

regarded him as an extremely hard worker, a quality that the Minister also demanded from his subordinates.

For his ministerial team, Fraga chose able young men, in their early forties, with professional as well as academic experience, in an attempt to improve the image of the regime. The majority had a strong Catholic background and had previously contributed to Catholic journals. They clearly represented a new breed within the regime and were professionally more capable than their predecessors. Having said that, Max Gallo believes that despite their new ideas 'these new men, who often concealed their personal ambitions behind a mask of disinterested technical efficiency, were the surest guarantee that the regime could find to ensure its continuity'.²³ These new faces included Pío Cabanillas, Carlos Robles Piquer, Manuel Jiménez Quílez, Antonio García Rodríguez Acosta and José María García Escudero. Most of them, however, were to play an important role in the future transition to democracy.

As far as the ministerial duties were concerned the tourism side witnessed a spectacular transformation. Since its creation in the cabinet reshuffle of 1951 the Ministry of Tourism had been a mere appendix to the Ministry of Information. This was a section of the Ministry that was never encouraged to develop because of the regime's view that the moral integrity of Spaniards should be protected from the bad habits of other European countries.²⁴ Fraga's arrival changed this pattern. His new policies and commitment to transform the tourist industry into one of the major Spanish industries contributed to an unprecedented tourist boom, which gathered pace through the 1960s and continues to this day. For instance, from 1962 to 1973 the number of tourists who visited Spain rose from 9 million to 35 million a year, thereby contributing to an

²³ Gallo, *Spain under Franco*, pp. 301-2.

²⁴ Bernáldez, *El Patrón de la Derecha*, p. 52.

important increase in Peseta earnings at an annual rate of 18 per cent.²⁵ In fact, during Fraga's ministry, tourism became the greatest single source of foreign currency for the Spanish economy. And, it was upon this influx of foreign currency that the financing of the Development Plans was going to be based.²⁶

The extraordinary development of this industry contributed considerably to the improvement of the overall economy, and consequently helped to increase the standard of living of many Spanish families. According to Fraga, that achievement was, however, not difficult because in Spain 'the climate is an excellent sub-secretary (*subsecretario*), and the landscape a magnificent personal secretary (*secretario personal*).'²⁷ Furthermore, the impact of tourists on Spanish life, as Edward Malefakis explains, 'although indirect and not usually susceptible to precise measurement, was overwhelming. Sexual mores were undoubtedly the first to be affected by their example, but other social attitudes soon followed. Secularism, consumerism, and all other aspect of the "modern" life-styles'. Likewise, 'because of tourism, Spain was flooded with many kinds of foreign newspapers and periodicals, which provided at least for the educated elite uncensored sources of information long before the Spain won its freedom'.²⁸

The information side, including radio, television and written press, also developed considerably during Fraga's time in office. The quality of both radio and television substantially improved, and with the help of greater purchasing power, more Spaniards could enjoy having a TV at home. Fraga organized the opening of a large number of so-called *Teleclubs* which were village centres where people met to watch TV as well as play cards, domino, read papers, and so forth. *Teleclubs* were opened all

²⁵ OECD Economic Survey, *Spain*, (May 1976), pp. 35-6.

²⁶ *La Actualidad Española*, No.687, 4 March 1965, p. 10.

²⁷ *Gaceta Ilustrada*, No. 742, 27 December 1970, p.15.

over the Spanish regions and represented an important source for the spread of communication. But above all, Fraga would be remembered for his controversial Press Law.

When Franco offered Fraga the ministry, he warned him that 'one of the problems that you will have to face is to make a good Press Law'. Fraga responded that 'that was what he was going to do, but not a general law of information like Arias Salgado had tried'.²⁹ Franco seemed to agree, but confessed not to believe 'in press freedom, but it is a step that many important reasons force us to take'.³⁰ He was, anyway, willing to make use of indirect controls over the press.³¹ A Press Law had to be drawn up and Franco knew that he could not leave to his successor the difficult task of lifting press censorship.³² Instead, the difficult task fell to Fraga. Allegedly, Fraga's core objective was the making of the first political reform in Spain, which could overturn the extant censorship laws once and for all.³³ But, the journalist Pilar Cernuda, one of Fraga's biographers, argues that Fraga never sought to abolish, eliminate, or annul censorship in a drastic way. He just wanted to slowly open the grip of the censors, and this he achieved.³⁴ Incidentally, López Rodó suggested to Fraga that he immediately eliminate censorship completely, or he would never achieve full freedom. But Fraga opted for applying his method of a gradual loosening until he reached the total and irreversible removal of censorship.³⁵ This gradual opening did not prevent Fraga from dismissing the Chief of Censorship Francisco Serrano Castilla, who was replaced by Manuel Camacho, a public servant more to Fraga's liking. With the help

²⁸ Malefakis, "Spain and Its Francoist Heritage", p. 218.

²⁹ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 29.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 144-5.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

³² López Rodó, *Memorias I*, p. 555.

³³ Sentís. *Manuel Fraga*, p. 43; Preston, *Franco*, p. 706.

³⁴ Cernuda, *Ciclón Fraga*, p. 75.

³⁵ López Rodó, *Memorias I*, p. 347.

and agreement of Fernando María Castiella, Camacho removed the 'double' censorship that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had had since the Second World War.

After a series of drafts and no little opposition from Franco's hard-liners, the Cortes finally approved Fraga's Press Law on Friday 13 August 1965. The Law abolished the pre-publication censorship (*censura previa*) although editors and writers still applied a certain amount of self-censorship to their writings out of a fear. The law also eliminated most of the censorship instructions, such as the one that forbade the display of pictures of ladies' swimming suits with 'ladies inside them' (*con señoras dentro*).³⁶ The response of the population to the Press Law was well captured in a cartoon published in *ABC* where the cartoonist Mingote cleverly expressed both surprise at the approval of the Law and criticism at its delay. In the cartoon an editor was pictured before his typewriter saying: 'Boy! twenty-nine years waiting for this moment, and I cannot think of anything to say right now'.³⁷

Amando de Miguel while regarding the Law to be unprecedented, also considered it to be insufficient due to its specific limitations. A clear example was the famous and ambiguous Article 2 of the Law, by which 'freedom of expression and the right to spread information, recognized in Article 1, will have no limitation other than that imposed by the Law'. In other words, the limitation will be marked by truth, moral and public order.³⁸ Thus, rather than eliminating censorship, it substituted it with responsibility. The editor had to bear in mind the limitations established by the authorities, or face prosecution, fine, seizure of the paper or even imprisonment.³⁹ Despite these restrictions, as mentioned in Chapter 2, according to the journalist Juan

³⁶ Cernuda, *Ciclón Fraga*, p. 75.

³⁷ Baón, "Fraga y su poliedro", p. 84.

³⁸ Miguel, *Sociología del Franquismo*, pp. 77-8; *Índice*, No. 268, 1 May 1970, pp. 6-11.

³⁹ John Hollyman, "The Press and Censorship in Franco Spain", in *Iberian Studies*, Vol. III, No. 2 (autumn, 1974), p. 66; A summary of the Press Law are recorded in Fraga, *Horizonte Español*, pp. 293-95.

Luis Cebrián, Fraga's law constituted an irreversible step towards modernisation, which without doubt contributed to the deterioration of the Francoist foundations.⁴⁰

The contradictory elements of Fraga's character came to the surface anew in relation to the Press Law, tarnishing the great expectations that were raised by his appointment. On the one hand, he authorized a number of new progressive publications and there was a substantial increase in newspaper sales. Sales went from 500,000 in 1945 to 2.5 million copies in 1967, helping to break the monopoly of information held hitherto by the Movement. In 1970, Spain stood fifth in world ranking for its number of publications.⁴¹ On the other hand, the Ministry of Information imposed four hundred and sixty-one administrative sanctions on journalists and publishers. Among the many examples are those of the evening paper *Madrid* which suffered four months closure; the magazine *Destino* which received fifteen sanctions and two months closure; *Cuadernos para el Diálogo* which suffered in the first six months of 1968 one seizure, two fines, and two administrative sanctions; and *Triunfo* closed down for four months. Ironically, Fraga was still said to believe that 'Spain is a country of open doors where journalism can be exercised with freedom'.⁴²

The reaction of the press towards the application of the sanctions was mixed. For instance, *Madrid* was given four months suspension and fined 250,000 pesetas for an article signed by its director, the Opus Dei Liberal Rafael Calvo Serer: '*Retirarse a tiempo: no al general De Gaulle*', whereby he was accused of indirectly referring to the Caudillo. Most of the popular dailies, namely *ABC*, *Informaciones*, *Nuevo Diario*, *El Alcázar* and *YA* considered the sanctions inappropriate, but they stressed the differences in their editorial line from the *Madrid*'s. On the other hand, *Arriba* and *Pueblo*

⁴⁰ Cebrián, *La España que bosteza*, pp. 105-7.

⁴¹ Domínguez Ortiz, *Historia de España*, p. 214.

considered the sanctions, in the words of Emilio Romero, to be well-deserved as Calvo Serer's article 'abused the freedom of the press'.⁴³ With a divided press, not much progress could be made.

Fraga's ambiguous relation with the press and with the cultural world in general was demonstrated even before the Press Law was passed, however. One such occasion had arisen on 30 September 1964 when a group of 102 intellectuals sent a letter of complaint to Fraga over the inaccurate information relating to miner strikes in Asturias. They denounced cases of torture and ill-treatment received by miners, men and women, at the hands of the Civil Guard. The denunciation was important as was the list of signatures, which included many well-known university professors, writers, and artists. Among them were the poet Vicente Aleixandre - later Nobel Prize winner -; Pedro Laín Entralgo, Professor of History of Medicine at the Universidad Complutense in Madrid; the economist Valentín Andrés Álvarez; the philosopher José Luis Aranguren; the founder of the *Partido Socialista del Interior* in 1968 (*later Partido Socialista Popular*), Enrique Tierno Galván; the poet José Bergamín; and the dramatist Antonio Buero Vallejo.⁴⁴

Fraga published this letter and his reply to it, which was addressed to the poet José Bergamín. Bergamín's forthright tone appears to have infuriated the Minister who began an undeclared war against him. After a series of letters, (which Fraga decided not to publish as in one of them the Minister accused Bergamín of having defended the crimes committed by a trotskyist group), the poet had to seek refuge at the Uruguayan embassy in Madrid. Given that his passport had been invalidated, and its renewal

⁴² *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 189, 11-17 December 1976, pp. 28-29; For a critical response to the government on its case see *Triunfo*, No. 676, 10 January 1976, pp. 6-7, 70.

⁴³ *El Ciervo*, No. 173, July 1968, p. 6.

⁴⁴ López Rodó, *Memorias I*, p. 480.

constantly refused 'on superior orders', Bergamín fled to Uruguay, and was only given a passport to return to Spain a few days after Fraga's dismissal in 1969.⁴⁵

Unfortunately, this case was not an isolated one. In relation to the aforementioned *Madrid* affair, Fraga also engaged in a quasi-personal dispute against its director Rafael Calvo Serer. The paper had been founded in 1961 by the Opus Dei cultural organization FACES (*Fomento de Actividades Culturales, Económicas y Sociales*) for the purpose of preparing a post-Francoist society. In 1966 Calvo Serer rescued it from failure, and from then on the *Madrid* became one of the most important papers for both liberal and democrat readers. Calvo Serer's known support for Don Juan alienated the pro-Francoist members of Opus Dei, namely Carrero's entourage, who favoured Don Juan Carlos. Calvo also fell out with Fraga, ensuring the Opus Dei member would have to battle constantly to defend his newspaper from the Minister. The paper's failure to support the regime line during the Burgos trials (further explained ahead), against members of the terrorist separatists ETA in 1970, led to its ultimate closure one year later and Calvo Serer's exile.⁴⁶ Calvo Serer accused Fraga on several occasions of being responsible for the paper's closure.⁴⁷

Dislike of Calvo Serer was perhaps the only thing Fraga and Franco's right hand man, Carrero Blanco, had in common. At the outset of his ministry, Fraga enjoyed good relations with the Deputy Secretary of the presidency, Carrero Blanco, who even asked Fraga to write a prologue to his book "Spain and the Sea". However, towards the end of the 1960s, their differing political views affected both their professional and personal relations and even halted Fraga's political career. They engaged in a 'battle' which

⁴⁵ Romero, *Tragicomedia de España*, p. 123; *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 189, 11-17 December 1976, pp. 28-29.

⁴⁶ Preston, *Triumph to democracy*, pp. 29-31, 36.

Carrero obviously won. On 8 October 1963 Fraga, for instance, presented the Caudillo with a constitutional bill for the reform of the State, which included the creation of a network of competitive political associations, the election of a Lower Chamber by universal suffrage, and he also presented the project of a Press Law. Franco rejected the first constitutional project and accepted the second one.⁴⁸ As seen in the previous Chapter, two other constitutional bills were also presented to Franco. One bill had been elaborated by José Solís and Fernando Herrero Tejedor, the other one by Carrero and López Rodó. Franco chose the Carrero-López Rodó proposal. In his memoirs, López Rodó points out the obvious differences between Fraga's bill and the later LOE - which was based on López Rodó's proposal. But, reading both, it is difficult to see much difference. Fraga proposed the election of only the Lower Chamber by universal suffrage – which was less restrictive than the LOE - by which only the family sector could be elected by heads of households, married women and adult men (so, not really by universal suffrage). The proposal still considered the family, municipality and syndicate as the basic structure of the State, and it contemplated the creation of association only under the umbrella of the Movement. Furthermore, the proposal emphasized the unity of religion, thereby opposing freedom of religion; and did not reform the syndical system, but 'soften' it.⁴⁹

Nevertheless, in comparison to the *inmovilista* sector, Fraga appeared to favour more open and reformist policies. For instance, Carrero and his Opus Dei protégés objected to any venture that threatened their plans to continue the Francoist regime under a Don Juan Carlos monarchy. Therefore they hid behind the position that Spain's

⁴⁷ Rafael Calvo Serer, *La dictadura de los franquistas*, (París: Ruedo Ibérica, 1973), pp. 264-293.

⁴⁸ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 87; Powell, *Reform versus 'Ruptura'*, p. 16.

⁴⁹ A summary of Fraga's bill is recorded in López Rodó, *Memorias I*, pp.397-400; Powell, *'Ruptura' versus Reform*, p.16.

chief problems were merely economic.⁵⁰ The differences between Carrero and Fraga became evident following the resignation of Muñoz Grandes as Vice-President of the Government on 22 July 1967. Rumours in the press asserted that the two contenders for the vacant position were Carrero Blanco and Manuel Fraga.⁵¹ Carrero was not only a strong contender but also the Caudillo's distrust of Fraga ensured that he had no chance of the post.⁵² On 21 September 1967 Carrero was officially appointed Vice-President of the Government, gaining more power and influence than ever before. Fraga lost his job as one of Franco's ministers in the ministerial change of July 1969. As Minister of Information and Tourism he had helped to relax, though not completely abolish, the dictatorial censorship, contributing ultimately to the regime's demise. He also improved the tourist industry, which itself contributed to the population's increased standard of living. In conclusion, it was a satisfactory result brought up short by his dismissal from the cabinet.

4.3. Fraga, the man of the 'Centre'

Fraga refused to accept that his dismissal from the Ministry represented the end of a phase in his political career, but a new opportunity only arose after the Caudillo's death. Between 1969 and 1975 he occupied top positions in both the public and private sectors, became president of a large Spanish brewing company, sat on the executive boards of various firms, and taught intermittently at the University of Madrid from 1969 until 1977.⁵³ Meanwhile Franco did not renew Fraga's seat as Councillor of the Kingdom, the so-called *40 de Ayete*, removing him gradually from the spheres of

⁵⁰ Bernáldez, *El Patrón de la Derecha*, p. 53.

⁵¹ Equipo Mundo, *Los 90 ministros de Franco*, p. 275.

⁵² Fraga, *Memoria breve*, pp. 205-8; Preston, *Franco*, pp.733-34; Preston, *Triumph of Democracy*, p.15.

⁵³ López-Pintor, "Francoist Reformers in democratic Spain", pp. 191-2; Fraga, *Memoria breve*, pp. 257-375.

power.⁵⁴ With Carrero as Vice-President of the Government, Fraga's scope for political manoeuvring was dramatically reduced. In fact, Fraga remembered the period between 1969 and 1975 as the time of 'his greatest political frustration' because the authorities denied him the conditions for direct action.⁵⁵

Franco had praised Fraga's youth, but regarded him as a man of the 'future'.⁵⁶ There was, therefore, no chance for Fraga to return to politics as yet. But, Fraga's political career had not finished. He believed he was to be a protagonist in the transition to a post-Francoist Spain, although he also realized that since his dismissal from the Ministry of Information and Tourism he had achieved little. As a result, he set himself an important task: to convince others of his capability and potential to lead in the post-Francoist era.⁵⁷ In fact, several years later, in December 1974, following a lecture to the Catalan political élite in Barcelona, the audience left under the impression that Fraga was the only man capable of playing a role in the terribly confused period that Spain was going through.⁵⁸ A more moderate prediction was that of the British historian Hugh Thomas who, also in 1974, said that any post-Francoist government would have to have Fraga's presence.⁵⁹

Fraga's first opportunity to return to public notice came in April 1970 when the West German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Walter Scheel, visited Madrid at the invitation of his Spanish counterpart, Gregorio López Bravo. Scheel reiterated European demands to prominent Spanish figures of the tolerated 'democratic opposition' like Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez, José María de Areilza, Joaquín Satrustegui, Enrique Tierno

⁵⁴ *Mundo*, 13-XI-71, p. 9.

⁵⁵ Interview with Pilar Urbano recorded in Manuel Fraga, *España en la encrucijada*, (Madrid: Eds. Adra, 1976), p. 178.

⁵⁶ Bernáldez, *El Patrón de la derecha*, pp. 133-4.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 124, 147.

Galván, and even Manuel Fraga. This meeting with the German enhanced Fraga's progressive image, confirming his reformist position. Ironically for Fraga, the meeting had been simply 'ceremonial as I do not like to exhibit national problems before foreigners'.⁶⁰ Scheel's visit to Spain was important as the newly-appointed cabinet, composed mainly of technocrats, was committed to economic liberalization and growth, which they believed would bring Spain closer to the European Economic Community (EEC). Thus, following the failed attempt of Spain to become part of the EEC, the Spanish Foreign Affairs Minister was making new efforts to present Spain as a modern country to the German Minister. Yet, the obvious deficiency of the Spanish system in basic human (see the Grimau affair), and political Rights (Right of free political associations, information, assembly, etc.) clashed with the catalogue of democratic requirements from the EEC.

In March 1970, José María de Areilza - Head of Don Juan's secretariat - published an article in the monarchist daily *ABC* called *The Spanish Road to Democracy*, in which he argued that 'it seems that recognition of Spain's politics as equivalent to elsewhere in Europe is impossible' (*La homología de España con la Europa política es, a lo que parece, imposible*). However, since the principal objective was the finding of a Spanish road to democracy, Areilza advanced some essential points of a democratic system, one of which was a government chosen by the people.⁶¹ But, Franco's entourage was hard to convince. Carrero, for instance, responded, under the pseudonym 'Ginés de Buitrago', to a public call for democracy in the Catholic daily *YA*

⁵⁸ *Cambio 16*, 16-22 December 1974.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 6-12 January 1975, p. 33.

⁶⁰ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 264; Areilza, *Crónica de Libertad*, pp. 103-4

⁶¹ *ABC*, 24 March 1970.

that, 'rather than Spain having to adapt to Europe, Europe should imitate Francoism'.⁶²

But Spain was not enjoying an enviable reputation.

At the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, the social situation in Spain was characterized by popular unrest against the dictatorship, student and worker demonstrations, and terrorist acts in reaction to the repressive government. One of the most important events, attracting national and international attention, was undoubtedly the so-called 'Burgos trial'. At the end of 1970 the regime held sixteen ETA militants, including two priests, out of which three were sentenced to death. In those days of dictatorship ETA enjoyed the support of many Spaniards, but the Caudillo remained unmoved by the many pleas for clemency or commuted sentences, from home and abroad. The Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs warned the Caudillo on the negative impact abroad, and other Ministers like Carrero and López Rodó did not approve of the death sentences.⁶³ The Caudillo's decision to have the sentences carried out alienated not only the Church and the democratic opposition, but also the regime reformists. On 29 December 1970, a 'mercy petition' was sent to Franco from the *Colegios de Abogados de Madrid* a number of progressive political personalities, which included signatures from José María Gil-Robles, Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez, Fernando Álvarez de Miranda, Pablo Castellano, Pedro Laín Entralgo, Dionisio Ridruejo, Enrique Tierno Galván, among others. Eventually, the Caudillo granted a reprieve, restoring calm.⁶⁴ According to Preston, 'the pardons may have been manifestations of strength, but to have held the trials at all was a symptom of Franco's loosening grip.'⁶⁵

⁶² Preston, *Triumph of Democracy*, pp.28-9.

⁶³ For more details on the trial see Preston, *Franco*, pp. 751-4.

⁶⁴ Álvarez de Miranda, *Del "contubernio"*, p. 71; Bardavio & Sinova, *Todo Franco*, pp. 376-379.

⁶⁵ Preston, *Franco*, p. 754.

Luis Ramírez points out that ‘the trial against ETA’s militants became the trial against the regime’. The Burgos trial resulted in the international isolation of the regime and clarified who would stay with Franco until the end.⁶⁶ Furthermore, the historian José Luis Rodríguez Jiménez suggests that the Burgos trial had a threefold effect; it provoked the ‘closing of ranks’ around the Caudillo; it halted the liberalization measures advocated by the reformists; and what was worst, it triggered the emergence of ultra-Right squads.⁶⁷ Yet, the trials also had an effect on the democratic opposition, which became more unified than any time since the Civil War.⁶⁸

By that time, the degree of political consciousness of the working class was much greater than a few years before. So far as political participation was concerned, it was not only the man-in-the-street but also elements of the regime that demanded political associations (even if some of them wanted them to be within the boundaries of the Movement). Many people regarded integration with Europe as the only way to open the way towards political liberalization. This demand was reflected in the press. An editorial in the Catholic *YA* recorded that ‘there is not a single day in which, in one guise or another, the theme of associationism does not appear in the press, to the point of seeming to be an obsession’.⁶⁹

The battle for associations became Fraga’s obsession too. Since his dismissal from the Ministry, Fraga had toured Spain giving lectures in his pursuit of delivering a progressive and centrist political programme. From 1969 to 1973, he gave, or participated in, a total of fifty-one lectures and workshops with the purpose of removing obstacles to political pluralism. This political stance, which he had publicly unveiled

⁶⁶ Ramírez, “Morir en el búnker”, pp. 10, 14, 19.

⁶⁷ José Luis Rodríguez Jiménez, “The Extreme Right in Spain after Franco”, in *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol. 24, Vols. 2-4, 1990, p. 87.

⁶⁸ Preston, *Triumph of Democracy*, p. 36

⁶⁹ *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 99, December 1971, p. 13; *YA*, 16-II-71.

during his speech before the Cortes on 15 December 1969, placed him in opposition to the regime. His public appearances did not go unnoticed.⁷⁰ He had agreed to give a talk at the *Club Horizonte 1980*, which was part of the *Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas* (CSIC), on 22 February 1971⁷¹. Yet, on 15 February he was informed that the lecture had been cancelled due to urgent repairs of the premises. The truth, however, was that José Luis Villar Palasí and Eugenio Montes Alonso, Ministers of Education and Public Works, respectively, had refused him permission to use the CSIC Centre. This prompted Fraga's resignation from the board of the CSIC, although he stayed to give his talk. His letter of resignation was published and the whole affair attracted great attention. Fraga's talk, *El desarrollo político*, was finally given before a large audience at premises belonging to the Dominican friars in Madrid. Fraga emphasized the need for a series of reforms equidistant from extremes of Right and Left, and defended the objective of such a political development; 'a rich and full Spain where all Spaniards belong, [and] which must have tensions, nuances and political ideologies'.⁷² His talk was later published in a book under the same title.⁷³

During an interview with the journalist Alfonso Paso, Fraga said that 'it is the time of honest men, [of those] who do not fear innovation and risk and have moral authority, of groups genuinely representative of all society and overall of a society just being born. It is the moment of participation [...], of enthusiasm but not of boredom. It is [the time for] re-launching the ideal of a Spain so big and just that all Spaniards

⁷⁰ Baón, "Fraga y su poliedro", p. 87.

⁷¹ This club was registered at the Registry of Associations in May 1967 as *Club 1980*. It aimed at promoting and making medium and long forecasting studies about the consequences of the development of science and technology in the economic, social and cultural life. Statutes of *Club 1980*, 13 Mayo 1967. Registro Nacional de Asociaciones. Ministerio del Interior, Madrid.

⁷² Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 277; *Dossier Mundo*, January 1972, pp. 16-7; López Rodó, *Memorias III*, pp. 163-4.

⁷³ Manuel Fraga, *Horizonte Español*, (Madrid: Heroes, 1968, 3 Ed.).

belong.’⁷⁴ The ex-Minister, however, did not clarify whether the Communists could be included in his idea of *all Spaniards*. Although Fernando Alvarez de Miranda asserted that Fraga was one of the few politicians of the regime willing to support a pluralist democracy, the lack of clarity about the legalisation of the Communist party seemed to be a common pattern at that time.⁷⁵ Like many of his contemporaries, therefore, Fraga was sceptical of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) because the Communist’s support for a democracy after Franco was still unknown to many. Open advocacy in favour of the PCE would have categorized Fraga as being on the left of the democratic opposition, and Fraga was still a long way from a purely democratic ideology.

Another unclear point was that of political parties or associations. When the journalist Mariano del Mazo asked Fraga which of the two options he preferred, the ex-Minister answered that, ‘my motto is reform, and that requires a tactic of ordered transition. Any statute of associations is good to start with, so long as the associations are sincere [he uses “good faith political associations”].’ It was clear that Fraga was willing to initiate a political association within the boundaries of the Movement, a position that changed over time. A few years later, as it will be explained in Chapter 6, he advocated a network of political associations outside the Movement. What Fraga made clear to Del Mazo, however, was his position towards the idea of a centrist policy in Spain,

The centre in Spain is the possible line between the *inmovilista* Right and the utopian Left. In any case, I believe, and that’s how I put it in books and lectures, that what is necessary in Spain are a policy of reforms. The revolutionary measures imply revolution that means risk [*aventura*] and a revolutionary dictatorship. *Inmovilismo* has no exit either, nor political future, nor truly economic development, nor social justice. In the middle grounds remains difficult but necessary field of reforms. [...]The Centre Policy is not only the most convenient, but also the one that the majority of Spaniards wish for.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ *Gaceta Ilustrada*, No. 742, 27 December 1970, p. 18.

⁷⁵ Álvarez de Miranda, *Del ‘contubernio’ al consenso*, p. 37.

⁷⁶ Cabezas, *Manuel Fraga*, p. 282.

His conviction that a centrist policy was the right one was such that he even defined himself as a man of the Centre.⁷⁷ In November 1971 Fraga gave, according to Rogelio Baón, one of his most important speeches. The lecture took place at the Royal Academy of Moral and Political Science under the title of ‘Social change and political reform’. The lecture contained the doctrinal and ideological material that Fraga presented throughout the early 1970s.⁷⁸ A few months later, on 10 March 1972, Fraga gave a speech in Barcelona called, specifically ‘Theory of the centre’, in which whilst he acknowledged the inevitability of change, he stressed the moderate meaning of the term Centre. ‘The attitude of the centre’, he said, ‘therefore, is neither conservative nor revolutionary, but reformist. The established order is not repudiated, but it is not accepted unconditionally either; the centrist [man] wishes to transform it selectively (in other words, in specific sectors) and gradually (*evolutivamente*), in other words, in a progressive way and without violence.’⁷⁹

Following the Barcelona lecture, Fraga claimed that his copyright of the ‘theory of the Centre’ was clear.⁸⁰ Gabriel Cisneros defends this claim, and although one cannot say that Fraga invented the term ‘centre’, he definitely put it into circulation.⁸¹ The tireless ex-Minister took every opportunity offered to him to explain his political stance. Fraga participated in a round table organized by ANEPA about ‘the Church and State in Spain’. Here he supported an amicable separation between Church and State and advocated a religiously plural society with its different traditions. But these

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 282.

⁷⁸ Baón, “Fraga y su poliedro”, pp. 86-87.

⁷⁹ The content of the lecture “Teoría de Centro” delivered in the Centre Mundo on 10 March 1972 was recorded together with other pieces of lectures in Fraga’s *Legitimidad y Representación*, (Barcelona: Grijalbo, 1973), pp. 213-257. This quote can be found in *Ibid.* pp. 240-41. See also *Mundo*, 18-III-1972, p. 11.

⁸⁰ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 286.

⁸¹ Testimony of Gabriel Cisneros, 13-9-99.

moderate ideas would only be possible, Fraga said, if one was at the centre of the political spectrum.⁸²

In retrospect, however, it is difficult to attribute the idea of a 'centre party' solely to Manuel Fraga although he may have been the first one to put it into circulation. Many observers had already understood that in order to have a peaceful transition to a post-Francoist society the only solution was to take a centrist position. As early as 1956 a group of students led by Jesús Barros de Lis and José Gallo had created a clandestine association called *Unión Demócrata Cristiana* which they defined as a 'centrist party'.⁸³ On the other hand, Rafael Calvo Serer believed it was actually the Professor of *Derecho Político*, Juan Ferrando Badía who developed the idea of a 'political Centre' while he collaborated with the newspaper *Madrid*. As a Minister of Information Fraga affirmed that Ferrando would never become a professor because of his advocacy of political associations. Years later, in 1977, an angered Calvo Serer complained that 'Fraga had the audacity, not to say the impertinence, to affirm that he had been the first one to talk of the political centre in Spain'.⁸⁴

Incidentally, in 1968 Calvo Serer himself had already published a book entitled *España ante la libertad, la democracia y el progreso*, where he explained the idea of the political centre. Here he argued that 'the regime is accepted for it is the legal system, but at the same time one wants to correct it, amend it, and transform it in order to match the changing reality, in other words, make it evolve. The centre stays to the Right of the opposition outside the regime'. Thus, he added, 'if the authoritarian formula, the military dictatorship, and the democratic extreme are unviable, [then] the gradual

⁸² Asociación para el Estudio de Problemas Contemporáneos, *El Estado y la Iglesia en España*, (Madrid, 1972); pp. 29-39. See also Asociación para el Estudio de Problemas Contemporáneos, *La participación política*, (Madrid, 1973).

⁸³ Tusell & Calvo, *Giménez Fernández*, pp. 268-269.

⁸⁴ Rafael Calvo Serer, *Mis enfrentamientos con el poder*, (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1978), p. 273.

evolution, via the reformist way that the centre represents, is the preferable (*the gradual evolución por la vía reformista representa el Centro*)'.⁸⁵

Fraga's reformist ideas, however, never stopped him from being close to Franco and admiring his work.⁸⁶ In 1970, for instance, Fraga had claimed to have 'the highest regard for his Excellency the Head of State. [...] [He] has been, and [still] is, a great leader who on many occasions has sacrificed his personal life, and his interests to the service of the Fatherland'.⁸⁷ Also, in his book *Horizonte Español* Fraga reiterated his admiration for Franco's system. 'With the nationalist victory', he wrote, 'this last quarter-century has seen the greatest period of peace, order and prosperity since the reign of Charles III. With Franco's guidance the country is moving in an orderly way towards solving all its economic, social, administrative, political and international problems'.⁸⁸

The ex-Minister, therefore, never really wished to break with the regime in order to establish a democratic system, but to keep its best elements and introduce the necessary legal reforms to evolve a new system in Spain. In fact, Pilar Cernuda argues that it was the reactionary attitude of his fellow Ministers, such as Carrero, that made Fraga appear more liberal than he really was. It is pointless to claim - Cernuda insists - that Fraga wanted to democratize the regime from within, as he felt comfortable on the inside. Moreover, Fraga did not raise his voice in protest when there were occasions to do so such as political repression in demonstrations, persecutions of individuals in the

⁸⁵ Rafael Calvo Serer, *España, ante la libertad, la democracia y el progreso*, (Madrid: Guadiana de publicaciones, 1968), pp. 314-317, 333.

⁸⁶ See for example Fraga's comments on Franco and the regime in José María Gironella y Rafael Borrás Betriu, *100 Españoles y Franco*, (Barcelona: Planeta, 1979), pp. 190-192.

⁸⁷ *Gaceta Ilustrada*, No. 742, 27 December 1970, p.16.

⁸⁸ Fraga, *Horizonte Español*, p. 15. Another propagandistic book in favour of the regime was an earlier work of Manuel Fraga titled *Así se gobierna España*, (Madrid: Oficina de Información Diplomática, 1949).

cultural world, application of the death penalty, and so forth.⁸⁹ Furthermore, Bernáldez observes that Fraga was really in the regime, not as Liberal as his supporters claimed. Fraga fully belonged and never distanced himself from the regime's abuses. Fraga's wish to reform the regime was sincere but insufficient and, according to Bernáldez, far from truly democratic in spirit.⁹⁰

Nonetheless, Manuel Fraga went around the country presenting his reformist political ideas. Lectures were not, however, the ideal place for discussions in a relaxed and open manner. Fraga needed a solid platform where he could explain in a consistent way his political ideas. On these grounds, in the early 1970s Fraga attempted the publication of a newspaper, which could reflect his ideas about the centre. In his memoirs Fraga records a meeting with José María de Areilza, Darío Varcárcel and Carlos Mendo on 26 November 1970 which marked the beginning of the conversations to create *El País*. On 15 February, and following a conversation with the same people, he wrote that 'the operation *El País* continues'. At the end of August 1971, Fraga records a conversation with Ortega Spottorno about *El País*. 'It will be', Fraga said, 'a Liberal and independent daily, equidistant from *inmovilismo* and Marxism.'⁹¹ Later, the former mayor of Madrid and one of Fraga's most faithful supporters, Juan de Arespachoga recorded that, 'in November 1972, and because of Fraga's wish, [I] had my first contact with Ortega Spottorno, Pérez Escolar and Carlos Mendo to contribute to the subscription for *El País*.'⁹²

According to the above information, it appears that the idea of *El País* had emerged from initial conversation between Manuel Fraga, Areilza and Darío Varcárcel.

⁸⁹ Cernuda, *Ciclón Fraga*, pp. 70-71.

⁹⁰ Bernáldez, *El Patrón de la derecha*, pp. 129, 152.

⁹¹ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, pp. 274, 277, 280. Further conversations about *El País* are recorded in *Ibid.*, pp. 281, 290, 294.

⁹² Juan de Arespachoga, *Cartas a unos Capitanes*, (Madrid: INCIPIT Editores, 1984), p. 210.

Yet, the confusion arises when the launch of the newspaper finally materialised in May 1976. The magazine *Cambio-16* referred to José Ortega Spottorno as ‘the father of the operation’, and Manuel Fraga was merely one among four-hundred other shareholders.⁹³ Furthermore, Areilza records the launching of the newspapers and also refers to Ortega Spottorno as the main promoter.⁹⁴ In May 1973, Ortega Spottorno visited Fraga at his London embassy. Ortega, as Fraga recalls, ‘has come to ask me to accelerate the process of registering the newspaper, and also to accept Juan Luis Cebrián’s candidature for the directorship, rather than Carlos Mendo [Fraga’s proposed candidate]. Cebrián had been included on the shortlist and was agreed to be the most suitable for the post.’⁹⁵ It is not clear why Fraga was asked to agree on the name of the director if he had not been one of the main promoters, or at least an important participant in the operation. The newspaper was finally launched in May 1976, and ironically, became one the most important platforms for criticism of Fraga’s AP.

By 1971, and alongside the operation *El País*, Fraga had also matured the idea of forming his own political group with a reformist and centrist tendency, as Rogelio Baón asserts, with the ‘pretentious’ intention of leading the Second Restoration. To this end, the tireless ex-Minister had gathered together a number of people interested in his proposals and with whom he created a couple of teams.⁹⁶ Fraga wanted these political groups to be ready for the creation of a political association in the event of their approval. The most important was a study group called *Gabinete de Orientación y Documentación, S.A.* (GODSA), which was finally created in 1973 (this group deserves special attention because it was a pioneering group formed by *aperturistas* and young *reformists* of the regime). Fraga’s group developed a proper political programme that

⁹³ *Cambio-16*, 4-10 February 1974, pp. 16-17. The names of eighty-eight shareholders are recorded in *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁹⁴ Areilza, *Crónica de libertad*, pp. 187-8.

⁹⁵ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 327.

served as the basis for the future AP. (This group is studied in more detail in Chapter 6). Fraga's decision to form a political group, however, seemed to be 'out of fashion'. According to Alfonso Osorio, the level of enthusiasm to form political associations that had existed in 1969 had vanished by 1970, by which time he, like many other observers, preferred to 'wait and see'.⁹⁷ In fact, while Fraga created a political study group, other people preferred to organize dinners to discuss politics.

Conclusion

Following his departure from the Ministry of Information and Tourism (1962-1969), Manuel Fraga Iribarne had set off on a political trajectory of his own. Fraga became the 'man of the Centre', and was regarded by many as the only politician capable of providing an alternative to Carrero Blanco's cabinet. Fraga advocated a centrist policy of reforms including the right for Spanish people to freely associate. But Fraga had started his policy of reforms already, while Minister of Information and Tourism. On the information side, Fraga's main achievement was the approval of the Press Law in 1966. Although some criticized its restrictive character, the Press Law contributed to the deterioration of the Francoist foundations by opening the frontiers of information. Equally important was Fraga's performance on the tourism side. Under Fraga's leadership tourism witnessed a spectacular transformation becoming one of Spain's most important industries.

His authoritarian character, however, tarnished Fraga's reputation as 'hard-worker' and aperturista. His reformist mantra contrasted with a series of incomprehensible decisions that he took as Minister such as to seize, to fine and to close

⁹⁶ Baón, "Fraga y su poliedro", p. 86.

⁹⁷ López Rodó, *Memorias III*, p. 64.

down a number of newspapers and journals, whose launching had been authorized by him. The only time Fraga's reformist side overshadowed his authoritarian side was between 1969 and 1975. From 1969, Fraga travelled around Spain delivering progressive speeches in favour of political reform and the introduction of a system of political associations. He secured the support of many young reformists, who became part of his study group later on. Moreover, from 1973, and while Spanish ambassador in London, Fraga was regarded by many as the only politician capable of bringing democracy to Spain. Yet, Fraga appeared more Liberal than he really was. As it is further explained in Chapter 7, Fraga advocated a tightly controlled liberalization of the regime, not a democratic regime. His wish to reform may have been sincere, but was also insufficient.

Chapter - 5

The positioning of the reformists (1969-1973). Part II

Juan Carlos as catalyst

By the end of the 1960s it was generally acknowledged that Franco's regime would not fall of its own volition, but would probably collapse after the Caudillo's death. Unlike its neighbour Portugal, Spain did not have a strong generation of young progressive military officers who could lead the transition to a democratic regime as happened in 1974. Many considered that the only logical option to ensure a peaceful post-Francoist transition was gradually to reform the system whilst meeting the demands of the population and the times. For some, the appointment of Prince Juan Carlos as Franco's official successor was a step forward, but the political future of Spain was still obscure at the beginning of the 1970s. The Caudillo's age should have prompted him to prepare the country for his stepping down, but it did not. On the contrary, Franco did not appear concerned by this issue. In fact, as the American Ambassador to Spain, Samuel Eaton, recalls, '...there was an unconscious, lingering popular suspicion that he would never die.'¹ It was the members of Franco's own regime, who were left to re-organize themselves and unofficially establish the possibilities for the country's future. However, given that political associations had not yet been approved, these Spaniards, and more specifically the *aperturistas* and reformists, had to find other ways to meet and discuss the political problems of the country. These were through means such as lectures, workshops, but mainly 'political dinners' that became very fashionable in the early 1970's.

During the period covered in this Chapter the divergence between points of view regarding the future of the country emerging amongst members of the regime became

¹ Eaton, *The forces of freedom in Spain*, p. 1.

more evident. According to the Spanish historian José María Jover, during this period there was a moderate group – probably a reference to the *aperturistas* and reformists - that stood between the members of a speedily growing democratic opposition, and the *inmovilistas*. Thus, the disappearance of a sharp divide between the regime and its opposition helped make possible the political reform which, orchestrated by the Institutions of the regime, took place after the death of the Caudillo.² Also, the quasi-official positioning of Prince Juan Carlos in favour of a democratic regime was, undoubtedly, what conditioned many members of the regime to take positions in the reformist side.

5.1. The years of the 'political dinners'

'If we organize dinners it is because, unfortunately, that is the only way to contrast different [political] opinions'.³ These words of Antonio Gavilanes, President of the *Centro de Estudios de Problemas Contemporáneos*, recorded in May 1972 clearly expressed the frustration felt among the progressive circles of the Spanish society in the face of the regime's reluctance to approve political associations. Dinners or private gatherings where people met to discuss political issues could be organized either by a registered association, or by private initiative. The early 1970s seem to have been the peak time of these gatherings, but as we have seen in Chapter 2, private meetings dated from much earlier.

In the early 1970s there were a number of groups which, among their activities, organized colloquiums and political dinners. These groups included the *Círculo de Estudios Jurídicos*, directed by the Catalan lawyer Pedro Rius, primarily dedicated to

² Jover Zamora (Dtor.), *Historia de España*, Vol. XLI., p. 145.

³ *Mundo*, 6-V-1972, p. 9.

legal topics although it blended law and politics; the *Club Horizonte 1980*, directed by Enrique Larroque; the ANEPA; and the *Club Siglo XXI*. (The last two were close to the regime).⁴ Antonio Fontán, director of the newspaper *Madrid*, also organized regular political dinners participated in by members of the editorial boards of *Madrid*, friends of the newspaper, and members of the study group *Juan Ruiz*, such as Miguel Herrero de Miñón.⁵ At a more personal level, Herrero de Miñón also records in his memoirs political dinners he had with several friends in the early 1970s. Herrero met Alejandro Nieto, Lorenzo Martín Retortillo, José María Maravall, José Torreblanca and Father Jesús Aguirre, among others, fortnightly at the restaurant *La Ancha* in Madrid. During these dinners they enjoyed a 'lively and interdisciplinary debate where each of [us] were enriched and enriched the rest, and, I suspect', Herrero writes, '[we also] rehearsed classes, reports and, in Aguirre's case, one of his outstanding Sunday morning sermons [which he gave] at the church of the University City.'⁶

Despite the political activities of these individuals and groups, and surely other unrecorded collectives, the group that transformed the political dinners into a fashionable event was the *Centro de Estudios de Problemas Contemporáneos*.⁷ Antonio Gavilanes, President of the centre, was the main organizer of these dinners, which were paid for by the guests themselves. Gavilanes believed that given the Spanish penchant for chatting over long lunches and dinners - known as *tertulias* in Spain - political dinners would be successful. Observers like Gavilanes realized that Franco's regime would only end with his demise. Franco's delicate health and advanced age led to repeated predictions of the imminent end of the regime. Different political

⁴ *Mundo*, 17-IV-1971 pp. 9-10.

⁵ Herrero de Miñón, *Memorias de estío*, pp. 47-8.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

possibilities for the future of Spain were constantly tabled, but the absence of political associations and parties impeded legal political encounters. Gavilanes, therefore, thought of political dinners as a temporary substitute for political associations.

The objective of these dinners was 'to unite people from different ideological and political persuasions around the simple and polite dialogue of a table with the aim of contrasting opinions, detecting political positions, and searching for common ground'. 'We thought', Gavilanes recalled, 'that there was a huge political vacuum, and that the Spanish political class was in need of greater sociability'.⁸ Despite the veracity of this statement, however, 'greater sociability' in political matters was precisely what the hard-liners of the regime had been trying to avoid. Hence Gavilanes' gatherings were regarded by some as part of the opposition to the regime perhaps because of the presence of some members of the opposition. Gavilanes denied this, 'but [on the contrary] we want evolution and to support the succession of Prince Juan Carlos as a unique alternative of political coexistence in the country'.⁹ Today, Gavilanes recalls that people of different political ideologies usually frequented the activities organized by the association. Therefore these events did not follow his personal monarchist line but a more progressive one.¹⁰

The dinners attracted political personalities from both the clandestine opposition and the regime (such as Emilio Romero) alike, particularly those identified with the *aperturista* side. Among these were personalities such as José María de Areilza, Manuel Fraga, José Solís, Alfonso Osorio, Francisco Fernández Ordoñez, Marcelino Oreja, Alberto Ballarín, Pío Cabanillas, Juan Manuel Fanjul, Miguel Herrero de Miñón, Albert Reguera Guajardo, Gabriel Cisneros, Jesús de Esperabe y Artiaga, Fernando

⁷ *Mundo*, 17-IV-1971 pp. 9-10.

⁸ *YA*, 27-III-1971, p. 12.

⁹ *La Vanguardia Española*, 21-VI-1972; *Informaciones*, 28-VI-1972.

Suárez, Emilio Romero, Ramón Areces, Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, Carlos Argos, Jesús Aguirre, Eduardo Tarragona, and Manuel Escudero Rueda. Gavilanes, however, never managed to persuade Adolfo Suárez to attend the dinners; during those years, Suárez remained extremely cautious in political circles, and would send his personal secretary, Carmen Díez de Rivera¹¹, instead. There was an important group of political journalists, including José Oneto, Miguel Angel Aguilar, Luis González Seara, Pilar Cernuda, Lorenzo Contreras, Ramón Pí and Juan Ferrando Badía, who would often attend. Members of well-known and well-to-do families such as the Fierros, as well as members the clandestine opposition, were also frequent participants in the colloquiums and lectures (Their names have been previously given in Chapter 2). Although some participants, especially those from the clandestine opposition, did not support the monarchic option, their common concern for the future of the country justified their meetings.

Diplomatic representatives of embassies like the United States, France, Germany, Italy and Great Britain also frequented the centre's activities. The imminent end of Francoism attracted the interest of the foreign representatives who wished to know how Spaniards were preparing themselves to face the future. Their attendance at these dinners and lectures was an effective way for them to meet people both from the clandestine groups and also from the *aperturistas*. Some of these diplomats were also present at the colloquiums on General Moscardó Street, but there their presence was less frequent and more discreet. On one occasion a young Dutch diplomat told Gavilanes that the Spanish Interior Minister had called the Dutch ambassador to warn him about the presence of his diplomat at the colloquiums. The Dutch diplomat feared he would

¹⁰ Testimony of Antonio Gavilanes, 21-9-99.

¹¹ Morán, *Suárez*, p.232.

be declared *persona non grata* if seen again at these events.¹² One may wonder why Franco did not stop these dinners, given their level of political openness. Gabriel Cisneros, one of the permanent participants at these forums, maintained that Franco understood that if he prohibited the dinners, he would be denying the reality of society, and this he could not do.¹³

The themes for discussion at the dinners ranged widely; the economy, the military problem, succession, the Movement, Spain's participation in Europe, via political associations, justice and liberty, to more social issues such as women in society, theatre, culture, the press and the Church. The conclusion drawn on some of these issues were: on the Movement: 'that the fundamental principles of the Movement, as part of the Spanish Constitution, should be respected by all'; on Associationism: 'that there is an urgent need to put it into practice'; on Participation: 'equally urgent at all levels'; and on Succession: 'full acceptance of Prince Juan Carlos' designation as successor, and support for his person and status.'¹⁴

The success of such political dinners led three journalists to write a book titled *Los Cenocentristas*.¹⁵ The book, which had evidently been written in a rush, gathered the opinions of some of the participants about the dinners and the political situation in Spain, which in those days was mainly characterized by unrest and political confusion. Gavilanes assured the readers that those who attended the dinners were at the centre politically and ideologically. It was clear in those days that Spanish society would not tolerate any extremism. Spaniards did not want to put their well-being at risk or those

¹² Testimony of Antonio Gavilanes, 21-9-99.

¹³ Testimony of Gabriel Cisneros Laborda, 13-9-99.

¹⁴ *Mundo*, 5-II-1972, p. 14

¹⁵ Mariano del Mazo *et al.*, *Los 'Cenocentristas'*. Radiografía Política de unas cenas (Bilbao, 1970).

commodities - house, car, refrigerator, television set - that had lain beyond the means of their parents and they had acquired with great effort.¹⁶

Initially the dinners started with a few politicians, intellectuals, and journalists, normally no more than twenty or thirty, who met at the restaurant “Jai Alai” in Madrid. These informal encounters, never recorded in newspapers, aimed at discussing public issues and finding a point of understanding. They hoped that the so-called ‘concurrence of opinions’ established by the Fundamental Laws, which they were then rehearsing in private, could later become an open discussion among friends and acquaintances at the Cortes. The privacy of these meetings ended, however, when they were moved to the restaurant ‘Maite-Comodoro’ in Madrid due to the increase in the number of guests. (Apart from anything else, the privacy of these meetings would end because it was popularly believed that the owner of the restaurant had been once romantically linked to Admiral Carrero Blanco). On the one hand, the incorporation of provincial leaders such as Eduardo Tarragona, Fernando Suárez, Jesús Esperabé, two ex-Ministers (namely José Solís and Fraga Iribarne), and one ambassador raised the quality of the talks as it brought together an interesting variety of points of view.¹⁷ But, on the other hand, according to Fraga, the increase of participants made dialogue difficult. Also, the fact that the speaker had to stand up in the middle of his dinner was not only inconvenient, it transformed the ‘informal’ dinner into a more formal meeting. As a consequence, Fraga decided not to attend any more of these dinners.¹⁸

Like Fraga, there were many that believed that national politics should be conducted publicly, not behind closed doors. Ironically, Antonio Gavilanes himself confessed to ‘personally oppos[ing] these political dinners [...] [because] I find it absurd

¹⁶ *Mundo*, 31-VII-71, p. 11; Testimony of Antonio Gavilanes, 21-9-99.

¹⁷ Mazo *et al.*, *Los ‘Cenocentristas’*, pp. 13-14.

¹⁸ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, pp. 278-9.

that Spaniards have to meet at dinners to talk about politics, and contrast [their] opinions. [...] The desirable [thing] would be that all these discussions could happen at the Spanish Cortes'.¹⁹ For some, such dinners came to replace the old *tertulias*, or meetings at famous *cafés*, which were common in earlier years. But in general, many felt that the dinners, with the mixing of the different political families of the regime and their surprising agreement on many issues, demonstrated that something had changed. Thus, as Areilza explained, 'the political dinners, even with their rigorous and unavoidable limitations on numbers of people, and of themes, demonstrated one thing overall: the unquestionable anxiety of many establishment people have over the future stages of the Francoist Institutions.' In other words, the dinners emphasized a political vacuum of which the population was already conscious.²⁰

As would be expected, the hard-liners of *Fuerza Nueva* criticized this new 'fashion' of 'political' lunches or dinners. For Blas Piñar's followers, the participants of these dinners were:

Generally people who owe their names to the regime but criticize it over the salmon or the Castilian beef although very 'intellectually' as corresponds to their high personalities or academic titles. [...] It is curious [to find] that some of those gentlemen are ex-Ministers or dignitaries whose own actions or inaction helped structure the State, without disagreeing with it. [...] Many of them are *procuradores*, the way to the floor of the Cortes is open to them, and yet, curiously, we do not hear them speak. Perhaps because it is more comfortable not to confront those who can dismiss them, and because dinners and lunches are more elegant for the minorities than the assembly hall (*salón de sesiones*).²¹

On the contrary, the *familiar* Alberto Ballarín Marcial said that, for instance, the *Centro de Estudios* was 'perhaps the only place for political discussion in Spain', and 'that its precious function could not be abandoned.'²² The *Centro de Estudios* might indeed have been the most publicly known, but as seen above, there were many forums

¹⁹ Mazo, *et al*, *Los 'Cenocentristas'*, p. 25.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-19, 44, 81-82.

²¹ *Fuerza Nueva*, No. 227, 15-05-71.

²² *Cambio-16*, December 1972, p. 25.

of this type. Gabriel Cisneros (a regular at these dinners) recalled that in those days, the same people frequented all these places; in other words, people with different backgrounds but with a common goal of modernizing the country. The only difference between the various participants was their level of openness towards those identified as real opposition to the regime (Socialists and Communists), or towards the figures who, although coming from the Francoist ranks, like Dionisio Ridruejo, Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez, José María de Areilza, among others, had distanced themselves considerably from the regime.²³

The centrist and supposedly moderate spirit of the dinners did not prevent the political differences of some of the participants from developing into personal rows. During a dinner organized by Gavilanes' association Emilio Romero, director of the official syndicalist newspaper *Pueblo*, engaged in a verbal dispute with the Socialist Jesús Prados Arrate that nearly became a physical fight.²⁴ But such problems did not only concern the guests. In 1972 an internal dispute among members of the association led to the provisional replacement of Antonio Gavilanes by Andrés Reguera, ex-*procurador* and closely linked to the Christian Democrat Federico Silva Muñoz, as President of the *Centro de Estudios*. Later on, the board of directors of the association elected a new council and appointed the *procurador* Alberto Ballarín as the new President. They also decided not to subscribe to a specific political tendency since the purpose of their meetings was democratic coexistence.²⁵ After a few years in the limelight and a series of internal disputes as well as constant warnings from the Ministry of Interior, the association was dissolved in 1973. Although it did not escape the criticism of political journalists like Emilio Romero, it was Romero himself who in

²³ Testimony of Gabriel Cisneros Laborda, 13-9-99.

²⁴ *Cambio-16*, December 1972, p. 25. Incident corroborated by Antonio Gavilanes, 21-9-99.

²⁵ *YA*, 5-IV-1973.

1970 awarded the *Cenocentristas* the 'Annual Popularity Prize'.²⁶ Gavilanes' contribution to this period was important so far as he helped those concerned with the political future of Spain to meet and discuss politics and exchange opinions.

5.2. The position of Prince Juan Carlos

The support of Antonio Gavilanes and members of his *Centro de Estudios* for the figure of Don Juan Carlos was not commonly shared by other political groups, and indeed many Spaniards, despite his appointment as Franco's successor in 1969. The main reason was a general belief that the Prince was a mere follower of the Caudillo, and it was not at all certain that the future King would accept a democratic system (although those who knew him personally believed otherwise). Franco, seconded by the Carrero-López Rodó tandem, wished the continuation of his regime after his death under the monarchy of Don Juan Carlos.²⁷ But, the Prince did not share these plans. In fact, before he swore the Principles of the Movement in July 1969, Don Juan Carlos asked Fernández-Miranda about the meaning of his commitment. He wanted to make sure that, by swearing the Francoist laws, the country's future would not be chained to *inmovilismo*. Fernández-Miranda explained the Prince that despite the acclaimed 'permanent and inalterable' nature of the 'Law of Fundamental Principles', Article 10 of the Law of Succession (one of the Fundamental Laws) said that the laws can be abolished and reformed. He assured the Prince that reform was possible as long as it was done with the mandates established by the Fundamental Laws.²⁸

²⁶ Testimony of Antonio Gavilanes, 21-9-99.

²⁷ Ruth Berins Collier, *Paths Towards Democracy*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), p. 129.

²⁸ Pilar & Alfonso Fernández-Miranda, *Lo que el Rey me ha pedido*, pp. 63-66.

Don Juan Carlos, however, was given few chances to put forward his political views.²⁹ One of these few occasions happened in January 1970 when the Prince agreed to be interviewed by Richard Eder, journalist of *The New York Times*. In the article called 'Juan Carlos looks to a Democratic Spain', published on 4 February 1970, Eder unveiled Prince Juan Carlos' previously unknown political stance. According to this article, the Prince had 'begun to let his acquaintances know that he does not accept the role apparently chosen for him: that of docile successor', [and that] he has no intention of presiding over a dictatorship. [...] He insists that only under some form of democracy will he have any real chance of remaining King of Spain. [...] "I am Franco's heir", he told a visitor not long ago, "but I am Spain's heir, as well".'

The article alleged that members of the European royal families, namely King Baudouin of Belgium and the exiled King Constantine of Greece, had been advising Don Juan Carlos on how to deal with a changing society. They insisted on how important it was 'to break out of the court, meet workers, farmers, students and professionals.' However, the Prince was controlled by Franco's cabinet, which took care not to allow the Prince to participate in public affairs.³⁰ Years later, the King admitted in an interview that it was difficult to specify the moment that he felt free to take initiatives. He explained that 'it was one thing to act without the consent of the general and quite another to do so without consulting the opinion of the top brass of his entourage. Still, we could say that I began to shoulder my responsibilities at the time of the general's first illnesses.'³¹

Speculation over a possible change in the succession question emerged in December 1971 when Franco's eldest granddaughter María del Carmen Martínez-

²⁹ Fernández-Miranda recorded several occasions where the Prince showed a clear pro-democratic stance. See *Ibid.*, pp. 66-68.

³⁰ *The New York Times*, 4 February 1970, pp. 1, 14.

Bordiú, became engaged to Prince Juan Carlos' first cousin (son of his uncle Don Jaime), Don Alfonso de Borbón Dampierre. Don Alfonso's alleged loyalty to Franco and to his regime divided the country down the middle, between those who favoured the Prince, and the regime hard-liners who welcomed the possibility of Franco's granddaughter becoming Queen of Spain. It appears that for some time ultra-Rightist, and other members of the regime, entertained the idea of Don Alfonso coming to the throne. Franco's real thoughts over this affair were never entirely clear, but those really close to the Caudillo (including the Prince himself) believed that Don Alfonso never represented a real danger for the Prince. In relation to this issue, Don Juan Carlos explained that he was confident because, 'Franco never went back on decisions he had made.'³²

In his article, Eder claimed that, according to a visitor to the Prince, who had talked to him at length, Don Juan Carlos 'does not disavow General Franco, but he does not feel himself committed to all of the leader's political baggage.' Since his designation as successor, Eder explained, the Prince had been widening his circle of visitors to the Zarzuela Palace, where the Royal family resided, as an attempt to pierce his political isolation. Among his new visitors Don Juan Carlos included a range of figures from the regime as well as a number of independents, a couple of foreign journalists, and even some members of the opposition. It seemed that the Prince had expressed to his recent visitors his wish 'to get across the message that he will work to open up Spain's restrictive political life but cannot say so publicly until General Franco steps down or dies.'³³ Moreover, it seems that the American President Richard Nixon

³¹ De Vilallonga, *The King*, p. 157.

³² Jover Zamora (Dtor.), *Historia de España*. Vol. XLI., p. 153. See also, De Vilallonga, *The King* p. 165.

³³ *The New York Times*, 4 February 1970, pp. 1, 14.

had advised the Prince not to oppose Franco's regime publicly, but to rely on the prospect that the Spanish population would appreciate his youth and positive image.³⁴ Thus, in 1969 at Don Juan Carlos' request a young and relatively unknown Adolfo Suárez was appointed director-general of the national television studios and took direct charge of improving - quite successfully - the public image of the Prince. Under Suárez's direction, Spanish television devoted only limited coverage to the wedding of Franco's granddaughter to Don Alfonso de Borbón.³⁵

The Prince, however, ignored Nixon's advice not to oppose Franco publicly. During a lecture given at the hall of residence 'Antonio Rivera' in Madrid, Don Juan Carlos delivered a hopeful, although carefully drawn, message for the future of the country. The Prince expressed to the university students his wish 'to become, one day, a King who looks with security and hope to the future that we all must build together, with our own strength. [...] With generous comprehension of the past, without forgetting the best essences of our most glorious tradition, but improving every day. [...] You must be sure that I will not be a dike that prevents progress, but a channel through which it will proceed in orderly fashion.' Alvarez Puga wrote that although brief and concise the Prince's statements were personally written by him and reflected his own personal stance.³⁶

The Prince's statements, however, became more explicit in the autumn of 1972. During an official trip to Germany, Don Juan Carlos was asked whether he wished to see Spain enter the EEC with all the political consequences that that implied. To the gratifying surprise of many, the Prince responded positively. He said he favoured it because he believed it to be for the good of both Spain and Europe, but he emphasised

³⁴ Powell, *Juan Carlos of Spain*, p. 51.

³⁵ De Vilallonga, *The King*, p. 70; Powell, *Juan Carlos of Spain*, p. 70.

³⁶ *Dossier Mundo*, January 1972, pp. 15-6.

that the moment had to be right as a hasty entrance could be dangerous for many. The political consequences were, among other things, the establishment of a democratic system as a condition for membership of the Community. The Prince's declaration boosted the hopes of many Spaniards who wished for a democracy. The political magazine *Cambio-16* reported that in economic circles the Prince's declaration was regarded as 'the blessing of the first cornerstone of a new and great political economic alternative for the liberalization [of the Spanish economy] in future years'.³⁷

Meanwhile the Prince had allegedly shown interest in the possibility of using the Fundamental Laws for the transformation of the regime into a democratic system. Areilza transmitted the Prince's idea to a group of young professionals of democratic tendencies. This group commissioned the study of the *aperturista* possibilities of the Francoist laws from a team of lawyers headed by Jorge de Esteban, Professor of Constitutional Law. The outcome of the research was quite positive as, according to the researchers, 'in order to achieve a democratic and peaceful evolution of the country, the best way is to exploit all the possibilities offered by the Organic Law of the State and the rest of the Fundamental Laws'. In their opinion, the introduction of political associations in the Spanish system was not only advisable, but also represented the 'condition *sine qua non* of Spanish democracy'. The study was published under the title, *Desarrollo Político y Constitución Española*. Fernández-Miranda told one of the authors that they had written a 'very important book', which he had read 'in great detail'.³⁸

³⁷ *Cambio-16*, 7 October 1972.

³⁸ Quoted in Powell, *El Piloto del cambio*, pp. 80-3.

The idea of an authoritarian monarchy advocated by Franco and the Carrero-López Rodó tandem was, therefore, not shared by the monarch although the relation between Prince Juan Carlos and Admiral Carrero was good. Don Juan Carlos had even proposed Carrero's name for the presidency of the government. López Rodó recorded that on 3 June 1970 during a private conversation with Franco the Prince had insisted to the Caudillo on the need to make use of the Organic Law of the State of 1967 and its complementary Laws (Law of Association, Electoral Law, Sindical Law, etc), and to start the functioning of all the Institutions by beginning with the appointment of a President. The Prince told the Caudillo that 'I would not like the Crown to have to appoint a President of the Government for the first time'. Franco answered that he would do it, but despite the Prince's insistence it took the old General nearly two more years to act.³⁹ Don Juan Carlos favoured Carrero's candidature for two main reasons. On the one hand, the Prince knew that after thirty years of loyalty to the regime Carrero was Franco's own favourite candidate; and on the other hand, he was convinced of Carrero's loyalty to the crown as well. Carrero had told the Prince that if Franco appointed him President, when the Caudillo died, he [Carrero] would put his post at the King's disposal in order to leave the monarch free hands.⁴⁰ Years later the King asserted that 'Carrero wouldn't have agreed at all with that I had decided to do. But, I don't believe he would have opposed the King's will openly. [...] He'd just have resigned'.⁴¹

On 4 June 1973 Franco told the Prince of his decision to appoint Carrero President. The Prince intervened in the selection of Ministers for the new cabinet. Fraga recorded in his memoirs that 'everyone believes that the Prince's influence has

³⁹ López Rodó, *Memorias III*, pp. 49, 75, 385.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

⁴¹ De Vilallonga, *The King*, p. 161.

played a positive role, within the possibilities, in the crisis [ministerial change]'.⁴² In fact the cabinet seemed so close to Don Juan Carlos that he had apparently said that 'all [the cabinet] needs is the label of "government of La Zarzuela".' The cabinet included Torcuato Fernández-Miranda, Laureano López Rodó, José María López de Letona, José María Gamazo, Fernando de Liñán and General Juan Castañón de Mena. The new Interior Minister, Carlos Arias, was perhaps the least liked by the Prince.⁴³ There was, however, an important absence. Fraga, the man who represented reformism, had not been included in the cabinet. Once again his political differences with the newly appointed President kept him out of office.

5.3. Fraga, Ambassador to London

Before the cabinet reshuffle of 1973, and his appointment as President of the Government, Carrero offered to appoint Fraga *Procurador en Cortes*, but the ex-Minister refused the post. Nevertheless, before Carrero was appointed President and despite his 'tolerated opposition' to the regime, Fraga had managed to be included in the *terna*, or shortlist of three candidates, for the presidency. Fraga did not achieve his ambition of becoming President, but he accompanied Carrero and Raimundo Fernández Cuesta in the *terna*, and achieved an important second place behind the Admiral, "after a good job by [Pío] Cabanillas".⁴⁴ Fraga had allegedly already offered ministries to various personalities when Carrero's appointment was officially announced on 8 June 1973.⁴⁵ Press comments on Franco's choice generally took the following line:

⁴² Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 296;

⁴³ Powell, *Juan Carlos of Spain*, p. 60.

⁴⁴ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 295; López Rodó's book includes a copy of the letter which the President of the Council of the Reign sent to Franco with the shortlist of candidates for the Presidency of the Government. López Rodó, *Memorias III*, p. 666.

⁴⁵ Allegedly, Fraga offered Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo the ministry of Public Works as the 'potential' Minister told Fenando Bau Carpi. López Rodó, *Memorias III*, p. 230.

Fernández Cuesta was the past, Carrero the present, and Fraga the future.⁴⁶ Despite his failure to become President Fraga tried, again through his friend Pío Cabanillas, to become Minister - of either interior or foreign affairs - in Carrero's new cabinet. Again he failed. Apparently, prior to the election for President, Fraga and Carrero had already met and discussed their views on the political reality of the country. During the course of the conversation Fraga realized that his views were contrary to those of Carrero. He believed that was why Carrero did not include him in his new cabinet and offered him an embassy instead.⁴⁷

The idea of sending Fraga to London came from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Fraga's former rival in the cabinet, Laureano López Rodó, who thought of Fraga as the ideal man to boost Spain's relations with Great Britain. Yet, the truth was that Fraga was seen as 'an uncomfortable' figure by the regime.⁴⁸ The most orthodox members of the regime believed that Fraga's presence in Spain might threaten their plans to implement an authoritarian monarchy after Franco. When López Rodó consulted Franco, the Caudillo perhaps sensing Fraga's scepticism over the offer, asked 'but, will Fraga accept it?' to which López Rodó answered affirmatively.⁴⁹

Fraga was willing to go abroad only if the government accepted the following conditions. These were: (i) to remain in Britain two years; (ii) to appoint his own advisor (Francisco José Mayans) and information attaché (Carlos Mendo); (iii) to finish his opus *La España de los años 70*; (iv) not to dismiss his collaborators from their positions as civil servants; to be allowed opportunities for publication in the Movement press; and (v) to establish the incompatibilities of being part of an association as well as

⁴⁶ Bernáldez, *El Patrón de la Derecha*, pp. 137-8.

⁴⁷ Sentís. *Manuel Fraga*, p. 58.

⁴⁸ Testimony of Carlos Argos, 14-09-1999.

having a position in the Administration.⁵⁰ On 10 August 1973 López Rodó informed Fraga that the cabinet had accepted his requests. His friend Gabriel Fernández de Valderrama officially offered an embassy to Fraga, on behalf of the government. Fraga was asked to choose between London and the United Nations. He chose Great Britain, a country for which he had always had great admiration. In September Fraga's ambassadorship had already obtained the *placet* from the British government. Prior to his departure, on 19 September 1973, Fraga went to see Prince Juan Carlos. The Prince praised Fraga's progressive attitude, and confessed that more than once he had had to tell those who criticized Fraga to keep quiet. Such regal support must have eased Fraga's departure, at a time when his participation in Spanish politics was still uncertain.⁵¹

Fraga accepted the prestigious post expecting Carrero to remain President at least for another five years, and knowing that, while Franco was alive there would be no chance for any political changes. In other words, there would be no opportunity for the creation of an important political organization outside the Movement. Thus, Fraga's inability to act while Carrero was President and Fernández-Miranda Vice-President led him to take the decision to depart. Had the ex-Minister remained in Spain, he would probably have burned the sails of his own ship. Time abroad would benefit him.⁵² Having said that, in those days Fraga tried to unite a group of people - among them Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, Pío Cabanillas, Alfonso Osorio, Pedro Areitio - to be prepared to stand as an alternative to Carrero's government. Federico Silva Muñoz declared his willingness to lead an alternative option to the regressive Carrero-López Rodó's cabinet.

⁴⁹ López Rodó, *Memorias III*, p. 428; Preston, *Franco*, p. 734.

⁵⁰ Following Franco's death, Fraga confessed to López Rodó that he only wanted to be in London for two years because this was the time he calculated Franco would last. See López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, p. 201.

⁵¹ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, pp.296-98.

But, Silva's ultimate insecurity about the project prevented any possibility of political change. Fraga sought to develop opportunities with different allies but nothing worked. The ex-Minister had to wait for a few years to return to the government. His efforts to avoid being forgotten were, however, considerable.⁵³

Fraga's official appointment as ambassador to London was received with surprise in Spain, as his final decision had not been revealed even to his closest friends. An annoyed Pío Cabanillas told Fraga, 'next time, let us know'.⁵⁴ Abroad, the international press commented on Fraga's appointment with interest. *The Daily Telegraph* described Fraga as a 'strong anglophile and an academic who regards himself as a man of the centre, politically'. The paper also wrote that Fraga 'has been devoting his talents and energy towards the creation of a Liberal centre group'. The newspaper expected Fraga to argue the case of Spanish sovereignty of Gibraltar 'more vehemently than hitherto'.⁵⁵ The ex-Minister, and new ambassador, arrived in London on 9 October 1973.

According to Bernáldez, Fraga's performance at the London Embassy was neither good nor bad but simply non-existent.⁵⁶ It was obvious that he was there on a transitional basis. His ambitions were not diplomatic, but political. He was aiming for a position in the government as a Minister, or even better, as a President. Yet, it is only fair to say that although Fraga did not acquire Gibraltar for Spain, he did sign some important agreements with the British government. The first agreement provided the Spanish community in Britain (about 58,000 in those days) with the benefits of Spanish

⁵² Testimony of Gabriel Cisneros Laborda, 13-9-99; Federico Silva Muñoz, *Memorias Políticas*, (Barcelona: Planeta, 1993), pp. 304-6.

⁵³ Bernáldez, *El Patrón de la Derecha*, p. 123.

⁵⁴ López Rodó, *Memorias III*, p. 444.

⁵⁵ *The Daily Telegraph*, 17 September 1973.

Social Service (equivalent to the NHS) in Britain, and likewise for the British citizens living in Spain. The second agreement avoided the double taxation to both Spanish and British in Britain and Spain, respectively.⁵⁷ For Fraga, the London experience was quite useful. Two years at the embassy, ‘was a period for reflection; removed from Spain, yet close, at such an important time, and with the time to study such an important democratic model as offered by Great Britain’. Thus, despite his temporary ‘political exile’⁵⁸ in London, and the duties related to the post of ambassador, Fraga enjoyed a time of relaxation, and took time ‘to read, think, and sleep’.⁵⁹

The distance between Great Britain and Spain did not seem to be an impediment to Fraga’s political career. In Spain he was still considered by many to be the ‘great white hope’, the *Fragamanlis*, the ‘*referente de la reforma*’, of change without rupture. His importance was such that in London he received personalities of all political tendencies. Fraga was expected to be of great importance in the future of Spain once Franco had died.⁶⁰ Having said that, unexpected events led to the belief that Fraga would return to Spain earlier than planned.

In December 1973, a few months after Fraga’s departure to London, the terrorist Basque separatist group ETA assassinated President Carrero Blanco. Carrero’s unexpected death left a feeling of fear and confusion within the bunker, and an ever greater feeling of restlessness in Spain itself.⁶¹ The bunker’s hope of Carrero ensuring the continuation of Francoism suddenly vanished. Observers believed that Carrero’s

⁵⁶ Bernáldez, *El Patrón de la Derecha*, p. 151.

⁵⁷ *Cambio-16*, 17-23 November 1975, p. 24.

⁵⁸ On 10 May 1975, and during a meeting with Don Juan de Borbón, Fraga toasted for what he considered to share with the Prince’s father: “for what it is common to us: living in exile”, to which Don Juan responded: “you call this living in exile living in this palace as an ambassador?”. See López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, p. 121.

⁵⁹ Sentís. *Manuel Fraga*, pp. 59-60.

⁶⁰ Testimony of Carlos Argos, 14-09-1999.

⁶¹ The term *búnker* or bunker was coined by Luis Ramírez. See Luis Ramírez, “Morir en el búnker” *Horizonte Español*, No. 1, 1972 (Ruedo Ibérico). As Preston explains, the *búnker* was formed by the hard-liner Falangists entrenched in the bureaucracy, the police and the Army, who would defend the dictatorship to the bitter end. See Paul

death broke the inertia of the Spanish regime creating a 'dislocation' in national life.⁶² In turn, and despite the Prince's trust in the Caudillo, Carrero's disappearance brought uncertainty even over the question of succession. Juan Carlos, whose appointment had largely been possible thanks to the intervention of Carrero, and especially the Opus Dei-linked Minister, López Rodó, would have to deal with the supporters of his first cousin Don Alfonso de Borbón. Yet, the Prince lacked the necessary support. At Carrero's death the Prince had lost his main ally, and although the technocrats still believed in Juan Carlos' cause, their power in the cabinet was nearly non-existent. Carrero's aim of leading the transition from Franco to Juan Carlos in a peaceful atmosphere seemed now unlikely to be fulfilled.⁶³

On 22 December, Franco told Admiral Pedro Nieto Antúnez of his decision to make the old Admiral President. Consequently Nieto Antúnez contacted potential collaborators for his proposed new cabinet. Among others Nieto Antúnez asked Fraga to be the Vice-President, and López Bravo the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁶⁴ A probably well-informed Pío Cabanillas warned Fraga that Nieto's appointment was extremely doubtful.⁶⁵ The election for the new President aroused expectations among those who aspired to become Head of Government. Among them was Manuel Fraga who, from London, saw his name shuffled among the candidates for the post. The political moment was of great importance, and Fraga believed that there was potential for change in the Spanish political scenario. On the one hand, Carrero - the main guarantor of Franco's regime - was gone; on the other hand, it was more evident than ever that Franco's age

Preston (Ed.), *Spain in crisis. The evolution and decline of the Franco regime* (London: Harvester, 1976), introduction.

⁶² *Cambio-16*, 25 February-2 March 1974, p. 27.

⁶³ Paul Preston, "Spain in Crisis: the assassination of Carrero and its aftermath", in *Iberian Studies*, Vol. III, No. 1, (spring, 1974), p. 34.

could not secure the continuity of the regime for much longer. Fraga's time was coming closer, but the moment was not yet right.

The task of finding a suitable successor to Carrero became more complicated than expected. The interim Prime Minister and Prince Juan Carlos' former tutor, Torcuato Fernández-Miranda, was regarded as the most logical candidate for the presidency. Fernández-Miranda not only enjoyed a close alliance with the Prince, but also a reputation as a reformer. The future successor of Franco, Prince Juan Carlos, had not been asked his opinion in such a crisis, but during a meeting with Franco, the Prince took the opportunity to put his opinion forward by suggesting the name of Fernández-Miranda for the post of Prime Minister.⁶⁴ However, to the suggestion of Fernández-Miranda becoming Prime Minister a member of the regime answered: 'it would be a real disaster. God forbid! (*Dios no lo quiera*)'. Among the names of those considered by the Caudillo were military officials such as General Castañón de Mena, and from within the Movement reformist figures such as the conservative Catholic Federico Silva Muñoz, and Opus Dei members López Bravo and López Rodó. Yet, none of these names satisfied the bunker.

After some hesitation, Franco reduced the list of twelve names to five. These were Admiral Pedro Nieto Antúnez, Torcuato Fernández-Miranda, Manuel Fraga, Carlos Arias Navarro and the liberal businessman Antonio Barrera de Irimo. Franco was under great pressure from his personal circle, including his wife who never seemed to have intervened in her husband's political affairs before. Doña Carmen Polo told him: 'they are going to kill us all like Carrero. We need a hard Prime Minister. It has to

⁶⁴ Preston, *Franco*, p. 763.

⁶⁵ Bernáldez, *El Patrón de la Derecha*, pp. 143-4.

⁶⁶ Victoria Prego, *Así se hizo la transición*, (Círculo de Lectores: Barcelona, 1995), pp. 68-9.

be Arias; there is no one else'.⁶⁷ Thus, under pressure from his entourage and suffering from an uncomfortable cold, Franco chose his last Prime Minister. It was not his friend Nieto Antúnez, as he would have liked, but Arias Navarro who was 'imposed' on him. At that stage, Franco was perhaps too tired to fight.⁶⁸ Once President, Arias had initially proposed Fraga as Minister of Foreign Affairs but Franco refused. The Caudillo wanted López Rodó to continue in the post, thereby leaving Fraga in London until his final return two years later. Fraga was allegedly sent to London with the intention of keeping him away from Spanish politics, but in practice, the new ambassador was not only kept very well informed about all the ins and outs of the Spanish political life, but was even part of them.

In the wake of Carrero's disappearance, as Preston argues, 'the changing economic situation together with the destruction of Franco's well-laid plans for the future convinced many on the right that their survival depended on giving change before it was taken by force'.⁶⁹ Indeed, the Admiral's death did rush some on the right into taking positions on a safer haven. But, as seen in the previous Chapters, there were also moderates of the regime who were advocating different degrees of change well before Carrero's death. Fraga himself merely continued working on the projects he had begun before his departure to London. As it is studied in more detail in Chapter 6, one of his main projects was the preparation of his political study group GODSA.

Conclusion

In the early 1970s, Antonio Gavilanes' *Centro de Estudios de Problemas Contemporáneos* organized a series of dinners which became popular forums for

⁶⁷ Preston, *Franco*, p. 764.

⁶⁸ For a detailed account of Arias' appointment see Prego, *Así se hizo la transición*, pp. 59-68.

political discussions. The guests at these dinners denounced the absence of possibilities to meet and discuss politics legally. Political dinners became a temporary substitute for political associations. The variety of topics discussed and the different backgrounds of the guests - from *aperturistas* and reformists of the regime, and *procuradores* in Cortes, to members of the clandestine opposition, as well as representatives of foreign embassies, journalists, intellectuals, entrepreneurs, etc. – turned these dinners into popular events. Gavilanes' contribution to this period was important so far as he helped those concerned with the political future of Spain to meet and discuss political issues and exchange political opinions in view of the imminent end of the Francoist era.

The political dinners of the early 1970s coincided with the (quasi-official) political positioning of Prince Juan Carlos. Through several interviews conducted by foreign journalists and published abroad, the Prince hinted at his intention to reign over a European-style democratic regime, which implied his acceptance of a pluralistic society. Yet, Francoist authorities had frozen the issue of political associations. Franco's entourage was determined to fight against the pressing demands for reform, but an unexpected incident rocked the stability of the regime. Carrero Blanco, guarantor of the continuity of the regime, was assassinated by ETA. The *aperturistas* and reformists of the regime as well as the democratic opposition knew the regime would not survive much longer after Franco's death. Many started to prepare themselves for a Spain without him. From London, for instance, Manuel Fraga hastened the formation of a political study group in order to prepare the imminent transition. It was clear to an important part of the regime that a system of reforms was not only necessary to satisfy

⁶⁹ Paul Preston, "The Dilemma of Credibility: The Spanish Communist Party, the Franco Regime and After", in *Government and Opposition*, N. 11, winter 1976, p. 80.

the demands of the time and the population, but was also unavoidable. The spotlight was now on the new President, Carlos Arias, and his new executive.

Chapter - 6
The beginning of a long end (1973-1976)

By June 1972 Prince Juan Carlos was already manifesting his impatience regarding the regime's lack of initiative about reforming the political system. The Prince declared that, in view of the persistently negative attitude of the regime towards modernization, he would have to make the changes himself.¹ A year later, in June 1973, the appointment of Admiral Carrero Blanco as President of the Government had only confirmed the Prince's fears. Carrero's cabinet brought no changes. Carrero may have served the Caudillo well as Chief of General Staff for years, but the Admiral did not have the necessary qualities to act as President of the Government, especially at a time when he was so far removed from the society he was presiding over.² Thus, despite the presence of known *Juancarlistas* in the cabinet, fear of threatening the stability and continuation of Franco's regime beyond the Caudillo's death halted any attempt to reform the authoritarian system. One of the key, and most controversial, issues of those years was the question of political associations, which was still unresolved. On 20 December 1973 Carrero's cabinet was due to hold a meeting where he would announce his final decision on the issue of political associations. The meeting never took place because the Admiral was assassinated on the morning of that day. In an interview, Cruz Martínez Esteruelas claimed that, anyway, the Admiral's plans were to oppose the creation of associations.³

Having said that, soon after Carrero became President he had appointed a joint committee of the cabinet and the National Council to study the problem of political associations. The research was halted by the Admiral's death, but the newly appointed

¹ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 287.

² Jover Zamora (Dtor.), *Historia de España*, Vol. XLI p. 150.

³ Powell, *El piloto del cambio*, p.76.

President of the government, Carlos Arias Navarro, rescued it and made the issue of political associations one of the most important points of his programme.⁴ On these grounds, the hopes of the regime reformists for a future Law of Political Associations did not entirely vanish. On the one hand, a speech made by Carlos Arias on 12 February 1974 boosted hopes for public participation in political affairs and, on the other hand, the Prince's frequent, although discreet, forward-looking declarations did not go unheard among the political class.

Don Juan Carlos' discretion, however, always made it difficult to guess his real political tendencies. In 1975 *Newsweek* wrote of the Prince:

Right-wingers suspect he is too liberal; his father complains that he "thinks like a Fascist". Chatting with moderates, the Prince advocates reform. When he plays backgammon with members of the upper crust, he talks like a born "ultra". His aides maintain that he must pay lip service to Franco's principles. But the upshot is that no outsiders know his ideas with certainty.⁵

Away from the public eye, from the early 1970s the Prince began to build up contacts with members of the semi-opposition⁶ to the regime, as well as the clandestine democratic opposition, at a time when few people dared to contact him openly. He was aware of the need to become acquainted with members of all political tendencies with no exceptions. Don Juan Carlos had regular contact with 'covert democrats' such as Iñigo Cavero, Marcelino Oreja and Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez, who were or had been linked to the regime, and also with members of the still-clandestine Socialist party. For instance he met Javier Solana on a number of occasions, and it was through him as well as other Socialists that the young secretary-general of the Socialist party, Felipe

⁴ Ferrando Badía, *Del Autoritarismo a la Democracia*, p. 54.

⁵ Fay Willey, Arnaud de Borchgrave and Miguel Aroca in *Newsweek*, 3 November 1975, p. 10.

⁶ Juan José Linz regards 'those groups that are not dominant or represented in the governing group that are willing to participate in power without fundamentally challenging the regime' as being part of the semi-opposition. 'This attitude', Linz argues, 'involves partial criticism and some visibility and identity outside the inner circles of participants of the political struggle'. See Linz, "Opposition in and under an authoritarian regime", p. 191.

González, was kept informed of the Prince's plans.⁷ Contact with Santiago Carrillo, secretary-general of the PCE, however, was more complex. The Prince's father, Don Juan de Borbón had already established contacts with the Communist leader in 1974, but according to Charles Powell 'the Prince could not seek his [father's] help in this matter [that of arranging an interview with Carrillo].'⁸ Carrillo lived in exile and could only be reached through a third, and independent, person. Don Juan Carlos sent his friend Manuel Prado y Colón de Carvajal to Romania to ask, on the Prince's behalf, the Communist President Nicolae Ceaucescu to act as Don Juan Carlos' messenger in this delicate mission.⁹ Thus Santiago Carrillo learnt from Ceaucescu the Prince's intention 'to recognize the Spanish Communist party along with all other political parties when he came to the throne'.¹⁰ But, Carrillo proved hard to convince.

Also in 1974, and coinciding with Franco's first illness, Carrillo met the Caudillo's nephew, Nicolás Franco Pasqual del Pobil – member of Franco's Cortes – for lunch in Paris. The meeting had been organized by José Mario Armero and Carrillo's friend, the millionaire Teodulfo Lagunero. Nicolás Franco wanted to ascertain Carrillo's opinion about the imminent transition in Spain. The Communist leader did not suspect that Nicolás Franco had not been sent by his uncle, but by Prince Juan Carlos. Carrillo learned it years later.¹¹

Despite his efforts, lack of trust in the Prince and his alleged future plans was widespread among those who were not close to Don Juan Carlos, and that included

⁷ Don Juan Carlos recalled that Joaquin Solana used to enter the Prince's residence with his motorbike helmet on to avoid being recognized. De Vilallonga, *The King*, p. 73.

⁸ Powell, *Juan Carlos of Spain*, p. 69.

⁹ Elías Andrés & Victoria Prego, *La Transición*. Video No. 9, *La dimisión de Arias Navarro*, (April-June 1976).

¹⁰ De Vilallonga, *The King*, pp. 73-77.

¹¹ Testimony of Santiago Carrillo, 29 November 2001.

Carrillo.¹² The Prince's meetings and declarations, however, although most private and always discreet, surely boosted the expectations of the most progressive of the political classes for the possibility of forming political associations in the near future. In 1971, Manuel Fraga had already declared that 'he sincerely believe that the Prince of Spain represented a legitimate hope for more and more Spaniards'.¹³

On these grounds, progressive members of the regime started taking the necessary steps for the future transition to a democratic system. As seen in Chapter 2, there were political groups that stood as a mild opposition to the regime. But, broadly speaking, at the start of the 1970s, according to Rodolfo Martín Villa, two major reformist groups emerged from the regime. On the one hand, there was Manuel Fraga and his group, and on the other hand the young reformists who gathered around the *Tácito* group. As we shall see later, in general, members of these groups were linked in various degrees to the regime, were university educated, enjoyed elite positions in either public administration or the private sector, and the overall majority belonged to a financially comfortable social class. These two groups were perhaps the most important collectives, which, from the regime's side, played the leading role in attempting to bring political liberalization, reform and, eventually, the introduction of the democratic system in 1977. Yet, whereas Fraga opted for leading his own group and defining his group's political strategy himself, the young reformists of *Tácito* preferred a more collegiate approach.

¹² On 22 November the leader of the Communist party declared on the Austrian television that although Don Juan Carlos had sent him emissaries, he had told them that he would not recognize him [Don Juan Carlos] as King of Spain. López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, p. 188.

¹³ Manuel Fraga, "La monarquía como forma de Estado". Conferencia pronunciada en el Club Siglo XXI de Madrid el 25 de November de 1971, in *Monarquía y representación*, (Barcelona: Grijalbo, 1973), p. 297.

From 1972 until 1975 some twenty young National Councillors and *procuradores familiares* - members of the two aforementioned groups - met on a regular basis at a flat that the notary Rafael Ruiz Gallardón owned in Núñez de Balboa Street in Madrid. Rafael Ruiz Gallardón gathered a heterogeneous group of political personalities including Marcelino Oreja, Enrique Sánchez de León, Rodolfo Martín Villa, José María Ortí Bordás, Andrés Reguera and Gabriel Cisneros, who acted as secretary (significantly, these personalities came together again in Suárez's *Unión de Centro Democrático* during the transition period in 1977). This group, which acted as 'an informal legal consultant group', had, according to Marcelino Oreja, a common objective, which was to introduce reforms that could lead to a democratic regime.¹⁴ It is worth emphasizing again that in those days, when *aperturistas* and reformists referred to a 'democratic regime' they usually meant a German-type of democracy that is without the Communist Party. Indeed, it is very difficult to guess how many, if any, of them advocated a full democracy at the beginning of the 1970s. Members of this collective were part of a group of thirty-nine signatories to a letter that was sent to the Caudillo. In this letter they carefully demanded a number of changes in the system including openness towards Europe, the interpretation of the Movement as the promoter of new and more ample channels of political participation, and a just understanding between Church and State.¹⁵ The signatories included Marcelino Oreja, Carlos Argos, Eduardo Navarro, Gabriel Cisneros, Fernando Bau, Antonio Castro Villacasas, Enrique Sánchez de León and José Miguel Ortí Bordás.¹⁶

¹⁴ Testimony of Gabriel Cisneros, 27 September 1999; Testimony of Marcelino Oreja Aguirre, 17 May 2000; Martín Villa, *Al servicio del Estado*, p. 49.

¹⁵ *Mundo*, 27-I-1973, pp. 10-11.

¹⁶ Testimony of Carlos Argos, 12 April 2000; Testimony of Gabriel Cisneros, 27 September 1999; Martín Villa, *Al servicio del Estado*, p. 49.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, since his defenestration in 1969, Fraga pursued the idea of elaborating a centrist political programme that could serve as the basis for the creation of a political association in the event of their being approved. Well before his departure to London as ambassador in the autumn of 1973, Manuel Fraga had already set up the basis for the creation of a study group, the so-called *Gabinete de Orientación y Documentación, S.A.* (GODSA). This study group would eventually elaborate the political manifesto of Fraga's first serious political platform. At the same time, *Tácito* was the group formed in 1973 by young reformists of Christian Democrat tendency. Both groups emerged out of the moderate side of the regime and most of their members played an important role during the transition to democracy in the mid-1970s. An examination of their emergence and development is essential to understand their political stance, and their dealings with both *inmovilistas* and the democratic opposition after Franco's death.

6.1. The creation of GODSA

As seen in Chapter 2, given the impossibility of forming political parties or even associations, the main purpose of study groups and discussion forums was for people to exchange opinions and talk politics. But, few of these groups had aspirations to become proper political associations. GODSA, however, was created with the sole purpose of building the foundations for a political association and perhaps eventually for a political party. According to Lourdes López Nieto, GODSA was 'an embryo of an authentic party', and years later it became Fraga's 'most solid platform for political activities.'¹⁷

¹⁷ Lourdes López Nieto, *Alianza Popular: estructura y evolución de un partido conservador (1976-1982)*, (Madrid: CIS, 1988), p.18.

In 1971, the young lawyer Carlos Argos met Fraga in the latter's office in Madrid through a common friend. During the conversation they realized they shared a common belief, that of the need to arrive to a democratic system without breaking with the Francoist regime. That was the key. Argos agreed with Fraga in that,

The essence of democracy is that politics responds to the wishes of all citizens. For them, they must have opportunities to formulate their preferences, to express them before the government, and the rest of the citizens - through individual or collective action -, and that they [their preferences] are considered in a non-discriminatory way. [...] In order to make all this possible civic rights in matters of opinion, expression, associations, suffrage, etc. must be established.

On those grounds,

The transition from hegemonic systems [...], when tradition and experience are missing must be unhurried and prudent. The best way to prepare it [the transition], is from within from the very centres of power, which implies a great capacity for vision and [a high degree] of concessions.¹⁸

In those days, Carlos Argos was part of a collective called *Equipo XXI*, which emerged from university circles. This collective had been created around 1968-9, and was formed by progressives including Antonio Cortina, Luis Santiago de Pablo, Pedro López Jiménez, Luis Apostúa, Rafael Pérez Escolar, Dionisio Ridruejo, Juan Velarde, Fernando Baeza, Martínez Esteruelas, Enrique Tierno Galván, Luis González Seara and Carlos Argos himself. They wrote pro-democratic articles in the magazines *Indice* and *Criba*. According to Juan de Arespacochaga, it can be said that some members of this initial group formed the nucleus of GODSA.¹⁹ Parallel to the *Equipo XXI* there were also 'young teachers and brilliant students' including Jesús Aparicio Bernál, Gabriel Cisneros, and brothers Fernando and Manuel de la Sota, whom Fraga had met at university, and who shared his political ideas. They all joined the ex-Minister in his

¹⁸ Manuel Fraga, "Cambio social y reforma política", in *Legitimidad y representación*, pp. 50-1, 56; Testimony of Carlos Argos, 14 September 1999.

¹⁹ De Arespacochaga, *Cartas a unos capitanes*, p. 209.

quest to form a serious political group for the future.²⁰ In the autumn of 1973, when Fraga was posted as Ambassador to London he delegated the direction of the study group to Antonio Cortina.²¹

The study group was officially formed in May 1974, and given the lack of a proper law of political associations, Fraga's team registered GODSA as a commercial company.²² As Carlos Argos recalls, there were many government controls, especially from the Interior Ministry and even the Civil Guard, which GODSA members wanted to avoid. Furthermore, the Law of Associations 1964 imposed a series of limitations regarding the activities and organization of the association with which the GODSA members disagreed.²³ They advocated reformism 'that rejects the rupture [with the regime], [and] demands the starting point of a truly unequivocal democratic process.'²⁴ The headquarters of the new society were established in the *Calle de los Artistas* of the modest *Cuatro Caminos* neighbourhood of Madrid. GODSA was registered with an initial capital of five-hundred thousand pesetas distributed in shares of one thousand pesetas each. The first administrative council of GODSA was formed with Rafael Luna Gijón as President, and José Luis Cortina Pietro, Luis Santiago de Pablos, Javier Calderón Fernández, Gabriel Cisneros, Florentino Ruiz Platero and Juan José Rodríguez Navarro as council members. Nicolás Rodríguez González acted as secretary. All of them were company shareholders.²⁵

²⁰ Manuel Fraga, *El Cañón giratorio*. Conversaciones con Eduardo Chamorro, (Barcelona: Grijalbo, 1982), p. 58; Testimony of Carlos Argos, 14 September 1999.

²¹ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, pp. 296-7.

²² Statutes of *Gabinete de Orientación y Documentación, S.A.*. Registro Mercantil, Madrid. Fraga confirmed that before he went to London, the group was still in an initial phase of formation. Testimony of Manuel Fraga, 28 April 2001.

²³ Testimony of Carlos Argos, 12 April 2000.

²⁴ Statement made by the GODSA member Rafael Pérez Escolar during the presentation of their political party *Reforma Democrática* on 25 February 1976. GODSA, *Boletín*, No. 0, June 1976, p. 17.

²⁵ Statutes of *Gabinete de Orientación y Documentación, S.A.* See also GODSA, *Boletín*, No. 4, October 1976, special Dossier, pp. 13-17.

Broadly speaking, Fraga's collaborators were young, between their early twenties and forties, and mainly university-educated. The majority of GODSA members were lawyers and academics, but there were also a few civil servants and others who worked in the private sector. There was a widespread reformist and liberal political tendency and, as Carlos Argos asserts, there was an important sector of GODSA which, mainly because of the emphasis that the Francoist - or Falangist - system of education put on social issues, was bordering on Social Democrat. There were three main characteristics common to all GODSA members, and perhaps to most of the regime reformists. These were the generational factor, the advocacy of a democratic system (probably similar to the German type of democracy), and the belief in the positioning of Spain within the European system.²⁶ The majority of GODSA members did not have links with the Francoist administration and although some like Jesús Aparicio Bernál and Gabriel Cisneros were part of it, they were identified with the reformist branch of Francoism. The acclaimed forward-looking political line of this collective, however, only attracted the collaboration of a handful of people with Leftist tendencies like the Catalan Francisco Guillamón Vidal. Guillamón is the only known example of someone at leadership level of GODSA who had had direct connections with Socialist ideas, for which he even suffered a prison sentence.²⁷

According to Gabriel Cisneros, GODSA was created to achieve two clear objectives. The first was the accumulation of papers such as social and political studies, which could culminate in a political manifesto. To this end, members of GODSA worked in close collaboration with the sociologist Amando de Miguel and Salustiano del Campo, former students of Fraga, who had worked extensively on sociological

²⁶ Testimony of Carlos Argos, 12 April 2000.

²⁷ A more comprehensive profile of Fraga's team can be found in GODSA, *Boletín*, Nos. 8-9, January 1977, pp. 24-27.

studies such as those commissioned and published by the FOESSA Foundation. GODSA's reports were also based on the collective work *La España de los años 70*, which consisted of thorough studies of the economy, society and politics of the country analysed by experts in different fields. Under Fraga's own direction *La España de los años 70* was published in the early 1970s. The second objective was the amassing of names of professionals, elite civil servants, military men and so forth, who could have enough political interest to take part in a possible political party at the time of the transition principally at a provincial and regional level.²⁸

The official statutes of the company - found at the *Registro Mercantil de Madrid* - confirmed the first objective. The official purposes of the company were the following: (i) the elaboration of public opinion studies through surveys or other research methods in order to determine the characteristics of the social strata and analyse the market for the launching of commercial products; (ii) the acquisition, elaboration and sale of all types of reports, studies, statistics and in general any documents of economic or social character; (iii) the diffusion of such documents, through the publication of bulletins; (iv) and in general, any other preparatory or complementary activity to the ones mentioned above.²⁹

But, as Carlos Argos explains, these points were just the cover for the real aim of the group which was the elaboration of studies of the reforms needed to modernize the Spanish system.³⁰ Furthermore, like some of the groups studied in previous chapters, such as CEISA and the *Centro de Estudios de Problemas Contemporáneos*, the second objective of Fraga's group was intentionally not mentioned in the official statutes of the

²⁸ The documentation service of GODSA is so complete that it was used by *Alianza Popular* and it is still used by the *Popular Party*. Testimony of Gabriel Cisneros Laborda, 13 September 1999 and 27 September 1999.

²⁹ Statutes of *Gabinete de Orientación y Documentación, S.A.*. The statutes of the society were elaborated by Nicolás Rodríguez González in May 1974. See GODSA, *Boletín*, No. 4, October 1976, p. 14.

³⁰ Testimony of Carlos Argos, 12 April 2000.

company. Internal documentation reveals that under the heading 'immediate action programme' the 'fundamental objective' of the group was to find popular support on a national basis. They wished to raise greater support among all sorts of people, regardless of their status, but who identified with the GODSA's ideology, in order to have a political team able to meet possible future electoral calls. The strategy to follow would be determined by the outcome of GODSA's surveys and studies. Initially, GODSA members believed that the success of the Madrid headquarters would be positively reflected in the growth of provincial and regional branches of GODSA, and would attract a larger number of supporters than it did.³¹

Fraga formed another base in Barcelona where members of the so-called *Club Àgora*, the Catalan equivalent to the *Equipo XXI*, had also been elaborating studies close to Fraga's political ideas. Initial contacts with the *Club Àgora* dated from as early as November 1971, although the merger of the club with GODSA was finally organised in 1973-4 by Manuel Milián and Francisco López Penalba.³² The premises of the *Club Àgora*, (once fused with GODSA the Catalan club kept its original name) were inaugurated by Manuel Fraga on 4 December 1975, when the ex-minister was visiting Barcelona to attend the second 'Manuel Fraga Iribarne Award' for journalists. The club set up branches all over the Catalan region. Juan Echevarria Puig became President, but his subsequent appointment as director general of the National Post Office obliged him to leave the presidency. Juan José Folchi Bonafonte succeeded him as President. Like many other societies, one of the main functions of *Club Àgora* was the organization of lectures and 'political' lunches and dinners paid for the guests themselves. Their meetings aimed at discussing social and political problems affecting Spain and their

³¹ *Godsa-Madrid*. (Madrid: 1975).

³² Fraga, *Memoria breve*, pp. 284, 287. Testimony of Carlos Argos García, 14 September 1999.

possible solutions through a modern and progressive prism based upon Fraga's own political thoughts.³³

Back in London, Fraga combined his duties as ambassador with those of a sort of shadow politician. During the weekend of the 9 and 10 March 1974 Fraga held an intense workshop with Carlos Argos, Antonio Cortina, Manuel Milián and Luis Santiago de Pablo in London. They agreed to speed up the elaboration of a political manifesto given that the end of Franco's regime seemed to be imminent.³⁴ On these grounds a series of study commissions were set up to research the current problems of Spanish society and to elaborate possible solutions to them. A team of members of GODSA and *Club Ágora* elaborated the so-called 'Appeal for Democratic Reform', or *Llamamiento para la Reforma Democrática*, the political manifesto of the group. Yet, the 'Appeal' was a preliminary summary of the 'White Paper for Democratic Reform', or *Libro Blanco para la Reforma Democrática*, their *magnum opus*.³⁵

Meanwhile, under Fraga's direct command, the Spanish embassy received a stream of Spanish visitors who enjoyed the 'most celebrated Spanish restaurant in London'.³⁶ Fraga organized regular working lunches (for six to ten people) and hosted eventual social dinners (for up to forty-five people) for representatives of embassies, ministries (both Spanish and British), and people of the world of finance, economics, politics, media, and so forth.³⁷ The occasions were financed by the ambassador, who

³³ GODSA, *Boletín*, No. 0, June 1976, pp. 22, 31-2. A list of members of the directive council of the *Club Ágora* can be found in *Ibid.*, p. 31.

³⁴ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 318;

³⁵ The *Llamamiento* was finally published in February 1976. GODSA, *Boletín*, No. 4, October 1976, Dossier especial; GODSA, *Boletín*, No. 7, December 1976, p. 7.

³⁶ According to Francisco José Mayans, Fraga's advisor at the embassy, the Spanish embassy had already earned that reputation with the Marquis of Santa Cruz, previous Ambassador. The Marquis had an excellent cook who was admired by the best connoisseurs. Testimony of Francisco José Mayans, 21 June 2001.

³⁷ According to *Cambio-16*, there were often weeks in which the Spanish embassy might host up to ten official lunches and dinners, as well as large cocktail parties of up to 1,000 guests. The ambassador would attend all of these functions. *Cambio-16*, 17-23 November 1975, p. 24. Mayans, however, recalls a maximum of 600 people in a macro-reception. In any case, these large venues happened occasionally, perhaps once or twice a year and on very special occasions. Testimony of Francisco José Mayans, 21 June 2001.

apart from his own salary had a budget to meet these expenses, called *Gastos de Representación*. In the case of Fraga, as Mayans recalls, he spent to the last peseta of his own salary to fulfil his duty as representative of Spain.³⁸

Among the visitors and friends who kept the ambassador informed of the ins and outs of Spanish political life was Pío Cabanillas. Cabanillas worked faithfully on behalf of Fraga and, in his capacity as Minister of Information, managed strategically to place some of Fraga's young supporters in various positions in Arias' administration.³⁹ Many visitors were political personalities identified with the most extreme political tendencies including Alvaro de la Iglesia and Ramón Tamames, both members of the Spanish Communist party – it is believed that Fraga was well aware of Tamames' affiliation to the Communist party. Around 1976, after a long friendship they distanced themselves from each other, perhaps once Tamames' affiliation to the party became publicly known. Their visits did not necessarily imply that they shared political views with the ambassador, but many visitors certainly wanted to be able to count as a friend the man expected to have great importance in post-Franco Spain.⁴⁰

Despite the variety of Fraga's visitors, acceptance of the Communist party was still a divisive issue amongst most progressive Spaniards. Allegedly, Tamames' proposal for negotiations with all the members of the opposition, including the Spanish Communist party (Tamames was present in several GODSA meetings despite not being part of the company) was rejected by many of Fraga's collaborators. From then on, Fraga's friendship with the professor of economics cooled.⁴¹ According to Gabriel Cisneros, GODSA members in general believed that although a democratic process

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ These men were León Herrera (Sub-Secretary of Interior [*Gobernación*]); Manuel Jiménez Quílez (Director General of Informative Co-ordination of the Ministry of Information and Tourism); Antonio García Rodríguez-Acosta (Vice-Secretary General of the Movement); Manuel Romay Beccaria (Sub-Secretary of the Presidency); Juan José Rosón (Director General of Radio and Television); etc. See Laureano López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, p. 22.

could not be fulfilled without the presence of the Spanish Communist party, the risk of accepting such a challenge appeared to be greater than it finally was.⁴² Such a belief was not uncommon amongst the reformists given that the position of the Communist party towards a post-Francoist Spain was still unknown in the first half of the 1970s. Yet, as Carlos Argos argues, it is difficult to get an absolutely unanimous view over an issue in a collective of several hundred people. He believes that there must have been only a few who disagreed with the rapprochement with the Communists, but there was a general feeling in favour of legalising the clandestine party.⁴³ As will be explained in Chapter 7, in 1976 both Fraga and the GODSA member Rafael Pérez Escolar stated that ‘political pluralism does not admit exception’, ‘the Communist Party will have a role in Spanish political life’.⁴⁴

Félix Pastor Ridruejo, one of the GODSA founders, knew many members of the Spanish Communist party, and was therefore well-informed on their activities. Pastor Ridruejo recalls that in 1965 members of the PCE contacted him through José Jiménez de Parga who asked him to be the *Notario* (lawyer) of the Communists. They needed help in their battle for legal recognition. Pastor Ridruejo argues that the Communists wished to gradually become part of society and to stop living clandestinely.⁴⁵

Pastor Ridruejo duly acted for the Communists. Thus, he had frequent contacts with party members like María Luisa Suárez and Cristina Almeida, and also with members of the Socialist Party who approached him for the same purpose. As the transition drew near, some Communists, who knew Pastor Ridruejo professionally and personally and of his role in GODSA, expressed their wish to establish contacts with

⁴⁰ Testimony of Carlos Argos, 14 September 1999.

⁴¹ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 330.

⁴² Testimony of Gabriel Cisneros, 27 September 1999.

⁴³ Testimony of Carlos Argos, 12 April 2000.

⁴⁴ GODSA, *Boletín*, No. 2, August 1976, p. 8.

Fraga's future political party. A meeting took place in Paris, between a few members of the Communist party and Félix Pastor although the latter did not go as a GODSA representative but on his own, as he did not want to involve Fraga's group in the meeting.⁴⁶ Their meeting seems to have been symbolic as there are no records of collaboration between GODSA and the PCE or the democratic opposition.

6.2. The emergence of the Tácito group

Parallel to GODSA's appearance, there emerged another study group - or a group of political thinkers in this case - of young Christian Democrats. *Tácito* was the name of a group formed by forward-looking young people linked, directly or indirectly, to the Catholic pressure group *Asociación Católica Nacional de Propagandistas* (ACNP) and its Christian Democrat philosophy. Abelardo Algora, President of the ACNP since 1965, and Alfonso Osorio agreed on the need to unite the Christian Democratic forces in an attempt to work together for the future of the country. For that purpose, in the autumn of 1972 Algora organized a meeting in the Centre of University Studies of the ACNP, which was attended by a number of young *Propagandistas* including Eduardo Carriles, Landelino Lavilla, Iñigo Cavero, José Luis Álvarez, Marcelino Oreja, Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, Enrique de la Mata, José Manuel Otero, Serafín Ríos, José María Belloch, Andrés Reguera, José Luis Ruiz Navarro, Luis Jáudenes, Fernando Arias-Salgado, Alejandro Royo-Villanova, Fernando Álvarez de Miranda, and Juan Carlos Guerra Zunzunegui.⁴⁷

Tácito was eventually created in May 1973, and its members used their collective identity to sign influential articles, written individually, or by a team, and

⁴⁵ Testimony of Félix Pastor Ridruejo, 17 May 2000.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

published initially in the Catholic newspaper *YA* (close to the ACNP and the Catholic Editorial). Their first article was published in *YA* on 23 June, and from then on articles were reproduced in another nineteen regional papers.⁴⁸ Besides their main demand for freedom of political association, *Tácito* also advocated the incorporation into the Spanish juridical system of the rights and freedoms contained in the Human Rights Declaration of the United Nations: freedom of religion; sovereignty for the people; a bicameral system where the legislative chamber would be elected by universal, secret and direct suffrage; independence of the judicial system; recognition of the peculiarities of the various Spanish regions; freedom to form trade unions; and integration into the European Community.⁴⁹ In fact, the latter issue was of particular importance to the group as many *Tácito* members had been part of the AECE; some had even held positions of leadership.⁵⁰

Although distinctively Christian Democrat, their progressive line of thought soon attracted the collaboration of people who were not linked to the ACNP such as Gabriel Cañadas.⁵¹ Yet, Álvarez de Miranda recalls that, in an attempt to unite the representatives of the different Christian Democrat political groups, Algora firstly invited Federico Silva, Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez and José María Gil-Robles (son), who for various reasons did not turn up.⁵² On the one hand, as Marcelino Oreja recalls, Silva wanted immediate participation in the cabinet because he believed reform had to be carried out by the government and quickly, and therefore, he regarded *Tácito* as a

⁴⁷ Osorio, *Trayectoria*, p. 24; Fernando Jauregui y Manuel Soriano, *La otra historia de UCD*, (Madrid: Emiliano Escolar Ed., 1980), pp. 41-42.

⁴⁸ The collection of articles written by the group and published in various newspapers are compiled in *Tácito* (Madrid: Ibérico Rueda de Ediciones, 1975). A list of regional newspapers where *Tácito* articles appeared can be seen in *Ibid.*, p. 51. See also, Osorio, *Trayectoria*, p. 25.

⁴⁹ *A.C.N. de P.*, No.4, 1975, p. 15; *Tácito*, pp. 46-8.

⁵⁰ *Cambio-16*, 6-12 January 1975, p. 26.

⁵¹ Osorio, *Trayectoria*, p. 24.

useless exercise; Gil-Robles was too attached to his father's idea that Christian Democracy had to be a strong political party which he believed would gather enough votes to become the major group of the Centre-Right. Ruiz-Giménez was too involved with *Cuadernos para el Diálogo* to contemplate being part of another collective.⁵³ Furthermore, despite their Christian Democrat background, Ruiz-Giménez and Gil-Robles (father) advocated full democracy whereas the members of *Tácito* favoured a German-type of democracy (without the Communist Party).⁵⁴

Tácito members were driven, according to one of its members, by 'the wish that our country [could] organize itself to live by a pluralistic democratic system, where all opinions have a place, and that [we could] arrive at it [a pluralistic democratic system] through evolution, reform and change [...], but not through destruction, revenge or a jump into the abyss (*salto al vacío*).'⁵⁵ Yet, they did not support – certainly before Franco's death – the legalization of the Communist Party. In September 1974, for instance, *Tácito* members declared their repudiation of Fascism and Communism or any other form of totalitarianism.⁵⁶

Many *Tácitos* were close to Prince Juan Carlos, both in age and at a personal level. Meetings with the Prince were, therefore, comfortable and frequent. The Prince would listen and sometimes give hints of what he would like them to do for him.⁵⁷ There were *Tácitos* who also had personal contacts with the Prince's father, Don Juan de Borbón. That was the case of Fernando Álvarez de Miranda, who was appointed

⁵² Álvarez de Miranda, *Del "contubernio"*, p. 72.

⁵³ Testimony of Marcelino Oreja Aguirre, 27 May 2000.

⁵⁴ Ruiz-Giménez in the table round "*Reforma o Ruptura*", in *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 148, January 1976, p. 654. Gil-Robles advocated the legalization of the PCE if only to avoid the party growing bigger underground. See *Triunfo* No. 690, 17 April 1976, p.20.

⁵⁵ *Guadiana*, No. 5, 19-25 May 1975, p. 9.

⁵⁶ *Tácito*, "Puntualizaciones" (20 September 1974), p. 307-9.

member of Don Juan's private council by Don Juan himself in 1964. The majority of the *Tácitos* had either worked in the Francoist administration or had strong links to it, and their university education had brought them to important positions. But, *Tácito* members were not close to the General-Secretariat of the Movement unlike some GODSA members namely Gabriel Cisneros.⁵⁸ There were diplomats such as Marcelino Oreja (National Councillor) and Rafael Arias Salgado; State Council Lawyers (*Letrados*) such as Landelino Lavilla and Juan Antonio Ortega y Díaz Ambrona; State Lawyers (*Abogados del Estado*) such as Alfonso Osorio and José Manuel Otero Novas; and economists and engineers working for the private sector. Overall, ninety people were part of *Tácito* at one time or another, some of whom were to be amongst the most prominent figures on the right in the post-Francoist transition (especially Marcelino Oreja, Alfonso Osorio, Calvo Sotelo, Enrique de la Mata and Andrés Reguera Fajardo who became ministers under King Juan Carlos' monarchy).⁵⁹

What began in mid-1973 as a meeting of friends to discuss the political situation of the time became an organization with a coherent ideology and solid structure. As one *Tácito* member explains, 'the imperative need for democratic evolution and the wish to construct a just, ordered and pluralist society brought them together' (understandably without the Communist Party as yet).⁶⁰ However, according to Alfonso Osorio, *Tácito* was not the embryo of a political association like GODSA at an early stage, but a group of political thinkers whose members had a common political ideology and different political experiences. *Tácito* did not have a political manifesto like GODSA's, but that was not their main difference. As Osorio argues, what really differentiated them was

⁵⁷ As we shall see later in the chapter the Prince expressed his concern to Alfonso Osorio for the convenience of having a strong progressive political force which could lead the transition. See Osorio, *Trayectoria*, p. 33.

⁵⁸ *Guadiana*, No. 12, 7-13 July 1975, p. 18.

that Fraga's team advocated the drawing of a constitution prior to democratic election, whereas *Tácito* wanted the opposite.⁶¹ Having said that, on 23 July 1974, *Tácito* tried to create an association called *Centro de Estudios Comunitarios* under the umbrella of the Law of 1964 in an attempt to form a moderate group, which could be ready for post-Franco Spain. José Luis Álvarez, José Luis Ruiz Navarro and Eduardo Carriles presented the paperwork for the legalisation of the group at the Interior Ministry in the summer of 1974. Yet, by January 1975, leaders of *Tácito* had still not received approval for the *Centro de Estudios Comunitarios*. The proposal failed.⁶²

In the meantime, six months after *Tácito* was created, Carlos Arias Navarro became the new President after the assassination of Admiral Carrero. Arias appointed various *Tácito* members at the secondary level of his government as under-secretaries whence they started to exercise some influence. Thus, the *Tácitos* Marcelino Oreja, Gabriel Cañadas and Royo Villanova joined the progressive Pío Cabanillas, while the economist José Ramón Lasuén and Luis Jáudenes became part of Antonio Carro's team. Landelino Lavilla was appointed to a senior post at the Ministry of Industry.⁶³ Given their powerful relations in the banking and industrial world, the *Tácitos* became very influential in Francoist circles. Also, their committed Catholicism, undoubtedly, made their visiting card more welcome. The *Tácitos'* public relations activities, such as political dinners and public lectures, attracted a wide and influential section of the

⁵⁹ Testimony of Alfonso Osorio, 21 September 1999; Powell, "The 'Tácito' group", pp. 250-2; Charles Powell, "Crisis del franquismo, reformismo y transición a la democracia", in Javier Tusell *et al.* (Eds.), *Las Derechas en la España Contemporánea*, (Madrid: UNED, 1998), p. 249.

⁶⁰ *A.C.N. de P.*, No.4, 1975, p. 15.

⁶¹ *ABC*, 21 January 1975; Testimony of Alfonso Osorio, 21 September 1999; It is interesting to note, however, that the alleged differences did not prevent José Luis Álvarez from being part of both collectives which suggests that such differences were not so marked.

⁶² Jauregui & Soriano, *La otra historia de UCD*, p. 42. *Tácito* refers to the attempt to legalize an association in *Cambio-16*, 6-12 January 1975, p. 27.

⁶³ Powell, "The 'Tácito' group", p. 259.

economic, social and political establishments. *Tácito*, therefore, became a pressure group that Arias could not ignore.⁶⁴

On 12 February 1974 President Arias introduced an unprecedented reformist programme for a 'controlled opening-up of the system' in a long-awaited speech. The so-called 'spirit of 12 February' - the first televised address of a Head of Government in Spain - was elaborated by Gabriel Cisneros and also by Antonio Carro and Pío Cabanillas, Ministers of the Presidency and Information, respectively. The *Tácitos* Marcelino Oreja and Gabriel Cañadas were invited to work under Cabanillas, and José Ramón Lansuen and Luis Jáudenes under Carro.⁶⁵ Arias' speech incorporated the new assumption of 'concrete compromises with concrete time location' to the political language of the time. Thus, according to Cisneros, the official announcements would include specific dates for example 'before 31 May, the government...', whereas before this speech no such precise time was given. This point was particularly important since the Statute of Associations, which was to be proposed in December that year, was also to be elaborated, as Cisneros points out, in the same terms. The Caudillo responded favourably to Arias' speech but he made two amendments. Firstly, Franco requested the elimination of one clause that designated young Prince Felipe successor to his father prince Juan Carlos, in case of his father's disappearance. This measure, Cisneros explains, was adopted because Franco had designated only one successor, and had made no provision for subsequent Heads of State. But they forgot that Prince Felipe - then still a young child - had no sworn loyalty to the Principles of the Movement, and that

⁶⁴ Preston, *Triumph of Democracy*, pp. 56-7.

⁶⁵ Powell, "The 'Tácito' group", p. 259. During an interview Gabriel Cisneros assured me that he had been the sole author of Arias' 'spirit of 12 February'. Testimony of Gabriel Cisneros Laborda, 13 September 1999. Yet, Alfonso Osorio explained in his memoirs that Arias was advised by Antonio Carro, Luis Jáudenes (both *Tácito*), and by Gabriel Cisneros. See Osorio, *Trayectoria*, p. 27.

was an essential requirement to become Franco's successor. Secondly, so far as political associations were concerned, the Caudillo told Arias to 'leave the door half-open'.⁶⁶

The 'spirit of 12 February' attracted national as well as international interest, and consequent comments on the speech were published in the most important newspapers. For instance, according to Henry Giniger, the correspondent of *The New York Times*, Arias 'promised Spaniards wider and freer participation in government and union affairs than they have known in the thirty-five years since the Civil War'. The premier also said that 'national consensus in favour of the regime had been achieved up to now through the leadership of General Franco. But in the future, he said, it would have to be expressed through participation'.⁶⁷ Later, Pío Cabanillas confirmed that 'Arias' message was centred around the word "participation" in the political life of the nation [meaning "popular participation"]'. The Francoist discourse avoided delicate terms like "democracy" and "political parties". This is why the magic word was "participation".⁶⁸ In practice, however, if there were to be any participation it would be quite limited. Arias' government combined promises of liberalization with the violent repression typical of Franco's dictatorship although some warned the President of the negative consequences of such a regressive attitude. Indeed, Osorio warned President Arias that his group would support only a cabinet committed to change. The *Tácitos'* influence opened Arias' eyes to the growing opposition, and forced him to acknowledge that, if his government was to survive, some degree of reform had to be attempted.⁶⁹ This time the President seemed more inclined to allow the creation of political associations even if restricted to within the boundaries of the regime.

⁶⁶ Testimony of Gabriel Cisneros Laborda, 13 September 1999.

⁶⁷ *The New York Times*, 13 February 1974, pp. 1, 4.

⁶⁸ Prego, *Así se hizo la transición*, p. 84.

Meanwhile, in April 1974, the peaceful overthrow of the Portuguese dictatorship at the hands of the Portuguese armed forces boosted the hope of the Spanish population who saw the Portuguese case as an example to follow. The collapse of the Portuguese dictatorship was followed by the overthrow of the Colonels in Greece. The Spanish regime was, therefore, the last dictatorship left in Western Europe. Inside the Spanish army, a few officers publicly announced the creation of the so-called *Unión Militar Democrática* (UMD) on 31 August 1974, based on earlier ideas of the progressive military group *Forja*.⁷⁰ Captain José Antonio Domínguez had declared in Paris in 1975 that ‘the UMD was an organization born to fight for the political transformation of the country to a democratic regime’.⁷¹ These officers, who amounted about two-hundred and fifty, wished to guarantee that the army would not be an obstacle for a transition to a democratic regime. As Major Julio Busquets recalls, ‘the UMD was founded because [we] were deeply concerned about the possibility of a clash between the army and the population’.⁷² Their attempt to detach the army from its alliance with Francoism had little impact within the bulk of the military. Domínguez’s declaration, however, aroused a great interest among the democratic opposition. Following the arrest of a number of UMD members, the association dissolved in 1977.⁷³ The triumph of the Right-wing of the military over the democrats of the UMD would affect the entire process of the transition to democracy.

⁶⁹ Preston, *Triumph of Democracy*, p. 57.

⁷⁰ *Forja* or ‘Forge’ was the name given to a military group led by Captain Luis Pinilla and formed by Catholic Cadets created in 1948. They launched and run military journals on professional and political subjects, and although not subversive, constituted a body of critical opinion within the army. The Francoist government, however, put an end to *Forja*’s activities in 1950. See Paul Preston, *The Politics of Revenge*. (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 141.

⁷¹ Quoted in Prego, *Así se hizo la transición*, p. 266.

⁷² Julio Busquets’ testimony in Andrés & Prego, *La Transición*. Video No. 3. *La influencia de la revolución de los claveles*. (April-September 1974). For the number of members see Prego, *Así se hizo la transición*, p. 214.

⁷³ Carr & Fusi, *Dictatorship to democracy*, pp. 22-23; Prego, *Así se hizo la transición*, p. 268.

Meanwhile, a divided democratic opposition made an attempt to unite forces. The leadership of the PCE, politicians linked to Don Juan de Borbón (Rafael Calvo Serer and Antonio García Trevijano), were followed by the Socialists of Tierno Galván, the Carlists of Carlos Hugo, and some smaller Leftist parties. These parties formed the so-called *Junta Democrática*, which was presented in Paris on 30 July 1974. The *Junta* demanded a ‘democratic break’ (*ruptura democrática*)⁷⁴ with the regime as well as the formation of a provisional government; political freedom; the legalization of all political parties, without exception; freedom of trade unions; recognition of the rights of manifestation, assembly and association; freedom of press; judicial independence; separation of Church and State; recognition of the historical characteristics of Galicia, the Basque Country and Catalonia; a referendum to decide the form of State: Republic or Monarchy; and political neutrality for the armed forces.⁷⁵ Later on, other Left wing groups that decided not to join the *Junta* – the Spanish Socialist Party of Felipe González, the Social Democrats of Dionisio Ridruejo, the Democratic Left of Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez, Catalan and Basque parties, some parties of the radical Left, and the Carlists of Carlos Hugo, who had left the *Junta* – formed the *Plataforma de Convergencia* in July 1975.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ The idea of *ruptura* with Franco’s regime has always been part of the democratic opposition to Francoism. Yet, in 1974 the Socialists coined and put into circulation the term ‘democratic rupture’ or *ruptura democrática* to underline their objectives. *Ruptura democrática* involved the devolution of sovereignty to the population in order to decide the political, economic, social and syndical system that it preferred (including also the question of republic or monarchy). That also involved the inevitable opening of elections, the annulment of the current legislation and the approval of a political amnesty. Later on, in 1976, the democratic opposition referred to a ‘negotiated democratic rupture’ as a dialectic process by which government (or rather the reformist sector of the regime) and opposition negotiated a programme of reforms. Incidentally, the ‘negotiated-democratic-rupture’ formulae chosen by the Adolfo Suárez’s government made the peaceful transition to a democratic system possible. See *Cambio-16*, 12-18 April 1976, pp.37-8.

⁷⁵ Carr & Fusi, *Dictatorship to Democracy*, pp. 195-206. Andrés & Prego, *La Transición*. Video No. 3. *La influencia de la revolución de los claveles*. (April-September 1974); Preston, “The dilemma of Credibility”, p. 82.

⁷⁶ Carr & Fusi, *Dictatorship to Democracy*, pp. 195-206. As we will see in Chapter Six, these two blocks, the *Junta* and the *Plataforma*, got together in March 1976.

In the spring of 1974, Arias was trapped between Franco and the die-hards - who blamed Arias for the problems with the democratic opposition and condemned his high degree of tolerance - and the reformists. In fact, as Samuel Eaton recalls, 'there were rumours of continuing differences between Franco and Arias with a corresponding enhancement of Arias' image as a true, though modest, reformer battling against the odds.'⁷⁷ Social problems such as labour militancy, and terrorism, increased considerably thereby exerting great pressure on the government.⁷⁸ But, as Don Juan Carlos acknowledged years later, 'Arias didn't have the necessary vision to face up to the radical changes the Spaniards were demanding. All the same, he realized that Francoism could not continue once Franco was gone, so he undertook various "liberal" reforms which were only for show and didn't satisfy anyone.'⁷⁹ Don Juan Carlos' feeling was shared by many in high political circles. After talking with a number of personalities including Nieto Antúnez, Juan José Rosón, Antonio Carro and Martin Villa, Fraga concluded that the general feeling was that Arias's government was not interested at all in applying any political reform, despite the famous 'spirit of the 12 February'.⁸⁰

Fraga and his collaborators also coincided in the view that Franco and his political system could not resist popular pressure much longer. The delicate health of the Caudillo on the one hand and the feeling of unrest and discontent among Spaniards on the other hand, were clear signs that the regime was coming to an end. Their concern was communicated to Prince Juan Carlos with whom they discussed their reformist programme on a number of occasions. Incidentally, Bernáldez states that the Prince received the entire GODSA group on 27 June 1974, but Gabriel Cisneros has denied this

⁷⁷ Eaton, *The forces of freedom in Spain*, p. 10.

⁷⁸ Preston, *Triumph of Democracy*, p.56.

⁷⁹ Vilallonga, *The King*, p. 163.

claim. Cisneros recalled that they had had regular private encounters with Don Juan Carlos, either individually or in small groups of two or three, but never as a group. In any case, it would not have been wise of the Prince to meet a political group, which was not yet legally recognized.⁸¹

On 9 July 1974, Franco fell ill and was taken to hospital. Don Juan Carlos was asked to take over as Head of State on a temporary basis – the period known as *interinidad* - and although the Prince disagreed with the idea he finally accepted. As he explained later, ‘I knew all along that I had to accept it. If I refused to become Head of State when illness put the General out of action there would be a power vacuum, and other people might be tempted to fill it. [...] Having said that, I accepted with reluctance.’⁸² *Tácito* criticised the decision to make the Prince temporary Head of State in one of their weekly articles.⁸³ Ten days after Franco’s admission to hospital, his health worsened, which led to considerable social tension. During these days Ultra-Right squads violently attacked all sorts of citizens, from relatives of ETA terrorists to respectable professionals - one of the cases being the brutal aggression against six Spanish lawyers and two Venezuelan journalists.⁸⁴ The uncertainty over the future of the country exacerbated the division between *continuistas* and *aperturistas/reformists*. Yet, the precedent had been set. Franco was mortal and Spaniards, especially the Prince, had seriously to prepare themselves for a future without the General.

⁸⁰ Bernáldez, *El Patrón de la Derecha*, p. 148.

⁸¹ Testimony of Gabriel Cisneros, 13 September 1999. This statement was also confirmed by Carlos Argos. Argos told me that he personally had several long discussions with Prince Juan Carlos at the *Palacio de la Quinta* where Argos told the monarch about the need for reform and the work of his group on this direction. Testimony of Carlos Argos, 14 September 1999.

⁸² Vilallonga, *The King*, p. 163; López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, pp. 56-8, 59-60.

⁸³ *Tácito*, “La Interinidad” (26 July 74), pp. 277-9.

⁸⁴ *Triunfo*, No. 676, 10 January 1976, p. 71.

6.3. *Arias Navarro's Statute of Political Associations. The 'Triple Alliance'*

In April 1974, and in view of the arrival of a possible law of political associations, General Lieutenant García Rebull had already declared that, 'as a Falangist, I don't accept associations of any kind. The associations are a dangerous devil for the entire society. No, I don't believe the subject will succeed'.⁸⁵ Yet, to his surprise, the Francoist Cortes eventually approved Arias' Statute of Political Associations by Decree-law on 21 December 1974.

Arias had ordered the elaboration of two drafts for the Statute of Political Associations already in February 1974. One draft was commissioned by Arias' Minister Antonio Carro from the *Instituto de Estudios Administrativos*, directed by Juan Antonio Ortega Díaz-Ambrona. The other draft was entrusted to a group of councillors of the Movement's National Council. As Ortega Díaz-Ambrona's recalls, his group 'elaborated a draft where the Statute reflected the acceptance of all political tendencies common in Western Europe (perhaps not the Communist party as yet) and, therefore, the freedom of political association'. By contrast, Ortega adds, 'the aim of the councillors' draft was not to emphasize the freedom of associations for the Spanish people', but to enhance the political forces integrated in the Movement. It was clear that the draft prepared at the *Instituto* was too adventurous for Arias and, as expected, the President chose the draft proposed by the councillors. During a conversation with José Utrera, Minister Secretary-General of the Movement, in November that year, Franco still insisted that the Minister write a document whereby the Movement retained the legal authority to authorize, control, sanction or dissolve any association that might be created in the future.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ *Nuevo Diario*, 28 April 1974, p. 2.

⁸⁶ Andrés & Prego, *La Transición*. Video No. 4. *La derrota del aperturismo* (September-December 1974).

Despite the approval of the Statute by the Cortes, the real challenge rested in Arias' hands who still had to obtain the Caudillo's ultimate blessing. José García Hernández, and first Vice-President of Arias' cabinet, possibly fearing trouble ahead, told Arias that 'if he [Franco] does not sign it, we better organize a fancy-dress party'. After many struggles the Caudillo allowed the 'go-ahead' of political associations. As López Rodó put it, 'after seven years of thinking [over and over] about the issue, which appeared and disappeared like the Guadiana [river], Franco finally signed the Decree-law of 21 December 1974 by which the Statute of Political Associations was approved' (*Tras siete años de darle vueltas al tema y de que éste apareciera y desapareciera como el Guadiana...*).⁸⁷

The text was based to a great extent on the old *proyecto de bases* approved by the National Council in July 1969, and consisted of thirty articles divided into six main sections.⁸⁸ These were freedom of association, competence in associative matters, constitution of political associations, the regime and the functioning of associations, federations and the disciplinary regime. The Statute read that 'all Spaniards, older than eighteen, have the right to associate freely for political activities without discrimination. [But] The exercise of this right is regulated by the National Movement'. The core of the problem was threefold. Firstly, popular participation had to respect the so-called 'inorganic democracy' of the regime; secondly, political associations would be instituted only within the community of the Movement; and thirdly, the recognition, suspension

⁸⁷ López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, pp. 96-7; López Rodó, *La larga marcha*, p. 473.

⁸⁸ Martín Merchan, *Partidos Políticos*, pp. 100-1. José Solís, however, believed that these proposals of 1969 and the statute of 1974 were different things, and incomparable because they respond to different situations of Spanish life. According to him, the statute was an improved and perfected version. See *Gentleman*, No. 24, 1-15 January 1975, p. 29.

and dissolution of political associations lay ultimately at the National Council's discretion.⁸⁹

As expected, comments on the new statute were varied. On the one hand, Francoist hard-liners reiterated their rejection of any attempt to form associations. On the other hand, Alfonso Osorio gave a different reaction. The *Tácito* member disagreed with the limitations and cautions of the statute although he believed that one should create a political association under the conditions of the statute if only to attempt a political reform from within. Yet, his *Tácito* collaborators, mainly those attached to Marcelino Oreja and Pío Cabanillas, completely disagreed.⁹⁰ In fact, the majority of the *Tácito* members stood against the statute. They thought that Arias' statute was 'the statute of the anti-associationists and betrayed the spirit of 12 February'. They believed, therefore, that 'the text must be modified to be accepted'.⁹¹ As we shall see later, *Tácito's* stance towards the new Statute of Political Associations was ultimately to provoke a schism in the group.

Prior to its approval, however, hope for a generous Statute of Political Associations disappeared when the press announced a string of twenty resignations of progressive political figures from high administrative positions.⁹² On 28 October 1974, Pío Cabanillas was asked to resign from the Ministry of Information and Tourism by Arias, who himself followed direct orders from the Caudillo. Cabanillas' mistake had been his 'loose' hand, which had led to an unparalleled level of press liberalization. The alarm had been raised a few months earlier, more specifically on 28 April 1974, by the

⁸⁹ *Cambio-16*, 9-15 December 1974, pp. 10-11.

⁹⁰ Osorio, *Trayectoria*, p. 32.

⁹¹ 'El Estatuto de Asociaciones' (article published on 6 December 1974), in *Tácito*, pp. 351-54.

⁹² The politicians who resigned in solidarity with Cabanillas and Barrera de Irimo included: from the INI, Francisco Fernández Ordoñez, Rafael Pérez Escolar, Miguel Boyer, Joaquín Solchaga; from the Ministry of Information and

Falangist hard-liner José Antonio Girón, who published a manifesto - popularly known as 'Gironazo' - in the daily *Arriba* where he denounced the ill-use of Arias' speech by the 'infiltrated Liberals'. Girón was clearly referring to Antonio Carro and Pío Cabanillas, the latter accused of directing a 'dangerous press policy'.⁹³ Yet, such a level of press liberalization boosted the success of independent and critical publications such as the magazines *Cuadernos para el Diálogo* and *Cambio-16*, which stood as serious critics of the current situation.⁹⁴ Cabanillas' dismissal represented a clear hit to *aperturismo* from President Arias. This regressive move infuriated the democratic opposition, and especially *Tácito*, who condemned his decision and praised the coherence of work of both ex-ministers. In an article published by *Tácito* a few days later, they stated that the dismissal of the forward-looking Cabanillas and the consequent resignation of Barrera de Irimo as well as the rest of the civil servants meant that 'a political line died yesterday'.⁹⁵

Despite these disappointing dismissals, there was considerable expectation amongst the reformists about the Statute of Political Associations even prior

to its approval. In December (8-9) 1974, the press published a series of articles about the alleged creation of a 'Triple Alliance' between Fraga, Areilza and Federico Silva.⁹⁶ The origins of this alleged alliance can be found, as Alfonso Osorio recalls, in a private conversation he held with Don Juan Carlos. The Prince expressed his concern about the need for a political association capable of attracting all sectors of the regime in

Tourism, Marcelino Oreja, Ricardo de la Cierva; from TVE, Rosón Pérez, Juan Luis Cebrián; and several others from the from the Treasury Department. For a full list see *Cambio-16*, 18-24 November 1974, pp. 6-8.

⁹³ *Cambio-16*, 13 May 1974, pp. 22-5; *Cambio-16*, 6-12 January 1975, p. 23. See also Prego, *Así se hizo la transición*, pp. 127-134.

⁹⁴ Álvarez de Miranda, *Del "contubernio"*, p. 78.

⁹⁵ "Tácito enjuicia el momento político" (article published on 31 October 1974) in *Tácito*, p. 333; *Cambio-16*, 11-17 November 1974, pp. 10-19.

an attempt to conduct a real transition to a parliamentary monarchy. Therefore, given that there was already an organized democratic opposition, it was very convenient to form a powerful group of moderate Francoists outside the umbrella of the Secretariat of the Movement. The *Tácito* leader promised the Prince that he would deal with the matter personally.⁹⁷ The Prince reiterated his concern to López Rodó during a conversation on 31 October 1974. His words to the Opus Dei member were allegedly, “we have to organize the Right and count also on the Left”. According to López Rodó, the Prince asked him to lunch with Fraga, Areilza and Fernández Miranda, and to make sure that the fact of this meeting was publicized.⁹⁸ Santiago Carrillo recalls that on wondering whom the leader of the regime reformists was, he arrived at the conclusion that it was Prince Juan Carlos himself. The Prince ‘had surreptitiously gathered some of them [reformists] together, waiting for the time when Franco would not be in control. [...] He was prepared to introduce democracy if it allowed him to keep the crown’.⁹⁹ Although Carrillo suspected this before Suárez became president, the Communist leader confirmed it when Suárez came to power.¹⁰⁰

Faithful to the Prince, Osorio began a series of talks with Fraga, Areilza, Silva and José Trillo as well as with other political figures at the beginning of December 1974. Fraga was, according to Osorio, quite enthusiastic about the idea of a political partnership, but expressed his scepticism about Silva’s willingness merely to join, and not lead the formation. In fact, while Areilza and Fraga understood the need for such an alliance, and agreed to be part of it, Silva seemed to hesitate although he finally

⁹⁶ Federico Silva recalled having learned about the alleged alliance through the press, and thought it was a canard. Federico Silva Muñoz, *Memorias Políticas*, (Barcelona: Planeta, 1993), pp. 302-3. See also *Gentleman*, No. 25, 15-30 January 1975, p. 15; *Cambio-16*, 27 January- 2 February 1975, p. 15.

⁹⁷ Testimony of Alfonso Osorio, 21 September 1999; See also Osorio, *Trayectoria*, p. 31.

⁹⁸ López Rodó, *La larga marcha*, p. 473.

⁹⁹ Santiago Carrillo, “The Consensus-building Role of the Communist Party”, in Threlfall, *Consensus politics in Spain*, pp. 54-5.

¹⁰⁰ Testimony of Santiago Carrillo, 29 November 2001.

accepted.¹⁰¹ Fraga, however, was still in London although his duties at the London embassy did not prevent him from leading GODSA and the *Club Ágora*, and from still being present on the Spanish scene. But, he still counted on the assistance of various collaborators. For instance, Carlos Argos recalls that in December 1974 (coinciding with the 'Triple Alliance'), they [Fraga's followers] organized the so-called 'Manuel Fraga Iribarne Award' for the best journalist. They wanted to keep Fraga's name in vogue in Spain and also remind people of Fraga's Press Law. The prize consisted of cash, although they had none. So they organized an exclusive dinner in Monjuïc, Barcelona, which would be charged at more than the real cost, thereby contributing the difference to the prize. A jury would choose the best article, and the prize would be presented by Manuel Fraga himself who would travel from London to attend the event. This trip also gave Fraga the opportunity to establish contacts with a number of personalities from all spheres of Catalan society from Cardinal Jubany and the Abad of Montserrat to people of the business and banking world. José María Santacreu, allegedly the main organizer of Fraga's visit to Catalonia, organized a lunch with personalities such as the banker Jordi Pujol, the *ex-familiar* Eduardo Tarragona, Pau Roig, Ibáñez Escocet and Sebastián Auger to whom the ambassador reiterated his idea of the centre.

The extraordinary marketing campaign organized by Fraga's collaborators attracted great publicity. The Catalan press recorded in detail Fraga's movements in the Catalan City, and the award ceremony attracted an important number of political personalities, journalists and businessmen. There were various ministers of Arias' current cabinet such as Antonio Carro, Minister of the Presidency; Pío Cabanillas, Minister of Information and Tourism; and Cruz Martínez Esteruelas, Minister of

¹⁰¹ Osorio, *Trayectoria*, p. 34-6.

Education. Following the prize-giving ceremony, Fraga gave an eagerly-awaited speech in which he was expected to unveil his views on the possible formation of a political association. But he did not. Allegedly, one businessman commented that although ‘Fraga has not said enough, he is the only man capable of playing a role in this terribly confused situation’.¹⁰² Others, like Alejandro Rodríguez de Valcárcel criticised Fraga’s flamboyance for travelling to Catalonia ‘as if he was the President of the Government’ (*en plan de Presidente del gobierno*).¹⁰³

Soon after Fraga’s visit to Catalonia, on 30 December 1974 Fraga met the Prince at the embassy in London. During their meeting, the Ambassador shared his political views with the Prince, and as a result of this encounter, on 31 December Fraga sent a carefully written letter to President Arias in which he included the draft for a political association that had been designed by his group GODSA. For Fraga, an association had to have a series of unquestionable conditions in its programme such as the advocacy of a parliament with a principal chamber elected by universal suffrage, the incorporation of the basic civic rights of the western world, freedom of trade unions and an amicable separation of Church from State, all under the monarchy of Don Juan Carlos. According to the Ambassador, political associations with an unclear stance towards democracy (understanding ‘democracy’ as a democracy without the Communist Party) would not succeed, and he believed that it was important to make his position clear before his return to Madrid.¹⁰⁴ Later, on 14 January 1975 Silva met Arias Navarro to

¹⁰² Testimony of Carlos Argos, 14 September 1999; *Cambio-16*, 16-22 December 1974, p. 24; John Gilmour, *Manuel Fraga Iribarne and the Rebirth of Spanish Conservatism, 1939-1990*, (Cerdigion, Wales: Edwin Mellen, 1999), p. 84.

¹⁰³ López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, p. 96.

¹⁰⁴ Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 341; Fraga’s detailed political programme was published in ABC in a series of articles between October and November 1975. These articles were “Cambio y Reforma” (1 October 1975); “La Reforma Religiosa” (4 October 1975); “La Reforma Militar” (15 October 1975); “La Reforma de las Autonomías” (18 October 1975); “La Reforma Educativa” (24 October 1975); “La Reforma Económica” (29 October 1975); “La

whom he explained the idea of the alliance. Arias' response was quite favourable, and even told Silva that in the event of the three politicians forming an association - of the type the government was seeking which was purely under the orthodox framework of the Movement - he would be willing to hand over power to them within a period of six months, or after the current legislature of the Cortes.¹⁰⁵ Even Cardinal Tarancón appeared to favour the idea. 'I understand', he told Osorio, 'that it is a project for national coexistence. [So] a light is lit for the future of Spain'.¹⁰⁶

But, the alliance had not yet amounted to anything. On 21 January 1975, the daily *ABC* published an interview with Alfonso Osorio in which the *Tácito* pushed the idea of the alliance. Osorio stated that, in his opinion, if progressive associations were successful - as he was convinced they would be - they would considerably reduce the potential followers of a revolutionary option. He also recognized that, despite the limitations of the statute, 'we have to try to walk as far as we can in this tight suit, and see if by using it we can manage to adapt it to our national body'. On these grounds, he declared his willingness to be part of an association that represented the positions of Areilza, Fraga and Silva in a joint alliance.¹⁰⁷ Osorio's public statement initiated a chain of press comments about the alleged partnership. According to *Cambio-16*, the three 'progressive' leaders were to create an association of a moderate-democratic-centrist tendency, and the various private meetings of these politicians led to the rumour that their alliance was based on their wish for a constitutional reform, and their support for the monarchy of Prince Juan Carlos.¹⁰⁸ The press showed great enthusiasm for what

Reforma Social" (2 November 1975); "La Reforma Jurídica" (7 November 1975); "La Reforma Política" (12 November 1975). These articles are reproduced in Manuel Fraga, *Un Objetivo Nacional*, (Barcelona: Dirosa, 1976, 3 Ed.), Parte séptima, pp. 137-95. See also Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 363; *Diario de Diarios*, 29-30 May 1975, p. 1.

¹⁰⁵ Silva Muñoz, *Memorias Políticas*, pp.302-07.

¹⁰⁶ Osorio, *Trayectoria*, p. 33.

¹⁰⁷ *ABC*, 21 January 1975; Osorio, *Trayectoria*, pp. 34-5; Fraga, *Memoria breve*, p. 346.

¹⁰⁸ *Cambio-16*, 27 January- 2 February 1975, p. 16.

seemed to be a progressive political association with the potential to be a serious alternative to Arias' government.

In the meantime in a conversation with Silva, Fraga had told the Christian Democrat that they had three options to choose from. First, to continue being part of the monolithic regime; second, to create the associationism of the Movement; and third, to create a plurality of associations in order to unite the reformists for 'when the Marxist groups come'. They both rejected the first two options and favoured the third.¹⁰⁹ On 22 January, Fraga met President Arias and some other members of his cabinet - namely the three vice-presidents, García Hernández, Licinio de la Fuente and Cabello de Alba, the Minister-Secretary of the Movement (Utrera Molina), and the Minister of the Presidency (and close friend of Fraga), Antonio Carro. During this meeting, according to Antonio Carro, President Arias offered Fraga the leadership of a new association called *Unión del Pueblo Español* which the government planned to create, and which would come into being in the event of Franco's death or retirement.¹¹⁰ Yet, when Fraga reiterated his intention to be only part of an association created according to the conditions he had previously listed in his letter of 31 December to the President, Arias backed down. Years later, as Juan de Arespachaga recalls, Adolfo Suárez told him [Arespachaga] that 'Fraga is far to the Left of what the *Unión del Pueblo* wants to be'.¹¹¹ It was clear that Franco would never accept Fraga's conditions. In fact, when Arias showed Fraga's proposal to Franco, the Caudillo allegedly asked 'which country does he think he is writing for?'. Fraga was later told that his proposal was 'undoubtedly the good and desired one' but not advisable for that moment. To be applied, however, the proposal

¹⁰⁹ Silva, *Memorias Políticas*, pp. 306-7.

¹¹⁰ Gilmour, *Manuel Fraga*, p. 86. According to *Cambio-16* Solís also offered Fraga the presidency of the UDPE. See *Cambio-16*, 8-14 September 1975, p. 13. The daily *Informaciones* wrote that the project of the UDPE, initially called *Alianza para el Pueblo*, had been orchestrated by government high officials, namely José Utrera Molina, and already existed in embryonic form by 12 January 1975. See *Informaciones*, 12 July 1975, p. 7.

would have had to be seriously 'pruned', which the Ambassador refused to do. Incidentally, as explained later, this document was later published unaltered with the title *Llamamiento para una Reforma Democrática*.¹¹²

During a lunch organised by *Club Siglo XXI* on 24 January, which attracted more than three hundred personalities, Areilza expressed his support for Fraga by claiming that he would follow Fraga anywhere.¹¹³ In contrast, Silva's utter silence irritated Fraga's followers. According to Osorio, Marcelino Oreja's group led by Pío Cabanillas refused to support Silva because to do so jeopardised the alliance. By the following day, it was already clear already that the adventure of the 'Triple Alliance' had finished before it had even began.

The truth, however, was that even though Fraga, Silva and Areilza had very similar political backgrounds and ideas, they were not sufficiently compatible to create a joint association. The core problem was their personal ambition (*personalismo*), although there seemed to be other drawbacks too. Silva, never very enthusiastic about collaborating with Fraga, told his two co-leaders that he was not sure whether they were all heading in the same direction. Silva wanted to update the offer of leadership that Fraga, Pío Cabanillas, Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, Osorio and Pedro Areitio made to him back in 1970 after his resignation as Minister of Public Works. But, in those days, according to Manuel Fraga, Silva was already in a very conservative position and refused their offer.¹¹⁴

Silva had not realized that in 1974 the situation had changed, and Fraga had more supporters than him. This new alliance had to be on a basis of equality. So Silva

¹¹¹ De Arespacochaga, *Cartas a unos capitanes*, p. 211.

¹¹² Fraga, *Memoria breve*, pp. 346-47.

¹¹³ Ironically, a few weeks earlier Areilza had told Silva that he had spoken to Fraga about politics only once, it was on the phone and Fraga had even expressed his displeasure to Areilza for an article the latter had written in *ABC*. Silva Muñoz, *Memorias Políticas*, p. 303.

backed down. Areilza, who proved to be the wisest, foresaw that the natural force of things would reunite them again in the near future although admitted not to comprehend why an alliance between the three could not succeed at that moment.¹¹⁵ Finally Fraga excused himself by saying that his GODSA collaborators, namely Rafael Pérez Escobar, Carlos Argos and Antonio Cortina, were inclined to lead a Center-Left political formation. The Ambassador's stepping back was mainly the result of both the Caudillo's refusal to accept his conditions, and fear of the project becoming a new version of Miguel Primo de Rivera's disastrous *Unión Patriótica*. Fraga believed that the type of political association the government wanted to organise would not last more than a month after the Caudillo's death.¹¹⁶ Allegedly, Don Juan Carlos told López Rodó that 'on its knees, the government had begged Fraga to promote an association, and Carro had considered it a success that Fraga had limited himself to saying that he would postpone his decision until October'.¹¹⁷ But, the Caudillo would never have approved Fraga's conditions on the grounds of their excessive liberalism. Furthermore, it is not known whether Franco agreed with the choice of candidates for the associations because, even though he appreciated Silva's diligence and Fraga's intellectual and administrative capacities as well as his will, the Caudillo did not have the same opinion of Areilza. Franco said that 'in other times, not so long ago, that man (Areilza) was one of the cruellest opponents of democracy'.¹¹⁸

It is interesting to note that Prince Juan Carlos' initial idea to unite the moderate forces of the regime was cunningly appropriated by President Arias. Yet, Arias' version

¹¹⁴ Testimony of Manuel Fraga, 28 April 2001.

¹¹⁵ Testimony of Alfonso Osorio, 21 September 1999; Osorio, *Trayectoria*, p. 36.

¹¹⁶ Osorio, *Trayectoria*, p. 36; Powell, "Crisis del franquismo", pp. 260-261; López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, p. 101.

¹¹⁷ López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, p. 106.

¹¹⁸ José Utrera Molina, *Sin cambiar de bandera*, (Barcelona: Planeta, 1990), p. 246.

was doomed to failure. The Prince wished for an association independent of the Movement, whereas Arias wished to form an association strictly within it. Some believed that Fraga's attitude represented a positive service to Spain. His withdrawal from the associations' project exposed the real plans of the government. While the Spaniards were demanding pluralistic democratic participation at all levels, it was clear that Arias' government was not willing to apply the necessary reforms to transform the dictatorship into a democracy. On the contrary, Arias was willing to do anything available to secure the continuation of the regime.¹¹⁹ The notion that Fraga was the 'saviour', capable of resolving the political crisis, however, was not shared by all members of the government. On 11 February 1975, José Utrera Molina called fourteen people to Arias's office, including Arias himself, Emilio Romero, Jesús Fueyo and José Solís, with a view to forming an alternative association to that of Fraga, under the name of *Alianza para el Pueblo*. This plan did not prosper either.¹²⁰

Thus, despite the failure of the 'Triple Alliance', and lack of interest by the population, the associationist fever did not fade away. Antonio Gavilanes attempted to organize an association, with the name of Democratic Change or *Cambio Democrático*. Allied with Gavilanes were lawyers and economists including Evaristo de León, Paulino Basco Plaza, Alvaro Domecq, Concepción García, Luis Guzmán, José López Nieto and Manuel Pérez y Pérez. Gavilanes' group presented the minister of the presidency with the group's programme, which was made public during a press lecture. *Cambio Democrático* claimed to be a Centre-Left group close to the Social Democrats, who among other things demanded the reform of the Fundamental Laws; the introduction of universal suffrage from the age of eighteen; juridical and not political control over the

¹¹⁹ *Cambio-16*, 28 April - 4 May 1975, p. 31; *Cambio-16*, 31 March-6 April 1975, p. 25.

associations; and free, independent and representative syndicates. Despite his initial enthusiasm, the refusal of the National Council to authorize the association did not surprise Antonio Gavilanes. To start with, the name itself reflected the aims of the group clearly enough. Years later, Gavilanes became a member of the Spanish Socialist party.¹²¹

By the spring of 1975 a total of ten political associations were constituted under Arias' statute. These were *Reforma Social Española*, *ANEPA*, *Falange Española de las JONS*, *Nueva Izquierda Nacional*, *Alianza del Trabajo*, *Partido Social Regionalista*, *Partido Agrario Español*, *Partido Laborista*, *Unión del Pueblo Español* and *Partido Proverista*.¹²² Although these associations claimed to advocate a democratic system, their mere acceptance of Arias' statute, and their willingness to be registered, brings into question the type of democracy that they envisaged. Of all these political associations, the most significant was the *Unión del Pueblo Español* (UDPE). The creation of the UDPE was orchestrated by the Spanish government to safeguard the credibility of Arias' statute and also the interests of the Francoist class by guaranteeing the continuity of the regime. On those grounds, it attracted the participation of the Francoist élite, and hence it was described as the 'party of continuity'.¹²³

The leadership of the party was entrusted to Fernando Herrero Tejedor, who had just been appointed Minister-Secretary of the Movement in March 1975. Herrero had taken over the leadership of the UDPE from its initial promoter José Utrera Molina, and registered the association in the spring of 1975. Herrero had been officially

¹²⁰ López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, p. 105; *Gentleman*, No. 28, 1-15 March 1975, pp. 9-11.

¹²¹ Testimony of Antonio Gavilanes, 12 April 2000; *Guadiana*, No. 7, 2-8 June 1975, p. 15; *Triunfo*, No. 19 June 1976, p. 43.

¹²² Martín Merchan, *Partidos Políticos*, p. 100; Programmatic details of several of these associations can be found in *Triunfo*, No. 699, 19 July 1976, pp. 39-41; López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, p. 108. Allegedly, Juan Antonio Samaranch, President of the *Diputación de Barcelona*, wanted to create a political-sportive association within the Movement in order to channel political interest in the sport world. See *Cambio-16*, 6-12 January 1975, p. 18.

¹²³ *Cambio-16*, 4-10 August 1975, p. 10.

commissioned to establish contacts with Dionisio Ridruejo's Social Democrats, Antonio García López's Social Democrat party and Llópis' Historic Socialist party in order to create a strong Social-Democratic collective which could compete with the remainder of the Socialist and Communists groups.¹²⁴ But, the attempt failed. UDPE advocated 'a democracy fully enhancing human values of coexistence, freedom and equality of social and economic opportunities without the loss of what we have managed to achieve so far' (a democracy without the PCE). But, despite the reformist statement, José María López de Letona, expressed his concern about the low number of 'authentic first rank politicians, known entrepreneurs, prestigious professionals, intellectuals and political youths' in the association, and even worse, the absence of 'what has been called "*aperturismo*".'¹²⁵

In fact, although Herrero was regarded as an *aperturista* and was said to be a true advocate of modernizing the regime, his vision was somewhat limited. Herrero favoured the creation of three major associations but primarily on the Centre-Right of the political spectrum. Herrero did not want to have a Leftist opposition. In fact, he wanted the opposition to be on the Right and to be formed by Fraga, Areilza and Silva (the failed 'Triple Alliance').¹²⁶ His ideas, however, did not bear fruit. On 23 June 1975, the Minister of the Movement died in a car accident. The Caudillo, who learnt the news while attending a bullfight, was visibly moved, although paradoxically, as Preston explains, Franco saw the accident as providential as it proved to him that political associations did not have 'divine approval'.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Michael Buse, *La Nueva Democracia Española. Sistema de partidos y orientación de voto (1976-1983)*, (Madrid: Unión Editorial, 1984), p. 39.

¹²⁵ Letter from José María López de Letona to Francisco Herrero Tejedor recorded in López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, pp. 493-95.

¹²⁶ Jorge Reverte, "Desintegración de un régimen", in Santos Juliá *et al*, *Memoria de la Transición*, p. 46.

¹²⁷ Preston, *Franco*, p. 774. Full details of the minister's accident can be found in *Cambio-16*, 23-29 June 1975, pp. 14-5.

The leadership of the party was briefly occupied by the man who also succeeded Herrero at the head of the Movement, the Falangist José Solís. Herrero's protégé Adolfo Suárez, who had been Vice-Secretary General of the Movement with Herrero, resigned the post because of his differences with Solís. Yet, Suárez continued his work with the UDPE eventually becoming its president on 12 June 1975. Suárez's appointment was followed by further changes. For instance, the Movement's National Council approved the UDPE's new board of directors, which was publicly announced on 28 July 1975. The new vice-presidents of the party were Alberto Ballarín Marcial, Javier Carvajal Ferrer, Francisco Labadié Otermín, Carlos Pinilla and Noel Zapico Rodríguez.¹²⁸ During that summer the UDPE had already collected the 25,000 signatures needed for it to be officially registered as a political association, and had branches in more than fifteen provinces.¹²⁹ Allegedly there had been plans for the immediate incorporation of Franco's entourage into the UPDE. Thus, the fact that the UPDE aspired to become the political association of Francoism, in other words another 'Movement', discouraged the participation of progressive politicians.¹³⁰ One may think that such a Francoist association could have harmed Suárez's future career, but quite on the contrary, this post gave Suárez the opportunity to become familiar with the people and internal structure of the Movement. Therefore, the post at the UDPE together with Suárez's good relations with Prince Juan Carlos, and his political contacts with people like Torcuato Fernández-Miranda, proved essential for his later appointment as Minister-Secretary of the Movement in Arias' second cabinet. In turn, this appointment represented the beginning of Suárez's meteoric political career.¹³¹

¹²⁸ *Triunfo*, No. 671, 9 August 1975, p. 49.

¹²⁹ *Cambio-16*, 4-10 August 1975, p. 10.

¹³⁰ *Guadiana*, No. 9, 16-22 June 1975, p. 10; Preston, *Triumph of Democracy*, p. 72.

Back to the approval of the statute; Arias' statute was not the only way of creating a political collective. In the summer of 1975, Luis Apostúa wrote in *YA* that the constitution of a political group could be done in four different ways. The first way was by creating clandestine political parties, as the Communists, Socialists, Nationalist Basque and Catalan parties and various Christian Democrat parties had done, regardless of their illegality; the second way was by creating political associations under the already mentioned new Statute of 1974; the third method was that applied by José María Gil-Robles, which involved the registration of an association under the Law of Associations of 1964 (even though a few months after the presentation of the required paperwork for the *Federación Popular Democrática*, the Interior Ministry had still not answered Gil-Robles' petition); and the fourth way was the application of the Law of 1951 for the creation of commercial companies.¹³² However, none of these alternatives could provide the expected freedom of political association. The main debate, therefore, was between choosing Arias' statute or waiting for real freedom of association. This debate appears to have been a determining factor in the split of *Tácito* in 1975.

6.4. Split in the Tácito group. The emergence of FEDISA

According to Álvarez de Miranda, 'the *Tácitos* abandoned the [political] game after Pío Cabanillas' dismissal in October 1974, and the approval of the Statute of Political Associations by the Movement's National Council on the following 16 December.'¹³³ Disagreement over Arias' statute was one of the main reasons for the splitting of the *Tácito* group into several groups. The first to break away was the

¹³¹ Buse, *La Nueva Democracia*, p. 39

¹³² Quoted in *Diario de Diarios*, 13-14 July 1975, pp. 1-2. According to Luis Apostúa, the idea of forming a commercial company for political purposes was not original since Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez had already chosen the same method seven years before. See *Ibid*, p. 1.; *The Times*, 18 June 1975, p. 1.

¹³³ Álvarez de Miranda, *Del "contubernio"*, p. 72.

centrist group led by Marcelino Oreja. Oreja's group opposed Arias' statute and insisted that their action was in response to the need 'to contribute to the preparation of a democratic pluralistic alternative, which crystallises the consensus of ample sectors who desire evolution without trauma.'¹³⁴ The second was the more conservative Alfonso Osorio and his adherents. Osorio, one of *Tácito*'s main leaders and founders, had declared himself in favour of creating an association under Arias' statute. Osorio's decision stood in clear contradiction to the position of the rest of the *Tácitos*, and led to his leaving the group. Finally, Fernando Álvarez de Miranda and Iñigo Cavero – more identified with the Left – withdrew from *Tácito* to form the *Izquierda Democrática* with Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez.

Aware of Osorio's position, Federico Silva asked him to form an association with him. In March 1975, they set up the *Unión Democrática Española* (UDE), which would be based upon their common Christian Democratic ideals.¹³⁵ The Osorio-Silva tandem attracted the attention of the press, as the association gathered a number of respectable politicians including Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, Enrique de la Mata, José Almagro, Andrés Reguera, José Jiménez Mellado and Alberto Monreal Luque.¹³⁶ The UDE claimed to be 'open to all Spaniards who wanted to participate - under the basic principles of coexistence - in the process of the renovation of Spain'. The association was also committed to a non-traumatic transition to democracy, and therefore to the application of as many reforms as necessary to achieve that goal. For that purpose, UDE's programme defended the idea of a democratic regime and the free formation of

¹³⁴ *Cambio-16*, 24 February-2 March 1975, p. 13.

¹³⁵ More than the specific decision of backing Arias' statute, Osorio believed that the incorporation into *Tácito* of many people with no links with the A.C.N. de P. broke the initial homogeneity of the group. Testimony of Alfonso Osorio, 21 September 1999; Silva, *Memorias políticas*, pp. 337-340; Testimony of Alfonso Osorio, 21 September 1999.

¹³⁶ Allegedly, prior to the formation of the UDE, Federico Silva and Alberto Monreal Luque planned the creation of an association called *Acción Social Popular* with the support of the *Hermandades del Trabajo*. Yet, the members of

associations (for workers and patrons) as well as an evolutionist interpretation of the Francoist Fundamental Laws, in other words, a constitutional reform. However, some of their proposals, especially for constitutional reform, had already been repudiated by the Caudillo and had even precipitated Fraga's withdrawal from the 'Triple Alliance'.¹³⁷

This may explain why the UDE was not legalised until Osorio was Vice-President of Suárez's government in 1976. In the summer of 1975, representatives of the association explained to the press that their decision to postpone the official registration of the UDE was due to their wish to know more about the norms of the Statute of Political Associations regarding the electoral process.¹³⁸ But, as Osorio acknowledges today, the truth was that they had never intended to legalize the UDE but merely to organise themselves for better times. Thus, for a long time they deliberately remained in a very ambiguous position. One day they would show willingness to present the paperwork to the Interior Ministry, while the next day they would apparently change their minds. They disliked the Law because it was 'absolutely limited and within the Movement's organisation, and therefore, political parties did not have slightest chance of emerging from it.'¹³⁹ This assertion seems to contradict his own previous statements to the press, where he wholeheartedly defended the participation within the statute although acknowledging its limitations. In fact, Osorio agreed with his fellow *Tácitos* about the inappropriateness of the statute, which was the main reason for the splitting of the group.

the brotherhoods did not back up the idea, and the plan did not succeed. See *Gentleman*, No. 26, 1-15 February 1975, p. 15.

¹³⁷ *Cambio-16*, 9-15 June 1975, pp. 38-39; *Cambio-16*, 31 March-6 April 1975, p. 12.

¹³⁸ *Informaciones*, 15 July 1975, p. 8.

¹³⁹ Testimony of Alfonso Osorio, 21 September 1999.

In February 1975, during a visit to Madrid, Fraga had met various *Tácitos* (Marcelino Oreja, Gabriel Cañadas, Juan Antonio Ortega Díaz-Ambrona and Juan Carlos Guerra); various members of his own GODSA group (Rafael Pérez Escolar and José Luis Álvarez); Areilza, Pío Cabanillas, Antonio de Senillosa, Francisco Fernández Ordoñez as well as other representatives of the moderate Right. During the meeting, they discussed the country's political situation, and the possibility of forming an association with a democratic programme (it is doubtful that they included the legalization of the Communist Party on the agenda) outside the Statute of 1974.¹⁴⁰ At this time, *Tácito* members believed that the possibilities for action from inside the regime were exhausted, and for that reason they knew their group to be illegal.¹⁴¹ On these grounds, whereas the attempt of the 'Triple Alliance' led to the creation of the officially backed UPDE, the failure of such an alliance led the aforementioned personalities to form the *Federación de Estudios Independientes* (FEDISA).¹⁴²

FEDISA was created as a commercial society by a total of seventy-five people, (see footnote) linked by different degrees with the so-called 'civilised Right' in mid-July 1975.¹⁴³ The creation of FEDISA demonstrated the failure of Arias' statute, and the differences between the 'official' and the 'real Spain'.¹⁴⁴ In fact, what FEDISA really demonstrated was that the 'official Spain' was not united. Areilza recalls that during their first meetings, they realized an enormous, and unorganized political void existed. Hence there was an urgent need to adjust the language, programmatic principles, style and organisational norms of the Spanish political system to the current European

¹⁴⁰ *Cambio-16*, 24 February-2 March 1975, p. 13.

¹⁴¹ *Guadiana*, No. 12, 7-13 July 1975, p. 18.

¹⁴² Statutes of the *Federación de Estudios Independientes, S.A.*, (FEDISA). Registro Mercantil, Madrid.

¹⁴³ The list of members included also Luis González Seara, Marcelino Oreja, Ricardo de la Cierva, Pío Cabanillas, Fuentes Quintana, Juan Carlos Guerra Zunzunegui, Landelino Lavilla, Otero Novas, Manuel Fraga, among others. For a complete list of the seventy five scholars who formed FEDISA see, *Cambio-16*, 21-27 July 1975, p. 17.

¹⁴⁴ Powell, "The 'Tácito' group", p. 261; *Informaciones*, 11 July 1975, p. 7; 12 July 1975, p. 6.

political sectors of similar tendencies, in other words the 'civilised Right'.¹⁴⁵ According to Fraga, the reformist sector of the regime was so disorganized that FEDISA symbolized 'the ambiguities and lack of solidarity of the democratic Right.'¹⁴⁶

In a public communiqué, FEDISA's representatives explained that, 'although the promoters have different political ideologies, they agree that the guarantee of public freedom, and the organization of formal democracy, are necessary minimum conditions for peaceful national coexistence.' FEDISA was created with the purpose of building a space where people could study, reflect upon and discuss political and economic problems affecting Spain.¹⁴⁷ FEDISA and GODSA had comparable objectives, which posed the question of whether there was a need for two groups of similar characteristics. But, Carlos Argos argues that there were people who did not want to join Fraga's GODSA because of their personal ambitions. Thus, even if Fraga was part of FEDISA, he was not the leader but merely a member of the collective.¹⁴⁸ In fact, the organization of FEDISA was very democratic. The capital of the company was divided into one thousand shares of four thousand pesetas each, and its presidency changed every six months in strict alphabetic order among those who were part of the council of advisors. Thus, 'all those who are on the council accept both to be presided over by, and to preside [over] the rest, respecting the meaning of team work and team discipline.'¹⁴⁹

José Solís, the new Minister-Secretary of the Movement, reproved FEDISA for using the mechanism of public limited companies for political ends, and accused its members of constituting 'a fraud for the country.'¹⁵⁰ But, FEDISA was not the only political commercial society constituted in Spain. In fact, Rafael Arias Salgado, son of

¹⁴⁵ Areilza, *Crónica de libertad*, p. 170.

¹⁴⁶ Manuel Fraga, *En busca del tiempo servido*, (Barcelona: Planeta, 1987), p. 18.

¹⁴⁷ *Triunfo*, No.668, 19 July 1975, p. 65

¹⁴⁸ Testimony of Carlos Argos, 12 April 2000.

¹⁴⁹ *Informaciones*, 11 July 1975, p. 7.

Franco's 1950s Minister of Information, asserts that there were at least three companies of the same sort. He argues that the reaction of the regime was probably the result of the tense political situation.¹⁵¹ This time the fear lay, perhaps, in the composition of the company. FEDISA represented perhaps the most significant negative response the regime had received from people of nearly all the groups that had collaborated with it, including ex-ministers, and also men of high professional calibre.¹⁵²

Under the circumstances, a meeting between José Solís and Fraga was scheduled for autumn 1975. The government seemed eager to start afresh and try to make FEDISA a Centre-Right association similar to the failed 'Triple Alliance'. Prior to the meeting, José Solís had declared that Fraga seemed willing to participate, but after seven hours of debate, they were back to square one. Fraga reiterated his opposition and that of FEDISA as a collective, to participating in a 'political associationism within the framework of the current statute'.¹⁵³ As Areilza explains, FEDISA could only work as a nucleus for the formation of a modern and European-style Right-wing party in Spain given that the group wanted an unambiguous pact, which could lead to a democratic and pluralistic nation.¹⁵⁴

FEDISA did not succeed, but it set an important precedent, and represented a blow to Arias' limited reforms. The variety of political tendencies in FEDISA made accord among its members difficult. But, there were other factors that prevented FEDISA from succeeding. According to Arias Salgado, the lack of representatives of the democratic opposition failed to attract the bulk of progressive political society to the

¹⁵⁰ *Cambio-16*, 21-27 July 1975, p. 17; *Cambio-16*, 18-24 August 1975, p. 8.

¹⁵¹ *Guadiana*, No. 15, 23-29 July 1975, p. 14.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, No. 31, 3-9 December 1975, p. 24; *Informaciones*, 11 July 1975, p. 7..

¹⁵³ *Cambio-16*, 18-24 August 1975, p. 8; *Cambio-16*, 8-14 September 1975, pp. 12-13; Solís' comment was quoted in *Guadiana*, No. 18, 3-9 Septiembre 1975, pp. 10-12.

company.¹⁵⁵ FEDISA also lacked organizational force, which would have made the company into a serious political group. But, the uncertainty surrounding the ultimate fate of the regime (and of the country itself) meant the company had been formed too speedily, which may have contributed to its ill-organization. Areilza explains, 'there was neither time nor [social] peace to prepare a [political] party; to create a climate of opinion that could mobilise the middle-classes towards an electoral channel capable of attracting the majority of the voters.' FEDISA was eventually dissolved at the beginning of the Monarchy since some of its members were to be potentially part of the new government, namely Areilza, Fraga and Oreja. The group failed, according to Areilza, 'for being excessively advanced [for its time]'. Incidentally, FEDISA's ideas and agenda reappeared one year later, more precisely in October 1976, in the *Partido Popular*, which was to be an essential part of the Presidential *Unión de Centro Democrático*.¹⁵⁶

Meanwhile, the political and social situation in Spain was clearly deteriorating. Among the main problems Arias had to deal with were the crisis in the Spanish enclaves of the Sahara region and terrorism. On 26 August 1975 Franco had signed a new anti-terrorist decree which even covered anti-regime tactics from the democratic opposition. The decree was applied straight away, and several death sentences were passed in early September. Yet, worse was still to come. On 26 September 1975 the Caudillo confirmed five death sentences on ETA terrorists during a ministerial cabinet. The execution of the five provoked a wave of national and international protests against the Spanish dictatorship. Franco had utterly ignored the many petitions for clemency from

¹⁵⁴ Areilza, *Crónica de libertad*, p. 170.

¹⁵⁵ *Guadiana*, No. 31, 3-9 December, p. 24; *Diario de Diarios*, 13-14 July 1975, p. 3.

¹⁵⁶ Areilza, *Crónica de libertad*, p. 170; López Nieto, *Alianza Popular*, p. 18.

all over the world, among which was a personal petition from Pope Paul VI. The international community adopted a number of extreme measures to warn the Spanish authorities of their refusal to support a government advocating these policies. On 1 October, the European Commission resolved to suspend negotiations with Spain.¹⁵⁷ Yet, the Francoist regime had paid no attention to the pleas and carried out the executions. It was fortunate that Don Juan Carlos was not substituting Franco temporarily as Head of State at that time, as the executions would have irreversibly damaged the democratic credibility of the Prince.¹⁵⁸

The turmoil over the capital punishments did not stop there. In October, as *The Times* recorded, 'Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez, in his capacity as President of the National Commission of Peace and Justice, which had links with the Church, and fourteen other members of the organization wrote individual appeals to the standing committee of the Cortes urging it to examine the (anti-terrorist) decree of August 26 for alleged illegal provisions.' The pressure was such that the Madrid Bar Association had approved a commission to study the case, and determine the possibility for annulling the decree on constitutional grounds.¹⁵⁹ The Spanish population was witnessing the imminent end of the dictatorship.

6.5. The transition

As the autumn approached, the level of uncertainty about post-Francoist Spain was feverish. Franco's health was seriously worsening, and some politicians were trying to secure a place in the impending new cabinet. Manuel Fraga returned from London on 18 November 1975, just forty hours before the dictator's death. A gathering

¹⁵⁷ *Triunfo*, No. 676, 10 January 1976, p.71.

¹⁵⁸ Testimony of Carlos Argos, 12 April 2000.

¹⁵⁹ *The Times*, 13 October 1975, pp. 1, 6.

of hundreds of followers, organized by Carlos Argos and Antonio Cortina, welcomed the ambassador at Barajas airport. Later, accompanied by a small group of collaborators including Argos, Cortina and Juan de Arespacochaga among others, Fraga went to La Paz Hospital where Franco had spent the past few weeks. The ambassador left hospital barely ten minutes later. He believed that Franco would not last much longer and therefore there was no time to waste. He called his collaborators for a meeting next morning at nine o'clock. They had to prepare themselves for the transition.¹⁶⁰

Despite his adherents' doing everything humanly possible to keep him alive, and with him the regime, Franco finally died in the early hours of 20 November 1975. The Caudillo died perhaps with the conviction that, as far the law was concerned, 'all is lashed down, and well lashed down' (*todo ha quedado atado y bien atado*), and that, therefore, his wish that a Francoist monarchy be installed would only be one step away. But, his successor chose not to carry out the task entrusted to him.¹⁶¹ Two days later, on 22 November the Prince was crowned as King Juan Carlos I of Spain, thereby becoming Head of State and restoring the monarchy to Spain after forty-four years.

During his sermon at the coronation ceremony, Cardinal Tarancón urged the new monarch, among other things, to make sure that truth, life, justice, love and peace prevailed in Spain. But, most important for our study, Tarancón warned the monarch that the Church would demand respect for human rights, and the implementation of a system of public participation in political affairs.¹⁶² Before the *procuradores* at the Cortes, the King reiterated his 'promise to observe and enforce the Fundamental Laws of the Kingdom and to keep loyal to the Principles of the Movement'. After praising the 'exceptional figure' of Franco, the King referred to need to make 'deep reforms' in

¹⁶⁰ Testimony of Carlos Argos, 14 September 1999; De Arespacochaga, *Carta a unos capitanes*, p. 211.

¹⁶¹ Santos Juliá *et al*, *Memorias de la Transición*, p. 82. Translation of Franco's expression taken from Preston, *Franco*, p. 748.

order to achieve a 'free and modern society'. Among other things, the King mentioned the Church and the armed forces, but surprisingly he did not talk about the Movement.¹⁶³

In a private interview with the journalist Arnaud de Borchgrave, Don Juan Carlos had already asserted that he wished his monarchy 'to be the symbol of national unity and reconciliation'. According to the journalist, 'He is determined to be King of all the people. [...and] the restoration of real democracy is his professed goal'.¹⁶⁴ These thoughts were the beginning of a new era. The royal swearing-in ceremony that took place on 27 November just confirmed this feeling. The ceremony was attended by representatives from many of Royal Houses as well as many Heads of State. It was a significant welcome for a monarch whose country had not been as welcoming to world leaders since the end of the Civil War.¹⁶⁵

The King became Head of State, but not Head of the Government as from 1973 the role of Head of Government and the Head of State had become independent from each other. Likewise, the King did not become Head of the Movement as it also became part of the presidency in 1973. This meant that the King, like Franco during the last years, had to have the approval of the government, the National Council or of the Cortes fully to implement his decisions, although in Franco's time that 'limitation' had been merely symbolic. Notwithstanding, the King still had significant freedom of governance.¹⁶⁶ For the first time, as the King himself recalls, 'for a whole year I was the

¹⁶² *Guadiana*, No. 31, 3-9 December 1975, pp. 14-15.

¹⁶³ Charles Powell, *España en democracia, 1975-2000*, (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 2001), p. 145.

¹⁶⁴ *Newsweek*, 3 November 1975, p. 8.

¹⁶⁵ Details on the coronation ceremony are recorded in *Cambio-16*, 1-7 December 1975, pp. 5-15; *Cambio-16*, 8-14 December 1975, pp. 20-23.

¹⁶⁶ Prego, *Así se hizo la transición*, pp. 365-67.

sole master of my words and actions. I used those powers first and foremost to assure the Spanish people that in future it was for them to express their will.’¹⁶⁷

Now that the Caudillo had passed away the Spanish people expected the King to form a new executive capable of transforming Spain into a modern and progressive country. For that purpose the monarch had to get rid of the old Francoists, and appoint young figures with a wish to establish a truly democratic system. That task, however, proved to be arduous. The monarch’s first duty was to choose a President of the Cortes and likewise a President of the Government. But, the election of the right people seemed to be a juggling act since any mistake could jeopardise the success of the entire process. Understandably, the international press showed concern and interest in the delicate situation Spain was in. The main international newspapers dedicated their attention mainly to the potential candidates for the post of President of the Government, the so-called *presidenciables*. According to the British *The Times* ‘the “evolutionists” seem to look increasingly to the present ambassador Señor Manuel Fraga as their leader. [...] If Señor Fraga is to play the “Karamanlis” role for which his supporters cast him, he will have to be the first Minister chosen by Juan Carlos on his accession.’¹⁶⁸ The Germans believed that Don Juan Carlos would have to choose between Arias, Fraga, Areilza and Díez Alegria for President of the Government. But, Walter Haubrich, journalist of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, dedicated five columns to Areilza who, according to the journalist, displayed a mixture of conservative and liberal attitudes.¹⁶⁹ In America, the magazine *Newsweek* also considered Areilza, ‘a reasonable liberal ex-diplomat’, to be ‘the leading candidate to succeed Arias’.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ De Vilallonga, *The King*, p. 177.

¹⁶⁸ *The Times*, 6 October 1975, p. 13; *Triunfo*, No. 677, 17 January 1976, p. 8; Testimony of Carlos Argos, 14 September 1999.

¹⁶⁹ *Cambio-16*, 1-7 December, 1975, p. 35.

¹⁷⁰ *Newsweek*, 10 November 1975, p. 9.

In Spain observers seemed to have similar opinions, but it was the Fraga-Areilza tandem, both members of FEDISA, who were regarded as the most likely for the post. Either Fraga as President, and Areilza as Vice-President, or *vice versa*, could work because of their good working relationship and similar political views. Also, they both had the international support that Spain needed at that moment. Areilza had given lectures and interviews all over Europe, in which he took the opportunity to express his concerns about the fate of Spain, and his wish for a peaceful transition to a democratic system. For instance, the *Giornale d'Italia* recorded Areilza's conviction that the authorities were not going to take irresponsible risks.¹⁷¹ Besides the candidatures of Fraga and Areilza other names were considered as *presidenciables*, including José Solís, Pío Cabanillas, Torcuato Fernández-Miranda, Fernando María de Castiella and García Valdecasas. Observers, however, did not rule out the possibility of a completely new name for the post.¹⁷²

According to Bernáldez, from 20 November to 4 December, Fraga believed in his chances for the presidency, and for that reason prepared himself for it.¹⁷³ On the afternoon of 20 November 1975, Prince Juan Carlos received Fraga, only hours after the Caudillo's death. During their meeting, Fraga did not miss the opportunity to hand the Prince a 'note' in which the ex-Ambassador defended 'the principle of reform and the need not to lose one minute in undertaking [them]'. But, according to Fraga, this would only be possible with 'a government which, because of its composition and undoubted leadership, will leave no doubts [...], and will not give excessive opportunities to either *inmovilistas* or *aperturistas*.' Yet, the Prince must have made it clear to Fraga that he

¹⁷¹ *Cambio-16*, 24-30 November 1975, p. 24.

¹⁷² *Cambio-16*, 1-7 December 1975, p. 40.

¹⁷³ Bernáldez, *El Patrón de la Derecha*, p. 154.

did not want to rush, but rather to gain time.¹⁷⁴ Bernáldez believes that, ‘the note was like a guide for the transition of the dictatorship to a sort of democracy. [The note was], more in line with what Fraga himself tried with Arias Navarro in the first government of the monarchy than what was subsequently successfully achieved by the Suárez-Fernández Miranda tandem, and then Suárez alone.’¹⁷⁵ Fraga had already published a series of articles in ABC in which he made proposals for the necessary reforms that Spain needed in those days. These proposals formed the core of Fraga’s book ‘*Un Objetivo Nacional*’.¹⁷⁶

Fraga, however, was not the only one interested in the outcome of the crisis. There was such a climate of expectancy and confusion in the top political circles that even Don Juan Carlos had made miscalculations. On 30 April 1975, in a conversation with López Rodó, the Prince had told him that, ‘Arias is not a man for my first government, or Fraga, or Silva, because he [the latter] is “denominational”. In monarchies there are no denominational parties.’ The Prince avoided revealing his plans to López Rodó, but the latter learnt through Fernández de la Mora that the Prince had also ruled out López Rodó’s name from his list of possible cabinet members.¹⁷⁷

Don Juan Carlos eventually renewed Arias’s appointment as President of the Government, which was announced to the existing cabinet on 5 December 1975. The Spanish population, who could not help wondering why Arias was staying on as President, did not understand his decision.¹⁷⁸ The monarch, who was planning to carry out the political modernization, could not afford to alienate the hard-liners of the regime hence changes had to be introduced at a slow pace. The survival of the monarchy would

¹⁷⁴ Fraga, *En busca*, p. 15.

¹⁷⁵ Bernáldez, *El Patrón de la derecha*, pp. 153-4.

¹⁷⁶ See footnote 102 of this Chapter.

¹⁷⁷ López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, p. 118.

¹⁷⁸ Prego, *Así se hizo la transición*, p. 368; *Cambio-16*, 15-21 December 1975, pp.4-8.

depend on the success of the transformation of the Spanish political system, but this would require some time.¹⁷⁹ In fact, as Pilar and Alfonso Fernández-Miranda write, 'Arias had been re-appointed but this was no more than a delay, a short wait until the right moment for his replacement would arrive'.¹⁸⁰

Conclusion

The assassination of Admiral Carrero Blanco in December 1973 marked the beginning of the long end of Franco's regime. At that time, in fact, two major political groups had emerged into the Spanish political scene directly from the reformist sector of the regime; i.e. Manuel Fraga's study group, GODSA, and the young *aperturistas* group, *Tácito*. GODSA was created in 1973 with the sole purpose of building the foundations for a political association and perhaps eventually for a political party. In fact, this study group would eventually elaborate the political manifesto of Fraga's first political party. Forward-looking young people linked, directly or indirectly, to the ACNP and its Christian Democrat philosophy also created *Tácito* in 1973. Their aims were very similar. Both groups wanted to arrive at a democratic system by reform and without breaking with Franco's regime.

By the time these two groups were well consolidated, the Francoist Cortes approved Arias' Statute of Political Associations by decree on 21 December 1974. Out of Prince Juan Carlos' initial idea uniting the moderate forces of the regime, the government attempted the creation of a political association under the leadership of Manuel Fraga, José María de Areilza and Federico Silva. In Fraga's view, an association could only succeed if its programme contained a series of unquestionable

¹⁷⁹ Preston, *Triumph of Democracy*, p. 78.

¹⁸⁰ Pilar & Adolfo Fernández-Miranda, *Lo que el Rey me ha pedido*, p. 144.

conditions. The conditions included a parliament with a principal chamber elected by universal suffrage, the incorporation of the basic civic rights of the western world, freedom of association and trade unions and a friendly separation of Church and State, all under the Monarchy of Don Juan Carlos. By early 1975, it was clear that the government would not accept these conditions. The adventure of the 'Triple Alliance' finished before it had even started.

Following the failure of the Arias plan, some seventy-five people linked in different degrees with the regime, including members of GODSA and Tácito, created a commercial company, FEDISA, in July 1975. Its creation demonstrated the failure of Arias' statute, and the differences between the so-called 'official' and the 'real Spain'. FEDISA was perhaps the most important negative response the regime received from personalities who came from nearly all groups that had collaborated with it. Therefore, it is worth emphasizing that despite their advocacy of a German or Western-type of democracy, which excluded the presence of the Communist Party, FEDISA's demands for reform stood in clear contradiction with the regime's politics. The regime's strict adherents, however, remained reluctant to give concessions.

In the midst of a social crisis, and with an important part of the regime in favour of a peaceful transition to a German-type of democratic system, the Caudillo died on 20 November 1975. Prince Juan Carlos took over as Head of State and was crowned King two days later. There was general acclaim for the changes from not only the Spanish population and the democratic opposition, but also from the regime reformists. To everyone's surprise and disappointment, however, King Juan Carlos re-appointed Arias as President of the Government. The profound political changes the monarch was planning to introduce had to be done at a slow pace. The monarch could not alienate the hard-liners of the regime; therefore, Arias would have to stay on although not for long.

Chapter - 7

From dictatorship to democracy (1976-1977)

The Spanish economy had been undergoing a serious crisis since the early 1970s. The consecutive Development Plans (1964-7, 1968-71, and 1972-5) encouraged industrial production, but neglected agriculture, consigning it to a secondary position.¹ Investment was channelled into industry, thereby increasing the importation of raw materials, especially oil. But despite the oil crisis of 1973, which hit the world economy, the Spanish authorities continued to import energy as if nothing had happened. In 1974 Spain trebled imports of oil and other sources of energy from 79.9 billion pesetas to 225.8 billions, but the government did not transfer these extra costs to the consumer, for whom energy prices hardly increased. Furthermore, a new international trade structure favoured newly industrialized countries such as Mexico and Brazil, and the Far East, enabling them to produce at lower costs, and therefore sell the final product more cheaply. Spain was, thus, left with fierce competition and stockpiles of expensive products, huge debt, escalating unemployment and rampant inflation.²

Carlos Arias Navarro's second presidency, which began in December 1975, was welcomed with 'the greatest agitation of the past thirty years'.³ Indeed, through most of 1976 workers of various sectors (such as metal, construction, banking and insurance, public services - including Madrid's underground and buses, and Barcelona's firemen, the post office, the telephone company - and others) from all over the country took to the streets in demonstrations demanding greater salaries. In the first three months of

¹ From 1963 to 1973, industrial production in Spain, with the exception of the textile industry, surpassed the average of the twenty-four developed countries quite comfortably. This spectacular growth slowed down in 1973, year of the historic oil crisis. Jover Zamora (Dtor.), *Historia de España*, Vol. XLI, p. 496. See graphs 13 and 14, pp. 497-8.

² By 1977 Inflation had risen to 26 per cent. See Harrison, *The Spanish economy*, pp. 14-9, 46-7.

1976 alone, a total of 17,731 strikes were recorded nationwide. One of the most disruptive strikes was that of the underground workers in Madrid, which paralysed the capital for four days in January 1976.¹⁸⁴ In Spain, the government had banned the right to strike, but strikes had nevertheless been taking place since the 1960s. By 1974, with the Communist Trade Union, *Comisiones Obreras* (CCOO) and the Socialist *Unión Socialista Obrera* (USO) occupying the headquarters of the official syndicate and the strike committee, the number of strikes increased substantially.¹⁸⁵ In any case, whereas in the 1960s the workers' protest had been characterised by demands for salary rises, in the 1970s the workers' demands had been clearly politized.¹⁸⁶ As Santiago Carrillo recalls:

Strikes were the only political weapon we could use as an instrument of pressure. [...] I believe that all those strikes contributed to exerting pressure. In the end [the strikes] gave the reformists of the government the strength they lacked [...] [the strikes] were their argument to the Ultras.¹⁸⁷

The general discontent of the population was also reflected in the national press, which in many cases - in magazines like *Cambio-16*, *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, *Triunfo*, *Sábado Gráfico*, *Guadiana* and newspapers like the newly created *El País*, *Informaciones*, *YA* - had adopted a critical tone towards the government in the early 1970s. Furthermore, regional discontents - mainly in Catalonia and the Basque Country - and the escalation of attacks by the terrorist Basque group ETA put even more pressure on the government. According to a survey conducted by *Cuadernos para el Diálogo* in December 1975, a great number of Spaniards 'advocated popular sovereignty with the demand for the establishment of democracy "from below"; fundamental public freedoms (political parties, syndicates, freedom of expression and assembly); together

¹⁸³ *Cambio-16*, 19-25 January 1976, pp. 8-13.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 8-13; *Cambio-16*, 26 January-1 February, pp. 26-29; Carr & Fusi, *Dictatorship to Democracy*, p. 210.

¹⁸⁵ Andrés & Prego, *La Transición*. Video No. 2 *El Espíritu del 12 de February*. (February-March 1974).

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*; See also Sebastian Balfour, "El movimiento obrero desde 1939", in *Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials*, No. 24, Barcelona, 1990, p. 8.

with a demand for amnesty as the decisive key for a pluralistic and tolerant coexistence'.¹⁸⁸ As the Chilean political scientist Carlos Huneeus points out, the population increased their demands for freedom and change as the 1970s advanced.¹⁸⁹ Popular pressure was high, but Arias seemed reluctant to cave in. On the contrary, workers' demonstrations, which continued throughout the seven months of Arias' second presidency, were met with authoritarian violence resembling the old days of the dictatorship. Professor of philosophy Carlos París felt that, 'at the moment, the principal contradiction of [political] authority is determined [on the one hand] by the inheritance of the dictatorship, with its power groups and ideological schemes, and on the other, [by] the real needs of the country, in total opposition to the perpetuation of [the dictatorial] situation.'¹⁹⁰ That contradiction was to be present throughout Arias Navarro's second presidency, leading only to further social tension.

Meanwhile the opposition was increasingly becoming a pressure lobby but, behind an appearance of unity, it remained acutely divided.¹⁹¹ As will be explained later, in March 1976 various groups within the democratic opposition joined forces against the government and called for rupture with the Francoist regime. The Socialist Luis Yañez-Barnuevo defined *ruptura* or democratic rupture as 'the alternative that offers least risk of social commotion, chaos or anarchy'.¹⁹² But, the regime had always equated the concept of rupture with violence, anarchy, trauma and disorder. The success of the rupturist option implied the inevitable destruction of all Francoist institutions and laws. Hence, the moderates of the regime also believed it was necessary to apply an

¹⁸⁷ Andrés & Prego, *La Transición*. Video No. 8. *El Primer Gobierno de la Monarquía*. (January-March 1976).

¹⁸⁸ Some of those interviewed were Rafael Arias Salgado, Manuel Díez-Alegría Frax, Joaquín Garrigues Walker, José María Gil-Robles, Raúl Morodo, Juan A. Ortega y Díaz-Ambrona, Joaquín Satrustegui and Enrique Tierno Galván. See *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 147, December 1975.

¹⁸⁹ Huneeus, *La UCD*, p. 49.

¹⁹⁰ "Mesa redonda: Ruptura o Reforma", in *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 148, January 1976, p. 17.

¹⁹¹ Powell, *El piloto del cambio*, p. 152.

¹⁹² *Cambio-16*, 12-18 April 1976, pp. 36-7.

urgent reform package in order to prevent the success of the rupturist option proposed by the democratic opposition. The moderates also feared a reaction by the armed forces that would halt any rupturist attempt and risk leading the country into another civil war. But at the heart of the problem was, in fact, the rupturist threat to the monarchy, and the return of the revolutionary and Moscow-directed Communist party.

More than at any other time during the Franco period, the quest for the political survival of the members of the regime - more than the regime itself, which was clearly in its final days - was now real. Given the *aperturistas*, and reformists' refusal to accept the rupturist option, they had to work out an alternative to it, and there was no time to lose. This chapter is a broad study of the failure of Arias and his cabinet to apply a programme of reforms. During its seven months of existence Arias' government did nothing but exacerbate the popular demands for change, in contrast to Adolfo Suárez's cabinet which transformed the political system in less than one year. The success of Suárez's reforms was the result of a combination of factors. These included the long-standing preparedness of the *aperturista*/reformist sector of the regime for a post-Francoist era. In an attempt to avoid the consequences of a rupturist victory, some reformists had elaborated the basis for a transformation into a democracy from the high reaches of the regime (a number of reformists became part of Suárez's cabinet). Also, the influence exerted by the democratic opposition as well as the population at large, the press, the unions, and even some members of the Catholic church, not only accelerated the government's initiative but also helped to guarantee the implementation of a minimum programme of reforms. Before Suárez's successes, it is important to study Carlos Arias' second government and its failure within only seven months of its appointment.

7.1. Arias' second presidency

Following Franco's death, Arias' re-appointment displeased the opposition and most of the forward-looking Francoists as much as it pleased the Francoist bunker. But, according to Carr and Fusi, given that the King had to choose one of the three candidates proposed by the Council of the Realm, he may have accepted Arias' re-appointment 'in view of the impossibility of obtaining a liberal president from it'.¹⁹³ King Juan Carlos could not afford to alienate Franco's hard-liners; hence changes had to be introduced at a slow pace. The first step was the appointment of a new cabinet, whose composition the King had prepared in advance. The monarch had included both *continuistas* and reformists without first asking Carlos Arias, who felt that the new cabinet had been imposed on him.¹⁹⁴ The *continuistas* were represented by two military figures, Admiral Pita da Veiga (navy) and General Fernando de Santiago y Díaz de Mendivil (national security and defense). The *aperturistas* consisted of Manuel Fraga (Interior and first vice-presidency), José María de Areilza (Foreign Affairs), Antonio Garrigues (Justice), Alfonso Osorio (Presidency) and to some extent José Solís (Labour), whom Areilza regarded as being closer to the *inmovilistas*.¹⁹⁵ Adolfo Suárez became Minister Secretary-General of the Movement. Such a position would give Suárez the opportunity to build up the necessary alliances within the Movement that, later on, would enable him to act as mediator between the Francoist machinery and the opposition.

Before officially accepting the Interior Ministry, Fraga consulted his GODSA collaborators and asked their opinion about the post. They advised him not to accept it.

¹⁹³ Carr & Fusi, *Dictatorship to Democracy*, p. 208.

¹⁹⁴ Prego, *Así se hizo la transición*, p. 369. *The Times* in Britain wrote that the King had opted for a 'gradual openness [...] balancing the weight between the reform and the continuation of the regimen'. *The Financial Times* also regarded the new cabinet as reformist although it did not forecast a very optimistic economic situation for the near future. A summary of comments in British newspapers can be found in *Arriba*, 13 December 1975.

They warned him of the difficulty, and the short life of such a position, as to enter a government with Arias meant failure. But Fraga did not listen. They were under the impression that Fraga had made up his mind even before he had spoken with them. According to both Argos and Cisneros, Fraga was not driven by pride or thirst for power, but more by a sense of duty. He had been asked to serve the country at a crucial time and he could not refuse.¹⁹⁶ Despite the King's choice of ministers, Arias (who probably wanted to keep Fraga at a distance) suggested Fraga become Education Minister. Fraga refused the offer and demanded a higher post, and he got it. He became first Vice-President for Internal Affairs and Interior Minister probably – as Fraga believes – because of the King's mediation.¹⁹⁷ He knew he was accepting an 'extremely difficult ministry'. Nevertheless, he believed that the Interior Ministry was an appropriate platform from which to introduce the necessary changes to make the anticipated reforms possible. 'I understood', Fraga said years later, 'that if a Liberal held the post [of Interior Minister] things could be done – and were done later – in relation to [public] order, which at the same time, would not compromise the reform process'.¹⁹⁸

7.1.1. *Fraga, Minister of the Crown*

Prior to his appointment as Interior Minister, Manuel Fraga had published a series of reform plans in the daily *ABC*, in October 1975, which encapsulated his objective of making 'the necessary continuity compatible with the inevitable

¹⁹⁵ For a complete list of the new cabinet see López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, pp. 194-5, *nota (1)*. See also *Boletín Oficial del Consejo Nacional del Movimiento*, Año XXI, Madrid 21 April 1976, p. 1855.

¹⁹⁶ Testimony of Gabriel Cisneros, 13-09-1999; Testimony of Carlos Argos, 14 September 1999; Cernuda, *Ciclón Fraga*, pp. 121-22. It is interesting to note, however, that when King Juan Carlos asked Fraga to be part of Suárez's cabinet a few months later, Fraga refused. This time Fraga's feeling of dislike and distrust towards Suárez outweighed his 'sense of duty'. Later Fraga explained that '[I] came to conclusion that I had more important things to do'. See Sentís, *Políticos para unas elecciones*, p. 66.

¹⁹⁷ Powell, *España en democracia*, pp. 146-147; Cernuda, *Ciclón Fraga*, p. 121.

reforms'.¹⁹⁹ José Manuel Otero Novas, director of interior policy under Fraga, recalls that the Minister refused to accept the proposal for radical reform which had been elaborated by his ministerial team, and suggested a more moderate proposal instead. Fraga's reform consisted of: 'a small "touch-up" of the Law of the Cortes (Parliamentary Law), establishing a bicameral system, whose Upper Chamber would contain the "organic representatives" (municipality, family and syndicate), leaving the Lower Chamber to those chosen by universal suffrage. Initially, [Fraga] disappointed us. But, [he] convinced us that that it was a possible option and that it would lead to the same objective we longed for.'²⁰⁰ Fraga believed that the holding of elections would conflict with the current laws and, above all, would not be accepted by the armed forces. Therefore, his priority was to introduce partial legal and institutional reforms but within the ambit of the Fundamental Laws.²⁰¹ According to Areilza, Fraga's document would have been valid for merely one year, and would have opened the door to negotiations with the European Community.²⁰²

In reality, those proposals did not seem to offer much change and contrasted dramatically with the plans of the democratic opposition. According to the Socialist Luis Yañez-Barnuevo, the democratic opposition wanted 'to constitute a provisional government which [in turn] would call for the election of a constituent Cortes' immediately.²⁰³ On those grounds, the opposition regarded Fraga's plans as 'a reminder

¹⁹⁸ Sentís, *Manuel Fraga*, p. 66.

¹⁹⁹ Fraga, *Un Objetivo Nacional*, p. 194.

²⁰⁰ Ricardo de la Cierva, *La Derecha sin Remedio*, (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1987), p. 339.

²⁰¹ Powell, *El piloto del cambio*, p. 142.

²⁰² Areilza, *Crónica*, p. 41. As Alberto Aza, member of the Foreign Minister's private office (1975-6), recalls Areilza was also 'promoting the most inadequate and incomplete plan for democracy, in which elections would eventually be held for an assembly which would, in turn, decide which parties of the Left would be allowed to stand in some future election. Areilza was doubtful whether the Socialist Party would be permitted to take part in the process and asserted that under no circumstances would it be possible for the Communist Party to do so.' Aza adds that 'the *aperturista* speeches intimating changes yet using Francoist language, [...] seemed to me neither credible nor encouraging'. See, Alberto Aza, "Adolfo Suárez's Stewardship of the Transition – A Memoir", in Threlfall, *Consensus Politics in Spain*, p. 28.

²⁰³ *Cambio-16*, 12-18 April 1976, pp. 36-7.

of totalitarian methods that were believed to have been overcome'.²⁰⁴ In any case it was clear, as Powell points out, that although Fraga's proposals may have been appropriate for Spain in 1974-1975, in 1976 they were already obsolete.²⁰⁵ Spain urgently required a new programme of reforms.

Nevertheless, at the outset of his new post Manuel Fraga seemed more eager than ever to implement his planned reforms. In light of the wave of demonstrations, Fraga announced several governmental plans. The first programmatic communiqué of the new executive, which had been elaborated by Fraga and approved by the Cortes on 25 December 1975, stated that 'the government will set in motion the necessary improvements and reforms to accommodate our political, administrative and syndical institutions to the economic, social, cultural and political developments [...]'.²⁰⁶ A few days later, on 2 January 1976, Fraga declared to *The New York Times* that 'the Spanish government will proclaim an amnesty but only a few changes in the Penal Code and the anti-terrorism Law. We are going to do it, but carefully. We need a law, we cannot improvise. We are not going to do it under pressure, nor in response to Communist propaganda.'²⁰⁷

Hope for change soon faded away, however. On 28 January 1976 Arias delivered a speech to the Cortes which made clear that under his presidency there would be no possibility of moving ahead. Arias' reforms contemplated the legalization of political parties (with the exception of the PCE and regional separatists), the implementation of the right of association and assembly, and the creation of a two-Chamber Parliament. Yet, the reforms did not include an electoral law or the possibility

²⁰⁴ *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 166, 3-10 June 1976, p. 15.

²⁰⁵ Charles Powell, "La Reforma que no fue", in Juliá *et al*, *Memoria de la Transición*, p. 138.

²⁰⁶ Sevilla Merino, "La intervención de AP en el proceso constituyente de 1978", PhD Thesis, p. 19.

²⁰⁷ Quoted in *Arriba*, 2 January 1976, p. 11. The Minister reiterated this stance a few weeks later in London, although there he confirmed his belief that the Communist party had to be left out of the legal framework of the political game.

of elections. Arias planned to establish a '*democracia a la española*' or Spanish democracy: a monarchic and representative democracy where there would be no place for terrorism, anarchism, separatism and Communism.²⁰⁸ Torcuato Fernández Miranda, President of the Cortes, believed that Arias' speech 'should be the starting point of a close relationship between the government and the Cortes in the effort for reform'.²⁰⁹ But, the historian John Coverdale argues that 'the speech disappointed even the most moderate reformists by its vague and inconclusive character and by its failure to put forward a concrete plan and a definite timetable'.²¹⁰

José María de Areilza, Minister of Foreign Affairs, regarded the content of the speech as very important, and believed that Arias destroyed it by wrapping it in appalling Francoist rhetoric combined with threats, unnecessary limitations and praise for the deceased dictator. The speech, according to Areilza, conveyed a mixture of confusion and ambiguity, which reflected contradictions within the government. For Herrero de Miñón, however, there was more to it than that. According to him, 'nothing was said of the freedom of [political] parties, syndical pluralism, autonomy of the regions [...]'. A few weeks after the speech, Arias confirmed what everyone had suspected. The president openly acknowledged his wish to continue the Francoist system, and his intention to fight Spain's foes, who 'have begun to show their faces and are a crouched and clandestine minority in the country'.²¹¹

Following Arias' speech, perhaps in an attempt to restore some credibility to the government's plans for reform, Fraga highlighted the good points of the president's

That, according to Fraga, was not abnormal, since Germany had taken twenty years to legalise the Communist party. See *Cambio-16*, 9-15 February 1976, p. 11.

²⁰⁸ *Cambio-16*, 2-8 February 1976, pp. 6-10; Carr & Fusi, *Dictatorship to Democracy*, p. 211.

²⁰⁹ Pilar & Alfonso Fernández-Miranda, *Lo que el Rey me ha pedido*, p. 180.

²¹⁰ John Coverdale, *The political transformation of Spain after Franco*, (New York: Praeger, 1979), p. 39.

speech and removed the Francoist rhetoric in an interview in *The Times*. Fraga confirmed that ‘the Spanish people will take part in a referendum with the objective of approving the creation of a new parliamentary system that would take the place of the current Cortes or organic democracy. Also, [the Spaniards] will declare via a second referendum whether they want reforms in the system of constitutional monarchy or not. [...] The new electoral law will imply elections exclusively by universal suffrage’. The president of the nation, however, would not be the leader of the winning party, but someone chosen by the Council of the Realm.²¹² Fraga’s plans would be hard to implement, however, because Arias refused to introduce any reforms, and Torcuato Fernández-Miranda was sceptical of Fraga’s capacity to impose his will on a very stubborn Arias.²¹³

Fraga’s efforts to reform the system, however, were not easily trusted. The journalist José Antonio Novais wrote in *Guadiana* that he expected the man of today Fraga to be different from that of the 1960s. ‘Let us give him credit’, Novais wrote, ‘and let us try to forget the Fraga of the 1960s. [...] [because] since his years in London an image of a man has emerged who claims to believe in democracy.’²¹⁴ But, Fraga’s allegedly democratic project was generally regarded as being very ambivalent and limited. The journalist, Carlos Elordi, asserts that Fraga wished to negotiate the reforms with the various ideologies of the regime, keeping the opposition in the wings and quiet, awaiting concessions from above. Given the social and political situation of the country that plan was doomed to fail. Fraga gained a reputation as *duro* or ‘tough’.²¹⁵ Furthermore, he allowed the use of police charges to break up groups of strikers -

²¹¹ José María de Areilza, *Diario de un ministro de la monarquía*, (Barcelona: Planeta, 1977), pp. 73-6, 81-4; Herrero de Miñón, *Memoria*, p. 65.

²¹² Quoted in *Cambio-16*, 9-15 February 1976, p. 11.

²¹³ Pilar & Alfonso Fernández-Miranda, *Lo que el Rey me ha pedido*, p. 213.

²¹⁴ *Guadiana*, No. 33, 17-33 December 1975, p. 13.

thereby replicating the repression used during Franco's time - and even declared war on ETA which provoked the emergence of ultra-rightist hit-squads.²¹⁶ The government's repression did not eliminate the number of workers and students' conflicts but rather it increased them.²¹⁷

His collaborators, namely José Manuel Otero Novas and his team, warned the minister that his reputation was deteriorating rapidly, and advised him to change his authoritarian attitude and carry on with the reform project.²¹⁸ But Fraga did not seem to listen. A clear dichotomy between reform and repression plagued Fraga throughout his political career and was to characterize his performance once again.

Away from the public eye, however, Fraga appeared ready to compromise, and tried to get close to the democratic opposition. Fraga's secretary in the Interior Ministry, Carlos Argos, recalls having ordered, on behalf of the Minister, civil governors of different provinces to release from prison without bail, people who had been imprisoned for various minor offences such as the distribution of propaganda pamphlets. The lists of detainees were given to Argos by the Minister-Advisor of the German Embassy, members of the Socialist party and its union, and the Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT).²¹⁹ At the same time, Fraga made contacts with representatives of the democratic opposition in an attempt to build bridges between them and the government. For instance, three days after Fraga's appointment as Interior Minister he contacted Marcelino Camacho, the leader of the Communist-linked CCOO, through Félix Pastor Ridruejo with the collaboration of Carlos Argos and Pedro López Jiménez. Fraga's

²¹⁵ Carlos Elordi, "El largo invierno del 76", en *Memoria de la Transición*, p. 123.

²¹⁶ Preston, *Triumph of Democracy*, pp. 82-3.

²¹⁷ Maravall, *Dictadura y disenso*, p. 262.

²¹⁸ Cierva, *La Derecha*, p. 341.

²¹⁹ Testimony of Carlos Argos, 12 April 2000.

messengers were charged with announcing the minister's forthcoming plans for the legalization of the unions. Fraga asked Camacho for patience and prudence in order not to provoke the hard-liners of the regime. The outcome of the meeting was satisfactory. However, new demonstrations and revolts organized by the CCOO at which Camacho was present, prompted Fraga to have the unionist leader detained once again.²²⁰

Fraga also contacted the president-in-exile of the Catalan Generalitat, Josep Tarradellas, some 'historic Socialists', who had lived in exile in Mexico, and Felipe González with whom the minister dined at Miguel Boyer's house, on 31 April 1976.²²¹ Allegedly, as Powell recounts, Fraga proposed to Felipe González an updated version of the *Pacto del Pardo* (whereby the conservative Cánovas and the liberal Sagasta had taken turns in power in the nineteenth century), but he rejected it. Thus, although Fraga advocated the participation of the main political parties, he did not think the Communists should be included in the first phase of the transition.²²² Fraga wished to have a strong Socialist party in order to have a weak Communist party. He based his argument on the German example (Germany took twenty years to legalise the Communist party)²²³

Fraga's view of the PCE, however, seemed to shift constantly from one position to another. For instance, at the beginning of 1975, Fraga met the Socialists Enrique Tierno Galván and Fernando Morán at the Spanish embassy in London. As Tierno Galván recalls, when he mentioned the problem of the Communist party, Fraga said that he 'would not mind having talks with the Communist party, and that he believed that its presence was convenient - or necessary, I cannot recall the word - for the transformation

²²⁰ Testimony of Félix Pastor Ridruejo, 17 May 2000.

²²¹ Cernuda, *Ciclón Fraga*, pp. 126-27; Testimony of Carlos Argos, 14 September 1999; Powell, *El piloto del cambio*, p. 34. For Fraga's version on the dinner with Felipe González see Fraga, *En busca*, pp. 44-46. Fraga authorized the celebration of the XXX Congress of the Socialist trade unionist *Unión General de Trabajadores* (UGT). For more details on the XXX Congress of UGT see *Cambio-16*, 26 April-2 May 1976, pp. 8-11.

or change of the Spanish regime. [...] Fraga's words sounded deeply democratic [...] [He] appeared as he is intellectually: a Liberal with conservative ideas'.²²⁴ By February 1976, however, social tension was mounting in Spain and the clashes between the government and the population were becoming an everyday event (Fraga blamed the Communist leaders for encouraging their followers to take to the streets).²²⁵ For this reason, Fraga declared on Mexican television that 'at this moment, the most important names of the PCE are more linked to Moscow than to Madrid', and, therefore, the government could not allow participation in national affairs of those groups that wanted to destroy freedom.²²⁶

Paradoxically, in June 1976, the journalist Cyrus Sultzberger published in *The New York Times* Fraga's statement wherein the minister declared that one day the Communist party could be legalised in Spain. The Minister, however, left it clear that it will not be possible before the next elections. This statement provoked a chain reaction.²²⁷ GODSA member Félix Pastor explains that Fraga's remark was actually prompted by a previous remark made along similar lines by Rafael Pérez Escobar, president of GODSA. Pérez Escobar declared that 'sooner or later, one must predict that the Communist party will have a role in Spanish political life'.²²⁸ As founder of GODSA, Fraga may have felt the need to support its president Pérez Escobar, but such a reasonable statement was very daring in those days. President Arias asked Fraga to publicly deny the declaration, but Fraga refused. Instead, Fraga met some members of the military élite to explain the meaning of his words, although General Fernández Vallespín, *Jefe del Alto Estado Mayor*, believed Fraga would legalise the PCE sooner

²²² Powell, "La 'Reforma' de Arias", in Juliá *et al.*, *Memoria de la Transición*, pp. 140-141.

²²³ Fraga, *El Cañón giratorio*, p. 68.

²²⁴ Tierno Galván, *Cabos sueltos*, pp. 443-4.

²²⁵ Fraga, *El Cañón Giratorio*, p. 69.

²²⁶ Quoted in *Arriba*, 25 February 1976, p. 6.

than everyone realised.²²⁹ In fact, Fraga had allegedly accepted an initial draft of a constitutional reform elaborated by Otero Novas, which presumed the participation of the PCE party.²³⁰ But, in light of Fraga's meeting with the military, José María de Areilza recorded in his diary that he was under the impression that Fraga had made a pact with some members of the armed forces. According to Areilza, Fraga wanted to secure their support for his candidature for the presidency in the event of Arias leaving. A few days later, Areilza's suspicion seemed to be confirmed. On 14 April, he wrote that Fraga's pact with the Right-wing military was self-evident and was damaging his reformist-Liberal attitude to which he should have stuck from the beginning. Ricardo de la Cierva points out that Fraga's twofold strategy - that is reformist and authoritarian - certainly did not please the King.²³¹

Meanwhile, on 25 February 1976 members of Fraga's group GODSA presented their preliminary 'Appeal for Democratic Reform', and with it their new political platform, *Reforma Democrática* (RD). The official presentation took place before more than two-thousand people - the majority were younger than forty-five - in Madrid. The political commentator Ramón Pí described the presentation of RD in Madrid in the following terms: 'last night in Madrid there took place one of the most brilliant displays of efficient politics that has ever happened, anywhere. The embryo of a truly political party, *Reforma Democrática*, was presented in public in the Eurobuilding Hotel'.²³² RD was introduced as 'a movement of the middle classes, of professionals, of people who want to keep Franco's conquests but who also want reform'. During the presentation

²²⁷ Fraga, *En busca*, p. 50.

²²⁸ GODSA, *Boletín de Información*, No. 2, August 1976, p. 8.

²²⁹ Fraga, *El Cañon Giratorio*, p. 68.

²³⁰ Cierva, *La Derecha*, pp. 341-2.

they expressed their eagerness to unite all centrist forces, and their refusal to ally with Marxist groups. Rafael Pérez Escolar claimed that ‘our appeal tries to reach a formula of compromise between the tendencies of the centre-right and centre-left. [...] Thus, we will create the structures that correspond to a truly political party’. The wish of the group, as Antonio Cortina announced, was to ‘achieve a democracy for Spain in the shortest possible period, and with the least risk’.²³³ Juan de Arespacochaga, member of the group, recalls that those present at the event advocated ‘a peaceful and orderly transition with neither undue haste nor changes in the current system, merely reforming it in order to keep the best of it. This was surely the wish of the middle class that the regime itself had created.’²³⁴

Fraga, welcomed by spontaneous applause, turned up towards the end of the event and sat amongst the audience. As mentioned above, the philosophy of this political group was based around the person, and upon the reformist and centrist ideas of professor Fraga. Yet, his responsibility as Interior Minister prevented Fraga from presiding over the presentation of RD. That may explain why members of GODSA stressed that ‘Minister Fraga has no relation with *Reforma Democrática* at this moment’. Having said that, during the presentation of RD in Barcelona, Rafael Pérez Escolar, after praising some of Manuel Fraga’s political statements, and perhaps in an attempt to show the democratic character of the group, commented that Fraga ‘is one [member] more in RD. [...] Leadership must be won democratically within the parties’.²³⁵

²³¹ Areilza, *Diario*, pp. 126, 146; Cierva, *La Derecha*, p. 342; Rogelio Baón questions whether Fraga made a pact with the military, but the interesting thing is that at least he mentions it. See Baón, “Fraga y su poliedro”, p. 92.

²³² GODSA, *Boletín*, No. O, June 1976, p. 29; *Triunfo*, No. 684, 6 March 1976, p. 67.

²³³ *ARRIBA*, 26 February 1976, p.8; GODSA, *Boletín*, No. O, June 1976, pp. 17, 28; *Triunfo*, No. 684, 6 March 1975, p. 67.

²³⁴ De Arespacochaga, *Cartas a unos capitanes*, p. 211.

²³⁵ GODSA, *Boletín*, No. O, June 1976, pp. 16-18.

In Barcelona, the *Club Àgora* organized the double launching of the *Llamamiento para la Reforma Democrática* and of the *Partido Reforma Democrática de Catalunya* (RDC) before an audience of five hundred on 2 March 1976. The studies and work of the *Club Àgora* became RDC's political platform and its members [*Club Àgora's*] the main promoters of the Catalan party. The presentation event was followed by presentations of RD in Alicante, León, Tenerife, Las Palmas, Pontevedra, La Coruña y Baleares, all where Fraga's sympathisers had created groups affiliated to GODSA. The presentation of GODSA's *Llamamiento* in the various cities was well received by the national press.²³⁶ By promoting their manifesto Fraga's RD became the first political group of reformists with a moderate and progressive project for the future of Spain. Yet, a series of incidents that occurred during the months of March through May of 1976 contributed to damaging Fraga's reformist image and questioned his abilities as leader of the transition.

The first incident broke out in Vitoria (The Basque Country) on 3 March 1976, although it had its roots on 9 January 1976. On that day, the metal company, *Forjas Alavesas*, demanded the renovation of the agreement with the council of entrepreneurs specially on three points: (i) higher salaries, (ii) reduction of working hours (iii) and social improvements (pensions, social security, etc.). Other companies and a large number of students soon supported the initiative led by *Forjas Alavesas*. On 3 March, while Fraga was away in Germany, a mass strike saw the intervention of one-hundred and eighty armed policemen resulting in five deaths and a large number of injured among the demonstrators.²³⁷ Due to Fraga's absence, Adolfo Suárez, in his capacity as

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-32.

²³⁷ For more details on the incidents see "Vitoria. Informe de las Comisiones Representativas", Dossier Gasteiz in *Cuadernos de , Ibérico*, No. 51/53, May-October 1976, pp. 188- 202.

substitute Interior Minister, dealt with the problem in a masterly way. In fact, as Osorio recalled, this incident allowed Suárez to show not only his capacity for governance, but also made him a realistic candidate for the presidency.²³⁸ Following the incident, the magazine *Mundo Diario* put forward some questions that seemed to be in everyone's mind. It questioned the failure of the lengthy negotiation between workers and employers in Vitoria, and in light of that, also questioned the effectiveness of the obsolete syndical organization. But most importantly, it highlighted a fundamental issue by asking whether the current social tension was the result of a deeper problem caused by the lack of recognized platforms for dialogue.²³⁹ Fraga's miscalculation to travel abroad during such conflictive times proved fatal for his reputation.

The second incident broke out a few days later, on 17 March 1976, when different groups within the Left wing opposition - those who had formed the *Junta Democrática* (July 1974) and the *Plataforma de Convergencia* (July 1975) - came to an historic agreement. The still illegal Socialist, Communist, and various Christian Democrat parties, joined forces with other smaller Left-wing parties, in the so-called *Coordinación Democrática*, 'Democratic Co-ordination' - popularly known as *Platajunta*. The promoters of the *Platajunta* aimed at creating 'a unitary organism of all the opposition at all levels'.²⁴⁰ Yet, despite the appearance of unity, the *Platajunta* failed to truly reconcile Socialists and Communists. Even then the Communists believed that the Socialists would participate in an election without the PCE. The *Platajunta* also failed to improve relations between the Socialists led by Tierno Galván and those led by González.²⁴¹ Nevertheless, for the government the *Platajunta* told of the unity of the Left. Fraga informed his fellow ministers of the historic agreement, and

²³⁸ Alfonso Osorio interviewed by Victoria Prego in Juliá, Santos *et al*, *Memoria de la transición*, p. 107.

²³⁹ Cited in *Triunfo*, No. 685, 13 March 1976, p. 64.

²⁴⁰ *Cambio-16*, 29 March-4 April 1976, p. 6.

of his decision to arrest the leaders of the *Platajunta* after their announcement at a press conference of Communist participation. Some ministers including José Solís, Antonio Garrigues, Carlos Robles Piquer (Fraga's brother-in-law), Adolfo Suárez and Alfonso Osorio, advised Fraga not to take such a precipitate course.²⁴²

As Areilza records, after the meeting with Fraga (at which Areilza was not present), one of the ministers commented that 'Fraga had designed a plan to counter-attack the meeting of the *Platajunta* with seizures of newspapers, warnings, threats against foreign correspondents and telegrams to foreign embassies in Spain. This reaction was similar to Carrero's to the Munich declaration (of 1962)'. According to Areilza, 'if Fraga went along with the idea of throwing himself against the *Platajunta*, he would be committing 'political suicide'. Furthermore, Fraga's reaction would create two antagonistic groups, which some have argued would lead us first to a *coup d'état*, and second to a republic'.²⁴³ Areilza's declaration reflects the level of tension present in those days, and although Fraga did throw himself against the *Platajunta*, Areilza's prediction was not confirmed. On 4 April, the PCE organized an illegal demonstration in Madrid. Fraga ordered the arrest of some of the participants who were imprisoned until the beginning of May. Allegedly, Fraga told his fellow ministers that 'until the first of May they are mine, from the second [of May], they are yours'. About this declaration Areilza recorded in his diary, 'this man manages some people's freedom like it was merchandise'.²⁴⁴

The final incident took place in Montejurra (Navarra) at the annual meeting of the Carlists. Allegedly, the Francoist authorities had been unaware that fifty Carlists with machine-guns had been hiding in the forest for several days. During the gathering,

²⁴¹ Powell, *España en democracia*, p. 157.

²⁴² Preston, *Triumph of Democracy*, p. 86.

²⁴³ Areilza, *Diario*, p. 120.

there were serious clashes between Don Carlos' followers, and those of Don Sixto, both Carlist Pretenders to the throne. The result was a number of deaths, and some injured. On this occasion, Fraga was in Venezuela, and once again it was Adolfo Suárez who dealt with the situation with his by now habitual calm and efficiency.²⁴⁵ Moreover, the Valencian lawyer Emilio Attard asked Fraga to ensure that the police exercise restraint in controlling an imminent amnesty demonstration in Valencia in which some of Attard's friends would be involved. Regardless, Fraga argued that it was the demonstrators who had to be careful, not the police 'because [otherwise]', Fraga said, 'I am going to smash them to a pulp' (*porque los voy a moler a palos*).²⁴⁶

Fraga lost the opportunity to demonstrate his long-proclaimed Centrist and moderate attitude, although he remained faithful to his beliefs. 'I am a man', he had declared a few months before the cabinet crisis, 'who has been described as Liberal in philosophy and authoritarian in character (*temperamento*). I believe that democracy needs strong leadership. A strong man must establish freedom. That is why I do not think that that [description] is derogatory'.²⁴⁷ Fraga also believed that 'to govern is to order; but not in just any way whatsoever: it is to govern with authority, in other words, legitimately, in the name of order, for the good of all'.²⁴⁸ His ambiguous attitude would not end here. Later, the creation of his political party *Alianza Popular* (AP) dismantled once again his theory of the Centre and long-professed wish for reform.

²⁴⁴ Areilza, *Diario*, p. 126; *Cambio-16*, 12-18 April 1976, pp. 8-9.

²⁴⁵ Osorio, *Trayectoria*, pp. 85-96; *Triunfo*, No. 695, 22 May 1976, p. 89; *Cuadernos para el Dialogo*, No. 195, 15-21 May 1976, p. 16.

²⁴⁶ Emilio Attard, *Vida y muerte de UCD* (Planeta, Barcelona, 1983), p. 49; Preston, *Triumph of Democracy*, pp. 86-7.

7.1.2. *Arias' failed reform*

From the appointment of the new cabinet, as mentioned before, the main reformist Ministers Manuel Fraga, José María de Areilza and Antonio Garrigues advocated urgent implementation of reforms. Time was running against them and the population was clearly getting impatient. But, although Arias was also aware of the need to introduce some kind of change, it was clear that the President wished to delay the elaboration of a proper reform programme. Adolfo Suárez, Minister of the Movement, suggested to Arias the creation of a joint Commission (Government-National Council) for the study of general political reform. The Commission would deal with the reform of three specific laws: the Constituent Law of the Cortes (or Parliamentary Reform), the Law of Succession and the Law of Political Association.²⁴⁹ Arias had already refused an initial proposal by some ministers for the creation of a royal commission to elaborate a reform plan, perhaps for fear of losing control over the reform. But this time the president accepted Suárez's suggestion. Arias would preside over it, but the project would have to be shared between Fraga (Interior Minister) and Fernández-Miranda (President of the Movement's National Council), thereby reducing Fraga's influence on the reforms. Thus Fraga was put in charge of Parliamentary Reform and, in conjunction with Suárez, of the Law of Political Associations. Fernández-Miranda was to oversee reform of the Law of Succession. The outcome of the proposals was to be presented publicly, and voted on, in a referendum in October.

The commission, which was formed by a total of eighteen members of both the government and the National Council, and three secretaries, met for the first time on 11

²⁴⁷ Quoted in *Arriba*, 2 January 1976, p. 11.

²⁴⁸ *Triunfo*, No. 680, 7 February 1976, p. 63.

²⁴⁹ Suárez's suggestion stemmed from an initial idea of Fernández-Miranda during his tenure as Minister of the Movement. As Suárez told Osorio, it was very convenient to be on good terms with Fernández-Miranda, who incidentally had proposed Suárez's name for the Ministry of the Movement. As we shall see later, Fernández-

February 1976.²⁵⁰ At that meeting Fernández-Miranda surprised everyone by claiming that the Law of Fundamental Principles was a law like any other one, hence it could also be amended. Fraga did not disagree with Fernández-Miranda's idea, but he believed that the current Cortes would never accept that proposal.²⁵¹ There seemed to be a disparity of opinions amongst members of the commission that affected the implementation of the reform. In fact, with reference to the last meeting of the commission, which took place on 21 April, Fernández-Miranda recalled that 'the meeting was getting more complicated without clear conclusions. [...] The commission suffered from three great defects: (i) [it] desired to reform much [while] keeping everything; (ii) it lacked clear ideas; (iii) [it] ignored the King's true position. [...] From the beginning, its work was impractical and [that] could not but complicate the situation. But, it seemed no one realized it. [...] The outcome was a collection of unconnected proposals, [hence] unviable as reform [proposals]'.²⁵² Having said that, the commission achieved some of its goals. Firstly, on 29 May the Cortes approved Fraga's proposal for a Law for the Regulation of the Right of Assembly and Manifestation, and secondly, the Cortes also approved the Law for the Right of Political Association.²⁵³

The proposal for the Law for the Right of Political Association had been elaborated by Juan Santamaría and Eduardo Navarro from the ministries of the Interior and the Movement, respectively. Originally the proposal was to be presented to the Cortes by Manuel Fraga, but Arias opposed the idea and asked Osorio to present it instead. Osorio in turn refused, although he proposed Adolfo Suárez, Minister of the

Miranda - allegedly following instructions from the King - campaigned for Suárez's candidature to the presidency of the government. Osorio, *De Orilla*, pp. 56-7; Powell, "La Reforma que no fue", pp. 138-9.

²⁵⁰ Pilar & Alfonso Fernández-Miranda, *Lo que el Rey me ha pedido*, p. 403, footnote 90.

²⁵¹ Osorio, *De Orilla*, p. 65.

²⁵² Pilar & Alfonso Fernández-Miranda, *Lo que el Rey me ha pedido*, p. 193.

Movement, to deal with the issue. Finally, on 9 June, less than one month before the dissolution of the cabinet, Suárez presented the proposal to the Cortes. Among its most interesting points, Suárez said that,

[Political] pluralism, sirs, is not an invention of this historic moment, neither should this government run into it like someone who runs into something artificial. On the contrary, the very State, which we serve, was born plural. And, many of the men who are here have understood some time ago the need to create a new order for the diversity of opinions. [...] Our society, independently of subjective criteria, is plural. And, if we contemplate the national reality with a minimum of sincerity, [we] have to agree that, apart from that theoretical pluralism, [there] already exist organized forces. To deny it, would be to insist on an absurd blindness (*nos empeñaríamos en una ceguera absurda si nos negáramos a verlo*). Those forces, whether called parties or not, exist as a public fact, are seen in the media, are present at intellectual levels and in the working base and even influence professional organizations. [...] Does there not exist, even at a popular level, a minimum tacit agreement with regard to change without risk, to a deep and ordered reform, to political pluralism, to a chamber chosen by universal suffrage, to the existence of political groups which channel ideological participation, to the popular freedoms of expression, assembly and demonstration, to an economic system able to harmonise the creative forces of private initiative with greater levels of justice so that the optimum socialisation of development results? [...] Let us simply, sirs, remove [the] drama from our political [life]. Let us elevate to the normal political level what is common in the street.²⁵⁴

According to the journalist Victoria Prego, Adolfo Suárez 'delivered a memorable speech with a few essential virtues: he does not raise his voice with burning enthusiasm at the end of a brilliant phrase, he does not get pompous, everything he says is understood, he is direct, and above all, [Suárez] describes a social reality which is exactly the one present in Spain at the moment.'²⁵⁵ According to *Triunfo*, the speech 'rated Suárez as the most *aperturista* of Arias' ministers [and it was] an authentic speech characteristic of a president of the government'.²⁵⁶ That achievement was, in Alfonso Osorio's view, what led to Suárez being regarded as a potential candidate for the presidency.²⁵⁷

²⁵³ López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, p. 243.

²⁵⁴ Extracts of Suárez's speech are recorded in *Ibid.*, pp. 248-50. See also Prego, *Así se hizo la transición*, p. 475-477.

²⁵⁵ Prego, *Así se hizo la transición*, p. 475.

²⁵⁶ *Triunfo*, No. 702, 10 July 1976, p. 7.

²⁵⁷ Prego, *Así se hizo la transición*, pp. 477-8.

Adolfo Suárez succeeded in persuading the Francoist Cortes which approved the law with 338 affirmative votes to 91 against, and 25 abstentions. On 16 June 1976 the government announced that the law came 'to regulate the right of political association with ample and flexible criteria [...] The exercise of this right will not find other limitations than those demanded in a democratic society in the interest of national security, of public constitutional order, and of respect for the rights and freedoms of all citizens, consequently proscribing only those associations that are categorised as illicit in the Penal Code'. This Law was, therefore, 'inspired by scrupulous respect towards the reality of political pluralism [...] The groups, associations, or political parties [...] registered under the Law will have a guarantee of participation, in a regime of liberty, justice and equality in the always renewed collective task of constructing a more just, free and democratic Spain'.²⁵⁸ The content of the law was unprecedented, but the Cortes still had to approve the reform of Articles 172 and 173 of the Penal Code in order to legalize political parties - with the exception of the Communist party. Despite all his efforts, the Minister of Justice, Antonio Garrigues, could not convince the Cortes, which ruled against the reform of Penal Code. The consequences of such a negative ruling were evident. The newly approved Law for the Right of Political Associations was basically pointless.²⁵⁹

Arias reluctantly applied some timid reforms which, as Preston explains, 'had the merit of drawing the fire of the die-hard Francoists, which allowed the ultra-Right to discredit itself in the eyes of the remaining components of the Francoist elite'. But, the inefficiency of his programme pushed Francoist bureaucrats and businessmen, like Joaquín Garrigues, Francisco Fernández Ordoñez and the *Tácitos* into the opposition

²⁵⁸ B.O.E., *Ley del Derecho de Asociación Política*, 14 June 1976 (Publication date 16 June).

²⁵⁹ Osorio, *De Orilla*, pp. 100-1.

camp.²⁶⁰ The Caudillo's entourage felt the threat from the *aperturistas* and their reformist plans. In fact, in May Francoist hard-liners - including the ex-ministers Admiral Nieto Antúnez, José Antonio Girón, Raimundo Fernández Cuesta, José Utrera Molina, General Juan Castañón de Mena - sent Arias a note, which was signed by one hundred and twenty-six people, accusing the ministers of 'continuous transgressions departing from the democracy (*Estado de Derecho*) inherited from Franco'.²⁶¹

Carlos Arias proved incapable of confronting (i) the growing pressure of the democratic opposition and of the regime's moderates and (ii) the pressure coming from the regime hard-liners.²⁶² As the journalist Carlos Elordi summarises, 'the seven months of Carlos Arias Navarro's government were the longest of the transition. It was time lost on the way towards democracy, an exhausting prolongation of the past, with the same faces, anxieties, [and] uncertainty. But there was a difference: Franco was not [there] anymore.'²⁶³ In contrast, Paul Preston argues that the Arias experience was of crucial importance in many respects, and therefore a 'necessary evil'.²⁶⁴ A peaceful transition to democracy required the leadership of someone who could deal with both the bunker and the opposition, and Arias proved not to be the right person. For this task, the King's man was Adolfo Suárez, even though at that moment the opposition saw him as another *continuista* of Franco's regime.

7.2. Adolfo Suárez, President of the Government

Hope for a progressive government which could control the economic and social crisis, and also introduce a democratic system in Spain, faded away when the relatively

²⁶⁰ Preston, *Triumph of Democracy*, pp. 53, 89.

²⁶¹ It is interesting to note that one of the signatories was Pérez Pillado, who happened to have died more than a month before the letter was even written. *Triunfo*, No. 695, 22 May 1976, pp. 89-90.

²⁶² Carr & Fusi, *Dictatorship to Democracy*, p. 196.

²⁶³ Elordi, "El largo invierno del 76", in Juliá *et al*, *Memoria de la Transición*, p. 121.

unknown Minister of the Movement, Adolfo Suárez, was appointed president as a replacement for Carlos Arias in July 1976. His appointment came as a surprise even amongst those well-connected in political circles although, allegedly, the King considered Suárez as the possible president of his government well before his appointment.²⁶⁵ Adolfo Suárez's name was the last one on a shortlist of six candidates, but thanks to the work of Torcuato Fernández-Miranda, following instructions from the King, managed to convince the Councillors of the *Consejo del Reino* to include the name of Suárez in the final *terna*. Fernández-Miranda's task was relatively easy given that Suárez was a 'man of the regime'.²⁶⁶ In the last round Suárez got only twelve votes after Gregorio López Bravo with thirteen, and Federico Silva with fifteen votes. Despite the result, Don Juan Carlos appointed Suárez President of the Government.²⁶⁷ Following Suárez's appointment, Fernández-Miranda famously declared: 'I have delivered to the King what he has asked me for', thereby confirming the royal involvement in the election.²⁶⁸

Victoria Prego argues that the initial idea of choosing Suárez had originated from Fernández-Miranda, who regarded Suárez as an energetic and decisive young man without a political agenda and without the prominence of Fraga or Areilza.²⁶⁹ In fact, Suárez fit the 'blueprint' (*retrato robot*) that Fernández-Miranda and Miguel Primo de

²⁶⁴ Preston, *Triumph of Democracy*, pp. 53-90

²⁶⁵ According to *Cambio-16*, the American embassy knew of Suárez's appointment from April. Allegedly, during his interview with Arnaud de Borchgrave of *Newsweek*, the King insinuated that his candidate was the then Minister of the Movement. Don Juan Carlos' declaration was, however, not published. See *Cambio-16*, 2-8 August 1976, p. 5. Furthermore, Antonio Gavilanes recalls that, in 1973 during a private conversation he had with General Alfonso Armada, the Spanish General insinuated to him that the still Prince had already chosen Adolfo Suárez to be the president once Don Juan Carlos became King. Among other reasons was the very good friendship between him and Suárez, the fact that they both belonged to the same generation and most importantly, that Suárez had not been a Minister of Franco. Testimony of Antonio Gavilanes, 21-09-1999.

²⁶⁶ Pilar & Adolfo Fernández-Miranda, *Lo que el Rey me ha pedido*, p. 29; Morán, *Suárez*, pp. 54-5.

²⁶⁷ Miguel Primo de Ribera interviewed by Nativel Preciado, in Juliá et al, *Memoria de la Transición*, pp. 157-8; López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, p. 259; Prego, *Así se hizo la transición*, pp. 491-95.

²⁶⁸ Gonzalo Fernández de la Mora, *Río arriba*, (Barcelona: Planeta, p. 260), p. 260.

²⁶⁹ Prego, *Así se hizo la transición*, p. 495; Pilar & Alfonso Fernández-Miranda, *Lo que el Rey me ha pedido*, p. 29.

Rivera, councillor of the National Movement and of the Council of the Realm, had thought of as the ideal president of the government. The new president would have to achieve the challenging goals of (i) applying reform from above: whereby the government had to elaborate a Law of Political Reform which, once approved by the Cortes, would be ratified by the Spanish people in a national referendum. In this way, general elections could be held with time left to organize political parties and dictate the norms regulating the elections; and (ii) reform from below: whereby the Spanish people could elect to the Parliament their representatives whose first objective would be the drafting of a new Constitution.²⁷⁰

Arias' inability to lead the transition had become clear soon after his appointment. Thus, from the beginning of Arias' second presidency, Fernández-Miranda studied his candidate Suárez in great detail and, on a number of occasions, feared his ambition for power. Fernández-Miranda wondered what was more important for Suárez, his desire to serve the country or his willingness to command. By June the social situation was becoming unbearable and Arias remained deaf to popular demands. In June, the King finally decided to intervene and asked for Arias' resignation. At that stage, the person who best fitted the blueprint for the presidency was Suárez. Years later, the King acknowledged that he appointed Suárez,

Because he was young and modern. Because his roots lay in Francoism, and he couldn't be suspected of wishing to introduce excessively radical changes which would have been unacceptable to certain sectors of our society. Adolfo had been within the Francoist fold throughout his career, like all Spaniards in public office at that time. He had been Secretary-General of the Movement, and later, at my request, director-general of the national television company, where he did a good deal for my image as Prince of Spain.²⁷¹

Like many others, Suárez had had a successful administrative career under the regime but, politically speaking, he was generally unknown to the Spanish public. In

²⁷⁰ Pilar & Alfonso Fernández-Miranda, *Lo que el Rey me ha pedido*, pp. 228-9; Miguel Primo de Rivera interviewed by Nativel Preciado, in Juliá *et al*, *Memoria de la Transición*, p. 159.

those days the limelight was focused on two reformist ministers of Arias' second government, namely José María de Areilza and Manuel Fraga. Yet, there were a number of reasons why neither of the two ministers was chosen to replace Arias. On the one hand, Fraga had been the main representative of the *aperturistas* for a time, but Fraga recognised that he could not expect to be Arias' successor. As Pilar Cernuda recalls, he believed that what really frustrated his likelihood for the post was his declaration over the legalisation of the PCE party.²⁷² Yet Fraga was not the ideal candidate to lead the transition principally because he had been one of Franco's ministers. Also, as seen earlier, during his tenure as Interior Minister Fraga displayed an authoritarian character, which over-shadowed his reformist image and contributed to him being ruled out as a potential candidate for president. One of the main requirements to lead the transition was to be able to negotiate with the opposition, and Fraga had demonstrated his inflexible position when meeting democrats like the leader of the Socialist party Felipe González. 'That interview', González recalls, 'was very tense. [Fraga] set out his programme and I mine. Both were completely antagonistic. [But] Fraga's position was "take it or leave it". One cannot have a dialogue like that.'²⁷³ On another occasion, Fraga told Felipe González that the Socialists might be legalized in eight years but the Communists never. Allegedly, Fraga made clear to González that 'I (Fraga) represent power and you are nothing'.²⁷⁴

In contrast, Areilza appeared to be the ideal candidate. Among other things Areilza travelled the world promoting the idea of a new democratic Spain; he was an experienced diplomat with extensive foreign relations (Areilza had been Franco's Ambassador to a number of countries, such as Argentina, the USA, and France); he was

²⁷¹ De Vilallonga, *The King*, p. 70.

²⁷² Fraga, *En busca*, pp. 52-3; Cernuda, *Ciclón Fraga*, p. 138.

²⁷³ *Cambio-16*, 23-29 August 1976, pp. 12-3.

part of the Spanish aristocracy (by marriage); and also he had many contacts with the democratic opposition. As the journalist Carlos Elordi recalls, a few weeks after his appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Areilza had already announced his readiness to authorize a passport for Carrillo should he apply for one.²⁷⁵ Thus, although Areilza, as Carr and Fusi write, 'seemed the incarnation of the civilised Right', the ex-minister had been an important member of Don Juan de Borbón's private council, and therefore, not the right person to preside over Don Juan Carlos' cabinet.²⁷⁶ Furthermore, unlike Fraga, Areilza did not have the necessary political backing that might support his candidature as president. Areilza, however, was so convinced of his triumph that, on the day of the presidential election, he had gathered a group of friends and journalists and, even put champagne in the refrigerator to celebrate his victory. Ironically, he was the first to inform journalists of Suárez's victory, who was alone at home without family or journalists.²⁷⁷ To everyone's amazement, neither Areilza nor Fraga survived even the first round of the election.

Although the King did not choose Fraga or Areilza for the post of president, the monarch valued them and wished them to be part of the new executive. Suárez, who wanted Areilza for the new government, phoned Areilza but the latter did not want to make an immediate decision. After talking with Fraga, who had already expressed to the King his wish not to continue, Areilza decided not to continue either.²⁷⁸ Neither Fraga nor Areilza accepted positions in Suárez's team. As Victoria Prego argues, the refusal of both ministers to collaborate in Suárez's government was the first obstacle for the new president. Areilza's loss was significant, but politically speaking, Fraga's loss

²⁷⁴ Attard, *Vida y Muerte*, p. 49; Preston, *Triumph of Democracy*, pp. 86-7.

²⁷⁵ Elordi, "El largo invierno del 76" in Juliá *et al*, *Memoria de la Transición*, p. 123.

²⁷⁶ Carr & Fusi, *Dictatorship to Democracy*, p. 217.

²⁷⁷ Cernuda, *Ciclón Fraga*, p. 139.

²⁷⁸ José María de Areilza, *Cuadernos de la Transición*, (Barcelona: Planeta, 1983), pp. 15-6.

was the greatest. Fraga, as Osorio recalls, 'had important influence amongst regime reformists and [we] had to count on them'.²⁷⁹ For his part, Fraga received a phone call from the King himself, but the ex-minister confessed to the monarch the impossibility of continuing. Fraga 'did not have any confidence in Adolfo Suárez, or in his capacity to command in the crisis'.²⁸⁰ The truth was that Fraga was resentful. During a conversation with Eduardo Chamorro, Fraga admitted that Suárez's appointment 'inspired in him feelings of frustration'. Fraga's experience and the time he had invested in preparing the reforms were now wasted and the reform was left in 'feeble and hardly-prepared hands [...], hands of those who never showed any interest in it'.²⁸¹ But the ministers' refusal to join a new ministry did not imply their departure from politics. On the contrary, this period marked the beginning of a new, although separate, political trajectory.

Meanwhile, Fraga was busy promoting his political group abroad. *Reforma Democrática* (RD) was presented as a 'Spanish political party' in Paris on 28 June 1976. The RD delegation, which travelled to the French capital, comprised Rafael Pérez Escolar, Félix Pastor Ridruejo, Luis Santiago de Pablo, Manuel Milián, Juan José Folchi, Gabriel Elorriaga, Francisco Aguilera and Antonio Abeijón. They held two workshops with French politicians where among other things they discussed: (i) the political and economic situation in Spain and abroad; (ii) French trade-union organization; (iii) political parties of the Left; (iv) market economy and (v) public administration. They also met Branko Lazitch, an expert in Communist studies, with whom they talked about the current position of the Communist party, its international

²⁷⁹ Prego, *Así se hizo la Transición*, p. 502. Osorio's cite in *Ibid.*, p. 502.

²⁸⁰ Fraga, *En busca*, p. 53.

²⁸¹ Fraga, *El Cañón Giratorio*. p. 75.

strategy, Euro-Communism and also syndical issues. The GODSA delegation stressed the pro-European vocation of the group, and their wish for an early incorporation of Spain into the European Community, for which they asked for French support.²⁸² RD's moderate programmatic content appeared to be clearly progressive for the time, and it attracted financial support from powerful groups, which, Félix Pastor Ridruejo, although never entirely sure of their origins, believes were following official American political strategy.²⁸³ Thus, from time to time, Pastor Ridruejo travelled to Paris to collect money from the premises of the magazine *Est-Ouest*. The amount of money given varied, but was always small quantities of two, three or five million pesetas. The quantities were small because the peseta was very controlled in those days, and large amounts could not have been hidden easily.²⁸⁴

In August 1976, following the trip to France, Fraga's RD presented a *Libro Blanco*, or white paper, which contained the 'political programme of reformism'. It was a collective work compiled by more than one hundred people who were organized in a dozen specialized study commissions. The majority of these collaborators were active members of or sympathisers with RD. This collective 'has put their humble effort at the service of an analysis of the state of the nation at this present time.' During several months, the commissions identified the issues at stake, which they studied and discussed together. The White Book was an 'open book' which launched an initial and, therefore, not a complete doctrine.²⁸⁵ Furthermore, as Pastor Ridruejo explains, the white paper 'is not the programme of the party, [it is] only a basis for discussion'.²⁸⁶ The paper was to have three main sections each dedicated to the proposed political, economic and

²⁸² GODSA, *Boletín*, No. 1, July 1976, pp. 13, 15.

²⁸³ This information has been denied by Fraga. Testimony of Manuel Fraga, 28 March 2001.

²⁸⁴ Testimony of Félix Pastor Ridruejo, 17 May 2000.

²⁸⁵ *Libro Blanco para la Reforma Democrática*, (Madrid: GODSA, 1976), pp. 7, covers.

²⁸⁶ GODSA, *Boletín*, No. 5, December 1976, p. 12.

social reforms. But, incidentally the chapter dedicated to 'political reform', which was going to be written by Fraga, was not included in the book.²⁸⁷ Some of the issues addressed were human rights, foreign policy, national defence, inequality, agriculture labour policy; syndicalist reform, and fiscal and monetary systems.²⁸⁸ Thus, through the white paper Manuel Fraga proposed: the introduction of constitutional reform; the effective establishment of a reformed and reformist monarchy; establishment of political forces created under a system of free political associations although channelled by existing Francoist law; the recognition of political sectors ranging from the Christian Democrats to the democratic and evolutionist Socialists; and the achievement of the economic model of the industrialised countries.²⁸⁹

Fraga's centrist group appeared to be a moderate option although it was quite progressive in areas such as education, health and women issues. For instance, as far as women's issues were concerned, four women's members of the group, namely Toñy Quiroga, María del Carmen Martín Rubio, Teresa Fernández and Sibila Pironte, stood in favour of divorce, free contraceptives and even abortion. They agreed, however, that the issue of abortion was very delicate and cases should be treated individually and with great care. Sibila Pironte even considered abortion essential in situations such as rape and fetus malformation.²⁹⁰ Manuel Fraga was responsible for the inspiration and promotion of the white paper but, owing to his duties as ambassador, had little direct participation in it. The nearly five-hundred page volume was of considerable

²⁸⁷ Testimony of Carlos Argos, 14 September 1999.

²⁸⁸ GODSA, *Boletín*, No. 3, September 1976, p. 13.

²⁸⁹ *Cambio-16*, 1-7 December 1975, p. 40; GODSA, *Boletín*, Nos. 8-9, January 1977, p. 6.

²⁹⁰ GODSA, *Boletín*, No. 7, December 1976, p. 6.

importance as it represented the basis for a new centrist platform, *Reforma Democrática*, arguably the political ground behind the creation of Fraga's AP.²⁹¹

Meanwhile, from the democratic opposition through to many *aperturistas* and a great share of the population, the majority of the Spanish people regarded President Suárez as a mere Francoist. They all questioned his ability to bring democracy to Spain. In fact, Suárez's presidency of the regime-supported UDPE categorised him as on the side of the *continuistas*. Ramón Tamames, speaking on behalf of the Communists, considered Suárez's appointment to be a 'historic mistake', while the Socialists thought Spain had entered a 'cul-de-sac'.²⁹² This feeling was shared even by some of Suárez's own future collaborators such as Ricardo de la Cierva and Rafael Arias-Salgado. De la Cierva wrote an article titled '*Que error, qué inmenso error*' or 'What a mistake, what a formidable mistake!' wherein he described Suárez's government as 'the first Francoist government of post-Francoism'. For his part, Rafael Arias-Salgado wrote in *Cuadernos para el Diálogo* an article titled '*El Apagón*' or 'The Blackout'.²⁹³ Furthermore, 'disillusionment and surprise' characterised the response of the international press to Suárez's appointment. For instance, in Britain *The Observer* wrote that, "Suárez lacks all qualities the King was believed to be looking for when [he] decided to challenge the Francoist bunker [...] [Suárez] lacks experience [...], is a man of the system, with his roots firmly rooted in the ideology of the old regime".²⁹⁴

²⁹¹ *Soluciones para una década*. Libro Blanco de Alianza Popular. (1981), p. 1; Fraga claims that RD was actually the first embryo of AP. However, in reality, RD was a centrist party whereas AP was clearly on the right of the political spectrum. Fraga, *En busca*, p. 37. Testimony of Carlos Argos García, 14 September 1999.

²⁹² *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 167, 10-16 July 1976, pp. 24-5.

²⁹³ Javier Pradera, "El Despegue de la Reforma", in Juliá *et al*, *Memoria de la Transición*, pp. 150-1; De la Cierva's article can be found in *El País*, 8 July 1976, p. 11; "El Apagón" in *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 167, 10-16 July 1976, pp. 14-17 (this article was signed by Pedro Altares). Arias-Salgado recognises his mistake of judging Suárez so early. See Burns, *Conversaciones sobre la derecha*, p. 323.

²⁹⁴ Quoted in *Cambio-16*, 12-18 July 1976, pp. 17-18.

Having said that, there were at least two very different people who did not dislike the idea of Adolfo Suárez as President. One of them was Carlos Arias who, as Preston argues, supported Suárez's appointment if only because it meant that neither Areilza nor Fraga would be president.²⁹⁵ The other one was, paradoxically, Santiago Carrillo. The Communist leader saw Suárez on television defending the Law of Political Association in June 1976 and thought that Suárez's language and reasoning were not typical of a Fascist but rather of a democrat. As Carrillo recalls today, he also knew that Suárez's father and grandfather had been republicans, and also that he had a relative who lived in Paris and was a member of the PCE. In addition, Suárez's image of a young and energetic man, whose past had not been tarnished by the Civil War, led Carrillo to believe in his possibilities to conduct the transition.²⁹⁶ A few days after Suárez's appointment, Carrillo wrote in *Mundo Obrero* that 'Suárez's government could take the negotiation to a point that will lead us to the *Ruptura Pactada*'.²⁹⁷ The *Ruptura Pactada* was an intermediate position between rupture and reform, an agreement between the reformists and the democratic opposition. Incidentally, Suárez's cabinet adopted this formula successfully to transform the dictatorship into a democracy.

Suárez's new executive was officially presented on 7 July 1976.²⁹⁸ Gonzalo Fernández de la Mora, president of the Unión Nacional Española, commented that the members of Suárez's cabinet 'are young people, intelligent and prepared...' whereas the

²⁹⁵ Preston, *Triumph of Democracy*, p. 93.

²⁹⁶ It is interesting to know that Carrillo believed in Suárez's possibilities to conduct the transition successfully better than Areilza's. Carrillo had known Areilza personally since 1969, when the latter had established contacts with him. Areilza was considered as one of the possible leaders of the transition, but Carrillo did not believe in his capacity to face the Francoist system. Testimony of Santiago Carrillo, 29 November 2001; Prego, *Así se hizo la transición*, p. 498.

²⁹⁷ Testimony of Santiago Carrillo, 29 November 2001; Quoted in Prego, *Así se hizo la transición*, p. 499.

journalist Luis María Ansón believed that ‘the new government is going to run into great difficulties in the Cortes as well as in its dialogue with the opposition, due to the eminently monochrome character of its members’.²⁹⁹ In general, however, comments such as ‘Francoist puppies’, a government of ‘second-rank politicians’ and a ‘government of sub-secretaries’ seemed to be in all surveys.³⁰⁰ Fernández de la Mora was right, however. The new ministers were young (having an average age of forty-four), politically well-prepared (seven of them were members of *Tácito*)³⁰¹, most of them identified with the reformist sector, and their ability and willingness to work soon bore fruit.

7.2.1. A brief account of Suárez’s main reforms

On 9 July the newly-appointed cabinet met for the first time, and some days later the Cortes approved by 245 to 175 the government’s proposal for the reform of the aforementioned controversial articles of the Penal Code. Only nineteen parties were registered under the Law of 14 June, which would become effective as of September 1976.³⁰² The democratic opposition had strongly criticised the new law despite the reform of the Penal Code. Later on, in anticipation of the upcoming elections, the government approved the Royal Decree of 8 February 1977, which re-structured the mechanism of constitution of an association under the ‘principle of freedom’ and eliminated the preventive control of the administration for the register of parties.³⁰³ The

²⁹⁸ For a complete list of Suárez’s cabinet see López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, p. 262. A complete list of the new cabinet members and some comments by political of different tendencies can also be found in *El País*, 8 July 1976, pp.1, 8-10.

²⁹⁹ *Triunfo*, No. 703, 17 July 1976, p. 65.

³⁰⁰ *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 168, 17-23 July 1976, p. 16.

³⁰¹ The *Tácito* Ministers were Eduardo Carriles (Treasury), Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo (Public Works), Landelino Lavilla (Justice), Enrique de la Mata (Syndicates), Marcelino Oreja (Foreign Affairs), Alfonso Osorio (Presidency) and Andrés Reguera (Information and Tourism). See Powell, “The ‘Tácito’ group”, p. 265.

³⁰² For a list of the nineteen parties see, Martín Merchán, *Partidos Políticos*, p. 101.

³⁰³ B.O.E., Real-Decreto sobre Asociaciones Políticas (8 February 1977); Martín Merchan, *Partidos Políticos*, pp. 104-5; Álvarez de Miranda, *Del “contubernio”*, pp. 112-3.

approval of this decree led to the mushrooming of registry applications for political parties with the Interior Ministry. The doors were finally open to all political parties except those, which discriminated against certain citizens, and those subjected to international discipline and whose programmatic objectives could include the introduction of a totalitarian system. Attention was thereby focused on the PCE.³⁰⁴ Suárez's own government did not plan to include the PCE in the first general elections, but - as we shall see later in this section - a series of events altered the government's initial plans in favour of it.³⁰⁵

Meanwhile, a few days after the presentation of the new executive, Suárez announced his intention of holding a series of talks with representatives of all political ideologies of the country from Right to Left, including representatives of the terrorist group ETA.³⁰⁶ The range of existing political groups was extremely wide. According to a study carried out by the professor of sociology Miguel Martínez Cuadrado, which was published by Cambio-16, there were more than two-hundred political groups within twelve different ideological currents. Broadly from Right to Left these ideological currents were: Ultras (including Mariano Sánchez Covisa, Blas Piñar), extreme-Right (Antonio Oriol, José Antonio Girón, Emilio Romero), Associations of the Movement (Raimundo Fernández Cuesta, Leopoldo Stampa, Federico Silva, Manuel Cantarero), Reformists (Manuel Fraga, José María de Areilza, Pío Cabanillas, Marcelino Oreja, Gabriel Cañadas), Confessional Liberal-Christian Democrats (Rafael Calvo, José María Gil-Robles, José María Ruiz-Giménez, Antonio Cañellas), Conservative Regionalism

³⁰⁴ Martín Merchán, *Partidos Políticos*, pp. 102-3; Álvarez de Miranda, *Del "contubernio"*, p. 113.

³⁰⁵ Osorio, *De Orilla*, pp. 152-3, 309-23.

³⁰⁶ According to a recent article, the president of the Basque Nationalist party, Xavier Arzalluz, recalls that representatives of the politico-military branch of ETA negotiated the surrender of weapons in exchange for the

(Carlos Hugo Borbón, Antonio Muñoz Peirats, Jordi Pujol, Miquel Roca), Liberal Centre (Joaquín Garrigues Walker, Francisco Fernández Ordoñez), Advanced Regionalism (Josep Andreu i Abelló), Socialists (Felipe González, Enrique Mújica, Enrique Tierno Galván, Raul Morodo, Antonio Rojas Marcos), Communists (Santiago Carrillo, Marcelino Camacho, Enrique Líster), other Leftist groups and ultra-Leftists. The political landscape appeared very confusing, but according to Martínez Cuadrado, the full establishment of democracy would regulate the different political options and the choice of parties could then become more definite.³⁰⁷

The government's theoretical intention to contact the different political currents of the country was soon put into practice. On 12 July, Suárez's meeting with José María Gil-Robles (son) of the *Federación Popular Democrática*, initiated the first round of talks. During July and August Suárez held talks with a number of political personalities but one of the most anticipated and remarked on interviews was the one Suárez held with the young leader of the Socialists, Felipe González, on 10 August.³⁰⁸ The interview lasted three hours and seemed positive, although González recognized that 'the negotiation will be difficult'. Yet, compared to his meeting with Manuel Fraga, the Socialist leader regarded Suárez as someone with whom it was possible have a dialogue.³⁰⁹ Suárez also established contacts with the Communists. On 28 November 1976, Santiago Carrillo told José María de Areilza that he [Carrillo] 'had established a permanent and secret link with president Suárez who [had been] taking and bringing authorized news of the situation [already] for three months'. A bilateral meeting

release of ETA prisoners in May and April 1977 with Adolfo Suárez and Juan José Rosón. Xabier Arzalluz, "Txiberta" in *Gaia*, 2 September 2000.

³⁰⁷ *Cambio-16*, 2-8 February 1976, pp. 30-33.

³⁰⁸ Suárez held talks with Fernando Álvarez de Miranda, Luis Gómez Llorente, Felipe González, Emilio Romero, José Ramón Lasuén, Joaquín Satrustegui, Enrique Fuentes Quintana, Enrique Tierno Galván, Carlos Ollero, Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez, Raúl Morodo, José María Ruiz Gallardón, Gonzalo Fernández de la Mora, Josep Pallach, Jordi Pujol, Heribert Barrera and Joan Raventós *Cambio-16*, 26 July-1 August 1976, p. 14; *Cambio-16*, 16-22 August, pp. 6-8; *Triunfo*, No. 707, 14 August 1976, p. 65. See also Álvarez de Miranda, *Del "contubernio"*, p. 109.

between Suárez and Carrillo did not take place until 26 February 1977 when, away from the public eye, José Mario Armero - the secret link - organised a private encounter at his house.³¹⁰

In the meantime, on 16 July, the government also announced a list of its immediate plans. Apart from the announcement of a long-sought amnesty (which did not cover ETA terrorists but only political prisoners), Andrés Reguera, Minister of Information, told the press that 'the government clearly expresses its conviction that popular sovereignty rests with the people, and it proclaims its determination to work in the instauration of a democratic political system based on the guarantee of civic rights and freedoms, the equality of political opportunities for all democratic groups and the acceptance of real pluralism.[...] The government wishes to make a public expression of its respect for the *corrientes de opinion*, in the conviction that neither goodwill nor democratic spirit are the exclusive patrimony of any group'. The government also announced its intention to call a general election before 30 June 1977, and a preceding referendum to ask the population for its decision on the constitutional reform. The first step was, therefore, the approval of a new political reform only after which the holding of a democratic election would be possible. Suárez's immediate plan seemed satisfactory but the opposition did not trust the government straight away.³¹¹ Yet, hardly one month after the appointment of the cabinet a representative of the democratic

³⁰⁹ *Cambio-16*, 23-29 August 1976, pp. 12-3.

³¹⁰ Areilza, *Cuadernos*, p. 74; Testimony of Santiago Carrillo, 29 November 2001; López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, pp. 266-7; Osorio, *De Orilla*, p. 313.

³¹¹ Quoted in Prego, *Así se hizo la transición*, pp. 512-13. The complete declaration is recorded in Osorio, *De Orilla*, pp. 157-9.

opposition commented that 'for the first time in forty years, the opposition is losing the initiative. If this carries on like this, the government is going to give us a surprise'.³¹²

The first surprise came on 8 October 1976, when the Movement's National Council, guarantor of the purest essence of the dictatorship, approved the government's proposal for political reform. In broad lines, the proposal aimed (i) to hold elections for a bicameral Cortes through universal, direct and secret ballot; (ii) to elaborate electoral norms, and (iii) to grant the freedom to form political parties.³¹³ The opinion of the National Councillors was informative, however. The Francoist Cortes was the main challenge that the government had to face and, given its history of halting any reformist attempts previously proposed, Suárez searched for support in the Spanish establishment before presenting the proposals to the Cortes. For instance, the President invited members of the military élite to discuss his reform proposals with them. The meeting was successful although the only condition the military demanded was that the PCE would not be legalized. As Carlos Huneus points out, it is important to stress that president Suárez had not made an agreement with the military in relation to the legalisation of the PCE. When six months later the party was legalized - as we shall see later - Suárez was accused of breaching an agreement that never existed.³¹⁴ As Fernando Abril Martorell, Minister of Agriculture and Suárez's close friend recalls, Suárez 'told them [...] that he would not legalise anything that was impossible. [...] Carrillo had to retouch the statutes of the PCE to make it purely Spanish. In that way, [it] already fulfilled the necessary requirements.'³¹⁵ Suárez also discussed the reform proposals with many politicians of different tendencies, and on 10 September he

³¹² Quoted in *Cambio-16*, 16- 22 August 1976, p. 6.

³¹³ Herrero de Miñón, *Memorias*, pp. 99-100.

³¹⁴ Morán, *Suárez*, p. 310; Huneus, *La UCD*, pp. 107-9.

appeared on television to explain the basic content of the political reform proposal to the population. It was important to let the Spanish public know of the government's plans quickly, and television was the fastest and surest way to reach a large number of households.

Meanwhile, the author of the juridical reform and president of the Cortes, Torcuato Fernández-Miranda, engaged in the task of forming parliamentary groups to discuss the reform proposals. The groups were formed by members of the UDPE; members of Manuel Fraga's newly created AP, of which Cruz Martínez Esteruelas was the spokesman (Fraga was not a member of the Francoist Cortes); and the Francoist hard-liners Raimundo Fernández Cuesta, Pilar Primo de Rivera and Blas Piñar who gathered around the so-called *Acción Institucional*. These groups made up for less than half of the 531 members of the Cortes, the rest being either independent of these groups or supporters of the government's proposal.³¹⁶ AP members demanded, among other things, a majority system, refusing the government's proposal for a proportional system in the Lower Chamber. As Alfonso and Pilar Fernández-Miranda point out, the Right-wingers believed that a majority system would guarantee their power by an absolute majority. Politicians like Manuel Fraga wholeheartedly advocated this system, especially following his ambassadorship in London. But, an English-style majority system would have divided the country again between Left and Right, and the government had to avoid that situation if they wanted reforms to succeed.³¹⁷

On 18 and 19 November those *procuradores* in favour of and against the government's reform plans defended their proposals in the Cortes. For instance, Cruz

³¹⁵ Fernando April Martorell interviewed by Nativel Preciado, in Juliá *et al*, *Memoria de la Transición*, p. 207.

³¹⁶ Josep Carles Clemente, *Historias de la transición, 1973-1981. El fin del apogón*. (Madrid: Fundamentos, 1994), pp. 70-1.

Martínez Esteruelas defended the position of the AP group, and Fernando Suárez and Miguel Primo de Rivera, among others, the government's position. As president of the Cortes, Torcuato Fernández-Miranda negotiated with both the government and the AP members to achieve consensus. Finally, on 18 November the Francoist Cortes overwhelmingly approved the reform proposal. Out of the 531 members of the Francoist Cortes, 425 voted in favour and 59 against (mainly the Ultra-Right sector) with 13 abstentions.³¹⁸ By voting in favour of this reform the Francoist Cortes accepted their own dissolution and the implementation of a democratic system in Spain.

Historians, such as Charles Powell and José Casanova, among others, believe that it was the reformists who imposed their solutions on the democratic opposition.

Casanova argues that,

It is clear that the opposition had nothing to do with this project [Law of Political Reform]. While one should not minimise the role which the pressure of the opposition may have played in forcing this option upon those in power, the fact is that, once the Suárez government decided upon this option, all the initiative, which since Franco's death seemed to belong to the opposition, now passed into the hands of the government. It should also be evident that the institutionalization of such an option could be put into effect only by those incumbents or powerholders who were willing and able to use their institutional roles and legal power within the regime in order to force this option upon those forces of the regime which were unwilling to change and upon those forces of the opposition unwilling to accept reform from above.³¹⁹

In turn, Charles Powell agrees that 'neither the reformists nor the rupturists would have achieved their goals on their own, but it was the former who largely imposed their solutions on the latter.'³²⁰ Technically, it was the government - in this case mainly formed by reformists - who successfully made possible the Law of Political Reform. But, Suárez's cabinet responded to an imperative demand for change coming from the democratic opposition and the population as a whole, especially university and labour sectors, intellectuals, professionals and the Church. Thus, in order to avoid the victory

³¹⁷ Pilar & Alfonso Fernández-Miranda, *Lo que el Rey me ha pedido*, p. 333-6.

³¹⁸ *El País*, 3 November 1976, p. 13; *El País*, 19 November 1976, pp. 1, 8-9.

³¹⁹ José Casanova, "Modernization and Democratization: Reflections on Spain's transition to democracy", in *Social Research*, No. Vol. 50, No. 4 (winter 1983), pp. 940-1.

of the rupturist option proposed by the democratic opposition, which would imply the destruction of all Francoist institutions, laws and, above all, their own political destruction (some reformists would sincerely advocate democracy whereas others would merely seek it for their political survival), the reformists had to speed up the elaboration of an alternative proposal.

The transformation of the dictatorial regime, by its own members, was, however, not an improvised decision. Throughout the 1960s some *aperturistas* had advocated the introduction of humble changes in the political system (with the exception of a handful of *aperturistas* who, from the mid-1950s, had proposed the implementation of a German-European type of democracy in Spain- without the Communist Party). At the beginning of the 1970s the idea of this type of democratic system was more widely accepted amongst them, and even amongst more conservative sectors of the regime. The most illustrative example would be the approval by the Francoist Cortes of the Law of Political Reform in November 1976, which did away with the old structure of the regime. The ultimate success of the government's alternative was possible thanks to (i) the will of King Juan Carlos to support the political reform or at least, as the Socialist Alfonso Guerra said, his attitude 'not to oppose what was evident: the arrival of democracy'.³²¹ And (ii) an early awareness among *aperturistas* (1950s and 1960s) and later reformist (late 1960s and 1970s) circles of the need to reform the regime. By 1976 they had managed to extend their advocacy of reform to more conservative sectors of the regime. Furthermore, older *aperturistas* had passed on their ideas to a younger generation of politicians many of whom were now part of Suárez's cabinet.

³²⁰ Powell, *Reform versus 'Ruptura'*, p. 321.

³²¹ Alfonso Guerra interviewed by Soledad Alameda in Juliá *et al Memoria de la Transición*, p. 234.

7.2.2. Suárez and the democratic opposition

Prior to the approval of the reform proposal, Suárez discussed his proposals with a stubborn democratic opposition, which had amalgamated in the so-called *Plataforma de Organismos Democráticos* on 23 October. Members of the democratic opposition agreed to negotiate with the government, although they demanded the immediate formation of a democratic government, the abrogation of all Francoist laws and called for elections. These demands, however, could not be met at that moment. Yet, Suárez's intelligent policy, as the historian Juan Pablo Fusi points out, of speeding up the reform process and getting closer to the opposition succeeded in (i) dividing the opposition and (ii) making the desired negotiation with the opposition (the so-called *Ruptura Pactada*) possible.³²² Thus, at the end of September Christian Democrats (namely Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez), Social Democrats and Liberals gradually detached from the *Coordinación Democrática* (formed in March 1976), and from the rupturist option. As Carlos Huneus points out, the Centrist and Right-wing members of the *Coordinación Democrática* evaluated the proposal with care because they knew that the King and members of *Tácito* were behind it.³²³

By contrast, Communists and Socialists refused to accept the government's proposals and campaigned for abstention from the popular referendum for the Reform Law scheduled for 15 December. They did not believe the Francoist hard-liners would allow the government to proceed with the reform proposal without reducing its scope, but to their surprise the Francoist Cortes approved it by an impressive majority.³²⁴

Their opposition to the government's proposal was even heard at the European Community. On 23 November 1976, Felipe González presented a resolution to the

³²² Juan Pablo Fusi, "La Reforma Suárez", in Julia *et al.*, *Memoria de la Transición*, pp. 164-5.

³²³ *Cambio-16*, 26 December 1976, p. 29; Huneus, *La UCD*, p. 119.

³²⁴ *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 178, 25 September-1 October 1976, pp. 15-17.

European Parliament asking for their support in the Spanish opposition's battle against the Law of Political Reform. But González's petition did not succeed. On 2 December a member of the European Parliament, Maurice Faure, advised that the Parliament remain in contact with the Spanish government, thereby ignoring González's petition. The European Parliament did not seem convinced of the effectiveness of González's rupturist thesis, especially after the Francoist Cortes had voted in favour of reform.³²⁵ Yet, at the beginning of December, González's party ratified their defiance of the government line when during the XXXVII congress of the Socialist party held in Madrid 'they reaffirmed their class character, [...] Marxist and democratic'.³²⁶

As Carlos Huneeus points out, such a radical position placed González's Socialists to the left of the Communists. But their campaign against the government's line came to nought. The people ratified the decision of the Cortes in the referenda on 15 December 1976. Of the 77.4 per cent of the electorate that voted, 94.4 approved of the reform proposal. This extraordinary victory demonstrated the failure of both the extreme Right and the democratic opposition.³²⁷ Having said that, other Socialist parties, namely the *Partido Socialista Popular* (PSP) of professor Enrique Tierno Galván and the *Izquierda Democrática* (ID) of Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez, played a mediating role between the government and the opposition.³²⁸

A different line was taken by the PCE, which seemed less radicalised than that of the Socialists. These were days when the cold war still prevailed, and not many people realised that the Spanish Communists of the 1970s differed quite a lot from those of the 1930s. On 28 July 1976 during the first public congress of the PCE's central committee held in Rome, both Santiago Carrillo and Dolores Ibarruri assured their

³²⁵ Osorio, *Trayectoria*, p. 60.

³²⁶ Huneeus, *La UCD*, pp. 137-8.

³²⁷ Abel Hernández (Ed.), *Fue posible la concordia. Adolfo Suárez*, (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1996), p. 60.

audience that their party was not under any international mandate. 'We are', Ibarri said, 'internationalists, [and have] solidarity with the all countries that fight for their national freedom'. Ibarri asserted that the PCE's goal was to achieve democracy.³²⁹ Later, the Communists declared in Paris that, 'should King Juan Carlos accept the democracy that the Spanish people want in our country, the PCE will not oppose the monarch'.³³⁰ In fact, the Communists had already adopted a policy of national reconciliation in 1956, which involved democratic freedom, political amnesty, and a policy beyond the politics of revenge. As Santiago Carrillo argues, 'this background will explain why the PCE, in its conduct during the transition, gave consummate proof of its commitment to democratization'.³³¹

The PCE was very well-organized and had an important influence on the working classes, especially through their syndical group CCOO, as well as on intellectuals and the middle classes. Félix Pastor Ridruejo asserts that, there was also a general feeling amongst the people of the Right that the legalization of the PCE was a positive step.³³² Its members demonstrated a high degree of moderation when taking part in demonstrations and popular gatherings. The positive result of the referendum implied the calling of democratic elections for the first time since the 1930s. But, no one believed that the Communists would participate in the elections of 15 June 1977.³³³

There were other groups that also stood against the referendum. For instance, representatives of a large number of Catholic associations considered the referendum to be 'the fruit of a pact between the government and the anti-democratic Cortes without

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 120-1.

³²⁹ *Cambio-16*, 9-15 August 1976, p. 14.

³³⁰ Cited in *Cuadernos de Ruedo Ibérico*, No. 54, November-December 1976, pp. 63-4.

³³¹ Carrillo, "The Consensus-building Role of the Communist Party", in Threlfall, *Consensus politics in Spain*, pp. 53-4.

³³² Testimony of Félix Pastor Ridruejo, 17 May 2000. Bernáldez, *El Patrón de la Derecha*, p. 189; Fraga, *En busca*, pp. 49-50.

³³³ Huneus, *La UCD*, pp. 125.

the participation of the population and the democratic opposition', and therefore, unacceptable.³³⁴ Technically, that was true, but the most moderate members of the democratic opposition understood that the approval of the reform proposal by the Francoist Cortes was an unprecedented opportunity to make a peaceful transition to a democratic system.

Meanwhile the reformists had already begun creating political formations in autumn 1976. The imminent arrival of elections led them to the emergence of new political alliances amongst, elaboration of programmatic manifestos and proselytism around the country. Two political parties stemmed directly from the regime, Manuel Fraga's AP and Adolfo Suárez's *Unión de Centro Democrático*. These parties covered the Centre-Right and Right of the Spanish political spectrum. Literature on the origins of both parties as well as the general history of Spain is quite extensive, but a brief explanation of the creation of these parties will serve to illuminate the *aperturistas*/reformists' long journey to the polls.

7.4. Fraga's political U-turn. From 'Reforma Democrática' to 'Alianza Popular'

In a letter circulated in GODSA's bulletin, Fraga explained how he 'dedicated August [1976] to meditate over the situation created for us [GODSA], and for me in particular, after the July crisis. The first [thing] I had to decide was whether to continue or not in political action. [...] I arrived at the conclusion that for the time being I had a duty to continue [given] the problems our country [will] have to face in the next two years. [...] The second [thing] I have clearly seen is that the service we [GODSA] can

³³⁴ *Cambio-16*, 26 December 1976, p. 8.

render to the country is the creation of an important political force' (Fraga's emphasis).³³⁵

Thus, during the summer of 1976 the ex-minister also met people at dinners and political gatherings for future political alliances. In August Fraga and Pío Cabanillas attended a political gathering in Galicia. The participants in that meeting, which Fraga considered to be one of the 'democratic Right', were the future workforce of AP and Unión de Centro Democrático.³³⁶ Following this meeting, as *Cambio-16* reveals, Manuel Fraga, Pío Cabanillas and José María de Areilza 'will meet in La Coruña to prepare a political strategy for the autumn. [...] [They] have decided to strike a balance after Arias' downfall'.³³⁷

On 8 September Suárez invited Fraga to dinner to discuss and explain the government's reform plans. One might think that despite Fraga's refusal to accept a ministry, Suárez would have liked him to participate somehow in the reform project. As mentioned already, Fraga had refused to collaborate with Suárez. Yet, to Fraga's amazement, Suárez offered him the Presidency of the Competence Tribunal. 'A post', Fraga wrote in his diary, 'with no category; a third degree retirement.' Fraga, who already had other plans, politely refused.³³⁸ As Rogelio Baón points out, 'Suárez's clumsiness in wanting to retire Fraga from politics, spurring on Fraga's hurt pride, led to an insuperable enmity [between them]'.³³⁹ Indeed, Fraga's unfortunate conversation with Suárez may have fuelled Fraga's already strong determination to create a powerful political party through which he could ascend to the presidency of the country. His *Reforma Democrática* already had 12,000 militants and around 170,000 sympathisers,

³³⁵ GODSA, *Boletín*, No. 3, September 1976, pp. 3-4.

³³⁶ Fraga, *En busca*, p. 56.

³³⁷ *Cambio-16*, 9-15 August 1976, p. 5.

³³⁸ Fraga, *En busca*, p. 58.

³³⁹ Baón, "Fraga y su poliedro", p. 94.

but he lacked the necessary funds.³⁴⁰ As already mentioned, Fraga's controversial statement favouring the legalisation of the Communist party did not go unnoticed. Félix Pastor Ridruejo recalls having received two anonymous communiqués, but given that the money RD was receiving through Paris was believed to come from American political interests, the communiqués may have had the same origin. One communiqué stated that Fraga's declaration meant the end of his political career. The other communiqué announced the cut in funding that had been providing RD with money.³⁴¹ Under the circumstances, Fraga had to find political partners who could attract financial support for RD.

During his meeting with Pío Cabanillas and José María de Areilza, which took place on 13 September, Fraga tried to attract them to his political group but failed. Cabanillas seemed to agree with Fraga's thesis concerning the existence of a Francoist social base (what they have called *Franquismo Sociológico*), a general desire for peace and order and, therefore, the urgency to create a great Conservative Party. Fraga insisted that known Right-wing figures such as Federico Silva (although clearly Christian Democrat), Laureano López Rodó, Cruz Martínez Esteruelas and Gonzalo Fernández de la Mora would accept the reform and they (Cabanillas, Areilza and Fraga) would have to accept them as "travelling companions" (*compañeros de viaje*). For his part, Fraga considered his own place to be on the Right, and claimed that the 'Union of the Right' would be positive since they would transform it into a 'civilised Right'. Also, Fraga was convinced that the establishment powers would accept this coalition. At the end of the meeting, Fraga handed Areilza and Cabanillas the draft of a programme-manifesto for a political party and asked for their comments. The party was

³⁴⁰ *Cambio-16*, 19 July 1976, p. 21.

³⁴¹ Testimony of Félix Pastor Ridruejo, 17 May 2000.

to be called *Alianza Popular*, and he begged them for a prompt response as the presentation of the party could be organized in the next few days. Such a union would imply a detachment from Suárez's political strategy, but Areilza disagreed, as he believed that Suárez' reform plan was both a good one and plausible.³⁴² Anyway, Areilza and Cabanillas were already embarked on another political adventure, the formation of the Partido Popular. Fraga, therefore, had to find other partners for his project.

The solution to Fraga's problem came soon, however. He was convinced that the alliance of several associations of the Movement would definitely attract both financial backing and a large share of the electorate (according to contemporary surveys around sixty-six per cent of Spaniards would give their vote to the alliance³⁴³) and, in any case, a strong coalition would require a strong leader. Fraga was convinced that there was a potential electorate who believed that a strong regime was the only government capable of both safeguarding their interests, and implementing effective solutions for the social problems brought on by democracy. These social problems, such as urban vandalism, student demonstrations, regional unrest, terrorism, unemployment, and economic crisis, among others, which had in fact been endured by Spain since the latter part of the 1960s, could only be solved by a strong authority.

Given these considerations, on 15 September Fraga began formal talks with several politicians of the various associations of the Movement, including Federico Silva, leader of a Christian Democrat group; Gonzalo Fernández de la Mora; and Cruz Martínez Esteruelas, who led a faction of the UDPE, a political association created by Herrero Tejedor and later presided over by Adolfo Suárez; and Raimundo Fernández

³⁴² Areilza, pp. 42-4; *Cambio-16*, 30 August-5 September 1976, p. 6-9.

³⁴³ *Cambio-16*, 27 September-3 October 1976, p. 15.

Cuesta, who led the *Frente Nacional Español* (FNE). The idea was for the creation of a sort of *Federación de Asociaciones del Movimiento* (FAMO). The project seemed promising since, allegedly, a consortium of entrepreneurs led by Idelfonso Fierro had offered an initial two-thousand million pesetas and an additional thousand million per annum to finance a conservative party. Furthermore, it appeared that several banks, such as Coca, Fierro, Popular, Banesto and Central, were also willing to support the coalition of Right-wing parties. In fact, prompt support from the banking world was possible since three of Fraga's new partners had close links with several banks. For instance, Monreal Luque, vice-president of the Silva's UDE, was vice-president of the administrative council of the Banco Coca; López Rodó was linked to the Opus Dei's Banco Popular, Atlántico, etc.; and, Martínez Esteruelas was close to Banca March. In addition, international support for the proposed conservative party was provided through Silva Muñoz who had links with the German Christian Social Bavarian Party of Josef Strauss. International support could also come from the United States since, as *Cuadernos para el Diálogo* points out, Kissinger was said to be willing to support the union of moderate parties. In fact, American assistance already provided to the UDPE could be transferred to the new alliance.³⁴⁴

Fraga had informed members of *Reforma Democrática* of his contacts with other political leaders. The objective of these meetings was that of creating a political force which could defend reform against the *continuismo* and *ruptura* options. On 23 September Fraga met Laureano López Rodó with whom he discussed the drafting of a possible manifesto.³⁴⁵ To facilitate this, on 28 September members of the National

³⁴⁴ Fraga, *En busca*, p. 58; *Cambio-16*, 27 September-3 October 1976, p. 15; *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 108, 25 September-1 October 1976, pp. 18-19.

³⁴⁵ López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, pp. 274-5.

Administrative Council of RD gave Fraga a vote of confidence to form a political alliance, and agreed to legalise RD under the Law of the Right of Association of 14 June 1976. In that way, the group applied for its registration on 2 October 1976.³⁴⁶

Following further contacts, Fraga finally announced the creation of his group. On 9 October seven prominent Francoist personalities united their political groups in the AP. AP was a federation of small parties of similar ideological tendencies centered around the most established party, the RD, under the leadership of Manuel Fraga. These personalities and their groups were Federico Silva's *Acción Democrática Española*, (ADE)³⁴⁷; Laureano López Rodó's *Acción Regional* (AR)³⁴⁸; Licinio de la Fuente's *Democracia Social* (DC)³⁴⁹; Manuel Fraga's RD³⁵⁰; Gonzalo Fernández de la Mora's *Unión Nacional Española* (UNE)³⁵¹; Enrique Thomas de Carranza's ANEPA³⁵²; Cruz Martínez Esteruelas' UDPE³⁵³. This collective became popularly known as the

³⁴⁶ GODSA, *Boletín*, No. 3, September 1976, p. 5. See also, *Ibid.*, No. 4, October 1976, *Dossier especial* p. 15.

³⁴⁷ Silva left the UDE due to his decision to join Fraga's AP, and a few weeks later created a new party, *Acción Democrática Española*. See Silva, *Memorias Políticas*, pp. 337-47. ADE was officially registered on 27 January 1977. Registry of Political Parties. Interior Ministry, various documents under *Acción Democrática Española*, No. 35.

³⁴⁸ López Rodó created *Acción Regional* together with José María Ruiz Gallardón and José María Guitián, which was registered on 4 December 1976. The party was dissolved on 4 March 1977 when, together with five parties of AP, it united in a single block. Registry of Political Parties. Interior Ministry, various documents under *Acción Regional*, No. 32.

³⁴⁹ De la Fuente joined AP as an independent and created *Democracia Social* which, curiously, was registered and cancelled on the same day in March 1977. Licinio de la Fuente, *Valió la pena*, (Madrid: EDAF, 1998), pp. 274-5; Registry of Political Parties. Interior Ministry, various documents under *Democracia Social*, No. 243.

³⁵⁰ Members of *Reforma Democrática* applied for its legalisation on 2 October 1976, which was finally approved on 29 December 1976. Ministerio del Interior, various documents under *Reforma Democrática*, No. 15.

³⁵¹ Fernández de la Mora's UNE was re-registered under the new law on 4 October 1976. Registry of Political Parties. Interior Ministry, various documents under *Unión Nacional Española*, No. 3.

³⁵² Around mid-1976 there was a schism within ANEPA. Rodríguez de Varcárcel's party was divided into a conservative group led by Thomas de Carranza, and a moderate group led by José Ramón Alonso y Rodríguez Nadas. Later on, and once part of AP, Carranza's group was registered as *Centro Popular* on 2 November 1976. Incidentally, a few months later, Carranza's group changed denomination once again. On 7 March 1977, Carranza registered a new party as *Unión Social Popular*, perhaps with the remains of *Centro Popular* (although the documentation found at the Interior Ministry does not mention the previous cancellation of the *Centro Popular* for the creation of the new party). Curiously, the new *Unión Social Popular* was dissolved on 4 May 1977, maybe to form part of AP. Testimony of Pedro Pérez Alhama, Secretary General of ANEPA, 12/09/1998. See various documents at the Registro de Partidos Políticos, Ministerio del Interior. Refs: ANEPA and *Unión Social Popular*. See also, Federico Silva Muñoz, *Memorias Políticas*, p. 347.

³⁵³ Cruz Martínez Esteruelas was chosen president of the UDPE during the first National Congress of the party which was held on 22 and 23 June 1976. The party, which was re-registered under the law of 1976 on 4 October 1976, was dissolved on 4 May 1977. Registry of Political Parties. Interior Ministry, various documents under *Unión del Pueblo Español*, No. 2.

Magnificent Seven or *Los Siete Magníficos*. The King considered the alliance ‘an explosive mixture’.³⁵⁴

Apart from the UDPE and RD, the remaining groups that formed AP were all ephemeral (*fantasmales*). In March 1977, five of these parties united around Fraga’s RD thereby becoming a single block, and together with Silva’s ADE and Fernández de la Mora’s UNE became the *Partido Unido de Alianza Popular*.³⁵⁵ The seven leaders signed AP’s political manifesto on 9 October 1976. As is explained later, RD’s initial centrist programme was wrapped in a nostalgic Francoist rhetoric transforming it into a very conservative manifesto away from Fraga’s long-preached moderation. AP’s fourteen-point manifesto included the unity of the *Patria*, defence of public order, defence of the family, support of the Monarchy, promotion of education, science and culture, the strengthening of free enterprise and a market economy and the defence of ‘public morality’. José María Ruiz Gallardón considered the manifesto to be ‘a serious and elaborate document with power for a [political] appeal (*llamamiento*). Its approaches and the solutions that it offers make of the *Alianza Popular* a Conservative Party’.³⁵⁶ In the Manifesto, the seven leaders claimed to share the philosophy of the populist, centrist and conservative European Centre parties. They declared that the current Spain, with its defects and virtues, was the starting point and, therefore, they refused any rupturist option. Thus, their aim was to create a political force based on ‘perfecting continuity’ (*continuidad perfectiva*) and ‘responsible reform’.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁴ López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, pp. 276-8; Federico Silva Muñoz, *Memorias Políticas*, pp. 347-9.

³⁵⁵ Jorge de Estebán and Luis López Guerra, *Los partidos políticos en la España actual*, (Barcelona, 1982), p. 162. See also Baón, “Fraga y su poliedro”, p. 95.

³⁵⁶ Quoted in Álvarez de Miranda, *Del “contubernio”*, p. 114.

³⁵⁷ GODSA, *Boletín*, No. 4, October 1976, pp. 2-5.

AP opted for the so-called *continuismo reformista*, in other words it offered continuity with limited reform, a similar approach to that of Arias Navarro.³⁵⁸ Therefore, the majority of the Spanish press regarded Fraga's proposal as insufficient and unacceptable. For instance, *Triunfo* compared it with 'a catalogue of the country's illnesses: those illnesses which were already present or being sowed when the signatories were ministers and could have cut their root. Or perhaps they could not'. So if they did not solve the country's problems before, who could believe they would solve them now.³⁵⁹ *El País* followed a similar line, and added that AP was nothing but the alliance of the shadows of Francoism: that is an amalgamation of Opus Dei, Catholic Action, Falange and corporativism. The Spanish Right was represented by the same faces and the same ideas, which did not bring much hope and enthusiasm.³⁶⁰

The administrative council of RD had given Fraga a vote of confidence for making a political alliance, but the result was disappointing. Carlos Argos wrote in the GODSA bulletin that 'the men who militate in RD must demonstrate and point out that the AP's manifesto has not meant any contradiction with the ideological schemes that we have strictly kept from the *Llamamiento para la Reforma Democrática* until today.'³⁶¹ Today, Carlos Argos declares that, in fact, he disagreed with Fraga's choice of partners and believed that RD had actually nothing to do with the new AP. Argos admits that he continued with Fraga out of respect for his person and their personal friendship. He recalls that many people, including him, warned Fraga of the mistake of forming a coalition with such Right-wing politicians, but Fraga did not listen. Fraga's stubbornness resulted in most RD members leaving the party. For them, Fraga's U-turn

³⁵⁸ *El País*, 10 October 1976, p. 8; In his *Un Objetivo Nacional* Fraga had already advocated the solution 'continuity with reform'. See Fraga, *Un Objetivo Nacional*, p. 194; Sevilla Merino, *La intervención de AP en el proceso constituyente de 1978*, PhD Thesis, p. 22.

³⁵⁹ *Triunfo*, No. 716, 16 October 1976, p. 11.

³⁶⁰ *El País*, 10 October 1976, p. 6.

to the Right was clear. In fact, Fraga was an isolated progressive member in a very conservative party.³⁶² According to *El País* some of Fraga's followers from the Balearic Islands expressed their discontent in a communiqué which read that 'according to their judgement, such alliances are not acceptable since they are in contradiction with the position that this group has promoted and, in good faith, proselytized'.³⁶³

Members of Silva's UDE and even some of Fernández de la Mora were also highly disappointed by AP's regressive character. Allegedly, a Christian Democrat was said to be happy with Silva's inclusion in AP because in that way it was left clear where Christian Democracy started and where neo-Falangism ended.³⁶⁴ On 6 October 1976, UDE members held a meeting to decide whether to unite with the *Equipo de la Democracia Cristiana* or with other Right-wing forces.³⁶⁵ As Silva records, during a meeting of the Spanish Christian Democratic forces held at the Hotel Ifa, in Madrid, he attempted to form an alliance with the *Equipo* that failed. Gil-Robles always blamed the Right-wing forces of the Spanish Christian Democracy for being "collaborationists" with the regime (Silva had been Minister of Public Works with Franco). According to Gil-Robles 'to accept these people would mean a total loss of prestige for [the Spanish] Christian Democracy in the eyes of the world'. In these circumstances, Silva proposed the incorporation of UDE with Fraga's AP, but the UDE members were unanimous in

³⁶¹ GODSA, *Boletín*, No. 3, September 1976, p. 5; *Ibid*, No. 4, October 1976, pp. 2-5.

³⁶² Testimony of Carlos Argos, 12 April 2000; According to Anxel Vence, Carlos Argos referred to AP's leadership as 'a wax museum'. See Anxel Vence, *Doctor Fraga y Mister Iribarne*, (Barcelona: Ed. Prensa Ibérica, 1995), p. 216. Richard Gunther, *El sistema de partidos políticos en España: génesis y evolución*, (Madrid: CIS, 1986), p. 97.

³⁶³ *El País*, 30 September 1976, p. 12.

³⁶⁴ *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 181, 30 October-5 November 1976, pp. 20-1; *Cambio-16*, 4-10 October 1976, pp. 12-3.

³⁶⁵ The *Equipo de la Democracia Cristiana* was formed by the *Izquierda Demócrata Cristiana* (IDC) with personalities such as Fernando Álvarez de Miranda, Iñigo Cavero y Óscar Alzaga; the *Izquierda Democrática* (ID) formed by Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez, Jaime Cortezo and Antonio Vazquez; the Federación Popular Democrática (FPD) formed by José María Gil-Robles, José María Gil-Robles (son), José Luis Hercé, Ángel Fernández Sepúlveda; and the regional parties Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV) led by Juan Ajuriaguerra and Xavier Arzalluz; the Unión Democrática de Catalunya (UDC) with Antón Cañellas and Pedro Coll Alentorn; a small radicalized Catalán group led by Antonio Miserás; the so-called Grupos de Zaragoza which were formed around professor José Luis Lacruz Verdejo; and the Unión Democrática del País Valenciano (UDPV) led by Vicente Ruiz Moraval. See Osorio, *De Orilla*, pp. 213-5

their negative response. Silva, however, decided to join AP, leaving the majority of the UDE members under Osorio's leadership.³⁶⁶ Although Silva provided funds from the *Banco Español de Crédito* and from CAMPSA (the Spanish petrol company), his departure did not affect the financial situation of the UDE since a number of its members including Alfonso Osorio, Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, Andrés Reguera, Bau Carpi and Ignacio Gómez Acebo, could also provide funds from various sources including banks and private companies.³⁶⁷

The Christian Democrat Federico Silva found in AP personalities of the Falange, Opus Dei, and even the Ultra-Right (Thomas de Carranza was a founding member of Blas Piñar's Ultra-Right party *Fuerza Nueva*). Such a collection of conservative groups undermined AP's acclaimed centrist tendency.³⁶⁸ In February 1976, for instance, Fernández de la Mora had declared that the term 'centre is nothing substantive, an accidental location, a resultant opportunism, a residue'. Before that, De la Mora had advocated the 'return to the 18 of July before the party system (*partitocracia*), class struggle, separatism and the parity with Europe'.³⁶⁹ Also, bitter disputes with Opus Dei-linked personalities, namely Laureano López Rodó, which led to Fraga's own dismissal from the Ministry of Information and Tourism in 1969, seem to have been forgotten.

Fraga complained that Suárez stole his idea of the centre but, as Carlos Argos recalls, the truth was that Fraga abandoned the centrist position when he created AP.³⁷⁰ Rogelio Baón believes that Fraga had realized (perhaps during their conversation on 8

³⁶⁶ Silva, *Memorias Políticas*, p. 345. Gil-Robles is quoted in Osorio, *De Orilla*, p. 216.

³⁶⁷ *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 181, 16-22 October 1976, p. 18.

³⁶⁸ A brief background of the 'Magnificent Seven' can be found in Rafael López-Pintor, "Francoist Reformers in Democratic Spain: The Popular Alliance and the Democratic Coalition", in Howard Penniman and Eusebio Mujal-León, *Spain at the Polls, 1977, 1979 and 1982. A study of the National Elections*. (AEI, 1985), pp. 191-196.

³⁶⁹ López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, p. 276.

³⁶⁹ Quoted in *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 181, 16-22 October 1976, p. 18.

³⁷⁰ Testimony of Carlos Argos, 12 April 2000.

September) that Suárez wanted to play the moderate card, and because he did not want to be left without a political place Fraga turned to Francoist society.³⁷¹ By allying himself with the rest of the AP founders, Fraga was implicitly renouncing a reformist position that he himself had defended in lectures, interviews, articles and books for years.³⁷² Fraga probably believed that RD's centrist manifesto would work for AP, but the outcome was completely the opposite. Following the presentation of AP, *Cuadernos para el Diálogo* wrote, 'the miracle has happened: the government can now boast of having an opposition in the Right, which allows it to play the role of the centre in public opinion.'³⁷³ Fraga had created AP six months before the creation of UCD, therefore, he could have continued his centrist pose by allying himself with true reformists. Yet, finance - provided by the alliance with first-rank Francoists - and a potentially large electorate seemed to be more appealing than a truly moderate political force with no finance or electorate guaranteed.

Still, Fraga's political U-turn was, perhaps, not completely unexpected. In May 1976, *Cuadernos para el Diálogo* already regarded Fraga as 'the great mystery of the [political] situation. [Fraga, who was the] first reformist of the Kingdom to accede to power, [...] has adopted attitudes lately that weaken his reformist wish (*que difuminan su voluntad reformadora*). His speeches are more intransigent and his policy less tolerant. His eagerness to carry on with a hardly democratizing reform, and his identity of criteria about this [reform] with president Arias would be clear symptoms of a turn to the Right.' According to the journal, Fraga's political turn was planned to calm Franco's cronies, the so-called bunker. Fraga wanted to get their confidence in order to

³⁷¹ Baón, "Fraga y su poliedro", p. 94.

³⁷² Testimony of Carlos Argos, 12 April 2000.

³⁷³ *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 181, 16-2 October 1976, p. 18.

be on the shortlist for the presidency that the Council of the Realm - formed by known Ultras - presented to the King in the event of Arias' resignation or dismissal.³⁷⁴

During a conversation with Osorio, Fraga justified the creation of AP by saying that it 'was necessary to unite forces which had some importance and identity in the face of Spanish individualism and regional fragmentation; that this type of alliance reduced to next to nothing the possibility of a *coup d'état*; and, although the alliance leaned towards the Right it did not lean towards the Ultra-Right, and it was not as if he had gone to the Right but that other members of the traditional Right had rectified [and swiftly] moved towards the Centre; and that they [AP] could also incorporate other Centrists groups.'³⁷⁵ However, in his relations with his new partners, at some point Fraga could not help acknowledging that 'politics make strange bedfellows'.³⁷⁶

Fraga was certain of AP's victory. In April 1977 according to a survey, 'more than forty per cent [of voters] would vote for *Alianza Popular*, whereas around twenty per cent would vote for the *Democratic Centre*'.³⁷⁷ But, Fraga's conviction proved to be wrong. Nonetheless, as the Christian Democrat Fernando Álvarez de Miranda argues, 'undoubtedly *Alianza Popular* emerged with many possibilities, and one has to recognize Fraga's merit in taming - with all the defects one could ask for - a recalcitrant and hostile Right to the idea of democratic participation.'³⁷⁸ Although that was really the outcome of the alliance, given the initial reason for AP's creation (funds and survey evidence of a possible victory of an AP-like party), one is more inclined to understand Fraga's decision to form AP as an opportunistic move which could give him both the

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 158, 8-14 May 1976, pp. 14-5.

³⁷⁵ Osorio, *De Orilla*, pp. 227-8.

³⁷⁶ *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, No. 183, 30 October-5 November 1976, pp. 20-1.

³⁷⁷ *Cambio-16*, 4-10 April 1977, p. 9.

³⁷⁸ Álvarez de Miranda, *Del "contubernio"*, p. 114.

presidency of the government and leadership of the transition. That position, however, was to be filled by Adolfo Suárez.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the political spectrum, Communist sympathizers celebrated an unexpected event. To the surprise of the whole nation, Adolfo Suárez legalised the PCE on 9 April 1976.³⁷⁹ As Fernando Abril Martorell declares, 'Suárez took the decision alone, without tutorials. Here, everyone was willing to open up the political system but no one dared to take the necessary steps. Arias' government, with Fraga, Areilza, etc. wanted to put limits to freedom, and that is impossible.'³⁸⁰ The president's decision had not been taken overnight, however. The road towards the legalisation of the PCE, Rodolfo Martín Villa, Interior Minister, recalls, started towards the end of 1976, but it was throughout the beginning of 1977 when the president and some others (including Martín Villa) confirmed their decision. They came to the conclusion that the inclusion of the Communists in a free political society would give the government and the political reform full democratic credibility.³⁸¹ Other members of the cabinet, namely Alfonso Osorio, remained hesitant and careful about taking such an important decision.³⁸² Yet, a bloody incident by at the hands of Ultra-right was to change definitely the course of events in favour of the Communists.

On Sunday 23 January nine members of staff of a legal office were assassinated by an Ultra-Right group in Atocha Street in Madrid. A massive demonstration followed organized by the PCE and the remaining Left-wing parties. The leaders of the PCE made a great effort to control its militants and the demonstration marched in silence,

³⁷⁹ *Cambio-16*, 18-24 April 1977, pp. 8-12.

³⁸⁰ Fernando Abril Martorell interviewed by Nativel Preciado, in Juliá *et al*, *Memoria de la Transición*, p. 207.

³⁸¹ Martín Villa, *Al servicio del Estado*, p. 61.

³⁸² Osorio, *De Orilla*, pp. 309-323.

pain and calm.³⁸³ The image of a revolutionary PCE was vanishing, and, according to Osorio, Adolfo Suárez started to question if they could contemplate general elections without the Communists.³⁸⁴ With this in mind, Suárez commissioned a survey in order to assess the position of the Spanish public to the legalisation of the Communist party. In October 1976, a similar survey showed that 25 per cent were in favour and 35 per cent opposed. In March, when the new survey was ready, the result showed 40 per cent in favour and 25 against, the rest undecided.³⁸⁵ This result proved to Suárez, among others, the impossibility of carrying on without the Communists. So far as the law was concerned, the modification of the Penal Code and the approval of a Decree-Law of electoral norms on 18 March 1977 (which definitely integrated the political parties as a key element of the constitutional regime) were not obstacles for the PCE. As mentioned above, Santiago Carrillo had modified the party statutes to make them compatible with Spanish requirements.³⁸⁶

As expected, the reaction to the Communist legalisation in Francoist circles was turbulent, and especially among the military, with Admiral Gabriel Pita, Minister of the Navy, resigning from his post to voice his disapproval.³⁸⁷ The legalization of the PCE also took the reformists by surprise. Manuel Fraga, for instance, judged the early legalisation of the Communists as ‘a grave political error and judicial farce’, and as ‘a true *coup d'état* that has transformed reform into rupture’.³⁸⁸ Alfonso Osorio also disagreed with Suárez’s decision but he, and those who shared his opinion, had to come

³⁸³ Victoria Prego, “La dialéctica de las pistolas”, in Juliá *et al*, *Memoria de la Transición*, pp. 178-9.

³⁸⁴ Osorio, *De Orilla*, p. 309.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 315.

³⁸⁶ Fernando April Martorell interviewed by Nativel Preciado in Juliá *et al*, *Memoria de la Transición*, p. 207; Martín Merchán, *Partidos Políticos*, p. 104.

³⁸⁷ The military elite sent a note to Suárez which encapsulates their bitter feeling for the legalisation of the PCE. López Rodó records a summary of the note. See López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, pp.308-9. See also, M.A. Bastenier, “El camino hacia las urnas”, in Juliá *et al*, *Memoria de la transición*, pp. 201-202.

³⁸⁸ Hernández, *Fue posible la concordia*, p. 65.

to terms with the reality.³⁸⁹ Anyway, not all reformists were of the same opinion. As Rodolfo Martín Villa recalls, ‘Santiago Carrillo, as the general secretary of the PCE, not only compromised himself by recognising and respecting the [national] flag, the monarchic form [of State] and the unity of Spain, but also maintained a position of collaboration with Suárez’s first cabinets in essential [matters], in a sincere eagerness to contribute to the establishment of democracy in Spain’.³⁹⁰ In any case, as Juan José Linz argues, ‘the democratic opposition at strategic moments shrewdly alternated between pushing and compromising, and the democratizing process went from the initial modest “reform”, initiated by the government, to a reform worked out with the democratic opposition (*reforma-pactada*), to a rupture with the past negotiated with the opposition (*ruptura-pactada*).³⁹¹ With the legalization of the PCE, there was only one political space to be occupied, the Centre, and one important leader without a party, President Suárez. The marriage proved to be ideal.

7.4. The emergence of Suárez’s ‘Unión de Centro Democrático’

Adolfo Suárez created the *Unión Centro Democrático* (UCD) on 3 May 1977, just a few weeks before the election of 15 June. The UCD has been defined by the journalist Abel Hernández as ‘a conglomerate of forces, some from the reformists of the regime, and others, from the moderate opposition. Secular and Catholic Spain converged in the UCD. There were Liberals, Christian Democrats, Populares, Conservatives, Social Democrats and Independents.’³⁹² The core of the UCD was the *Partido Popular*, which originated one year prior to the formation of UCD.³⁹³ In the

³⁸⁹ Osorio, *De orilla*, p. 321

³⁹⁰ Martín Villa, *Al servicio del Estado*, p. 75.

³⁹¹ Linz, “Transitions from authoritarian regimes”, p. 28.

³⁹² Hernández, *Fue posible la concordia*, p. 77.

³⁹³ Not to be confused with José María Aznar’s party of the same name.

spring of 1976 Pío Cabanillas and José Luis Álvarez called on politicians with a Christian Democratic background, or affinity, to create a modern centrist party with an ample popular base. Thus, both leaders initiated talks with members of the moderate opposition, namely Liberals and Christian Democrats, which had started forming political parties and had already been forming alliances since 1974.³⁹⁴ These parties included the *Izquierda Demócrata Cristiana* led by Fernando Álvarez de Miranda and Iñigo Cavero; members of FEDISA such as Manuel Fraile; the *Tácitos* including Marcelino Oreja, Landelino Lavilla, José Luis Ruiz Navarro, Gabriel Peña, José Rodríguez Soler and Luis Gamir; delegates of the *Movimiento del Apostolado Secular*; Social Democrats such as José Pedro Pérez Llorca; centrist politicians such as Oscar Alzaga; and the non-Francoist elements of the UDE. After a series of meetings they resolved to form a party with Christian Democratic roots. The new party, they decided, was to be named *Partido Popular Independiente* or *Partido Popular Democrático*.³⁹⁵

The *Partido Popular* (PP) was presented on 10 November 1976 in a semi-public event which was attended by around sixty people, including prominent political figures including José María de Areilza, Pío Cabanillas, José Luis Álvarez, Miguel Herrero de Miñón and José Luis Ruiz Navarro.³⁹⁶ As José María de Areilza recalls, ‘the participants manifested the absolute need to avoid the polarization of Spanish political life into two antagonistic blocks [...] The *Partido Popular* offers an alternative [...] This intermediate option, essential for the stability and the consolidation of the democracy, demands the joint performance of Independents and Liberals, Christian Democrats or Social Democrats. [...] The ideological differences [...] are easily

³⁹⁴ Gunther *et al*, *El sistema de partidos*, pp.109-110.

³⁹⁵ Álvarez de Miranda, *Del "contubernio"*, pp. 101-4; *Cambio-16*, No. 231, 10-16 May 1976, p. 24.

³⁹⁶ For a list of PP members see *El País*, 12 November 1976, p. 11.

overcome today'.³⁹⁷ According to Carlos Huneus, the PP was in fact, 'to a great extent, the concretion of political approaches made before by *Tácito*', and despite its clear Christian Democratic roots members of the party classified it as 'inter-ideological'. The PP was the first party formed by politicians whose origins were both in the Francoist regime and the democratic opposition alike.³⁹⁸ The PP was also the first non-Leftist political party publicly to propose the legalization of the PCE.³⁹⁹

For some time, the leader of the group had not been chosen but, according to Fernando Álvarez de Miranda, 'the promoting group of the PP wanted to use the good image of the Count of Motrico (José María de Areilza) in the Christian Democrat sector'.⁴⁰⁰ But, following the first party congress on 6 February 1977, which further alliances transformed into the *Centro Democrático* (CD), Pío Cabanillas became president and José María de Areilza vice-president. Allegedly, they wanted Areilza to run for the presidency of the government but, apart from internal discrepancies, it was the government and its hidden agenda that was mainly responsible.⁴⁰¹ Not only did Areilza stand as the main rival to Adolfo Suárez for the presidency, but also he was already occupying the coveted centre space. Furthermore, Areilza's successes during the PP campaign worried Suárez who, by March, had not finalized the organization of his own political party.⁴⁰² The CD was well-organized, had a superior panel of moderate politicians and a centrist political ideology (rooted in Christian Democracy) which had been inherited from the PP and previously from FEDISA and *Tácito*. The

³⁹⁷ Areilza, *Cuadernos*, pp. 63-4.

³⁹⁸ Huneus, *La UCD*, pp. 154-6.

³⁹⁹ Areilza, *Cuadernos*, p. 82. A few months earlier, *Tácito* had written '[we] believe that it is better to recognise and admit the Communist party as an existing reality than let it manoeuvre from clandestinely'. *YA*, 2 April 1976. According to Huneus, Alfonso Osorio disagreed with this line moving away from the activities of the group. Huneus, *La UCD*, p. 102.

⁴⁰⁰ Álvarez de Miranda, *Del "contubernio"*, pp. 103.

⁴⁰¹ Areilza, *Cuadernos*, pp. 91-95. 7.

⁴⁰² Osorio, *De Orilla*, pp. 334-5.

CD was, therefore, Suárez's best hope and the president was not going to miss an opportunity to grab the leadership of the party.

The idea of the CD members that they integrate all moderate parties into one single force failed, however. Ironically, many Christian Democrats did not join the PP or the CD. More specifically, the *Izquierda Democrática* and the *Federación Popular Democrática* of José María Gil-Robles (son) did not join.⁴⁰³ One year before the elections, the *Equipo de la Democracia Cristiana*, of which Gil-Robles' party was a member, was important enough to become one of the main pillars of Spanish political life. But, according to the historian Javier Tusell, 'its [Christian Democracy] sectarianism and identification, on occasions, with a Left which its own electorate repudiated, reduced it to a purely testimonial position'.⁴⁰⁴

During a dinner held at the house of Landelino Lavilla on Saturday 19 March, Alfonso Osorio told the other guests – CD members Pío Cabanillas, Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo, Juan Carlos Guerra, José Luis Álvarez, Fernando Álvarez de Miranda, Iñigo Cavero, José Pedro Pérez Llorca, Celso García and the Marquis of Urquijo - that the government believed that Areilza wanted to substitute Suárez rather than support him. If that was the case and CD's members agreed with this idea, they could go on with Areilza, but they should forget about government support. CD needed governmental support and, given the internal dissent over Areilza's leadership, the choice was clear.⁴⁰⁵

On Tuesday 22 March, Suárez met Pío Cabanillas and José María de Areilza. On following days Suárez met other CD personalities, namely Francisco Fernández

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 338; Huneus, *La UCD*, pp. 156-7. By then, *Izquierda Democrática* had suffered a serious set back over their policy towards the PCE. Some of its members, including Fernando Álvarez de Miranda and Iñigo Cavero had left the party over their disagreement to collaborate with the PCE to form the *Partido Popular Demócrata Cristiano*. Powell, *España en democracia*, p. 157; *Cambio-16*, 29 March-4 April 1976, p. 7; *Cambio-16*, 12-18 April 1976, pp. 16-7.

Ordoñez, Fernando Álvarez de Miranda, José Luis Álvarez, Joaquín Garrigues and Ignacio Camuñas. Following his meeting with Suárez, José María de Areilza was certain that,

Suárez did not want any sort of competitor, neither today nor tomorrow, in his presidency. Out of the two rivals he could have, only two worry him today: Manuel Fraga and myself. In order not to have two adversaries [Suárez] makes a pact with one [Areilza]. [But] what is the pact? The pact does not exist. In his [Suárez's] words there is a revelation of a political purpose of great importance. It consists of taking a heavy majority of between 150 and 200 deputies to the Cortes, [who are] able to control the Parliament alone. What for? To have a lasting cabinet, to finish the reform, to draw up the Constitution and put into practice the necessary economic and social plan [...] What [political] color can that project have? Nowadays, there is no free space but the Centre.

A few days later, Areilza resolved to leave the PP and the CD.⁴⁰⁶

On 3 May 1977 the *Unión de Centro Democrático* (UCD) was created under the leadership of the president, Adolfo Suárez. According to Manuel Núñez Pérez, Adolfo Suárez's UCD was an enterprise whose objective was to pass from an authoritarian system to a democracy in peace and with everyone's collaboration.⁴⁰⁷ UCD was made up of a combination of moderate members of the Francoist regime such as Pío Cabanillas, Francisco Fernández Ordoñez and Adolfo Suárez (although Suárez was never considered part of the *aperturista* sector), and members of the moderate opposition such as Fernando Álvarez de Miranda, Iñigo Cavero, Joaquín Garrigues Walker and Ignacio Camuñas. Thus, UCD was composed of a total of thirteen political parties which themselves were made up of smaller groups, coming to a total of forty-three.⁴⁰⁸ In contrast with the historic Socialists, Communists, *Partido Nacionalista*

⁴⁰⁴ Quoted in Gunther *et al*, *El sistema de partidos*, p. 129. See also, *Ibid.*, pp. 125-9.

⁴⁰⁵ Osorio, *De Orilla*, pp. 335-6; Attard, *Vida y Muerte*, pp. 39-40; Cierva, *La Derecha*, pp. 350-2.

⁴⁰⁶ Areilza, *Cuadernos*, pp. 122-3.

⁴⁰⁷ Testimony of Manuel Núñez Pérez, 22 September 1999.

⁴⁰⁸ The thirteen larger parties were: (i) the *Federación de Partidos Democráticos* made up of nine smaller parties and led by Joaquín Garrigues Walker and Antonio Fontán, among others; (ii) the *Federación del Partido Popular* consisting of seven parties and led by Pío Cabanillas, Pedro Pérez Llorca, José Luis Ruiz Navarro, among others; (iii) *Federación Social Demócrata* formed by ten political parties and with politicians like José Ramón Lasuén; (iv) the *Partido Social Demócrata* formed by six parties and led by Francisco Fernández Ordoñez, Rafael Arias Salgado and Luis González Seara; (v) the *Unión Demócrata Murciana* led by Antonio Pérez Crespo; (vi) the *Unión Canaria* led by Lorenzo Olarte Cullen; (vii) the *Partido Gallego Independiente* led by José Luis Meilán; (viii) the *Partido Social Demócrata Independiente*; (ix) the *Partido Social Andalúz* led by Manuel Clavero Arévalo; (x) the *Acción*

Vasco (PNV) and the Catalan *Convergencia I Unió*, none of the parties that formed UCD had a long history. In fact, most of them had been created during the period of the transition and only very few before Franco's death.⁴⁰⁹ UCD's political programme had been mainly provided by the *Tácito* group although it also included contributions from other important members.⁴¹⁰ Thus, despite their inexperience as far as political parties were concerned, the long trajectory of the moderate Francoists, and more specifically, of the moderate opposition in their determination to establish a democratic system in Spain proved essential to building and running a centrist party. Suárez's party proposed:

To offer the electorate a moderate position, like the one represented by non-Marxist preponderant parties in Europe, of Christian Democratic, Liberal and Social Democrat affiliation, in order to support president Suárez's policy in the next elections, in the definite and peaceful consolidation of a stable democracy in Spain.⁴¹¹

The UCD won the first democratic elections since the 1930s with 35 per cent of the votes confirming Adolfo Suárez as president. The electorate chose the centre option rather than the extreme parties. On the one hand, the failure of Manuel Fraga's AP must have been extremely disappointing and also humiliating, considering they achieved fourth place after the Communists. On the other, the Communists themselves, despite a third place, also failed to attract a large share of the electorate. The Left-wingers voted for the Socialists instead, which stood as the second political force in the country after Suárez's UCD.

Regionalista Extremeña led by Enrique Sánchez de León Morcillo, among others; (xi) the *Partido Demócrata Popular* led by Ignacio Camuñas; (xii) *Partido Demócrata Cristiano* led by Fernando Álvarez de Miranda and Iñigo Cavero, among others; and (xiii) the *Federación Social Independiente* led by Jesús Sáncho Rof. See Martín Merchán, *Partidos Políticos*, pp. 206-210.

⁴⁰⁹ Huneus, *La UCD*, pp. 140-6.

⁴¹⁰ Testimony of Manuel Núñez Pérez, 22 September 1999.

⁴¹¹ Quoted in Gunther *et al*, *El sistema de partidos*, p. 116.

The result was as follows⁴¹²:

<u>Congress:</u>	UCD	34.6 per cent - 166 seats
	PSOE	29.3 per cent - 118 seats
	PCE	9.4 per cent - 20 seats
	AP	8.3 per cent - 16 seats
	PDC♣	2.8 per cent - 11 seats
	PNV	1.7 per cent - 8 seats
	Others	13.9 per cent - 11 seats

♣PDC stands for *Partido Demócrata de Cataluña*

The arrival of democratic elections in 1977 marked the beginning of a new era in Spanish politics and indeed in society in general. The new democratic Cortes was the successful result of the *ruptura pactada*. For the first time the political tendencies of the country converged in a single parliament, the Spanish Cortes. By voting in favour of Suárez's political reform, the members of the Francoist Cortes avoided their political withdrawal, which would have resulted in the victory of the rupturist option, and consequently guaranteed their continuity in active politics. In fact, seventy-seven members of the new democratic Cortes had also been part of the Francoist Cortes and were concentrated mainly in AP, and some in the UCD. Thus, only forty-four of the one-hundred and sixty-five UCD parliamentarians (16.3 per cent) had been members of the Francoist Cortes, whereas a staggering thirteen out of sixteen of the new AP parliamentarians had been members of the Francoist Cortes. Also, there were four old members of the Francoist Cortes amongst those labelled 'Others'. The Francoist élite also seemed to have been replaced by more humble professions, thus far marginalized by the Francoist Cortes. In 1977, a variety of professions, including manual workers, technicians, employees and other professional sectors occupied the new Cortes. Furthermore, the dramatic decrease in military men to almost none was also another

⁴¹² Results taken from Augusto Delkáder, "Las primeras elecciones libres", in Juliá *et al*, *Memoria de la transición*, p. 231.

symptom of the change in regime.⁴¹³ In any case, as the sociologist Richard Gunther argues, ‘a common and very wrong supposition, specially in the period 1976-1977, was to believe that to have been linked to the Movement was synonymous of having Right-wing political and social values; although, in fact, there were many Right-wing “Independents”, the most important [being] Adolfo Suárez, Fernando Abril and their most immediate collaborators’.⁴¹⁴

Thus, given the Francoist character of Manuel Fraga’s AP, we could say that the bulk of the UCD members of the old Francoist Cortes might have been identified with the reformist sector of the regime.⁴¹⁵ Therefore, the new Spanish parliament was overwhelmingly reformist in membership along with members of the democratic opposition. A peaceful transition to a democratic regime had been made possible. Adolfo Suárez had succeeded in his job. According to the British journalist William Chislett, however, it was the King who had succeeded. ‘The King’, Chislett wrote in *The Times*, ‘as the successor to General Franco, has achieved the remarkable feat of being at the helm of a country which has moved from dictatorship to free elections in just eighteen months without serious upheavals apart from the sad deaths of sixty-seven people in political violence. The King’s achievement represents some kind of historical precedent. There is no doubt from whom he has learnt the art of political survival.’⁴¹⁶ Without the collaboration of rest of the population, however, the King would not have succeeded. The next step, that is, to consolidate the newborn democracy, was less easy.

⁴¹³ Salustiano del Campo *et al*, “La élite política.española”, in *Sistema* No. 48, March, 1982, pp. 37-8.

⁴¹⁴ Gunther *et al*, *El sistema de partidos*, p. 123.

⁴¹⁵ López Rodó, *Memorias IV*, pp. 320-1.

Conclusion

As seen in this Chapter, Franco's death did not imply a dramatic change in Spanish political structures. Don Juan Carlos, who could not afford to alienate the Orthodox Francoists, had no other choice but to re-appoint the loyal Francoist Arias Navarro as President of the Government. But a few months after Arias' re-appointment it was clear that he would not be the man to lead Spain to a democratic system. Despite popular pressure, Arias refused to reform the old system and clung to the idea of continuing the Francoist regime without Franco. During Arias' second presidency (December 1975-July 1976), the reformist Ministers of his cabinet, specially Manuel Fraga (Interior Ministry) attempted to reform the system from above. But, Fraga's reform proposal proved insufficient for the democratic opposition and even for members of his own team. Fraga was expected to lead the transition to a German-type of democratic regime, but his performance in the Interior Minister damaged his reformist image further. Fraga gained a reputation as *duro* or 'tough'.

Popular uprisings and an active democratic opposition exerted enough pressure to provoke a cabinet crisis. The King asked for Arias' resignation on 2 July 1976, and surprised everyone by appointing Arias' Minister of the Movement, Adolfo Suárez, President. Manuel Fraga and José María de Areilza, who refused to participate in Suárez's cabinet, created their own political parties instead. Their parties would attract the bulk of the regime. Fraga chose to change his long-standing centrist position to form AP, a Right-wing political party, with hard-liners of the regime. Secured finance and favourable opinion polls outweighed his acclaimed centrist mantra. Areilza led the centrist party *Partido Popular*, which later became the *Unión de Centro Democrático*. President Suárez took over the leadership of the UCD, displacing his rival Areilza.

⁴¹⁶ *The Times*, 17 June 1977, p. 16.

UCD's success in the elections confirmed Suárez's presidency with a democratic mandate.

Suárez's new cabinet showed signs of real willingness to change things. The main achievement was the holding of free democratic elections for the first time in more than forty years. Nonetheless, such an achievement could not have been made possible without the prior approval of the Law of Political Reform by the Francoist Cortes. The Reform Law approved in November 1976 'converted Spain into a democracy based on universal suffrage'.⁴¹⁷ As this Chapter has tried to demonstrate, the success of Suárez's reform, specifically the Reform Law, resulted from a combination of factors. Firstly, the King favoured the process of reform and advocated a democratic monarchy. Secondly, a strong democratic opposition used its influence not only to accelerate the process of reform but also help to guarantee the implementation of a minimum programme of reforms. Other sectors of Spanish society namely the press, the trade unions and even some members of the Catholic Church also influenced the population and exercised great pressure to the government. And thirdly, the long-standing preparation of the *aperturista*/reformist sector of the regime for a post-Francoist era made a significant contribution.

By 1976, the regime reformists were aware that the social crisis could not be controlled much longer. Hence a number of reformists who were part of Suárez's government elaborated the basis for a transformation of regime into a democracy 'from above', in an attempt to avoid the consequences of a rupturist option. Some regime members may have voted in favour of the Reform Law in a genuine wish for the establishment of a German-type of democratic system in Spain, but others surely voted in favour of the Law if only to guarantee their political survival. In record time,

Suárez's government applied enough reforms to make democratic elections possible on June 1977. Before the elections, Suárez also legalized the PCE, which took the regime as a whole – and Spain in general - by surprise. Despite the discrepancy of regime members, including some *aperturistas*/reformists, the regime learned to live with the Communists. After a long journey, the Spanish democratic Cortes housed parliamentarians of the plural society that was Spain. For the first time in a long while, not just one person, but a handful of Francoists (AP), a bulk of reformists (UCD) and the democratic opposition (some PSOE, PCE, PDC, PNV, etc.) elected by the population would decide the fate of the country.

⁴¹⁷ Carr & Fusi, *Dictatorship to Democracy*, p. 222.

Conclusion

After nearly forty years of existence, Franco's regime ended with his death in 1975. Two days later, Prince Juan Carlos was proclaimed King of Spain and Head of State, marking the beginning of a new era. The transformation process from a dictatorial regime into a democracy was made possible thanks to the presence of a number of key actors. These actors included King Juan Carlos, the democratic opposition, pressure groups, the Spanish population, and the regime moderates, *aperturistas* and reformists. Studies on the transition to democracy in Spain have covered many aspects of the process, including the role of individual actors. Yet, a study of the trajectory of the regime moderates, *aperturistas* and reformists, has been so far neglected. The moderates, *aperturistas* and reformists, helped to implement Don Juan Carlos' reform plans, and played an essential role in the approval of the Reform Law. The starting date of many studies on the transition process is normally taken as 1973, when Admiral Carrero Blanco was assassinated marking the unstoppable demise of the regime. Other studies start in 1969, when Don Juan Carlos was appointed Franco's successor. But, the regime moderates' awareness for the need to modernize the regime dates from as early as the 1950s. The purpose of this thesis has been the study of the trajectory of the regime moderates from the end of the 1950s until 1977. This study is essential to understand their contribution and positioning during the crucial time of the transition to democracy.

Although several *aperturistas* appeared as early as the mid-1950s, they mainly emerged during the economic boom of the 1960s as a result of the Francoists' reluctance to introduce reforms. Franco's regime underwent important changes throughout its

nearly forty-years of its existence. The outstanding performance of the economy under the command of the Opus Dei-linked technocrats led to the creation of a large middle class in Spain, and brought unparalleled prosperity to many Spaniards. The economic boom was not matched by an appropriate programme of political reforms, which brought to the surface the contradictions between Franco's institutions and the economic capitalist system that had developed in Spain. The so-called 'real Spain', which was enjoying better standards of living but was also starting to be conscious of the political limitations of the Spanish regime, contrasted with the 'official Spain', which refused to accept the need for political reform. During the 1960s, some members of the Francoist élite, however, understood that the most appropriate method for a peaceful transition to a post-Francoist Spain was the introduction of some reforms. At that point, the *aperturistas*' proposals were very mild, but still contrasted with the stubbornness of the *inmovilista* sector. In particular, the *aperturistas* supported an increase in popular participation in political affairs within the boundaries of the Movement, if only to avoid the emergence of a strong underground political force. In the late 1960s, *aperturistas* such as Manuel Fraga advocated the establishment of a network of political associations regulated by the Interior Ministry and outside the Movement.

The Francoist legal system, however, prohibited the formation of political associations and hence political parties. Until the 1964 approval of the Law of Associations, various laws had ratified the right of association. But the theoretical recognition of the right of association did not, in practice, grant permission to associate and meet freely. The 1964 Law gave people the opportunity to create entities with cultural, not political, purposes. On those grounds, some people, with different degrees of connection to the regime, developed alternative ways to meet in order to discuss the country's political problems. These included private gatherings, publications

(newspapers and magazines, which became popular following the 1966 Press Law), study groups or clubs (which normally were formed around a publication), trading or commercial societies, cultural associations and political dinners. Some of those who met in these gatherings became part of the *aperturistas* and some others – the most progressive – part of the democratic opposition (because they decided to ‘break’ with the legality of the regime and create their own political parties).

The legal ways allegedly to participate in the politics of the State were through the so-called ‘natural channels’ that is to say the family, municipality and unions, all represented in the Cortes. But, in reality not even the *procuradores* in the Cortes were able to make political decisions without Franco’s prior agreement. Some *procuradores* regarded the family sector of the Cortes as their only hope to increase popular representation through a network of associations of heads of families. The approval in 1967 of the Organic Law of the State, the Law of Family Representation, and the Organic Law of the Movement revived hopes for greater participation in national politics. Yet, all of them failed to modernize the system of representation.

The period between 1967 and 1969 saw the emergence of a series of laws, which could have reformed the aspect of associationism in the Spanish political system. After an intense three-day debate in the summer of 1969, the Movement’s National Council approved a bill (the Legal Basis of Associations within the Movement) whereby political associations could be created within the boundaries of the regime. It only needed Franco’s signature, but Franco did not ratify it. To that end, the fact that the National Council (specially the *aperturista* sector) voted in favour of the bill implied the awareness for the need of greater participation in national politics, if only to avoid the formation of a parallel and clandestine Spain. In the summer of 1969, the Caudillo appointed Don Juan Carlos as his successor and the stability of the government suffered

a serious setback when inner problems of the regime were publicly exposed during the Matesa scandal. On the one hand, the Prince's appointment led to the widespread belief that Francoism was secure in his hands. A few, however, claimed to have been aware of the Prince's plans to reign over a democracy. On the other hand, the financial scandal brought to the limelight the acute separations between the different currents of opinion already existent within the regime. The regime showed its weaknesses infuriating Franco.

Meanwhile, despite Franco's refusal to ratify the 'Legal Bases for Associations', the issue of political associations remained. In the autumn of 1969, Fernández-Miranda proposed to replace the old 'National Delegation of Associations' with one of 'Family, Political Action and Participation'. The debate over the approval of the Minister's proposal renewed the unresolved conflict between *inmovilistas* and *aperturistas*. The debate prompted a group of National Councillors to send a note to the Minister urging him not to delay the process of associationism. Their plea was made in vain. Once again Franco ordered the council to withdraw the proposal, and the issue of associations was frozen. It was clear that Franco refused to advance, but it was also clear that a feeling in favour of reforms was now more widely spread among members of the regime, and that those who believed in the need for reform began to speak louder than ever.

Such was the case of Manuel Fraga, who after his dismissal from the Ministry of Information and Tourism in July 1969, set off on a political trajectory of his own. Fraga became the 'man of the Centre', and was regarded by many as the only one politician capable of providing an alternative to Carrero Blanco's cabinet. Fraga advocated a centrist policy of reforms, including the right for the Spanish people to associate, which fell, however, quite short of the demands of the democratic opposition.

Until then, Fraga's main achievement had been the approval by the Cortes of the Press Law in 1966. Even though this law was criticized for its restrictive character, it did contribute to the deterioration of the Francoist foundations by opening the frontiers of information. Yet, while he was minister, Fraga's reputation as a 'hard-worker' and *aperturista* was tarnished by his authoritarian character. For instance, Fraga did not protest when repression was used against in demonstrations or when there were persecutions of individuals in the cultural world and applications of the death penalty. Likewise, his *aperturista* reputation contrasted with a series of incomprehensible decisions such as the seizure, fine and closure of a number of newspapers and journals, whose launching had been authorized by him. The only time Fraga's reformist side overshadowed his authoritarian side was between 1969 and 1975, outside the cabinet. From 1969, Fraga travelled around Spain delivering progressive speeches in favour of political reform and the introduction of a system of political associations. He secured the support of many young reformists, who became part of his study group later on.

The beginning of the 1970s saw the emergence of the political dinners organized by Antonio Gavilanes' *Centro de Estudios de Problemas Contemporáneos*. Like Fraga, the guests at these dinners denounced the absence of possibilities to meet and discuss politics legally. Political dinners became a temporary substitute for political associations. The political dinners of the early 1970s coincided with the (quasi-official) political positioning of Prince Juan Carlos. Through several interviews conducted by foreign journalists and published abroad, the Prince hinted at his intention to reign over a European-type of democratic regime, which implied his acceptance of a pluralistic society. At the same time, the issue of political associations had been frozen by the Francoist authorities. Franco's entourage was determined to fight against the pressing demands for reform, but an unexpected incident shook the stability of the

regime. Carrero Blanco, guarantor of the continuity of the regime, was assassinated by ETA. The *aperturistas* and reformists of the regime as well as the democratic opposition knew the regime would not survive much longer after Franco's death. Many started to prepare themselves for a Spain without Franco.

In those days, two major political groups emerged into the Spanish political scene directly from the reformist sector of the regime: Manuel Fraga's study group, GODSA, and the *Tácito*. GODSA was created in 1973 with the objective of building the foundations for a political association and perhaps eventually for a political party. In fact, this is the study group that would eventually write the political manifesto of Fraga's first political party. In those days, and while Spanish ambassador in London, Fraga was regarded by many as the only politician capable of bringing democracy to Spain. *Tácito* was also created in 1973 by forward-looking youth linked, directly or indirectly, to the ACNP and its Christian Democrat philosophy. Both groups wanted to arrive at a democratic system not by breaking with Franco's regime but by reforming it.

By the time these two groups were well consolidated, the Francoist Cortes approved Arias' Statute of Political Associations by Decree-law on 21 December 1974. From an initial idea of Prince Juan Carlos to unite the moderate forces of the regime, the government organized the creation of a political association under the leadership of Manuel Fraga, José María de Areilza and Federico Silva. In Fraga's view, an association could only succeed if its programme contained a series of unquestionable conditions. The conditions included a parliament with a principal chamber elected by universal suffrage, the incorporation of the basic civic rights of the western world, freedom of association and trade unions and a friendly separation of Church and State all under the Monarchy of Don Juan Carlos. However, by early January 1975, Fraga's acclaimed centrist programme was rejected by Arias' government. In turn, Fraga's

refusal to form an association under Arias' statute was one of the main reasons why the so-called 'Triple Alliance' did not prosper.

Following the failure of Arias' plan, seventy-five personalities linked in different degrees to the regime, including members of GODSA and *Tácito*, created a commercial company in July 1975. The creation of FEDISA demonstrated the failure of Arias' statute, and the differences between the so-called 'official' and the 'real Spain'. In fact, as the Matesa scandal had demonstrated a few years earlier, FEDISA demonstrated that the 'official Spain' was not united. FEDISA was perhaps the most important negative response that the regime received from personalities who came from nearly all groups that had collaborated with it, including ex-ministers, and also men of high professional calibre. Therefore, it is worth emphasizing that despite their advocacy of a German type democracy (excluding the presence of the Communist Party), FEDISA's demands for reform stood in clear contradiction with the regime's politics. The Caudillo died on 22 November 1975 in the midst of a social crisis and with an important part of his regime in favour of reform. Prince Juan Carlos took over as Head of State and was crowned King Juan Carlos I two days later. There was a general acclaim for change from not just the Spanish population and the democratic opposition but also from the regime reformists. To everyone's surprise and disappointment, however, King Juan Carlos re-appointed Arias as President of the Government.

Despite popular pressure, Arias refused to reform the old system and clung to the idea of continuing the Francoist regime without Franco. During Arias' second presidency (December 1975-July 1976), the reformist Ministers of his cabinet, especially Manuel Fraga (Interior Ministry) attempted to reform the system from above. But, Fraga appeared more liberal than he really was. Fraga advocated a tightly controlled liberalization of the regime, not a fully democratic regime. His wish to

reform the regime may have been sincere, but it was also insufficient. Fraga's reform proposal proved insufficient not just for the democratic opposition but for members of his own team too. Fraga's performance in the Interior Ministry damaged his reformist image further. Fraga gained a reputation as *duro* or 'tough'. On many occasions, he allowed the use of police charges replicating the repression used during Franco's time.

Popular uprisings often organized by an active democratic opposition created enough pressure to provoke a cabinet crisis. The King took the initiative and asked for Arias' resignation on 2 July 1976, and surprised everyone by appointing a near unknown, Adolfo Suárez. Manuel Fraga and José María de Areilza, who refused to participate in Suárez's cabinet, created their own political parties instead. Their parties would attract the bulk of the regime. On the Conservative side there was Manuel Fraga who chose to change his long-standing centrist position to form *Alianza Popular*, a Right-wing political party, with hard-liners of the regime. The assurance of finance and favourable opinion polls outweighed his acclaimed centrist mantra. On the Centre side, José María de Areilza led the centrist party *Partido Popular*, which after subsequent developments became the *Unión de Centro Democrático*. President Suárez took over the leadership of the UCD, displacing his rival Areilza.

From the start, Suárez's cabinet showed signs of real willingness to change things. The main achievement was the holding of free democratic elections for the first time in more than forty years. Nonetheless, such an achievement could not have been made possible without the prior approval of the Law of Political Reform by the Francoist Cortes. The Reform Law approved in November 1976 did away legally with the old Francoist Cortes and gave way to a new democratic Cortes. Following Franco's death, the regime had no *raison d'être*, and the regime members could not contain the spectacular changes in the Spanish society, which had been at odds with Franco's

regime for years. In fact, the reformists, who were part of Suárez's government, helped to deliver the King's reform plans, which would avoid the consequences of the rupture option, proposed by the democratic opposition. Generational changes in regime circles, substantial socio-economic changes, mounting pressure of the population and the democratic opposition, and above all, the King's advocacy of change, proved to be essential for the overwhelming acceptance of the Reform Law by the Francoist Cortes. The success of the Law was also largely the result of the moderates' early awareness and advocacy of the need for political reform, as this thesis has tried to prove. It is impossible to say who, among the Francoist *procuradores*, advocated a deep reform of the system. Some *procuradores* may have genuinely wished for a true transformation of the regime, but others surely sought to guarantee their political survival. Anyway, by 1976, the number of regime members who advocated reform had increased with the arrival of the young reformists in the late 1960s and early 1970s. They were basically the majority in Cortes.

Suárez's government applied enough reforms to make democratic elections possible in June 1977. Before the elections, Suárez also legalized the PCE, a decision that took the regime as a whole – and Spain in general - by surprise. Despite strong discrepancies between regime members, including some *aperturistas*/reformists, the regime learned to live with the Communists as part of the new Spanish society. After a long journey, the Spanish Cortes, finally a proper Parliament housed parliamentarians of the plural society that Spain had always been.

In summary, given the lack of research on the subject, this thesis offers a study of the political careers of the moderate members of Franco's regime (as part of a group of actors who made possible the success of the transition to democracy in Spain)

between the 1960s and 1970s. This detailed examination indicates that the participation of *aperturistas*/reformists in the process of transition to democracy had not been a decision taken overnight. It is clear that after Carrero's death in 1973, or, more to the point, after Franco's death in 1975, many members of the regime appeared to favour a democratic regime under Juan Carlos (without the Communist Party) merely as a strategy for political survival. But, as I have tried to prove throughout this thesis, there were people within the regime who had advocated the introduction of different degrees of reform already from the mid-1950s onwards, and particularly throughout the 1960s; in other words, well before their political survival was clearly at stake. It goes without saying, however, that after 1975 their willingness to participate in this process was undoubtedly conditioned by the new political climate in Spain. The lack of political reforms implemented by the Caudillo put the political survival of the regime, including that of its reformist members, at risk. But, their participation in the process of democratizing Spain was a natural step after their long-standing advocacy of reform. During the transition process, the regime's reformists acted as a bridge between the hard-liners of the regime and a strong democratic opposition, helping King Juan Carlos, Adolfo Suárez and Torcuato Fernández-Miranda to implement the 1976 Reform Law which did away with the Francoist political structures. The ultimate importance of the regime reformist in the transition to democracy, therefore, cannot be understood in isolation. It is beyond question, however, that the lack of a group of regime reformists would have yielded a different transition process.

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