

Polityka wschodnia Państwa Hiszpańskiego

Streszczenie

Państwa Bloku Wschodniego nie utrzymywały stosunków z Państwem Hiszpańskim (dyktatura Francisco Franco) ze względu na wsparcie udzielane przez nie emigrantom politycznym. W 1969 r. zaczęła się odwilż w relacjach gospodarczych, związana z poszukiwaniem przez Hiszpanię nowych rynków. Nieśmiałe kontakty z czasem rozwinęły się, sprzyjając kontaktom, które, niezależnie od różnic ideologicznych, przynosiły korzyści wymiarze ekonomicznym. W ten sposób utorowano drogę do pełnego uznania i wymiany ambasadorów w 1977 r.

Słowa kluczowe: *frankizm, antykomunizm, polityka wschodnia, dyplomacja, Europa Środkowa, państwa Europy Wschodniej*

Abstract

Francoist Spain was not recognised by the Communist Bloc countries due to its support of the communities of political exiles. In 1969 a thaw in relations began at an economic level in search of markets for Spanish development. The timid contact would gradually increase and favour relationships away from political ideology, beneficial in economic terms, and this would prepare the basis of full future recognition, with the exchange of ambassadors in 1977.

Key words: *Francoism, anti-communism, Ostpolitik, diplomacy, Central Europe, Eastern European countries*

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The Ostpolitik of Francoist Spain

The present article aims to analyse the politics of Franco's Spain with Eastern Europe. Spain's international relations with Western Europe, the United States, Arab countries and Latin American countries, have many studies, but this area has few. General Franco's foreign policy was marked by him and the foreign minister of that period, and increasingly the person of Admiral Carrero Blanco. The period after World War II corresponds to a Spain isolated by its friendship with the fascist countries, that lasts until 1953. At that moment, the international policy of Spain is to reinforce its anticommunism and its Catholicism. With respect to the countries of the east, the relationship is reduced to protect the anti-communist exiles and to recognise their governments abroad. Refugees become the authors of important reports on the action of communism in their countries.

However, in 1969 Foreign Minister of Spain, Gregorio López Bravo, is appointed a young naval engineer, who becomes the external image of a new Spain. The Spain of the sixties is the one of the maximum economic growth, a modern country that is in search of new markets for its companies. The period coincides with the mandate of the socialist Willy Brandt in the Federal Republic of Germany, where the Ostpolitik initiated a policy of recognition of the Communist governments of Eastern Europe. The research aims to demonstrate, as at the same time as in West Germany, the Spanish minister will develop a similar policy that will have economic, political and diplomatic consequences for Spain, when until this moment it was believed that the Franco regime had maintained a hard policy against the communist countries.

To support this research, I have used the most recent bibliography in monographs and specialised journals, the oral sources of the last survivors of exile in Spain, and

especially the reserved reports and propaganda documentation used by the Spanish Head of State, as his vice president, and which is in the archive of the Francisco Franco National Foundation. Consultation of these documents demonstrates the political evolution of Spain, from a militant anti-communist position to a moderate one, which gives importance to economic interests. The Spanish Ostpolitik becomes the origin of an international policy that will be maintained during democracy, and will be the basis of the recognition of Eastern European countries in the late 1970s.

Previous context

The end of World War II caused the division of the European continent into two blocks, with much of central Europe falling into the occupation of the Soviet armies, establishing communist governments under their protection. Poland maintained its government in exile, while the rest of the occupied countries had to establish national committees with people of prestige in the cultural, political or diplomatic world, that were able to flee to the West.

In response to this situation, Spain maintained the representation of the Polish Government in London and the representative legations of the national committees who had set up in the communities of the political diaspora. These exiled diplomats were able to help fugitive refugees to flee from their countries to America through the help they could give them from Spain. In response, following the guidelines of the USSR, the diplomatic relations of the new republics were established with the Spanish Republic in exile, which had rebuilt its institutions in Mexico (Eiroa 2001: p. 78–101). In 1933 the Second Spanish Republic in 1933 had begun diplomatic recognition of the USSR, without obtaining the exchange of ambassadors, but was thwarted by the electoral triumph of the Right, which prevented the process until the outbreak of the Civil War. During the Civil War, the Soviet embassy became the epicentre of the takeover of republican institutions by the Communist Party of Spain (PCE), marginalising the rest of the revolutionary forces (AMAE December 26, 1933: Leg. R.899, exp. 7). The victory of the nationals led to the extinction of diplomatic relations until 1977.

In turn, Spain helped the exiles on its land by establishing the Santiago Apóstol College as a residence for students from occupied Europe, which became the epicentre for all the political, cultural and religious activities that the exiles participated in up to

1969¹. Its first director was Alfredo Sánchez Bella from 1948 to 1949, when he was replaced by Josef Cieker, former ambassador of Slovakia, who held the position until 1969. For two decades, more than one and a half thousand university students from Central and Eastern Europe were able to finish their degrees in Spain (Orella 2014: p. 127–145). Many of those graduates from the Santiago Apóstol College, due to their high academic level, worked at the universities and collaborated in the broadcasts that Radio Nacional de España (RNE) did for twenty years in their respective languages (Russian, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, Slovak, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Czech and Croatian), in a similar way to the U.S. radio station Radio Free Europe, since 1949. The services provided were praised by General Władysław Anders, hero of World War II and later a prominent figure in the Polish diaspora, in a letter to director of RNE (AFNFF March 15th, 1949: D-12708). However, they also had their enemies. The Spanish ambassador in Vienna, Víctor Erice, reported confidentially that the top North American officials of Radio Free Europe showed a deep dislike for the strong Catholic content of Spanish broadcasts, which subtracted support from theirs (AFNFF 2nd November, 1956: D-16354). According to the Polish diaspora, the Polish emissions of RNE were heard by over one hundred thousand people in Poland (AFNFF January 10th, 1950: D-12497).

In 1948 Spain recognised the Committee of Communist Oppressed Nations, made up of diplomats and influential representatives from the exiled countries (Martín de la Guardia 2016: p. 329–351). Some of those exiles would request the help of Spain for their activities. The president of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations, based in Munich, Yaroslav Stetsko, who was a senior leader of the OUN (Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists), met with General Franco to ask for his support for a Magna Carta based on Christian and national principles, for the freedom of peoples oppressed by communism; a military and political collaboration agreement with these nations; the diplomatic recognition of the Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, and the struggle with the communist USSR. Similarly, Prince Nicholas of Romania requested a hearing to request assistance in leading a resistance movement in his country. The reason for the interview was the Spanish Head of State's strong anti-Communist stance (AFNFF March 21st, 1950: D-11906).

¹ Josef Cieker had been the ambassador of Slovakia in Yugoslavia, with the dissolution of the country he became ambassador to the new State of Croatia, from 1941 to 1944, when he was assigned to Madrid, until the end of World War II. In Spain he would be the unofficial representative of the Slovak National Council of Karol Sidor until 1969, and editor of the Bulletin of the Nations Oppressed by Communism.

The regime's main commemorative event to break its political isolation was the XXXV International Eucharistic Congress, held in Barcelona between May 27th and June 1st, 1952, with the participation of 300,000 members from 77 countries. It was a unique opportunity for the regime to connect with people of importance from both the Catholic political and cultural field, who could help to restore Spain in the international community. Specifically, Alfredo Sánchez Bella², director of the Institute of Hispanic Culture, sought to set up another similar organisation, but with the aim of establishing relations with the rest of Europe. To this end, contact was made with members of Pax Romana and the Committee for the Defence of Christian Civilisation, with the support of Joaquín Ruiz Giménez and Fernando María Castiella, Ministers of Education and Foreign Affairs respectively, in order to promote the convergence of countries of Western Europe on Christian principles, and also to fight for the liberation of peoples oppressed by communist totalitarianism. The CEDI (European Centre for Documentation and Information), would then hold annual meetings with delegates from right-wing political groups from Western Europe and representatives from Central Europe exiled in Spain. Its work would be the equivalent to that of international socialist or liberal organisations, as liaison and coordinator of these rightist groups, with an exclusively Spanish budget.

Spain's commitment to exiled Europeans would not only be diplomatic, but in the circumstances of the Cold War in which the world found itself, it wanted to support them to the end. The fact that would demonstrate this determination was the Hungarian popular rebellion of 1956 that led to the Soviet intervention in the country. When this happened General Franco convened an urgent meeting of the Council of Ministers, with the aim of preparing to send an armed contingent of volunteers and extra weapons to the rebels. The Minister of War, Agustín Muñoz Grandes³, who had been the former general of the Blue Division, prepared to direct the new unit. There would be no shortage of volunteers, as the Spanish ambassador in London spoke of offering of some two thousand Magyar exiles who wanted to return to their country with Spanish support (AFNFF November 4th, 1956: D-17621). However, air transportation could only be sent with US collaboration, to avoid stopovers in other countries. However, Count Ferenc Marasys was informed by the representatives of the Magyar exiles in the USA that President Dwight D. Eisenhower's American government had vetoed any Spanish

² For more information on this interesting diplomatic figure, in: Cañellas 2015.

³ To cover the biographical profile of this important military of the regime, in: Togores 2007.

intervention on behalf of the Hungarians, rendering military aid impossible (Anderle spring 2006: p. 115–123).

During the harsh years of the post-war period and the 1950s, Spain and the communist bloc did not recognise any kind of relationship⁴. Although the Spanish Head of State was regularly informed by different agents, among them the Archduke Otto von Habsburg, leader of CEDI, who regularly passed reports of analysis of Europe under communist rule (AFNFF September 14th, 1957: D-23899 and AFNFF June, 1958: D-14849). Also the representative of the Polish legation, Count Jozef Potocki⁵, provided information that might be of importance to Spain, such as the military activities of Republicans based in the Polish People's Republic. The exiles belonging to the PCE were grouped together in the AMERE (Military Association of Spanish Republican Ex-combatants) with 600 members employed in different State factories, and another 40 being trained in military academies, receiving orders directly from Spanish cadres from Moscow. Their formative activity was carried out jointly with Portuguese and Dominicans (AFNFF October 16th, 1959: D-25829). Another exile, King Leka Zogu of Albania, also provided information on the situation of his country and on Yugoslavia's desire to absorb it under the pretext of the liberation of the Stalinist line dictatorship (AFNFF October, 1963: D-4567).

However, the Spain projected from the sixties would be a very different country from the one in the black and white images that could be seen in documentaries. The 1959 Stabilisation Plan and the Development Plans that were implemented thereafter made misery and rationing disappear, making Spain an economic power that needed to seek markets for the high production of its development. Consequently, Spain could not close itself off to half the world.

From 1953 Spain broke its international isolation, by signing a new concordat with the Vatican and on August 27th, 1953, a bilateral agreement with the United States, which was based on military defence and economic aid, signed on September 26th the same year. From then on, the international policy led by the Basque Fernando M^a Castiella as Spanish Foreign Affairs Minister, had been the inclusion of Spain in Western

⁴ For the complex foreign policy during the Cold War, in: Martínez Lillo 2000. With regard to relations with communist bloc countries see: Suárez Fernández 1987; Eiroa 2001; Eiroa, Ferrero Blanco 2007; Martín de la Guardia, Pérez 2005: p. 43-59.

⁵ Count Potocki had been secretary to the Polish embassy in London, director of the western department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw and deputy director of the political department. From 1939 he was Delegate of the Polish Red Cross in Portugal and from 1944 to 1968, the date of his death, he was the head of the Polish legation in Spain.

Europe and international organisations, the diplomatic opening to the world and the abandonment of cultural diplomacy, which had been undertaken at the time to form pressure groups in favour of the recognition of Spain. However, what would prove to be the great turnaround of the Spanish international relations was the arrival of Gregorio López Bravo to the tenure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Gregorio López Bravo, the man of the Spanish Ostpolitik

The young naval engineer, Gregorio López Bravo, was influential when he became Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1969, and stayed in the position until 1973. He came from the private business sector, where he had been director of the naval shipyard of Sestao (Basque Country) at the age of 32. His relationship with the regime began in 1959 when he accepted the role as Director General in the Ministry of Commerce, at the age of 36, from the then Minister of Commerce, Alberto Ullastres, a key figure in the economic liberalisation, along with Mariano Navarro Rubio in the Treasury post. A year later, he became Director General of the Spanish Institute of Foreign Currency (IEME). In 1962 his good work would earn him the post of Minister of Industry where – along with the commissioner of the Development Plan, Laureano López Rodó, who would go on to become a minister in 1965 – would be responsible for the implementation of the Development Plans, which would be the origin of the “Spanish Miracle”. The spectacular economic growth transformed Spanish society in a balanced way, thanks to the social measures adopted by the regime, which favoured the formation of a broad middle class. The new industrial fabric was strongly encouraged towards the exporting and competitive model, meaning that if the desired entry into the EEC could not be achieved other alternative markets should be explored. In 1969 the so-called technocrats, the men from Admiral Carrero Blanco’s team, gained hegemonic control of the executive, at the expense of the rest of the regime’s key people. The appointment of Gregorio López Bravo to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reduced the influence of the Christian-Democratic trend in the regime, which had dominated since 1945.

The important role played by the Finance Ministers in previous executives meant the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs became his international showcase. In regard to internal organisation, the minister abolished the Undersecretariat of Foreign Policy, and the general directorates of Europe, America and Far East; Africa, and the Middle East. The new bureaucratic structure was reflected in the Undersecretariat of Foreign Affa-

irs, and the new State Offices of Foreign Policy, International Technical Cooperation and International Economic Relations. The State Offices of Foreign Service, Consular Affairs, Cultural Relations and the General Technical Secretariat were retained, which included the functions of the dissolved Permanent Secretariat. The new organisation brought more specialisation and emphasised the importance that the economy would have as a determining factor for Spain's future external relations. The objective was to be the search for broad markets for Spanish development⁶.

On May 13th 1970 the signing of an Agreement on Economic Preferences was announced between Spain and the EEC, which would come into effect on 30th June, mainly consisting of a 30% reduction of European tariffs on Spanish products for five years. The revival of relations with Arab countries would lead to succulent economic agreements with the Spanish oil extraction companies and diplomatic support for the reclamation of Gibraltar. In return, the Palestinian cause was recognised and the PLO was supported. Even the Arab League opened an information office in Madrid. The main defender of the Spanish policies towards the Arab community would be Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser of the Arab Republic of Egypt. Similarly, the Hispanic American world would become one of the main objectives of the young minister's new foreign policy. The policies towards Hispanic America had to be of strict neutrality between the positions of the US and the USSR in order to achieve the political objective of highlighting the importance of Spain in the Continent and the economic importance of entering its enormous market.

But developing Spain could not ignore half the world, and the new minister was willing to open the new market to the Hispanic economy. The Spanish *Ostpolitik*, following the phrase coined by Willy Brandt when he initiated relations between the two Germanys, had already been set in motion. Since the death of Stalin, the Soviets had made contact with the Spanish diplomatic services in Europe, as the Count of Artaza had told the Director General of Foreign Policy. Faced with the possible entry of Spain into NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation), the USSR called on Spain to maintain its traditional neutrality, taking into account the friendly policy that the USSR had initiated by liberating the Spanish prisoners of the Gulag, and not opposing against Spain entering as a member of the UN (Organisation of United Nations). In addition, the Soviets were willing to talk about the return of the gold of the Bank of Spain that was taken during the Civil War (AFNFF December 29th, 1955: D-433). These negotiations would not have ministerial support until the arrival of López Bravo.

⁶ BOE February 21st, 1970 and BOE February 23rd, 1970.

The Spanish *Ostpolitik* takes shape

The economy would be the meeting point between Spain and the communist giant. The first result was in 1963, when a German company intermediated in the exchange of 500 tons of pork meat and cow's butter from the USSR for 5,000 tons of Spanish citrus fruit. This kind of exchange had already begun with the satellite countries, as the minister knew well from his time as Director General of Foreign Trade. Trade with countries with which there were no diplomatic relations was made possible through a line of action, which was the Payment Arrangements – long-term trade agreements which opened the possibilities to areas of a scientific and industrial nature. The first Payment Agreement was between Spain and Poland, signed by the Spanish Institute of Foreign Currency and the National Bank of Poland in 1957. The model was subsequently subscribed by the rest of the satellite countries, such as Bulgaria (1958), Czechoslovakia (1958 and renewed in 1964), Romania (1958 and renewed in 1964), Hungary (1958 and renewed in 1964), the German Democratic Republic (1961 and renewed in 1964) and Yugoslavia (1948 and renewed in 1964). Starting in 1964, commercial agents from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia and Romania were established in Madrid. In 1966 Spain opened consular and commercial delegations in Romania, and three years later in Poland and Hungary (Martín de la Guardia and Pérez 2005: p. 44–47).

Spain sent IEME (Spanish Institute of Foreign Missions) commercial technicians to Bucharest, with a sphere of activity in Romania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia; and another to Warsaw, with a sphere of activity in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary (AFNFF October 28th, 1965: D-1716), but there were no agreements with either the USSR or Albania. This opening to the communist world was confronted with foreign experts. The Spanish ambassador to the Vatican, Antonio Garrigues, had a meeting with Monsignor Antonio Samoré, Vicar General of Rome and Secretary of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, and cardinal two years later, who conferred the Vatican's need to take steps that would materialise agreements with the Eastern European countries. In this work, the diplomatic presence of a Catholic country, such as Spain, on a political, commercial, diplomatic, military and social level, would be of great help to the Church. Even the Italian Foreign Minister, Christian Democrat Amintore Fanfani had warned Gregorio López Bravo, on his recent trip to Rome in 1965 as head of Industry, that the danger for Catholic countries did not proceed so much from the Third

International (Communist), as from the Second International (socialist), because of its capacity of influence in the western world (AFNFF June 2nd, 1965: D-5412).

For Spain the economic opening to the Eastern European countries, also initially had a strategic value. Alberto Ullastres had just been appointed Special Ambassador for the EEC, residing in Brussels, where he would obtain the advantageous trade agreement for Spain in 1970. However, the initial situation was very fragile, and the national selfishness of countries with products similar to those of Spanish would do their best to prevent Spain's entry. The increase in Spanish sales in the communist countries would make Spain a country less economically dependent on the EEC, at a delicate stage of negotiations. On a political level, the establishment of economic relations with the communist countries would weaken their support for the armed and propaganda actions of the Spanish communists based there.

Table 1. Balance of import and export between Spain and the countries of Eastern Europe 1961–1964 (in US dollars)

Countries	1961 Import	1961 Export	1962 Import	1962 Export	1963 Import	1963 Export	1964 Import	1964 Export
DDR	2693500	3025180	2036279	2438325	3880109	1630395	4141660	1878333
Bulgaria	286116	564383	1428.266	803625	2740804	3364889	2783300	731600
Czecho- slovakia	2499500	3202750	2304335	2017849	6493978	2448972	4158300	2776600
Hungary	454600	1226100	563814	1196123	3780756	918576	1240000	751660
Poland	4135917	2420817	11344020	7825720	11024803	11703990	8050000	5525000
Romania	1249867	1482300	2390962	1343305	6782099	5084819	5593300	2571660
Yugosla- via	1666400	2816200	1813070	2009758	1305536	451161	2780000	1998300
USSR	1346067	3025233	2106525	388116	15012595	653458	3621660	3273330
Total	14331967	17762963	24047271	18022821	51020680	26256260	32368220	19506483

Source: AFNFF October 28th, 1965: D-1716 Appendix 2.

However, unlike the countries of Western Europe whose balances were positive – because they did not find anything that interested them in the countries of the communist area – Spain was the exception, although trade with the Eastern bloc had not yet acquired an important prominence as it could do with Latin America, Arab countries or Western Europe, not reaching 2% of Spain's international trade. The deficit volume showed the need to expand and diversify the country's product offer to reduce the growing deficit, hence the need for commercial agents on the ground. The products that Spain exported were still the traditional ones: fruits, cork, aluminium, wines, textiles and oil. In turn, Spain's imports were meat, cement, petroleum products, oilseeds, wood and heavy machinery (AFNFF October 28th, 1965: D-1716).

Of the satellite countries, the one that stood out because of its size and economic volume was Poland, with which Spain already had commercial contacts, through the Polish commercial representatives in Paris. Coal from the mines of Silesia was valued in dollars and paid for in Spanish agricultural and chemical products (AFNFF April 20th, 1949: D-2772). The Payment Agreement signed on July 5th, 1957, was followed by an annex on March 9th, 1959, which expanded the number of products and increased the monetary amount of clearing. A new Payments Agreement between the IEME and NBP was signed on October 23rd, 1963, which would add a new amendment on February 9th, 1965, and on March 13th, 1968, an additional protocol according to which both countries were commercially recognised on equal terms to the countries with which they traded. The volume of exchanges had been more active on the part of Poland, stabilising at the annual 11–13 million dollars of sales to Spain. On the other hand, Spain started from a more modest base, expanding its sales, except in 1964, before recovering and reaching 17 million dollars in sales in the years 1966 and 1967, surpassing Polish sales in Spain (AFNFF February 13th, 1969: D-24828).

Poland would be the pioneer of the communist bloc in initiating relations with Spain. In 1969 Spain inaugurated its consular and commercial representation in Warsaw, and the People's Republic of Poland did so in Madrid on April 21st, 1970. This paved the way for the signing of agreements on air transport and the supply of metallurgical coal⁷. But while for Spain it meant an increase in its market, sales of machinery products in

⁷ BOE 22nd September 1973 and BOE 29th July 1975. For the pioneering role of opening up reciprocal relations between Spain and Poland in SERRANO, Paloma: "El giro hacia el Este de la política exterior española tras la etapa franquista: el ejemplo del reencuentro con Polonia" in: Flores 2009.

exchange for meat products and fertilisers, Eduard Gierek's Poland pressed in favour of the elimination of the activities of the Polish exiled collective. Polish broadcasts on Radio Nacional de España, the publication of the magazine *Polonia*, the Santiago Apóstol College and the diplomatic representation of the Polish Government in exile in London were silenced and closed in 1969 (AFNFF, September 10th, 1969: D-24782).

Poland and Romania were the two countries in the Communist Bloc that had been most prominent in the process of rapprochement with the Western world. On January 5th 1967, the agreement on the establishment of consular and trade representations between Spain and Romania, headed by plenipotentiary ministers, was signed in Paris. Cantabrian diplomat Ricardo Giménez Arnau was the one who visited the Balkan country in representation of Spain, providing a detailed report to the minister Fernando M^a Castiella. In the document he spoke of the immense kindness shown, the opportunity to speak to the Polish representative and his interviews with the directors of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The areas of discussion were economic cooperation, especially in tourism, and cultural exchange of students. Romania was open to representation with all existing sovereign countries, including Spain. However, the presence of the Spanish representative was marked by the arrival of the PCE (Spanish Communist Party) representative Santiago Carrillo, who requested an audience with Nicolae Ceaucescu, General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, in order to prevent the development of relations between both countries. Diplomatic relations between Spain and Romania were formalised ten years later (AFNFF June 1st, 1967: D-19574).

As for the USSR, on February 11th, 1967, Spain and the USSR signed a first agreement, which was extended two years later, allowing the use of Canary Island ports by Soviet fishing vessels. In 1970, the TASS Agency opened its office in Madrid, and in turn, the EFE Agency did the same in Moscow. But what really attracted the attention of Spain's new international stance was the strategical stopover that the minister Gregorio López Bravo made in Moscow on December 26th 1969, on his return trip from Manila. At the airport he was received by the Soviet Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade, Antoni Kovalev. The meeting, confirmed a few days by the Spanish minister, was especially highlighted by the American press (Pereira 1993: p. 189–206). *The Washington Post* reporter, according to the Spanish press, said that the Spanish minister maintained independence in relation to the US, and in line with the *Ostpolitik* that was carried out

by France and the Federal Republic of Germany⁸. The Catholic newspaper *YA*, echoed the need to initiate new relations with the communist world. On September 15th, 1972, a commercial agreement was signed, along with a protocol for the establishment of commercial delegations.

Finally, on January 10th, 1973, the first communist country that established diplomatic relations with Spain was the German Democratic Republic. By then the rest of the USSR satellites had opened consular and commercial offices. Spain, in coordination with the FRG, always maintained the international isolation of the DDR, but when the Ostpolitik of the Social Democrat Chancellor Willy Brandt recognised the existence of the DDR, Spain immediately accepted the exchange of ambassadors offered by the German communist government⁹.

The initiative of the Spanish minister did not go unnoticed by the main Western power (Morgan 1970). The international policy based on economic interests began to open up new markets, but it would raise political issues in the delicate world of Cold War equilibrium. For some, the opening towards the communist countries of Europe, the good relationship with the South American left populism and the recognition of the People's Republic of China was a betrayal of the regime's anti-communist discourse, and for the US, a great concern because of the international autonomy that Spain was gaining. The recognition of the People's Republic of China on March 9th, 1973, in the Spanish Embassy in Paris, led to the abandonment of Taiwan (Nationalist Republic of China). Since 1972 Gregorio López Bravo had foreseen the change of direction of the international politics of Richard Nixon's Republican administration, and paved the way when he coincided in the UN with the future Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, Huang Hua. Both the official and private Spanish press supported the implementation of a "realistic" policy in Spain's international relations, aimed at the huge Chinese market. Spain anticipated six years for the diplomatic recognition by the United States of the People's Republic of China.

This particular and autonomous international action had already taken shape in America. He landed in Chile on March 24th, 1971, during his trip to the Southern Cone. At that time, the Andean republic was on the front pages of the mainstream newspapers due to the election of the leftist candidate of the Popular Unity, Salvador Allende, as

⁸ ABC January 14th, 1970. *YA* January 14th, 1970.

⁹ To know about the anti-Franco activity carried out by Spanish Communists in the DDR in Report of the Political Affairs Directorate of Eastern Europe, "La campaña antiespañola de la DDR", June 7th, 1963, AMAE DOC. R 7232/19.

Head of State. Minister López Bravo advised his diplomatic team towards the strictest political neutrality, not taking public positions in favour of the National Party (right) or the *Gremialistas* (Jaime Guzmán's Catholic student opposition). For the Spanish minister, working with socialist Chile from a relaxed position was the way to avoid a process of radicalisation that would lead them to become a new "Cuba" in the American continent. Chilean chancellor Clodomiro Almeyda declared:

"As an expression of the Spanish government's policy of non-discrimination ideological and as a sign of reaffirmation of the traditional and current links with Spain, for the two countries this visit represents a new type of economic relations" (Fermandois 2005: p. 372).

President Allende himself praised the economic and social progress achieved by Spain under the leadership of General Franco, which surprised many (Figallo and Henriquez 2009: p. 22–48). Among the points of the commercial agreements that were signed, one of the beneficiaries was the Spanish company Barreiros that was able to set up in the country, for the construction of heavy trucks in very favourable conditions, with hardly any competition, which the military government would later eliminate. On the Chilean side, Spain advocated in the UN and before the US, not to block international economic aid to Chile as it was a developing country and even favoured the industrial planning work that the leftist government had programmed with a significant official loan¹⁰.

However, within the regime there were dissenting voices against the international minister's policy. The National Councillor and Deputy in the Cortes, Blas Piñar, presented an amendment to the entire protocol of ratification of commercial relations with the USSR in October 1972, alleging that while Spanish commercial agents would be subject to their economic activity, the Soviets in Madrid would enjoy great freedom to promote activities in favour of clandestine communists. This, for Blas Piñar, coupled with the open dialogue with Communist China, was a betrayal of one of the countries that had a strong anticommunist position, such as Taiwan, which had given refuge to dozens of Spanish missionaries expelled by the communist regime in the 1950's. His

¹⁰ To expand on the information about this peculiar friendship, in: Henriquez 2014.

response in the *Fuerza Nueva* magazine led to the first case before the Second Chamber of the Supreme Court. In his speech in the Cortes, Deputy Piñar highlighted the political differences between the minister and Admiral Carrero Blanco, Vice-President of the Government at that time. He said: “Mr. Lopez Bravo believes it possible to live with the communist countries in a fair way. He believes that the economic, financial and commercial transactions between East and West are a positive factor in the long run for a detente, and believes that the policy of openness generates uninterrupted cooperation, as a guarantee of peace. Mr. Carrero Blanco does not think the same in matters that are so decisive for Spain and the world”. In turn, the critical deputy, highlighted the deficit that Spain had with the communist countries and the economic support to Chile, governed at that time by the radical socialist, Salvador Allende (AFNFF December 18th, 1972: D-2018).

The initial consequence of the arrival of the ambassadors of East Germany and the People’s Republic of China was the loss of status of the consular and commercial representations of the rest of the communist countries, which were no longer received by the minister López Bravo, but by the undersecretary. Secondly, Spain’s recognition of the People’s Republic of China and the Chinese Communists of General Pinochet’s military junta, which overthrew Salvador Allende’s leftist government in September 1973, brought an end to his relationship with Santiago Carrillo, Secretary General of the PCE. These events caused the USSR satellite countries to slow down the momentum of diplomatic recognition with Spain, when the Spanish Communist leader convinced the Soviet leaders what the official reestablishment of relations would mean – thus weakening their subversive activities in Spain (Harsanyi 2007: p. 137–157).

However, the minister’s autonomy of action – despite always having the Head of State’s direct support in all his activities – would make it impossible to continue in the reordering of the 1973 government, under the presidency of Admiral Carrero Blanco. The final step to official mutual recognition between Spain and the countries of the communist world would have to wait for the establishment of democracy, after the death of General Franco. The assassination of Prime Minister Carrero Blanco by the Basque revolutionary group ETA – with the support in Madrid of dissidents of the clandestine communist apparatus and with accurate information on the movements of the admiral from sources not identified until the present day – would lead to the elimination of his team and his replacement by an executive who quickly ruined the regime’s exterior image with a strongly repressive policy.

The road to full recognition

The initial thaw in relations of the two blocs favoured the spirit of dialogue that was visualised at the Conference on European Security and Cooperation in Helsinki. The conference lasted from July 1973 to July 1975 and the main point of debate was to prevent resorting to the use of weapons to solve the problems that existed on the continent. However, the delegations present were surprised by the dynamic and prominent role obtained by Spain through its ambassador in Finland, Nuño Aguirre de Cárcer. Spain was not only interested in its problems, but also raised suggestions for international coexistence through educational reform, family reunification of migrants and intensification of tourism as a mass contact of countries. However, the latter aspect was seen by the Eastern countries as capitalist contamination of their societies. The Helsinki Charter finally focused on the sense of equality of sovereignty, the immutability of borders and the absence of attacks on sovereign states (Aguirre de Cárcer 1999: p. 27–36).

The presence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Laureano López Rodó, sought to improve the conditions in a possible renegotiation of the preferential Trade Agreement with the EEC, which had been signed in 1970. He also added, before British entry into the EEC, the possibility of solving the decolonisation of Gibraltar, in a manner favourable to Spain. At the end of 1975, the then Prime Minister, Carlos Arias Navarro, accompanied by his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pedro Cortina Mauri, in what was practically his only international intervention, was photographed with the Soviet leader Breznev. At the Conference, the Germans took advantage of the dissension to present a possible German unification, but it was to no avail. But the Yom Kippur War between Israel and the Arab states, in addition to the assassination of Admiral Carrero Blanco, transformed the international context of the meeting. The final charter of the Conference served to be used by the dissidents of the communist countries as an ideological base against their totalitarian systems. Czech Vaclav Havel assembled a number of intellectuals in Charter 77, who along with the Polish trade union Solidarity were two of the main architects of the organisation of the new anticommunist opposition.

The death on November 20th, 1975, of the Spanish Head of State brought the end of the authoritarian regime and led to the transition to a democratic parliamentary system. The new Head of State and successor of General Franco, King Juan Carlos I was a pivotal figure who steered the evolutionary process to a political regime equivalent to the rest of the Western European countries. The transition to the New Spain was free of

conflict, because it was the same liberal officials from the previous regime that led the process of transformation towards the democratic regime. The assumption of democracy brought about the strengthening of the desire to belong to the EEC, not because of economic interests, but as a guarantee of democratic values.

1977 was the year of official recognition between Spain and the countries of the communist bloc, with the subsequent opening of embassies. Adolfo Suárez's government began the process on January 21st with Romania, on January 27th with Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, on January 31st with Poland, and on February 9th with the USSR, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Later on May 5th, with Kampuchea, on the 23rd of the same month with Vietnam and on July 4th with Mongolia, and at the end of the year with the communist regimes settled in the former Portuguese colonies of Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde.

Conclusions

During the Cold War, Franco's Spain maintained a belligerent position against communism and full support for the communities of exiles from those countries, which was used to increase friendship with the United States. The Polish community, which participated in the Allied side, favoured the good international image of a Catholic and anti-Communist Spain, but not fascist.

The subsequent economic development forced Spain to seek markets and to avoid, as far as possible, dependence on the emerging EEC, of which it was not a part. The beginning of commercial relations with the communist bloc anticipated diplomatic relations and closed the ideological radicality in favour of a pragmatism that was beneficial for both parties. The commercial opening to the countries of the communist bloc brought the end of the Spanish support to the activities developed by the communities of exiles, which were greatly depleted and without prominence until the fall of communism. The archival documentation proves that the communist European governments were in favour of establishing relations with Franco's Spain, with the opposition of the Spanish communists. The political reality prevails in both countries.

The USSR favoured the Spanish *Ostpolitik* commercially as a means to deactivate the anti-communist exile activities and prevent the entry of Spain into NATO, which would materialise in its democracy. The thawing of relations between Spain and the USSR could prevent the future entry of Spain into NATO and favour a position of

neutrality, boosting the USSR the independent policy developed by the Minister López Bravo. The excessive independence of the Spanish minister will bring the end of his political career.

The economic pragmatism of López Bravo would be imposed as a strong concept of the Spanish embassies abroad, dedicated to favouring the plans of internationalisation of the Spanish business world. This line of action has been maintained until today in Spain's reputation abroad. The strong stability of international relations of democratic Spain, is based mainly on economic interests and the necessary internationalisation of Spanish business, within the framework of friendship with the USA and the European Union.

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