

## Political associations in Spain

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— I —

Up to now, two analytical categories have been used in modern political science to study and identify organised political forces, i.g. political parties and pressure groups. Nevertheless, it is obvious that political analysts feel that these two categories are not sufficiently comprehensive to cover the wide range of groups that exists. I do not intend at the present moment to discuss at length the theories that have been developed by students of politics with regard to parties and pressure groups. We shall confine our remarks to stating that the criterion for distinguishing one group from the other is that whilst parties attempt to conquer power in order to exercise it directly, pressure groups, on the contrary, limit themselves to bringing pressure to bear on political authorities whilst remaining outside these authorities. Secondly, it can also be said that whilst on one hand political parties have an overall view of the community, pressure groups, on the other hand have a partial or sectional view of this community. On the third place some authors add-whilst political parties combine heterogeneous groups that give a heterogeneous social infrastructure to them, pressure groups, on the contrary, are the representation of homogeneous interest (1).

Even a cursory examination of political life in the western world leads us, nevertheless, to the conclusion that such a classification should be treated with extreme care. This is because, on one hand, political forces are constantly evolving, so that it would be preferable to talk

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(1) This aspect is, to my opinion, the weakest of the three. For, however valid it may be concerning pressure groups of economic nature, it cannot be said of a wide range of « ideological » pressure groups which one may find in modern times. See : NEUMANN S., in *Interest groups on four continents*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 4th printing, 1967, p. 235.

about a sort of « continuum » which possesses « ideal poles », rather than a series of groups which are separate and distinct from each other : the different organised political groups could be placed, according to circumstances, between these poles but each one of these groups could vary its own position in the continuum during its lifetime thus, the case of a group that starts its life as an interest group but later tends to develop towards the « party pole » (2). On the other hand, it can be seen that it is difficult to situate certain organised political groups in the context of political parties and pressure groups : this is the case with paramilitary organisations, « conspiratorial groups », or that of the groups which G. Sartori has called « struggle groups », or that of the groups which I have called « political clubs ».

It is therefore necessary to identify these groups which cannot be easily classified as parties or pressure groups, but which, according to J. Meynaud, must be identified and then classified in order to proceed from fragmentary research to a comprehensive view of the subject.

With this end in view the author has attempted, in a doctoral thesis (3), to draw attention to the fact that it is both possible and desirable to develop a new concept, that of « political club », which may go some way towards filling the lacunae which exist in the field of what we could call « the theory of organised political groups ».

To date, very few political scientists have referred to political clubs in their work (4). Those who have made some reference to them such as Duverger or Burdeau, have done so in brief and have included them, in general, in the pressure group category, in spite of the fact that can be easily seen, on the other hand that political clubs have an overall view of the community whereas pressure groups, as we had said, have a partial view.

It is obvious that any such scheme must be based upon reality if it is to be both useful and scientifically valid. For this reason we proceeded to a comparative historical analysis of certain institutions which not only share certain common features but also have similar functions, taking as our point of departure the modicum of information that can be culled from philology and the small amount that has been written on this subject to date.

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(2) That has been the case, for example, of the French « Croix de Feu », which after being created for defending the interest of war veterans, turned into a paramilitary league, and, finally, into a political party.

(3) *Los clubs políticos en Europa*. Published in 1973 by the Confederación Española de Cajas de Ahorro, Madrid.

(4) Probably with the exception of professor Lukaszewski, Rector of the College of Europe (Bruges), whose research works on the subject have not been published yet.

These features, as I have pointed out in the conclusions of my doctoral theses, are as follows :

1. They have an overall view of the community (which would distinguish political clubs from what are, strictly speaking, ideological pressure groups).
2. They display ideological « homogeneity » (which would distinguish them from political study groups, seminars, or those groups of people who meet solely to exchange opinions).
3. The fact that they do not seek to exercise power directly (which would distinguish them from political parties in the strict sense of the term).
4. They have a certain organised structure and are not just occasional meetings which lack such a structure.

Furthermore, political clubs foster discussion, reflection and/or political propaganda, the latter being understood in its broadest sense, which can mean anything from agitation to pure political education.

What happens is that this activity (which perhaps could be described as « intellectual », in the broadest sense of the term) seldom appears by itself. It usually appears alongside other types of activity of a different nature, the intensity of which will vary and be closely related to political regimes and circumstances.

In this sense, before modern political parties emerged and Western Europe's present political institutions were consolidated, the clubs activities were mixed with another type of activity so as to produce an extremely complex phenomenon where by the functions we have already mentioned were mixed with activities of a subversive nature, the stirring up of popular feeling, etc.

However, as the pluralistic liberal democracies gradually consolidated themselves and mass movements appeared which had as their main aim the conquest and exercise of power, the phenomenon became more sharply defined. At this time some political clubs appeared in the form of associations which, broadly speaking, fostered discussion, reflection on political subjects and political propaganda, to the exclusion of other activities.

This does not mean, however, that all the clubs assumed the characteristics of groups based exclusively on study and propaganda after political parties had emerged and democratic institutions had been firmly established. For it is true that in certain European regimes (de facto in some countries and de facto and de iure in others) parties have been

unable to develop normally as the subjects of political life. In this way, and above all in situations where the political associative urge has taken root in the political culture of a political community, one section of the individuals or another will tend to form organisations which are, to a grater or lesser, extent, clandestine and which range from parties to certain associations that must necessarily restrict themselves to discussion, reflection on political topics and careful attempts to spread political ideas and doctrines. It can be seen that this latter type of association comes into our area of study.

But this political club phenomenon becomes evident in non-pluralistic regimes also at other occasions. Certain factions which although in principle may form part and parcel of the established order, may begin to undermine these afterall vulnerable monolithic regimes with their dissension on certain issues and often form in the end heterodox cells. In such cases, the powers that be may allow political clubs or circles to be formed so that may have some control, at least, over these disruptive factions, whilst not permitting the formation of completely independent groups (5).

## — II —

1. — It is a well known fact that little has been written about the present political regime in Spain. It is true, on the other hand, that the mass of literature on the civil war and the regime's origins has reached considerable proportions. It is only in recent times, however, that political scientists have turned their attention towards preparing objective studies on the nature and workings of the political regime which has existed in Spain for more than thirty years and to keep their work free from the passion which usually wells up in the wake of civil wars (6).

In any case, certain observations can be made with regard to the background against which we must view the subject of this study (i.g. organised political forces in Spain). Firstly, it is possible to quote what prof. Ionescu wrote with regard to the people's democracies ; i.g. that

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(5) With regard to political clubs in pluralistic regimes, one may say that they provide us with a ample evidence of diversity since they display a mixture of both transitory and structural features. These clubs are often a short-lived phenomenon and either develop along the lines of political parties or stagnate at the discussion group stage, only to crumble away before they gain sufficient momentum. On the other hand, as J. Mossuz has pointed out these clubs, by being complementary to political parties, can be explained in structural terms, given that the very notion of « political parties » may be inadequate. MOSSUZ, *Que sont devenus les clubs ?*, in *R.F.S.P.*, october 1970.

(6) An exhaustive bibliography on this subject can be found in : GALLO M., *Histoire du franquisme*, Verviers, 1969. HERMET G., *Le franquisme*, Paris, 1971. GEORGEL J., *Le franquisme*, Paris, 1970.

the absence of a « political opposition » as it is understood in the strict sense of the term does not rule out the existence of an opposition, using this word in its broadest sense (« any concerted attitude or action, spontaneous or deliberate, sporadic or continuous, of anomic or associational groups or of individuals against the existing power under any circumstances or by any means ») (7). Furthermore these remarks concerning countries with Marxist democracies are even more appropriate in the case of Spain. Her political culture, the result of many years of History, must be fertile ground for political groups which have, as their ultimate aim, the conquest of power by peaceful or by violent means—even though circumstances may force them into a clandestine existence. In the words of two authors who enjoy undoubted prestige in the field of political system, it is apparent that, once political parties have emerged in a political system, their repression does not necessarily terminate their activities.

Where parties are outlawed, they will usually continue to operate underground (8). And this is true above all in countries such as our own, where secret societies enjoy a long tradition of acting as the focal points of political action. As F. Gross points out, it was not in vain that the secret political societies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries handed down some of the fundamental techniques and concepts which were to be adopted by the clandestine organisations of the future (9).

Alongside what are, strictly speaking, Spain's clandestine political parties, there are certain groups which have as their short term objectives, political discussion and reflection on political topics, and whose aim is also to disseminate the results of such reflection or the thoughts of other individuals or related groups in so far as this is possible. These groups, of course, have the characteristics of political clubs, and receive a certain degree of support, if one bears in mind that membership of these clubs does not demand the same high level of commitment that

(7) IONESCU G., *The politics of the European communist States*, London, 1967, p. 2. With regard to « political opposition » the same author says that, « as an institution and as part of a constitutional political procedure is one party or more, or a coalition of political parties, which on the basis of a publicly proclaimed set of values present themselves to the electors as competitors for the established executive power and fail to command enough votes in an institutionalized consultation to enable them to claim to express the will of the people ».

(8) LA PALOMBARA J. and WEINER M., *Political parties and political development*, Princeton, 1966. And they add : « This occurred under both German Nazism and Italian Fascism. It is also evidently the case in Franco Spain... We assume therefore that in almost all places where parties are totally suppressed the ruling military and/or bureaucratic oligarchies have created conditions of great potential political instability » (pp. 23-24).

(9) GROSS F., *Beginnings of major patterns of political parties*, in *Il Politico*, 1965, p. 587.

is a prerequisite for membership of political parties. Such clubs cannot therefore appear in their true colours in public and must make best use of whatever the existing legal order tolerates. In this sense, general cultural activities, or « pro Common Market » activities, often serve as a smokescreen for discussion and propaganda which is free and independent of the established order. Nevertheless, it is quite obvious that the Spanish opposition — or if one prefers, « the organisations and groups that reject the regime and do not try to participate in it, nor eventually to exert influence on it, but to substitute a new form of government for it » (10) — has developed a difficult, not very spectacular activity. And this not only because of the notorious dangers that spring from the defensive apparatus of the regime. It is also due to the undeniably reluctant attitude shown by the masses, above all as far as the parties and other organisations of the republican period are concerned. For the latter have shown themselves as incapable of overcoming their differences, preoccupied with matters that, for better or worse, do not attract the interest of the majority of men in the street.

All these factors, then, will make our decision to leave the study of the political clubs associated with the Spanish opposition until later more readily understandable, I hope. An attempt to discuss these now would mean, among other things, that our research would have to go beyond strictly scientific matters and take on the appearance of a police enquiry (11).

2. — Can it be said, then, that political clubs have emerged within those political forces which share the values and ideology of the 18th July regime ?

Although it is well known that after a relatively « pluralistic » period during the first few months of the Civil War, the Decree of Unification soon institutionalized the sole political party, it is nevertheless true that no political scientist could fail to be aware of the presence of a series of more or less organised and autonomous forces which have been growing independent of the original groups of 1936, as the economic development of the last few years gains momentum.

It is by no means an easy task to enumerate these forces since the interests of some of them at least seem to lie outside the sphere of politics. Broadly speaking, one can state nevertheless that the positions that they adopt can be classified as follows :

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(10) HERMET, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

(11) For similar reasons, we will not make any reference to certain religious groups which, on the other hand, are being studied as « agents de substitution » in Latin America and in Spain, by professor G. Hermet (See R.F.Sc.P., juin, 1973).

a) First of all, those who favour the continuation of the status quo ; those who « want to reshape the sole party system », as prof. Mtnz. Cuadrado would say. Various elements which might well be hostile in any other context are grouped in this category.

b) The second group consists of the « semi-aperturistas »-i.e., those who are in favour of conceding a relative degree of autonomy within the existing constitutional order to those groups who agree to respect the latter.

c) Thirdly, the « aperturistas », whom Mtnz. Cuadrado describes as favouring a movement towards genuine pluralism by means of a relatively restricted transitory stage. They have been attracted towards standpoints which are original and, to a certain extent, independent, even though circumstances restrict them to reflection on political topics and political propaganda-i.e. those activities which, as we have seen, are characteristic of political clubs (12).

Even common sense tells us that certain phenomena that we encounter not only in the third tendency but also in the first two, can be included in our area of study-political clubs. It is not therefore difficult to classify the Madrid club known as « Club Siglo XXI » (which has as its President the Colonel D. Manuel Guerrero Burgos) as a « political club » belonging to the a) tendency. Similarly, the « Association for the Study of Contemporary Problems » Asociación para el estudio de los problemas contemporáneos-APEPA), which is run by the solicitor don Leopoldo Stampa, and favours progress whilst defending the present constitution « to the limit », can be described as « semiaperturista ».

For the time being at least, the clubs which prove to be the most interesting are, however, those which belong to the « aperturista » category, due, no doubt to their greater although relative-independence and originality :

*The « Association of the Former Members of the Youth Front »  
(Agrupación de Antiguos Miembros del Frente de Juventudes —*

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(12) In connection with this, professor Mtnz. Cuadrado writes, « In fact those individuals, groups or sections of the community which are still active within the Movimiento or which still form part of it continue to debate two possible courses of action. The first option open to them is that of continuity, i.e. to reshape the one and only political party and to weld together its different factions so as to produce what is in fact one powerful party. The second tendency could be called « crypto aperturista ». It wavers between moving towards the autonomous recognition of the factions and groups which have supported and defended the *status quo*, but no other type of recognition, and moving towards genuine pluralism by means of a relatively restricted transitory stage ». MARTINEZ CUADRADO M. *et al.*, *Anuario Político español 1970*, Madrid, 1971, p. 659.

AAMFJ). — This group is just a reflection of the labyrinth of contradictions which has grown within the Spanish Falange ever since it was founded (13).

The AAMFJ harbours many individuals who have their roots in Falangism but because their political adolescence came at the same time as the period which followed the Civil War, with all its consequences, they have found that there was no hope or gaining access to certain areas of knowledge and more specifically, to certain authors whose thinking did not fit in with the heterogeneous official ideology, and whose reading was nevertheless necessary for an individual in order to place himself consciously in the cultural process in which man develops. Then as time passed and it became possible to read Marx or Engels (to name just two authors) and as some of the basis assumptions of the Spanish political regime gradually shifted towards those of other contemporary regimes, many of these people who had given their wholehearted support to the new State began to think that it was necessary in the light of these new circumstances, to reconsider their ideology. This often led them to adopt positions which bore some sort of resemblance to those of their former enemies, although for a whole of series of reasons there was no break with the established order.

The Association was created in 1959, at a time when the Spanish regime, after creating a General Directorate of Associations (*Dirección General de Asociaciones*) and a National Committee for Organisations (*Delegación Nacional de Organizaciones*), seemed to be sketching out a pluralistically minded reform. In the words of its present National President, Sr. Cantarero del Castillo, the Association's original aims were merely to maintain and simulate the emotional links which arose from the atmosphere of fellowship in the youth organisations. The Association, however, gradually began to differentiate its attitude, becoming a platform

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(13) In a report submitted to the IVth Assembly of the AAMMFJ in 1969, M. Cantarero drew attention to the following contradictions within the Spanish Falange: 1. Innate contradictions which arise from the different motives for joining the original Falange. 2. With regard to the different opinions expressed about the regime of 18th July. 3. With regard to the belief in the Falange's share of power. 4. With regard to the very name of the Falange itself. 6. With regard to questions of formalities or procedures. 7. With regard to the possibility of carrying the national syndicalist revolution to its conclusion. 8. With regard to the question of the political methods to be employed. 9. With regard to the « institutional framework » or the form to be taken by the State. 10. With regard to the problem of political « style ». 11. With regard to the problem of the succession. 12. With regard to the question of political parties. 13. With regard to the problem of the left wing and the right wing. 14. With regard to the trade Union question. 15. With regard to the way in which power should be exercised. 16. With regard to the « Opus-Dei » question. 17. With regard to religious and confessional questions. 18. With regard to supra-national unification. 19. With regard to problems of colonialism and racism.



for a generation group which includes members whose ages range from about 22 to 45. At the same time, the objective political standpoint which the Association adopted was, in the words of its President, « very close to that of the Social Democrats in Western Europe ». The fact that the men who have been raised to positions of authority are precisely those whose ideology inclines towards a sort of social democracy, indicates that this standpoint whilst not being accepted by all of the Association's members, is, nevertheless, that of the majority.

The different provincial groups started to draw up an « ideological plan » along these lines, based on a draft version which had been put forward by the Madrid group. After being discussed at local and provincial levels, this was duly amended and returned, and so a plan was drawn-up which was also to be discussed and amended at local and provincial levels. The fruit of all this labour was an « up-dated ideological plan », which was approved in May 1965. This plan, by attempting to synthesise the different attitudes of the elements forming the group, « turned out to be a plan for ideology and tactics, rather than a plan which was in itself ideological ».

At the same time, as the perspective of the « associations » in Spain gave the impression of becoming more clearly defined, the AAMFJ considered creating an « Association for Spanish Social Reform » which would incorporate not only the majority of the Agrupación's members, but also all those Spaniards, irrespective of origins, who felt that the country's future should be decided along social democratic lines. It was also felt, some what ambitiously, that the group might be the point of departure leading to the eventual integration of similarly minded groups which existed in Spain. This was suggested « with no intention to exclude or dominate but with the aim of encouraging participation and the preparation for this participation ». Nevertheless, already in May 1970, the Draft-bill on regulations concerning the Associations for Political Activity was to throw cold water on these speculations and tract acute criticism from members of the group (14).

The internal machinery of the AAMFJ is, or attempts to be, democratic. The local groups councils which in turn elect the members of the provincial Council. The latter, which meets annually is provided with a standing commission which consists of 13 members elected by the National President. The supreme governing body is the National Assembly, since it is responsible for taking decisions on matters which affect the ideological line.

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(14) See *Criba*, 1, p. 3 and 3, p. 8.

In 1970 its total membership in 42 of Spain's provinces amounted to about 50.000 (according to data supplied by Sr. Cantarero del Castillo).

« Bearing in mind that this is the most that we can do at the present time », the local groups, then, attempt to analyse different national and international events and base their opinions and statements on these analysis. They try to develop « basic political education, with a view to putting attitudes on a national level ». They believe, in Sr. Cantarero's words, that if political thinkers wish to exert a real influence in present day Spain, they must reveal their thought or make a greater impact by means of adequate political education rather than just pure speculation. So, seminars, courses of lectures, meetings of different types, etc., are organised in order to discuss topics which are submitted by the national organisat : to the local groups. In this context, it is worth mentioning that there is a weekly magazine, « Criba », which is closely connected with these groups.

On another level, it is worth emphasising the decision taken to the effect that the presidents of the groups can not combine their appointments with « designated » political positions. As far as the remaining positions of authority are concerned, even though it is felt that it would be desirable to adopt the same attitude, the criteria employed are less rigorous. On the other hand, members are encouraged to participate (either as candidates or as electors) in the various elections which take place (elections taking place in associations, professional bodies, etc.). Before the last change regarding the composition of the Cortes (Spanish « Parliament ») there were about 10 members of Parliament who were affiliated to the group, although it appears that those who closely followed the majority line scarcely amounted to 6.

According to statements made by one of its leaders with regard to its relationship with other organised political groups, it has been maintaining contacts (usually on a personal level) with other groups of similar tendencies both in Spain and abroad. Nearly all of these groups would belong to the second socialist International and to the most progressive streams of the Christian-Democratic movement. As far as the different clandestine organisations that exist within Spain are concerned, it appears that the AAMFJ maintains almost institutional contacts with the different groups which display social democratic tendencies, in the hope of being able to form the nucleus of a « federal » structure which could be built up, into a new party of a social democratic nature. It would then be a question of searching for a type of socialism shaped in our times and which would overcome the past, « yet not shy from the traditions of classical socialism ». They feel, then, that « it is impossible to establish socialism in Spain today without

referring to P. Iglesias, Besteiro or, to foreign thinkers such as Jaurès, or Bernstein. This would be « a new style of socialism which would nevertheless have certain links with the rest of the unsuccessful European style Spanish socialism » (15).

*The Center for the Study of contemporary problems (Centro de Estudios de Problemas Contemporáneos — CEPC)*

Wavering between « semi-aperturismo » and an « aperturista-pluralista » attitude, the Centre's origins have little in common with the groups we have just described. It was created in 1968 by a group of University graduates who had been politically active University and who had found, now that their studies were over, that « there was no practical outlet for their preoccupations » (in this context it is perhaps worth remembering that, at this time, the professional bodies were not so highly politicised as some of them are at present).

The Centre's Executive Council consisted of « people who represent different ideological trends, with the exception of those who refuse to follow a policy of cooperation and coexistence as a consequence of their commitment or extremism of one sort or another ». However, even though the CEPC at the outset welcomed individuals whose general attitude was apparently one of clear-cut opposition to the regime, the Club gradually moved towards a more moderate position. Such speakers as J.L. Aranguren, D. Ridruejo or R. Morodo, for example, no longer gave lectures there and were replaced by speakers who came from the Cortes, the National Council (Consejo Nacional del Movimiento) or, in any case, from circles that some authors have describe as the « semi-opposition » (16).

After the abandoning of the « opposition » nucleus, the Club was able to shift towards a position which was, self admittedly, moderate. According to the former President of the Centre, Sr. Gavilanes (an ardent monarchist) this change was brought about by the designation of Prince Juan Carlos de Borbón as sucesor to the throne, and consequently, the eclipse of the Count of Barcelona as the « standard bearer of the opposition ». The executive Council (which was till recently under the triple chairmanship of Sres. Gavilanes, Ballarín and Reguero) has defined itself as belonging to the « centre-right », a definition which, incidentally, has caused some members to consider the possibility of leaving the club (17).

(15) CANTARERO DEL CASTILLO M., in *Criba*, 5, p. 3.

(16) I.G. : J.J. LINZ ; quoted by G. HERMET, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-96.

(17) In fact, after a considerable turmoil inside the Center, it seems that, by the end of 1972 it was on the process of being reshaped.

The CEPC calls for the modification of the existing constitutional order (« there is no reason why it should be rejected in its entirety ») and believes that monarchy is « the only solution for Spain ». It has about 100 paid up members, and organises lectures and talks which usually draw an audience of about 500 (although this figure has often been exceeded by a wide margin). It also organises the well known « political dinners », an experiment which is not without interest and which apparently is being extended to the provinces.

Finally, to conclude our brief reference to this political club, it is worth mentioning that contrary to some of the speculation surrounding the latest elections of « family » members to the Cortes, there were no CEPC candidates.

*The « marginal » political clubs.*

Although we have already classified the groups which support the Franco regime as « continuistas », « semi aperturistas » and « aperturistas », it is obvious that such a classification can not be exhaustive. There are, for example, groups which find themselves in a « marginal » situation, due either to the fact that they were neglected when the higher positions of authority were allocated or to the incompatibility of their position with regard to that of the rest of the organised political groups and the play of interests within the regime. So, although they are not near the political centres of decision, they are also far from being counted among members of the opposition to the regime.

Then, often we found that the groups which are in this « marginal » situation have gradually adopted structures and rôles which can be compared to those of « political clubs ».

*The « José Antonio » Doctrinal Circles (Círculos Doctrinales « José Antonio ).* — These consist, on one hand, of individuals who belong to a certain stream of Falangist thought and who believe that the political regime established in Spain after the Civil War does not correspond to the doctrines of the Falange. It aims not only to revise Falangist thought, but also to regain political independence.

They were created, in the words of their leaders, as a reaction against the « falsification of José Antonio's doctrine by those who are in power ». They believe, moreover, that what has been achieved by the political regime existant in Spain since the Civil War does not tally with the Falangist ideas, which they try to embody. In the opinion of these « dissident members of the orthodoxy », the Falange has merely

been the ideological justification and the external facade of the regime which was born on July 18th 1936 (18).

The Circles' short term objectives are « serious reflection, study and the search for what is valid and the elimination of the superseded and incidental elements of Falangist doctrine ». In this way they hope to become increasingly committed to the idea of founding once again the political party which ceased to exist as a result of the enforced unification of 1937. Their main objective is the creation of a « syndical State which includes all workers » (« Estado sindical de todos los trabajadores »). And so, while no new political situation can arise that will allow them to become « a party », or rather, perhaps, a « Movimiento » (19), the Circles consider themselves to be both study groups and nucleus of resistance against the establishment. The CDJA, which avow that « they cannot give their support » (« se declaran insolidarios ») to the present Constitution (20), have as their prime objective and aim to study, spread and develop the thought of José A. Primo de Rivera and, as their ambition, to translate this into reality (21).

Although they consider their own efforts to be weary plans and insufficient resources (« our only possibility is that of keeping the sacred flame alight ») (22), the very inertia of the force which they represent, or, rather, believe to represent, has provided them with enough impetus to agree to create an association known as the Falange Española de las Jons. To this end, a « Founding Council » consisting of 8 members, was appointed (23). Nevertheless, this plan like so many plans which were put forward at this time was doomed to waste away in the same

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(18) See booklet *Legitimidad de una fecha*, published by the CDJA.

(19) In the same way that other political groups, the CDJA seem to prefer the « movement » rather than that of « party », which they consider to be representative of political structures already out-dated and superseded.

(20) This does not prevent the Circles from « revolving » around these and proposing their reform where necessary. After a meeting which took place in Castelldefells in May 1972, the Circles made the following statement: « We believe that a reform of the Constitution is necessary and that this reform, in accordance with art. 10, paragraph 2 of the Act of Succession, must be carried out on the basis of a referendum ».

The following list of conclusions was drawn up: « The National Council should become a genuine House of Parliament which is not bound by other legislation and so become a joint legislative body... ». « The representation of the provinces in the National Council should at least be doubled and should be decided on the basis of direct, universal suffrage, by all Spaniards of 18 years of age or over ». « The Government must adjust its policy in accordance with the Council's rulings and therefore must be responsible to the Council ». (*La Voz de Asturias*, 1 June 1972).

(21) Points 14 and 15 of the CDJA.

(22) According to the President of the Madrid Circle (in a speech made on 29th October 1970 at the Circle's premises in Madrid).

(23) Cf The National Conference of the CDJA which took place in March, 1970.

mire into which the draft bill on Regulations concerning political associations had slid.

Political reflection and study (in the most active Circles at least) take place under the aegis of the « study section » (in the Madrid Circle there are sections for industrial relations, youth, women's training, regional affairs, the press and publicity and international affairs). Recently, teach-ins have been organised on the basis of the results of this reflective study. Both members of the Circles and the general public have taken part in these. In the same way, short courses are organised with a view to providing « political education » for members and sympathisers. For example, a five month course entitled « Notions on the theory of the State », with weekly meetings began in October 1970. The Madrid Circle publishes a monthly bulletin for its members, with a circulation of about 1000. It also publishes pamphlets and documents from time to time.

The executive bodies of the Circles consist of a General Assembly, a Governing Council, an executive Council and a President.

According to figures supplied by the « José Antonio » Circle in Madrid the various Circles have about 30.000 members at the moment. Although officially they are organised only on a provincial and local level, there is a « de facto » unofficial national organisation, by virtue of the National Council and its Standing Council, both of which are elected by the provincial Circles. Another of the resolutions passed by the National meeting of March 1970, namely the appointment of a National Committee responsible for establishing a « Federation of José Antonio Circles » could not be carried out, apparently due to the opposition of the authorities (24).

As far as the Circles' social composition is concerned, most of their members are of middle class origins, with University graduates predominating in the decision making bodies (25).

*The « Vazquez de Mella » Circles (Los Círculos « Vázquez de Mella »).*  
— They appear to have solely cultural aims (i.e. « to encourage and increase the general appreciation and understanding of the ideas and literature of Juan Vazquez de Mella y Fanjul ») (26). All this, however, has become a smokescreen from their activities which are, nevertheless,

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(24) Nevertheless, in June 1972, the president of the Circle in Madrid presented to the press a letter to the editor of an important Madrid newspaper, in which, among other things, one could read : « A Junta Nacional de Mando of the CDJA has been constituted... in order to coordinate the activities of the circles developed throughout the country ».

(25) See the article by H. SAÑA, *La Falange proscrita*, in *Índice*, 1970, 269-279.

(26) See art. 1 of the Estatutes of the Circles *V. de M.*

treated in a relatively tolerant way by the authorities. They must be seen in the context of one of the political forces which, after joining the « Movimiento Nacional » with due pomp and circumstance, have gradually drifted further away from it and occasion have shown themselves to be radically opposed to the present regime in Spain.

As in the case of the groups which we have already described, the activities of these Circles would appear to be mainly the organisation of « lectures », « study groups » and similar activities along with the publication of booklets, journals and other material » (27). In fact, the intensity of activity varies considerably between one Circle and another (as, on the other hand, it does in the AAMFJ and the CDJA). One could even say that with the exception of clubs in some of the large cities, their activity amount to no more than renting premises which either remain empty or serve as a place for meetings which are not necessarily of a political nature. The Madrid Circle, for its part, publishes a journal from time to time.

Membership usually varies between a hundred or so (in some provincial Circles) and about five hundred in the capital.

The « Friends of Vazquez de Mella » groups are very close to the Circles, to the extent that they are often difficult to separate from the latter. The roots of these groups lie in a dissident wing of the « Comución Tradicionalista »- the « carloctavista ». When the « carloctavistas » merged with the main group (the « javieristas ») the « Friends of Vazquez de Mella » merged with the « Circles ».

The provincial Circles operate as branches of the Madrid Circle ; they are organised « in those provinces or towns where there are at least 20 members » (28). The club is composed of an Executive Council (which consists of the President, two Vice-Presidents, a Secretary General, 2 Vice Secretaries, the Treasurer, the Auditor and 7 voters) and the General Council (29).

### — III —

#### *A Brief Reference to the subject of the « Asociaciones Políticas » in Spain.*

It was said recently that the National Movement is going through the first stages of a period of equivocation, in as much as it is an organised political force which « attempts to unite the convergent strands of Spanish society ». The increasing momentum of these sections

(27) See art. 2 of the Estatutes of the Circles *V. de M.*

(28) See art. 27 of the Estatutes of the Circles *V. de M.*

(29) See art. 14 to 26 of the Estatutes of the Circles *V. de M.*

of Spanish society pushes them on to demand autonomy within the National Movement in an increasingly insistent tone of voice. The formation of the various groups to which we have referred in the precedent pages must, therefore, be considered against this background. On the other hand, various other organisations which are of a fundamentally religious or economic nature must not be forgotten: according to Prof. Martinez Cuadrado, these organisations, by virtue of their public functions, have been developing along lines which are completely or partially independent of the « Movimiento-as-an-organisation » (30).

In this sense, the attempt by the powers that be to find a new formula for political associations, so as to enable the latter to act as « collective subjects » in national politics, assumes special importance.

Although the exact details of this experiment are still unknown, it hardly seems presumptuous to state that it does signify, to some extent at least, that one section of the political classes in the regime has woken up to the fact that the forces which had once formed a closely knit unit are showing a growing tendency to disintegrate. It also proves that it was felt to be an opportune moment to bring together officially those forces which had set themselves up on the margins of the Movement and which, as someone has said, would be « a safe alternative to the regime itself, taken as a whole and a National Movement which had cast off a great deal of its Falangist trappings ».

If we leave aside both the semantic contortions which those who are responsible for developing this « new » concept are forced to adopt (and, incidentally, « sceptics » cannot avoid smiling at some of these contortions), and the opinion held by some to the effect that they oppose « political associations » because they would inevitably lead to political parties, one can conceive that political associations might assume one of three possible forms :

a) They could become a new channel of representation which would complement the organic representation which already exists (ie. through the family, the municipal authority and the trade Unions).

b) They could become nothing more than more groups of political opinion, which would discuss and study questions of a political nature and perhaps even criticise specific courses of action taken by the Government, but having no opportunity to take part in electoral

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(30) See : MARTINEZ CUADRADO M. *et al.*, *Cambio social y modernización política. Anuario político español 1969*, Madrid, 197, pp. 409-415.



campaigns as a group (neither in a new channel nor in one which already exists). These associations would then become for those who favour this second solution, something like a « nature reserve » for men and ideas, but would not themselves be able to participate directly or play an active part in politics.

c) An intermediate solution (which I have already mentioned) would be to allow the associations to take part in electoral campaigns, putting up candidates in the three « natural channels » but not forming themselves into a fourth « representative channel » (which might be of an « inorganic » nature).

It is clear that if the first of the three directions is taken, the « political associations » (whether their official title might be) could play the same role as that played by parties in pluralistic democratic regimes. If this were the case, it is obvious that politics in Spain would then be restricted to one clearly defined section of the population, i.e. those who accept the legitimacy of the present institutions. So, even though the regime would have taken an important step forward, in its own terms, by harnessing the activity of these groups which, although closely related, are also dangerous in that they make it run the risk of disintegration, it would not be able to rid itself of a clandestine opposition which would continue to act (or refuse to participate) in a marginal but by no means inconsequential context.

If the second solution were adopted (i.g. that of moulding the associations into more groups, based on opinion, discussion, propaganda or political education) it does not seem illogical to state that in this case the form in which they are modelled would resemble quite closely the concept of « political club » that we have attempted to delineate. However, one could then, be faced with a problem which has been discussed in the conclusions of our doctoral thesis, but is worthy of mention now. Namely, that of knowing the extent to which political clubs are merely a transitory force which tends, thanks to its own inertia, to be attracted towards the pole of political parties with the passing of time or whether they will eventually become dull, lifeless and irrelevant in the field of politics.

The final possibility is that of accepting the intermediate solutions, -i.e. by allowing the « associations » to form electoral groups during elections, these groups campaigning in favour of candidates in one of the channels which are permitted in Spain's present Constitution (31).

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(31) The so called « natural » channels of participation : family, trade unions and municipal authorities.

This would then amount to combining the activities of a « political club » (« which would be the normal type of activities in the period between elections) with the functions of an « electoral group » during the polling. If we suppose this, then, in spite of the legal obstacles which could be constructed (in fact, some of these had already been sketched out in the « Draft Bill on regulations concerning Associations for Political Action within the Movement ») (32), the possibility that the « asociaciones » will move towards the « party pole » seems increasingly likely. This is particularly true when one considers that the « associations » (albeit in another capacity) could take part in electoral struggles which, in the last analysis, were the regime to become engaged, in a process of democratization and liberalization, would become (even in Spain) power struggles.

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(32) In this sense, one can quote the following articles of the Draft Bill : art. 53 which requires the guarantee, for founding a new « association », of 5 National Councillors. Art. 18 which forbids associations to incorporate conditions into their statutes which permit them to debar certain individuals from membership. Art. 20(b) which allows people to belong to several associations at the same time. These and other provisions, one may assume, are obviously designed to prevent the formation of groups with a solid internal structure.

