

Spain's Thatcherites stand to gain as wave of ETA terror is unleashed

by Katharine Kanter

On the evening of Jan. 24, news arrived that the former interior minister of Spain, José Barrionuevo, had been indicted by the Supreme Court for alleged involvement in the 1983 kidnapping of a Basque industrialist, Segundo Marey. The indictment follows a three-year witchhunt against Barrionuevo, by press magnate Pedro J. Ramírez of the *El Mundo* group, who is a standard-bearer in Spain for the Thatcherite Conservative Revolution. Barrionuevo, who was interior minister from 1982-88, then transport minister, and most recently a Socialist member of parliament, lost his parliamentary immunity last November.

Marey was kidnapped by an illegal, underground police commando, part of the Anti-Terrorist Liberation Group (GAL), who had mistaken him for a member of the Basque separatist terrorists, ETA. During the 1980s, the GAL is said to have "executed," mainly over the border in France, 29 people whom they presumed to be terrorists. Eight of these people were murdered "by mistake": It late came to light that they never had anything whatsoever to do with ETA, nor were they even separatist sympathizers.

Barrionuevo was also charged with leading an armed band of outlaws, and misuse of public funds, i.e., applying the so-called "reserve funds" of the ministry, to uses of the GAL.

One can imagine the hue and cry, when the GAL mowed down, in France, in a single operation and by mistake, a 16-year-old girl and an 80-year-old French peasant.

It would appear that the GAL was formed under the control of then-Secretary of State for Interior Rafael Vera, an intelligence professional whose ostensible stock-in-trade was "negotiating" with ETA. Vera had cultivated an image of glamor and mystery, as he jetted around the world resettling ETA members who had "negotiated" their way out of jail, in African and South American beauty spots where they would supposedly "do little harm." That many subsequently employed themselves in South American terrorist movements or in narcotics, did not seem to disturb Vera in his colonization plans. Meanwhile, the GAL was hard at it, bumping off the surplus ETA population. That, at least, appears to be the meaning, behind what may best be de-

scribed as an "opaque" security policy.

The recruitment process to the GAL, is alleged to have been continued by the next Secretary of State for the Interior, Julián San Cristóbal, and by the law enforcement officer José Amedo. Vera is out on bail, the latter are presently in jail, accused of homicide in varying degrees.

Now, where does Barrionuevo come into all this? He was interior minister in 1983, when the GAL was formed. From what one can tell, he made mistakes, notably, with respect to the excessive license given to the inscrutable Vera, who seems to have a personal agenda somewhat unrelated to Spain's national interests. From a strictly legal standpoint, Barrionuevo is responsible for acts carried out under his authority, whether or not he was informed of them in detail; in any event, it would be naive to assume, that he knew nothing at all.

The problem of Barrionuevo, who is considered, even by his political enemies, to be a patriot, and a highly professional and dedicated law enforcement officer, is the problem of Giulio Andreotti, the former Italian prime minister now indicted on dozens of criminal charges. In order for him to defend himself adequately, he would have to open to the courts, the tenor of the discussions on anti-terrorist policy conducted between his ministry and Prime Minister Felipe González. In the present hostile climate, orchestrated by Ramírez's daily *El Mundo*, this would not only lead to the impeachment of González, but to the wrecking of the entire Spanish security apparatus, as one officer after another, no matter how high or how low the rank, is "Watergated"—as terrorism and separatism run amok. Barrionuevo is willing to go to jail to prevent that, and, despite pressures brought to bear over the last months, he has not caved in. That is the reason that he has been indicted.

This is statesmanlike behavior, but it has its limits. The truth is that Prime Minister González, like Andreotti when he was in power, never really had an anti-terrorist policy, because neither González nor Andreotti, were prepared to face the full horror of what British intelligence and its Kissinger-Bush circles, had done to them, of which the "Gladio" scandal gives only a faint idea. To face down the British on

the issue of terrorism, means full-scale intelligence war, and that sometimes means a shooting war. It means naming the names, and it means adopting as an absolute national priority, an economic policy which will allow the nation to face a virtual blockade by those hostile forces over a period of years. Albeit clumsily, that was the aim of the *desarrollista* (pro-development) faction around Franco's first industry minister Juan Antonio Suances (1939-57), whom Franco dumped in 1958 at the demand of the International Monetary Fund; Suances's dismissal was the IMF's "conditionality" if Spain wished to be "admitted into the international community" in 1958. *Desarrollismo* is the policy that Adm. Carrero Blanco would have put into effect, had he not been assassinated, allegedly by ETA, on Dec. 21, 1973.

Blind terror grips nation

Doubtless in order to bring down the last vestiges of González's authority, and ring in the Thatcherite option for the March national elections, namely José María Aznar, president of the Partido Popular (People's Party), those who run ETA have given these terrorists free rein. The latest spate of attacks has mainly been outside the Basque country. On Dec. 13, a car bomb went off in Madrid, killing six civilian employees of the Defense Ministry. A few days later, a bomb went off in a shop in Valencia, killing a woman. In late December and early January, in two cities outside the Basque provinces, car bombs were set off, killing two Army officers and severely wounding their young daughters. On Dec. 28, the Basque police, Ertzaintza, stormed a cache in Vitoria, in the Basque province of Alava, where they found 179 kilos of explosive, submachine guns, and a complete arsenal for setting off remote-control bombs. The commando known as "Araba," who was arrested, had planned to assassinate the head of the Basque security establishment, Juan María Atucha, the head of the Alava Socialist Party, the head of the Alava Unity party, and three policemen.

But such high-profile attacks against prominent figures, have slipped into the background; what we now face, is more generalized, blind terror.

As every month goes by, the methods used by the "Abertzales" (pro-terrorist, separatist, so-called left) come to resemble—because they have advisers who study how Hitler did it—precisely and down to the last detail the methods used by the SA and SS in that critical year of 1933, when the Nazi Party unleashed a full-scale war *against the German population*.

During the regular gatherings of *Gestoras por la Paz*, an independent youth group which holds silent vigils against ETA, leaflets are scattered about threatening the lives of the leading organizers. Diego Apalátegui, a member of the People's Party youth group, had to flee the Basque provinces, after posters went up against him in the streets of San Sebastián. Judge Justo Rodríguez, who tried an ETA case, also

had to flee to Madrid after similar posters went up against him. Ana Urchegía, a Socialist Party municipal councilman in Lasart, has been the target of wall graffiti, reading, "Ana, fascist, you're next on the list." Then posters with her photo and ID card number were pasted up, bearing the caption, "Wanted—Terrorist." Like many others, the academic Xavier Elzo received death threats through the "Abertzale" newspapers; then one day, a threatening crowd gathered in front of his door to deliver the message: "You will pay." In Irún, 19-year-old Borja Semper, who is the youngest municipal councilman in Spain, was the target of escalating terror: first graffiti was painted against him, then he received threatening phone calls, people followed him in the streets to insult him, and finally, a gang attacked him in a café. Borja has been advised to leave the Basque provinces.

Just before Christmas, two hooded individuals tried to kidnap a boy from his classroom in the town of Gecho, in Vizcaya. The boy, 15, had made public statements against ETA, which became widely known as he is the nephew of a PNV (nationalist) leader, Ricardo Ansótegui. One should note here that PNV members, like José María Loiti of Arrasate, who say they are for separatism, but against ETA, are subjected to the same threats as socialists or conservatives.

Exactly a year ago, the head of the People's Party in San Sebastián, Gregorio Ordóñez, was assassinated by ETA. When his widow, Ana Iribar, tried to find a priest to say mass on the anniversary of his death, they were all so frightened—they claimed it was "too political"—that she had to call the Bishop Setién, who said he had "forgotten the date."

All this being not enough, the Basque provinces have been the scene, over the last six months, of horrific riots, in which a town or city will be "held hostage" for hours, as hooded individuals engage in pitched battles with police, set vehicles and buildings on fire, and erect barricades.

Beware Ramírez

So José María Aznar (or "Boy Thatcher" as his friends call him) hopes to sweep to power in Spain behind a wall of flames. A pyrrhic victory, and certainly not a difficult one, given the sorry incompetence displayed only very recently by González at the big Socialist election rally, where, in a country whose unemployment stands officially at 22.7%, he proposed to create jobs by promoting early retirement and shorter work weeks with reduced pay, in order to promote job sharing!

Depressed as they presently are, not all Spaniards are utter dupes. A member of Aznar's own party, a senior parliamentarian with considerable knowledge of international terrorism, told this news service, that although Aznar may well be elected prime minister in March, the very machinery he relied on to set him upon the throne, namely, the slaving pack around *El Mundo* and Pedro J. Ramírez, will as soon pull him down—or any leader who might threaten to be a *desarrollista* and a patriot.