
OTHER NATIONS

they speculate that, thanks to improvements in health care spurred by the shock of the early 1970s' statistics, the rising rates in European Russia have leveled off, and perhaps reversed. At the very least, they write, the Soviet Union during the 1970s suffered nothing like the "epidemic of infant deaths depicted in . . . the Western popular press."

Iberia's Fragile Democracies

"The Emergence of Democracy in Spain and Portugal" by Kenneth Maxwell, in *Orbis* (Spring 1983), Foreign Policy Research Institute, 3508 Market St., Suite 350, Philadelphia, Pa. 19104.

During the 1970s, decades-old dictatorships in Spain and Portugal gave way to democracy. But it is too early to cheer, warns Maxwell, a Columbia University historian. Both governments are fragile, and the full integration of the countries into the rest of Western Europe has yet to occur.

The two countries entered the 1970s under regimes linked philosophically to fascism. This unsavory legacy had long troubled the Western democracies, despite Portugal's role as a founding member of NATO and growing trade between the two and Europe during the 1960s.

Portugal's refusal to free her African colonies also drew criticism from the West. Finally, frustration over prolonged wars in Mozambique and Angola radicalized much of the Portuguese army; and in 1974, junior officers toppled strongman Marcello Caetano. The new regime moved rapidly leftward until national elections in 1976 temporarily put a middle-of-the-road coalition in power.

Spain's transition was more systematic. After Generalissimo Francisco Franco's death in 1975, his hand-picked successor, King Don Juan Carlos, guided his countrymen toward parliamentary elections in 1977. Carlos deftly used his prestige to stave off an attempted army coup in 1981, but oldline army generals remain a threat.

In both countries, Left and Right now seem to be gaining at the expense of the moderate center. Portugal's left-wing army officers are still active, drawing support from poor southern peasants, and the industrialized north remains a bastion of conservatism. Lisbon has seen 15 governments in the last nine years. In Spain's 1982 elections, the once-dominant Union of the Democratic Center lost ground to both the winning Socialist Workers' Party and the right-wing Popular Alliance.

Maxwell sees more trouble ahead. Lisbon is negotiating a new financial bail-out agreement with the International Monetary Fund, which will entail unpopular cuts in social programs. Spain's new Socialist Premier, Felipe Gonzalez, plans to cut military manpower from 300,000 to 160,000 and to reduce the officer corps by one-quarter. Politically, both are "tricky and potentially dangerous moves," warns Maxwell.

Stronger ties with the West could strengthen the Iberian democracies. But it may be premature to discard the snide dictum of 19th-century French diplomat Talleyrand: "*Europe begins at the Pyrenees.*"