

THE MEDIA



SEVEN RADIO STATIONS –ONE OF THEM ANDORRAN–, SIX TELEVISION CHANNELS –ALL OF THEM FOREIGN–, THREE ANDORRAN WEEKLIES AND ONE DAILY AND ALL THE FRENCH, SPANISH AND CATALAN DAILY AND WEEKLY PRESS –THIS IS THE RANGE OF MEDIA AVAILABLE TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF ANDORRA.

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All the surveys show that people in Andorra read very little in general, and even less when it comes to genuinely local press. We must not forget that 60 % of the country's population is foreign and therefore hardly motivated by Andorra's political situation. Another factor that has a negative effect on the low level of reading is the relatively short time set aside for leisure; shops are open on Sundays and holidays and only close their doors for Christmas, New Year's Day and the national holiday, the day of the Virgin of Meritxell.

Nevertheless, three weeklies and one daily provide up-to-date information on the country's political, social and sporting life. Since the beginning of this year, this offer has been completed with "Ràdio Andorra", the national radio station broadcasting on the FM band and nothing to do with the mythical "Ràdio Andorra" that did so much to publicize our country abroad.

The arrival on the streets of the first number of the *Diari d'Andorra* last May meant the rebirth of Andorra's own daily press, which already had a forerunner in the newspaper *Poble Andorrà*, first published in December 1974. The adventure lasted a little over two years before the paper became a weekly which, along with *Informacions* and *Correu Andorrà*, forms the triumvirate of Andorra's weekly press. But we have to go back to 1919 to find the first Andorran-produced publication, which, with the title *Valls d'Andorra* and a price of 10 cents, informed readers of events in the country. From then until now, there have been more than thirty publications, many of them short-lived and with not a few problems with the authorities of the time.

Until now, the Andorran reader basically bought one newspaper a day: *El mundo deportivo* heads the sales lists, followed by *El Periódico*, *La Vanguardia*, *Sport* and *El País*. Now, since the appearance of the *Diari d'Andorra*, all those people with an interest in the political life of the country have doubled their investment in the daily press, which is further increased every Friday with the purchase of one, two or all three of the principality's weeklies. For how long will readers be prepared to spend 80 pesetas more each day? The success of this daily depends on the answer to this question, which also affects the thirteen journalists hired by the publishers,



who have the support of a series of shareholders who have expressed their faith in this adventure with a total of 36 million pesetas.

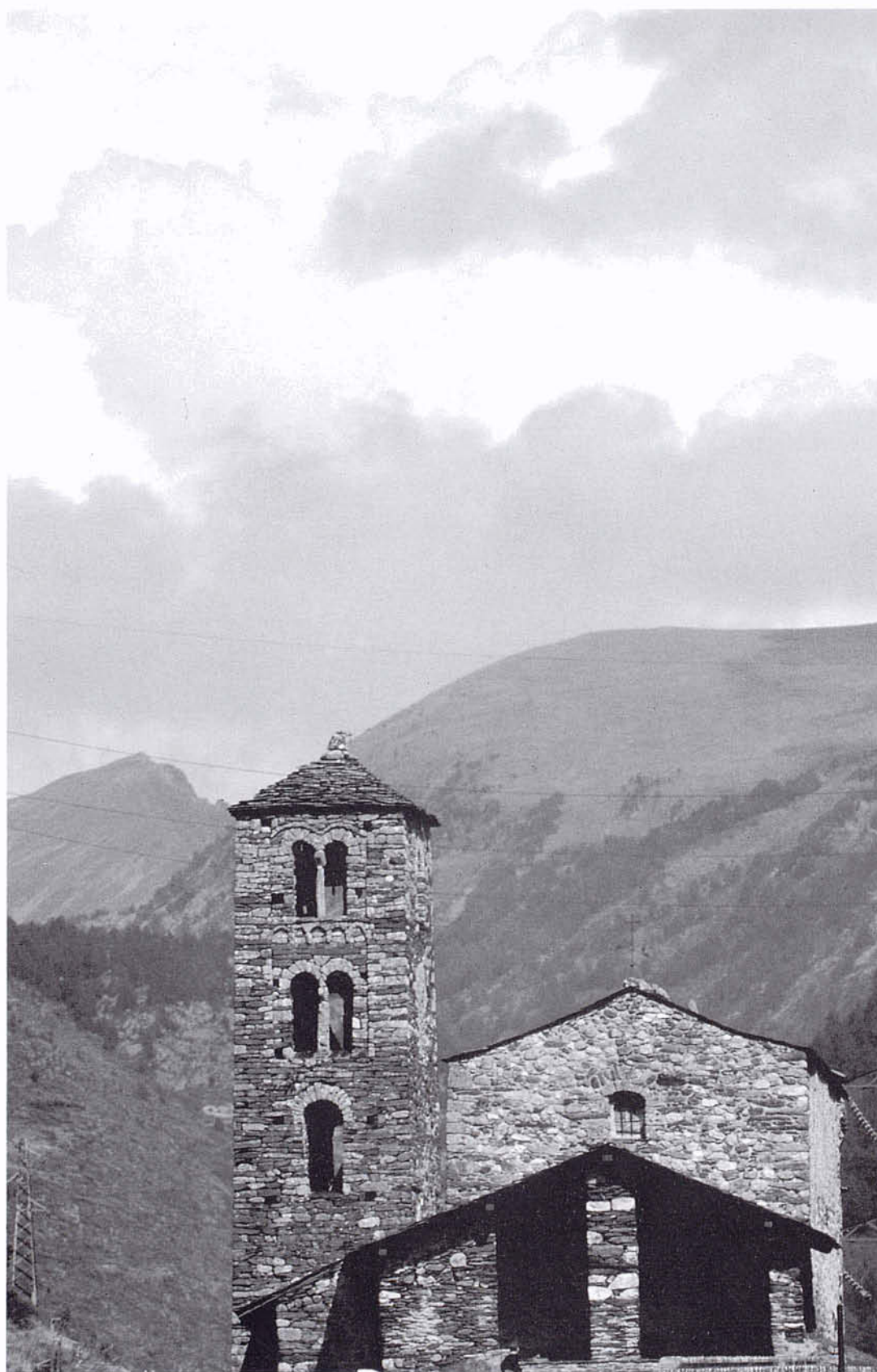
Until just over a year ago, press conferences were unknown in Andorra. Journalists had to get hold of their news as best they could. The sentence "Look, I'll tell you, but don't say that I told you" is the motto of any politician who wants to make something known. Discretion and a good deal of persuasion are the arms by which the journalist obtains the most important items of news. This is why the press in Andorra is dominated by women, making it more difficult for the politicians—99 % of whom are male—to get angry with them. Conditions of work for journalists in Andorra have improved in the last few years, but we need not go back very far to find politicians publicly stating that "We'd be better off without the press". There have also

been recent cases in which certain political sectors have tried to obtain a binding control over the official means of communication—that is, the radio and the sporadic television broadcasts. It is important to remember that the press receives no subvention from the state and is only supported by its income from publicity. This financial dependence often works to the detriment of the journalist's freedom of expression, since he or she is conditioned by the investment made in publicity by a given client who might at some point be the object of a news item that could prejudice him or her and which is automatically jeopardized. This makes it difficult to speak of absolute independence in the media in Andorra, which are sometimes forced to use half truths or to sin by omission.

"Ràdio Andorra" has been operating since the beginning of the year, broadcasting on the FM band, and is the only radio station in the principality, since it was decided not to renew the concessions to the license holders of the old "Ràdio Andorra" and "Ràdio de les Valls" (Sud-Ràdio).

"Ràdio Andorra" broadcasts exclusively in Catalan and its programmes combine news, music and entertainment. However, after six months, the station has serious financial problems, since the political crisis currently affecting Andorra means that the budget has not yet been approved.

The second phase of the new age in the audio-visual media in Andorra is the launching of a television station. After various sporadic experiments on the occasion of local festivals or special events, the first fifteen days of Andorran television were broadcast last Christmas and repeated on the occasion of the IVth European Games of the Small States. On both occasions, the broadcasts could only be picked up in the Principality and offered programmes starting at two o'clock in the afternoon and going on until the early morning. The extensive television offer available to the inhabitants of Andorra, who can tune in to three French stations, two Spanish stations and one Catalan station (TV3), made it difficult to see a place for local broadcasts. The response of the public was excellent, possibly because of the novelty of having a "home-produced" television channel, but the fact is that audience figures were more than satisfactory. ■



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