

ARTICLE

‘Like Father, Like Son’: Willy Brandt and Felipe González: Democracy, Social Democracy and Internationalism in Motion in the Late Cold War

Marina Pérez de Arcos 

Department of International History, London School of Economics, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, United Kingdom and Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford, Manor Road, Oxford OX1 3UQ, United Kingdom

m.perez-de-arcos@lse.ac.uk; marina.perezdearcos@politics.ox.ac.uk

The article sheds light on the significant and understudied bond between West German Chancellor and Nobel Peace Laureate Willy Brandt and Spanish President Felipe González. It is based on interviews with senior policy makers; archival material from the Ebert Foundation in Bonn; fresh material from Austria, Spain, Sweden, Portugal and the United States, and exclusive additional private papers. Drawing on these sources, the article identifies the three key political-intellectual pillars – democracy, social democracy and internationalism – that sustained their special ‘father-son’ relationship and discusses their shared desire to project their brand of socialism across Europe and the world. In doing so, it also sheds light on how personal guidance, assistance and exchange, linked with institutional support, contributed to the expansion of democracy and social democracy in the late Cold War.

*Adiós, amigo Willy. Nuestro homenaje será el de seguir trabajando por tus ideales europeos e internacionales; lo haremos con el mismo entusiasmo que tú nos mostraste. Pero te confieso, y quiero confesar a todos, que será difícil llenar el hueco de tu ausencia.*¹ (Felipe González’s speech at Willy Brandt’s funeral, Berlin, 17 Oct. 1992; Felipe González Foundation Archive)

*Felipe González . . . Fils spirituel de Willy Brandt, connu et apprécié en Europe et en Amérique latine, il était l’un des leaders très écoutés de l’Internationale socialiste.*² (Pierre Mauroy, *Mémoires ‘Vous mettez du bleu au ciel’*, 2003)

The ‘Willy Brandt – Politikerleben’ exhibition at the Willy Brandt Foundation’s old headquarters near the Brandenburg Gate culminated in a display of the Order of Service of the West German chancellor’s state funeral on 17 October 1992, a photograph of Brandt’s casket and a radio broadcast of a farewell speech delivered at the memorial.³ Only one person was present in all three exhibition

¹ ‘Our tribute will be to continue working for your European and international ideals; we will do so with the same enthusiasm that you showed us. But I confess to you, and I want to confess to everyone, that it will be difficult to fill the gap of your absence. Farewell and thank you for everything, *amigo Willy*’.

² Felipe González . . . the spiritual son of Willy Brandt, known and appreciated in Europe and Latin America, was one of the most respected leaders of the Socialist International’.

³ ‘Willy Brandt – Politikerleben’, Forum Willy Brandt Berlin, <https://archiv.bundesregierung.de/archiv-de/forum-willy-brandt-wiedereroeffnet-353406>. A new exhibition titled ‘Willy Brandt – Freedom Fighter, Chancellor for Peace, Bridge Builder’ is currently on tour in Germany: <https://willy-brandt.de/en/exhibitions/exhibitions/touring-exhibition/>, and a new permanent exhibition opened in Berlin in October 2021: <https://willy-brandt.de/ausstellungen/ausstellung-gen/forum-berlin/>

memorabilia – Felipe González, the former president of Spain. The only non-German listed in the Order of Service, González was seen in the photograph standing next to Brandt's casket as he delivered his farewell speech in Spanish – the broadcast included a voice-over in German – at the first state funeral held at the Reichstag in a reunified Berlin.

Despite the public spotlight on González at Brandt's funeral and in the foundation's curatorial display, which clearly highlights their bond, there are no academic texts that explore the connection between the two politicians. Published in 2018, *Willy Brandt and International Relations: Europe, the USA and Latin America* is a most welcome contribution to scholarship on Brandt and the only book in English to address his politics as an elder statesman between 1974 and 1992.⁴ However, with only a few passing references to González, it offers little on their relationship. Even Hélène Miard-Delacroix's recent biography (published in both French and English), *Willy Brandt: Life of a Statesman*, mentions González only twice: when the two men met formally for the first time in Portugal in 1974 and later when Brandt asked González to deliver his eulogy in 1992.⁵ There is no discussion of what occurred between the two dates, though much must have passed between the two men to establish a relationship such that Brandt would ask González to deliver the eulogy at his state funeral. This is also the case with biographies of Brandt in German, even though Hans-Joachim Noack calls González Brandt's '*politische[r] Ziehsohn*' – his political adopted son.⁶

A review of the scholarship on political parties reveals a similar picture. Despite his lifelong interest in Spain and democratisation in the Iberian Peninsula, Brandt is mentioned only once in a recent study on Southern European socialism in the 1970s.⁷ Earlier important works on the support the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (*Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*; FES) offered the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*; PSOE) during Spain's transition from dictatorship to democracy also fail to explore the personal and intellectual link between González and Brandt.⁸ Works on socialist transnational networks at a European level, whether of a more structured or intellectual kind, have little to say about the subject.⁹

However, political advisors to both men have often remarked that Brandt and González shared an almost 'father-son' relationship. Indeed, in a recent interview, Luis Yáñez-Barnuevo (the PSOE's international secretary from 1974 to 1979) observed that 'they were like father and son'.¹⁰ Such remarks reveal that Brandt and González shared a strong emotional bond which is in itself a subject worthy of academic exploration and one that historical research has yet to catch up with. Yet were there political-intellectual underpinnings to their affective rapport as well?

In his memoir, Pierre Mauroy, the first socialist French prime minister under President François Mitterrand, described González as Brandt's 'spiritual son' in a political context, implying that their bond contained an important intellectual element.¹¹ This description is particularly revealing because Brandt served as president of the Socialist International (SI) for two decades, and Mauroy assumed the

⁴ Bernd Rother and Klaus Larres, eds., *Willy Brandt and International Relations: Europe, the USA and Latin America, 1974–1992* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018). See also, Bernd Rother, *Sozialdemokratie Global: Willy Brandt und die Sozialistische Internationale in Lateinamerika* (Berlin: Campus, 2021), which came out in October 2021. An English version is intended for release in 2022.

⁵ Hélène Miard-Delacroix, *Willy Brandt: Life of a Statesman* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016).

⁶ Hans-Joachim Noack, *Willy Brandt: Ein Leben, ein Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2018), 316.

⁷ Alan Granadino, 'Possibilities and Limits of Southern European Socialism in the Iberian Peninsula: French, Portuguese and Spanish Socialists in the mid-1970s', *Contemporary European History*, 28, 3 (2019), 390–408.

⁸ Antonio Muñoz Sánchez, 'The Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Spanish Socialists During the Transition to Democracy, 1975–1982', *Contemporary European History*, 26, 1 (2016), 143–62; Pilar Ortuño Anaya, *European Socialists and Spain: The Transition to Democracy, 1959–77* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002). The Spanish edition was published three years later: Pilar Ortuño Anaya, *Los socialistas europeos y la transición española (1959–1977)* (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2005).

⁹ Christian Salm, *Transnational Socialist Networks in the 1970s: European Community Development Aid and Southern Enlargement* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); B. Vivekanandan, *Global Visions of Olof Palme, Bruno Kreisky and Willy Brandt: International Peace and Security, Co-operation, and Development* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

¹⁰ Luis Yáñez Barnuevo, interview with the author, 7 Jan. 2020.

¹¹ Pierre Mauroy, *Mémoires: 'Vous mettez du bleu au ciel'* (Paris: Plon, 2003), 452.

role a month before Brandt's death. Mauroy thus acknowledged that, although he was Brandt's institutional successor, the continuity of Brandt's intellectual project lay with González. Indeed, Walter Haubrich, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine's* Spanish correspondent from the late 1960s and for over three decades, called theirs a 'political father-son relationship'.¹²

This article unpacks the term *fiel espiritual* used by Mauroy to refer to the bond between Brandt and González. The research is based on memoirs; interviews with senior policy makers, including González himself and former US Secretary of State George Shultz; archival material from the FES and the Willy Brandt Archive in Bonn; new or underexplored material from the Felipe González Foundation in Madrid, the Pablo Iglesias Foundation in Alcalá de Henares, the Mário Soares Foundation in Lisbon, the Bruno Kreisky Foundation in Vienna and the Swedish Labour Movement's Archive in Stockholm; and exclusive additional private papers and CIA reports.

The article first explores the biographies of Brandt and González up until 1974, when they first met in Portugal, to review their backgrounds in terms of both their generational differences and their nationalities and political experiences, as well as their commonalities. It provides an essential framework to understand what brought such a seemingly unlikely pair together. This exploration leads into the second section of the article on the three distinct yet interconnected political-intellectual pillars that sustained their relationship: (i) democracy, (ii) social democracy and (iii) internationalism. Brandt and González also shared a common purpose: to usher their vision of international social democracy into a new decade (the 1990s) and project it toward new territories on both sides of the Atlantic. The conclusion examines González's eulogy of Brandt to better understand the emotional dimension of the 'father-son' relationship between the two men, thus bringing the paper full circle to their initial encounter and putting flesh on the limited references in the literature. It also highlights the point that their political relationship was based on an emotional bond. In doing so, new threads on the international history of social democracy, on the transnational history of contemporary Europe in the late Cold War, on the democratisation of Spain and on transnational approaches to political mentorship are woven into the narrative.¹³

A Seemingly Unlikely Pair

At first glance, Brandt and González seemed like an unlikely pair, especially when it came to their age, nationality and political experience. Soon after the PSOE's 1974 conference in Suresnes, a small town in the western suburbs of Paris, González, the new PSOE first secretary, travelled to Portugal to attend a meeting of that country's Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista*; PS), where he met Brandt for the first time.¹⁴ González made an immediate impression on Brandt. From the beginning, 'I felt a liking for the young lawyer, Felipe González, who had taken over the leadership of the PSOE', Brandt intimated in his memoirs.¹⁵ He continued: 'It has been fascinating to see Spain find its way into the modern world under his prudent and courageous leadership'.¹⁶ Brandt had found just the man to lead the socialist project in Spain. Indeed, the meeting was a turning point for both men. González was in his early thirties when he met Brandt, who was sixty-one.

Importantly, González did not think and sound like the 'Toulouse gerontocracy', a term used by historian Richard Gillespie to refer to the PSOE leaders who lived in exile in southern France, and with whom Brandt had dealt since the 1930s.¹⁷ Years later, Austrian social democrat Bruno Kreisky

¹² Walter Haubrich, *Spanien* (Munich: Beck, 2009), 59.

¹³ I would like to thank one of the anonymous reviewers for helping me frame this sentence.

¹⁴ It is quite probable that Brandt and González spoke to each other in French. González spoke fluent French, as attested by his participation as the first head of government (French and foreign) on the show *Apostrophes*, a live, weekly, literary, prime-time talk show on French television that ran for a decade and a half. See Marina Pérez de Arcos, 'Of Therapy and Passion: "Les lectures du président"'. A Literary Conversation Between Felipe González, Carmen Romero, Bernard Pivot, Eduardo Mendoza, Javier Marías, Jean Canavaggio, and Marc Lambron', working paper.

¹⁵ Brandt, *My Life in Politics*, 315.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Richard Gillespie, *The Spanish Socialist Party: A History of Factionalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 235.

(who served as Austria's chancellor from 1970 to 1983) recalled that at the very first, 'we listened to Felipe with respect, but not without a certain scepticism . . . [due to his age]. But the young Felipe struck us with his objectivity and insight in an impressive analysis of the situation in Spain. We were meeting with a representative of the new Spanish youth for the first time, and we all talked about it in the corridors – admiringly and a great deal'.¹⁸ Brandt later wrote in his memoirs that González 'was the only Spanish leader who ever spoke to me about the future and change'.

In her 1978 article, 'Mentoring in Politics: The Case of Willy Brandt', Barbara Kellerman explores the qualitative impact of Brandt's mentors, Julius Leber and Ernst Reuter. Leber had been a prominent politician in Germany's Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*; SPD) in the interwar period and the editor-in-chief of the social democratic newspaper *Lübecker Volksboten*, for which Brandt wrote as a student in the early 1930s. Reuter was the mayor of West Berlin between 1948 and 1953 after his return from exile in Turkey. Kellerman notes that 'prophetically, Brandt met Reuter at the home of Leber's widow', a further connection between Brandt and both his mentors.¹⁹

'From the first moment I felt that Reuter and I understood each other very well. When I was a young man I never felt that the difference of twenty years in our age alienated me from Julius Leber; that difference did not matter in my relationship with Ernst Reuter either', wrote Brandt in his memoirs published in 1960.²⁰ Almost thirty years later, in another book of memoirs, Brandt remembered:

Politically and personally, Reuter and I were close, almost entirely of one mind. I was regarded as 'Reuter's young man', and I was proud of his liking for me and of being able to give him support. What drew us together? On my return from wartime exile in Scandinavia, I felt attracted by his humane and sociable manner, his warmth, his wit, his courage in standing up for his convictions, his readiness to shoulder responsibility, his optimistic nature and his assured but not arrogant way of expressing himself, even to the Allies.²¹

Brandt's words consistently show that age did not stop him from establishing significant political relationships and that personal affection played an important role in them. While unaware of the Brandt–González relationship at the time of publication, Kellerman concluded that 'having a mentor facilitates generative ability, the ability to become a mentor oneself. This last point can scarcely be overestimated'.²² As the Brandt–González relationship later demonstrated, Kellerman's statement was prescient. The age gap between Brandt and González was ultimately an asset rather than a liability.

González also provided 'new blood' – or 'a boost of young sap', to use the literal translation of his statement in a 1982 interview – to the SI, an otherwise ageing organisation.²³ Western Europe's best-known socialists, including Brandt, Kreisky, Olof Palme, Michael Foot, Pietro Nenni and François Mitterrand, flew to Madrid to show their support for the PSOE's grand public debut in Madrid after decades of proscription.²⁴ In 1976, González was closest in age to Palme, who was nevertheless fifteen years his senior, followed by Mitterrand, Brandt, Foot and Kreisky, who were all about thirty

¹⁸ Bruno Kreisky, contribution for book to mark the tenth anniversary of Suresnes, n.d. 1984, X3 Prominentenkorrespondenz Box 21 Gle-Göss, Bruno Kreisky Foundation (BKF).

¹⁹ Barbara Kellerman, 'Mentoring in Political Life: The Case of Willy Brandt', *American Political Science Review*, 72, 2 (1978), 430.

²⁰ Willy Brandt, *My Road to Berlin* (London: Peter Davies, 1960), 167.

²¹ Willy Brandt, *My Life in Politics* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992), 12.

²² Kellerman, 'Mentoring in Political Life', 433.

²³ Felipe González Márquez and Víctor Márquez Reviriego, *Un estilo ético. Conversaciones con Víctor Márquez Reviriego* (Barcelona: Argos Vergara, 1982), 101. 'Además de eso, es que aportamos a la Internacional Socialista un impulso de savia joven, un impulso de debate ideológico nuevo y una perspectiva de un partido que no había soportado por razones de clandestinidad todo el desgarramiento brutal que se había producido con la guerra fría'.

²⁴ Olof Palme (b. 1927 – 15 years); Bruno Kreisky (b. 1911 – 31 years); Michael Foot (b. 1913 – 29 years); Pietro Nenni (b. 1891 – 51 years); François Mitterrand (b. 1916 – 26 years).

years older than González, and finally Nenni, who was fifty years older. They all remembered the Spanish Civil War and had lived through the Second World War, whereas González was born halfway through the latter in officially neutral, yet Nazi-influenced, Francoist Spain.²⁵ In short, though there was a clear age gap, González was a rare and welcome sight among the ageing PSOE leaders and a breath of fresh air within the SI.

Another key difference between Brandt and González was their nationality and their life abroad. Brandt ‘came from a North German Protestant background’,²⁶ while González was born and raised in Seville, southern Spain – north vs. south, Lutheran vs. Catholic. However, both Brandt’s and González’s families had been involved in the trade union movement. Brandt’s mother – a single mother – had worked as a salesgirl in a social-democratic co-operative store and been active in the SPD’s workers’ associations; his maternal grandfather, who assumed the role of father, had been an SPD member. González’s father had been a member of the General Union of Workers (*Unión General de Trabajadores*; UGT) before the Civil War.

Equally, both families were committed to Brandt’s and González’s education. Brandt’s grandfather saw to it that Brandt did not attend a local primary school, which would have made it difficult for him to pursue higher education, and enrolled him in the St Lorenz Boys’ Middle School instead.²⁷ His grandfather’s ambition, wrote Brandt, ‘was to see me go further than himself and my mother Martha’.²⁸ González’s family sent him to San Antonio María Claret,²⁹ a newly built Catholic (day and boarding) school for boys from a middle-class background and with aspirational parents like González’s.

Despite the difference in scale and population, Lübeck and Seville were both port cities and historic centres of international trade. Lübeck was a key Hanseatic town while Seville was the Spanish departure point for the New World – perhaps a motivation or sign of Brandt’s and González’s future internationalism. ‘I had realised in my Lübeck days that it was far from adequate to consider political problems from a purely national standpoint . . . and was particularly anxious to enrich this picture with personal contacts’, wrote Brandt.³⁰ Although he spent the first nineteen years of his life in his hometown, in April 1933 ‘the young shipbroker’s apprentice pressed his possessions into a small attaché case and, with only a hundred [Reichsmarks] in his pocket, escaped Hitler’s Reich as a stow-away on a fishing vessel’.³¹ Like Brandt, González also spent the first twenty years of his life in his hometown and experienced his first extended stay away from home abroad.

Brandt spent approximately fifteen years in exile in Norway and later Sweden; he only moved to Berlin permanently in 1947. ‘My only choice was “external” emigration. I took that choice, and I have never regretted it, because it offered me not only the chance to learn but also to resist’, wrote Brandt.³² González’s experience abroad was also one related to learning and activism. After graduating in law from the University of Seville, González took up a Catholic trade union scholarship at the University of Louvain in Belgium, where he improved his French and studied economics during

²⁵ Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol. II, *Their Finest Hour* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1948), 518; Andrew Szanajda and David A. Messenger, ‘The German Secret State Police in Spain: Extending the Reach of National Socialism’, *The International History Review*, 40, 2 (2018), 397–415; Marina Pérez de Arcos, ‘Education, Intelligence and Cultural Diplomacy at the British Council in Madrid, 1940–1941, Part 2: Shock Troops in the War of Ideas’, *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 98, 5 (2021), 707–38.

²⁶ Willy Brandt, *In Exile: Essays, Reflections and Letters, 1933–1947* (London: Wolff, 1971), 9.

²⁷ See <https://www.willy-brandt-biography.com/working-class-youngster-in-luebeck/> (last visited 8 June 2020).

²⁸ Brandt, *My Life in Politics*, 77.

²⁹ ‘Claret apaga cincuenta velas’, *ABC*, 2 April 2006, https://sevilla.abc.es/sevilla/sevi-claret-apaga-cincuenta-velas-200604020300-142988855714_noticia.html (last visited 8 June 2020); see also <https://claretsevilla.org/historia-del-centro/> (last visited 8 June 2020); and González’s student record <https://archivo.fundacionfeligepgonzalez.org/es/consulta/registro.do?id=81585> (last visited 8 June 2020).

³⁰ Brandt, *In Exile*, 201.

³¹ Harold Mock, ‘A Post-National Europe: Brandt’s Vision for the European Community Between the Superpowers’, in Rother and Larres, *Willy Brandt and International Relations*, 89.

³² Brandt, *In Exile*, 10.

the 1965–6 academic year. There, he had to face the grim realities of Spanish migrants: ‘they are helpless, oppressed, exploited and, to top it all, hated as inferior beings, as a cursed race’, he wrote in a personal letter.³³

Brandt and González went abroad before they had even lived in the capital of their respective countries; by the time they met in 1974, both had travelled widely. According to one academic commentator, ‘Among the Federal Republic’s post-war chancellors, Brandt was the one most widely travelled in his youth’.³⁴ Brandt later travelled extensively as foreign minister and chancellor, while González repeatedly visited France, Portugal and Belgium.³⁵

The only country in which both Brandt and González had lived was Spain. Brandt was emotionally attached to Spain.³⁶ Aged twenty-three, he travelled there to report on the Spanish Civil War as well as to improve relations between the Socialist Workers’ Party of Germany (*Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands*; SAPD), a breakaway faction of the SPD which he had joined in 1931, and the Workers’ Party of Marxist Unification (*Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista*; POUM), a Trotskyist group.³⁷

The Spanish Civil War captured the imagination of the left everywhere, from Europe to India.³⁸ As the prominent British historian Eric Hobsbawm put it, the Civil War ‘became and has remained something remembered by those who were young at the time like the heart-rending and indestructible memory of a first great and lost love’.³⁹ Brandt was no exception, and his stay in Barcelona and on the Aragon front in 1937 was ‘full of the most contradictory impressions and of important experiences which later largely determined my political actions and thinking’.⁴⁰ On his return to Oslo, he felt particular satisfaction ‘to work on the Spanish Aid programme, which provided food and medical supplies to the bitter end’.⁴¹ Although Brandt did not officially visit the country for almost four decades, he did spend time on vacation in the Canary Islands from 1972 onwards, ‘and save for Norway and Sweden where he went into exile, Brandt felt most attached to Spain’.⁴²

Until 1974, Brandt and González’s experience in public service had been completely different. Brandt had held municipal office as mayor of West Berlin from 1957 to 1966, and he became chairman of the SPD in 1964, a post he retained until 1987. That is to say, Brandt had been the leader of the SPD for a decade when he met González, whereas González had been the leader of the PSOE for just a

³³ Fernando Jáuregui, ‘Felipe González, la biografía de un hombre corriente’, *El País*, 30 Oct. 1982, https://elpais.com/diario/1982/10/30/espana/404780429_850215.html (last visited 8 June 2020).

³⁴ Mock, ‘A Post-National Europe’, 87.

³⁵ Luis Yáñez Barnuevo, interview with the author, 7 Jan. 2020.

³⁶ Alfonso Guerra, *Cuando el tiempo nos alcanza: memorias (1940–1982)* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 2004), 183.

³⁷ Bernd Rother, ‘Willy Brandt y España’ (Zaragoza, 2014), conference paper, 1; Peter Merseburger, *Willy Brandt: 1913–1992. Visionär und Realist* (Stuttgart: Dt. Verl.-Anst., 2002). See chapter on Brandt in the Spanish Civil War, 126–72; Terence Prittie, *Willy Brandt: Portrait of a Statesman* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1974), 30–5.

³⁸ Michael P. Ortiz, ‘Spain! Why? Jawaharlal Nehru, Non-Intervention, and the Spanish Civil War’, *European History Quarterly*, 49, 3 (2019), 445–66. See also the report ‘Apertura consulado general indio en Madrid’ from José Balenchana in Bombay to Spanish Foreign Minister Alberto Martín-Artajo Álvarez, 1 Mar. 1955, Archivo General de la Administración.

³⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, ‘Intellectuals and the Spanish Civil War – War of Ideas’, *The Guardian*, 17 Feb. 2007, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2007/feb/17/historybooks.featuresreviews> (last visited 5 Aug. 2016). See Tom Buchanan’s books on Britain and the Spanish Civil War, including *Britain and the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) and *The Impact of the Spanish Civil War on Britain: War, Loss and Memory* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2007).

⁴⁰ Willy Brandt, *Links und Frei: Mein Weg 1930–1950* (Hamburg: Hoffmann u. Campe, 1982) quoted in Barbara Marshall, *Willy Brandt: A Political Biography* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 16, n. 6.

⁴¹ Brandt, *In Exile*, 141; Brandt, *My Life in Politics*, 106.

⁴² Rother, ‘Willy Brandt y España’, 1; Bernd Rother, ‘Willy Brandt und die Demokratie in Europa: Das Beispiel Spaniens’, in Andreas Wilkens, *Wir sind auf dem richtigen Weg: Willy Brandt und die europäische Einigung* (Bonn: Dietz, 2010), 403. Although Bruno Kreisky, later the chancellor of Austria, had discretely visited Majorca in 1966, he purchased a holiday house there only in 1976, after Franco’s death. See the book edited by the municipality of Calvià, *Bruno Kreisky: Un home per la pau. Mallorca 1976–1990* (Mallorca: Ajuntament de Calvià, 1991). He found there ‘the right sort of atmosphere every true intellectual needs to take a break from immediate surroundings without being cut off from reality’, 17.

few weeks. Unlike Brandt, who served as foreign minister and vice-chancellor of West Germany from 1966 to 1969 and then as chancellor from 1969 to 1974, González had no experience in either municipal or national government. Brandt's track record as a highly experienced municipal, party, national and international politician and policy maker contrasted sharply with González's lack of experience in office. Yet it was precisely the contrast between Brandt and González, along with Brandt's resignation as chancellor just a few months before their meeting in Portugal, that partly motivated Brandt to become involved in González's political development. After unexpectedly resigning the chancellorship, Brandt searched for new political projects. In other words, González presented himself at the right time.

Despite his lack of experience in office, González, like Brandt in his youth, had been active in the labour movement in his hometown and had played an important role in promoting the PSOE in Spain.⁴³ Though not in a formal capacity, González had also built international links with several socialist comrades abroad. By the time Brandt and González met, González had established a strong connection with several prominent French socialists, including international relations secretary of the French Socialist Party, Robert Pontillon, and Gaston Defferre, who served as mayor of Marseille and went on to become French prime minister under Mitterrand.⁴⁴ Thus, González was not unfamiliar with international matters and had started to develop transnational collaborations with other European socialists.

In addition, González had a great deal of underground experience in politics, which Brandt would have identified with from his youth in Nazi Germany and Scandinavia, where he had been 'a refugee twice over'.⁴⁵ Brandt had engaged in underground politics when he was González's age and had built an international network with other exiles in the *Kleine Internationale* based in Stockholm. In this 'modest international circle', as he called it in a letter written in 1946, 'many things now appear considerably more complicated than they did at the time, but we should nonetheless not feel ashamed of the work we did then'.⁴⁶ Approximately three decades later, Brandt thought that González would benefit from a *Grosse Internationale* of sorts – the Socialist International. Brandt took office as president of the SI in 1976,⁴⁷ and two years later González became its vice-president.⁴⁸ He and Brandt worked closely together until Brandt's death.

To sum up, Brandt and González had little in common at first glance: old vs. young, northern vs. southern, experienced vs. inexperienced. They belonged to different generations, hailed from different national backgrounds and had radically different levels of experience in office when they met in 1974. Rather than divide them, these differences brought them closer together, allowing them to forge a sense of continuity in their shared project of advancing democracy, social democracy and internationalism.

Brandt and González had more in common than one might think at first glance, however. They shared an emotional attachment to Spain and experience in underground politics, and they had

⁴³ Luis Yáñez Barnuevo, interview with the author, 7 Jan. 2020.

⁴⁴ Ramón-Luis Acuña, *Como los dientes de una sierra. Francia-España de 1975 a 1985, una década* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janes, 1986), 97.

⁴⁵ Brandt, *My Life in Politics*, 8.

⁴⁶ Brandt, *In Exile*, 223.

⁴⁷ Antonio Muñoz Sánchez, *El amigo alemán. El SPD y el PSOE de la dictadura a la democracia* (Barcelona: RBA Libros, 2012), 148.

⁴⁸ EFE, 'Felipe González, vicepresidente de la Internacional Socialista', *El País*, 7 Nov. 1978 https://elpais.com/diario/1978/11/07/internacional/279241218_850215.html (last visited 10 Aug. 2016). *The Historical Dictionary of Socialism*, however, gets the date of González's appointment as vice-president of the SI wrong. See Peter Lamb and J. C. Docherty, *Historical Dictionary of Socialism* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 141. Unfortunately, the third edition of the *Dictionary* still says that González became vice-president of the SI in 1982; see Peter Lamb, *Historical Dictionary of Socialism* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 187. This is just one of the several factual errors found in the short entry on González, including the statement that he graduated from the University of Louvain and not the University of Seville, led a number of coalition administrations, and that he is notable for Spain's entry into NATO, which is inaccurate, though not surprising considering the conventional wisdom.

moved straight from the local to the international. They came from families linked to the labour movement that had invested in their education, they originated from countries that had experienced civil violence and authoritarianism and they had built an informal international network of their own. Their commonalities proved essential to building an emotional bond that sustained and nurtured their shared political beliefs.

Democracy

'To have helped in causing the German name to be linked with the concept of peace and the prospect of European freedom is the true satisfaction of my life', reads Brandt's last sentence of *My Life in Politics*, Brandt's final book of memoirs published in 1992.⁴⁹ He expanded on this point a few paragraphs earlier in the chapter: 'In my old age, I am glad of the measurable gain for human rights and civil liberties. First in the centre of Europe. Then in the South, written off by the faint-hearted only a decade and a half ago'.⁵⁰ In contrast to the faint-hearted Brandt mentioned, González thought that Brandt 'was exceptionally attentive and exceptionally committed to democratic development in the Iberian Peninsula'.⁵¹ Indeed, in a lengthy 1978 report entitled *Portuguese Socialism and Willy Brandt*, Mário Soares, secretary-general of the Portuguese PS and earlier prime minister, wrote that 'Brandt had the courage and the clearness to trust the PS' in the *verão caiente* (hot summer) of 1975 when 'few people in Europe . . . would have then bet on the victory of the PS in that unequal fight [against the Communist Party]'.⁵²

Brandt's experiences in the Spanish Civil War, where he learnt to distrust the communists, as well as under the Nazi regime and in exile, made him particularly sensitive to later developments in Spain.⁵³ As noted in a 2014 lecture delivered by historian Bernd Rother, Brandt dedicated forty pages of his 1982 autobiography to Spain. Rother also comments that Brandt drew two major lessons for his future life in politics from his time in Spain: first, the value of freedom and that its enemies came both from the right and the left; second, the need to confront sectarianism.⁵⁴ After his defection to the SAPD and return from Spain, Brandt 'shed all [his] inclinations towards party intrigue and factionalism'.⁵⁵ Spain was a point of inflexion in his life. In addition, supporting Spain's transition from dictatorship to democracy provided some atonement for Germany's past sins, which included Nazi Germany's involvement in the Spanish Civil War.⁵⁶ To be sure, the image of Brandt dropping to

⁴⁹ Brandt, *My Life in Politics*, 466.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 464.

⁵¹ Felipe González, 'Willy Brandt by Felipe González', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmFVrUQru8> (last visited 6 June 2020). 'Antes de que acabara la dictadura en España, yo me reuní con Willy Brandt y con Mario Soares en Lisboa. Él estaba extraordinariamente atento y extraordinariamente comprometido con el desarrollo democrático en la Península Ibérica. Yo creo que una pieza clave. Vamos a ver, los suecos, fueron con Portugal, específicamente, muy solidarios estaban muy próximos, pero la figura que de verdad acompañó todo el proceso de la lucha por la democracia era Willy Brandt'.

⁵² Mário Soares, 'Portuguese Socialism and Willy Brandt', 10 Oct. 1978, Soares–Brandt correspondence, Mário Soares Foundation Archive (MSFA). An abridged version in German was published in an edited volume prepared to mark Brandt's sixty-fifth birthday. See Richard Löwenthal, ed., *Demokratischer Sozialismus in den achtziger Jahren: Willy Brandt zum 65. Geburtstag, 18. Dezember 1978* (Cologne: Europ. Verl.-Anst., 1979). González, Craxi and Mitterrand's contributions were revealingly entitled 'Probleme des demokratischen Übergangs in Spanien' (Problems of democratic transition in Spain), 'Die ideologische Antithese zwischen Sozialismus und Kommunismus' (The ideological antithesis between socialism and communism), and 'Die sozialistische Erneuerung und die Einheit der Linken' (Socialist renewal and the unity of the left), respectively.

⁵³ George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* contains a fascinating account of the fights between supporters of the POUM and the communists in Barcelona. See Paul Preston's 'Lights and Shadows in George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*', *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 2017, for a strong critique of Orwell's book.

⁵⁴ Rother, 'Willy Brandt y España', 3.

⁵⁵ Brandt, *My Life in Politics*, 106.

⁵⁶ See Robert H. Whealey, *Hitler and Spain: The Nazi Role in the Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1989); Stanley G. Payne, *Franco and Hitler: Spain, Germany, and World War II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

his knees at the Monument to the Ghetto Heroes in Warsaw in a gesture of humility for the crimes of the Nazis is the most poignant visual reminder of his attempts to shoulder Germany's burden. Therefore, the memory of both wars probably influenced Brandt's active interest in Spain's transition to democracy.⁵⁷

In an introduction to the English edition of his memoirs of exile published in 1971, Brandt wrote,

For me the Spain of today has not become an *idée fixe*. I know that there too things have progressed, and I can but hope with all my heart that the forces of freedom and a European vision will come out on top. The Spanish people certainly do not want another civil war. Democracy which is still being suppressed in Spain can only gradually emerge victorious. It needs European solidarity.⁵⁸

Brandt used his vast prestige as the German and European left's moral leader to promote democracy all over the world, especially in Southern Europe and Latin America.⁵⁹ It is therefore not surprising that González and Brandt first met in Portugal, months after the Carnation Revolution, which had led to the fall of the oldest dictatorship in Western Europe.⁶⁰

Partly as a consequence of US policy towards Portugal, explored by historian Mario Del Pero in several articles and more recently by Daniela Melo⁶¹ – according to Soares, Henry Kissinger foretold that, in the best case, 'I would end up my days as another Karensky [sic] in exile teaching in some American University'⁶² – West Germany began its own *Südpolitik*, or southern policy, toward Portugal and then Spain.⁶³ In December 1976, at the PSOE's first conference in Spain since the Civil War, a large banner reading *Socialismo es libertad* ('Socialism is freedom') covered the main hall at the Hotel Meliá Castilla in Madrid.⁶⁴ González proclaimed that the PSOE was 'willing to negotiate how to get from dictatorship to democracy, but not the objective of democracy itself' and that '[the situation] requires us to come to terms with the past, so we can overcome it, not cling onto it. [It] requires us to look to the future . . . in search of justice, not revenge'.⁶⁵ It was then Brandt's turn to speak: '*Compañeros*, my fellow socialists, you can count on our unbroken solidarity in this

⁵⁷ Guerra, *Cuando el tiempo nos alcanza*, 183; Ortuño Anaya, *European Socialists and Spain*, 175. Ortuño writes that González and Brandt first met in Bonn in 1971. According to Pilar Cernuda, Curro López Real introduced González to Kreisky and Brandt. See Pilar Cernuda, *El presidente* (Madrid: Ediciones de Hoy, 1994), 101. González recalls that he first met Brandt in 1974 at a Socialist International meeting in Helsinki when Kreisky presented a report on the Middle East. It seems he only properly engaged with Brandt in Portugal after he became first secretary of the PSOE in October that year. Felipe González, correspondence with the author, 6 July 2021.

⁵⁸ Brandt, *In Exile*, 140.

⁵⁹ Muñoz Sánchez, *El amigo alemán*, 148.

⁶⁰ 'Do 25 de Abril de 1974 ao I.Congresso na Legalidade, Dezembro de 1974 – Provas finais do livro organizado Secretariado Nacional PS', Fundação Mário Soares / DAR – Documentos António Reis, http://hdl.handle.net/11002/fms_dc_79971 (last visited 8 June 2020); David Castaño, 'Mário Soares e o sucesso da transição democrática', *Ler Historia*, 63 (2012), 9–13; Raquel Varela, 'O impacto da revolução portuguesa de 1974–1975 no PSOE visto através de El Socialista', *Ler Historia*, 57 (2009), 111–24; David Castaño, *Mário Soares e la Revolución* (Lisbon: D. Quixote, 2013).

⁶¹ Mario Del Pero, 'A European Solution for a European Crisis. The International Implications of Portugal's Revolution', *Journal of European Integration History*, 15, 1 (2009), 15–34; Mario Del Pero, 'Which Chile, Allende? Henry Kissinger and the Portuguese Revolution', *Cold War History*, 11, 4 (2011), 1–33; Daniela Melo, 'Outmanoeuvring Kissinger: Role Theory, US Intra-Elite Conflict, and the Portuguese Revolution', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 15, 2 (2019), 224–43.

⁶² Soares, 'Portuguese Socialism and Willy Brandt', MSFA.

⁶³ Ana Mónica Fonseca, 'The Federal Republic of Germany and the Portuguese Transition to Democracy (1974–1976)', *Journal of European Integration History*, 15, 1 (2009), 35–56. For the SPD and Italy see, Giovanni Bernardini, 'La SPD e il socialismo democratico europeo negli anni '70: il caso dell'Italia', *Ricerche di Storia Politica*, i (2010), 3–21.

⁶⁴ Letter of invitation to the conference from Luiz Yáñez-Barnuevo to Bruno Kreisky, 6 Nov. 1976, Folder Partido Socialista Obrero Español (1970–1975), VII. 1 Länderboxen Spanien, Sri Lanka, Südafrika, Sudan, BKF.

⁶⁵ Felipe González, PSOE 1976 conference in Victoria Prego, *La transición*, chapter 11, <http://www.rtve.es/alacarta/videos/la-transicion/transicion-capitulo-11/2066369/> (last visited 11 June 2016). 'Es necesario insistir en que estamos dispuestos a negociar el proceso de tránsito de la dictadura de la democracia, pero no el objetivo democrático mismo'.

difficult path to democracy and freedom'.⁶⁶ Brandt was the keynote speaker at the conference. He gave his speech entirely in Spanish, as did Palme.⁶⁷ Brandt had learnt some Spanish in school. Uwe-Karsten Heye, his speechwriter between 1973 and 1979, recalled that Brandt had delivered a speech in Spanish to thousands of people in Mexico City a year earlier.⁶⁸ At the time, Brandt, Palme, Mitterrand and González all featured on the cover of a special edition of *El Socialista*, the PSOE's party newspaper, to demonstrate their support for democracy in Spain.⁶⁹

In a booklet entitled *¿Qué es el socialismo?* (What is socialism?) published in 1976 – part of an outreach series on political ideas launched soon after Franco's death – González cautioned that 'the temptation, after a dictatorial regime as long-lasting as the Spanish one, to offer as an alternative a new dictatorship of the opposite sign is frequent and explicable in our society'.⁷⁰ However, he thought that 'the individual's right to think and express one's ideas freely, the collective right to join or create associations that defend one's interests in a trade union, social or political level, or to decide who will govern one's destiny . . . are closely and indissolubly linked, and only a socialist alternative, that is to say, a democratic alternative in all these directions, can achieve complete emancipation'.⁷¹

In an interview given to YA newspaper in June 1977, González declared that 'this dilemma [between reform and revolution] is absolutely out of date, that it is necessary to create reforms that are irreversible, that become radical transformations of society'.⁷² On 6 December 1978, the day of the referendum on the new Spanish constitution, González responded to the Brazilian weekly magazine *Veja*, which had asked him whether change would be made possible by the socialist alternative, as follows: 'I never said that the PSOE is a revolutionary alternative. It offers no revolutionary expectations'.⁷³ He added: 'I think that democracy – non-adjectivized democracy – is the only way to socialism. And that is because I see democracy as the socialisation of the State's wealth. Socialism is a deeper representation of the notion of democracy, not an alternative to it'. For González, therefore, democracy was not only the basic condition for socialism, but also a synonym for socialism.

González shared a special relationship, '*una sensibilidad próxima*', with leaders in Latin American countries, with whom he spoke in Spanish.⁷⁴ In an interview with the author, he stated that he 'was closest to them', engaging in discussions of new and innovative ideas.⁷⁵ For instance, President Ricardo Lagos of Chile revealed the impact of González's conversations with him on how to get a country to shift from dictatorship to democracy. Lagos even used Spain-inspired analogies to explain the situation

⁶⁶ Willy Brandt, PSOE 1976 conference in Victoria Prego, *La transición*, chapter 11, <http://www.rtve.es/alacarta/videos/la-transicion/transicion-capitulo-11/2066369/> (last visited 11 June 2016). 'Compañeros, en el difícil camino hacia la libertad y la democracia podéis contar con nuestra inquebrantable solidaridad'.

⁶⁷ Guerra, *Cuando el tiempo nos alcanza*, 226–7. 'Olof Palme subió a la tribuna y con tono alto pero cálido entonó en perfecto castellano . . .'; 'Anförande på PSOE's kongress, Spanien', Box 676/2/4/0/76/19, Swedish Labour Movement's Archive and Library (SLMAL).

⁶⁸ Uwe-Karsten Heye, conversation with the author, 27 Aug. 2017; Uwe-Karsten Heye, *Und nicht vergessen: Autobiographie* (Berlin: Aufbau, 2018). My thanks to Mr. Heye for allowing me to read several book chapters before publication.

⁶⁹ *El Socialista*, 5 Dec. 1976, Archivo Fundación Pablo Iglesias (AFPI).

⁷⁰ N.a., 'Presentación multitudinaria de la Biblioteca de divulgación Política', *El País*, 4 Jun. 1976.

⁷¹ Felipe González, *¿Qué es el socialismo?* (Barcelona: Editorial La Gaya Ciencia, 1976). 'La tentación tras un régimen dictatorial tan prolongado como el español, de ofrecer como alternativa una nueva dictadura de signo opuesto es frecuente y explicable en nuestra Sociedad . . . Pero el derecho individual a pensar y expresar con libertad sus ideas, el colectivo para afiliarse o crear asociaciones que en plano sindical, social o político defiendan sus intereses, o el decidir quién va a regir sus destinos mayoritariamente . . . están estrechamente e indisolublemente unidos y sólo una alternativa socialista, es decir, una alternativa democrática en todas estas direcciones puede realizar la completa emancipación'.

⁷² 'Declaraciones exclusivas a YA. Felipe González: "El dilema reforma o revolución está superado"', 29 June 1977, YA, Archivo Juan Linz, Fundación Juan March. 'Yo pienso que ese dilema [entre reforma y revolución] está absolutamente superado, que es preciso crear unas reformas que sean irreversibles, que se conviertan en transformaciones radicales de la sociedad'.

⁷³ Eric Nepomuceno, "Marx é como Freud". Entrevista: Felipe González', 6 Dec. 1978, *Veja*. In X3 Prominentenkorrespondenz Box 21 Gle-Göss, BKF.

⁷⁴ González Márquez and Márquez Reviriego, *Un estilo ético*, 101.

⁷⁵ Felipe González, interview with the author, 10 Apr. 2012.

in Chile to his Christian Democrat opponent: 'If you form a small coalition, you will be Adolfo Suárez and I will be Felipe González'.⁷⁶ Rother writes that in 1976, 'Veronika Isenberg, who worked for the SPD's International Secretariat, related that Felipe González's trips to Cuba, Mexico, Colombia and Chile had been a triumphal procession'.⁷⁷ Indeed, according to Eusebio Mujal-León, González travelled to Latin America twelve times between 1975 and 1982,⁷⁸ averaging almost two trips per year. González served as the SI's informal delegate to Latin America, and at Brandt's urging he was appointed president of the SI's International Committee for the Defence of the Nicaraguan Revolution in 1980.

Two years earlier, in his opening remarks at a conference on 'Democratization Processes in the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America', held in Estoril in September 1978, Brandt insisted there were 'already useful experiences in Latin Europe which will hopefully give grounds for hope for Latin America'.⁷⁹ González shared Brandt's idea. In his first meeting, as president of Spain, with US Secretary of State George Shultz, González explained that his concern for Central America was 'not only political, it is fraternal' and admitted to worrying about the grave risk to peace faced by the region. 'That is why I wish to contribute to a project for peace, progress, freedom and pluralism in the region as a whole'.⁸⁰ A democratic Spain, González added, could be of great symbolic value to Latin America's peaceful democratisation. Years later, Shultz remembered that González had 'surprised [him] by his candour and the position he took'.⁸¹

In a letter dated June 1981, Brandt told González that 'I believe that our friends in Nicaragua are taking advantage of the SI for their own purposes and I believe that, for its part, the International cannot unconditionally endorse everything they do'. He added that 'surely, you are the only one who can objectively assess developments in Nicaragua'.⁸² The president of the SI, a former West German chancellor and Nobel Peace Laureate, asked for advice from the young Spanish socialist with no government experience but enough political acumen and trustworthy judgement. A former director of the Institute for European-Latin American Relations writes that González's 'personal role in supporting the democratization process in some Latin American countries can hardly be overestimated'.⁸³ Some years later, when González was already in government, the Nicaraguan vice-president, Sergio Ramírez, declared that González 'has demonstrated that he has the ability and decision to play an important role in the future of Central America' and underlined his 'prestige and moral authority' in the region.⁸⁴

'We will always remember you standing up against totalitarianism and oppressors, kneeling before the victims you never provoked', said González in his eulogy of Brandt at the Reichstag.⁸⁵ 'And I have seen tears of emotion on your face when a dictatorship has been defeated, in Portugal or Spain, in Chile or Argentina; in any corner of the world'. In parallel to Spain's transition to democracy and after it had been completed, Brandt and González were keen to promote democracy in Latin America. From Germany in Central Europe to Spain and Portugal in Western Europe and over to the other side of the Atlantic, Brandt and González supported local attempts to democratise and end totalitarianism and authoritarianism. They worked together to achieve their shared goal.

⁷⁶ See the interview with Ricardo Lagos in Sergio Bitar and Abraham F. Lowenthal, eds., *Democratic Transitions: Conversations with World Leaders* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 79 and 86.

⁷⁷ Berndt Rother, 'Cooperation Between the European and Latin American Moderate Left in the 1970s and 1980s', in Rother and Larres, *Willy Brandt and International Relations*, 202.

⁷⁸ Eusebio Mujal-León, *European Socialism and the Conflict in Central America* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 33.

⁷⁹ Ana Mónica Fonseca, 'From the Iberian Peninsula to Latin America: The Socialist International's Initiatives in the First Years of Brandt's Presidency', in Rother and Larres, *Willy Brandt and International Relations*, 183.

⁸⁰ Meeting transcripts, 'Interview Between President González and US Secretary of State, George Shultz', 15 Dec. 1983, Felipe González Archive (FGA), 6 and 8.

⁸¹ George Shultz, interview with the author, 3 Mar. 2015.

⁸² Willy Brandt to Felipe González, 2 June 1981, Box 307-A-4, AFPI.

⁸³ Wolf Grabendorff, 'International Support for Democracy in Contemporary Latin America: The Role of Party Internationals', in Stephen Whitehead, ed., *The International Dimensions of Democratization: Europe and the Americas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 212.

⁸⁴ EFE, 'González juega un papel importante en Centroamérica, según Sergio Ramírez', *El País*, 22 May 1985.

⁸⁵ Felipe González, eulogy at the Reichstag, 17 Oct. 1992, Felipe González Foundation Archive (FGFA).

Social Democracy

‘Willy Brandt, our comrade and president, has asked me to welcome you at the opening of the congress of the Socialist International, since he was unable to be here himself’, González announced at the start of the conference held at the Reichstag in Berlin on 15–17 September 1992, just three weeks before Brandt’s death and less than three years after the fall of the Berlin Wall.⁸⁶ The subject of the conference was ‘Social Democracy in a Changing World’. As González explained, the newly reunified Berlin symbolised the extent of these changes. He also realised ‘the significance Berlin had had in the political career of Willy Brandt and what international social democracy owes to the work of our president’.⁸⁷ In his written message to the Berlin conference, Brandt acknowledged, ‘I was very moved when Felipe González suggested Berlin’ and asked González to open it in his name – a powerful gesture of continuity after Brandt had stepped down as SI president.⁸⁸

In the second half of the 1970s, González, like Brandt, wanted to see the PSOE move to a more moderate form of socialism.⁸⁹ The term ‘Marxism’ had not appeared in the PSOE party statutes for almost a century until the first conference held in Madrid after Franco’s death included the term in the party’s self-definition. In a meeting in October 1977 with King Juan Carlos, Queen Sofia and President Adolfo Suárez, Brandt noted that González was inclined to the moderate left, whereas large sections of his party supported ‘radical Marxist’ postulates.⁹⁰ In May 1978, González announced at the Barcelona Press Association that he would propose the removal of the term ‘Marxism’ from the party’s manifesto at the PSOE conference to be held in 1979. Its inclusion, in his view, ‘was a mistake’. He added that ‘I do not mind recognising that I am a social democrat’.⁹¹

González modelled his proposal on the SPD’s November 1959 Godesberg programme,⁹² which marked a radical shift away from revolutionary socialism. As proven by his handwritten preparatory notes and the recording of his speech at the 1959 convention, Brandt supported the Godesberg programme. It offered an up-to-date party statement, represented a combative democratic freedom movement, clarified party positions ‘on the state and in the state’, and made it harder for the SPD’s opponents to distort its message.⁹³ The SPD transitioned from a workers’ party to a people’s party, dropped the Marxist doctrine, committed itself to a social market economy ‘and adopted a policy of integration with the West and its institutions, such as NATO’.⁹⁴

Twenty years later, the PSOE still quarrelled over Marxism. The motion to drop the term was rejected by 65 per cent of the PSOE delegates.⁹⁵ In vain, González exhorted his PSOE colleagues to follow the example of other European socialist parties (many of which had already abandoned Marxist dogmatism) rather than cling self-righteously to an outdated ideology:

⁸⁶ Felipe González, ‘We Depend on Each Other’, *Socialist Affairs*, 3 (1992), https://www.internacionalsocialista.org/fileadmin/uploads/si/Documents/Congresses/XIX_Berlin/Felipe_Gonzalez_XIX_SI_Congress_Berlin.pdf (last visited 13 June 2020).

⁸⁷ González, eulogy at the Reichstag, FGFA.

⁸⁸ González, ‘We Depend on Each Other’.

⁸⁹ Message from German Ambassador Munz, ‘Streichung des Wortes “marxistisch” aus der Selbstdefinition der PSOE’, 16 May 1978, 11.4 SPD (Parteiführung) 1964–87, 130, Willy Brandt Archive (WBA), Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES).

⁹⁰ Letter from Willy Brandt to Bruno Kreisky, 21 Nov. 1977, with meeting minutes attached from Brandt’s conversation with King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia of Spain, President Suárez, German ambassador Lilienfeld and Dieter Koniecki on 16 Oct. 1977 in Madrid, VII. 1 Länderboxen Spanien, Sri Lanka, Südafrika, Sudan, BKF, 5.

⁹¹ Enrique Sopena, ‘Felipe González renuncia al marxismo’, 9 May 1978, *Informaciones*, Archivo Juan Linz, Fundación Juan March, <https://www.march.es/es/coleccion/archivo-linz-transicion-espanola/ficha/linz:R-18081>

⁹² Felipe González, interview with the author, 10 Apr. 2012.

⁹³ Nr. 26 Redebeitrag des Mitglieds des SPD-Parteivorstands Brandt auf dem Außerordentlichen Parteitag der SPD in Bad Godesberg, 13 Nov. 1959, *Auf dem Weg nach vorn. Willy Brandt und die SPD 1947–1972*, 206; SPD 1959: ‘Willy Brandt wirbt für das “Godesberger Programm”’, SWR2 Archivradio, https://www.swr.de/swr2/wissen/archivradio/spd-1959-willy-brandt-wirbt-fuer-das-godesberger-programm-100~_detailPage-1_-dc56264c3eed6f7453c3f263012a8308a11ab691.html (last visited 13 June 2020).

⁹⁴ Miard-Delacroix, *Willy Brandt*, 65.

⁹⁵ ACZ-187-21 Materiales del XXVIII Congreso PSOE del 17-05-1979/20-05-1979. Madrid; Ponencia política y propuesta de Sevilla al dictamen de la ponencia política, AFPI.

We Spanish socialists must be humble. We have very little to teach our socialist colleagues, particularly our European ones. If anything, what we can teach them is a century-long history where freedom is the exception and dictatorships the rule. Let us be humble when we come to debate what socialism is and where it is headed.⁹⁶

As González later put it, the party's rejection derived from 'the ideological build-up that comes from living under a dictatorship and [carrying out] clandestine activities' against the Franco regime.⁹⁷ In his interview with the Brazilian weekly magazine *Veja* in December 1978, González explained:

One cannot say that Marxism defines socialism. Marx was the revolution's man. Nobody questions this. He made, in this sense, an invaluable contribution. However, between Marx and socialism there is the same relation as between Freud and analysis. Not every analyst is Freudian . . . There are points in which Marx has become obsolete . . . He knew nothing about theory of the state . . . I do not accept the ecclesiastic notion which views Marxism as an untouchable subject . . . More than anything else, I think, it is necessary to use the critical approach – that is the Marxist approach – on Marxism . . . I do not accept any dogma.⁹⁸

In August 1976, González already referred to Marxism as 'neither a dogma nor a religion' but as a critical method of analysis.⁹⁹ Two years earlier, and six months after the Carnation Revolution, in a press conference with Soares upon Brandt's arrival at the Lisbon airport, Brandt explained that there was no Marxist dogma in the SPD and that it used Marxist critical analysis of the economy (not Marxist philosophy, as his translator had first declared, only to be corrected immediately by Brandt, much to the interpreter's embarrassment).¹⁰⁰

Among those who organised the rejection of the party's move towards social democracy was Enrique Tierno Galván, a law professor whose party, the People's Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista Popular*; PSP), had joined the PSOE the previous year after its poor results in the 1977 election. González's decision to step down as leader enabled Tierno to test the waters. Tierno approached Dieter Koniecki, the Ebert Foundation delegate to Spain, and asked him whether he would support Tierno's plans to be the party's new leader and stick with Marxism. Koniecki warned Tierno that the SPD would not endorse his nomination.¹⁰¹ In June 1979, a month after the PSOE conference, Tierno declared that 'at the moment, Felipe González appears as an irreplaceable man', which he blamed on the party's unwillingness to foster other political figures. He declared himself a Marxist, affirmed that 'socialism is indeed Marxism' and observed that all 'the European socialist parties'

⁹⁶ Felipe González in his speech at the 28th PSOE conference, 20 May 1979, in Chamorro, *Felipe González*, 337. 'Y tengo que decir desde esta tribuna, sabiendo que no soy el que va a asumir la responsabilidad de dirigir este partido, que hagamos un serio ejercicio de humildad, los socialistas españoles. Un serio ejercicio de humildad. Que pensemos que tenemos muy poco que enseñar a nuestros compañeros del mundo. Muy poco que enseñar. Y sobre todo a los de Europa. Que si algo les tenemos que enseñar, es una historia centenaria en la que la libertad ha sido la excepción, y la dictadura, la regla. Eso les podríamos enseñar. Que tengamos una cierta humildad cuando abordamos qué es el socialismo y hacia dónde va. Y, sobre todo, que tengamos en cuenta que el camino recorrido es el cimiento sobre el cual hay que seguir caminando. Y no se puede nunca despreciar lo que se consigue, porque, con frecuencia, del desprecio de lo que se consigue nace la pérdida de lo que se consigue. Para volver a luchar por eso que se acaba de perder'.

⁹⁷ Felipe González, interview with the author, 10 Apr. 2012.

⁹⁸ Eric Nepomuceno, "'Marx é como Freud". Entrevista: Felipe González', *Veja*, 6 Dec. 1978. In X3 Prominentenkorrespondenz Box 21 Gle-Göss, BKE.

⁹⁹ Emilio Gómez, 'En Gijón: nuestro partido es marxista, democrático, de masas, y revolucionario', *El País*, 17 Aug. 1976. The newspaper heading did not properly match the body of the text nor the reports from González's declarations.

¹⁰⁰ 'Chegada de Willy Brandt a Lisboa', 19 Oct. 1974, RTP Arquivos <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/chegada-de-willy-brandt-a-lisboa/> 11.56 m. The translator became even more embarrassed when he had to translate Brandt's statement that the SPD also built on influences from the *Bergpredigt*, or Sermon on the Mount, that is, the longest continuous discourse by Jesus in the New Testament. He limited himself, and only after Brandt's insistence, to say that the SPD also had some Christian ethical roots.

¹⁰¹ Cernuda, *El presidente*, 144.

had made severe mistakes because they aimed to be alternative governments rather than an alternative to the system.¹⁰² González had the full support of the Ebert Foundation, the SPD and Brandt (the Ebert Foundation even prepared several dossiers with newspaper clippings around the debate on Marxism within the PSOE).¹⁰³

González told PSOE members at the conference that he would refuse to stay on as leader if the party did not give up Marxism: 'Though there are political reasons for me to stay on as general secretary, my ideas and my ethics do not allow me to do so.'¹⁰⁴ He did not run for re-election, but four months later, in September, PSOE members voted González back in at the party's first extraordinary conference.¹⁰⁵ Possibly to support González in his struggle, Chancellor Kreisky made a statement from his summer home in Mallorca in July that 'Marxism is no longer useful'.¹⁰⁶ González convinced the PSOE to drop the term Marxism from the party programme in a second attempt in 1979. 'That was the move to social democracy. That was our Bad Godesberg', he said to the author.¹⁰⁷ In Spain, González had instigated and led the PSOE's embrace of social democracy at great personal and political risk.

Social democracy was a key aspect of the special bond between Brandt and González. It was not only a question of what social democracy stood for that shaped their friendship, but also what social democracy was not. Brandt did not buy into the narrative of communism, and neither did González. Unlike Mitterrand, who struck a deal with the French Communist Party (*Parti communiste français*; PCF) in 1972, and Tierno, who joined the communist-led Democratic Junta (*Junta Democrática*) in 1974, González wanted to keep the PSOE independent from the Spanish Communist Party (*Partido Comunista de España*; PCE).¹⁰⁸ In contrast, Tierno's decision to join the Junta did not go down well with Brandt's SPD. In a telegram to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the West German ambassador to Spain called Tierno the PCE's 'Trojan horse'.¹⁰⁹

A year later, in July 1975, the PSOE, along with a few regional parties and some left-wing Christian Democrats, agreed to set up a separate coalition, the Democratic Convergence Platform (*Plataforma de Convergencia Democrática*). González wanted nothing to do with the PCE.¹¹⁰ His decision not to join the PCE's Democratic Junta made him all the more agreeable to Brandt and the SPD.¹¹¹ As Michele Di Donato has pointed out recently, 'from its frontline position, the SPD made clear its outlook: détente did not change at all the ideological controversy between the two movements, and reaching

¹⁰² Joaquín Prieto and Enrique Tierno, 'Frente al capitalismo, la única alternativa es el marxismo', *El País*, 22 June 1979.

¹⁰³ Fundación Friedrich Ebert, Dossier 5: 'Abandono del marxismo en el PSOE', AFPI; Fundación Friedrich Ebert, Dossier 21: 'Tendencias y discusiones entre los dos congresos de 1979', AFPI.

¹⁰⁴ RTVE, '28 Congreso, Felipe González dimite y se convoca un Congreso Extraordinario', Informe Semanal [TV show], <http://www.rtve.es/alacarta/videos/informe-semanal/informe-semanal-1979-28-congreso-felipe-gonzalez-dimite-se-convoca-congreso-extraordinario/1311483/> (last visited 13 Aug. 2016). Felipe González in his speech at the 28th PSOE conference, 20 May 1979 in Chamorro, *Felipe González*, 337. 'Pero quiero deciros que con tener mucho peso las razones políticas que me podrían obligar a seguir ligado al puesto – a lo que algunos compañeros creen que es el leit motiv de la política, el sillón de secretario general –, aunque hay muchas razones políticas, esas razones políticas se cortan, se separan en este momento en mi conciencia, de las razones morales'.

¹⁰⁵ AAVV-162-33 Carta del PSOE-Agrupación de México a sus afiliados adjuntándoles la nueva ejecutiva del PSOE y las resoluciones adoptadas en el Congreso Extraordinario de septiembre de 1979, tituladas 'Dictamen de la ponencia ideológica', 'Modelo de Partido', 'Estrategia', AFPI.

¹⁰⁶ José Antonio Rodríguez, 'Bruno Kreisky: 'El marxismo ya no sirve'', *El País*, 26 July 1979. A wide range of Spanish newspapers, including the conservative *ABC* newspaper and *Mundo Obrero*, the Communist Party's official newspaper, reported Kreisky's statement. These cuttings are held in the VII. 1 Länderboxen Spanien, Sri Lanka, Südafrika, Sudan, BKF.

¹⁰⁷ Felipe González, interview with the author, 10 Apr. 2012.

¹⁰⁸ Message from Veronika Isenberg to Willy Brandt, 'Konferenz der Sozialistischen Parteien Südeuropas am 24./25.1.1976 in Paris' 11.4 SPD (Parteiführung) 1964–1987, 128, WBA, FES.

¹⁰⁹ Muñoz Sánchez, *El amigo alemán*, 181.

¹¹⁰ Message from Veronika Isenberg to Willy Brandt, 'Das Verhältnis der PSOE gegenüber den Kommunisten', 23 Jan. 1976, 11.4 SPD (Parteiführung) 1964–1987, 128, WBA, FES.

¹¹¹ Muñoz Sánchez, *El amigo alemán*, 183.

agreements with Eastern European governments did not mean softening the approach to communism'.¹¹² Brandt and González saw communism as a political adversary and thought social democracy should steer clear of it.

Brandt took a stand on Eurocommunism in his inaugural speech as president of the SI, delivered in Geneva in 1976. He stated that in addition to its previous opponents – Moscow, Beijing or even national communism – social democracy now must also keep a watchful eye on Eurocommunism.¹¹³ Earlier that year, in an interview with the German weekly magazine *Der Spiegel*, Brandt, when asked whether the SPD could ignore the communists, admitted that although the fundamental assessment remained unchanged, 'there are interesting developments in the communist world. We don't walk around the world with blinders and say there is nothing. There are really very interesting things'.¹¹⁴ On the subject of the Italian Communist Party (*Partito Comunista Italiano*; PCI), Rother contends that Brandt cautiously but insistently promoted 'like no other would have done' the rapprochement of the PCI to the SI, greatly facilitating the dissolution in 1991 of what was once the largest communist party in the West and its relaunch as the Democratic Party of the Left (*Partito Democratico della Sinistra*; PDS), which joined the SI and the Party of European Socialists.¹¹⁵ As Brandt had commented fifteen years earlier, 'it would be wrong if our behaviour contributed to the fact that the developments that loosened up the former monolithic bloc of communism came to a standstill again'.¹¹⁶

The historian Alan Granadino rightly points out that, after the refounding of the French PS at the Épinay conference in 1969, the Iberian Peninsula became a target of political influence for the PS and its line of democratic socialism, which Granadino defines mainly as self-management (*autogestion*) and unity of the left.¹¹⁷ As Christian Salm writes, 'the French PS worked for a left-wing union in Portugal in order not to hamper the French leftist unity with the PCF . . . Also in Spain, the French PS worked for a socialist–communist union in the form of a merger of the PCE and the PSOE'.¹¹⁸ Their research highlights that the French PS managed to influence the PSOE, at the expense of the social democracy espoused by the British Labour Party and the German SPD, especially in the first half of the 1970s.¹¹⁹

¹¹² Michele Di Donato, 'The Cold War and Socialist Identity: The Socialist International and the Italian "Communist Question" in the 1970s', *Contemporary European History*, 24, 5 (2015), 193–211. On Eurocommunism see also Silvio Pons, 'The Rise and Fall of Eurocommunism', in Melvin P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 45–65; Emanuele Treglia, 'El PCE y el movimiento comunista internacional (1969–1977)', *Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea*, 37 (2015), 225–55; José M. Faraldo, 'Entangled Eurocommunism: Santiago Carrillo, the Spanish Communist Party and the Eastern Bloc During the Spanish Transition to Democracy, 1968–1982', *Contemporary European History*, 26, 4 (2017), 647–68; Silvio Pons and Michele Di Donato, 'Reform Communism', in Juliane Fürst, Silvio Pons and Mark Selden, eds., *The Cambridge History of Communism*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 178–202; and Ioannis Balampanidis, *Eurocommunism: From the Communist to the Radical European Left* (London: Routledge, 2018).

¹¹³ Willy Brandt's inaugural speech as the new president of the Socialist International, 26 Nov. 1976, http://www.willy-brandt.de/fileadmin/brandt/Downloads/Rede_SI-Kongress_1976.pdf (last visited 24 July 2016).

¹¹⁴ Willy Brandt, "Da gibt es wirklich sehr Interessantes", *Der Spiegel*, 26 Jan. 1976, <https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-41330927.html> (last visited 13 June 2020).

¹¹⁵ Bernd Rother, "Era ora che ci vedessimo". Brandt et il Pci', *Contemporanea*, 14, 1 (2011), 81.

¹¹⁶ Brandt, "Da gibt es wirklich sehr Interessantes".

¹¹⁷ Alan Granadino, *El internacionalismo socialista en Europa del sur (1975–1976)*, Fundación Felipe González, Papeles, 7 (Apr. 2021); Alan Granadino, 'La evolución del PSOE en la Transición. Entre el socialismo del sur de Europa y la socialdemocracia europea', *Ayer*, cxvii (2020), 75–102; Alan Granadino, 'Between Rhetoric and Political Moderation: The Portuguese PS and its International Networks in the Carnation Revolution', *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften*, xxix (2018), 85–110; Alan Granadino, '¿Socialismo democrático o socialdemocracia? Escribir la historia de la península ibérica en un context europeo y global', *Cahiers de civilisation espagnole contemporaine*, xviii (2017) <https://doi.org/10.4000/ccec.6626>.

¹¹⁸ Christian Salm, 'Limbering up Sister Parties' Europeanization: Transnational Socialist Networks in the Portuguese and Spanish Transitions to Democracy and Accession to the European Community', *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma*, xxxii (2020), 59.

¹¹⁹ Alan Granadino, '¿Gestores del capitalismo o un modelo de socialismo a seguir? La imagen de la socialdemocracia alemana en el PSOE entre 1972 y 1977', *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma*, xxxii (2020), 75–101; Alan Granadino, *Democratic*

However, Mathieu Fulla's work shows the usefulness of unpacking the French PS into different, sometimes contradictory, actors: Mauroy, Mitterrand and the *Centre d'études, de recherches et d'éducation socialiste* (CERES), for instance, had different views and degrees of appreciation for self-management, ranging from scepticism in Mauroy's case to advocacy of its Marxist variety by CERES.¹²⁰ The current article uses a similar approach of not treating the PSOE as a monolithic entity or an umbrella term, but rather zooming in on its leader. Indeed, Tierno, after he joined the PSOE, and Pablo Castellanos, before he left the PSOE to establish *Izquierda Unida*, disagreed with González on important issues. Abdón Mateos, doyen of the history of the PSOE in the twentieth century, points out that in 1976 González showed less enthusiasm for the concept of self-management than many other senior PSOE members,¹²¹ and 'always rejected the possibility of a common programme of the [Spanish] Left'.¹²²

In a 1977 interview with *Zona Abierta*, a radical left-wing theoretical magazine, González was asked, 'How would you define the difference between social democracy and democratic socialism?', to which he replied, 'I would say that, above all, this difference is being abused . . . In the course of the conference of socialist parties of southern Europe I have insisted many times that if there is a political project, it is that of a united Europe . . . To draw a north-south dividing line, a supposed total division between social democracy and socialism, would be to strengthen a conservative alternative in the construction of Europe'.¹²³ Indeed, González had insisted on both these points in his speech at the inaugural session of the conference of Southern European socialist parties held in Paris in January 1976, just two months after Franco's death.¹²⁴

Brandt and González believed that communism should be opposed, but they continually engaged with communist countries in order to nudge them towards social democracy and collaborate towards a safer world. In his first visit to Spain, González bluntly told Shultz that he was not a friend of the communist system. He said that the PSOE's victory in the 1982 election had reduced the PCE to a mere shell of its former power – 'a mere symbolic role'.¹²⁵ Yet in his first meeting with President Ronald Reagan at the White House in 1983, González skilfully defended his engagement with Fidel Castro of Cuba, eliciting a chuckle from Reagan.¹²⁶ González also enjoyed the trust of Mikhail Gorbachev, who acknowledged that before the fall of the Berlin Wall he had been able to exchange opinions confidentially 'only with you, Mr Gonzalez – then, you already understood a lot, with several details of the West as well'.¹²⁷

'The complaint that has sometimes been raised that parties and institutions of the Federal Republic gave only moderated assistance to related groups on the Iberian Peninsula – that criticism has always

Socialism or Social Democracy? The Influence of the British Labour Party and the Parti Socialiste Français in the Ideological Transformation of the Partido Socialista Português and the Partido Socialista Obrero Español in the mid-1970s, PhD thesis, European University Institute, 2016.

¹²⁰ Mathieu Fulla, 'French Socialists, Capitalism and the State: A Unique Approach within West European Social Democracy?', in Mathieu Fulla and Marc Lazar, eds., *European Socialists and the State in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 255–82; Mathieu Fulla, 'Le parti, l'expert et les théories économiques. Le cas du Parti socialiste d'Épinay (1971–1981)', *Politix*, cvi (2019), 85–109.

¹²¹ Abdón Mateos, 'Mayo del 68 y la idea socialista autogestionaria en la España de los sesenta', in Abdón Mateos and Emanuele Treglia, eds., *Las convulsiones del 68. España y el Sur de Europa* (Madrid: UNED, 2019), 117–127.

¹²² Abdón Mateos, 'La transición del PSOE en perspectiva europea: "Eurosocialismo" y modelos de partido', in Abdón Mateos and Antonio Muñoz, eds., *Los socialistas y la consolidación de la democracia en España y Portugal* (Madrid: Fundación Pablo Iglesias, 2015).

¹²³ 'Felipe González: Entrevista', *Zona Abierta*, xii (1977), 29.

¹²⁴ 'La construcción de una Europa socialista y democrática. Intervención de Felipe González en la sesión inaugural de la Conferencia de los Partidos Socialistas del Sur de Europa', *El Socialista*, lviii (1976).

¹²⁵ Meeting transcripts, 'Interview Between President González and US Secretary of State, George Shultz', 15 Dec. 1983, FGA, 7.

¹²⁶ Felipe González, interview with the author, 10 Apr. 2012.

¹²⁷ Record of a conversation between M. S. Gorbachev and Felipe González in Madrid, 26 Oct. 1990, History and Public Policy Programme Digital Archive, translated for CWHIP by Daniel Rozas, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/118987> (last visited 18 Oct. 2014).

annoyed me', wrote Brandt. In particular, Antonio Muñoz Sánchez's research on the Ebert Stiftung and the PSOE demonstrates that the criticism was unfounded. The FES provided the PSOE with major 'financial, logistical and training support'.¹²⁸ The FES also helped the PSOE organise several workshops for party and union officials, including the PSOE's first summer school in El Escorial, which had a profound effect on public opinion in Spain, as it was the first time that González appeared on TV.¹²⁹ According to one FES report, from 1976 to 1981 the FES helped organise over 2,000 seminars.¹³⁰ This was an expensive enterprise. Mujal-León estimates that between 1975 and 1980, the FES spent over 1,600 million pesetas in Spain, which is approximately €9.5 million (£8 million) in today's currency.¹³¹

The FES trained PSOE officials and supported campaigns, helping the party to expand across Spain and gain ground on the PCE. In 1975, the PSOE and the UGT had only one full-time employee each, while the PCE had seventy full-time staff in Madrid alone.¹³² By the time democratic elections were held in June 1977, the SPD and the FES's support had helped the PSOE become the largest opposition party in parliament, and González become the left's undisputed leader. 'I am still proud to think that under my leadership, the SPD sent more than fine words to help Spanish democracy to its feet', wrote Brandt towards the end of his life.¹³³

In preparation for the November 1978 Socialist International conference in Vancouver, Brandt sent the draft of his presidential speech to González. 'I would be very grateful if you could look at it and let me know if you have any comments or remarks', he wrote.¹³⁴ At its executive bureau meeting held in Hamburg in February of that year, the SI had decided to start drafting a New Declaration of Principles to replace the one adopted at the Frankfurt congress in 1951. Brandt entrusted González with the critical task of chairing the New Declaration of Principles Working Group for the SI. The bureau accepted the PSOE's offer to set up a technical secretariat for the working group at PSOE headquarters and that the Spaniard Francisco López Real, an old supporter of González's with significant experience in Brussels, should be responsible for the technical coordination of the work.¹³⁵

González chaired the group for a decade, and a new SI Declaration of Principles, which is still in place, was adopted at the Stockholm conference in 1989. The end of the preamble, entitled 'Global Change and Future Prospects', read: 'Today the Socialist International combines its traditional struggle for freedom, justice and solidarity with a deep commitment to peace, the protection of the environment and the development of the South. All these issues require common answers. To this end, the Socialist International seeks the support of all those who share its values and commitment'.¹³⁶ The partnership reflected Brandt and González's commitment to promoting social democracy at the start of a new decade; it also showcased how González had brought new energy to the global social democratic project.

In January 1992, ten months before his death, Brandt wrote to González and offered him the presidency of the SI. 'I want you to know', he wrote, 'that if you want to do this job then you can be sure that you can count on great approval'.¹³⁷ González, who was still in office, turned down the offer.

¹²⁸ Muñoz Sánchez, 'The Friedrich Ebert Foundation', 143.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 150; *Socialismo es libertad. Escuela de verano del PSOE 1976* (Madrid: Edicusa, 1976).

¹³⁰ Fundación Friedrich Ebert, *30 años de la Fundación Ebert en España* (Madrid, 2006), 2.

¹³¹ Eusebio Mujal-León, *European Socialism and the Conflict in Central America* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 22 and 107; Muñoz Sánchez, *El amigo alemán*, 262.

¹³² Ibid., 234. The numbers are for April 1975.

¹³³ Brandt, *My Life in Politics*, 315.

¹³⁴ Willy Brandt to Felipe González, 5 Sept. 1978, Box 69 A-1 'Correspondencia internacional – Europa occidental', File 1, AFPI.

¹³⁵ 'Minutes of the meeting of the Bureau of the SI in Luxembourg 1979', 70-C-1 'Correspondencia Internacional Socialista. 1981', Box 2, file 2, AFPI.

¹³⁶ Declaration of Principles of the Socialist International adopted by the XVIII Congress, Stockholm, June 1989 <https://www.socialistinternational.org/congresses/xviii-stockholm/declaration-of-principles-of-the-socialist-international/>

¹³⁷ Letter from Brandt to González, 8 Jan. 1992, FGFA. 'Ich möchte gerne, daß Du weißt: wenn Du diese Aufgabe übernehmen willst, dann kannst Du sicher sein, daß Du mit großer Zustimmung rechnen kannst'.

He similarly declined Chancellor Helmut Kohl's later nomination to replace Jacques Delors as European Commission president.¹³⁸ Though Kohl and several other EU leaders continued to insist throughout Jacques Santer's term, González rejected their second nomination.¹³⁹ His refusal was neither personal¹⁴⁰ nor due to a lack of commitment to international socialism and a unified Europe; González wished to avoid further institutional responsibilities, yet 'without abandoning political tasks – quite the opposite'.¹⁴¹

In his public farewell to Brandt, González shared his own private farewell with Brandt:

A month ago, after the end of the congress of the Socialist International, which you were unable to chair, I called on you in Bonn. You asked me about various points to do with the congress and after I'd told you three times that everything had gone off well you said to me with a little laugh, 'it seems that everything goes on better without me'. From that moment, and in the knowledge that we would not meet again, you began to take your leave, and spoke of the many difficulties facing Europe and my country. You wished me the best of luck for the next few years and encouraged me to continue to work towards the ideals which we have shared.¹⁴²

This was a powerful reminder that their shared understanding of social democracy envisioned an expanding, evolving social democracy that would expand globally.

Internationalism

Brandt and González's international experience and global vocation also drew them together. Writing about his early youth, Brandt said that his 'journey of discovery of the world – intellectually and geographically – was too exciting . . .'¹⁴³ and that he 'was lucky enough to discover Europe' in his twenties.¹⁴⁴ He spent a decade and a half surrounded by other European socialist exiles in Scandinavia, which helped foster his 'growing interest in international affairs'.¹⁴⁵ Indeed, their regular discussions 'promoted a sense of fellowship among them and understanding of each other's views', notes B. Vivekanandan.¹⁴⁶ Brandt's later decision to return to Allied-occupied Berlin and a life in city politics committed him to involvement with international actors and events, such as the nearly year-long Soviet blockade of West Berlin, Soviet demands for the withdrawal of Western troops and the building of the Berlin Wall. Brandt's internationalism, therefore, was awakened, nourished and practised well before he became foreign minister and later chancellor of West Germany.

González also enjoyed intense international engagement prior to his first election victory in 1982.¹⁴⁷ He made numerous trips across Western Europe and to America, both North and South,

¹³⁸ 'Kohl aún mantiene la opción de González para suceder a Delors', *El País*, 4 July 1994; 'Kohl descarta a González como candidato a presidir la UE', *El País*, 6 July 1994; Lluís Bassets, 'Los Doce se resignan a que Santer suceda a Delors al frente de Europa', *El País*, 16 July 1994

¹³⁹ Anabel Díez, 'Kohl propuso a González que sustituya a Santer en la presidencia de la Comisión Europea', *El País*, 3 Mar. 1997; Xavier Vidal-Folch, 'El primer ministro portugués propone a González para la presidencia de la Comisión Europea', *El País*, 7 May 1998.

¹⁴⁰ Marina Pérez de Arcos, 'El amigo español: la caída del Muro y la construcción europea, treinta años después', *Letra Internacional* (2019), 27–30.

¹⁴¹ Felipe González, *En busca de respuestas: liderazgo en tiempos de crisis* (Barcelona: Debate, 2013). From the Prologue.

¹⁴² 'The Last Farewells', *Socialist Affairs*, 3 (1992), https://www.internacionalsocialista.org/fileadmin/uploads/si/Documents/Congresses/XIX_Berlin/Willy_Brandt_Socialist_Affairs.pdf (last visited 13 June 2020).

¹⁴³ Brandt, *My Life in Politics*, 89.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 463.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹⁴⁶ B. Vivekanandan, *Global Visions of Olof Palme, Bruno Kreisky and Willy Brandt*, 192.

¹⁴⁷ 'Socialist leaders, Bruno Kreisky Chancellor of Austria, Olof Palme of Sweden and Felipe Gonzalez of Spain, meet with President of Iran Abulhassan Banisadr and Iranian Foreign Minister Sadegh Ghotbzadeh in Tehran', Associated Press, 26 May 1980, Associated Press Archive, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JHt3XYxi1g> (last visited 11 Aug. 2016); 'Puntos cardinales. La mediación socialista', *Triunfo*, 28, 31 May 1980. For more on the worldviews and close friendship

many of which were staunchly supported by Brandt. In 1980 González, Kreisky and Palme, the latter two close friends of Brandt's from his Stockholm years, embarked on a three-member mission to Teheran to seek a solution to the Iran hostage crisis. Mitterrand wrote to Brandt to express his 'serious concerns' that the PS had been left out of the trip,¹⁴⁸ to which Brandt replied that the Iranian authorities had invited only González, Kreisky and Palme.¹⁴⁹ Kreisky had confided in a friend that González's performance in the difficult negotiations with the leader of Iran had been 'brilliant'; he foresaw a very bright future for González in the SI.¹⁵⁰ That same year, González met with Castro in Cuba on a stop-over to Panama, where he also met President Omar Torrijos, 'who saw me like a son',¹⁵¹ and discussed Reagan's recent election victory, the 1980 Uruguayan constitutional referendum and the Iran–Iraq war with them.¹⁵² As González reflected later, 'I had accumulated international experience . . . I learnt very quickly. I lived in the world. I had travelled a lot, had lots of contacts and had a very close relationship with lots of leaders from Latin America and Europe. Lots of them'.¹⁵³

Once in office in 1982, González quickly set up a strong international affairs team that worked directly out of his presidential residence, the Moncloa Palace, to lay down the general outlines of Spain's foreign policy and to assume a highly visible role in its conduct. Manuel Marín, then secretary of state for European affairs at the foreign ministry, notes that 'foreign policy was Felipe González's personal commitment, an absolutely earnest endeavour', because he liked international affairs.¹⁵⁴ The CIA described the International Department at the President's Office as akin to the National Safety Council of the White House.¹⁵⁵ Yet, in reality, González's organisational arrangements were modelled along the lines of Brandt's major reform of the chancellor's office a decade or so earlier,¹⁵⁶ which

between Kreisky, Palme and Brandt, see Vivekanandan, *Global Visions of Olof Palme, Bruno Kreisky and Willy Brandt* and Salm, *Transnational Socialist Networks*, 37–41.

¹⁴⁸ Nr. 46, Schreiben des Ersten Sekretärs des PSF, Mitterrand, an den Präsidenten der SI, Brandt 9. Juni 1980, AdsD,WBA, A 11.15, 7 (Übersetzung aus dem Französischen: Bernd Rother) in H. Grebing, G. Schöllgen and H. A. Winkler, eds., *Willy Brandt, Berliner Ausgabe*, vol. 8, *Über Europa hinaus Dritte Welt und Sozialistische Internationale* (Bonn: Dietz, 2006), 306–9.

¹⁴⁹ Nr. 49, Schreiben des Präsidenten der SI, Brandt, an den Ersten Sekretär des PSF, Mitterrand 26. Juni 1980, AdsD,WBA, A 11.15, 7 (Übersetzung aus dem Französischen: Bernd Rother) in Grebing, Schöllgen and Winkler, *Über Europa hinaus*, 312–14.

¹⁵⁰ Letter from Damián Barceló Obrador to Günter Pauli (n. d.), VII. 1 Länderboxen Spanien, Sri Lanka, Südafrika, Sudan, BKF, 75. See also material at the Swedish Labour Movement's Archive and Library (SLMAL) in Stockholm on their trip to Iran, especially boxes 676/2/6/33/15 'Presskonferens i Stockholm efter besök i Iran tillsammans med Kreisky och Gonzales' and 676/2/7/14/54 'Olof Palme efter resan till Teheran. Straffaktioner och våld mot Iran fördröjer bara en lösning av gisslanfrågan'.

¹⁵¹ González Márquez and Márquez Reviriego, *Un estilo ético*, 101. 'Torrijos, que me veía como su hijo, en una relación un poco paternofilial . . .'. In fact, González stood before a large crowd – including the then-president of Panama, Martín Torrijos (2004–9) – to give the keynote speech at the ceremony to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of Omar Torrijos' death. 'D. Felipe Gonzáles [sic] hablando en los 25 años de Omar Torrijos', Fundación Alternativa, Cocosito, 31 July 2006, Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWZUeo1ZIPY> and Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bAx4LrWs4xs> (last visited 7 Aug. 2016).

¹⁵² EFE, 'Felipe González se entrevista con Fidel Castro y Omar Torrijos', *El País*, 4 Dec. 1980.

¹⁵³ Felipe González, interview with the author, 10 Apr. 2012. 'En ese momento, lo que yo tenía era una acumulación de experiencia internacional . . . Yo tuve ese aprendizaje muy rápido. Vivía en el mundo. Había viajado mucho, tenía muchos contactos, una relación muy estrecha . . . con muchos líderes latinoamericanos, con muchos líderes europeos, con muchos'.

¹⁵⁴ Manuel Marín, interview with M^a Antonia Iglesias in M^a Antonia Iglesias, *La memoria recuperada. Lo que nunca han contado Felipe González y los dirigentes socialistas de sus años de gobierno* (Madrid: Aguilar, 2003), 920. 'El franquismo nos había impedido observar: el contexto internacional. Fue también un empeño personal de Felipe González, un empeño absolutamente descomunal – porque le gustaba . . .'.

¹⁵⁵ CIA Report, 'Spain: Socialist Foreign Policy. An Intelligence Assessment', Jan. 1983, Directorate of Intelligence, 3.

¹⁵⁶ Blanca Olías de Lima, 'Los gabinetes de los presidentes de gobierno en España', *Política y Sociedad*, 16 (1994), 264. The size of the chancellor's office increased exponentially under Brandt. It was divided into six divisions or *Abteilungen*, including one on foreign policy exclusively. See Ferdinand Müller-Rommel, 'Management of Politics in the German Chancellor's Office', in B. Guy Peters, R. A. W. Rhodes and Vincent Wright, eds., *Administering the Summit: Administration of the Core Executive in Developed Countries* (London: Palgrave, 2000). González's was also the largest

reflected his great interest in pursuing a self-assured and active role in the international affairs of West Germany.¹⁵⁷ Similarly, the CIA expected González to ‘assume a highly visible role’ in the conduct of Spain’s diplomacy, which turned out to be an accurate speculation.¹⁵⁸

The CIA’s January 1983 report added, ‘we expect Prime Minister Gonzalez to keep Spain in harness with the US and Western Europe. The harness, however, will sometimes be looser than Spain’s allies would like’. *New York Times* correspondent David Binder reported that Brandt had stated a similar position immediately after he took office in October 1969: ‘We will be a loyal ally but not a comfortable government. I will not be the Chancellor of a conquered Germany, but of a liberated Germany’.¹⁵⁹ Spain had an uneasy ‘bases-for-cash’ arrangement with the United States dating back to 1953, hosting four US bases on its national territory, one of them just twenty kilometres from Madrid.¹⁶⁰ Both González and Brandt took steps to reclaim Spanish and German sovereignty, respectively, and to effect change without calling into question the structural basis of the system, the kind of action that British political scientist Archie Brown calls ‘redefining leadership’.¹⁶¹

Despite intense pressure against it from the NATO allies,¹⁶² González delivered the 1982 PSOE manifesto promise to hold a referendum on Spain’s continued NATO membership.¹⁶³ Once Spain had been taken into NATO by a Union of the Democratic Centre (UCD) government, González believed it was in Spain’s best interest not to leave it, and therefore campaigned in favour of continued membership. To convey to the electorate that NATO was not an American organisation, but a European one and even a socialist one, there is evidence that González’s team asked Brandt to make a statement in favour of Spain remaining in NATO.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, Italian socialist Prime Minister Bettino Craxi, Soares (newly appointed president of Portugal) and Brandt all spoke in favour of González’s proposal to keep Spain in NATO.¹⁶⁵ In addition, as Marina Pérez de Arcos maintains, the referendum per se and the result gave the Spanish government leverage when it renegotiated the US–Spain bilateral treaty and rebalanced its relations with the United States, thus regaining Spanish sovereignty, as was also Brandt’s aim for Germany.¹⁶⁶

Indeed, Pérez de Arcos has shown that, contrary to the long-established narrative,¹⁶⁷ Spain’s continued NATO membership was not a precondition for Spain’s accession to the European Economic

increase and the model remains unaltered in many ways. See Paul Heywood and Ignacio Molina, ‘A Quasi-Presidential Premiership: Administering the Executive Summit in Spain’, in Peters, Rhodes and Wright, *Administering the Summit*, 126.

¹⁵⁷ Andreas Wilkens, ‘Westpolitik, Ostpolitik and the Project of the Economic and Monetary Union. Germany’s European Policy in the Brandt Era’, *Journal of European Integration History*, 5, 1 (1995), 73.

¹⁵⁸ CIA Report, ‘Spain: Socialist Foreign Policy: An Intelligence Assessment’, Jan. 1983, Directorate of Intelligence, 3.

¹⁵⁹ David Binder, *The Other German: Willy Brandt’s Life and Times* (Washington, DC: The New Republic Book Company, 1975), 256; Wilkens, ‘Westpolitik’, 73.

¹⁶⁰ Ángel Viñas, *En las garras del águila: Los pactos con Estados Unidos, de Francisco Franco a Felipe González (1945–1995)* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2003).

¹⁶¹ Archie Brown, *The Myth of the Strong Leader: Political Leadership in the Modern Age* (London: The Bodley Head, 2014), 101.

¹⁶² CIA memo from George Kolt to deputy director of Central Intelligence, ‘Suggested discussion item for meeting with DepSecState on Spanish-NATO referendum’, 2 Oct. 1985, General CIA Record; Felipe González, interview with the author, 10 Apr. 2012; Inocencio Arias, *Los presidentes y la diplomacia: me acosté con Suárez y me levanté con Zapatero* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 2012), 173. See also, Marina Pérez de Arcos, ‘“Millions of Europeans Have Their Eyes on Spain Right Now”: How “Remain” Won the 1986 NATO Referendum’, working paper.

¹⁶³ PSOE 1982 election manifesto, <http://www.psoe.es/media-content/2015/03/Programa-Electoral-Generales-1982.pdf> (last accessed 11 June 2021).

¹⁶⁴ From Klaus Lindenberg to Willy Brandt, ‘Pro-NATO-Kampagne Felipe Gonzalez, 04.03.1986’, A 3 Publizistische Tätigkeit Willy Brandts 21.02.1986 – 24.03.1986, 1010, WBA, FES.

¹⁶⁵ George Bush: ‘Salir de la OTAN no es lo mejor para los pueblos libres’, *El País*, 10 Mar. 1986; ‘Iglesias culpa de “injerencia” a tres líderes europeos’, *El País*, 11 Mar. 1986.

¹⁶⁶ Marina Pérez de Arcos, *Redefining Leadership in International Relations: Spain, the European Community, and NATO (1982–1986)*, DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2017, 312–14.

¹⁶⁷ Pilar Sánchez Millas, *La Europa soñada, la Europa creada. Idea y acción del PSOE en la CEE (1982–1992)*, PhD thesis, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2016, 113; Michael P. Marks, ‘Coming into Europe: The U.S.–Spanish Relationship

Community (EEC).¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, although González was not in favour of the UCD government's decision to join NATO in 1981–2, he was also not anti-NATO before he came into office in December 1982 and therefore did not perform the alleged U-turn from anti-NATO to pro-NATO once he was in government, as is widely held in the literature. For instance, preparatory notes for González's meeting with US President Jimmy Carter in June 1980 reveal that he planned to clarify his position to Carter: 'PSOE action in foreign policy pursues autonomy for Spain, in line with our Western, democratic and pluralistic character. Being against Spain's entry into NATO is neither anti-NATO nor anti-US'.¹⁶⁹ González also maintained his position in public, as captured in an article in *El País* newspaper just days after meeting Carter in Madrid¹⁷⁰ and again the following year in the official debate on accession to NATO held in the Spanish parliament.¹⁷¹

As mentioned earlier, Brandt recognised that the true satisfaction of his life was to have contributed to the association of Germany with peace and European freedom, a sort of readjustment of German identity and a reconciliation with Germany's recent past. González made a similar acknowledgement in his most recent book: 'When I meditate on those years . . . I realize that, of all things, the most satisfying thing for me is that, at the end of the eighties, we Spaniards could finally feel reasonably well in our own skin'.¹⁷² He notes that a Spanish miner who had emigrated to Belgium – the type of person he met as a student in Belgium during the 1960s – said that "at long last we could move around our continent with a kind of citizenship right that is comparable to any other". We were once again proud to be Spanish'.¹⁷³ Both Brandt and González shared a deep commitment to helping their respective countries overcome their international pariah status and foster a renewed national and European identity.

'German citizen to the core, European citizen by conviction and world citizen by vocation' is how González described Brandt at his state funeral. Brandt proved himself a dedicated Europeanist committed to further enlargement and integration. According to historian Daniel Möckli, the *rélançe européenne* of the late 1960s, which was initiated at the Hague summit, included Brandt's active support for the establishment of European Political Cooperation (EPC), European Monetary Unity (EMU), the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and Britain's accession to the EEC after two French vetoes.¹⁷⁴ Brandt later became a Member of the European Parliament at the first direct European parliamentary elections held in 1979. In turn, González played a key role in Spain's difficult EEC accession negotiations by setting up a bilateral strategy that mainly targeted Paris and Bonn to overcome years of virtual standstill.¹⁷⁵ Once in the EEC, González introduced the concept of

since 1980', in Sabrina P. Ramet and Christine Ingebritsen, eds., *Coming in from the Cold War: Changes in U.S.–European Interactions since 1980* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 132; Lorena Ruano, *Institutions, the Common Agricultural Policy, and the European Community's Enlargement to Spain, 1977–1986* (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2001), 141; Paul Heywood, *The Government and Politics of Spain* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), 263.

¹⁶⁸ Pérez de Arcos, *Spain, the European Community, and NATO*, 197–200.

¹⁶⁹ 'Esquemático recordatorio de Temas para el contacto Carter-Felipe', n.d., ACEF 307-A-1, Secretaría General, Correspondencia, entrevistas, y otros documentos de Nortemérica. Junio 1980–noviembre 1982, AFPI.

¹⁷⁰ Felipe González, 'Felipe González: "España debe ser observador permanente en el grupo de países no alineados"', *El País*, 29 June 1980.

¹⁷¹ Felipe González, Record of Proceedings (*Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados*), n. 192, 28 Oct. 1981, 11402.

¹⁷² González, *En busca de respuestas*. 'Cuando medito sobre . . . aquellos años . . . me doy cuenta de que, de todo, lo más satisfactorio para mí es que, a finales de los ochenta, los españoles nos pudimos sentir por fin razonablemente bien en nuestra propia piel'.

¹⁷³ González, *En busca de respuestas*. 'Por fin podíamos circular por nuestro continente con una especie de derecho de ciudadanía homologable a cualquier otro. Nos sentíamos de nuevo orgullosos de ser españoles'.

¹⁷⁴ Daniel Möckli, *European Foreign Policy During the Cold War: Heath, Brandt, Pompidou and the Dream of Political Unity* (London: Tauris, 2008); Claudia Hiepel, *Willy Brandt et Georges Pompidou. La politique européenne de la France et de l'Allemagne entre crise et renouveau* (Paris: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2016); Wilfried Loth, 'Détente and European Integration in the Policies of Willy Brandt and Georges Pompidou', in Piers Ludlow, ed., *European Integration and the Cold War: Ostpolitik–Westpolitik, 1965–1973* (London: Routledge, 2007), 53–66; Andreas Wilkens, 'New Ostpolitik and European Integration: Concepts and Policies in the Brandt Era', in Ludlow, *European Integration*, 67–80.

¹⁷⁵ Pérez de Arcos, *Spain, the European Community, and NATO*.

European Union (EU) citizenship and the notion of social and economic cohesion in the Maastricht Treaty – signed just months before Brandt’s death – which paved the way for the creation of a single European currency, the euro. Ten years after he left office, González presided over a committee of EU ‘wise men’ to examine the EU’s role until 2030.¹⁷⁶

As president of the SI for sixteen years, Brandt’s leadership and his personal and political connections proved to be ‘a key asset in allowing the European social democracy movement to create an extensive network of political leaders and organizations that spread around the world, particularly to Latin America’.¹⁷⁷ The SI stopped its eurocentrism under Brandt.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, ‘in more than one country we [the SI] were able to contribute to the replacement of military dictatorships by democratically legitimated governments . . . where dictatorships prevailed, however, we could at least offer help and protection to persecuted democrats’.¹⁷⁹ González’s international solidarity similarly extended beyond Europe. In 2014, president of Colombia and later Nobel Peace Laureate Juan Manuel Santos described González, on his conferral of Colombian citizenship, ‘as a “key figure” because there is no president in the last decades who can say that in moments of anguish or doubt he did not have him “to give his advice, to help, to contribute in an effective, selfless way, with love for Colombia”’.¹⁸⁰

For his part, Brandt chaired the World Bank’s Independent Commission on International Development Issues that made recommendations to help improve North–South relations. ‘It was well worth the trouble, and not just because meeting people from other parts of the world and learning about their ways of thinking and reacting was a great gain. The experience helped me to understand the great social question of the late twentieth century [global inequality]’.¹⁸¹ As González observed in his eulogy of Brandt, ‘he continuously demonstrated what has always been a mark of democratic socialism: internationalism [and] international solidarity’, which may be said of González as well.¹⁸²

Conclusions

The many drafts of his eulogy of Brandt show that González considered quoting an elegy by the Spanish poet Miguel Hernández and dedicated to his mentor, knowing that Hernández ‘was not unfamiliar’ to Brandt. Thus, González’s original choice of eulogy material harks back to Kellerman’s work on Brandt’s own mentors. González quoted the first line of the poem, ‘In Orihuela, his town and mine, death has taken from me as if struck by lightning Ramon Sijé, with whom I shared so much love’. The poem ends with ‘we’ve so many things to speak of, friend, friend of my soul’.¹⁸³ In the end, González decided to quote instead from a different Spanish poet, possibly his favourite, Antonio Machado, and described Brandt’s traits rather than the friendship the two shared: ‘and in the good sense of the word, he was good’.¹⁸⁴ In any case, González referred to Brandt six times as ‘friend’ and finished the speech with ‘Adiós, amigo Willy’.

Brandt’s third wife, Brigitte, and Lars Brandt, the second of his children from his second wife, both thanked and commended González for his speech, which they recognised as ‘based on warmth and

¹⁷⁶ Reflection Group on the Future of the EU 2030, *Project Europe 2030: Challenges and Opportunities* <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/30776/qc3210249enc.pdf> (last visited 10 June 2021). See also Felipe González, *Vive de Europa* (Barcelona: RBA, 2010).

¹⁷⁷ Fernando Pedrosa, ‘“Elastic Cooperation”: Willy Brandt and the Socialist International in Latin America (1976–1992)’, in Rother and Larres, *Willy Brandt and International Relations*, 163–78.

¹⁷⁸ Willy Brandt to vice-presidents of the Socialist International, 10 Jan. 1980, MSFA.

¹⁷⁹ Brandt, *My Life in Politics*, 407.

¹⁸⁰ ‘Felipe González se convierte en ciudadano colombiano’, *ABC*, 3 Dec. 2014, <https://www.abc.es/internacional/20141203/abci-felipe-gonzalez-nacionalidad-colombiana-201412030306.html> (last visited 13 June 2020).

¹⁸¹ Brandt, *My Life in Politics*, 340.

¹⁸² González, eulogy at the Reichstag, FGFA. ‘Dio pruebas constantemente de lo que ha sido siempre una característica del socialismo democrático: el internacionalismo, la solidaridad internacional’.

¹⁸³ ‘En Orihuela, su pueblo y el mío, se nos ha muerto como del rayo Ramón Sijé, con quien tanto quería’.

¹⁸⁴ González, eulogy at the Reichstag, FGFA.

knowledge'.¹⁸⁵ Brigitte remembered 'Willy smiling in [her] mind' and saying about González, 'Now you all understand what I found again and again in him'. She wrote that Brandt had spoken often about González during his last, difficult months, reminiscing about 1975 and some later encounters, and that he had been 'incredibly moved' by these recollections.¹⁸⁶ Interestingly, Harold Mock notes that Brandt's 'failure to cultivate a natural successor among the party's moderate base left him no natural heir'.¹⁸⁷ Perhaps as a result of Brandt's international experience and internationalist vocation, as well as his aim to expand the chronology and geography of his social-democratic project, Brandt did not find his spiritual heir within Germany's borders, but outside them.

Brandt's funeral was the first state funeral of a former chancellor to take place in Berlin since 1929, and the first time since then that the Reichstag – until recently located in the eastern part of a divided Berlin – was used for a state memorial service. González was the only non-German to give a speech at the event, and he was also the only speaker to do so in a language other than German – a poignant symbol of how Brandt's life had touched many beyond Germany's borders. To mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of Brandt's death in 2017, González was again asked to deliver a speech, this time at the SPD headquarters (named after Brandt) in Berlin-Kreuzberg. Once more, he was the only non-German to speak at the commemoration. 'We still need Willy's ideas today', said González. 'Europe is suffering again from a "virus of destruction" – nationalism'.¹⁸⁸

By focusing on the Brandt–González bond, this article extends Kellerman's 1978 study on Brandt's relationship with his own mentors and fills some of the gaps in the many published biographies of Brandt.¹⁸⁹ It has sought to shed light on what occurred between their first meaningful meeting in 1974 and Brandt's death in 1992. It also contributes to recent studies on the reception of the Bad Godesberg programme by other European socialist parties, such as Karim Fertikh's work on the French PS.¹⁹⁰ The paper also provides much-needed content to explain the oft-quoted catchphrase that Brandt and González shared a 'father-and-son' relationship.

In addition, it provides new biographical and political information about Brandt and González, which can be valuable for studies on political mentorship, particularly transnational mentorship, international leadership and transnational networks, as well as for the broader study of Spanish–German relations, democratisation, the European left and the Socialist International in the late and early post-Cold War period. Indeed, the article contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how personal guidance, assistance and exchange, linked with institutional support, contributed to the expansion of democracy and social democracy in Spain, and to these projects beyond the Iberian Peninsula, offering new insights into the international affiliations and global outlook of the president of Spain.

The need for this research is perhaps best exemplified by the fact that not even a recently published multinational history of German reunification includes a discussion of why González was the only

¹⁸⁵ Letter from Lars Brandt to Felipe González, 22 Oct. 1992, FGFA.

¹⁸⁶ Letter from Brigitte Brandt to Felipe González, 21 Oct. 1992, FGFA.

¹⁸⁷ Mock, 'A Post-National Europe', 99.

¹⁸⁸ 'SPD erinnert zum 25. Todestag an Willy Brandt', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 8 Oct. 2017, <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/parteien-spd-erinnert-zum-25-todestag-an-willy-brandt-dpa.urn-newsml-dpa-com-20090101-171007-99-360053> (last visited 13 June 2020).

¹⁸⁹ Interestingly, Harold Mock notes that Brandt's 'failure to cultivate a natural successor among the party's moderate base left him no natural heir'. Indeed, the relationship between Brandt and his successor as chancellor between 1974 and 1982, Helmut Schmidt, was a complicated and difficult one. Their socialisation, political style and political understanding differed significantly, as chief correspondent of *Die Zeit* Günter Hoffmann and historians such as Kristina Spohr and Mathias Haeussler have suggested in their work.

¹⁹⁰ Karim Fertikh, 'The Godesberg Programme and its Aftermath: A Socio-Histoire of an Ideological Transformation in European Social Democracies', *Austrian Journal of Historical Studies*, 29, 1 (2018), 14–41. See especially 29–34 on the reception of Bad Godesberg by the PS. For a new and more in-depth analysis of the genesis of the Godesberg programme, see Karim Fertikh, *L'invention de la social-démocratie allemande. Une histoire sociale du programme de Bad Godesberg* (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2020).

both EEC and NATO leader to support German reunification at the Strasbourg European Council meeting held on 8 December 1989, less than a month after the Berlin Wall had come down.¹⁹¹ Moreover, Kohl admits that González was the only European leader to stand firmly on ‘our side’ from the very outset of the reunification process,¹⁹² and that he was immensely grateful for González’s support,¹⁹³ as was Brandt.¹⁹⁴ Just hours after the opening of the Berlin Wall, González wrote to Brandt telling him that ‘we are very happy and excited’ and that they ‘can count on us to shape a European opinion’ and ‘to search for consensus in the EEC and the Atlantic Alliance’. The newly unveiled dispatch and archival proof of early Spanish support concluded that ‘this is, broadly speaking, the message he conveyed to Kohl’.¹⁹⁵ González’s own friendship with Kohl (which is only now starting to garner academic attention),¹⁹⁶ national interests and European integration may also explain Spain’s support. González’s bond with Brandt, who was Berlin’s mayor at the time of the building of the Wall, however, is also deeply significant here. González’s poignant understanding of divided Germany’s plight would not have been as profound if not for his formative, intense relationship with Brandt.

A scholarly biography of González is yet to be written. Some recent multinational, archival research has been done to offer a basis for González to be written into the histories of German reunification or European integration. As a case in point, Gorbachev expert Brown and several of Gorbachev’s closest aides have insisted that González was Gorbachev’s ‘favourite foreign leader’.¹⁹⁷ In fact, Brown’s most recent book notes that ‘Gorbachev’s preference was for like-minded leaders who would move towards a social democratic variant of socialism. His problem was that they were more readily identifiable in Western than in Eastern Europe – in the persons, most notably, of former German Chancellor Willy Brandt and Spanish Socialist Prime Minister Felipe González, with both of whom Gorbachev had established a real friendship’.¹⁹⁸ Just as we have explored the ‘father-and-son’ relationship between Brandt and González, we still need to know more about the special bond between Gorbachev and González and the political implications of that connection. Also in this vein, an archival study focused on the relationship between the two Iberian socialist leaders, Soares and González, especially in the lead-up to the fiftieth anniversary of the Carnation Revolution and Franco’s death, is still needed to complement the important party-focused and comparative works on Southern European political transitions to democracy published to date.¹⁹⁹

The three political-intellectual pillars that sustained Brandt and González’s relationship – democracy, social democracy and internationalism – were interconnected. Indeed, to a great extent, the stages of political development followed in both post-war Germany and post-Franco Spain were similar. These pillars were also evolving constantly, for Brandt and González shared a common purpose: to

¹⁹¹ Frédéric Bozo, Andreas Rödter and Mary Elise Sarotte, eds., *German Reunification: A Multinational History* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016); Pierre Favier and Michel Martin-Roland, *La décennie Mitterrand*, tome 3. *Les défis, 1988–1991* (Paris: Éd. du Seuil, 1996), 207.

¹⁹² Helmut Kohl, *Vom Mauerfall zur Wiedervereinigung. Meine Erinnerungen* (Munich: Knaur-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 2009), 21.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 407.

¹⁹⁴ Klaus Lindenberg to Elena Flores, 13 Nov. 1989, Box 310-C 88, AFPI.

¹⁹⁵ Felipe González to Willy Brandt, 10 Nov. 1989, Box 310-C 88, AFPI.

¹⁹⁶ José Ignacio Torreblanca, “Con los dedos de una mano”. Felipe González y Helmut Kohl: una relación especial’, *Fundación Felipe González, Papeles*, 5 (Nov. 2020); see also Pérez de Arcos, ‘El amigo español’.

¹⁹⁷ Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 116; Brown, *The Myth of the Strong Leader*, 407 (n. 69); Pavel Palazhchenko, *My Years with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze: The Memoir of a Soviet Interpreter* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 340.

¹⁹⁸ Archie Brown, *The Human Factor: Gorbachev, Reagan, Thatcher and the End of the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 275.

¹⁹⁹ António Costa Pinto, ed., *A Sombra das ditaduras. A Europa do Sul em comparação* (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2013); Maria Elena Cavallaro and Kostis Kornetis, eds., *Rethinking Democratisation in Spain, Greece and Portugal* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan/St Antony’s Series, 2019). The Mário Soares Foundation and the author of the article have begun work on a collaborative project on the topic.

project their political-intellectual ideas through time and space, into the future and towards new horizons. This was complemented and sustained by their affective rapport. To quote González, 'I shared more than a political relationship with Willy Brandt, I shared with him more than ideas and projects. I shared friendship, I would even say I shared with him a similar perception of the world and the reality around us'.²⁰⁰ In this light, Mauroy's description of González as Brandt's *fiels spirituel* gains even greater significance. González's prominence at Brandt's state funeral and the Brandt Foundation's permanent exhibition on his life thus simply reflected their profound political friendship and strong 'father-son' bond.

Acknowledgements. The completion of the article and final archival research trips were facilitated by the Federal German Chancellor Willy Brandt Foundation's 2021 Research Award. My warm thanks to the Ruhenstroth-Bauer family (Max, Peter and Cornelia) for their kind hospitality in Bonn, and Dietmar Post and Lucía Palacios for their generosity in Berlin. My thanks also to Professor Birgit Aschmann and Dr Anna Catharina Hofmann at the Department of History at Humboldt Universität, where I enjoyed a research fellowship over a summer. I am grateful to Professors Paul Betts and Nick Stargardt for their stimulating questions at the Oxford Modern History Seminar, Magdalen College, Oxford, and Peter Barnes and Professors Anne Deighton and Barbara Kellerman for their insightful comments on an earlier draft of the article. I also thank Professor Piers Ludlow for his support of the project and the editors and the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback. The article is dedicated to the memory of Hans Steinböck (1927–2021).

²⁰⁰ Felipe González, 'Willy Brandt by Felipe González', 13 Dec. 2013, <https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/channel/willy-brandt-felipe-gonzalez> (last visited 13 June 2020). 'Compartí con Willy Brandt algo más que una relación política, que las ideas y los proyectos. Compartí amistad, incluso diría que una percepción parecida del mundo y de la realidad que nos rodeaba'.

Cite this article: Pérez de Arcos M (2022). 'Like Father, Like Son': Willy Brandt and Felipe González: Democracy, Social Democracy and Internationalism in Motion in the Late Cold War. *Contemporary European History* 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777321000795>