

# Letter from Guy Debord to Miguel Amorós

## 13 August 1981<sup>1</sup>

Dear comrade:

I have received your letter of 23 and 27 July, and I have taken note of all the precious information that they contain. I am happy to learn that Guillermo [González García] is safe and sound. I have thus written him a note, at the same address. I didn't believe that such a man could change in the way that people have told me he has changed (but, naturally, on the tactical plane, I myself counseled him when I saw him to have the greatest prudence, which imposed itself several days later, after the new conditions manifested by the fall of Suárez).<sup>2</sup> To me, this comrade from Valladolid appears honest and frank. Thus I believe that his pessimism in this case was inspired by his entourage, either in Madrid (due to the people there who might perhaps be fanatics of armed struggle in all circumstances and always taken up by everyone, even by those who are already too well-known, which would imply that one has judged the current situation to be of the "Salvadorian" type, which is hardly credible, since this comrade had reasonably judged that he himself needed to leave Spain) or, more probably, in Geneva (due to certain Spanish individuals there who are hostile to us for diverse reasons).

I hope that you are completely right when you estimate that in Spain the police and the special services currently have too much to do, while confronting the three tendencies that, in this burning struggle, seek to exclusively dominate the State and that you have described to me – such descriptions would be very welcome, it seems to me, in the text that you are preparing – , so that they do not at this moment have the time to keep an eye on their old enemies. But they will never forget them. You yourself have emphasized the modernization ("*en la electrónica policial*"<sup>3</sup>) of the repression. This is no doubt far from the avant-gardism tested out by the English in Ulster, but already the police in Spain are no longer what they were under Franco. For many years, I have also been, in Italy and in France, the object of a surveillance that has been, at certain times, very visible and clumsy – which obliges me to keep certain doubts when considering other times – , thus causing complications which must be kept in mind during certain trips and meetings, and in many cases it would be quite accurate to modestly estimate that the enemy has much more urgent tasks that require the use of its talents. But the peasants in the country say that, where the lightning has already struck several times, one can expect that it will strike again, one day or another. While I have sent "A los libertarios"<sup>4</sup> to several comrades in Europe, who have sometimes sent new printings back to me without knowing that this tract

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<sup>1</sup> Published in *Guy Debord Correspondance, Vol 6: Janvier 1979 - Décembre 1987* (Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2006). Translated by Bill Brown and uploaded to the NOT BORED! website (notbored.org) in 2007. Footnotes the translator, except where noted.

<sup>2</sup> Spanish Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez resigned in January 1981.

<sup>3</sup> Note by Alice Debord: electronic surveillance.

<sup>4</sup> Dated 1 September 1980, attributed to The International Friends and eventually signed by 25,000 people, "To libertarians" called for efforts to free libertarians who were imprisoned in Spanish jails. Published by Editions Champ Libre (November 1980), as part of the volume *Appels de la prison de Ségovie* (Appeals from the prison in Segovia), which was attributed to the "Coordinated autonomous groups of Spain."

originally came from me, there are already rumors in England, Germany, Italy and France that it could only have been written by me, and some [police agents] have looked here and there to obtain confirmation, which honors their sense of style or the good functioning of their computers.

With respect to the struggle between the three tendencies aiming for State power in Spain, I will make only a single observation, seen from the outside. The States of Western Europe, and also no doubt the United States to the limited extent to which it keeps in mind the utility of making an illusory “democratic perspective” alluring to the greatest number of countries in Latin American, have a great interest in making the success of democracy in Spain believed, even kept in a state of “artificial survival” by the crudest spectacular lies. These countries certainly have many means of applying pressure and encouragement. This all works against the Tejero line,<sup>5</sup> insofar as it is a “final solution.” But, on the other hand, all forms that power can take in Spain will find themselves confronted with problems as insolvable as those in Poland and Italy, to cite only two examples; which in current Spain, more easily than elsewhere, works in favor of open dictatorship, which has above all the subjective pleasures of clearly identifying itself and repressing dissent without any restrictions. By while waiting for a semi-hidden showdown to make a choice between the three tendencies, everything is done – notably in “Socialist” France – to support the King<sup>6</sup> and Felipe.<sup>7</sup> Any revelation, even a moderate one, of the obviousness of what is taking place is denounced as irresponsible aid to the “terrorists,” which would therefore amount to acting against the preservation of the cadaver of democracy by exhausting the military “opposition,” which the French Minister of Foreign Affairs has described as “comprehensible” (you know that this word does not only mean, as in mathematical expositions, that something can be intellectually apprehended, but also means “to partially approve,” “not reproachable,” and, in the language of diplomacy, this is the equivalent of almost complete approval, but with several slight temporal reservations).

The principal unanswered question still seems to be this one: knowing that the Basques will not give up, and that Andalusia appears to me to be a powder keg, is it not possible that the urban workers in Madrid and Barcelona, the politico-unionist containment of whom is so weak, see what is happening and find themselves justifiably angry, once again begin wildcat strikes? The defeat of 1977 resulted from yielding to the perspective of the “democratic transition.” The defeat of this year could consist in yielding to the perspective of a neo-dictatorial transition. This would certainly be the pure opposite of 1936; but it would not resemble the conduct of the German proletariat in 1933, when it followed powerful and, unfortunately, still-respected organizations. As you do, I estimate that, since January, the enemy has all the initiative and that, in such a period, the passage of time works against us. To cite your chapter on Clausewitz: “In brief, even on the defensive, one can only win big with a big bet.” And assuredly our forces are much more limited than those of the King of Prussia at the end of the Seven Years War.

I conclude that, if the current period continues without being overturned by the intervention of a powerful proletarian movement, the prisoners of Segovia are truly condemned. Last year, I counted on a certain offensive, or even only *the threat of an offensive* from a side

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<sup>5</sup> On 23 February 1981, Lieutenant-Colonel Antonio Tejero led a failed attempt to stage a coup against the government of Spain led by President Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo.

<sup>6</sup> Juan Carlos I.

<sup>7</sup> Note by Alice Debord: Felipe González, Socialist leader.

that had remained relatively calm, to make Suárez hesitate on this question. Today, the enemy is in a much different position.

I have transmitted your critique – except for the first paragraph of the letter – to the Dutch. Although it was also sent to people in Spain, this text appears to me especially well suited to be an appeal for international solidarity. Even on this terrain, it is no doubt always dangerous to fall into a certain optimistic lack of precision. You know to what extent information and a minimum of concerted action has failed – it is here that one finds the greatest damage caused by the abominable Arthur [Marchadier], with the result that, in different countries, each person has recently started to act on this question a little at random and almost uniquely on the basis of the first publications.

I hope that, with Guillermo, you will find a terrain of practical agreement on what can currently be done. I have never believed that the “international solidarity” expressed here and there in Europe could have a real efficacy where the Segovia affair is concerned (but without, however, denying other aspects of its utility). It seems to me that it will be necessary to act even in Spain itself. Several foreigners are, no doubt, completely disposed to travel there so as to provide their help: but one of the first ones [Arthur Marchadier] was not truly good and all this might come a little too late.

I am not at all sure, after all that we have seen, that, in the sum total of their actions, the good have had the upper hand over the bad. I hope that, as a whole, the Spanish comrades will finally judge that, if these foreigners have not been successful, at least they tried.

Fraternally,  
Guy