

Spain: out of the 18th century

by A. Ruiz Salvador

Sooner or later, while away from Spain, every Spaniard has been asked the question: What is going to happen when Franco dies? An obvious, but also a surprising question for many a Spaniard who, at best, might have asked himself - what would happen if Franco were to die. Suddenly faced with the certainty of the when the death of the General no longer a remote possibility, the startled Spaniard - often for the first time in his life - had to speculate about a future for which he had not been prepared. Wish-

had shown its scorn for Franco and all he represented, as well as its hope that November 20th was indeed a new beginning. Europe would not tolerate Francoism, as it had not tolerated Franco: it was willing to bet on Juan Carlos, but was also warning that it was now up to the King and his Government to convince everybody that Spain was no longer Franco's Spain. The message delivered, the Western world as well as Spain remained at the end of 1975 in a wait-and-see situation.

Compared to the previous 36, to say the least,

book written by his cousin and private secretary.

The Arias Navarro Government, of course, acted - newspapers were confiscated, political rallies were broken up by the police, political leaders were arrested, pro-amnesty demonstrations were dispersed by rubber bullets. There were deaths and there was torture - but to no avail. A country that refused to be intimidated any longer after 36 years of repression, simply could not be stopped; it became obvious that the lid could not be put back on again, that the Francoist political system didn't work because it did not allow room to work from within. The King called on Adolfo Suárez to preside as premier over the dismantlement of the system itself. The question of whether Francoism could survive without Franco was answered in July 1976 - No.

There were bad omens for Francoism earlier in the Spring, what we may call its Ides of May: The Osasuna soccer team from Pamplona (Spain's political ultraright capital) went down to third division - and there is no fourth. Franco followers tried to stage a demonstration on the 6 month anniversary of his death at the Plaza de Oriente, and it took a single policeman to disperse them. The Francoist Parliament appointed Suárez, virtually an unknown then, and not the other candidate as an M.P. - considering that the defeated candidate was the Marquis of Villaverde (Franco's son in law), who had summarized his platform in one line ("To vote for me is to vote for Franco"), the defeat, in its symbolism, was hard to ignore, and the King made his move.

TOWARDS THE 18TH CENTURY

On October 23, 1975 - during the period between the September executions and the death of Franco - the *Christian Science Monitor* published a cartoon in which Don Quixote (symbolizing Spain) was telling his constant companion: "Come, Sancho, it is now time to move forward into the 18th century". Indeed, Suárez has become Spain's benevolent despot: our "all for the people but without the people" enlightened



Franco and heir-designate, Prince Juan Carlos, saluting a Madrid rally in early 1975 before Spain moved forward into the 18th century.

ful thinking has probably determined many an answer, but in fact, the question could only be answered with a laconic "he will be buried"; and more than one pessimist did probably caution about the ominous possibility of a resurrection three days later. The question, simply, could not be answered.

Franco died, or rather, was finally allowed to die on November 20, 1975; after 36 years of dictatorship, the Spanish Government felt that the Spaniards needed at least 36 days of continuous medical bulletins on Franco's deteriorating health in order to make a mental transition from Franco's Spain to a Spain without Franco. During the carefully planned agony of the General, the coun-

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try as a whole had to deal with the question, with the when and not with the if; and from November 20th, with the now: What is going to happen now that Franco's gone?

Premier Arias Navarro remained in power and assured the country that the political system engineered by the General was working smoothly, and would continue to do so. A few days before, Franco's death however, Juan Carlos' announcement of the end of the 36 year ban on the use of regional languages (Basque, Catalanian and Galician) was interpreted as a sign that Spain was now ready to address itself to the issues that the General had for so long tried to repress.

Even before Franco was buried, then, the question was in everybody's mind: Can Francoism survive without Franco? Symbolically, the only head of state present at his funeral was Augusto Pinochet and, with the exception of the United States, the Western democracies boycotted the ceremony; two days later, led by the president of the French Republic, the 'free world' attended almost en masse the crowning of King Juan Carlos. Within a week, then, the Western world

1976 was a very good year. Early in January the King went to Catalonia and delivered a speech; Rodolfo Llopi (former secretary general of the Socialist Party), Sánchez Albornoz (former president of the Republic), Salvador de Madariaga (former ambassador of the Republic), as well as several anarchists and communists, returned to Spain after 36 years in exile. The second anti-terrorist trial never took place and an amnesty was granted.

WANTING A MILE.

These signs of a new policy of national reconciliation were welcomed, if only as an indication that the long era of absolutism and repression was ending. But for a country that could not have dreamt of such developments a few months before, these concessions were no longer sufficient. There were too many "buts": Santiago Carrillo (secretary general of the Communist Party) was denied a passport to return to Spain. Furthermore, an amnesty that applied only to 12% of the political prisoners amounted to a mini-amnesty. As Franco had always said, and his followers continued to warn, "If you give them an inch they will ask for a mile." But wasn't Spain entitled to that 'mile' in the first place?

Arias Navarro's neo-Francoist Government lasted until early July, helplessly presiding over what we may call "the greening of Spain". During the first six months of 1976 the country caught a glimpse of its political future and put Franco in the past. They acted as if the Government and its fool-proof system didn't exist. Without freedom of speech or assembly, Spaniards talked, the illegal political parties held rallies, and the banned trade unions met directly with management. Another pillar of the system collapsed when the model Nadiuska went topless. In a country where human anatomy was to be hidden - by decree -, where kisses and adultery could not be seen or heard of in films, this was revolutionary. Furthermore, the symbolic uncovering of Nadiuska heralded a new era of exposure: C.I.A. agents' names were released by the press, the Spanish connection in the Lockheed affair was unveiled, the wrongdoings of former Franco cabinet ministers were reported, and a rather negative image of the General himself was revealed in a

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despot. It should not be forgotten that Spain has not held elections since February 1936, and that every Premier and Cabinet minister since then (including Suárez) has simply been appointed; but it is to his credit that, according to his plan, his will be the last non-elected Government of Spain. This, and the creation of the first non-appointed in more than 40 years, is what the May 1977 general elections are all about.

Since July - without haste but also without pause - Franco's Spain has been the object of continued on page 3

