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Fifty Years of a Transition Orchestrated by Spanish Fascism
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To break the chains of what is tightly bound requires strategy and revolutionary struggle. The confrontation against fascism, both past and present, is the struggle against capital. Therefore, an anti-fascist front must, in any case, include a revolutionary organization against capitalism. The proven collusion of liberalism and social democracy always ends up opening the door to the expansion of fascism because it fails to address its root cause: the capitalist system of exploitation. Building real alternatives for emancipation and strategies for intervening in the daily lives conditioned by economic exploitation is the path forward in the face of the extreme right.

In the 21st century, we are witnessing how, following the advancement of rights for women, migrants, and the LGBTQ+ community-won through political struggles-as well as the increase in workers' struggles, a major reactionary offensive is underway due to an organic crisis of capitalism and global imperialism. The narratives and actions of Donald Trump, Bukele, and Marine Le Pen directly attack all of society and promote a rhetoric of nationalism, order, and security.

Ultimately, the regime of the Spanish Transition, underpinned by the December 1978 Constitution, consolidated a model of capitalist exploitation, based on a Spanish nationalism with a historically colonialist and inquisitorial mindset. Only a comprehensive strategy of anti-capitalist struggle and for libertarian socialism is the sole guarantee of defeating fascism. Against fascist barbarism: let us build utopia.

Ángel Malatesta, activist with Liza Madrid.

the neutralization of this political entity that was developing outside the regime's established channels.

In this context, the international role also carries significant weight; and the United States, through the CIA, sought to guarantee a stable ally within NATO, loyal to imperialist interests. Hence the "recycling" of parliamentary social democracy at the Suresnes Congress (1974), from which a rejuvenated, moderate, and functional PSOE (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party) emerged, aligned with the new project. The PSOE, through Felipe González, was selected as the ideal actor to offer a controlled exit, capable of appealing to young and urban sectors without jeopardizing the economic structure of Francoism. In this way, an escalation like the Portuguese Carnation Revolution was avoided, where more decisive action was required to prevent a rupture that would destabilize capitalist interests.

The neo-reactionary offensive is combated with class organization.

The Francoist apparatus was not purged, and repression remained active, with hundreds of workers murdered during that period. In 1975, when Franco died, Francoism was not dying; it had merely completed its functional historical cycle. The dictatorship, which was born as a counter-revolutionary project, left behind a matrix that has remained intact to this day, because Franco died, but Francoism did not.

The persistence of Spanish fascism is evident not only in institutions, but also in the social agenda and the media through its partisan branches, collectives, and criminal groups. Antifascist historical memory must act as an active element, not to cover the past with tributes, but to keep the current struggle against domination and reaction alive. Resistance to fascism is not an act of nostalgia, but a duty of historical justice based on class consciousness.

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had to be preserved; the judicial and police hierarchy would remain intact; In addition to guaranteeing the continuity of the monarchy designated by Franco in the person who would be crowned Juan Carlos I, the inherited authoritarian framework was not dismantled; it was merely given a makeover to adapt it to the repressive and social control norms established by Western imperialist democracies.

The student movement that erupted in 1968 had allied itself with the demands of the working class and acted as a catalyst for a profound questioning of the Franco regime. University assemblies and strikes expressed solidarity with workers' struggles. Meanwhile, concern intensified regarding the political and armed insurgency represented by organizations such as ETA, FRAP, and later MIL, which, while not posing a real threat to state power, did represent a symbolic challenge to its capacity for total control. Cracks opened in the legitimizing narrative of Francoism, leading to a resurgence in repression and its increasing sophistication. They began to devise a plan of reforms negotiated from above.

The assassination of Carrero Blanco in December 1973 was the symbolic blow to the Franco regime needed to set in motion the Transition that had been brewing since the beginning of that decade. Those sectors most resistant to the reform negotiated from above had to be tamed; their structure would not be destroyed, only the plan for a Francoism without Franco but with die-hard Francoists would be dismantled. The economic and political elites assumed a recomposition within the power bloc, and a transition was orchestrated to neutralize the working-class movement. Workers' struggles were experiencing explosive growth; tens of thousands of workers were overflowing the vertical union system, generating a potential social counter-power of coordinating bodies and commissions, strikes, and mass assemblies in working-class neighborhoods. Therefore, the Transition had to address as its main objective

The Cold War allowed the dictatorship to achieve international rebranding: anti-communism had become its safe passage. The United States and the Western powers integrated Spain as a functional piece of the capitalist bloc, opening the door to technocracy, developmentalism, and a controlled "modernization" that never challenged the foundations of power. The 1959 Stabilization Plan coincided with the visit of US President Eisenhower, and the economic growth of the 1960s was by no means a neutral takeoff: it consolidated new factions of the bourgeoisie, reinforced inequalities, and used mass emigration to Europe as a social safety valve. Repression became more selective, but no less effective.

Throughout those four decades, Francoism mutated, but its nature never changed: it was always a militaristic and ultra-Catholic regime that defended the interests of the bourgeois class and ensured the continuity of the economic and political exploitation by the business elites. The workers', students', and neighborhood struggles that arose were met with violence perfectly calculated to prevent any erosion of their legitimacy. Repressive laws, the Public Order Court, the Civil Guard, and the Political-Social Brigade of the police acted as the main apparatus of control and punishment.

The Transition: A Pact of Silence and Reform by the Oligarchy from Above

Far from representing any grassroots-driven rupture, the Transition was the result of a pact among the Spanish oligarchic elite. A segment of the old Francoist guard understood that maintaining the regime as it was was incompatible with its integration into European markets and with the control of a working class that had been highly mobilized since 1968. Therefore, they opted to direct the regime's evolution themselves. The structures of the state apparatus born in 1939

And so, the story ends… that seems to be the watered-down ending of a criminal dictatorship imposed by the narrative of the Transition, which is nothing more than the story agreed upon by the dominant elites in the Spanish State. The Franco regime was the project of the national bourgeoisie, supported by international capitalism, which, in different phases, protected its economic interests by consolidating a dictatorship around the figure of Franco as the guarantor of that bloody order.

Franco's death shortly before 9 p.m. on November 19 marked the turning point of a process that had already begun years earlier. An idyllic closure of Francoism had been negotiated since at least 1968, subsequently concealing a complex process of reformed continuity. Same dogs, but also same collars.

Beneath the official narrative, presented as a feat of consensus and democratic moderation, lay a profound underlying political logic: the need for the economic, political, and military elites, consolidated after 1939, to reorganize their hegemony in the face of an international and social context that rendered the continuation of a dictatorship untenable, a dictatorship that had already fulfilled its role as guarantor of their privileges. Spanish fascism had done its job, but the curtain would neither fall nor leave the stage; it was granted a leading role as a consolidator and shock force, a role it continues to this day.

If we can identify a common thread throughout 20th-century Spain, from the monarchy of Alfonso XIII, the dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera, the Second Spanish Republic, Francoism, and the current monarchical regime, it is the economic power held by virtually the same families and driving forces of Spanish capitalism. The Spanish Transition should be understood not as a rupture, but as a recomposition of power, where a significant portion of the Francoist elites

and dominant economic interests retained key positions, reshaping the institutional system.

Forty Years of Francoism: Fascism's Mark on Spain

The Francoist regime was born directly from the power granted by the military coup of July 1936, and extended throughout the territory through a war of extermination against the working class and popular forces. From the outset, it was a project with a counter-revolutionary objective, serving the economic and military elites of oligarchic Spain, anticipating the realistic potential for success had the organized labor movement launched a full-scale offensive to build popular class power. It was not a historical tragedy, nor a civil conflict between brothers, nor an outbreak of aimless violence: it was the conscious and planned gamble of landowners, large industrialists, the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and army commanders to crush a possible victory by revolutionary popular forces, which posed a serious threat to the power structure built over centuries. The military coup was not against the republican government; rather, the violence was directed against the working class, and this is the first point we must understand in a revolutionary analysis. There were not two Spains, but two antagonistic social classes: the dominant class and the exploited class.

The Spanish bourgeoisie's prior project was to build a republican and social-democratic government as a fire extinguisher against the growth of the labor movement, and this republican government, as a simple historical review would demonstrate, was the very breeding ground for the preparation and development of Spanish fascism. The Francoist victory in 1939 reinstated an authoritarian, militarized state characterized by psychological and physical terror, based on systematic

repression, censorship, social control, and the destruction of all forms of workers' organization. The state apparatus-from the Catholic Church to the Civil Guard, from the National Movement to the military tribunals-functioned as a perfectly coordinated machine to guarantee the brutal restoration of the most reactionary capitalist order after the people's social revolution. Francoism did not merely discipline: it aspired to mold an obedient, battered, and subjugated society, where all political or trade union dissent was considered a crime against the nation.

In its first phase, Francoism extended the extermination of tens of thousands of members of the working class, and its project was firmly aligned with Italian fascism and German Nazism, which took the offensive initiative until 1943 in the world conflict. During the forties the regime shifted its focus to distance itself from Nazi Germany, and to survive the new global reordering of the victorious powers. Francoism was tolerated and even seen as a political bulwark against Marxism in Europe. By refusing to grant social and political concessions, imperialist capitalism developed new strategies to crush the workers' movements born from the struggle against fascism in the global conflict.

The 1940s and early 1950s were marked by the autarkic economic model imposed by Francoism, which benefited business groups aligned with the regime, plunging the country into hunger and misery while consolidating an oligarchic capitalism protected by the State. The postwar repression, with hundreds of thousands imprisoned, deported, executed, and purged, was not an "excess," but rather the pillar upon which the regime's stability was built and, to some extent, the return to the political structures normalized by capitalism. The working class was subjected to a mandatory, vertical union system, designed to neutralize any capacity for conflict and ensure its subordination to the regime.