

in rhetoric, his aggressive style and usage of defamatory vocabulary increasingly pushed him to the outer right of the conservative camp.

However, after CDU leader Helmut Kohl's defeat in the 1976 campaign, Strauss managed to be named the conservative nominee for the chancellorship in the 1980 general elections. Starting brilliantly, Strauss could not manage to control his temper during the second half of the campaign, falling back into old, bad habits. This was said to be a major factor in his defeat by the Social Democratic incumbent, Helmut Schmidt.

Two years before, Strauss had made a surprising but brilliant political move. He left national politics in Bonn to become minister-president of Bavaria, a position comparable to a governor's post in the United States. He gained wide praise by paving the way for Bavaria's development into a high-technology region, partly due to his power to attract defense and aviation industries to settle in the south. An avid pilot himself, he also became chairman of the supervisory board of Deutsche Airbus Industrie.

Apart from these activities, Strauss remained active and influential in international politics during the 1980s. He visited Tibet during a trip to China in 1987, met with the Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, in Moscow in December 1987 and—still subject to speculation by some—arranged large credits for East Germany in direct talks with Erich Honecker, head of the GDR.

Four years after Strauss's death, the new international airport in Munich was named after him, putting him in an exclusive circle with such political figures as Kennedy, de Gaulle and Dulles. Reactions to this honor are symbolic of Strauss's entire career: It seemed justified and appropriate to the Bavarian authorities but was little understood and roundly criticized elsewhere.

Strauss's most dominant political trait, next to his genuine political instinct for power and leadership, was his inability to form majorities outside Bavaria. His temper and political style always prohibited him from gaining broad, national acceptance as a politician, a fact which effectively barred him from becoming chancellor or minister of foreign affairs, as he so dearly wished.

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ADOLFO SUÁREZ (1932–) has been one of the key political leaders in Spain in the last quarter century. His significance and importance lies in the role he played in creating the new democratic system that was established in Spain after General Francisco Franco's death in 1975. He was prime minister of the Spanish government from 1976 to 1981.

King Juan Carlos I of Spain appointed Suárez prime minister in July 1976, carefully doing so in strict adherence to the procedures of Franco's authoritarian political regime. Suárez and his colleagues quickly set to work to dismantle that regime, although many sectors of the population and parts of the political class questioned Suárez's appropriateness for the task, as he had been closely associated with the Franco regime, holding a number of official positions, such as civil governor in Segovia (1968), general director of Spanish state-run television (1969) and the last general secretary of the National Movement, the only party allowed under Franco's dictatorship. However, Suárez proved quite adept at the task, for, on the one hand, he managed to successfully legitimate the new, emerging regime in the eyes of many old Franco supporters while, on the other hand, also managing to shore up his credibility in the face of the former opposition. Both tasks were necessary to the successful reform of the fascist regime's institutional structures.

It is clear that the key to Suárez's leadership during this difficult transitional period—apart from his personal qualities and vision of the future—also lay to a great extent in the circumstances and problematic conditions of change in which his political career evolved. Pragmatic and innovative, Suárez was able to legitimate reform while defusing threats to order and stability. It is quite remarkable that such substantial transformation occurred peacefully, leading, moreover, to greater moderation in public opinion. Working to build consensus, dialogue and open debate over policy, during his term of office Suárez was able to preside over the first free elections in 1977, as well as a referendum in December 1978 which approved a constitution establishing democratic rights and institutions for Spain.

In all this, Suárez was careful to follow the established legal procedures of the dictatorship, managing to obtain Cortes (the Francoist legislature) approval of the Law for Political Reform a few months after he was appointed prime minister by the king. Thus a Francoist institution sanctioned this move, opening the way to political transition. Legitimacy was then formally transferred to the Spanish people by means of a referendum, as required under the Franco regime, which endorsed the new democratic assembly established by the Law for Political Reform.

Suárez's centrist views, reflected in his UCD (Union of the Democratic Center) and supported by a majority of Spaniards in two successive legislative elec-

tions (1977 and 1979), managed to defuse oppositionist breakaway tendencies and to legitimate reform in the eyes of a number of interests left over from the previous regime. Suárez was thereby instrumental in leading the way to fundamental change without significant disruption and trauma.

In this brilliant and delicate political transition, Suárez guided Spanish political reform through a number of crucial milestones: On April 1, 1977, he disbanded the National Movement's General Secretariat, of which he had been top leader. On April 7, he received the Soviet ambassador to Madrid. On April 9, he legalized the PCE (Spanish Communist Party). On July 28, 1977, Spain formally put forth its application to join the European Community (EC). On October 25, he brought all political and social forces together in signing the Moncloa agreements outlining a policy of economic austerity. On November 24, he brought Spain into membership on the European Council. In December 1978 he led the successful campaign for the referendum to approve the constitution. Finally, in elections of both 1977 and 1979, Suárez led the UDC to victory, each time finishing ahead of any other party formation.

Besides overseeing this rapid and remarkable transformation of the Spanish political regime, Suárez, as head of the government, undertook a number of other significant initiatives, such as legalizing unions and parties, granting amnesty, negotiating an electoral law, reforming the tax system and establishing the Statutes of Autonomy for Catalonia and the Basque country, as well as dissolving the corporatist unions, the National Movement and most institutions left over from Franco's regime. (He did not, however, succeed in breaking up the state-owned television monopoly.)

Quite important among these measures was Suárez's reformation of the heretofore highly centralized Spanish state in order to devolve more powers onto some regions. While leading the UCD, he favored ample regional powers and negotiated very pragmatically with regional nationalists the Statutes of Autonomy of Gernika (the Basque country) and Sau (Catalonia). These statutes were later approved in referenda of 1979 and 1980, respectively. Although Suárez lacked an overall design in his territorial conception of the state—being attacked at the time by many for being "suicidal" (*vis-à-vis* the interests of Spain)—the fact is that Suárez developed a political response to the needs of the periphery based upon certain regional autonomies that were welcomed by many.

Indeed, Suárez's centrist politics, quick action, clear goals and pragmatism helped to a great extent to prevent disruption and a vacuum in power. Suárez's role as one of the key figures in the Spanish transition to democracy is all the more significant when one recalls that Spain was in deep economic crisis during this period, all the while experiencing terrorism propagated by the ETA, GRAPO and other violent groups, and that claims from peripheral nationalist groups were becoming more and more vocal. At the same time, Suárez had to face growing pressures emanating from both revolutionary and reactionary elements of Spanish society in general.

Adolfo Suárez was born on September 25, 1932, in Cebrenos (Avila) to a

family of low social background. Given the date of his birth, he belonged to a generation that had not been implicated in the beginnings of Franco's regime (which dated from the 1936 uprising and the resulting Civil War). Nonetheless, his subsequent political career was tied to the National Movement (the party founded by Franco), and he held, we have seen, several offices in Franco's regime. Although some analysts have dwelled on his less than scintillating intellect and lack of distinguished academic background, on his relative denseness and fear for the "hand-to-hand combat" of parliamentary debates and on his relations with the press, everybody, nonetheless, recognizes his negotiating brilliance, his tenacity and capacity for work and his great personal charisma, with which he projected a progressive and reformist image and the credibility needed to carry out political transformation.

As to the foreign policy of his governments, it must be said that although he succeeded in obtaining international support for the Spanish democratization process and in normalizing Spanish foreign relations, his actions were nevertheless directed more toward continuity with Franco's foreign policy, rather than at fundamental change and construction of a new framework that would define Spanish foreign policy through debate on important pending matters.

Some argue that Suárez was not an esteemed leader in international circles and that, in spite of personalizing foreign policy, he lacked both sensitivity to foreign policy issues and an overall view of international relations. That very personalization, however, along with the diversity and lack of consensus within the UCD on foreign policy, contributed to his tendency to preserve the status quo inherited from the Franco regime, rather than striking out into bold, new foreign policy directions. Moreover, the necessities of consensus with other political forces in order to implement the transition to democracy also constrained Suárez from pursuing a clear, new foreign policy during his tenure in office.

Although Suárez did begin to define a new Spanish line with regard to Europe—Spain formally sought membership in the EC on July 28, 1977, and on November 24 of that year it was admitted to the European Council—an altogether different course was charted *vis-à-vis* the Spanish position regarding that other pole of Western Alliance, NATO.

Unlike the king, as well as many of his own UCD colleagues (in fact, it was his UCD successor as prime minister, Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo, who finally brought Spain into NATO), Suárez avoided aligning Spain with NATO because he wanted to keep Spain a nonaligned country, intending to develop an autonomous "third way" toward Latin America and the Arab countries and avoiding involvement in the East-West confrontation. In fact, Suárez was always reserved toward the United States and later even blamed, in part, American pressure for his downfall.

Although it is usually said that his opposition to NATO had its origins in an agreement he reached with the PCE (Spanish Communist Party) when the latter was legalized and integrated into the democratic process, the fact is that Suárez was simply reluctant to accept a commitment to alignment with the West. De-

spite the fact that his UCD was reportedly in favor of the Atlantic Alliance, in the end the issue was never openly debated.

On the other hand, Suárez tried to make Spain into a bridgehead between Europe and Latin America. This is the setting for Suárez's trip to Cuba and Spain's status as an observer at the summit of nonaligned countries in 1978. He met with Fidel Castro, as well as with representatives from center parties and leaders from most of Latin America. He then followed up with a policy of cooperation and development with a clear Latin American orientation.

Finally, it must be mentioned that Suárez and his governments continued to follow the pro-Arab Franco line, maintaining very cordial relations with Yasir Arafat and with various leaders from the Middle East, while systematically refusing diplomatic relations with the state of Israel.

In Spain's new democratic regime, Suárez was closely connected to two political parties: the UCD (Union of Democratic Center), a coalition of parties, and the CDS (Social and Democratic Center), which he founded after the breakup of the first. But some argue that as a party leader during this period Adolfo Suárez had a too personalized view of political power and that he was not capable of constructing an ideological identity, thereby keeping him from being part of the ethos of any of the political parties and groups that he led.

The first, the UCD, was established as a coalition made up of fifteen small parties covering a fairly wide ideological spectrum, ranging from social democratic, democratic-Christian, liberal and conservative tendencies, as well as including small regional parties. There were also many independents, often linked to the old regime. These played an especially important role, however, as they maintained and controlled a dense network of local leaders and substantial sectors of the population. This helped mitigate the weak organizational substructure of the new UCD. Likewise, including independents helped to improve the coalition's integrating and reformist image.

Heading the government, Suárez managed to impose his leadership and control on the UCD under the banner of a vague populist ideology and, above all, under the flag of reformism, but the heterogeneity of positions, values and political goals in the coalition made unity of action difficult. However, although the coalition's ideological definition and, therefore, coherence was very weak, everyone still agreed on the way in which the transition to democracy had to be implemented, that is, through a path in between the "breakup" recommended by PSOE (Spanish Labor Socialist Party) and leftist forces, and the "continuity" recommended by parties such as the AP (Popular Alliance) and other forces from the old regime.

As long as the task of transition continued and election results were favorable to the UCD, friction was concealed. But Adolfo Suárez was not a party man and he had populist inclinations. He therefore tried to impose his personal style and own ideological view onto the other groups constituting the coalition. He even attempted to co-opt elites within the groups of his coalition, trying to change the UCD into a party with a personalistic focus—on him.

Suárez's personalized style of leadership caused strains that eventually disrupted the balance in internal power between the different political groups and leaders within the coalition. In addition to all that, Suárez's view of the party kept it from creating close links with social movements or groups. That is, there was no effective social network connecting the party with society. The split between conservatives and progressives within the reform movement led the conservatives to walk out, accusing Suárez of taking excessively left-leaning positions. The coalition that won two successive elections under Suárez's leadership (1977 and 1979) went into internal crisis, leading Suárez to resign in 1981. The coalition would dissolve in 1983, hardly a year after Suárez had left it.

Although the UCD was useful in joining Suárez to politicians who had democratic credentials, deepening his credibility and strengthening his leadership in the face of the awesome tasks of political reform, he failed to make the party into one capable of playing a sustainable role as a member of the democratic opposition. The leadership crisis, the absence of a political program and the factional war within its ranks put a quick end to the UCD.

But the crisis in the UCD and Suárez's downfall were not only a consequence of internal conflicts and dissension. Pressure and opposition from different forces—economic, religious, military and other—also contributed, to a great extent, to the disintegration of the ruling coalition.

For example, banking and business interests, through their powerful organization CEOE (Spanish Confederation of Business Organizations), began to support the creation of a "big right," in which they intended to combine the AP (Popular Alliance Party, led by Manuel Fraga) and the UCD's most conservative factions. The army, which had felt betrayed ever since the legalization of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE, at that moment led by Santiago Carrillo), also began an internal anti-Suárez campaign. The Catholic Church, in its turn, was fiercely opposed to reforms on divorce. The mass media, intellectuals and unions also withdrew their support. All this hastened the crisis building toward the UCD's breakdown, bringing on the demise of a larger center-right movement.

Overwhelmed by political paralysis and pressure, Suárez resigned the premiership on January 29, 1981; immediately thereafter, on February 23, he faced an attempted coup d'état by military officers during the parliamentary debate on his successor's investiture (a coup eventually faced down by King Juan Carlos). In November of that year, Suárez left the UCD's executive and in the summer of 1982 he left the UCD to found a new party, the Social and Democratic Center (CDS). This group was described as center-leftist and with it, he would only win two parliamentary seats in the 1982 elections, which the Socialist opposition (PSOE) won by an absolute majority.

Eventually, according to scholarly consensus, Suárez in power became an obstacle to long-term national interests, like stability and consolidation of the democratic system, whose very establishment had been led by him. In addition,

he was no longer a well-respected leader in the eyes of the great powers in international circles.

Personally isolated both within and outside the UCD, Suárez soon became a symbol of the past. In spite of his work to demolish the Franco regime, his image could not avoid being tainted by his past in that regime. Moreover, in spite of the leftist tinge that he gave to the CDS, this was all but overwhelmed by the social force, ideological clarity and leadership of the much more successful Socialists.

Following the CDS's 1982 electoral disaster, Suárez and his new party obtained 5 percent of the parliamentary seats in the June 1986 elections. While this seemed to indicate a recovery of his presence in the center, the alliances and agreements he reached with the PP (Popular Party—formed by the AP and other sectors from the old UCD) and with the PSOE badly eroded his image in public opinion. In the 1989 general elections, the CDS all but collapsed, leading Suárez to relinquish his leadership of the party and withdraw from "active politics" in 1990.

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MARGARET THATCHER (1925–) was Great Britain's longest continuously serving prime minister (1979–1990) since Lord Liverpool in the early 19th century (1812–1827). Moreover, Lady Thatcher was the first female prime minister and the first female leader of the Conservative Party in the history of Great Britain. She also was the first British prime minister to have a body of political thought and policies named after her: "Thatcherism" was a label for a variety of ideas and public policies on the conservative right, ranging from privatization of firms and services to a monetarist economic policy to traditional Victorian social values.

Widely regarded as one of the two strongest leaders of 20th-century Britain—the other being Sir Winston Churchill—Margaret Thatcher dominated the stage both domestically and internationally throughout her term in office. She presided over and helped to lead a renaissance in right-wing political ideas and significantly moved Britain away from its mixed economy in the direction of free enterprise. She also played a central role in lending support to leaders in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in their efforts to reject communism in favor of democracy and free markets, and she shaped much of the debate over the institutions and policies of the European Community. Since leaving office in 1991, Thatcher has continued to play an active role in both British domestic politics and international affairs as a member of the House of Lords.

Born in Grantham, Lincolnshire, in 1925, Margaret Thatcher's roots were humble ones. She often pointed out her lower-middle-class origins when claiming to speak with the authority of one who knew what the average Briton believed. Few leaders in modern times have attributed so much of their values, abilities and later successes to their early upbringing, and few have demonstrated such clear continuities in thought and conduct from childhood to adulthood.

Thatcher's father, Alfred Roberts, son of a shoemaker, was a grocer who had left school at twelve, while her mother, Beatrice Roberts (née Stephenson), daughter of a railway cloakroom attendant, was a seamstress. Devout Methodists who had met at church, they married, bought a grocery store and sub-post office

**POLITICAL LEADERS
OF CONTEMPORARY
WESTERN EUROPE**

A Biographical Dictionary

EDITED BY
DAVID WILSFORD

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