

# A pitiful end for Spain's González

by Christine Bierre

The mood in Spain these days anticipates a rapid "end of regime" for Socialist Prime Minister Felipe González, who has been in power for 12 years. A maelstrom of scandals has led to the resignation of six top government officials since early May. With a whopping unemployment rate of 21%—the highest in Europe—the country is undergoing its worst economic crisis of the last 30 years. Bankruptcies of major banks such as Banesto and of top industries have become the daily lot of the economy.

Even more shocking is the exposure of massive corruption, going up to the highest levels of the economy and the state. This is, of course, not independent from the influx of drugs from South America into Spain. Though things are hardly quite so simple, it was even rumored that the Banesto bank had collapsed because of the sudden drying up of the



*Spain's Felipe González, at a gathering of European Socialists in Washington, D.C. in 1980. Now, Prime Minister González may soon find himself without a job.*

funds of drug kingpin Pablo Escobar, after he was killed in Colombia last November.

The shakeup in Spain fits a pattern of economic depression and scandals which are scrambling the entire European political map. In Italy, two years of anti-corruption scandals led to almost a total turnover of the political class in the March parliamentary elections. In England, the Conservatives were trounced in local elections in April, and Prime Minister John Major is not expected to stay in office after the June 12 elections for the European Parliament.

Likewise in Spain, the crisis is accelerating so quickly that it is hard to speculate how much longer González will be able to hold on to power.

## The heads are rolling

The crisis started with an arrest warrant issued against Luis Roldán, the director general of the powerful Civil Guard, accusing him of embezzlement and kickbacks. From his hiding place, Roldán has barraged the press with statements threatening that if he is not let off the hook, he will name names and bring down the entire system. His cynicism can hardly be underestimated, nor his depravity: The latest issue of the magazine *Interviú* publishes photos of Roldán cavorting naked during a bisexual cocaine orgy.

The Roldán arrest warrant was followed by the resignations of Interior Minister Antoni Asunción and Agriculture Minister Vicente Albero. Their resignations had barely been accepted by González, when two other top figures of Spain's financial establishment were arrested: Mariano Rubio, head of the Bank of Spain, and Manuel de la Concha, head of Madrid's stock exchange. The latter is also suspected of having managed investment funds for Albero, which were not properly declared to the tax authorities.

The last to resign was Judge Baltazar Garzón, number two in the Interior Ministry, who became quite popular after running successful operations against drug traffickers. González had brought him in to boost the regime's credibility. Garzón claims that he didn't know about all this corruption.

Felipe González has refused to step down and call for new parliamentary elections. Only a censure vote by the parliamentary majority could force him to resign, but so far the two parties that have joined with his own Socialist Party to give him a majority, the Catalan and Basque nationalists, are clinging to the governing coalition, and so the opposition could not expect to win a vote against him. How much longer this will last is another question.

## The Cisneros connection

Some observers expect the scandals to continue. It has already been proven that the head of the central bank, Mariano Rubio, shifted millions of pesetas into a Swiss account before going to jail. The prime minister himself could become a target.

Observers are not excluding the possibility that ties be-

tween Felipe González and the Venezuelan Cisneros Group could come to light fairly soon (see articles, pp. 42-52). This relates to an old story, which *EIR* previously reported, concerning possible kickbacks to González from the purchase by Cisneros of Galerías Preciado, a chain of department stores, for the juicy sum of 20 billion pesetas. This could well cause the downfall of González, since the Cisneroses are currently under investigation for fraud in the case of the Venezuelan Banco Latino, of which the Cisneros Group was an important shareholder, and which has been accused, among other things, of being involved in drug-money laundering. Banco Latino director Ricardo Cisneros fled Venezuela after an arrest warrant was issued against him, and remains a fugitive from justice.

Another sore spot for González on the Venezuelan front is his intimate friendship with the disgraced former President, Carlos Andrés Pérez, who was deposed from the presidency last year for corruption, and has just been arrested. Pérez is also tight with the Cisneros clan.

The close tie between the Cisneros woes in Venezuela and the crisis of González in Spain was underscored when *El País* reported on May 13 that Roldán had been hiding out for two weeks on the Venezuelan island of Margarita, allegedly under protection of the political police, the DISIP. *El País* quoted Samuel Robinson, editor of *Hora Cero*, a Margarita newspaper, saying that he saw Roldán at the island on May 7, in the company of his associate Antonio Morán. *El País* quoted a DISIP bodyguard who claimed that "on Thursday the 4th he was asked to guard a heavyweight [a high-level personality], apparently of French nationality." The bodyguard later recognized Roldán from a photo.

### Dirty tricks

The Spanish paper *El Mundo* published in the second week of May the story that González had run an investigation against Mario Conde, the head of the Banesto Bank, which was recently forced into bankruptcy by the government, through his own right-hand man and deputy prime minister, Narcis Serra.

González was looking for dirt to pin down his main potential political rival, whom he feared as a Spanish version of Italy's upstart politician Silvio Berlusconi, currently the prime minister.

According to *El Mundo*, Roldán did much of the footwork in this investigation, which cost some \$500,000, and was paid for with suitcases full of cash. By the end of 1992, when these dirty tricks took place, Conde's political career had come to a screeching halt, and his bank was later closed down by the state, accused of being heavily overextended in the derivatives markets. *El Mundo* also revealed that the company in charge of the Banesto investigation was none other than Kroll Associates, which ran similar investigations for the CIA and the FBI on such "difficult" matters as the assets of former Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos.

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## Book Reviews

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# The Romanian secret service's 'wilderness of mirrors'

by Daniel B. Platt

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### **Red Horizons: Chronicles of a Communist Spy Chief**

by Lt. Gen. Ion Mihai Pacepa  
Regnery Gateway, Washington, D.C., 1987  
446 pages, hardbound, \$19.95

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*Red Horizons* is an exposé of the incredible machinations of Romanian Intelligence during the 1960s and '70s, told in the form of reminiscences by the man who was its top administrator. He reveals, in fascinating and appalling detail, the measures used to monitor and police millions of Romanians, the subterfuges used to manipulate foreign leaders, and the brutal reprisals against opponents, all driven by the diabolical stratagems and mad caprices of Romania's absolute rulers, Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu.

The individual who wrote this book no longer exists. When he defected to the United States in July 1978 he was given a new identity, which, as far as we know, was sufficient to protect him from reprisals. Before his defection, he was the head of Romania's *Departamentul de Informatii Externe* or DIE, the equivalent of the CIA in the United States. Subsequently, Romanian governments would attempt to entirely rewrite the history of his life in Romania.

Thus, we are dealing with a book written by a rather chimerical person. We can only hypothesize his motives for writing it; since his value to western intelligence services was staggering, we can probably discount the motive of monetary gain. He rose to prominence in his profession due to his facility in dealing with both information and disinformation; the world of intelligence is sometimes called the "wilderness of mirrors," because it is difficult to differentiate between what is real, and what is semblance. Pacepa says he defected because he had had "enough of life at the top of a society that I detested more every day." Elsewhere in the book, without