

Spain Embraces Change

Canceling the Past

by José Javier Esparza

For the last four years, change has been in the air in Spain, following the election of Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, leader of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party. And thanks to his reelection in March of this year, we can look forward to more of the same.

There have been abrupt changes to the very structure of the government: new statutes regarding regional autonomy that recognize the "national" character of Spain's regions, thereby weakening the unity of the country.

There has been a radical shift in Spain's antiterrorist policy: In the name of the "peace process," the political spokesmen of terrorism have returned to public life, while victims of terrorism are being harassed by the authorities and pressure is being brought to bear on judges.

Change has come to our civic morality as well, through the legalization of homosexual "marriage," legislation in favor of transsexuals, and the adoption of fast-track divorce laws. Abortion laws are being amended to bring Spain closer to abortion on demand, euthanasia is being advocated, and embryonic stem-cell research is being promoted.

We now have a party line to tow with regard to our interpretation of the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). "Historical memory" is now skewed in favor of the Republican (leftist) side of the conflict.

Change has meant the injection of leftist ideology into education and policies that reward indoctrination over academic performance.

There have been attacks on the Christian identity of Spanish society—government initiatives hostile to the Catholic Church, a diminishing role for religion in schools, and attempts to confine religion to the private sphere. We are also being encouraged to explore other faiths, especially Islam.

This has accompanied an emphasis on rapprochement with authoritarian regimes in Latin America and within the Islamic bloc, as well as support for Turkey's admission to the European Union.

Change has meant the toleration of huge waves of immigration, mass amnesties, ineffective control over the borders, and laxity in the expulsion of illegals, accompanied by

ongoing dialogue that actually encourages them to come.

Spain's course today is the direct result of trends promoted for a long time. One of these trends follows the general direction of the European left in recent years—toward the liquidation of any vestige of tradition. Another corresponds to a leftist path unique to Spain throughout her history: the path to self-hatred and self-annihilation, whereon everyone who promotes anything that is uniquely national and Spanish is identified as a reactionary. Zapaterism, the ideology driving those who hold the reins of power in today's Spain, is the synthesis of these two trends.

The socialism of Felipe González contradicted the traditional values of the Spanish people, but nobody feared (at least after 1984) that it would be necessary to rush to the door, ax in hand, to defend the things held most sacred. On the other hand, the socialism of Zapatero, with regard to the most important things in life (family, social order, religion, the right to life) is extraordinarily aggressive—all the more so for having been built upon such a meager majority. Felipe González's socialism was socialist; Zapatero's is nihilistic. This is terrifying. All things terrifying, however, are interesting. And what is interesting in Zapaterist socialism is that it reveals the true face of the Third Left.

The First Left was revolutionary and red: Russia in 1917, Germany in 1919, Spain in 1934 and 1936. Its paradise was Soviet Russia. The First Left ended up drowning in a bloodbath of the Gulag and the Cheka. Today only Castro survives.

The Second Left was reformist and white: the British Labor movement, Swedish and German social democracies, as well as French (Mitterrand) and Spanish (González) socialism. Its paradise was Sweden. The Second Left collapsed and died, a casualty of the mere inability to keep up the level of public spending required by the welfare state.

The Third Left is the granddaughter of revolutions discredited by butchery, and the daughter of experiments found to be impracticable because of financial incompetence. Its great challenge is to construct a new theoretical paradigm. On the left's fringes, nihilistic currents began to pop up under the banners of antiglobalization. And in the chapels of nostalgia, a new hagiography was being assembled that did not take its inspiration from the old Soviet and Swedish paradises, but from the Sexual Revolution, the Latin American insurgency, the perpetu-

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ally defeated Reds, libertarian pipe dreams, and militant Third Worldism. From these ingredients, a doctrine has been concocted—the “ideology of cancelation.”

The ideology of cancelation is the conviction that the happiness of peoples and the progress of nations require the cancelation of everything born of the traditional order: fatherland, family, morals, upbringing, identity. These are the legacy of a dark and retrograde world. This liquidation of the past will not be carried out in the old way—with red banners flying and heads mounted on stakes. Such methods will no longer do, because they frighten the masses. What we are faced with is a movement soft and gentle in appearance, heavily cloaked in ritual invocations of dialogue and peace. This “sub-revolution” does not focus on the structure that holds up state power—the economy, the military—but pays attention instead to the true foundations of collective life: belief systems, customs, education. The nation is a decaying concept; the family is an institution from the past; religion is a superstition; morality is but a question of perspective; the law should adjust to circumstances. This is the mind-set that is being imposed on Spain from the corridors of power.

Just as the old Protector State of the 1980's was a caricature of a father, so this new Mommy State is somewhat of a caricature of a mother. It creates an air of intimate personal attachment as touching as it is ridiculous—passing out condoms in schools to avoid traumatic pregnancies; justifying military policy by arguments for humanitarian charity; making provisions for homosexual “marriage” because, “if they love each other, why not let them marry?”

The ideology of cancelation was not invented by Prime Minister Zapatero nor even by Spanish socialism. It made its first appearance in the West during the 1960's, with the student revolts in California and in Paris. Its operating principle is that, to change the world, one has to change the people; and to change the people, one has to change their values. If the people do not want to change, it is because, as Erich Fromm wrote, they are afraid of freedom. The tidal wave of 1968 saw the convergence of other currents: a popularization of Freudian-Marxist theories gave sexual liberation an essential role in breaking up traditional institutions. Yet the great masses of Western societies, who were eager to hear the message of liberation and hedonism following the harsh years of postwar discipline, continued to adopt bourgeois ways. Finally, there was the power of communist propaganda on the cultural front, which helped to weaken the opposition.

Afterward, the demands of 1968 became so individualistic and hedonistic (the “right to an orgasm,” for instance); yet at the same time so bourgeois, that the more serious communists, such as Pasolini, condemned the

movement. From those upheavals arose the New Left in the West and especially in Europe. This was a left that not only renounced the dictatorship of the proletariat but set about altering the playing field of the revolution, of social change. Alongside the march through the institutions, it opted for a “micro-revolution” in people's daily lives, as André Gorz put it. Thus, the left's ideological arsenal filled up with new weapons—euthanasia, sexual education for children, abortion. It is not difficult to spot in all of this a “lite” version of the grand revolutionary projects of the pre-war period, but the decisive difference lies in the strategic objective: Political change is now subordinated to long-term social change.

When the Protector State proved to be impracticable—in Great Britain, in the Scandinavian countries, and in France and Germany—the European left embraced the “micro-revolution” in daily life. Thus, the destruction of the traditional family, for instance, has figured more prominently on their agenda than have gains for workers on the social and economic fronts, particularly after the elephantine welfare state entered into crisis everywhere during the 1980's. While the figures of Reagan, Thatcher, and Kohl dominated the right, the seeds planted during the previous decades, in universities and in the press, continued to bear fruit. Though all of the applications of socialism had failed in practice, the voices of the left continued to be the ones that dictated where legitimacy lay, that decided what was good and what was bad, that shaped the opinions and prejudices of society.

The disintegration of the apparatus of state socialism (and, on a different order, the Soviet model) paradoxically facilitated the deployment of the ideology of cancelation. The left no longer struck fear into the hearts of the established order. The nationalization of the financial sector, the collectivization of the means of production, and government intervention in the market were torn to shreds. What remained for us to fear? The left now presented itself as loosening society's reins and freeing people from custom, and this gave the established order and the market no reason to squirm. In fact, it gave them comfort. The left offered well-calculated doses of “good feelings” so as to make the inconveniences of the omnipotent market more bearable.

If modernity has singularly attempted to liberate individuals from all traditional bonds, we are now witnessing one final and supreme effort to carry this process to its conclusion. But there is, of course, a drawback: Since the individual does not gain this emancipation autonomously but under the stewardship of an ideological system, his so-called freedom remains subject to a power structure that no longer rests on visible institutions. Instead, it operates within an intricate network where the powers of politics, finance, and the media are intertwined. This process makes power more invisible and thus renders opposition and resistance, and even simple dissent, more difficult. The logic of emancipation leads to a new logic

of domination.

This is the situation not only in Spain but throughout the West. It is characteristic of Zapatero's Spain, however, that this ideology is being spread from the center of power, institutionally, and without resistance.

The Spanish state has had a makeover. It no longer addresses citizens in imperious, stentorian tones, but seeks to cloak itself in the protective affability of a mother—laws preventing you from smoking, for your health; laws requiring you to wear reflective vests in your car, for your safety; laws to prevent obesity in children, for their well-being; laws so that students pass their courses without effort, for their happiness.

The Protector State was a social incarnation of that paternalistic state which conservatives had built in the 19th and 20th centuries. The first legislation regarding Social Security was sponsored by conservatives (Bismarck in Germany, Maura and Dato in Spain). Liberals came to dub the Protector State the "Daddy State," and, in a certain sense, they were right. The paternalistic state was the swan song of the type of patriarchal society known in this neck of the woods since the classical world. In the Daddy State, government took on all the attributes of a protective father.

Today we have gone a step further. The state has less power, and patriarchal society is vanishing, so the paternalism of the state has transformed into maternalism. Government now oversees people's comfort, their domestic well-being, their everyday health, their waistlines, and even their love life. Just as the old Protector State of the 1980's was a caricature of a father, so this new Mommy State is somewhat of a caricature of a mother. It creates an air of intimate personal attachment as touching as it is ridiculous—passing out condoms in schools to avoid traumatic pregnancies; justifying military policy by arguments for humanitarian charity; making provisions for homosexual "marriage" because, "if they love each other, why not let them marry?" Across the West, it will naturally take on different forms: In highly developed cultures, the Mommy State adopts the air of a grande dame; in Spain, it puts on a rather domesticated air, like that of a woman donning a pair of slippers.

Whatever its genteel form, we must not deceive ourselves: This is the same Mommy State that, in conformity with the "ideology of cancelation," fights to eliminate any restrictions on abortion, hurls proposals for euthanasia at society, and authorizes experiments with human embryos. And again, the discourse of emancipation leads, in practice, to domination.

Zapaterism also possesses uniquely Spanish features, especially in its disdain for Spanish history. This is not something invented by Zapatero, but a hoary tradition of the Spanish left, which Zapatero has carried to surprising extremes. Measures such as the reform of the *Estado de las Autonomías* or the peace process with ETA (a Basque separatist group) can only be understood in this context.

Our left does not clearly identify the Spanish nation with the people the way the European left does. Instead, it has identified the nation with the "exploitative classes." From this line of reasoning arise both a pent-up hostility toward the Spanish identity and a solidarity with certain forms of anti-Spanishness. In addition, the strategy of Zapatero's government is consistent with the leftist tradition which holds that Spain cannot progress except under the permanent hegemony of the selfsame left, a hegemony that would finally bring about the great modern revolution Spain has never had. Many of us thought the cliché of the "unresolved revolution" had been laid to rest after our long experience with socialism from 1982 to 1996, and by the establishment of an unmistakably leftist media and financial elite, and that for these reasons the tendency to identify the nation with a privileged class had been rendered objectively meaningless. Yet the ideological fallout from the crumbling of the Berlin Wall meant a resurgence of old obsessions. All it took was a new group of fresh faces in the Spanish socialist leadership.

This mind-set has every potential to take root in other societies—wherever the people do not know who they are and where they are going. The instinct to surrender to the barbarian first arises in the privileged classes and may be described as an inclination to back down in the face of an external threat. Here, the fear of losing what one possesses enters into the equation, as does a certain kind of guilty conscience, a disquieting feeling of having benefited from some injustice. Thus, frequently, we hear cries that "They're not so bad," or "Aren't we the ones who pose the real threat?" At this point, the only thing left to do is to throw open the gates.

For them, the history of Spain is filled with gigantic mistakes, and we will not be able to pick ourselves up until we have a revolution *à la française*. Spain will not be a worthy country until the left gets to shape her. And this conviction leads to the condemnation of the discovery of America, to the loathing of the Reconquista (the liberation of Spain from the Muslims), and to the extolling of our Muslim heritage. According to this view, regional separatist movements exist because our national unity has been a disaster. If we have terrorism, it is because Spain has never managed to understand irredentism. Spain, still identified with empire and the Counter-Reformation (*i.e.*, the "right"), is always the guilty party. This strictly Manichaean vision draws a thick line between good (the left) and bad (everything else). Little does it matter that there have been revolutions, constitutions, and orderly transitions. This interpretation of history simply dispenses with reality because it dispenses with time.

The condemnation of history brings with it an implicit messianic hope: If things have been this way until today, it is now up to the left to effect change, to return us to the righteous path. And the disintegration of Spain will not be called such, but rather an improvement in harmony; and a pact with terrorists will not be called a capitulation, but a message of peace.

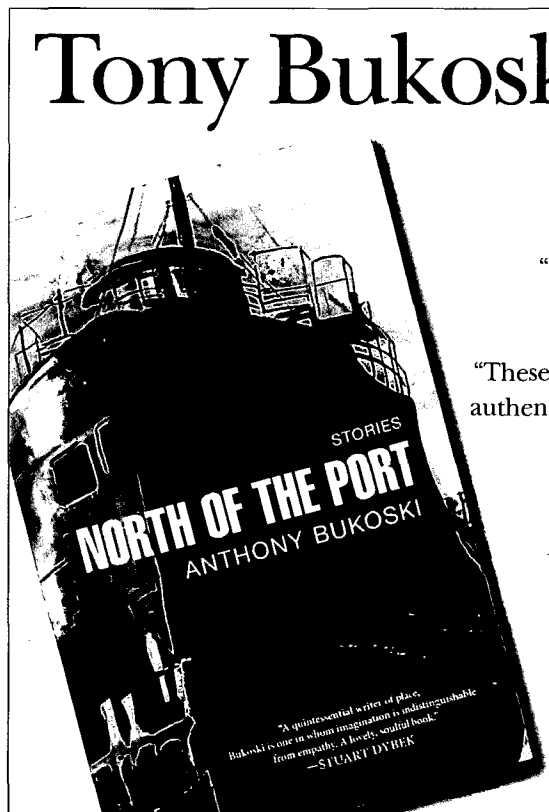
In the 1980's, Eduardo Subirats wrote that the greatest sin of the Spanish left lay in having built a social and political culture bereft of its national tradition. He added that the type of culture imposed by the left wiped the slate clean of all characteristically Spanish historical references. The result, after a couple of generations, has been a country ignorant of itself, if not self-loathing.

This inferiority complex has less to do with our national history than with the relative stature of the left within that history. The history of the Spanish left is a story of continuous failure, from the disaster of *La Gloriosa* (Spain's "Glorious Revolution" of 1868) and of the first republic, to the impotence of the resistance to Franco, to political incompetence under the Restoration, to trade-union opportunism under the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, to the shameful chaos of the civil war. Thus, when the man of the left studies this history, two options remain for him: He may conclude that his tribe suffers from a rather lamentable lineage, or that Spain has never been worthy of such sublime people as Pablo Iglesias, Margarita Nelken, Largo Caballero, and Captain Condés. The first option

would demand some capacity for critical perspective and a willingness to examine one's own convictions. Most have taken the latter.

Perhaps the Spanish left is afflicted with a pathological condition—the "Don Julián Syndrome," after the Goth who opened Spain's doors to the Muslims. The Don Julián Syndrome appears when one of us concludes that our historical enemies are, in fact, the "good guys" and Spain is, in essence, the "bad guy." Those afflicted evince an irresistible sympathy toward anything and everything that systematically infects us, whether it be the old "Black Legend of Spain" or the Eternal Moor. Zapatero's politics have given the state's blessing to all those who have that disorder.

This mind-set has every potential to take root in other societies—wherever the people do not know who they are and where they are going. It is the instinct to surrender to the barbarian, a phenomenon observed in all historical instances of decay; today, it is spreading throughout Europe. This instinct first arises in the privileged classes and may be described as an inclination to back down in the face of an external threat. Here, the fear of losing what one possesses enters into the equation, as does a certain kind of guilty conscience, a disquieting feeling of having benefited from some injustice. Thus, frequently, we hear cries that "They're not so bad," or "Aren't we the ones who pose the real threat?" At this point, the only thing left to do is to throw open the gates. <>



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Under the Black Flag

by Taki Theodoracopulos

Before the Cacophony

Can anyone today imagine a clarinetist as a superstar the size of, say, Mick Jagger? Or God forbid, the ghostly Madonna? Well, 60 years or so ago, the biggest star in Hollywood, as well as the biggest stud, was Artie Shaw, whose combination of good looks, extraordinary musical talent, and great intelligence made him the brightest star among the dumb (not all) celluloid ones under the California sky.

Why have very few of you ever heard of him? That's an easy one to answer. Most of you are young and think that the Rolling Stones and the Beatles are as old as Beethoven, if not quite as deaf. No, the reason Artie is unknown is because he quit the music business in the mid-50's, during his prime, retired, and stayed retired until his death at 94 four years ago. He gave up the clarinet in order to write books—a book, rather—and he wrote that book until the end, 10,000 chapters or so. It was, unsurprisingly, never published. Many of his articles about jazz, or the state of jazz, were, as were his articles about the state of the human condition. (Curmudgeonly, to say the least.)

He was born Arthur Jacob Arshawsky, the son of Jewish immigrants, and married eight times. Among his wives—and check this—were Ava Gardner, the smoldering beauty from the deep South that drove men mad, certainly yours truly; Lana Turner, the blonde that went through men like a hot knife through butter; Kathleen Winsor, the novelist (*Forever Amber*), who was more beautiful than her heroines and twice as sexy; Evelyn Keyes, Scarlett O'Hara's younger sister in *Gone With the Wind*; and four other beauties that Hugh Hefner would give away his equity in Playboy Corporation to possess. Oh yes, I almost forgot. He left Betty Grable at the altar for Lana Turner, a big mistake as far as I'm concerned, because for me Betty was the most deliciously wholesome as well as sexy movie star in America, when America still repre-

sented everything everyone desired. It was said at the time that she never got over it. Well, it sounds good, but get over it she did when she married Harry James, the great trumpeter, but she did stay loyal to the artist by marrying a man who played music almost as sweet as Artie's.

So much for Artie Shaw as Don Giovanni. Ava, Lana, Betty, Kathleen, Evelyn, and hundreds of others. Let ugly feminists rail against Lotharios. A Lothario is simply a man women say yes to. And a woman who says yes to every man is—well, we all know the answer to that one. Famous beauties may have added to Shaw's mystique, but it was raw talent that lay behind the myth. And he let it all go with a short note to Duke Ellington in 1955:

There is too much dishonesty, lack of dignity, and cheap compromises of every possible sort . . . a business bristling with names built solely on willingness to cater to cheapness, shoddiness and ignorance on mass tastes. I congratulate you, Duke, for functioning with integrity.

Now there was an honest man.

When Shaw retired he walked away from \$60,000 per week, a colossal sum in those days, days in which his band was number one in the United States. Talk about style, and then some. Artie Shaw was the greatest clarinetist of all time. He concluded all his concerts by hitting a cosmic high with his C at the end of his own creation, "Concerto for Clarinet." Here are some of his greatest hits: "Begin the Beguine," "Frenesi," "Star Dust," and hundreds of other recordings I was lucky to hear time and again while growing up. A friend was a fan. Shaw hired Billie Holiday, Roy Eldridge, Oran "Hot Lips" Page, Hank Jones, Tommy Potter, Mel Tormé, Billie Butterfield, Max Kaminsky, and Buddy Rich. He volunteered for the U.S. Navy



in World War II, served and performed under fire in the Pacific, and collected over 15,000 books. His great rival, Benny Goodman, was not a nice man, and in a band niceness and human relations count a lot. Duke Ellington's clarinetist Barney Bigard called Artie "simply the best," as did others in his field. He lived incognito the last 30 years of his life in Los Angeles but kept busy, spending his days investigating the possibilities of language. He was my idol when I was a very young man because of his music and his women, not necessarily in that order. I associate him with every young girl I danced with or kissed to his music. Now I love him for having walked away, Achilles-like, but unlike my fellow Greek, never making a comeback.

And he knew what he was doing. Rock music is the single most blatant stigma of the death of civilization, and Artie Shaw saw it coming before anyone else. In Dante's *Inferno*, deceivers are dispatched to the eighth circle of Hell enduring cruel enough punishment, but traitors are sent to the ninth, for even greater torment. Modern cacophony—I refuse to call it music—and those who have enriched themselves by it are both deceivers and traitors. Alas, 300 million morons in the United States alone, and hundreds of millions elsewhere, go weak at the knees at the sight of odious, untalented, ugly, hirsute, cacophonous so-called rock stars, as bitter an irony as the fact that Mozart died broke. Artie Shaw, a very good-looking man with great knowledge and even greater curiosity, decided to opt out at the top. Let's call him the Cincinnatus of sweet music. <