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POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES  
OF SPAIN'S ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN  
COMMUNITIES

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by

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Political and economic perspectives of Spain's accession to the EEC

Spain, and Spaniards as such, have spent many years dreaming about the Community. It would not be an exaggeration to say that for a significant number of my countrymen the word Europe has been a culmination of illusions and hopes behind the frustrations and helplessness of a country isolated by its politics and economically far removed from the well being of its neighbors.

1. WHY WE WERE LEFT OUT

Right from the moment of the signing of the Treaty of Rome, Spain experiences a curious sensation of ambivalence. The people, who sees that to the north of its frontiers there are significant degrees of freedom and well being begin to wonder why the "rich democrats" of Western Europe have left Spain out. The governing operators of the dictatorship, which on the other hand have based their entire political philosophy on an affirmation of the moral and material superiority of authoritarian rule over what they call the rotten bourgeoisie democracy, are compelled to notice with increasing concern how these same rotten democracies not only do not go downhill, but that they actually make progress and flourish. The dictatorship had also to take into account the fact that democratic opposition in Spain, however scattered, badly organized and incapable of unity of action it may be does find faithful and active supporters for their aspirations towards a better and more just distribution of natural wealth and towards adequate respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of the human person.

The Franco regime, aware of its international weakness and although basically not overconcerned by it, realizes that this Europe of well being and freedom lies far out of reach.

Powerful propaganda machinery tries to convince the Spanish public of the fallacy that there are no political reasons preventing our accession to the Communities, while at the same time explaining that we were interested for purely economic reasons. This heavy-handed fallacy was practically denied when the Spanish government on 9th February 1962 in a letter that was never answered, asked the Communities to open negotiations for Spain's entry into the Communities.

But in this specific field the propaganda had the opposite effect - popular feeling was acutely aware of the fact that the difficulties were exclusively political in nature. And therefore when as from the 20th November 1975, at the death of Franco, an accelerated and inevitable process of democratic change began in Spain, the average Spaniard sees with pleasure and satisfaction that one of his greatest desires, however ambiguously represented, was about to be fulfilled - Europe would welcome us immediately with open arms as soon as the existence of a true democracy in Spain could be guaranteed. And this is why when the average Spaniard, who after some months of enthusiasm realized that the recovery of liberty did not necessarily go hand in hand with radical improvement in his living conditions, also noticed that being part of Europe meant difficult economic negotiations, there grew up a certain feeling of disenchantment.

2. DEMOCRACY  
AND SPANISH  
DISILLUSION  
MENT WITH  
EUROPE

Franco tried to make us believe that the best we Spaniards had was to be found in ourselves, that the world outside could not teach us anything because, among other things, this world outside either despised or envied us. And then, after Franco, the average Spaniard of the democracy begins to realize with some bitterness that the world continues to be reticent about Spain's accession. Some Community countries mention economic difficulties. There is out and out rejection by some political elements who convince part of public opinion that it continues to abhor us and various pretexts are used to slam the door in our face. I need hardly add that these reflections also come into a wider context of doubt about not only the Europe of the EEC, but even about the democratic system itself. This is neither the moment nor the place to enter into details of this subject. I would nonetheless mention the very real difficulties for Spain and for the Spanish government entailed in moving from an autocratic system to a democratic system in the midst of an allout economic crisis. I have begun my intervention here today in this vein on purpose although it may not exactly reflect the approach of the Spanish political and economic circles with a view to my country's entry into the Communities. I did however think it necessary to begin with some idea of how people feel although I myself and my party and the Spanish government do not share these feelings which can be detected in various sectors of Spanish society. These are all details which I think make the picture clear.

3. UNANIMITY  
OF SPANISH  
POLITICAL  
PARTIES

All the political, social and economic forces have a slightly different but basically positive approach to Spanish accession to the Communities. Looking ahead to the fundamental conclusion of my analysis and if mere words can precisely reflect an intrinsically complex situation, I would say that contemporary Spanish leaders

have three main ideas:

- The first is that Europe constitutes the only valid choice for defining our internal and foreign policy;
- The second is that this choice will be difficult and complex to achieve;
- The third as a result is that this choice, being the best and only one, cannot however be considered to be a panacea of all our ills or a solution to all our problems.

However, I would mention something which certainly is extraordinary in European political life and in the context of the two extensions to the Community. Here I refer to the fact that all those political parties with significant representation in Parliament have repeatedly shown themselves to be in favour of Spain's becoming a full member of the EEC. This support naturally requires some clarification to moderate former though recent enthusiasm: The Europe in the mind of the Spanish government and of the government party - a Europe closely modelled on the provisions of the Treaty of Rome and completed by the whole "acquis communautaire" - has little to do with the so-called Europe of the workers which the parties of the left wish to depict. In more dialectic terms than do politicians and economists.

Nevertheless the fact that all these same parties of the left clearly state their desire to see Spain become a member of the European Communities greatly facilitates the definition of a vital aspect of our foreign policy and even constitutes an extremely favourable contribution to our negotiating position. This would also hold true whatever political force held the reins of Spanish government. In this context mention should be made of how the main Spanish political parties have met specific

counterparts. There was discernable embarrassment in the Spanish parties because of the reticent, and even at times openly negative attitude towards Spanish entry into Europe expressed by the French socialist party and particularly by the communist party.

An additional embarrassment for the Spanish communists was the posture adopted by their French counterparts which coincides with that of of Mr. Chirac's right wing.

The net result has been that both the Spanish socialists and communists have gone against their French counterparts rather than change their own favourable attitude to Spanish accession to EEC. Again, this attitude is subject to variations and different interpretations and is no cause for excessive enthusiasm. It nevertheless meant that on 27 June 1979 the Spanish Parliament unanimously adopted a resolution which, among other things, specifies: The Chamber expresses its support for the decision to integrate Spain in the European Community

The resolution was put forward by my group in Parliament by the socialist group and the Catalane and Bask minorities.

It obtained 285 votes in favour of a total of 287.

This consensus of all political forces reflects - at the same time taking into account all the ambiguities and the certain disillusion I have referred to - the feeling that for more or less varied political reasons the Spain's accession to the European Communities.

4. PUBLIC  
OPINION  
POLES

Here it would be significant and opportune to refer to the latest poles available the results of which have been favourable for the past ten years.

1- 67 per cent of those questioned are in favour of Spain's accession to the European Communities. 7 per cent are against and 26 per cent gave no reply. Those against are active members in the extreme left or the extreme right.

2- The effects of Spanish integration in the Communities appear positive for the majority of those questioned whose opinions vary between the 58 per cent that feel that our country would obtain advantages in a field of trade (55 per cent for agriculture, 54 per cent for culture, 53 per cent for labour, 52 per cent for industry and tourism). And the 45 per cent who consider it to be a good thing for its political benefits.

3 - 31 per cent of those surveyed feel that Spanish accession to the European Communities will take place within 2 to 5 years. Only four per cent is of the opinion that Spain will never be integrated in the European Community.

4 - In any case, information on the subject is rather scarce as over 30 per cent of those questioned have no answer.

5. INTEGRATION  
CONSIDERED IN  
EVITABLE

In addition to the information from figures, which in themselves are very positive, account should be taken of other very specific considerations.

The first is that the advantages of Spanish integration, and this is an opinion that I personally fully share, are to be seen about all from a political point of view. I am fully aware that the results of the surveys I have just mentioned may slightly undermine my opinion and I would explain that I am of those who have some confidence in

unquantified political analysis.

Hardly a week ago I had the opportunity to organize a seminar about Spanish accession to the European Communities for active members of the governing party, of my party. The speakers at the seminar were trade unionists, business men, politicians, representatives of the administration and simple party members. It was an attempt to give a general introduction to the subject of the Communities in which we dealt with subjects such as structure and financing of the Communities, moment for negotiation as well as more specific subjects explaining the direct effect in economic and social sectors: agriculture, industry, energy, finance, etc. It was clear that while for the politician there was no doubt about integration, although he recognized the inherent technical difficulties, for the representative of specific economic sectors there was grave concern about the possible repercussions, although they also began by affirming the inevitability of Spain's presence in the Communities.

Many of our businessmen, our trade unionists, our farmers or our industrialists, wanted a quantified assessment that would clearly indicate the advantages of integration. Naturally they also all said not only that they did not want short term disadvantages for their interests, but that they wanted positive short term impetus as well. The truth is, without getting into detail, that such assessment is extremely complex. It is certainly true that some sectors and products will suffer more than others, but it is no less true - and here I go forward to another of my conclusions - that the Spanish economy continues to show certain structural deficiencies which require modernization and rationalization: with or without the Communities such streamlining would have to be carried out.



However even those who were most reticent or doubtful regarding the economic results - perhaps because they come from less profitable or badly organized sectors - still regard Spanish integration to be inevitable. It seems as though unconsciously they apply the maxime formulated by a Catalan politician at the beginning of the century who said that to ask for the impossible or to reject the inevitable leads to chaos.

Actually, we might ask why our integration in the Communities is inevitable? Or even why many of those who think that on a short term basis there will be disadvantages attached to Spain's accession to EEC and yet they still consider the process to be inevitable?

6. THE POLITICAL REASONS FOR SPANISH INTEGRATION

It should be understood that the adjective "inevitable" should not be taken to be absolute because after all nothing - specially in politics - is inevitable or irreversible. But I chose this word for reasons which I believe to be a basic truth both in democratic Spain and in the Community: That the Iberian peninsula is a natural part of Europe and furthermore is capable of playing, as it has already done in the past, an important role in the creation and development of this nucleus which will soon group twelve states.

And from this point of view the inevitable aspect is to be seen mainly in the political field. In other words, the reasons in favour of our integration in the Communities are fundamentally political, and as a result, the advantages are also political.

Although it would be rather hazardous to affirm that in this field opinions are other than purely personal, I would quote from my intervention as spokesman of my party in Parliament on the 27th of June of this year, during the debate on the European Communities where the resolution I referred to before was almost unanimously adopted.

At that time, using words which have not been contradicted and, let us not forget, had the backing of a good majority of the Spanish people, I said : „because we believe that first and foremost this country is European, that it belongs to Europe and is Europe; because we also believe that the Spanish people wishes to adopt a way of life in theory and in practice which is that of Western democracies; because we do not wish to poeticize about other possible relations - which are not incompatible but which should be looked at from a European point of view, democratic and Western -, for all these reasons I wish to say on behalf of my group and of behalf of my party that the experiment begun on the 28th of July 1977 is the point of departure and of definition of something which affects us all directly, of something we often forget, and which increasingly in the future, will affect us; Spain's position in the world (...) It is not in vain to wonder during this debate about the introduction of a certain idea of Spain in a certain idea of Europe. In other words, about how we want this integration to take place and which profile we wish to have in Europe (...) Our desire is that Spain should be integrated in this set of common policies which are in the process of becoming so. I also wish to make quite clear that for us the terms of integration and of our accession to the Communities will have to be those of the founding treaties (...) The path we have chosen is not towards the Europe of the multinationals, but rather towards what this nucleus of nations has established which in free association has achieved for its citizens the greatest relative prosperity (...) Do we want a confederation of national sovereignties or delegated sovereignties ? Do we want a purely sectorial type of cooperation or allover harmonization in all fields? Do we want institutions that are a mere facade or that are effective decisionmaking instruments with progressive supranational authority? Do we want a common foreign policy or a vague

coordination of existing national policies? For us the answer to all these questions should be provided by the concept of the implementation of European union; in other words, a high degree of supranational integration which would include a significant delegation of sovereignty to community bodies, a goal which will not be achieved tomorrow (...) Our choice is integration, supranationality; or if you prefer, to repeat one of the slogans in fashion during the 60ies and at the beginning of the 70ies, the United States of Europe (...) The choice is between the theories of General De Gaulle and those of Mr. Jean Monnet. It is to choose between total and permanent supremacy of the nation state over and above any possibility of transnational integration, or based on sectorial integration which at the beginning would be purely economic, to move towards a situation of effective constitution of a Community which today is made up of smaller or larger countries. The presence of Spain would introduce an intermediary dimension. Similarly, in a community in which, as has so often been said, the nordic holds sway, Spain, Greece and Portugal would reinforce the Mediterranean flank, and the possible results might be intensification of a hardly noticeable north-south conflict within Europe, within the Community (...)"

7. THE RECOVERY OF THE FEELING OF PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL LIFE

All this is basically the result of a belief; Namely that as never before Spain is in a position to recuperate the possibility and the sense of participation in international life. This participation would be in solidarity with those countries and those people who share the same way of life, the same beliefs and the same values. The isolation of Franco's era had contributed in biased fashion to the creation of a manichaeian world in which only what was inside was good - and the outside was systematically hostile which naturally, prevented

cooperation. I need hardly add that this approach logically led to a feeling that was both egoistic and distant, xenophobic and irrational and which also has diluted the separation between friends and adversaries, between permanent interests and circumstantial desires. For all these reasons, and from the political focus I mentioned before, I think, we think, that Europe is the only reasonable alternative for our internal and foreign policy.

It is not and should not be interpreted as the expression of an absolute necessity or total urgency. I believe that Spain would be failing its historical destiny if it were not to fully recover its European identity. I also would not be inclined to adopt a catastrophist vision of the consequences, which in any case would affect Spain and Europe equally. I sincerely believe that it is a unique opportunity for both sides.

#### 8. THE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

I say this because I am also firmly convinced that the advantages and benefits should be felt both in Europe as well as in Spain. I would not go into further details on this aspect which does not really need emphasizing.

I think I would be correct in assuming that this awareness of inevitability, in a political sense, of Spanish accession is equally perceptible in the nine European capitals as in Madrid.

With regard to the economic perspectives of integration, we are perfectly aware of the extent of the changes integration would imply for many Spanish sectors, and of the measures of adaptation which would inevitably accompany it. Many circles in the Community think along the same lines and fear, or say they fear, the results of the Spanish presence in the Community. Whatever the actual scope of these changes or of such fears, obviously the adjustment process would have to be free of violence for our economic structures.

We attempt, rather than to stress the hazards and difficulties to assert the possibility of overcoming them with a view to imposing a discipline and a stimulus which should be dictated by integration and its consequences. I am certain that in this required adaptation process Spain will be able and should be able to expect help from the Community.

Although from the Spanish point of view the answer to the question "why Europe" is unequivocally positive, some are nonetheless concerned; is this the right moment, this moment of crisis and disillusion to make these efforts to adjust?

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This certainly is a legitimate question and it should be answered by explaining that neither are the problems exclusively ours nor can the solutions be restricted exclusively to our national territory. The crisis has global dimensions and although Spanish integration cannot be a remedy for our domestic ills, the Community does provide a more efficient framework for collective effort.

Studies made in other countries in an attempt to assess the global effects of integration in the Communities on national economies or, more specifically on the growth of GNP or on the balance of payments have shown how difficult it is to make a precise analysis or one that would be really significant.

For Spain the effects of this new situation will fundamentally depend on the reaction of the various economic agents when they adapt to new circumstances and the possibilities offered by a more extensive, richer and more vigorous market.

Furthermore, the gradual adjustment process should take into account factors not directly linked to integration but which will have a decisive influence on the behaviour of the Spanish economy during the coming decade such as the development of the economic crisis which would have to be tempered by negotiation for the transition period basically in favour of the weaker party; the evolution

of productivity; the framework of labour relations or the capacity for the introduction of a new technology in the required sectorial restructurization.

Although undoubtedly part of a supranational framework, these factors can be given individualized treatment in medium and longterm economic planning. This is why the problems inherent in accession cannot be solved only by negotiation; they require and will require internal action that the Spanish government intends to implement immediately in the sphere of its competence and which the economic agents should carry out in accordance with the practices of the market economy. The Spanish government has promised to give regular information to the economic and social forces about problems caused by integration for individual sectors, possible solutions, and the developments in the negotiation with the Community.

During the seminar you have had plenty of opportunities to consider sectorial, technical and economic aspects of the accession of Spain to the Community, naturally presented with greater authority and better technical knowledge than I can offer in a field which is not really mine. I have tried, however, to put forward some ideas that are both objective and committed, of what to my way of thinking and according to the factual data I have

of what our integration in Western democratic Europe would mean for Spain and the Spanish people.

9. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Detailed analysis of the sectors and the individual consequences possibly caused by integration, both in Spain and in the countries of the Community, obviously is many-sided. Certain circles in one or other Community country, for example want to give a catastrophic picture of Spanish integration and describe it as a serious threat for Community production and economies. In Brussels itself there seems to be a vague feeling that the integration would be exclusively to the benefit of Spain and at the expense of effort and sacrifice on the part of the Community.

To put forward all the pros and cons of the case would pointlessly extend my intervention. The figures give a more objective picture. It is possible that in a short and medium term there will be serious consequences for specific sectors of the Spanish economy that will have difficulty in surviving, or simply will not survive, the impact of integration. The same however cannot be said for any economic sector of any of the other countries now in the Community, however sensitive it may be.

You may contend that in a long term the advantages of economic rationalization will be obvious, and with this I would agree. I said this myself when I referred previously to the need for streamlining the Spanish economy.



in any case inside or outside the Community. Nevertheless it is our duty to take into account repercussions of all the types, and the least important of these are not those of a social nature. There may be negative aspects for a considerable part of the Spanish population.

It would be an oversimplification to present Spain's integration in the Community as something that would only be of benefit to us. Those Community circles who still react in this fashion forget too easily what advantages the substantial widening of the market would have for all members as it has had in the past. I find it difficult to adjust the simplicity of such analysis to available figures; I cannot even admit that in its very simplicity there may be some truth. I do not believe that anybody in Spain today still sincerely believes that the Common Market is the ideal solution and a panacea for all economic problems. It is evident to me that the more clear-thinking minds in the Community bodies see this and act in consequence.

10. BEYOND,  
THE CONSTRUCTION  
OF EUROPE

Among other reasons because beyond tomatoes and wheat, the special steels or the automobiles you have the underlying fact which has made it possible to revive the founding treaties and their very development of the Community.

This can be summarized in a word: the construction of Europe.  
the

We all know that this construction, far reaching in scope and basically political in nature, is not conceivable today if it does not comply with the original objectives of integrating in a single community all those European countries who share the same democratic ideals. This ideal today is the meridian that cuts across Greece, Portugal and Spain.

Thank you very much