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**CHAMELEONS OF COMPROMISE.  
THE MONARCHY IN CONTEMPORARY SPAIN**

As we approach the new millennium, Spain is considered by many observers to be at the vanguard of the new democratic spirit which is laying the foundations for the Europe of the 21st century.<sup>1</sup> A committed and highly vocal member of the European Union, the political arrangement of Spain's autonomous communities within the central Spanish state structure is regularly cited as a model example of the federalist future of Europe. Coupled with this embrace of innovative political structures, Spain's championing of diverse human rights issues has brought it international attention and an impressive and growing portfolio in the field of international relations.<sup>2</sup> The aforementioned factors combined with the enthusiastic and continual support of the Spanish state for the ideals of European integration since the beginning of the 1980's have worked together in the creation and fostering of a new image and identity for Spain, far removed from its chequered and often murky history of autocracy and extremism which had led throughout history to long and repeated periods of ostracism and isolation from European and international affairs.

*SCRIPTA MEDITERRANEA*, Vol. XXI, 2000, 71

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<sup>1</sup>In the course of this monograph, reference will be made to a large number of personal interviews, etc carried out by the author during the course of the preparation of this monograph. Given the sensitive nature of much of the material involved, the author has strictly observed the requested right to anonymity of many individuals and institutions who helped in the preparation of this monograph. However, the author would like to express sincere gratitude to the all those who have aided him particularly the many individuals who agreed to be interviewed for academic purposes, some for the first time, and those individuals who gave the author access to personal correspondence, family records, etc. On an official level, the author offers his sincere thanks to the British Library, the University Libraries of Valladolid and Limerick and the *Biblioteca Nacional* of Spain. The author is also indebted to the Spanish National Archives and the Press Archives of Spain along with the Italian National Archives. Special thanks is offered to Professor Edward Moxon-Browne, Director of the Centre for European Studies at the University of Limerick for his passion and enthusiasm for this project from the beginning and to Ms. Kathleen Warfield for all her help and assistance.

<sup>2</sup>The recent Spanish stance on the Pinochet case and the role of Spanish judge, Baltasar Garzón is a good example of this. Spain's leading role in attempting to achieve peace in the Middle East is another example.

In the context of this radical break with tradition in contemporary Spain, the position of the monarchy is, in the first instance, an uneasy and delicate one. Given the highly influential and often decisive role that the monarchy has played throughout Spanish history and moreover, its association with many of the social groups and political forces which the new democratic Spain has sought to undermine or eradicate, it would seem logical to suggest that the role of the monarchy in contemporary Spain already is or will evolve into a ceremonial and relatively benign one, an idiosyncratic historical annex locked into the modern Spain of the autonomies and by extension, the new European family.

On a superficial level, this idea appears to be correct and the actions of the current Spanish Royal Family seem to fully echo these sentiments. However, Spain is a country of great enigmas and perhaps, the first and most important lesson for any commentator on Spanish politics or society is that things are often not quite what they seem. In fact, they are often, on the contrary, quite radically different and the trajectory of the monarchy in contemporary Spain and its real role in contemporary Spanish life is a prime example of the above paradox at work.

Although the Spanish Royal Family often appears in the media and on the international stage as a flag-waving model family which symbolizes and embodies the ethos of the new democratic Spain, such generalities only mask the latent importance of the socio-political beliefs and influence of a complex group of individuals encapsulated in the King, Juan Carlos I whose past, present and future are intrinsically intertwined with that of the Spanish state and vice versa.

On the fundamental question of the control of the monarchy's power, analysis of the new Spanish constitution of 1978 reveals fundamental flaws or key provisos, depending on one's point of view and the politico-legal status of the monarchy in contemporary Spain is a domain whose parameters remain blurred and quite elastic. In fact, the contemporary Spanish monarchy is in reality far from a creation of Spain's democrats as it is often perceived. On the contrary, the successful trajectory of the monarchy in contemporary Spain and its undeniable national and international support as an institution is much more a reflection of the political adeptness and charisma of the complex and often chameleon-like Spanish Royal Family than any other factor. Perhaps of more importance, it has been the inability in the contemporary era of successive commentators and politicians alike to pin down this chameleon and neatly compartmentalize the role of the Spanish monarchy within a secure politico-judicial framework which has led to an erroneous and one could suggest, dangerous under-estimation of the true meaning and importance of its real role in the new Spain.

Any discussion on the role of the monarchy in contemporary Spain must first acknowledge the heterogeneous character of Spanish monarchism throughout the modern era. Although the contemporary portrayal of the Spanish Royal Family is more than often as a unifying monolithic force, the reality is in fact quite the contrary. In order to illustrate this, this monograph concentrates on much of the background events which led to the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in 1975 and after the death of Franco, on the lesser-known but highly important role of the monarchy in Spanish life in the informal socio-political arena. While events such as the role of the King in the aborted coup of February 23rd, 1981 are obviously of importance in any study of the monarchy in contemporary Spain, much has already been written on these subjects and there is danger that excessive commentaries on and analyses of such events may only serve to divert attention away from other key factors which are responsible for the real significance of the Spanish Royal Family and its still vital role in the evolution of the new democratic Spain.<sup>3</sup>

The current Spanish Royal Family are members of the Bourbon<sup>4</sup> dynasty and it is pertinent here to highlight that the Bourbons came to rule Spain not through rights of succession or the desires of the Spanish people but rather through their victory in the bloody War of the Spanish Succession which ended Habsburg rule in Spain. Since then, the Bourbons have won for themselves a reputation as ineffective and weak rulers having presided over some of the darkest periods in modern Spanish history from the Napoleonic invasion of 1808 to the traumatic 1898 conflict with the United States which resulted in the end of the once glorious Spanish empire.

However, the Bourbons' problems were far from merely external. The War of the Spanish Succession may have brought them to the throne but it also left Spain deeply divided particularly along regional lines and these divisions continue to strike a strong resonance in contemporary Spain. Valencia, Cataluña and Aragón had all opposed the Bourbon claim to the throne and support in these areas for a Bourbon monarch has remained a problematic question up until the present day.

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<sup>3</sup>For an excellent treatment of *El Tejerazo* i.e. the events of the 23-F coup, see Powell, C.T., *El piloto del cambio, el rey, la monarquía y la transición a la democracia*. Madrid: Ed. Planeta, 1991.

<sup>4</sup>In Spanish, the Bourbon dynasty is referred to as *Los Borbones* but as the monograph is aimed principally at an English-speaking readership, English translations will be employed throughout the monograph except where the original Spanish is essential or does not deter from comprehension. It is pertinent to point out that most of the interviews, research etc for this monograph were conducted in Spanish and the select bibliography is almost wholly Spanish as there is a dearth of material published in English on this subject.

Despite the dubious trajectory of the Bourbons throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, it would be their association with Spain's backward slide into autocracy and dictatorship in the 20th century which would leave an indelible imprint in the minds of many Spaniards. After the failure of the Spanish First Republic, the Bourbons were restored to power in the shape of Alfonso XII, a well-meaning but largely incapable ruler. It was his son, Alfonso XIII, the grandfather of the current monarch, Juan Carlos I, who would re-introduce the idea of the Bourbon's distaste for parliamentary democracy or constitutional procedure and in doing so, he would sow the seeds of discord and chaos which would culminate in the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in July, 1936.

Alfonso XIII was the embodiment of all the worst that Spain had come to expect of the Bourbons. Spain had been extremely fortunate to survive the carnage and horrors of the First World War but Alfonso XIII proved unable to steer any kind of course for Spain through the turbulent decade of the 1920's. Too weak to rule effectively on his own, he also lacked the foresight to maintain some semblance of power or credibility in a rapidly disintegrating Spain by embracing some sort of democratic or republican structure. Instead, he pinned all his hopes on his support for the charismatic dictator, General Miguel Primo de Rivera.<sup>5</sup> By supporting Primo de Rivera's accession to power in 1923, Alfonso XIII showed blatant and flagrant disregard for the Spanish constitution from which his monarchy derived its very legitimacy and in taking this foolish gamble, he was to sign the death warrant of the Bourbons by inextricably linking the faith of his dynasty to that of the eccentric dictator. Of more importance in the contemporary era, Alfonso XIII's support of Primo de Rivera candidly revealed once again the undeniable Bourbon *afición* for right-wing autocrats, an idea which would come back to haunt and cast a shadow over the political trajectory of the current King.

General Primo de Rivera ruled Spain for seven years but when he fell from power in 1930, it was not a question of if but rather one of when Alfonso XIII would follow him. The King lasted another year against the backdrop of a Spanish societal landscape which was daily becoming increasingly polarized with an alarming growth in terrorism and political violence. It was not until April 14th, 1931 that the King finally stepped down but even then, his exit was inglorious to say the least as he left Madrid by night<sup>6</sup> for exile in Italy still refusing to abdicate and smooth the path for a future successor.

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<sup>5</sup>Primo de Rivera consolidated himself as a dictator through his military leadership in the Moroccan War in which a young Francisco Franco was one of the combatants.

<sup>6</sup>Alfonso XIII left Madrid secretly by night on the express demand of the leader of the Provisional Government of the new Republic, Niceto Alcalá Zamora. It is ironic that

The exile of Alfonso XIII in Rome until his death in 1941 was not in itself of such vital importance in the course of Spanish history. He was not the first Bourbon to have had to flee Spain and he would not be the last. However, what was of fundamental importance was the timing of his exile. The significance of this timing meant that the Spanish monarchy was crucially absent from the events of a decade which would shape modern Spain and it is this absence which has allowed the monarchy to successfully cultivate a role as a floating fulcrum in contemporary Spanish life free from the Civil War baggage of its contemporaries. However, one must also note that this absence also denied the monarchy a concrete and definite support base for most of the political and social allegiances in contemporary Spain find their origins in the highly-charged political minefield of the mid-1930's and the tragic Civil War which followed it.

While the Bourbons were in exile in Italy, the question of succession became once again a divisive one. Alfonso XIII's eldest son, Alfonso renounced his claim to the throne in 1933 in order to marry a Cuban socialite, Edelmira Sampedro and embarked on a life of frivolity financed by his father's allowances.<sup>7</sup> A chronic haemophiliac, his sybaritic and wasteful life came to a tragic end when his car hit a lamp-post in Miami in September, 1938 as he left a cabaret. Four years earlier in Austria, his youngest brother, Gonzalo, another chronic haemophiliac, had also been killed in a car accident. The heir apparent, Jaime was also forced to renounce his claims to the throne as he was deaf and dumb although he was to retract this renunciation several times in the following years, especially after the birth of his two sons, Alfonso and Gonzalo.<sup>8</sup>

Given this woeful situation of the Spanish Royal Family, it is little surprise that the restoration of the monarchy was barely mentioned throughout the Civil War even though the Bourbons had ruled Spain for more than the past two centuries. The only remaining son of Alfonso XIII was Juan who would now become the legitimate successor in name to his father but as the Civil War tore apart the delicate fabric of Span-

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Zamora had previously been one of Alfonso XIII's trusted ministers. Virtually all of Alfonso XIII's wealth was confiscated by the new Republic including his prized polo horses which were sold through Jimmy Alba, the King's friend. The Royal Family was thus impoverished except for the savings of Alfonso XIII's wife, Doña Victoria Eugenia in an English bank.

<sup>7</sup>Don Alfonso divorced his Cuban wife four years later in order to marry a model, Marta Rocafort who had a reputation as a "lady of the night" and is said to have run off with all his money before leaving him.

<sup>8</sup>Don Jaime's marriage and the subsequent birth of his two sons would have important consequences for the succession of the current King as will be discussed later in the monograph.

ish society, only the most ardent Spanish monarchists saw Juan III ascending to the Spanish throne in the near future.

Juan, who would later become the Count of Barcelona, was English-educated having studied at the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth. An anglophile, he was seen by the family as somewhat of a liberal who might wish to end the murky association of Bourbon rule with right-wing autocracy. He married in 1935 another Bourbon, María de las Mercedes de Borbón y Orléans, La Princesa de las Dos Sicilias and they established their residence in Rome.

When the Civil War broke out in July, 1936, Don Juan's "liberal" reputation would be severely compromised by his little-known voyage to the French border where he crossed secretly in order to join Franco's rebel forces only two weeks after the conflict had begun. Such an action strikes a strange paradox with a man who would later bemoan the Francoist dictatorship and its anti-democratic nature. Whatever Don Juan's motives in 1936, Franco was not very interested and he was quickly placed back over the border by the rebel forces.<sup>9</sup>

The life of the young royal couple in Rome was a modest one of relative penury. They had originally planned to live in Cannes but the opposition of the French Popular Front Government of Léon Blum<sup>10</sup> put paid to that idea although the high cost of living in France was also a significant factor. Don Juan and Doña María then moved to Milan but the rain and cold of the Milanese winter caused Doña María, who had grown up in the sun-baked Andalucía of the south of Spain, to become depressed and they finally decided to settle in Rome where Alfonso XIII was already living along with Don Juan's sisters, Beatriz and Cristina and where they also might hope to find friends amongst the supporters of Mussolini who enjoyed a highly paradoxical penchant for the trappings of monarchy.

The Roman experience of the heir to the Spanish throne began in the undistinguished surroundings of the Eden Guest-House, a cheap hotel popular amongst travelling salesmen before finally settling on the top floor of a house in the Viale Parioli,<sup>11</sup> in the heart of a typical working Roman neighbourhood. Below their house, there was a barber's shop, a launderette and a food-store. In a humble clinic of English nuns next to the house, at a quarter past one on the afternoon of January 5th,

<sup>9</sup>Don Juan was taken by Nationalist forces to the other side of the Pyrenees.

<sup>10</sup>Blum's posture was also influenced by pressure exerted upon him by Manuel Azaña, the leader of the Spanish Republican Government.

<sup>11</sup>The Royal Family lived at No. 112. Today, Viale Parioli is quite an upmarket neighbourhood but from Roman records of 1938 and eye-witness accounts, it could best be described at the time as being a lower middle-class neighbourhood.

1938, their first child, Juan Carlos de Borbón y Borbón was born.<sup>12</sup> In such circumstances, it would have been difficult to believe that he would restore the Bourbon monarchy in Spain and play such a fundamental role in contemporary Spanish life.

The background to Juan Carlos' birth and his childhood are of vital interest because they provide a valuable insight into a very secretive figure and explain in many ways his populist and proletarian leanings and his extraordinary capacity as a monarch to appear as simply another ordinary citizen. Such a capacity has played a vital role in the growth in the popularity of the monarchy in Spain since Franco's death and the role played by the King's own personal character in this success is such that rather than speaking of a surge in support for *monarquismo* in post-Franco Spain, it is perhaps more correct to speak of the origins and rise of *juancarlisto* for the trajectory and success or failure enjoyed by the current monarchy are inextricably intertwined with the personality of the current King and the activities of his immediate family.

When one analyzes the considerable stature of Juan Carlos I in contemporary Spain and the international reputation he enjoys as a defender of democracy, it seems nearly unthinkable to imagine a period when Juan Carlos I was not the choice of the Spanish people or more sinister, when his fortunes were not tied to the liberal or democratic tradition.

Juan Carlos I's relatively humble childhood for a future monarch would instil in him a deep sense of humanity and coupled with his family's exile, it helped him avoid the sybaritic detachment from the needs of society which had been the downfall of many of his Bourbon predecessors. However, Juan Carlos I did not grow up in a liberal or democratic tradition. His baptism was overshadowed by the diplomatic attempts on behalf of his family to secure the release of the leader of the Spanish *Falange* or fascist movement, José Antonio Primo de Rivera<sup>13</sup> and his family's support for Franco's rebel forces was logical as a right-wing, reactionary victory was seen as the best means of getting a Bourbon back on the Spanish throne.

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<sup>12</sup>The only knowledge of the future King's birth in Spain was in a small announcement on page thirteen of the January 6th Seville edition of the Spanish daily newspaper, ABC.

<sup>13</sup>Those who attended the baptism on January 26th, 1938 in the chapel of the Knights of Malta on the Via Condotti testify to this. Don Juan offered his help as a go-between with the British Royal Navy in which he had served as Primo de Rivera was being held in the coastal port of Alicante. The Germans also suggested an exchange of Primo de Rivera for a son of Largo Caballero, the republican leader who was being held by the Nationalists and they suggested the use of Von Knobloch, the German Consul in Alicante as an intermediary. However, Franco, mindful of the threat posed to his emerging leadership by the charismatic Primo de Rivera, refused both offers of help.

Yet, after Franco's victory, the new dictator had little use for the Bourbons and their enforced exile continued. In 1942, the new Spanish Royal Family moved to Switzerland where Juan Carlos I began school. It is pertinent to point out here that the young King although he was rapidly gaining a reputation as a polyglot through his contact with Italian, German and French<sup>14</sup> still did not speak Spanish fluently and in 1946, when the Royal Family moved on to Salazarist Portugal in order to be closer to Spain, arrangements were made for Juan Carlos I to stay on as a boarder with the Marian Fathers in Freiburg.

1948 was to be a watershed year for Juan Carlos I and the future of the Spanish monarchy. At the time, Franco was drawing up the Law of Succession as Head of State which would be passed in 1949 by his parliament. This law effectively restored the monarchy but Franco was to be Head of State for Life and it would be he who would decide his future successor as King or Regent. Franco, who had always harboured regal ambitions, was in effect establishing a dynasty and he was to choose as his successor Juan Carlos I, the eldest son of Don Juan, the rightful heir in the hope that he could mould the young boy into the type of ruler who would defend and uphold the principles and beliefs upon which Franco was building his new Spain.

The principal problem that Franco faced in 1948 was that Juan Carlos I had never set foot in Spain and this was not a suitable preparation for the destiny which Franco envisaged for him. Therefore, Franco proposed to Don Juan that his son be sent to Spain in order to be educated. This presented Don Juan with a virtual *fait accompli* if he wished to restore Bourbon rule in Spain. It was true that the young Juan Carlos who now spoke Spanish with a pronounced French accent would have to be educated in Spain if he was ever to be a credible candidate for the Spanish throne. However, by sending his son to Spain, Don Juan would also be letting his son come under the influence of the Franco dictatorship thus tying Bourbon fortunes to another autocratic exercise. More importantly for Don Juan, by sending young Juan Carlos to Spain, he was already beginning to relinquish his own claims to the throne for it was already clear by 1948 that although Franco had no desire to see Don Juan re-enter the political arena or indeed the country, he was clearly interested in moulding a potential successor in the shape of the Bourbon heir's son.

Don Juan deliberated several weeks over Franco's proposal but bowing under the yoke of history, he finally acceded to Franco's request and on the evening of November 8th, 1948, Juan Carlos at the tender age of

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<sup>14</sup>Juan Carlos had a Swiss-German nanny, Ucsa, who spoke to him and his older sisters, Pilar and Margarita in all three languages.

ten accompanied by Alfonso, his seven-year-old brother, boarded the Lusitania Express in the Lisbon station of Rossío and with both the young brothers and their parents holding back the tears, the train moved slowly out of the station on a journey which would eventually take Juan Carlos to the *Palacio de la Zarzuela* and relegate his father to the role of a historical anomaly as the King who never sat on his throne.<sup>15</sup>

Juan Carlos's first journey into Spain, accompanied by his brother and the Duque of Sotomayor was far from the triumphant Bourbon re-entry that his father might have envisaged. The young princes disembarked in the tiny station of Villaverde outside Madrid where only a half-dozen people were waiting to welcome them back to Spain. Juan Carlos I has cited this moment as a fundamental one in the shaping of his future political outlook for it was now that he learnt the "loneliness which was beginning, knowing that it would be necessary to always keep silent, to be watchful for every word I would say would be repeated in the highest circles... and by people who wouldn't always wish me well."

This end of innocence for Juan Carlos was to have a vital bearing on his future career. His Francoist education had begun and for over twenty-five years, his fortunes would become directly linked to those of Franco who now became in effect a father-figure for the young prince. The two young princes studied both in Madrid and San Sebastián during their first years in Spain and it was not until 1954 that another conflict arose between Don Juan and Franco over the education of his sons.

Juan Carlos had passed his *bachillerato* examination in 1954 and the question of his higher education now became a bone of contention between Franco and his father. Don Juan, who was displaying increasingly dangerous anti-regime tendencies in exile, wished his sons to receive a liberal education in a progressive university such as Bologna or Louvain. However, Franco wished to continue his moulding of Juan Carlos's character by sending him to a military academy and then to the University of Salamanca, one of the oldest and most traditional universities in Spain and an intellectual nerve-centre of the Francoist regime. As a result, Franco and Don Juan met in November, 1954 near the Portuguese border in the hunting-lodge of Las Cabezas, owned by the Duque of Ruiseñada. Playing the card of Bourbon restoration, Franco was victorious again and Juan Carlos entered the Military Academy in Zaragoza in 1954 and after a year in the Air Force and Navy under the

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<sup>15</sup>For an excellent discussion of this, see Fuente, I., *Don Juan de Borbón, hijo de rey, padre de rey, nunca rey*, Madrid: Prensa Ibérica, 1992.

overall supervision of General Carlos Martínez Campos, el Duque de la Torre, he graduated in 1959 as a lieutenant in all three services.

However, during his time in the armed forces, another tragic but little-known event had occurred which would exert a strong influence on the future career of Juan Carlos. In 1956, while at home on leave in Estoril in Portugal, his beloved younger brother, Alfonso was killed while playing with a gun in the family home. Juan Carlos was with him at the time of the accident and his younger brother died in his arms. This event is cited by those who knew the boyhood Juan Carlos as one which would fundamentally change his character as the young prince was now more alone than ever and he became even more guarded in his speech and actions as he became aware of the great responsibilities which now rested upon his young shoulders.

After he graduated from the military, it was thought that Juan Carlos would study at the University of Salamanca but Franco changed his mind when he learnt that one of Juan Carlos's professors would be Enrique Tierno Galván<sup>16</sup> and to the surprise of many, a special course was designed for the prince which he would take in Madrid. In protest, the Duque de la Torre resigned his position as the prince's academic guardian and Juan Carlos was even more isolated than before. In Madrid, Franco sent Juan Carlos to live in a restored house near El Escorial, almost fifty kilometres from Madrid so the prince could study in relative peace and tranquility. From his window, the future king was no more than a brisk walk from the gigantesque Valley of the Fallen<sup>17</sup> monument which dwarfed its surroundings and served as a permanent reminder of Franco's mission and the indelible imprint he was leaving on Spain.

It is in this period of the early sixties that the question of Franco's successor really became an important one on the Spanish political agenda. The dictator was ageing and Spain was changing too. Juan Car-

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<sup>16</sup>It is said that Franco feared that the young Juan Carlos would come under the intellectual spell of Tierno Galván, the famous "*viejo profesor*".

<sup>17</sup>The Valley of the Fallen or *El Valle de los Caídos* is a gigantic monument which can be seen from Madrid although it is over forty kilometres away. Perched on a hill-top, it takes the form of a gigantic cross with a vast underground catacomb with murals of the apocalypse. It was built with the forced labour of Republican prisoners and many of them died during its construction. At the end of the vast underground cavern, Franco is buried before the high altar next to José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the *Falange* leader. The site is still a place of pilgrimage for Francoist sympathizers and rallies are held there on the anniversary of Franco's death (November 20<sup>th</sup>) each year and on the 18<sup>th</sup> of July (anniversary of the uprising which began the Spanish Civil War) along with other dates of significance for supporters of the Francoist regime. During the rest of the year, the site remains a national monument in the care of an order of monks and visitors are permitted.

los was rapidly becoming the official choice of the regime and his marriage to the Greek princess, Doña Sofía in the Catholic cathedral of Athens on May 14th, 1962 was seen as a further preparatory step for the role which Franco had in mind for the young prince.

Doña Sofía was also the regime's choice and her personal relationship with the ageing dictator is an often-ignored but undoubtedly important factor in Juan Carlos's accession to power. However, she was shocked at the extent of the influence which Franco wielded over the prince and decided that the man she was marrying would have to take a much, more independent line if he was to survive politically. Nevertheless, her allegiance to the Francoist regime was unquestionable<sup>18</sup> and analysis of her personal correspondence finds a letter to Franco and his wife, Carmen Polo after the Royal Wedding in which she thanks them for their gift and goes on to state how "*la preciosa joya que el General y Doña Carmen me han regalado...hacen que me sienta ya unida a mi nueva patria y ardo en deseos de conocerla y de servirla* (the beautiful jewel which the General and Doña Carmen have given to me as a present... makes me feel already united with my new homeland and so anxious to know it better and to serve it)."

From the time of the wedding, the "Juan Carlos Solution" became an official one for the Francoist regime and the difficult job of selling this solution to the Spanish people began. It seems quite unbelievable now, but at the time, public support for Juan Carlos and his new wife was minimal. On their different public outings, they were often met with a chorus of booing or rotten tomatoes or if they were fortunate, they were simply treated with indifference by the public.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, it was the Opus Dei technocrats who had engineered the Spanish economic miracle who became the kingmakers of Franco's Spain under the guise of *Operación Lucero* and no expense was saved to enhance the image of the prince and his new family.

However, Juan Carlos's problems with the Spanish public were minuscule in comparison with the personal dilemma he now faced as the 1960's drew to a close and Franco became more intent on cementing the

<sup>18</sup>Franco's wife, Carmen Polo commented to her friend la Marquesa de Huétor in 1962 after the wedding "*que Doña Sofía le había robado a Franco el corazón* (that Doña Sofía had stolen Franco's heart)".

<sup>19</sup>It is pertinent here to point out that this indifference continued up until the mid-1980's. Indeed, a popular skipping song of the early 1980's for Spanish children was *Franco, Franco, el que tiene el culo blanco porque su mujer se lo lava con Ariel, La Doña Sofía se lo lava con lejía y el teniente-coronel con Pernel* (Franco, Franco, you are the white-arsed one because your wife washes it with Ariel. Doña Sofía washes it with bleach and the Colonel (Tejero, the protagonist of the 23-F coup) with Pernel (another Spanish brand of washing powder). Different versions of this skipping-rhyme appeared throughout the 1970's and early 1980's.

path of succession for his protégé. Don Juan was still alive and this meant that Juan Carlos would have to usurp his own father's claim to the throne if he was to succeed Franco. Don Juan had known for years of Franco's ambitions for his son but he was shocked that his son would actually agree to the usurpation of his own father's claims.

On July 12th, 1969, Franco met Juan Carlos and informed him that he was about to name him as successor. The prince agreed and ten days later, the Spanish parliament ratified his decision. On July 23rd, in front of the television cameras and the world's press, Juan Carlos swore his oath of loyalty to Franco and to the *Movimiento Nacional*. To hammer home that Juan Carlos was Franco's choice and creation as successor rather than a Bourbon one, he was accorded the title of Prince of Spain in place of the title of Prince of Asturias which had traditionally been accorded to the eldest son of the Bourbon monarch.

Don Juan could still not believe his son's disloyalty to the family and on the day of his son's investiture, he went sailing alone in his yacht, putting in at a small coastal hamlet in Portugal in order to watch the proceedings on television. When Juan Carlos had finished his oath and his discourse, the only words his father said were, "*Bien leído, Juanito, Bien leído* (Well read, little Johnny, well read)."

Juan Carlos had now disposed of his father who now became increasingly involved in the democratic opposition and politically marginalized until he made a vitriolic speech in June, 1975 at a dinner in Barcelona in which he attacked Franco and his regime and just as his son was about to come to power, he was banned from ever re-entering Spain. In the following years, there was a reconciliation between son and father and in early 1977, during the heady days of the transition, Don Juan gave his son the public approval which he had withheld until then. A convert to democracy, on May 14th, he finally renounced all his rights to the throne in a speech at the Palacio de la Zarzuela thus greatly smoothing the path for his son. It would not be impertinent to suggest that Don Juan's noble actions were greatly influenced by the tragic death of the King's brother, Alfonso as a teenager. Don Juan did not wish to lose another son and so he acceded to his son's demands. He closed his speech on that fateful day of May 14th by bowing his head and uttering the words to his son, "*Su Majestad, por España, todo por España ; Viva el Rey ! ; Viva España !* (Your Majesty, for Spain, everything for Spain. Long live the King ! Long live Spain !)".<sup>20</sup>

These words of Don Juan were strikingly different than his son's 1969 oath to Franco and his movement but one could suggest that the King did take his father's words to heart for since then, these words

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<sup>20</sup>See ABC, "*Don Juan: una vida al servicio de España*" April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1993, pp. 28-29.

can be said to encapsulate the King's activities in the social and political arenas.

The question of Don Juan was not the only challenge to Juan Carlos's succession in the last years of the Francoist regime. The dubious machinations of the Spanish monarchy over the past two centuries had left two pretenders to the throne and in the 1960's, the degree of support that they commanded amongst the populace could not have been said to have been any worse than that of Juan Carlos who was relying almost exclusively on his *Opus Dei* backers and the personal approval of the septuagenarian Franco.

The traditional threat to Bourbon rule came from the Carlists in their Northern stronghold of Navarra. Yet, the death in 1936 of Alfonso Carlos, the last direct male descendant of the Carlist line seemed to have ended this division amongst Spanish monarchists as his closest male relative was the Bourbon, Don Juan, Juan Carlos's father. However, before he died, Alfonso Carlos in order to keep the Carlist political cause alive had bestowed the rights of succession upon a distant cousin, Prince Javier de Borbón Parma.

This decision was to have very little real political significance until 1958 when the aforementioned prince renounced his claims to the Spanish throne in favour of his eldest son, Carlos Hugo. Carlos Hugo seized his opportunity by marrying Princess Irene of the Netherlands in 1964 after a highly-publicized romance in an attempt to attract the attention of a Spanish public which was still giving the cold shoulder to monarchism. However, Carlos Hugo's attempts at undermining Juan Carlos had little success as influenced by the political climate of the 1960's, he became increasingly embroiled in left-wing opposition movements until he was finally expelled from Spain in December, 1968 with his wife for having attacked Juan Carlos in a speech.

In 1977, Carlos Hugo returned to Spain as a politician rather than as an aspiring monarch and healing an age-old wound, he met with Juan Carlos and the Bourbon family was united once more with Carlos Hugo quickly fading from the political scene along with traditional Carlism. The last cries of Carlism were centred around the activities of Carlos Hugo's radical younger brother, Sixto Enrique, around whom a certain cult of extremist Carlism had been born in the early 1970's after his brother's enforced exile. The political ambitions of Sixto Enrique came to a bloody end in 1976 when the followers of his brother, Carlos Hugo were attacked by armed right-wing reactionaries led by Sixto Enrique during the traditional Carlist pilgrimage to the hill of Montejurra in Navarra with one man killed and several wounded.

A much more dangerous threat to Juan Carlos's right of succession came from the candidacy of Don Alfonso de Borbón-Dampierre, the el-

dest son of his Uncle Jaime who had renounced his claims to the throne in 1933 as being a deaf mute, he was considered unfit to rule. However, he went on to marry and have children and Alfonso's claim on the throne was greatly enhanced by his marriage in 1972 to Franco's eldest granddaughter, María del Carmen Martínez Bordiú. Franco had always had regal pretensions<sup>21</sup> and this explains in many ways his obsession with Juan Carlos. Now, he had the opportunity to create a dynasty of his own but despite the protestations of his wife who favoured Alfonso's claims, Franco was unwilling to let go to waste the quarter of a century's work he had put into Juan Carlos and up until his death, he remained adamant that Juan Carlos was to be his successor as Head of State.

Yet, despite Franco's wishes and the hard work of *Operación Lucero*, there was still very little real evidence to suggest after Franco's death on November 20th, 1975 that Juan Carlos would become the immensely popular figure that he is in today's Spain. However, Juan Carlos was to prove himself a much deeper and more astute politician than anybody had given him credit for up until then. Juan Carlos managed successfully to predict the mood of the Spanish people in the immediate post-Franco era and almost immediately adapted a strong democratic persona. Much was made of his secret contacts with left-wing politicians during the Franco era and showing the same ruthless streak with which his father had been dispatched in 1969, many of his old Francoist allies were similarly disposed of. Most importantly, Carlos Arias Navarro, the Prime Minister of Franco's government who had made his distrust of Juan Carlos public was dispatched from the political arena albeit through his own resignation.

A die-hard supporter of Franco, it was Arias Navarro who had appeared sobbing on Spanish national television to announce Franco's death<sup>22</sup>. Arias Navarro was not interested in tradition but rather in

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<sup>21</sup>Such regal pretensions of Franco stemmed from his youth and were popularly exemplified by his obsession with creating new titles of nobility which would normally be the exclusive domain of a monarch. This new nobility still exists in Spain. A prime example was Pedro Barrié de la Maza, the chief of the Galician electrical company, Fuerzas Eléctricas del Noroeste Sociedad Anónima or FENOSA. As a new noble, Barrié de la Maza was allowed to take the title Count of Fenosa.

<sup>22</sup>It is pertinent to point out here that Franco's death did not see any great outpouring of joy or street demonstrations in favour of either the King or democracy. On the contrary, it was a sombre affair with many Spaniards crying on the street and his funeral enjoyed a huge attendance. This may seem strange given the type of regime that Spain would embrace within the next few years but it can be understood by the explanation that for many Spaniards in 1975, Franco was the only leader they had ever known and by extension, Francoism, the only system of government. In this light, the miracle of the relatively smooth democratic transition seems even the greater.

continuation and he was well aware that the new King had conned the ageing dictator about his aims and desires. Arias Navarro was to be proved to be correct for despite Juan Carlos's promise to Franco to maintain the unity of Spain above everything else, within two years he was presiding over a state which was introducing some of the most radical statutes of regional autonomy which had ever been seen in Europe.

The rise in Juan Carlos's popularity after Franco's death is well-documented but it undoubtedly hinged upon his successful ditching at least in public of many of his former allies and his consummate ability to appear as all things to all men (and women). His relationship with Adolfo Suárez, the prime minister of the transitional government was fundamental to his success as the King played a leading role in the formulation of a new constitution which would paradoxically radically curtail his own powers and that of his successors.

Franco had envisaged an executive monarchy for Spain after his death and it would not be impertinent to suggest that there was a time when Juan Carlos envisaged the same thing but keenly aware of the political reality in the transition years, he not only settled for a position as a constitutional monarch but moreover, he never missed an opportunity to defend or promulgate the ideals of this new democratic constitution.

Only Santiago Carrillo, the leader of the Spanish Communist Party had been publicly vocal in his criticism of a King who had sold his father for a crown but even he was co-opted in the new spirit of reconciliation launched by the King in post-Franco Spain. However, the support of many left-wing leaders for the King must not be seen as a sign of their faith in monarchy or in Franco's chosen successor. On the contrary, they needed Juan Carlos as much as he needed them. He provided the vital link between Franco and the new Spain and became a compromise candidate whose flexible and malleable character made him acceptable to all sides. The left-wing opposition saw the new King as a man they could negotiate with and the figureheads of the Francoist regime saw the King as a buffer which would protect them against any threat of revenge or retribution from opposition groups or indeed, the Spanish people. Juan Carlos needed everybody for without the support of the various political leaders, he would return to what he had been in the 1960's, a King without a realm and this realization was of paramount importance in his insistence on a monarchy and by extension, a Spain of inclusion rather than exclusion.

The King's amazing success in managing to appeal to highly polarized sections of Spanish society in the transition period has been analyzed by many experts and undoubtedly, his own personal character was of immense importance. However, the role of his wife, Doña Sofía

is often ignored and this is a glaring oversight as the importance of her role in the restoration of the Spanish monarchy cannot be over-estimated.

A quiet but powerful influence over her husband, it was Doña Sofía who had played a fundamental role in changing Juan Carlos from Franco's puppet into a much more independent and hence, politically dangerous individual. Moreover, if her husband was to succeed by showing strong traits of populism and compromise, Doña Sofía would embody these very traits. She had already converted from Greek Orthodoxy to Catholicism in order to marry the King and when she discovered that the Spanish populace wanted a "monarchy of the people", she embarked on a campaign for which she has been given very little real credit but which was nevertheless of great importance in winning vital support for the monarchy in the transition period.

Doña Sofía has always shied away from the normal functions or outlook of a monarch's wife. She has declared how one of her greatest pleasures in life is setting her own hair and how if she was not a member of the Royal Family, she would have loved to have been a hairdresser. When the future King, Prince Felipe first went to primary school, she insisted he went to an ordinary yet progressive one. Infamously, when a group of parents complained that the price of lunches at the school was too high, Doña Sofía was instrumental in instituting a boycott of the school lunches and afterwards, Prince Felipe was one of those who turned up for school every morning with sandwiches in his schoolbag.

This image of the King's wife has endeared her to a population who had no wish to re-embrace Bourbon excesses. Although official royal receptions take place in the *Palacio Real* or *Palacio del Oriente*, the Royal Family live in the modest *Palacio de la Zarzuela* on a budget that would put to shame other European monarchies. Doña Sofía loves to go shopping with her friends, a national pastime in Spain, and she buys much of her clothes off the peg at little boutiques. It is not uncommon to find small boutiques in Madrid or Palma de Mallorca, where the Royal Family holidays, proudly displaying letters of thanks from the Palace enclosing payment. More importantly, a strong image has been cultivated in the Spanish public imaginary of Doña Sofía as a caring and humanitarian royal. After many major tragedies in Spain from landslides to traffic accidents, Doña Sofía is to be found in the background consoling the victims and this image has greatly boosted her popularity amongst the ordinary Spanish people who had been so indifferent to her and her husband when they first married.

This image of the Royal Family as an ordinary one is not confined to the activities of Doña Sofía. The King has followed his wife's lead

and given his relatively humble childhood, he has fitted the part of proletarian very well indeed. At every major sporting event, the King is seen supporting the national team but not in an aloof, monarchical manner.<sup>23</sup> He is just another *aficionado*, albeit at times, a more vocal and expressive one and this has cemented his popularity amongst the ranks of society who provoked his grandfather's downfall. Stories abound of the King giving lifts to hitch-hikers and inviting the locals to drinks while on holidays in Palma de Mallorca.<sup>24</sup> The King who doesn't act like a King has found a welcome reception in a Spain which was tired of Francoist regal pretensions and it is more pertinent to speak of the success of *juancarlismo* rather than monarchism in post-Franco Spain.

Yet, acutely aware of the problems his successor will face, Juan Carlos I and Doña Sofía have been intent on creating a cult of *Felipismo* which will ensure the smooth transition of rule in the future. The King's eldest son is tall like his father and his handsome good looks have won him immense popularity amongst at least one half of the Spanish population. However, the Prince of Asturias is not an arrogant young man. A sportsman, he has represented Spain at the Olympic Games and while a university student in Madrid, he was accorded the ultimate compliment for a Spaniard by his fellow classmates in that it was said that he always stood the coffees in the faculty cafeteria.<sup>25</sup> Prince Felipe has been protected both from and by the media and the support of his two older sisters, Elena and Cristina has also been vital. In particular, La Infanta Cristina's marriage to Iñaki Urdungarín, the popular Basque handball player who plays with Barcelona has done much to increase the Royal Family's popularity in the problematic regions of the Basque Country and Cataluña. Perhaps most importantly, time is passing and Don Juan has passed away along with many of the leading figures of Francoism who have haunted much of his father's ca-

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<sup>23</sup>Indeed, the Royal Box at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona was often the most animated area of the stadium and the King's unbridled joy at Spanish victories was captured for posterity on international television. In particular, the victory of the underdog from the rural Castilian province of Soria, Fermín Cacho in the blue riband 1500 Metres seemed to be a particular source of joy to the King.

<sup>24</sup>The King is said to like the Mallorcan seafood but he prefers a plate of the cheaper mussels than the more expensive octopus or squid. However, he is quite prepared to invite fellow diners to the more expensive delicacies if that is their choice. His bodyguards are reported to get regularly frustrated with his choices of ordinary, working-class bars as they are difficult to patrol and the King likes to pass off *incognito*. He lets his beard grow in summer and delights in not being recognized.

<sup>25</sup>Prince Felipe has followed his father's example of never choosing the most expensive whiskey for his *copa* and during his study sojourn in the United States, he regularly passed off as just another Spanish exchange student.

reer. The future path of succession will be a lot easier for Prince Felipe than it was for his father but he has a very difficult act to follow and the search still continues for a Doña Sofía who will be by his side.<sup>26</sup>

The latter observations may seem to have painted the post-Franco period as a wholly rosy one for the Spanish Royal Family. However, public relations alone did not make the King's reputation and it was his role in the aborted February 23rd or 23-F coup d'état of 1981 which really cemented his position as a political heavyweight in contemporary Spain.

The events of that fateful day in contemporary Spanish history have been well-documented. On the afternoon of what was to be one of the longest days and nights in Spanish history, Col. Antonio Tejero, a member of the reactionary and pro-Franco *Guardia Civil* branch of the police force, broke into the Spanish parliament and as gunfire rained around the building, the deputies took to the floor. A coup d'état was declared and in Valencia, the Motorized Division under Lt. General Miláns del Bosch took to the streets in their tanks and armoured cars. Spain and Europe shuddered as the extent of the plot began to unravel.

The King hesitated while Doña Sofía remained an oasis of calm in the *Zarzuela*. Finally, he came on national television with the coup already doomed to failure and in a famous speech, not only as King but also as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, he defended democracy and attacked the organizers of the coup. His speech was followed by spontaneous demonstrations of support for democracy as Spaniards spilled on to the streets and the King was heralded as having saved the day. Tejero was arrested along with Miláns del Bosch, General Armada and the other coup organizers. Unlike the king, they had erred in their judgement and their timing. The majority of Spaniards were not ready for a return to military rule and the democratic experiment which Juan Carlos had staked his career on was here to stay.

However, one must point out here that the spontaneous show of support for the King on that night of February 23rd/24th, 1981 was, in many ways, a sigh of relief as many feared the worst and although the army-educated Bourbon who had been Franco's protégé was an unlikely saviour, he was infinitely better than no saviour at all. The reality is that one of the leaders of the plot, General Armada was a close personal friend of the King's and it is extremely doubtful that the King had no idea whatsoever of this current of dissent within the Armed Forces. However, the King was prepared once again to go with the pop-

<sup>26</sup>This question of the future bride of Prince Felipe is a recurring theme in the Spanish press and particularly in the *prensa del corazón* or love press which has no real English equivalent but basically reports on the love interests of the Royal Family, etc. It has a massive circulation.

ular current which favoured democracy in 1981 although it is notable that none of the conspirators were given harsh sentences in the trials that followed and several commentators spoke of their silence being bought. Neither had the King or indeed the new democratic regime any desire to antagonize further the Armed Forces but the lenient treatment of the conspirators did arouse some suspicion of if not the collusion in at least the knowledge of the *Zarzuela* with regard to the original plot. Miláns del Bosch became in particular an embarrassment for the King after his release from jail and his retirement to an opulent residential area of Madrid from where he consistently refused to repent for his actions in the 23-F coup until his death last year and his son's embarkment on a military career sends a unsettling message to those Spanish democrats who like to view the right-wing and reactionary reputation of the Spanish military as a thing of the past.

The fallout from the 23-F coup only served to strengthen the position of the monarchy in Spain. Whether the King had known about the coup or not, Felipe González's Socialist Government now needed the support of Juan Carlos more than ever and if he had been an important beacon of unity during the transition period, he now became the fundamental lynch-pin on which the future of Spanish democracy hinged. González was a very intelligent politician who realized that there may have been more support for a military coup in Spain than the 23-F coup had revealed and he needed the King to control this support and stop it from growing while the fledgling democracy was consolidated. Felipe González built up a close personal relationship with the King and from then on, any potential leader in Spain was acutely aware of the necessity of the support of the monarchy if the new democratic Spain was to prosper.

Fortunately for González and for Spanish democracy, the King was in agreement with him. The King realized that the future of his dynasty now lay with democracy and he became a fervent supporter of European integration in the belief that locking Spain into the European family of nations would not only enhance Spain's constitutional credibility and silence reactionary elements but also provide important democratic guarantees.<sup>27</sup> For his efforts, Juan Carlos I was awarded the prestigious Charlemagne Prize in 1982 and Spain finally acceded to full membership of the European Union in 1986. In the field of international relations, the King was also instrumental in fomenting increased Spanish co-operation with Latin America and in doing so, he managed to appease the old imperialists while also democratizing Spain on the world stage. The King was walking a tightrope in trying to be all

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<sup>27</sup>See Arnal, M. *España ante el reto europeo*. Zaragoza: Diputación de Zaragoza, 1993.

things to all men but he was getting better at it all the time and as much of his murkier anti-democratic past began to die off or fade into obscurity, the monarchy in Spain could be said to be able to relax somewhat with its position relatively secure. However, the problems of Basque separatism and the ETA terrorist movement<sup>28</sup> remain a pressing concern and the coming to power of the *Partido Popular* in 1996 under José María Aznar presented a new challenge to the King as the cosy relationship with González which had lasted over fifteen years was now over. The new Government called itself centrist but to many Spaniards, it was the return of the right-wing and the return to power of Francoist figureheads such as Manuel Fraga<sup>29</sup> would call for a new approach from the monarchy.

From a strictly constitutional point of view, the actual power of the monarchy is very weak. The 1978 Constitution outlines the monarch's three main functions. Firstly, his place as *jefe del estado* (head of state) which manifests itself as a symbol of unity and continuity embodied in the principle of hereditary succession. Secondly, the monarch has the role of ultimate arbiter in ensuring that the institutions of the democratic state run smoothly. Last but by no means least, the monarch is commander-in-chief of the Spanish Armed Forces.

All these functions are controlled by the constitution and it is true to say that most of the monarch's powers are merely symbolic and on paper, he is simply an instrument of parliament. However, as the events of 23-F showed, his role as Commander-in-Chief of a reactionary army with a strong and well-deserved anti-democratic reputation is a very important one. Although any decisions the King makes in this post have to be ratified by the parliament, it is the King's informal power which is most interesting as he remains in regular contact with the highest authorities in the Armed Forces and he uses the *Pascua Militar* or annual military celebration of January 6<sup>th</sup> to speak to an army which continues to look to him for leadership and guidance.

Similarly, a constitutional weakness which could allow the King considerable informal powers is his duty to propose the candidate to head the next government. Under normal circumstances, this power is merely symbolic as the leader of the majority party is automatically requested to head the next government and is then appointed and sworn in by the King. However, in the not wholly unlikely future scenario of an indecisive election result, there is no constitutional provision evi-

<sup>28</sup>The threat of an assassination attempt on the King or on a member of the Royal Family remains a constant reality and several aborted attempts have been discovered throughout the last two decades.

<sup>29</sup>Fraga had been a leading minister in the Francoist regime. He is currently head of the *Xunta de Galicia* or Regional Government of Galicia, Franco's native region.

dent and the King's informal arbitrary role would come into play through which he would be able to command considerable influence.

A further interesting if little-known observation on the 1978 Constitution from a monarchist point of view is its gender bias which runs contrary to the King's public persona as a progressive supporter of gender equality. Article 57.1 states that a male heir is always preferred to a female heir even if the female is older. This institutionalization of male privilege continues down the line of succession.

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the King's potential powers stems from one of the very devices which was installed to control them. The *refrendo* or royal endorsement on every bill or official document signed by the King comes with the provision that there must be a counter-signature of the prime minister or one of his cabinet. This provision was put in place to drastically reduce the King's powers but the Constitution goes on to declare that "those who endorse the acts of the King are responsible for them" so in fact, the King cannot therefore become politically involved or blamed for unpopular or polemic legislation.

This provision is a vitally important one for it places the King and his successors above political reproach in the eyes of the Spanish people and with their support solid and the popularity of the monarchy guaranteed, he can then go about his informal work through which he can exert a far greater influence on Spanish life. It is ironic that the King used his wide-ranging executive powers in the years of 1975-77 to help steer Spain towards democracy with his reward being a stripping of those very powers. However, the reality is that the always astute monarch exchanged his executive powers for a moral authority under the new Constitution, which in the long-term, may prove much more durable and valuable for the Bourbon dynasty.

This monograph has concentrated on much of the little-known events and activities of the King's early career which would shape his outlook in his increasingly public life after Franco's death. When Franco died, there was little popular support for a return to monarchy in Spain but the King's ability to ride the crest of the democratic wave without alienating his traditional right-wing supporters made *juancarlismo* a socio-political ideology which would be attractive to almost all Spaniards. It is an immense tribute to the King that he managed to live up to the ideals he had promulgated and deliver on his promises. In this task, he was helped in no small way by his wife, Doña Sofía and the rest of his family. The dignified and noble withdrawal from the political arena of his father, Don Juan in 1977 was another key factor alongside his alliance with Carlos Hugo and the resultant end of the Carlist challenge to his crown.

The monarchy in Spain has enjoyed a murky and chequered history and, in particular, the Bourbons have had very few days of glory. Juan Carlos I has changed that and especially since 1981 and the aborted coup, his popularity and that of his family have grown throughout Spain providing one of the very few symbols of unity in a country which is becoming increasingly fragmented and divided. Not only has the monarchy in Spain been restored but much more importantly, the Spanish people's faith and belief in monarchy as an institution has been restored also. Prince Felipe has been moulded and groomed in his father's likeness and a smooth succession seems assured.

The political power of the monarchy remains greatly under-estimated with the King's informal powers of guidance and influence still playing a significant role in contemporary Spain. Although few commentators readily admit it, Spain is still in transition and the democratization process in Spain has taken place at different speeds throughout different elements of society. The Spanish Armed Forces have undoubtedly been one of the slowest institutions to embrace democracy and it is still vitally important that they have a democrat, albeit a converted one as their Commander-in-Chief. More importantly, they respect this figure and his leadership and his example is the one they will follow.

Therefore, it would not be impertinent to suggest that some of the greatest challenges for the Spanish monarchy are still to come as Spanish democracy is finally consolidated but Spain has to deal with the march of European integration and growing regional problems within the national territory. In fact, if anything, the influence of the monarchy may grow rather than diminish as Spain's need for an independent arbiter who can command universal respect will become increasingly important in an escalating social and political climate of polarization.

It is highly ironic that Juan Carlos I was put on the throne by Franco in order to avoid the will of the people taking sway for it is now the will of the people from which he derives his power and which he uses in order to ensure that a situation akin to his own will never happen again. Juan Carlos has worn many different guises throughout his long career but the path and position to be followed by his son will be a lot clearer and it will be much easier for Prince Felipe to seek unity rather than division in the new Spain as the ghosts of Francoism and the Civil War fade into the past. If the Prince was looking for a dictum on which to follow his father, he could find no better than the conclusion of Juan Carlos I's speech to the Spanish parliament immediately after Franco's death when he declared, "*Si todos permanecemos juntos, habremos*

*ganado el futuro. ¡ Viva España !* (If we all remain together, the future is ours. Long live Spain !)"<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>See the speech by Juan Carlos I to the Spanish Parliament on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1975 after he was proclaimed King upon Franco's death. The full text of the speech was carried the next day in all the national and regional newspapers.