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By Ludovic Kennedy THE CHANGE IN SPAIN

What happens when a restrictive society breaks loose, as Spain has done after Franco? Has the dramatic switch brought more harm than good?

We have had democracy for nearly four years," said Jaime de Salas, Professor of Metaphysics at Madrid University, "and we still don't know what to do with it." Augustin Gervas, lawyer turned diplomat, echoed him. "The people at the top tolerate democracy, but they don't encourage it. The only thing they have permitted freely is the permissive society."

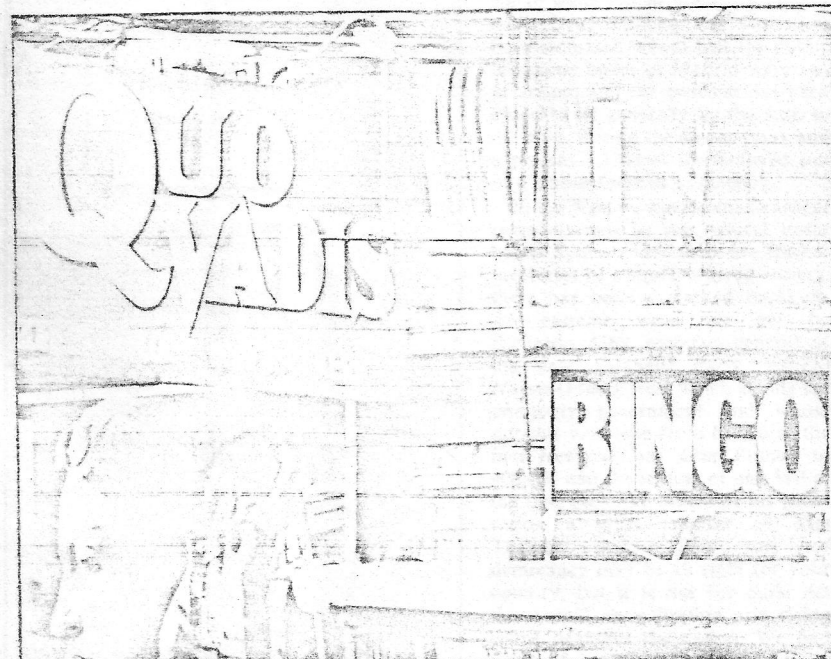
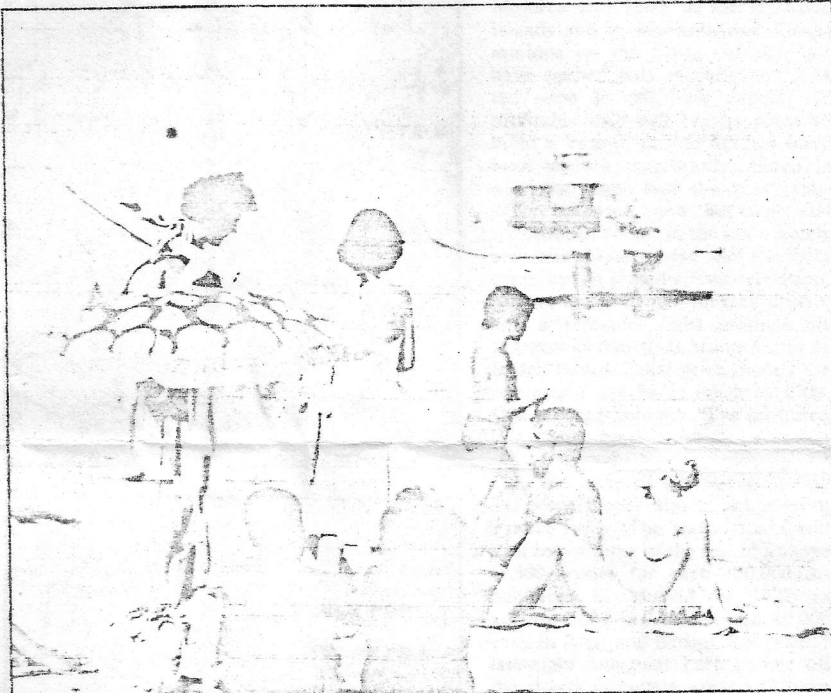
This is certainly true in the towns and cities, though not yet in the villages. What surprises one today in Madrid is what has long ceased to surprise elsewhere. Opposite the British Airways office in the centre of the city a nightclub sign says, unbelievably, *El Clitoris*. In the Cockney Pup (mahogany, brass, mirrors) luscious topless señoritas serve cold beer in clay tankards. Girlie bars abound and porn is available at most of the city's numerous pavement bookstalls. In *El Pais*, the country's leading daily newspaper, there is a regular column-and-a-half advertising services for massage.

Although Spain has not yet gone to the lengths of some European countries (there are no hard porn movies as at Frankfurt airport, no live sex shows as in Amsterdam or Copenhagen), the obsession with public sex seems even more marked than in London.

Of the 21 theatres in Madrid at the time of writing, only six (staging *Car on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Kafka's The Trial*, *Chicken Soup With Barley*, *The Flood that's Coming* and two modern Spanish comedies) can properly be called straight. The other 15 shows (which include *Oh, Calcutta!* and a thing which has been running for three years called *I'm feeling sexy, let's get undressed*) are all in some degree erotic.

The choice of film is even more restricted, and many Spanish women complain that there is almost nothing suitable for children (one recent happy exception was Chaplin's *The Great Dictator*, which had its first public showing 40 years after its general release).

In the late-night café theatres you



Women striding into the sanded ring as bullfighters . . . Topless beauties basking in the sun on some beaches . . . and bingo binges which pay out as much as £700 for one round . . . it is all part of the new Spain, the permissive peninsula as it lives in the aftermath of the 40-year-rule of the late General Franco's tightly controlled régime. The lady bullfighter (right) is Maribel Atienzar, recognised by even her severest critics as a determined and dedicated practitioner in the bullring. And while, only a few years ago, Spanish (and foreign) women were not permitted on the streets in jeans, today they can find beaches (top left) which permit topless exposure to the sun. Bingo (bottom left) is another recent development, drawing its own groups of faithful followers

Photographs by Ian Murphy

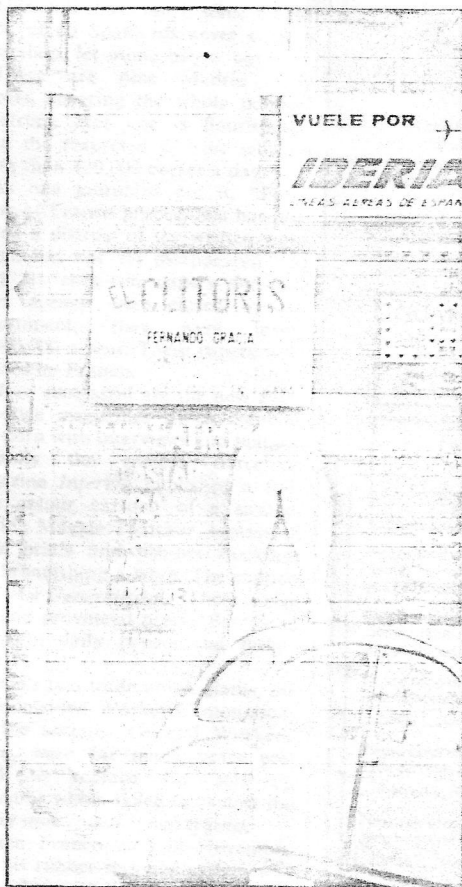
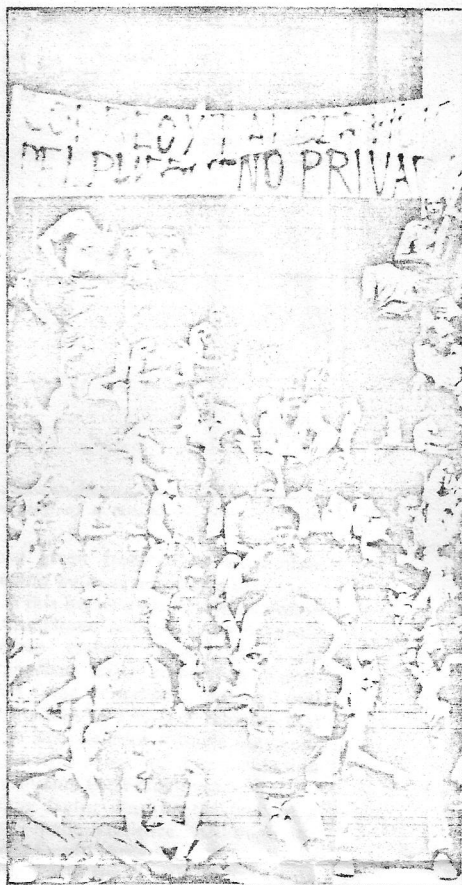
can see a variety of smutty sketches, whose participants toss four-letter words around as liberally as confetti. An exception is the Boite del Pintor, which specialises in political satire and takes off wittily such previously taboo subjects as Francoism, bullfighting and the Church, as well as old favourites like British tourists and American GIs. For topicality the dancing girls wear the emblems of today's main political parties on their G-strings.

In a country where adultery for a woman was, until quite recently, a crime (one woman, separated from her husband, was jailed for it only two years ago) such libertinism has reaped its own rewards - an increase both in broken marriages and unwanted pregnancies. Although the Church is still firmly against both, its voice has become increasingly ignored, and a bill to legalise divorce is expected before Parliament shortly. Contraceptives are still difficult to obtain and there has been a surge in the demand for abortions.

Rather than risk the dangers of the brisk back-street abortion trade (still illegal and likely to remain so) those girls who can afford it take package-deal trips to private London nursing homes: according to the Spanish Ministry of Health 190 in 1971, 10,000 in 1978 and an estimated 13,000 this year.

The younger generation looks on the permissive society as the norm but the views of the 30 to 40-year-olds are mixed. Maria Isabel Lopez, 40, and with three children, said, "I missed out on liberation for women. When I was as old as 25, I had to be in by 10 p.m. unless I had special permission from my parents. Many of my younger friends are now living openly with their boyfriends, but I don't think they are any happier. They still have their frustrations, even though they're of a different kind." And her mother, Sophia, a widow in her seventies, said, "I brought up two daughters where there was a real home life. I don't know what I'd do if I had to bring them up in the present environment. Sexual freedom can bring nothing but problems."

All this, of course, is the sexual revolution in *extremis*, a revolution which was gestating long before Franco's death and was accelerated by it. With 77 per cent. of the population under 40 it has been a young people's revolution and, above all, a revolution of women - of those no longer prepared to progress from heavy chaperoning to heavy domesticity or, alternatively, to become courtesans, or whores in the well-run state-supervised brothels. In only a few years Spanish womanhood has become dramatically liberated. Pretty 19-year-old Maribel Atienzar wanted to become a bullfighter, took her case to the Supreme Court, won it and now draws huge crowds. There is a fully qualified woman mining



engineer, and a woman airline pilot.

Spain's annual Christmas lottery is already the biggest in the world - over £150 million in prize money and one chance in seven of a winning ticket - and gambling is on the increase.

Certainly Spain's new casino business is flourishing. But as one tourist official said, "It is Spanish money with Spanish winners and losers. Very few of the gamblers are foreigners. Most of them can gamble freely in their own countries. So they come to Spain for other reasons."

The main casinos are at San Sebastian, Santander and at La Toja along the northern coast; La Manga, Villajoyosa on the southeast coast; Majorca and Ibiza in the Balearic Islands and at Marbella and Torremolinos on the Costa del Sol. All have opened only recently and it is too soon to tell how popular or profitable they will be. As plans to build a casino outside Madrid have been shelved temporarily; bingo is now the rage. Not the cosy, suburban bingo we know, but large, air-conditioned rooms in the main hotels and elsewhere, where the numbers come up on closed-circuit television, waiters are at hand with iced drinks, and a foreigner must produce his passport as though at Monte Carlo or Baden-Baden. Total prize money for one round can be as much as £700. One manager told me, "I've seen men lose their monthly wage packet in one afternoon."

In the wake of sex and gambling has come crime - almost unknown in Franco's day. The statistics are still well below those of the rest of Europe (1,500 crimes for each 100,000 inhabitants in Madrid in 1977 as against 7,000 in London and 10,000 each in Paris and Berlin). But regular late-night muggings keep people off the streets in certain areas and have led to some fall in nightclub attendance. Drug-peddling and vandalism have increased (about half the public telephone boxes in Madrid were out of action) and the problem has been exacerbated generally by the rush to the cities during the boom years and a present 1,130,000 unemployed out of a labour force of 13,000,000.

In the West we have come to accept permissiveness as the natural order but in Spain, where there are fresher memories of a more ordered society, there has been a marked backlash. An extreme view was put by Richardo Alba, secretary-general of the new Falangist Party, *Fuerza Nueva* (Free Force) which stands for one-party government and whose popular vote rose from 68,000 at the first free elections after Franco to 400,000 and the seating of one MP at the last. He - like others of his generation a great admirer of Mrs Thatcher - said, "This sort of democracy may be all right for your country, but it is not for ours. All this sexual animalisation and rising crime degrades the nation. We had none of it under Franco. We had

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The new reign in Spain of King Juan Carlos has ushered in startling changes which touch every level of society. Postmen (top left) would not have risked a strike during the Franco days, and porno bars (bottom left) with explicit names could not have dared the wrath of the ever-vigilant police. A bikini (top right) was a forbidden garment which would have affronted the grandmother knitting in the shade near Madrid. Bright lights flash on night streets crammed with cars and even a few ladies of the evening feel free to find clients in some of the big city side streets. Huge hotels, despite a recent building slump, remain on architects' drawing boards, casinos are pulling in Spaniards - not only tourists - looking to tempt Lady Luck, while The Banco de Bilbao, among others, has introduced Spain to the delights of the credit card



Gambling has arrived in Spain - part of the staff of a casino at San Sebastian

peace and order and tranquillity. And we rose to become the ninth leading industrial power in the world."

Tom Burns Maranon, journalist, whose father is English and mother Spanish, and who has welcomed democracy, put it another way: "Under Franco you acknowledged all authority - not just the citizen for the state, but the child for the parent, the pupil for the teacher, the employee for the boss. Now there is no acknowledgement of authority - but whereas in England the process took 30 years, here it happened almost overnight. No wonder so many people don't know what to believe."

As you would expect, it is the intellectuals and the politicians who have most welcomed democracy. To the great majority of ordinary hard-working Spaniards, it has made little impact. Casto Herrezuela, who runs a successful working-men's bar in the centre of Madrid, said, "All this business about democracy doesn't excite me one way or the other. I'm still working like a slave to make ends meet. Nothing's changed."

And Pedro Diez, who has been a telex operator for 30 years, said, "Spain is the only country that I know of where a litre of milk (about 25p) is more expensive than a litre of wine."

In fact, the cost of living has gone up in absolute terms more than eight times in 20 years. Inflation in 1977 was running at 26 per cent. By 1978 it was down to 16 per cent. and during the March elections Suarez promised to reduce it to 12 per cent. But the real figure for 1979 is likely to be at least 16 per cent.

In what fields other than sex has freedom of expression manifested itself since the death of Franco? Very few. The works of established artists like Picasso and Miró have been received into the fold (there was a big Miró exhibition in Madrid recently and moves are afoot to bring home Picasso's *Guernica* from New York), but at a recent writers' conference one delegate said, "Now that we have

been given freedom of expression, we find we have nothing to say."

Is this because art flourishes best in a disciplined society or, as Augustin Gervas claims, "Forty years of Francoism have completely dampened our creative and cultural sensibilities"? The fact remains that there has not been a single outstanding native work of fact or fiction chronicling the Franco years.

One factor may be the lack of a ready-made audience. Although the huge South American market has made Spain the fourth largest book-producing country in the world (23,000 titles last year), some 60 per cent. of all Spaniards never enter a bookshop, let alone buy a book.

There are nine Madrid daily papers, covering the whole political spectrum. Not one is flourishing: even the respected *El Pais* sells no more than 120,000 copies a day.

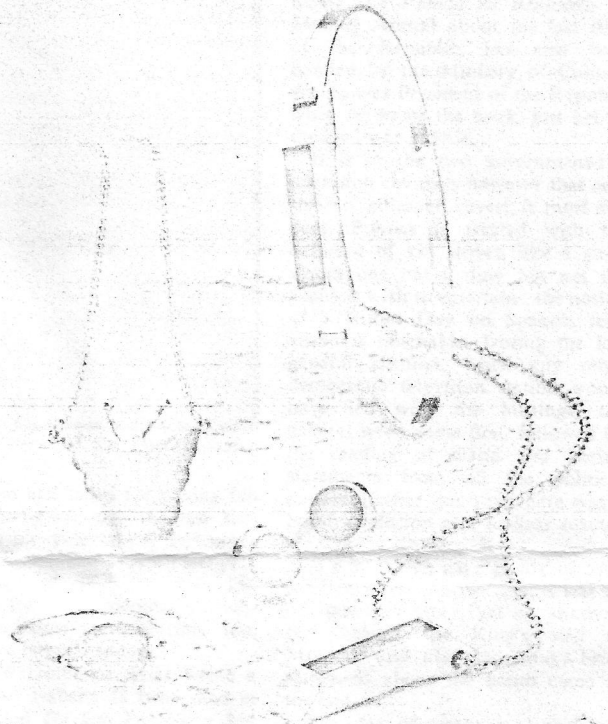
As one journalist put it, "Forty years of Franco propaganda has produced a distrust of the written word which has not yet disappeared." In May six state-run papers and one news agency were closed by the government; they were losing £7,000,000 a year. These papers were created by Franco.

More successful are the new *Playboy*-style magazines which combine soft porn with interviews and politics. Recently the radical Barcelona magazine *Interviú* published a full-page colour cartoon of a savage-looking Maggie Thatcher, topless, in black briefs and fish-net stockings and brandishing a whip. The caption read: *La Generalissima*. There is also a strong provincial press: Barcelona has eight daily papers and Bilbao three.

Spain's two trade union giants, the communist-led Worker Commissions and the socialist General Workers' Union, were for many years prepared to replace the state-run *Sindicatos* which failed to protect the worker under the Franco regime.

When Franco died in November 1975 his rubber-stamped system was dismantled and the two giants took

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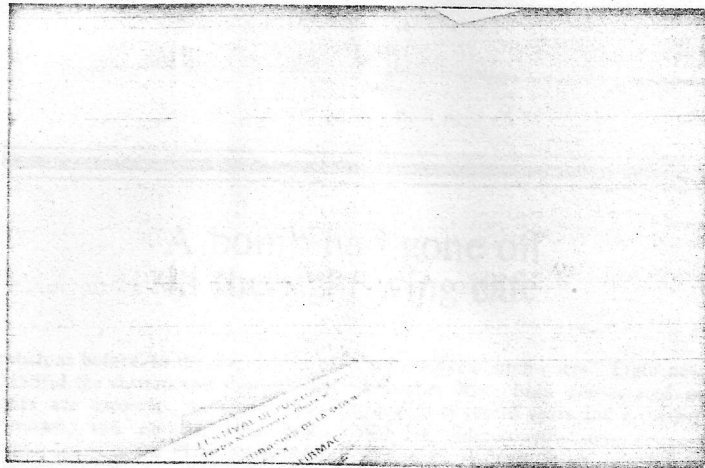
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its place. Each claims one million members and they battle each other for control of the shop floor. The communists are in the lead at the moment but more than 70 per cent. of Spanish workers are not members of any trade union. Nevertheless, many of them follow the dictates of one union or the other and join in industrial action. In the last two years there has been a rash of strikes over conditions and pay.

In education generally Spain would still seem to be a long way behind most of the rest of Europe. Some progress has been made since the universities abolished Franco's *Three Marys* (political formation, religious education, physical training) and anyone who passes his secondary school examinations is entitled automatically to a university place. But there is very little teaching of the humanities, and the explosion in university places (400,000 students out of a population of 36 million compared with Britain's 300,000 out of a population of 52 million) has resulted in an unforeseen expansion of teaching staff, many of whom are not adequately qualified.

The result is that, as nowhere else in West Europe you find so few people—bank officials, shop-managers, headwaiters—who can speak French or English: even the weekly *What's on in Madrid* is published in Spanish only. Jaime de Salas says this is because so few



Smiling extremist—Richardo Alba is secretary general of the Fuerza Nueva

teachers have been to France or England, yet in Russia the Intourist guides, who have not been to France or England, speak French and English almost perfectly.

There has been no concerted effort for the teaching of foreign languages—and this at a time when Spain is on the brink of joining the EEC and will need all the French and English speakers she can find. It is another example of the country's traditional, deep-rooted insularity.

Censorship is on the wane but has not disappeared. Last year members of a Catalan theatre group were

prosecuted and jailed for poking fun at the Army—though the law that allowed this prosecution has since been rescinded, and in April last year the editor of *Playlady* was imprisoned for three months for publishing indecent material (this, too, would not happen today).

In 1976 Domingo Arias wrote a play about Isabella II (who died in 1904) called *De San Pascual a San Gil*. It was promised a Madrid production as a result of winning a national competition, but it still awaits its premiere: it is held to be too anti-monarchical. Another play,

adapted from a book already published (*La Velada en Benicarlo* by Manuel Azana) about the last days of the Republic, has also been banned by the Ministry of Culture. Azana was President of the Republic when he wrote the book, just before the civil war in 1936.

It is in the two government-run television channels however that censorship, although covert, is most evident. Politics is treated with the daintiest of kid gloves, like a guest whom one has a duty but not the slightest wish to entertain: the notion of a Robin Day on Spanish television is laughable. During the last general election, when any other democratic television station would have led with the hustings, the general news came first, followed by the reading of bland and boring statements from all the political parties. Earlier this year there was a bomb explosion at a nuclear reactor plant near Bilbao. It happened at 2.30 p.m. which gave plenty of time for interviews and pictures. It was an obvious lead story, yet an anodyne piece about the King's visit to Morocco took first place, and a brief statement about the bomb came at the end.

The idea, of course, is to cool, not to inflame partisan feelings in what is still a very volatile and fragmented country. Alfredo Arnestoy, who presents the Spanish equivalent of *This is Your Life*, told me, "To a great



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degree we are still suffering from the inhibitions of the Franco era. In another ten years perhaps we shall have bred a new generation of journalists who, if the political climate remains stable, will insist on a proper assessment of news values. But at present it is too risky." It is not by accident that the Director-General of Spanish television is directly accountable to the office of the Prime Minister.

This apart, Spanish television is still pretty amateur. Light entertainment and musicals are said to be abysmal, though there has been high praise for the documentaries made abroad, as in the war in Nicaragua. Our own *Edward VII* has been much enjoyed this past summer, partly perhaps because it concerns a monarchy which can be freely criticised (not that anyone has anything but respect for King Juan Carlos, whose role as a focus of national unity has won praise from all). Yet with a television budget of £140,000,000, 8,000 employees and only 50 per cent. of home-grown programmes (the comparable BBC figures for two channels are a budget of £172,000,000, 15,700 employees and 86 per cent. home-grown) there is a widespread belief that Spanish television could be doing rather better.

It would be wrong to give the impression that the old Spain does not co-exist with the new. In a thousand small towns and villages life goes on

much as before. In the old quarter of Madrid the shrimp and smoked-ham bars are crowded, flamenco shows flourish, and on the huge paved chess-board in the Plaza Santa Anna people of all ages dance nightly to the music of a *pasodoble* band. On days of *fiesta* the bullfight aficionados throng past the matadors' statue to Sir Alexander Fleming (whose discoveries enabled so many more of them to survive) to view that most traditional of Spanish spectacles; one which, for all its elegance, expertise and human courage, remains for me an aberration of western culture.

The churches are well attended by people to whom church-going is still a habit—though the better-off are now more likely to take their problems to the psychiatrist than to the priest. There have been no official figures for church attendance since 1968, but a spokesman for the Archbishop of Madrid said, "Our impression is that attendances in Madrid are continuing to rise slightly. We think that about 40 per cent. of the population of Madrid

are regular church-goers." Eight new churches have been consecrated in Madrid in recent years and a further five are under construction.

But these have been put up to meet the needs of hundreds of thousands who still flock in from the country to seek work, and who live in new, ugly high-rise flats. Church attendance in country districts has correspondingly declined.

Two things threaten Spain's new-found freedoms. One is a fear of even greater unemployment and reduction in the standard of living. With 75 per cent. of energy requirements imported and an average wage bill which now almost equals that of Britain, the fear is well founded. Should matters deteriorate, will the delicate new political power structure be able to stand the strains? Some are doubtful. "In England you have the institutions to weather them," said Jaime de Salas. "In Spain we haven't."

The other worry, of course, is Basque terrorism. There have been more than 70 deaths already this year, mostly assassinations of soldiers

and police near the north-west border.

Tom Burns Maranon told of the day that he and a dozen friends came home from the bullfight to hear that a bomb had gone off in the right-wing California café, killing eight people. "Many of my friends who are known left-wingers didn't dare walk home for fear of attack by right-wing thugs, and spent the evening telephoning friends nearby to see if they could get a bed for the night." The fear is that if terrorism spreads the army may feel inclined to take things into its own hands.

The U.S. diplomat Dean Acheson once said that Britain had lost an empire but had not yet found a role. By way of paraphrase it could be said that Spain has lost a dictatorship but not yet found democracy. The great majority have welcomed it; anything better than the repressions of a police state. Others, not extremists, are less sure.

Is there not something to be said they ask, in favour of a degree of authoritarianism, of a regime which, for all its faults, nurtured public order and public decency? Is not Spain following the rest of Europe in a mindless rush towards greater materialism, increased moral decadence and ultimately, when the bubble bursts, anarchy? Perhaps we who led the way should answer those questions for ourselves first before answering them for Spain. (T)