

**The limits of Destalinisation:
The Spanish Communist Party 1956-1965**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to demonstrate that the process of liberalization started by the PCE in 1956 was of a very limited nature and never managed to change the party's Stalinist internal structure. This in turn obstructed the success of the party's policies, its programmes and campaigns inside the country, as the leadership in exile, far removed from the Spanish reality, imposed from above its views on underground activists, thus limiting their influence and impact. I demonstrate this by looking mainly at the relationship that flourished in 1956 between the leadership in exile and the intellectual and student organizations inside Spain. Just as it had happened in the 1940s with other underground Communist organizations, this relationship soon started to deteriorate and eventually led to one of the most important purges ever to take place inside the PCE. My thesis thus concludes that the party's lack of internal democracy, which became evident during this period, in the long term discredited the transformation attempted through Eurocommunism and hence, sheds new light into one of the reasons behind the party's failure during the transition to democracy in Spain.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	2
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	3
TABLE OF CONTENTS	5
INTRODUCTION.....	7
I. THE FIRST YEARS IN EXILE	18
A. Introduction	18
B. The aftermath of 1939.....	21
1. From unity to confrontation.....	21
2. The Party in Spain	25
3. The fight for power: Hernandez v La Pasionaria.....	29
C. The Second World War.....	31
1. The Party in France.....	32
2. The Aran Valley invasion.....	37
3. The downfall of Jesús Monzón.....	40
D. The Beginning of the Cold War	44
1. The PCE and the Republican forces	44
2. Titoism and the PCE.....	50
3. The PCE in France. Anton.....	55
E. Conclusion	60
II. FROM APATHY TO ACTIVITY	62
A. Introduction	62
B. The dormant years	63
1. Peace.....	63
2. The V Congress	68
C. The breaking of the deadlock.....	74
1. Spain's incorporation into the UN.....	76
2. The XX Congress of the CPSU	80
3. The young guard wins.....	83
D. Conclusion	90
III. THE BIRTH OF A NEW OPPOSITION	92
A. Introduction	92
B. From Culture to Politics	93
1. The PCE and the intellectuals in the 1940s	93
2. The early stages of a new opposition.....	105
3. The Congress of Young Writers	118
C. The turning point: February 1956	128
1. The death of Ortega y Gasset.....	128
2. The cancellation of the Congress of Young Writers and the University Manifesto of 1956.....	134
3. The student riots	142
D. Conclusion	153
IV. THE EXILE RULES	155

A.	Introduction	155
B.	Setting the limits	156
1.	Hungary and Poland	156
2.	The PCE's reaction.....	159
3.	Mexico.....	164
C.	The aftermath of the Student riots in February 1956	172
1.	The University of Madrid	172
2.	The policy of National Reconciliation.....	176
3.	The University of Barcelona.....	179
D.	The Transport Strikes.....	182
1.	Barcelona 1957.....	183
2.	The transport boycott in Madrid	186
3.	The workers' movement	188
E.	Conclusion	190
V.	DISSENT.....	192
A.	Introduction	192
B.	"Jornadismo"	193
1.	The JRN.....	193
2.	The failure and "success" of the JRN	200
3.	The HNP.....	208
C.	The hangover from the HNP.....	217
1.	Arrests	217
2.	Dissent at the top	219
3.	Pasionaria resigns	221
D.	Criticism from below	223
1.	The VI Congress.....	223
2.	Welcome home	226
3.	A widening gap.....	232
E.	Conclusion	240
VI.	STALINISM STRIKES BACK.....	242
A.	Introduction	242
B.	Spain in the early 1960s.....	243
1.	The workers.....	243
2.	The opposition.....	247
3.	The students.....	252
C.	Prelude to a rupture	256
1.	Julián Grimau	256
2.	The merging of the opposition.....	260
3.	Preparing for battle	267
D.	The purge of Claudín and Semprún.....	272
1.	The battle.....	272
2.	The knock-out.....	279
3.	Farewell	289
E.	Conclusion	294
	CONCLUSION	296
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	306

INTRODUCTION

Since its foundation, the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) has been a significant agent in the most important chapters of contemporary Spain. After the outbreak of the Civil War in 1936, the PCE moved to the front line of politics thanks to the support given by the Soviet Union to the Republican side. The ensuing dictatorship of General Francisco Franco would see the Communists become the dominant force in the opposition movement; the Communist-influenced trade union, *Comisiones Obreras*, making a major contribution to the erosion of the regime in its final years. During the Spanish transition, the PCE under the command of Santiago Carrillo, would give an important endorsement to the new democracy. The party was, nevertheless, unable to translate into electoral strength the prominence it had gained during the dictatorship and would in the long term only see its power diminished.¹ Instead, the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) won the support of the left, denying the Communists a decisive role in national politics. The irony was that, unlike the Communists, the PSOE had practically been absent from Spanish politics during the Franco years. This thesis will attempt to shed some light on one of the most important reasons behind this particular development by tracing it back to 1956 and the events that followed thereafter.

Indeed, 1956 has been pointed out by scholars, journalists and Communists alike as a critical point in the history of the PCE.² Prior to this year, the submission

¹ In the elections of June 1977 the Communist garnered only 9.2 percent of the national vote while the PSOE took 29 percent.

² Fernando Jáuregui and Pedro Vega, *Crónica del antifranquismo, 1939-1962* (Barcelona: Argos Vergara, 1983-1985), p. 228; Gregorio Morán, *Miseria y Grandeza del Partido Comunista de España, 1939-1985* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1986), p. 276; Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi, *Spain, 1939-1985* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1986), p. 276.

of the Spanish Communists to Moscow, a feature since the party's foundation, had only deepened. As a result, during the following years, the PCE made several contradictory changes of policy, damaging its relationship with other exiled Spanish political forces that were already extremely suspicious of the Communists after the role they had played during the Civil War. The situation inside the country was not much more encouraging: the repression made the reorganization of an underground Communist movement very difficult. Furthermore, the party's Stalinist internal structure brought about a number of purges that usually ended with the destruction of the emerging Communist organizations inside the country, since they were seen as a threat to the exiled leadership's power.

A decisive period in the history of the party would begin after the death of Joseph Stalin in March 1953, when a liberalization process started in the Communist movement that would reach its peak during the XX Congress of the CPSU in March 1956. There and then, Nikita Khrushchev read his soon-to-be famous secret speech where he denounced Stalin's crimes. In the context of the ensuing climate, the PCE reshuffled its leadership, permitting the rise of the younger members of the politburo (Santiago Carrillo and Fernando Claudín) over the hard-line-Stalinists (Dolores Ibárruri and Vicente Uribe). This shift of power was accompanied by increasing criticism of the party's internal structure, its lack of democracy and the cult of personality it had suffered from. From then onwards, the PCE allegedly renounced its Stalinist past for once and all, and was prepared gradually to embrace a more

Dictatorship to Democracy (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1979), p. 163; Joan Estruch Tobella, *El PCE en la clandestinidad. 1939-1956* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1982), pp. 228-229; Irene Falcón, *Asalto a los cielos: mi vida junto a Pasionaria* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1996), p. 308; Ramón Mendezona, *La Pirenaica y otros episodios* (Madrid: Libertarias/Prodhuvi, 1995), pp. 133-134; Ramon Bucley, *La doble transición*, (Madrid, Siglo Veintiuno, 1996) p. 7; Santiago Carrillo, *Memorias* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1993), p. 456; Eusebio Mujal-León, *Communism and Political Change in Spain* (USA: Indiana University Press, 1983), pp. 22, 35; Jordi Solé Tura, "La

democratic and open spirit. In addition, the party's policy changed from one of violent confrontation against the regime to one of National Reconciliation, in harmony with the USSR's foreign policy of Peaceful Coexistence. This shift has been seen as a breakthrough in the Communists' approach to the situation inside the country, the more so because it would coincide with the cultural awakening of a generation of students and intellectuals that had not fought in the Civil War and whose most active members would look to the Communists for answers they could not find within the regime.³ In view of these developments, it is only logical that 1956 is often described as a turning point in the history of the PCE. Moreover, a connection is often made between the liberalisation process started at this time and the party's breakaway from Moscow in 1968 and its subsequent adoption of Eurocommunism.⁴

The main purpose of this thesis will be to challenge this view and show that even though the party underwent certain changes in 1956, its internal Stalinist culture never disappeared. During the years that followed the secret speech of Khrushchev, the thaw that had originated in Moscow proved to extend only as far as had been required for the changes in leadership to take place. Once Santiago Carrillo was

oposición comunista al franquismo" in Fontana, Joseph (Ed.). *España bajo el franquismo* (Barcelona: Biblioteca de Bolsillo, 2000), p. 128; Antonio Elorza, "El viaje a ninguna parte", *El País*, 3 July 2000.

³ Interview with Santiago Carrillo, January 2001; Fernando Claudín, *Santiago Carrillo. Crónica de un secretario general* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1983), pp. 118-119; Carrillo, *Memorias*, pp. 455-457; Mujal-León, *Communism*, pp. 1, 22; Guy Hermet, *The Communists in Spain. Study of an Underground Political Movement* (Hants: Librarie Armand Collin, 1971), p. 57; Andrés Carabantes and Eusebio Cimorra, *Un mito llamado Pasionaria* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1982), p. 287.

⁴ Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*, pp. 225, 246; Simón Sánchez Montero, *Camino de libertad. Memorias* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1997), p. 230; Falcón, *Asalto*, pp. 308, 355-356, 358; Mariano Asenjo and Victoria Ramos, *Malagón. Autobiografía de un falsificador* (Spain: El Viejo Topo, 1999), p. 223; Paul Preston, "The PCE's long road to democracy 1954-77" in Richard Kindersley, *In Search of Eurocommunism*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), p. 57; Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 457; José Álvarez Junco and Adrian Shubert, *Spanish History since 1808* (New York: Arnold Publishers, 2000), p. 287.

safely in his position, the old autocratic management of the party was back in action. The deceit became apparent as the policies that the party was applying in Spain began to fail, leading to further repression and to the weakening of the underground organizations as well as to the disillusion of many activists. Criticism arose in the PCE, not just among the rank-and-file but also within the leadership itself. It was felt that the party lacked a realistic appreciation of the situation in Spain, partly due to the leadership's refusal to relinquish power and rely on the judgement of its forces inside the country. The ensuing crisis would mainly affect the generation that had joined the party in 1956, making it all the more relevant because the initial success of the PCE with these activists had been the result of the leaders' ability to catalyse their initiatives instead of just imposing their will on them. The crisis also led to the complete expulsion in 1964 of the party's two most prominent champions of reform, the intellectuals Jorge Semprún and Fernando Claudín, both members of the PCE's Executive Committee. By expelling them, the party cut off its most likely means for future reform, making it clear for those inside Spain that its policies could never be questioned.

Nevertheless, it could be argued that paradoxically the crisis of 1964 still represented an important step towards the PCE's liberalisation.⁵ After Claudín and Semprún's expulsion, Carrillo claimed some of their arguments as his own, and in fact, the dissidents' ideas shared common ground with the ideas later on advocated through Eurocommunism. On this basis, it could be claimed that if the expulsion was not itself very democratic, the results in the long term helped the party's democratisation process. In contrast, I will argue that 1964 was a return to the old

⁵ Hermet, *The Communists*, p. 78; Preston, "The PCE's long road..." in Kindersley, *Eurocommunism*, pp. 43, 54; Mujal-León, *Communism*, p. 24.

ways of the party. Thereafter, the contradiction between what the PCE advocated through Eurocommunism and the party's refusal to question its internal Stalinist structure, proved to be ultimately unsustainable. The PCE would pragmatically espouse a far more lenient ideological programme but the party itself remained under the despotic control of one individual, Santiago Carrillo, who, whilst prepared to compromise on programmatic points, was not as willing to risk his own position by democratising the party. In fact, this attitude coincided with the pattern followed by the PCE throughout the dictatorship, according to which the party changed its policies when the external conditions demanded it, no matter what ideological contradictions were involved. This had happened on several occasions, the most obvious being in relation to the German-Soviet Non Aggression Pact, when the Communists found themselves partners with the German allies of Franco during the Spanish Civil War.

In order to understand the party's history, including its poor fortunes in the 1970s and 1980s, it is crucial to lay bare this continuity. In this study, this is exactly what I purport to do, mainly by looking at the crucial period between 1956 and 1964. It was then, and only then, that the hegemonic culture within the PCE was seriously challenged and an alternative future beckoned. But this was not the road followed. At the end of the day, Carrillo forcefully reconfirmed the traditional ways of his party. And it was there, and then, that he decided its future.

This thesis relies mainly on primary sources from the Spanish Communist Party, such as congress minutes, reports, correspondence, publications, theoretical journals, party newspapers, circulars, speeches and statements. Most of the research has been done in the archives of the PCE, which hold vast amount of documents relevant to

this work, including material of those who differed with the party line. In addition, the use of memoirs and personal interviews with the most prominent individuals of the period covered in the thesis has been extremely useful. The testimonies of those students and intellectuals that joined the party in 1956 have proven an invaluable source for understanding their motivations as well as the evolution that led them to a break with the party less than a decade later. Similarly, those leaders interviewed by the author have brought with them considerable insight into the internal workings of the PCE, particularly the conversations held with Jorge Semprún and Javier Pradera. Newspapers of the time have also contributed to this research as well as the police documentation about the student movement in the mid 1950s edited by Roberto Mesa in *Jaraneros y alborotadores. Documentos sobre los sucesos estudiantiles de febrero de 1956 en la Universidad Complutense de Madrid*.⁶ At the same time, a considerable body of secondary literature has been examined to gain an understanding of the Franco regime and the position of the diverse opposition movement that developed in Spain particularly in the late 1950s and continued to grow thereafter. In addition, the literature on the history of the PCE before 1956 has been used to draw a complete picture of the above-mentioned pattern followed by the party since the end of the Civil War.

Indeed, one of the reasons that makes this work all the more important is that the majority of the historical studies on the PCE never go further than 1956. Joan Estruch Tobella's first two books on the Spanish Communists cover the period from 1920-1939 and 1939-1956.⁷ His most recent publication, *Historia Oculta del PCE*,

⁶ Roberto Mesa (Ed.), *Jaraneros y alborotadores. Documentos sobre los sucesos estudiantiles de febrero de 1956 en la Universidad Complutense de Madrid* (Madrid: Editorial de la Universidad Complutense, 1982),

⁷ Joan Estruch Tobella, *Historia del PCE (I). (1920-1939)* (Barcelona: Iniciativas Editoriales S.A., 1978); Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*.

dedicates only a few pages to the years covered in this thesis.⁸ Rafael Cruz in *El partido comunista de España en la Segunda República* analyses the role of the PCE during the Second Republic while Antonio Padilla's *El movimiento comunista español* goes only as far as 1939.⁹ At the same time, the studies on the transition to democracy in Spain usually lack an in-depth analysis of the roots of the PCE's failure. On a more theoretical level, there are two books, Guy Hermet's *The Communists in Spain* and Eusebio Mujal-León's *Communism and Political Change in Spain*, which have been particularly useful for this study.¹⁰ The most important publication on the subject to date remains Gregorio Morán's *Miseria y Grandeza del PCE*.¹¹ The author, a journalist who had belonged to the PCE in the 1960s, had access to a great deal of unpublished material and produced a sharp and detailed description of the history of the Party. I am much indebted to his work as well as the help he has always provided me during our conversations. Unfortunately, there are no references to the origins of the primary material he uses in the book. In addition, his judgements seem to be somewhat affected by the fact that he had left the PCE in disillusionment during the 1970s. The constant pejorative references to Santiago Carrillo and his poor intellectual education, though arguably justified, seem to reflect a degree of personal retaliation in his study.

Hence, I believe this thesis will fill a very important gap in the historiography of the Spanish Communist Party, as well as shed new light on the opposition movement to Franco and the transitional process to democracy in Spain. Moreover, it will provide detailed attention to the crucial student and intellectual Communist

⁸ Joan Estruch Tobella, *Historia oculta del PCE* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 200).

⁹ Rafael Cruz, *El Partido Comunista de España en la II República* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1987); Antonio Padilla, *El movimiento comunista español* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1979).

¹⁰ Hermet, *The Communists*; Mujal-León, *Communism*.

¹¹ Morán, *Miseria*.

organizations that developed in Spain during 1956. The relationship of the leadership with these new generations will help to explain the reasons for its initial success. In the same manner, the study of the crisis that these organisations underwent during 1964 will serve the exact opposite purpose: to reveal how the Stalinist structure of the party led to the failure of its policies in the country and to the destruction of one of the strongest underground organizations it ever had. The leadership's unrealistic perception of the situation in Spain will account for the problems it encountered with the policies applied by the party to fight the regime, mainly through the use of General Strikes. Finally, by looking at the true nature of National Reconciliation and tracing its origins to previous party policies all the way back to the Civil War, it will be possible to show that it was not the breakthrough it has often been taken to be, as some authors have partially acknowledged.¹²

This thesis is structured in the following way: Chapter I, which deals with the period 1939-1952, serves as a historical background and sets out some of the issues that will be dealt with in the following chapters. Emphasis is given to the relations of the party with Moscow and how, in turn, this affected its relationship with other Spanish political forces in exile. The internal political struggles and the purges that took place during this period are also covered in detail, particularly the relationship between the leadership and the Communist organizations that emerged in Spain, as well as in France during the Second World War. This serves as a kind of historical template against which the destalinisation process in the PCE will be measured.

¹² See Arasa's explanation about José Díaz's speech in 1938, "Lo que España enseña a Europa", Daniel Arasa, *Años 40: los maquis y el PCE* (Barcelona: Editorial Argos Vergara, 1984), p. 31. On the 1940s, see Falcón, *Asalto*, pp. 312, 319; Rafael Cruz, *Pasionaria. Dolores Ibárruri, Historia y Símbolo* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1999), pp. 183-184; Valentina Fernández Vargas, *La resistencia interior en la España de Franco* (Madrid: Ediciones Istmo, 1981), p. 168; Estruch Tobella, 1939-

Chapter II concentrates on the power struggle that developed inside the party in 1955 and whose outcome was decided by the events that took place during the CPSU's XX Congress in March 1956. By looking at this power struggle in detail, it will start to become evident that, from the very beginning, the destalinisation process did not bring about a real democratisation of the party's internal structure. A first attempt will also be made to understand the policy of National Reconciliation in the context of the history of Spanish Communism. In addition, this chapter gives a brief description of the events that led to the PCE's policy of "infiltration" into the regime's trade unions and mass organisations.

Chapter III examines the emergence of an opposition movement in Spain, mainly at the University of Madrid, and the contribution made by the PCE to its full development. Emphasis is given to the student riots of February 1956 as they led to one of the most important crises of Franco's regime. This serves two purposes: on the one hand, it is an example of the prominence that the new leadership placed on the struggle inside the country and on the other, it establishes the party's potential to catalyse the discontent of those who felt constrained by the regime. Moreover, through the use of party and police documents related to this period, this chapter attempts to give an accurate chronology of the events surrounding the riots, which up until now has not been properly done. It will also serve to clarify the origins of the democratic movement inside the university that would continue to develop from then onwards. Following this, the figure of Jorge Semprún will receive special attention not just because, as the head of the party in Madrid, he was in charge of the intellectual and student organizations, but also because his physical presence inside

the country would eventually become a major factor in his later criticisms against party policy.

Chapter IV looks at the first signs of the limits of the destalinisation process both in the Communist movement and inside the PCE. It also studies the relationship of the PCE with the other emerging political forces inside Spain, which will help to understand the mistrust these would eventually develop regarding the Communists. At the same time, the transport strikes that took place at the beginning of 1957 will be used to explain the reasons behind the party's policy of general strikes adopted soon after. In order to place the strikes in context, a brief analysis of the workers movement in 1950s Spain will be provided.

Chapter V describes the events that preceded and followed the General Strikes called by the PCE in 1958 and 1959 as well as the party's VI Congress. This will serve to reveal the irreconcilable distance that existed between the Spain as perceived by the exiled leadership and the Spain the underground activists were living amidst. The strikes not only failed to achieve their goals but also provoked waves of repression. Even so, the party turned a blind eye to the negative results and portrayed the events as successful. The VI Congress would also result in a great number of arrests and the weakening of the underground organisations, mainly due to the fact that the party had not taken proper care of the security during the event. This chapter will create the framework that explains the discontent of the party forces inside the country and the beginning of dissent within the leadership.

Finally, Chapter VI analyses the crisis that led to the expulsion of Fernando Claudín and Jorge Semprún from the PCE and the collapse of the student and intellectual Communist organizations that had emerged in 1956, particularly in Madrid. An explanation will be given regarding the character of the divergences

between the latter and the majority of the Executive: mainly a different appreciation of Spanish reality that subsequently developed into a discussion about the party's internal structure. Because of this, the first section of the chapter is entirely dedicated to the development in Spain of the workers movement, the opposition forces and the students movement during the 1960s, which is essential to place into context the divergences within the leadership. Emphasis is laid upon the manner in which Santiago Carrillo dealt with the crisis. It is thus concluded that the purge that followed shared all the characteristics of those that took place inside the party during the Stalinist years, hence confirming the real limits of the destalinisation process inside the Spanish Communist Party.

Accordingly, this thesis seeks to demonstrate that the process of liberalization started by the PCE in 1956 was of a very limited nature and never managed to change the party's internal structure, which in turn would discredit in later years the democratisation process attempted through Eurocommunism.

I. THE FIRST YEARS IN EXILE

A. Introduction

The Spanish Communist Party emerged at the end of 1919, as a result of a series of schisms within the Socialist ranks. The diverse political backgrounds of those who at first joined the Communists meant that from its birth the PCE had a heterogeneous structure that soon led to a great number of internal confrontations and purges. In addition, the Spanish Communists became increasingly unpopular with other left political forces that accused them of trying to steal their members and being under the control of the Third International.¹ For the following years, the PCE would only play a minor role in Spanish politics, particularly after it was declared illegal during the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera (1923-1930). Nor would the PCE's power increase after the proclamation of the Republic in 1931 as the Spanish Communists, following an order from the Comintern, alienated many by refusing to support the new regime.² Moreover, the nomination of José Díaz in 1932 as the new General Secretary tightened even further the control of the PCE by the Soviets, who appointed him in order to assure the party's loyalty to the Comintern.³ The policy of

¹ For more information on this early period of the PCE see Antonio Elorza and Marta Bizcarrondo, *Queridos Camaradas. La Internacional Comunista y España, 1919-1939* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1999), pp. 21-42. This book is the latest and most extensive work published on the subject. It also has the advantage of including material from the archives in Moscow, which is not to be found in other publications about the early years of the Spanish Communist Party. Also see Estruch Tobella, 1920-1939; Padilla, *El movimiento comunista*.

² For this period see Cruz, *El Partido Comunista*; Estruch Tobella, 1920-1939; Padilla, *El movimiento comunista*.

³ He replaced José Bullejos who had run into trouble with the Soviets after refusing to accept some of their suggestions. At the same time as José Díaz, other figures such as Antonio Mije, Vicente Uribe

the PCE during the period of the Republic closely followed the dictates of the Soviet Union. It was not until the Popular Front policy was adopted by the Comintern that the PCE fully supported the Spanish Republic. This policy change led to its support for the Popular Front that would come to power in April 1936.

Subsequently, on 17-18 July 1936, the Civil War broke out in Spain. During the three years that the conflict lasted, the PCE would see its power and influence increase strikingly. This was principally due to the support given by the Soviet Union to the Republican government. Other governments, including countries such as Britain and France, refused to help the Republic under the façade of the Non-Intervention Agreement. The role of the PCE in the Spanish Civil War is a complex matter that has filled the pages of many history books.⁴ In the context of this study, the important point is to mention the damage it inflicted on the relations of the party with other political forces. Under the control of the Comintern, the PCE was not averse to ridding itself of its adversaries inside the Republican camp using whatever means were within its reach. Moreover, its refusal to capitulate once defeat became clear did little to increase the party's popularity. When the Casado Coup took place 4-5 March 1939, the streets of Madrid became a battleground between Communists and the supporters of Casado, the latter looking to end the conflict in the hope that

and Dolores Ibárruri were promoted to the highest positions in the PCE.

⁴ E.H. Carr, *La comintern y la guerra civil española* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1986); Estruch Tobella, *1920-1939*; Helen Graham, *Socialism and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 1991); Helen Graham and Paul Preston (Eds.), *The Popular Front in Europe* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987); Paul Preston, *Las tres Españas del 36* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés Editores, 1998); Palmiro Togliatti, *Escritos sobre la guerra de España* (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 1980); Manuel Azcárate & José Sandoval, *Spain. 1936-1939* (London: Lawrence & Wishart LTD, 1963); Fernando Claudín, *Socialismo y guerra civil* (Madrid: Pablo Iglesias, 1987). For memoirs of this period see Valentín González, "El Campesino". *Comunista en España y antistalinista en la URSS* (Madrid: Ediciones Jucar, 1941); Jesús Hernández, *Yo, Ministro de Stalin en España. Prólogo y notas de Mauricio Carlavilla* (Madrid: NOS, 1954); Francisco-Felix Montiel, *Un Coronel llamado Segismundo* (Madrid: Editorial Criterio-Libros, 1998); Manuel Tagüeña Lacorte, *Testimonio de dos guerras* (México: Ediciones Oasis, 1973); Aurora Arnáiz, *Retrato hablado de Luisa Julián* (Madrid: Compañía Literaria, 1996); Manuel Azcárate, *Derrotas y esperanzas. La República, la Guerra Civil y la Resistencia* (Barcelona: Tusquet Editores, 1994).

some form of negotiated peace was still possible with Franco.⁵ In the weeks that followed, the leaders of the PCE and the Soviet emissaries began to flee the country, leaving behind, on the one hand, many activists but on the other, little in the way of organisation to deal with the underground status they would now have to face.⁶ On 1 April 1939, Franco announced: "Today, with the Red Army captive and disarmed, our victorious troops have achieved their final military objectives. The war is over".⁷

As we shall see, the first decade in exile of the Spanish Communist Party witnessed a continuation of the PCE's submission to the Soviet Union and the CPSU. This is unsurprising taking into account that the party was now in exile and hence depended all the more on the help and reputation of the Soviets. In this chapter, we will look at the consequences these factors had on the party's relations with other political forces in exile and with its clandestine organisation in Spain. The pattern followed by the party from the end of the Spanish Civil War until the death of Stalin will be established, making it possible to assess subsequently if the destalinisation

⁵ It is worth mentioning the personal impact that the Casado coup had on Santiago Carrillo. His father Wenceslao Carrillo, a Socialist leader, had been one of the brains behind the operation. Two months and half after the coup, the son wrote a letter disowning his father. "No, Wenceslao Carrillo, between you and I there cannot be any relations, because we have nothing in common". This reaction was not at all uncommon in the Stalinist era when the sins of your family were considered to taint your own reputation. Moreover, Carrillo had started his career as a Socialist, and had in the past praised Trotsky. He had to act quickly and decisively in order to prove his loyalty to the PCE and avoid any suspicion about himself. And so he did. Letter from Santiago Carrillo, General Secretary of the JSU, to his father (Wenceslao Carrillo), Socialist leader and accomplice of Casado, Historical Archive of the Spanish Communist Party (AHPCE) (DIRIGENTES, Santiago Carrillo, Correspondencia, Sig. 3, Carp. 1.2). Wenceslao Carrillo responded to the letter with an open letter to Stalin, attributing to the Soviet leader the letter signed by his son. He defended the Casado coup and denounced Communist tyranny as well as giving testimony of the pain that had been inflicted on him as a father, Arnáiz, *Retrato*, pp. 290-291.

⁶ Dolores Ibárruri, *El único camino* (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1962), p. 476. Dolores Ibárruri, also known as Pasionaria, was born on 9 December 1895 in Vizcaya. She joined the Socialist Party in 1917 but joined the Communist Party during its First Congress in 1921. She was nominated to the PCE's Central Committee in 1930, and became a member of the party's Political Bureau in 1932. From there, she continued to rise in the party's hierarchy until she became the General Secretary of the PCE after José Díaz's death in March 1942. Throughout this text, Pasionaria and Dolores Ibárruri will be used inter-changeably. For more information on Dolores Ibárruri see her memoirs, Ibárruri, *El único*. There are also several biographies of Dolores Ibárruri: Cruz, *Pasionaria*; Falcón, *Asalto*; Teresa Pamies, *Una española llamada Dolores Ibárruri* (México: Ediciones Roca, 1975); Andrés Sorel, *Dolores Ibárruri Pasionaria. Memoria humana* (Madrid: Libertarias/Prodhuvi, 1989); Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, *Pasionaria y los siete enanitos* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1995); Carabantes and

process, which began in 1956, indeed marked a turning point in the history of the party.

B. The aftermath of 1939

1. From unity to confrontation

As the last vestiges of the Republic fell into the hands of the enemy in 1939, the leaders of the PCE began their exodus, travelling to France and from there to the Soviet Union and Mexico. The capitals of these countries would become the headquarters of the Party during the following years. Soon after the leaders' arrival in Moscow, a series of discussions between the PCE and the Comintern on the reasons for the defeat took place.⁸ As expected, the Comintern was absolved of any blame while the PCE reluctantly agreed to assume part of the responsibility.⁹ There was no overall or real self-criticism of the Party's policies during the conflict and the resolution was never made public.¹⁰ According to Paul Preston:

This process assured the PCE's loyalty to Moscow but left great reserves of bitterness among the senior cadres. Moreover, the consequent commitment to Stalinist methods robbed the party of flexibility in the difficult years to follow.¹¹

Cimorra, *Un mito*.

⁷ Paul Preston, *Franco* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), p. 322.

⁸ Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*, pp. 50-51.

⁹ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 66.

¹⁰ Tagüeña, *Testimonio*, p. 354; Cruz, *Pasionaria*, p. 143; Enrique Líster, *Así destruyó Carrillo al PCE* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1983), p. 26.

¹¹ Paul Preston, "The Anti-Francoist Opposition: The Long March to Unity" in Paul Preston (ed.), *Spain in crisis* (Sussex: The Harvester Press Limited, 1976), p. 131.

In addition, the meeting had an impact on the leadership of the PCE. José Díaz was put in charge of Indian and Latin American affairs inside the Comintern. Being the General Secretary of the party, this shift of responsibility in reality meant that the Soviet leaders no longer considered him to be the number one in the PCE. It was also decided that in Latin America there was to be a Secretariat of the party formed by Vicente Uribe, Jesús Hernández, Santiago Carrillo, Antonio Mije and Francisco Antón.¹² This measure took three years to be implemented due to the outbreak of the Second World War.¹³

On 23 August 1939, whilst the leaders of the PCE were still settling into their new exile, the German-Soviet Non Aggression Pact was signed by Von Ribbentrop and Molotov. This Pact ostensibly meant an agreement of non-aggression and neutrality between the two countries. However, the Soviet and German emissaries had also

¹² Vicente Uribe was born in Bilbao in 1902. He was a former metal worker who had been the editor-in-chief of *Mundo Obrero*, the party's newspaper, during the II Republic. He then became a member of the Central Committee of the PCE. Uribe was elected deputy for Asturias (along with Dolores Ibárruri) in the government of the Popular Front in 1936. During the war, he became part of the PCE's Political Bureau and remained a major figure in the party until his downfall in 1956.

Co-founder of the PCE, Jesús Hernández became part of its Central Committee in 1930, when he left for Moscow to receive military education. In 1933, he returned to Spain and was appointed editor-in-chief of *Mundo Obrero*. At that time, Hernández was considered the number two of the PCE following José Díaz, and both were followed by Pasionaria. He won a seat in the Parliament of the Republic in 1936 (Córdoba) and after intense parliamentary activity, became the Minister of *Instrucción Pública y Bellas Artes* during the Civil War. Under Negrín's government, Hernández was appointed political commissar of the Central-South zone of the Republican army. He then left for the Soviet Union.

Santiago Carrillo was born in Oviedo in 1916. He was the son of Wenceslao Carrillo, a leader of the Spanish Socialist Party. During his youth, he had belonged to the Socialist party. It was during the creation of the JSU that he became a member of the PCE and eventually developed his political career inside the party. For more information see Claudín, *Carrillo*; Santiago Carrillo (interviewed by Régis Debray and Max Gallo), *Dialogue on Spain* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1976); Carrillo, *Memorias*.

Antonio Mije joined the Political Bureau of the PCE during the Second Republic, as part of the group led by José Díaz that had been placed at the head of the party by the Comintern after the purge of the Bullejos troika. He won a seat as a deputy for Seville with the victory of the Popular Front in 1936. During the Civil War, he took over the war regional ministry at the *Junta de Defensa* of Madrid.

Francisco Antón had been the secretary of the Provincial Committee of Madrid during the Civil War and then became the Commissar General of the Republican Army. Apparently, Indalecio Prieto tried to send him to the front but the Communists refused, Cruz, *Pasionaria*, p. 152. In 1937, Antón became part of the Political Bureau of the PCE. During the war, he started a romantic relationship with Pasionaria, which many used to explain his rapid ascent along the road to power.

signed with it a much more lethal secret protocol that led to the partition of Poland and a large part of Eastern Europe.¹⁴ Though the Communist parties around the world did not know about the secret protocol, the pact still meant that they had to change their whole mental structure to one where the fight against Fascism was no longer predominant. In fact, through this agreement, the Nazis had now become their allies instead of their enemies, a dramatic turnaround that no doubt took most Communists some time to digest.¹⁵

Nevertheless, the loyalty of the Communist parties to the USSR was strong, even if “once more they were to damage their own prospects by supporting Soviet foreign policy”.¹⁶ More dramatic was the case of the PCE whose activists had just been fighting against the German allies of Franco during the Spanish Civil War. They knew very well that the support given by Hitler to the Spanish Fascist forces had been a major factor in their victory. The shock for the rank-and-file was profound. The leadership was startled. But whatever the surprise and confusion, the pact would not have a major destabilizing effect on the PCE. Now, more than ever before, the Spanish Communists were dependent on the support of the USSR, both morally and economically. Their loyalty, even during this sad episode, was unshaken. Indeed, a fanatical defence of Moscow's justifications for the pact immediately replaced the

¹³ Morán, *Miseria*, p. 27.

¹⁴ On 1 September, the Nazi forces occupied Poland all the way to the Bug River. On 17 September, the Soviet Union invaded the eastern part of the country. Soon Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania were annexed to the USSR. On 29 November, after initial resistance, Finland signed a pact with the Soviets. In the meantime, free from the threat of a war on two fronts, Hitler continued his "conquest" of the world. It was clear by then that the appeasement policy of the United Kingdom and France had been a fiasco.

¹⁵ It was of course the third dramatic change in international Communist policy in less than ten years: from the doctrine of labelling social democrats as ‘social fascists’ to that of the Popular Front, now followed by this pact.

¹⁶ J.N. Westwood, *Endurance and Endeavour. Russian History 1812-1992* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 340.

initial shock and hesitation it had caused. The war was defined as inter-imperialistic and therefore, it was reasoned, the USSR did not have to become involved.¹⁷

The pact also had a dramatic effect on the relations between the PCE and the rest of the Spanish political parties in exile. As if their relationship with the Socialists was not strained enough after the Spanish Civil War, the German-Soviet Pact brought back to the fore the insults once commonly used by the Communists against them, such as 'Social-Fascists'.¹⁸ In addition, the policy of the Popular Front was abandoned and replaced with a so-called United Front that followed the Comintern's guidelines. It aimed at the unity from below of all the workers' forces, which was perceived by the leadership of the other workers' organisations as an attempt to steal their members.¹⁹ Once again, the Communists' search for unity with other left wing forces was understandably interpreted by others as confrontation.

Two years later, in June 1941, with the German invasion of the Soviet Union in what came to be known as "Operation Barbarossa", another dramatic shift in Communist policy took place. The Nazi-Soviet Pact had been broken and Stalin had been betrayed by Hitler. This series of events meant that the USSR now needed to pact with the Allies in order to survive. As soon as their support for the Soviet Union was confirmed, the Communist parties around the world were instructed by Moscow to back the war effort of the Allies.²⁰ Once more, the common enemy was Fascism; the war and the Western democracies were no longer imperialistic; the Socialists

¹⁷ Dolores Ibárruri, Manuel Azcárate, Luis Balaguer, Antonio Cordón, Irene Falcón and José Sandoval, *Historia del Partido Comunista de España* (La Habana: Editora Política, 1964), p. 217; Tagueña, *Testimonio*, p. 364; Carrillo, *Memorias*, pp. 313-314; Carrillo, *Ha muerto el comunismo?* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janes, 2000), pp. 79-85; Falcón, *Asalto*, pp. 187-188; Tagueña, *Testimonio*, pp. 360-361.

¹⁸ The term Social-Fascists had already been used against the Socialists in the 1920s. The Socialists and the Fascists were accused of being two sides of the same coin.

¹⁹ The United Front policy had its origins in the shift to the left that took place in the VI Congress of the Third International in 1928.

²⁰ Westwood, *Endurance*, p. 362.

were no longer Fascists. The end of the Nazi-Soviet pact came as a relief to many activists who had been trapped between two loyalties. The clearest example of this division of loyalties can be found among those in France who had been invaded by a foreign force to which they were theoretically allied as Communists. As for the PCE, these shifts of policy would further isolate it from other political groups in exile in the fight against Francoism.²¹

2. The Party in Spain

After the defeat of the Republic, those members of the PCE that had remained in Spain attempted to maintain the cohesion of an almost non-existent underground organisation and help those who were on the run or in prison. As was to be expected given the situation both in Spain and worldwide, contact with the leaders in exile was almost impossible. Moreover, the early post-war years in Spain were characterized by a fierce repression. Under the laws of Political Responsibilities and of Repression of Communism and Freemasonry, there were thousands of arrests that made it almost impossible for the Communists to achieve more than just keeping themselves alive. Prisons were the only place where they managed to develop some kind of organisation, though without much political impact.²² Heriberto Quiñones was in effect the first individual to create any serious clandestine organisation inside

²¹ The entrance of the Soviet Union into the war further aggravated the precarious conditions of the majority of the Spanish immigrants that had arrived in Russia after the Civil War. Some of those who had fought in the Spanish conflict joined the war effort against the Nazi invaders. Among them was the son of Dolores Ibárruri, Rubén Ruiz, who died in the battle of Stalingrad. His death was a blow for Pasionaria. For a time, she withdrew from Spanish immigrant and political circles in the USSR. For more information see Falcón, *Asalto*, p. 213; Law, *Pasionaria*, p. 130; Cruz, *Pasionaria*, p. 157.

²² For more information on the first attempts to reorganise the PCE in Spain see Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*, pp. 20-22

Spain.²³ He was the key figure in the rebirth and reconstruction of the PCE under Franco.²⁴

Quiñones, who had been born in Moldavia, was a so-called “instructor” of the Comintern.²⁵ These instructors were meant to work amongst the middling levels of the Communist parties around the world. They were fairly independent from Moscow and had to survive on their own means wherever they went, a role that took Quiñones to many different places where he always pursued a very active political role. At the beginning of the 1930s, Quiñones had arrived in Spain where he would stay until his death in 1942, always acting on the behalf of the Communist organisation. Once the Civil War was over, Quiñones quickly began reorganising an underground party but he did so without any help or contact with the leaders in exile. He soon called for a policy of National Unity for all those who opposed to the Franco regime, including right wing sectors such as the Monarchists.²⁶ According to his programme, the re-establishment of the Republic was no longer a priority in the fight against Francoism. The policy of National Unity proclaimed by Quiñones was very similar to the policy supported by the Soviets in relation to the Allies after the German invasion of the USSR. Nevertheless, the fact that Quiñones had launched it without the specific approval of the Spanish leadership in Moscow and Mexico, is an indication of his level of political autonomy.

Furthermore, in August 1941, through a document called “*Anticipo de orientación política*”, Quiñones' committee declared itself to be the replacement

²³ For more information about the first years of Heriberto Quiñones in Spain see David Ginard, *Heriberto Quiñones y el movimiento comunista en España (1931-1942)* (Palma: Ediciones Documenta Balear, 2000).

²⁴ Hermut Heine, *La oposición política al franquismo* (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 1983), p. 69.

²⁵ Estruch Tobella, 1920-1939, pp. 157-158.

²⁶ The policy of National Unity was established by the PCE in 1938 in an attempt to include in the Popular Front those right wing sectors who wanted to fight against the Italian and German invaders,

inside the country of the leadership in exile.²⁷ Quiñones claimed that the PCE could not be led from abroad by people who knew nothing about the realities of the country and who had abandoned the rank-and-file in Spain to their own fortunes.²⁸ In addition, he asked for the return to Spain of all those activists who were not under the threat of the death penalty by the Francoist authorities. He also contacted the party in exile to inform them of the developments of the underground organisation and the political views already expressed in *Anticipo*.²⁹ Quiñones probably felt confident in doing so because of his condition as an "instructor" of the Comintern. It was at this point that his fate was sealed.

Soon after Quiñones' *Anticipo* became known to the leaders in exile, they began a campaign to regain control over the organisation of the party in Spain. First, the party sent two delegates from Mexico into the country to report on Quiñones and to impose the orders from the leadership in exile.³⁰ They achieved no results and due to their lack of experience were soon arrested by the police, leading to the downfall of many other activists.³¹ At the same time, the leadership in Mexico sent Quiñones a letter in September 1941 reproaching him for many of his positions and attitudes.³² They argued that the policy of National Unity followed by Quiñones had nothing to do with the policy of National Unity defended by the Soviets and the PCE after the Nazi invasion of the USSR. This seemed to be an exaggeration: they were mainly referring to Quiñones' abandonment of the demand to re-establish the Republic after

Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*, p. 71.

²⁷ This document is 132 pages long and is very valuable in order to interpret the position taken by Quiñones and the differences between his organisation and the PCE in exile. The document was recently published by the *Fundación Nacional Francisco Franco* as part of the series, *Documentos Inéditos para la Historia del Generalísimo Franco*, tomo II-2 (Madrid: 1992), pp. 186-294.

²⁸ Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*, p. 25.

²⁹ According to Ginard, the document did not really reach anyone other than the leaders in exile and the police, Ginard, *Quiñones*, p. 69.

³⁰ The two activists were Perpetua Rejas, known as "Irma", and Eleuterio Lobo, known as "Leandro".

³¹ For more information see Ginard, *Quiñones*, pp. 89, 108, and Heine, *La oposición*, pp. 194-195.

the overthrow of the Franco regime, and to the prominence given to the right-wing forces in the alliances proclaimed by Quiñones' policy. Nevertheless, as we will later see, by 1942 the party had already adopted both of these positions.

To complicate matters further, due to the arrests that had followed the arrival of the activists sent from Mexico, Quiñones assumed the drastic measure of cutting off all further contact with the leadership in exile. Consequently, another activist, Jesús Carreras, was sent from France by the leadership to report on him. However, before he had time to act on the "insubordination", the police began an operation that led to the crushing of Quiñones' organisation. Quiñones himself was arrested on 30 December 1941 and suffered terrible torture during the month and half that his interrogations lasted.³³ Whilst in prison, fellow Communist prisoners told him that he had been expelled from the PCE. The campaign orchestrated by the leadership in exile to discredit him and portray him as a traitor was now at full speed. On 2 October 1942, Quiñones was executed.³⁴ Even then, the party held that he had been working for the Franco regime and was responsible for the arrest of fellow comrades.³⁵

The case of Quiñones brought the party leadership face to face with the problems deriving from its underground organisations based inside the country, which from then on they tried to keep under their firm control. It was the beginning of a complicated domestic-exile relationship that became more complicated as time

³² Ginard, *Quiñones*, pp. 70-72

³³ For more information on the police actions that led to the arrest of Quiñones and the downfall of his organisation see Ginard, *Quiñones*, pp. 95-97.

³⁴ He could not walk as the police had broken his spine during the interrogations, and he had to be carried to his execution by two who were to share the same fate, Luis Sendín and Angel Cardín.

³⁵ Heine, *La oposición*, p. 81. Daniel Arasa argues that the informer was Luis Sendín, who was the Secretary of Action and Propaganda in Quiñones' group and as mentioned, would later be executed by

passed, as those in exile grew even further apart from the realities of a country they had left behind in 1939.³⁶

3. The fight for power: Hernandez v La Pasionaria

As was explained at the beginning of this chapter, the meeting between the PCE and the Comintern after the defeat of the Spanish Republic in 1939 prompted the restructuring of the party leadership. Though José Díaz maintained his position as the General Secretary, in reality he was no longer considered as such by the Soviets. He had become ostracized from the decision-making body of the PCE ever since a serious illness had kept him bed-ridden.³⁷ In March of 1942, he killed himself at the terminal stage of his illness. The power vacuum inside the PCE increased when Pedro Checa, who was in charge of the organisation of the party, died a few months later in August 1942.

Two candidates stood for the post of General Secretary: Dolores Ibárruri, a gifted orator and a popular symbol of the Republic, and Jesús Hernández, a powerful figure in the PCE and the Minister of Education during the Civil War. Pasionaria had the support of the Comintern and Hernández the support of the rank-and-file in

the Franco regime, Arasa, *Maquis*, p. 41.

³⁶ Only as late as 1986 was there a gesture to rehabilitate Quiñones as well as other "traitors" such as Jesús Monzón and Joan Comorera, whose cases will be examined below. Even so, no profound analysis of the circumstances that allowed these purges to take place has yet been produced by the PCE. "Rehabilitaciones tardías en el PCE", *El País*, 25 April 1986.

³⁷ José Díaz had been suffering from cancer since the Civil War. He had gone through several operations that had failed to cure him. He missed the last year of the Civil War while he was being treated in the Soviet Union. Initially, he was in a hospital in Barvija, near Moscow. Once the Second World War broke out, he was sent to a hospital in Pushkin and then to Tbilisi, capital of Georgia. There, in a lot of pain caused by his illness, he committed suicide by jumping out of the window from the third floor of his house. His suicide was kept secret from the rank-and-file of the PCE because, as Falcón says, "at the time, the suicide of a Communist leader was, like it is for religious people, a sin for our fighting morale. It was not well considered because they said that a Communist should not take his life, and least of all, a General Secretary", Falcón, *Asalto*, pp. 228-229.

Moscow. As we shall see, the support of the Soviets would be the decisive factor in this power struggle for the party leadership.³⁸

In the summer of 1943, Hernández left for Mexico accompanied by Antón.³⁹ Hernández took the opportunity to try to gain more adherents to his cause amongst the Latin America diaspora. However, he found himself unable to create a rupture between the leadership in Mexico (Uribe and Mije) and Dolores Ibárruri.⁴⁰ Antón had gone with him for no other purpose than protecting Pasionaria's interests, and he did so efficiently. In the meantime, she was alone in Moscow with her hands free to secure her position.⁴¹ Hernández achieved the rank-and-file support that Pasionaria lacked by offering the Spanish exiles in the USSR the possibility of leaving the country, a proposal that did not please the Comintern and put into question his fidelity to the "motherland".⁴²

By 7 April 1944, while still in Mexico, Hernández was expelled from the Central Committee and soon afterwards was thrown out of the party. He was accused of factional activity against the new leader, Ibárruri. The party published a press released announcing the expulsion. Among other things, it stated:

Hernández ... has started an infamous operation against the sacred unity of our Party; slandering our adored General Secretary, the great comrade Dolores Ibárruri.

³⁸ Falcón, *Asalto*, p. 230; Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 71; Carmen Parga, *Antes que sea tarde* (Madrid: Compañía Literaria, 1996), p. 101.

³⁹ There is disagreement on whether the Comintern instructed Hernández to leave, Victor Alba, *El partido comunista de España* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1979), p. 268; Hermet, *The Communists*, p. 52. Or whether he decided himself to go, Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*, p. 57; Tagüeña, *Testimonio*, p. 468. It does not really matter because whatever the case nobody could leave the USSR without the permission of the authorities. Hence, it is fair to assume that the Comintern agreed to Hernández's departure for Mexico.

⁴⁰ Morán, *Miseria*, p. 74.

⁴¹ "For those of us who lived in the USSR, everything was resolved for there she was left in charge of everything. Her position was well above that of other leaders who, before Hernández left, used to act under his wing", Tagüeña, *Testimonio*, p. 467.

⁴² Many authors cite this factor as one of the main reasons Hernández lost the support of the Comintern, Alba, *El Partido*, p. 268; Tagüeña, *Testimonio*, pp. 467-468; Sergio Vilar, *Por qué se ha destruido el PCE* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, Barcelona, 1986), p. 90; Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*, p. 57; Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 71.

To slander Dolores Ibárruri is to attack the most beloved thing of our Party and our people.⁴³

Hernández's downfall was the only possible consequence of a power struggle that, with the help of the Soviets, Pasionaria had finally won.⁴⁴ Hence, his supporters or those who had not clearly supported Pasionaria found themselves in a delicate position and soon faced the same fate as their leader.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, it is important to note that if the balance had shifted towards Hernández, there is little doubt he would have also purged those who had not backed him.

The purge of the Hernandists revealed the extent of the submission of the party to the Comintern and the Soviet Union. Neither in Moscow nor in Mexico was there ever a meeting of the Central Committee or the Political Bureau to nominate Pasionaria. By May 1944, it was clear to all concerned that Ibárruri had succeeded in her rise to the high command of the party. The power struggle of the PCE had yet again been decided in Moscow.

C. The Second World War

⁴³ Declaration of the CC of the PCE concerning the expulsion of Hernández, 21 July 1944, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS, DOCUMENTOS AÑO 1944-I-XII, Caja 107, Carp. 25).

⁴⁴ As Paul Preston points out, Hernández did enjoy the support of certain members of the Comintern, such as Dimitrov and Manuilsky. Had he acted more wisely, he might have held a chance to overthrow Pasionaria but this was not the case, Paul Preston, *Comrades! Portraits of the Spanish Civil War* (London: Harper Collins, 1999), p. 307.

⁴⁵ Morán, *Miseria*, p. 76; Vilar, *PCE*, p. 91. There are several memoirs from the protagonists of this episode in the history of the PCE: Hernández, *Yo, Ministro*; Tagueña, *Testimonio*; Parga, *Antes*; Enrique Castro Delgado, *Mi fe se perdió en Moscú* (México D.F.: Populibros "La Prensa", 1972).

1. The Party in France

After the Nazi invasion of the USSR in June 1941, the dramatic shift in Soviet foreign policy to one of alliance with the Western democracies led to a change of policy for the rest of the Communist parties in the world. In the Spanish case, the PCE made an attempt at reconciliation with the Socialists as well as those political forces that opposed or disagreed with Franco, including those on the right. By the summer of 1941, the party was hoping that under a so-called policy of National Unity, they would be able to fight together against Spain's possible participation in the war on the side of the Axis, eventually overthrowing the Franco regime.⁴⁶ Among other things, the policy demanded: the unity of all forces that opposed Franco to achieve the recognition of the Republic's continued legality; the re-establishment of the Negrín government; the re-establishment of the freedom of the press, of opinion and of assembly; the disruption of any connection with Hitler and the Axis powers; and regional autonomy within Spain.⁴⁷

However, this abrupt shift of policy was too sudden to convince anyone, least of all the Socialists. Some of the PCE's potential allies were put off by the wide spectrum of political forces included in the supposed alliance, with sectors far to the right, such as Monarchists and Carlists. At the same time, it is easy to imagine that a Republican government led by Negrín with Communist participation did not seem like an appealing prospect for those very same right wing groups. In addition, the doctrine of National Unity excluded groups that ideologically were much closer to

⁴⁶ The National Unity policy had its origins in the Civil War. Quiñones had continued to apply it without the approval of the party in exile. For more information see Francisco Moreno Gómez, *La Resistencia Armada contra Franco* (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 2001), pp. 241-245.

⁴⁷ To spread the message of National Unity, the party published a manifesto in September 1941 called "A la Unión Nacional de todos los españoles contra Franco, los invasores italo-germanos y los traidores. Contra la participación de España en la guerra que Hitler hace a la URSS, Inglaterra y sus

the party but with whom the Communists had had confrontations in the past, such as certain Socialists, Libertarians and those who had taken part in the Casado coup against Negrín in 1939.⁴⁸ Finally, this shift in position lacked any analysis, let alone criticism, of the Soviet Union's recent alliance with Germany.⁴⁹

All of these contradictions put together should have been enough for the policy of National Unity to fail. The only reason it survived for some time was due mainly to the perseverance of the Communists in France, where the organisation of the PCE put great efforts into promoting it.

At the beginning of the Second World War and, once the PCE had been declared illegal in France as a result of the Soviet-German pact, most of the party leaders left Paris in a rush to seek refuge in Moscow and Mexico.⁵⁰ The group that remained on French soil included the activists Jesús Monzón, Carmen de Pedro, Gabriel León Trilla and Manuel Azcárate.⁵¹ In theory, de Pedro had been appointed as the person

aliados...".

⁴⁸ Heine, *La oposición*, p. 105; Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*, p. 71.

⁴⁹ In the official History of the PCE, the German-Soviet Non Aggression Pact is not even mentioned: "At the beginning of the war, France and England as well as Germany were fighting an imperialistic war. But later on its character was modified. This change had its origins, mainly, on the resistance of the people to Hitler's aggression, on the entrance of the Soviet Union in the war and the formation of a powerful coalition between the USSR, England, the USA and other countries", Ibárruri & VVAA, *Historia del PCE*, p. 217.

⁵⁰ The pact had made the PCE some sort of fifth column in France.

⁵¹ Jesús Monzón Reparaz was born to a wealthy family of Navarra sometime between 1907 and 1910. He became a lawyer and joined the PCE in 1931. He soon took over the General Secretariat of the provincial committee of Navarra. Once the war broke out, Monzón acted as prosecutor in one of the popular tribunals established in Bilbao. He would later work in Madrid and Valencia. With the loss of the Northern front, Monzón left for France and then returned to the Centro-Levante zone. There, he was appointed Civil Governor of Alicante and Cuenca, and subsequently, Negrín proposed him as the new General Secretary of the Ministry of War. The war finished before he took over the post. In exchange for his brother, who was captured in Pamplona, Monzón liberated a Carlist conspirator jailed in Madrid (the Carlist was Antonio Lizarza and when Monzón was arrested by the police in 1945, Lizarza helped him to avoid the death penalty.) Monzón did not belong to the Central Committee or the Political Bureau of the PCE but he was well considered inside the party, as shown by the fact that after the Casado Coup, he left Spain in the same aeroplane as Dolores Ibárruri, the delegate of the Comintern Stepanov and the French deputy Jean Catala. For more information see Manuel Martorell, *Jesús Monzón, el líder comunista olvidado por la historia* (Pamplona: Pamiela, 2000).

Carmen de Pedro had worked as a typist for the Central Committee of Madrid and Barcelona. She had

in charge of the party but once the leadership was gone, Monzón took over the role.⁵² In the view of Azcárate, the only reason the party had chosen her over Monzón was because the leadership did not hold him in great regard.⁵³ In contrast, Monzón is described in most activists' accounts as a "natural leader".⁵⁴

From 1940 onwards, the team worked to reorganise the Communist activists in France and help those in the concentration camps to flee to America or the Soviet Union.⁵⁵ Azcárate's detailed recollection presents a very active organisation that managed to expand itself throughout France, even in the occupied territory.⁵⁶ Monzón fought to maintain the independence of the Spanish Communists from the French Communist Party (PCF), and eventually participated in the planning of the first guerrilla actions against the Germans that would eventually develop into the Spanish *Maquis* in France in 1941.⁵⁷ He also worked hard to promote the policy of National Unity. In August 1941, he launched a newspaper called *Reconquista de*

also worked as Togliatti's secretary in Madrid and had been in charge of facilitating visas to the Spanish émigrés at the Chilean Embassy in France at the end of the Spanish Civil War, Martorell, *Monzón*, p. 73; Arnáiz, *Retrato*, p. 134. Aurora Arnáiz met Carmen de Pedro after the Spanish Civil War in Paris and they became close friends.

Gabriel León Trilla was an intellectual who came from a military family of Valladolid. He was one of the founders of the *Partido Comunista Español*, predecessor of the PCE. He had a degree in Philosophy from the universities of Valladolid and Madrid. In 1927, he became part of the Political Bureau of the party. Together with Adame and Bullejos, Trilla formed the troika that was in charge of the PCE until 1932. He also worked for the Comintern in Moscow until this time. In 1932, Trilla was expelled from the PCE as part of the Bullejos leadership due to disagreements with the Comintern. He was readmitted into the party again during the Civil War and worked as a translator of the Ministry of Public Instruction. During the conflict, Trilla also became the editor-in-chief of *Nuestra Bandera*. After the war, Trilla worked as a French teacher in Aix-en-Provence when Monzón found him and convinced him to become an activist for the party again.

Manuel Azcárate was a party activist and an intellectual. His father was the ambassador of the Republic in London.

⁵² By then, Carmen de Pedro and Monzón had started a romantic relationship.

⁵³ Azcárate, *Derrotas*, pp. 227, 248; Law, *La Pasionaria*, p. 138; Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 411. Morán, on the other hand, points out that "Dolores, who always liked domineering men made to succeed, or at least to appear so, had a good opinion of Monzón", Morán, *Miseria*, p. 84.

⁵⁴ Azcárate, *Derrotas*, p. 218; Mariano Asenjo and Victoria Ramos, *Malagón. Autobiografía de un falsificador* (España: El Viejo Topo, 1999), p. 97; Morán, *Miseria*, p. 84.

⁵⁵ Among those who they helped to flee was Palmiro Togliatti, who escaped to the USSR in February 1940.

⁵⁶ Azcárate, *Derrotas*, pp. 259-265.

⁵⁷ The *Maquis* was a rural guerrilla movement that acted in the rearguard, fighting against the Nazi forces in occupied France. There is no agreement on when exactly the first action of the *Maquis* took

España.⁵⁸ A year later, he created an organisation called Spanish National Unity (UNE), and appointed himself as the president. The UNE managed to gather support from some individuals who were not Communists but never from any other political party.

During this period, communication between the group in France and the party in Moscow and Mexico was difficult to maintain, particularly in the early years of the war.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, Monzón made a great effort to follow the directives of the party, with more success once he was able to listen to Radio Moscow from September 1941, and the PCE's *Radio España Independiente*, also known as *Radio Pirenaica*, from 1943. In addition, Monzón drafted several reports that he tried to send to the leadership in Mexico and Moscow, of which at least one reached Carrillo in Cuba in the summer of 1942.⁶⁰ Though at first his attempts to receive a response from the party failed, later Carmen de Pedro would travel to Switzerland with the specific task of contacting the exiled leadership and indeed succeeded in doing so.⁶¹ In fact, most authors agree that Monzón never developed his own political line and they manage to demonstrate this by using the documents left from this period and showing among other things the similarities between the declarations of the organisation in France and those of the organisations in Moscow and Mexico.⁶²

place, but it was sometime in 1941.

⁵⁸ For more information see Martorell, *Monzón*, pp. 95-96.

⁵⁹ Azcárate, *Derrotas*, p. 232.

⁶⁰ Martorell, *Monzón*, pp. 98-99, 106.

⁶¹ Azcárate, *Derrotas*, p. 271.

⁶² Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*, p. 97; Arasa, *Maquis*, pp. 299-300; Heine, *La oposición*, p. 203. Moreno Gómez, author of one of the most extensive books on the guerrilla movement against Franco, also argues that National Unity was a policy of the whole PCE and of the International, not a policy invented by Monzón. See Moreno Gómez, *La resistencia*, pp. 242-243. Another example of the leadership's approval of the National Unity policy can be found in an article written by Santiago Carrillo on the substitution of Ramón Serrano Suñer, "Declaraciones de Santiago Carrillo", *HOY*, Montevideo, 5 September 1942, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Santiago Carrillo, Artículos, Caja 3, Carp.

Aside from the activities carried out in France, Monzón soon turned his attention to the party in Spain. Following the downfall of Quiñones, the clandestine organisation had never recovered. In an attempt to bring it back to life, Monzón began to send into the country cadres from France, who worked under his direct orders. One of these men would be Gabriel Leon Trilla.⁶³ Jesús Monzón himself entered the country and, soon after his arrival, began to work on the arduous task of finding allies for the UNE.⁶⁴ In Madrid, while trying to give the UNE some credibility, Monzón launched the *Junta Suprema de Unión Nacional* (JSUN) in September 1943. It was supposed to be the representative of the UNE inside Spain and have the support of Socialists, Cenetistas⁶⁵, and Catalan and Basque nationalists. However, there is strong evidence that the *Junta* never really existed.⁶⁶

While this was happening, the Latin American version of the UNE, the *Unión Democrática Española* (UDE), had also been created. It was in charge of expanding the ideas and programme of National Unity in the New World. Through the UDE, the PCE obtained the support of a few intellectuals and what was more important, the support of the Negrínist sectors of the PSOE and the UGT. Unfortunately, this was just a delusion. Soon, the rapprochement between the PCE and the rest of the exile forces in Latin America that had begun after the German invasion of the USSR was challenged again. The PCE published a new manifesto in the summer of 1942 in

1.1.5).

⁶³ Monzón's decision to give Trilla a position of responsibility was a bold thing to do. Trilla had been expelled from the PCE in 1932 and though he had been readmitted into the party during the Civil War, in Communist terms his past was reason enough to make him untrustworthy for life.

⁶⁴ For more information see Moreno Gómez, *La Resistencia*, p. 243.

⁶⁵ Those who belonged to the Syndicalist trade union *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo*, (CNT).

⁶⁶ A very extensive inquiry into the matter was undertaken by Estruch Tobella. He also concluded "that the Junta Suprema never existed", Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*, pp. 78-85. Also see Sergio Vilar, *Historia del Anti-franquismo* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1984), p. 100; Morán, *Miseria*, pp. 83-95; Azcárate, *Derrotas*, p. 272; Moreno Gómez, *La Resistencia*, p. 243. On the other hand, Arasa maintains that the *Junta* existed but that it gathered nothing more than a few individuals who could not have been said to represent their parties, Arasa, *Maquis*, p. 43.

which the party no longer called for the re-establishment of a Republican government.⁶⁷ Rather, it called on the Spanish people to elect a Constituent Assembly that would then draw up a constitution. This measure, which was not welcomed by the Spanish Republican forces in exile, came as a result of the Communists' attempt to appeal to right wing forces such as the Monarchists. However, not only did the Manifesto trouble many of those the PCE was theoretically trying to gain as allies, it also failed to find any allies among the right wing forces. The difficulty for the Communists in attempting to build bridges with conservative anti-Francoists was compounded by the anti-Communism of these sectors. Even so, the policy of National Unity to a certain extent served to break the isolation in which the PCE had found itself ever since the German-Soviet Pact.⁶⁸

2. The Aran Valley invasion

The guerrilla invasion of Spain in 1944 came about as a result of the party's combined approach that defended, on the one hand, the policy of National Unity, and, on the other, supported the guerrilla option to overthrow the Franco regime. In August 1944, Monzón wrote a letter to the Communist organisation that he had left in France, asking them to organise an invasion of Spain through the Pyrenees. After the liberation of Paris, at a time when the euphoria of victory was at its highest, Monzón wanted to take advantage of the Spanish forces that had fought on French soil during the Nazi occupation.⁶⁹ It was sensible to anticipate that in the struggle against Fascism, Spain would be the next stage. The aim of the invasion was to

⁶⁷ "Llamamiento del Comité Central del PCE."

⁶⁸ Estruch Tobella, 1939-1956, p. 72; Morán, *Miseria*, p. 81; Heine, *La oposición*, pp. 107, 109.

occupy a strip of Spanish territory that would serve as a bridgehead where a provisional government could be established provoking a national insurrection and the subsequent intervention of the Allies.⁷⁰ Those Spaniards who had fought in France against the Nazis were now organising themselves as the *Agrupación de Guerrilleros Españoles* (AGE), to prepare an Army for the “conquest” of Spain.

As with everything else relating to Monzón, there is some debate about whether or not the leadership of the party in Mexico and Moscow knew about the invasion, and approved of it. While the party maintained that the decision had been taken by Monzón alone, several authors have suggested that the invasion plans must have been known to the leadership in Moscow for several reasons. At the time France had already been liberated and communications between the PCE and its organisation in France were possible. Azcárate and De Pedro had held a meeting with two leaders of the PCF, André Marty and Jacques Duclos, to inform them about the operation and very likely, the French would have informed the PCE leadership about it. And finally, the preparations for the invasion were not kept secret: the British Intelligence Services, the Franco regime and the French Authorities all knew about the plans of the guerrilleros making it almost impossible for the Soviets and hence, the PCE leadership not to have known about it.⁷¹

Soon after receiving Monzón's letter, the group in France agreed to go ahead with the invasion that came to be known as the “Reconquest of Spain”. They chose the Aran

⁶⁹ For information on the participation of the Maquis in the liberation of France against the Nazis see Moreno Gómez, *La Resistencia*, p. 246.

⁷⁰ Moreno Gómez, *La Resistencia*, p. 247.

⁷¹ Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*, pp. 94, 97; Heine, *La oposición*, pp. 203, 211; Azcárate, *Derrotas*, pp. 286-287; Arasa, *Maquis*, pp. 94, 106, 108, 303. Other authors that agree with this view are Lister, *¡Basta!* (Madrid: Gregorio del Toro, 1978) pp. 180-181; Vilar, *Anti-franquismo*, p. 136; Falcón, *Asalto*, p. 234. On the other hand, according to Moreno Gómez, the decision to invade was an

valley as the crossing point. Azcárate believes that there were three main reasons why they welcomed this idea. Firstly, they had a false vision of the reality of the situation in Spain, which made them believe that conditions were such that the invasion would be followed by a general insurrection of the populace against the dictatorship. Second, they were very much influenced by the experience they had just lived through: the guerrilla victory over the Nazis in France. And finally, there was a general feeling that they 'had to do something' with the Republican Army of Spaniards located in the south of France, which had numerous weapons and high morale.⁷² Moreno Gómez, in his extensive book on the guerrilla movement against Franco, argues that the invasion was in fact a logical action: "It was coherent to rely on the Allies' support for the reestablishment of a democratic order in Spain, and it was coherent to expect that an armed action of the Spanish exiles against Franco would attract European solidarity".⁷³

At 6 a.m. on 19 October 1944, the operation "Reconquest of Spain" officially began.⁷⁴ The *guerrilleros* had a few early successes but, very soon after the invasion began, they were overpowered by the Spanish army. In addition, it soon became clear that the people were not ready to support them. Their onward march halted at the town of Viella, which they failed to conquer. At this point, Carrillo arrived in France.⁷⁵ He then took over the command of the party organisation, which was not hard to do since he was the only top party leader present in the country. He travelled into the Aran valley with Azcárate, and on 28 October held a meeting with the

autonomous one made by the PCE's delegation of France and Spain, Moreno Gómez, *La Resistencia*, p. 246.

⁷² Azcárate, *Derrotas*, p. 286.

⁷³ Moreno Gómez, *La Resistencia*, p. 245.

⁷⁴ There were groups of guerrilleros coming inside the country before and after this date. For more information about the invasion see Arasa, *Maquis*, pp. 121-189 and Moreno Gómez, *La Resistencia*, p. 247.

leaders of the *guerrilleros* where it was decided to order the troops to retreat.⁷⁶ According to Carrillo, he was the one that took this decision because he had been informed in Paris that a Francoist regiment was marching towards the frontier to close it, which would have left the guerrillas without an escape route.⁷⁷ However, Vicent López Tovar, the military chief of the *guerrilleros*, has argued that the order had already been given when Carrillo arrived: he had been the one to convince Carrillo to go ahead with it.⁷⁸ In fact, López Tovar had refused to attack Viella against the orders of the party as he thought they could not succeed.⁷⁹ However, it was not until Carrillo arrived that the decision became official.

As the venture came to an end, it was clear that the invasion had been a mistake. Monzón's days as a party leader were coming to an end. However, as we shall see, the tactical errors made during the Aran valley invasion, though important, were mainly used as excuses for his downfall.

3. The downfall of Jesús Monzón

Due to the conditions imposed by the Second World War, the underground Communist parties in Europe were forced to develop independently from their Political Bureaux in exile. However, the centralism that characterized the Communist

⁷⁵ He was in Oran when Ibárruri ordered him to go to France immediately to take charge of the situation, Carrillo, *Dialogue*, pp. 91-92; Arasa, *Maquis*, p. 194.

⁷⁶ Until the publication of Moreno Gómez's book on the guerrilla movement against Franco, the date for Carrillo's arrival into the Aran Valley had been 27 October (Azcarate, *Derrotas*, p. 288; Martorell, *Monzón*, p. 144; Arasa, *Maquis*, p. 192). Moreno Gómez, basing his argument on the version of events given by Vicente López Tovar, maintains he only got there on 28 October, which gives weight to the theory that the decision to retreat had already been taking before Carrillo's arrival, Moreno Gómez, *La Resistencia*, p. 248.

⁷⁷ In his book about the Maquis, Daniel Arasa argues that it was unlikely that such a regiment existed, Arasa, *Maquis*, p. 201.

⁷⁸ Asenjo and Ramos, *Malagón*, p. 139 and Moreno Gómez, *La Resistencia*, pp. 248-249.

⁷⁹ Arasa, *Maquis*, p. 188.

movement at the time could not allow these autonomous organisations to exist for long, much less so if they had been successful in their respective countries. Once the war ended and the communication channels were opened, it was just a matter of time before the party leaders regained control over the activists in the field, often destroying their organisations in the process. In the case of the PCE, the policy of National Unity and the Aran valley invasion would both be used to crush the organisation created by Monzón. Obviously, the failure of the guerrilla operation made this process easier, but it was not the reason Monzón fell in disgrace after the end of the war. As Vázquez-Montalbán explains, “the leadership of the PCE was ready to come of age and take charge of the party in Spain, even if they had to pass over the political corpse of Monzón and the physical corpse of Trilla”.⁸⁰

Monzón's downfall was the result of the party's democratic centralism, the rule of a leadership that did not want to lose any of its power.⁸¹ It cannot be forgotten that the core of the PCE leadership had been safely waiting in Mexico and Moscow for events to unfold, while Monzón succeeded in creating an autonomous party organisation in occupied France. The two groups represented the central dilemma of activists against bureaucrats that had unfolded in the international Communist movement as a result of the Second World War, a conflict that had previously been exposed within the PCE by the case of Quiñones. The activists were indirectly questioning the legitimacy of the bureaucrats, as previously the Communist forces in Spain had questioned the leadership in exile. An autonomous organisation even when acting in accordance with party policy, as has been shown to be the case with the policy of National Unity and with the Aran valley invasion, would threaten the very

⁸⁰ Vázquez-Montalbán, *Pasionaria*, p. 123.

⁸¹ The principle of democratic centralism basically meant that the minority had to adhere to the line adopted by the majority and that there could not follow any deviation or public disagreement.

essence of a centralized Communist party, therefore leaving no other option for the exiled leadership than to crush the newly emerging activists. The downfall of Monzón was the result of this conflict; the failure of the Aran valley invasion was just the excuse to carry it through.⁸² Indeed, a month after the invasion, Carrillo made a speech in which he described the guerrilla action of the Aran valley as a success:

In the north of Catalonia -in the Aran valley- the patriotic *guerrilleros* have occupied during ten days sixteen villages. ... ten days of power for National Unity, during which there has been no act of revenge or reprisal and during which, for the first time, the Spanish people have lived together.⁸³

Until at least 1951, the party pursued the guerrilla policy as part of its strategy to overthrow the Franco regime even if the idea of an invasion had been abandoned.⁸⁴ And even as late as 1960, the official history of the Spanish Communist Party still described the application of this policy during the Second World War in very positive, if unrealistic, terms: "The guerrilla activity contributed towards preventing the wishes of Franco and his people in joining the war".⁸⁵ However, even if the party did not immediately disengage itself from the invasion or from the policy of National Unity, the objective of its leadership, in this case represented by Carrillo, remained focused on the destruction of Monzón.⁸⁶ He soon became isolated in Spain where frictions were developing with activists such as Sebastián Zapirian and Santiago Álvarez, who had been sent to Spain by Carrillo in an attempt to regain control of the

⁸² It is important to remember that Monzón imposed on his organisation the same despotic leadership he later suffered from those in Moscow and Mexico. For information on the abuses committed by Monzón and the UNE see Heine, *La oposición*, pp. 207, 445-446; Morán, *Miseria*, p. 88; Estruch Tobella, 1939-1956, p. 87; Arasa, *Maquis*, p. 92; Heine, *La oposición*, p. 217; Vilar, *Anti-franquismo*, p. 137.

⁸³ (*Unidad y Lucha*, Toulouse, Ediciones España Popular, November 1944, p. 1). Estruch Tobella, 1939-1956, p. 99.

⁸⁴ Carrillo places the end of the guerrillas in Spain in 1949 but there seems to be enough evidence to confirm that they were active until 1951, Carrillo, *Dialogue*, p. 101.

⁸⁵ Ibárruri & VVAA, *Historia del PCE*, p. 219.

⁸⁶ Arasa, *Maquis*, pp. 246-247; Estruch Tobella, 1939-1956, p. 98; Asenjo and Ramos, *Malagón*, p. 153.

underground organisation. In February 1945, the exiled leadership published an "Open letter from the Delegation of the CC inside Spain". Its goal was to discredit Monzón and everything he had done until then. However, Morán argues that the letter was not written by any delegates in Spain but rather by Carrillo himself in France.⁸⁷ Subsequently, the leadership called Monzón, Trilla and Pilar Soler, another activist that worked with Monzón, back to France for a meeting. Apparently, Monzón and Soler planned to leave Spain through different channels than those normally used by the party activists, fearing that they could be betrayed and even killed by the latter. Monzón got as far only as Barcelona where he was arrested by the police while preparing his departure.⁸⁸ Eventually, he was sentenced to 30 years in prison.⁸⁹ According to Líster, Monzón's arrest saved his life because the person in charge of helping him to leave Spain was in effect going to take him to his place of execution.⁹⁰ Trilla, on the other hand, opted not to follow the orders of the party and stayed in Madrid, breaking contact with the PCE activists. Monzón and Trilla's suspicions were soon confirmed when Trilla was murdered by a group of Communist guerrilleros on orders from the PCE.⁹¹ In December 1947, while in jail, Jesús Monzón was officially expelled from the PCE accused of being a provocateur.⁹²

⁸⁷ Morán, *Miseria*, pp. 100-102; Ibárruri & VVAA, *Historia del PCE*, p. 226.

⁸⁸ Soler managed to escape and soon crossed the frontier with the help of the PSUC's activists. For more information see Martorell, *Monzón*, pp. 153-164.

⁸⁹ Monzón avoided the death penalty thanks to Bishop Olaechea and a man called Antonio Lizarza, a Carlist from Navarra he had saved during the civil war (see note 51 in this chapter). Apparently, Lizarza gave proof that Monzón had been in Switzerland during the Aran valley invasion, Heine, *La oposición*, pp. 224-225; Morán, *Miseria*, p. 106, Martorell, *Monzón*, pp. 153-182.

⁹⁰ Líster, *Carrillo*, p. 79.

⁹¹ There were other activists that suffered from the repression of the PCE. According to Morán, Carrillo and Serradell were directly responsible for the death of Pere Canals, Monzón's delegate in Catalonia, Morán, *Miseria*, p. 173. Llibert Estartus, who also belonged to the PSUC, disappeared in strange circumstances, Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*, pp. 110-112; Vilar, *Anti-franquismo*, p. 150. Alberto Pérez Ayala, in charge of the political contacts of the JSUN, was killed in October 1945 probably by the same group that killed Trilla, Arasa, *Maquis*, pp. 293-294. And Arriolabengoa, another member of Monzón's group, was arrested by the police in 1945, Morán, *Miseria*, p. 107.

As the Monzón affair drew to a close, it became clear that the main beneficiary of his downfall had been Santiago Carrillo. During the evacuation of the guerrillas, his reputation grew dramatically. According to many authors, it placed him on the ‘trampoline’ towards the general secretariat of the party.⁹³ The rest of the Communist leaders in Mexico and Moscow had arrived in France much later than Carrillo, a time difference which allowed him to become settled and take control. Carrillo, the bureaucrat, had won the battle against Monzón, the activist, a pattern that will be repeated throughout this study.

In December 1945, the PCE held a General Assembly in Toulouse that helped to affirm the party’s centralized structure, validating in this manner the authority of the exiled leaders. The purge of Jesús Monzón confirmed a pattern in the PCE that had already started with the case of Heriberto Quiñones. The birth of an autonomous clandestine movement had met with the resistance of the bureaucratic leadership in exile. This resistance translated itself into open confrontation to finally crush Monzón and those close to him. As a consequence, the party also destroyed one of the most active organisations the Communists ever had.

D. The Beginning of the Cold War

1. The PCE and the Republican forces

⁹² Arasa, *Maquis*, p. 301.

⁹³ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 79; Morán, *Miseria*, p. 97; Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*, p. 102; Heine, *La oposición*, p. 220; Arasa, *Maquis*, p. 196; Falcón, *Asalto*, p. 234.

The end of the Second World War signified further change for the PCE as well as for the Spanish Republican forces in exile, the latter having undergone serious internal confrontation since the end of the Spanish Civil War.⁹⁴ The initial indications that policies were taking a new turn appeared on 10 January 1945, when the *Cortes* (Spanish Parliament) in exile held its first session. From then onwards, it became clear that the Republican forces were attempting to rebuild a unified and stable platform with which to attract the support of the Allies. As the Communists became aware of the dangers in not being part of this alternative, they decided to revive the claim for the re-establishment of Republican legality that had been eliminated in their 1942 manifesto.⁹⁵ Slowly but surely, the PCE was disentangling itself from the policy of National Unity that started to become the object of subtle criticism in the party's newspapers and the leaders' speeches.

In 1946, the party applied to join the *Alianza Nacional de Fuerzas Democráticas* (ANFD), an organisation created by the Socialists in Madrid 1944, which brought together members of the PSOE, the UGT, the CNT and the Spanish Republican Parties. Soon after its creation, the ANFD entered into negotiations with the Monarchists and with the Republican government in exile.⁹⁶ Once accepted into the ANFD, the PCE could no longer portray the guerrillas as the force heading the

⁹⁴ After the resignation of Manuel Azaña on 27 February 1939, the Republican government in exile went through a very difficult period. Diego Martínez Barrio, President of the Cortes (Spanish Parliament) refused to replace Azaña and subsequently, on 27 July, the Standby Committee approved a motion that assumed the dissolution of the Republican government. However, Juan Negrín, the Prime Minister since 1937, refused to accept this resolution for he argued the Committee did not hold the constitutional power to take such a measure. There followed a period of great animosity between the Republican forces in exile, particularly between those who supported Negrín, mainly the Communists, and those Socialists who supported Indalecio Prieto.

⁹⁵ This manifesto supported the idea of the people choosing the Constituent Assembly that would elaborate the constitution.

⁹⁶ The difficulty in these negotiations, the confrontations between the different political groups inside the organisation, the strong repression of the Franco regime against the ANFD's activists and the lack of support of the Western democracies, would all contribute to the dissolution of the ANFD between 1947 and 1948. For more information see Heine, *La oposición*, pp. 369-388.

planned overthrow of the Franco regime. It now had to favour the goal supported by the majority of the Republican forces for an allied intervention in the country. Nevertheless, the Communists did not abandon guerrilla action and were in reality always eager to praise it, especially since it was the only ace the party could claim to have. This attitude did not help to unite the opposition as the Communists were suspected of being two-faced.

The next step for the PCE entailed membership of the Republican government in exile now headed by the Socialist José Giral. This government had been formed with great difficulty on 21 August 1945 in Mexico, following years of internal disputes between Indalecio Prieto, Diego Martínez Barrio and Juan Negrín, the main adversaries in the Spanish political arena in exile. In order to be included in the new government, the Communists had to overcome strong opposition from the Socialists led by Prieto, who refused to forget past confrontations. Nevertheless, by March 1946, Carrillo became Minister without portfolio in the new government of the Republic.⁹⁷ However, despite the efforts of the political forces in exile and the guerrillas inside Spain, the dissolution of the Franco regime was still not an immediate possibility.

As we have seen, the guerrillas were unable to provoke the emergence of a popular revolt against Franco. In fact, their effects seemed to be the reverse of those intended. According to Preston, “they (the *guerrilleros*) made possible the revival of the Civil War mentality, gave the Army something to do and generally reunified the

⁹⁷ In the meantime, the PSUC went through a similar process. The ANC, which had been created as the PSUC counterpart of the UNE, disappeared in August 1945. The Catalan Communists were then accepted in a new unitary platform called *Solidaritat Catalana*, led by Josep Tarradellas. On 14 September 1945, Comorera became part of Josep Irla's government of the *Generalitat*. But the efforts of this government would not get them very far and on 22 January 1948, it was dissolved by its president.

officer corps around Franco”.⁹⁸ Those who had fought and lost the war against Franco, and were now experiencing the terrible effects of post-war repression and appalling economic circumstances, were likely to prefer to wait for a solution to come from the outside. However, it soon became clear that international factors would no longer work against the regime. The Republican forces in exile had achieved little other than symbolic measures against the Franco regime. Firstly, there was the exclusion of Franco’s Spain from the United Nations on 19 June 1945, ratified during the Potsdam Conference in the summer of that year.⁹⁹ Secondly, there was condemnation of the regime in the Tripartite Declaration of the United States, Great Britain and France on 4 March 1946.¹⁰⁰ By then, it was clear that the Spanish exiles’ hopes for intervention in the country had been wishful thinking. Once again, the international state of affairs favoured Franco as in reality, Spain fell under the Western powers’ sphere of influence. The fear of Communism, adequately exploited by the regime, erased any intention the western powers might have had of an intervention whose result could be unpredictable.

Moreover, the world was on the verge of the Cold War. The anti-Communist sentiment implanted in Europe through American aid meant that the Communist parties that at first had been part of the post-war coalition governments, as had been the case in France and Italy, were now being ostracized. As a response to this change, the Communists re-adopted their old sectarian habits against the rest of the forces on the left and against countries like the USA and the UK.¹⁰¹ The policy of the United-Front-from-Below from the years of the German-Soviet Pact, which stood in total

⁹⁸ Preston, *Franco*, p. 518. Of the same opinion are Azcárate, *Derrotas*, p. 302 and Morán, *Miseria*, p. 117.

⁹⁹ 2 August 1945. For more information on Franco and the Allies see Preston, *Franco*, pp. 532-562.

¹⁰⁰ This took place during the Assembly of the United Nations.

¹⁰¹ The Cominform was created in September 1947 to replace the Comintern, which had been

contradiction with the policy of National Unity, returned to the fore. This once again led to the isolation of the Spanish Communists.¹⁰²

In August 1947, Vicente Uribe resigned as Minister of the Economy in the Republican Government, after the PSOE had violently attacked the PCE. Rodolfo Llopis, the General Secretary of the PSOE, had been appointed Prime Minister of the Republic in exile in February of that year. The Socialists favoured an alliance with the Monarchists, a policy thought to be more in line with the desires of the international community. Once it became clear that there was not going to be any intervention, Llopis was replaced by the Republican Alvaro de Albornoz on 27 August 1947. The new government contained only ministers from Republican parties and would have no further impact on Spanish politics. The alliance of the Spanish political forces in exile had failed drastically.

As the new shift towards confrontation left the PCE isolated from other Spanish political forces, the party became concerned again with its guerrilla strategy. However, by this time, the repression had limited the guerrilla activity in Spain to the Front of the Levant and Aragon, which was directly controlled by the PCE.¹⁰³ Elsewhere, the guerrilla presence was declining.¹⁰⁴ Desperate for a solution to these failures, the Spanish Communists decided to go to Yugoslavia to ask Tito for help with the guerrillas. The Spanish wanted Tito to help them with the planes they

abolished earlier in the war.

¹⁰² From November 1947 to the spring of 1948, the organisation of the PCE in Moscow would go through a new purge connected to the above-mentioned downfall of Jesús Hernández. For more information see Morán, *Miseria*, pp. 151-160

¹⁰³ For a detailed account on the repression against the guerrilla in Cordoba, Albacete, Ciudad Real and Jaén during this period see Moreno Gómez, *La Resistencia*, pp. 468-676.

¹⁰⁴ As with the number of *guerrilleros* that crossed Spain during the Aran valley invasion, the number of casualties that the guerrillas suffered during their existence until 1951 varies greatly from one author to the other. For different accounts see Morán, *Miseria*, p. 118; Carrillo, *Dialogue*, p. 101; Heine, *La oposición*, pp. 430-436; Vilar, *Anti-franquismo*, pp. 157-160; Moreno Gómez, *La*

needed in order to parachute men into Spain. The PCE leadership was unaware of the growing tensions between Belgrade and Moscow.¹⁰⁵ In February 1948, Carrillo headed an expedition to Yugoslavia but only managed to obtain 30,000 dollars from the Yugoslavs.¹⁰⁶ Tito was about to break from Moscow and the last thing he wanted was to challenge the West by helping the Spanish in an armed struggle.

Nevertheless, though the Yugoslavs did not give them the help they expected, the encounter prompted the Soviets to call their own meeting with the Spanish Communists. In all probability, they wanted to reaffirm the PCE's fidelity to the Soviet Union in the confrontation between Tito and Stalin.¹⁰⁷ The meeting took place in October 1948 between the Soviet delegation formed by Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov and Suslov, and a Spanish delegation formed by Dolores Ibárruri, Francisco Antón and Santiago Carrillo. According to most accounts, Stalin suggested a reduction in guerrilla action, which could then be used in combination with a policy of Communist infiltration in the regime's trade unions and mass organisations.¹⁰⁸ The Spanish delegation was disappointed: there seemed to be a hint of capitulation in the measures recommended by Stalin. However, as Claudín explains, "the meeting finished with the Spanish not totally convinced but ready, nevertheless, to apply with discipline the wise advice of the great chief".¹⁰⁹ The PCE was not about to contradict the orders coming from Moscow: at a time of extreme isolation from other political forces in exile, the Spanish Communists depended all the more on the support and

Resistencia, p. 687.

¹⁰⁵ Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 417; Carrillo, *Comunismo?*, p. 201.

¹⁰⁶ For Carrillo's description of the meeting see Carrillo, *Memorias*, pp. 417-418. Also see Morán, *Miseria*, pp. 134-136 and Law, *La Pasionaria*, pp. 151-152.

¹⁰⁷ Carrillo, *Comunismo?* p. 202.

¹⁰⁸ Ibárruri, *Memorias*, pp. 618-620; Carrillo, *Memorias*, pp. 420-422; Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 97; Sánchez Montero, *Memorias*, p. 206; Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*, pp. 153-154; Morán, *Miseria*, pp. 137-141. On the other hand, Azcárate, Vilar and Lister argued that Stalin ordered the dissolution of the guerrillas altogether, Azcárate, *Derrotas*, p. 321; Vilar, *Anti-franquismo*, pp. 169-171; Lister, *Carrillo*, p. 54.

legitimacy given to them by the Soviet Union. In addition, the Soviet dictator also gave the PCE half a million dollars, sealing once more the Spaniards' economic dependence on the Soviet Union.¹¹⁰

Nevertheless, it could be argued that in the short term, Stalin's orders had little effect on the party. By 1948, the guerrilla movement seemed to be at a point of no return. The Civil Guard had finally managed to break the Front of the Levant and Aragon. A reduction of guerrilla activity was therefore a fact, not a choice. It would not be until the tram strike of Barcelona in 1951 that the PCE finally ordered the guerrillas to withdraw. Moreover, the possibilities of infiltrating the mass organisations and regime's trade unions were remote in 1948. The regime's control over industrial relations was very tight and the workers' representatives were carefully appointed from above. In fact, the infiltration of the official trade unions only happened on a large scale in 1957 when Spain's economic growth following the abandonment of the autarchic model by the Francoist regime, opened new routes of negotiation in labour relations. It was at that point that the underground groups were able to use the newly available legal instruments of workers' representation, giving rise later to the first *Comisiones*. Nevertheless, even if it took several years for Stalin's orders to have an impact in the development of the party, both the abandonment of violence and the use of legal platforms to fight the dictatorship eventually became the mainstay of the PCE's policy.

2. Titoism and the PCE.

¹⁰⁹ Claudín, *Carrillo*, pp. 96-97.

¹¹⁰ Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 422; Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 97.

At the beginning of the Cold War, the Communist world embarked on a witch-hunt that came to be called anti-Titoism. Josip Broz Tito had been the General Secretary of the Yugoslav Communist Party (YCP) since 1937. During the Second World War, he became responsible for an all-Yugoslav Partisan Force created to resist the 1941 German invasion. These partisans acted with autonomy from the Soviet Union and would become the main force in the subsequent liberation of Yugoslavia.¹¹¹ By March 1945, Tito was the new Prime Minister of the country, and after defeating the Germans, he set up a one-party dictatorship.

However, his subsequent refusal to come under Soviet domination angered Stalin and eventually led to the expulsion of the YCP from the Cominform in June 1948. It is interesting to point out that except for Albania, Yugoslavia had been the only country under the Soviet sphere of influence whose leaders had stayed in the country fighting for its freedom during the Second World War and eventually led to their liberation from the Germans. Hence, the YCP did not suffer from the activists vs. bureaucrats' dilemma that had affected most of the Communist parties in Eastern Europe at the end of the Second World War. In countries such as Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Poland, the leaders who had fled into exile during the war would later return to purge those who had stayed home fighting against the enemy. Needless to say, these leaders had to rely on the Soviet Union to regain power and influence, something Tito did not have to do.¹¹² This confidence allowed him to stand up to the Soviets when they tried to interfere in his affairs and resist attempts to convert Yugoslavia into a satellite state. Consequently, Titoism became a new form of heresy under Soviet eyes, replacing Trotskyism as the label used to justify

¹¹¹ The partisans started to receive military aid from the Soviets only in the spring 1944. In contrast, the Western Allies had been supplying war material to them since May 1943.

¹¹² Westwood, *Endurance*, pp. 370, 379.

repression. From then onwards, anyone threatening or questioning in any manner the authority of the orthodox Communist leaders could be accused of Titoism, which would lead to his/her automatic fall from grace.¹¹³

In the case of the PCE, the anti-Titoist campaign would be directed principally against the leader of the PSUC, Joan Comorera.¹¹⁴ For many years, Comorera had worked to maintain his party's independence from the PCE. His most important achievement was the PSUC's acceptance into the Comintern in 1939, which legitimised the autonomy of the party. It was only a matter of time before the PCE would attempt to regain control of the Catalan party. The opportunity came after the Second World War. The Comintern had disappeared in 1943 as a result of the Soviets' attempt to show moderation to the Allies. Hence, the PSUC no longer had the protection derived from its membership in this international organisation. In 1946, the PCE's campaign to take over the Catalan party began, reaching its peak three years later.¹¹⁵

When the crisis turned into open confrontation, Comorera fought to keep control of the PSUC but his efforts proved to be in vain. By this time, the Catalan party was totally dominated by the PCE. Comorera had allowed those who favoured an organic fusion with the Spanish Communist Party to take over critical positions in

¹¹³ This happened to many leaders in Eastern Europe, who under torture confessed to treacheries they had not committed and were thereupon executed. Such were the cases of Mijail Kostov in Bulgaria; Rudolf Slansky in Czechoslovakia; Lucretiu Patrascanu and Ana Pauker in Rumania; Wladislaw Gomułka in Poland; Katchin Dzodze in Albania; and Laszlo Rajk in Hungary. The western Communist parties also underwent their own Titoist clean up, but in their case the results were less dramatic as they lived under the watch of democratic governments. A good account of these events can be found in Arthur London, *The Confession* (William Morrow, New York, 1970).

¹¹⁴ Monzón and those who had worked with him were also accused of being Titoist, though this would happen long after their downfall, which took place at the end of the Second World War. Hence, the timing of Comorera's purge was better and could be presented to the Soviets as proof of their continuous hunt for Titoists. Comorera had become an ideal prey.

¹¹⁵ For information on the events that lead to the confrontation between Comorera and the PCE see Miquel Caminal, *Joan Comorera. Comunisme i Nacionalisme (1939-1958)* (Barcelona: Editorial Empuries, 1985), pp. 214-246; Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*, pp. 177-180; Morán, *Miseria*, pp. 171-176.

the PSUC.¹¹⁶ On 8 November 1949, the Spanish Communists published a manifesto informing the rank-and-file of the expulsion of Comorera from the PSUC and accusing him, amongst many other things, of being a Tito supporter.¹¹⁷ The confrontation between the Yugoslav leader, Josip Tito, and Stalin had finally exploded. Hence, the PCE was happy to present Comorera as their Titoist sacrifice. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that the campaign against Comorera had started long before the beginning of the Titoist witch-hunt. The accusations of Titoism against the Catalan leader were therefore pure opportunism, though it was relatively easy for the leadership to target Comorera with nationalist tendencies, as had been the case with Tito. In August 1951, *Mundo Obrero* would publish an article about Comorera in which he was accused of being a Francoist agent. Amongst other things, it said: "Comorera and his gang are complying with their role as footmen and police agents of the imperialists and Francoist forces, just as that Judas Tito and other 'masters' of Comorera have done in Yugoslavia."¹¹⁸

Once Comorera realised there was little more he could do in exile, he moved into an area that he had previously ignored: the clandestine movement in Catalonia. On 31 December 1951, he crossed the frontier into Spain. He went to Barcelona and lived there for three years in terrible conditions accompanied only by his wife, Rosa Santacana, and the activist Celesti Martí.¹¹⁹ Soon after his arrival, through *Radio Pirenaica* and the party's newspapers and theoretical journals, the PCE began a campaign against Comorera accusing him of being a Francoist agent and an

¹¹⁶ Such were the case of Josép Moix, Rafael Vidiella, Ramón Soliva, Wenceslao Colomer, Roman i Margarita Abril, Estruch Tobella, 1939-1956, p. 129; Morán, *Miseria*, p. 173; Caminal, *Comorera*, p. 249.

¹¹⁷ Declaration by the Secretariat of the PSUC about the political conduct of Juan Comorera, 8 November 1949, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, AÑO 1949-I-XII, Carp. 30)

¹¹⁸ "El papel policiaco de los provocadores comoreristas", *Mundo Obrero*, August 1951.

¹¹⁹ For more information on this period see Caminal, *Comorera*, pp. 289-351 and Estruch Tobella,

imperialist spy.¹²⁰ In this manner, not only did they inform the police of Comorera's presence in Barcelona but also ensured that those Communists inside the country would treat him as a traitor. It is no wonder that, at this point, in the clandestine party newspaper Comorera published in Barcelona, *Bulletí Interior del PSUC*, he wrote in reference to the PCE: "What is left for you to do? A protocol M?", M standing for *muerte*, death in Spanish.¹²¹ The discrediting campaign led by the leadership in exile continued until Comorera's arrest on 9 June 1954.¹²² As happened with Quiñones and Monzón, the PCE presented the arrest as a manoeuvre by the police to disguise the informer Comorera. Three years passed before his trial took place in August 1957 when he was condemned to thirty years in prison.¹²³ Comorera died after a long illness on 7 May 1958 in the prison's infirmary.

Ironically, Comorera's downfall was not followed by the absorption of the PSUC by the PCE. It was only logical that once the Catalan party had been brought under the control of the PCE, there was no longer a need for a fusion. In fact, the Spanish leadership could see the benefits of having a Catalan Communist party in name, which would be more attractive for the Catalan rank-and-file than a national Spanish party. Morán has argued that between the PCE and the PSUC there had been no political or tactical difference, and that Comorera's purge was rather the result of political interest, a power struggle. The Catalan leader was defending the

1939-1956, pp. 185-192.

¹²⁰ "El papel policiaco de los provocadores comoreristas", *Mundo Obrero*, August 1951; Caminal, *Comorera*, p. 310.

¹²¹ ("El que ha de saber el Buro Politic del PCE", *Bulletí Interior del PSU de C.* n. 11, 11 June 1950) Estruch Tobella, 1939-1956, p. 191. Líster would later accuse the party of indeed planning to kill Comorera, Líster, *¡Basta!*, p. 229.

¹²² For information on the party's campaign against Comorera see Caminal, *Comorera*, pp. 320-324.

¹²³ The attacks on the Catalan leader by the PCE would weaken after 1956 due to the start of the destalinisation process.

organisational autonomy of the party not the political one.¹²⁴ Indeed, it is clear that the Catalan leader had run his party in the same manner as the Spanish leaders had run the PCE. However, Comorera's purge did stand for something more than just a power struggle. The autonomy that a strong Catalan party represented in the eyes of the PCE was reminiscent of the underground movements that had developed in Spain at the end of the Civil War, and in France during the Second World War. The three purges that followed exemplified the PCE's inability to deal with its inferior organisations, refusing to give them the necessary autonomy they needed to survive. In the short term, this allowed the leadership to keep the PCE's centralized internal structure untouched but in the long term, it hampered their chances of understanding Spanish reality and hence, applying sensible policies in Spain. The physical distance between the exiled leaders and the activists inside the country meant that the party needed to rely on the latter to gather information about the country and subsequently decide upon the policies to follow. However, as we shall see, this never happened.

3. The PCE in France. Anton

On September 7 1950, the Spanish Communist Party was outlawed in France. The Cold War had made the French government very distrustful of the Communists living in their country. Not daring to attack the PCF directly because of the implications it could have for the legitimacy of their democracy, the French government punished a weaker target, the PCE. Moreover, the Spanish Communists were suspected of maintaining arms and the guerrilla structure of the *Maquis*, which

¹²⁴ Morán, *Miseria*, p. 180.

gave the authorities another motive to ban the party.¹²⁵ The PCE's newspapers, *Mundo Obrero* and *Lluita*, and theoretical journals, *Nuestra Bandera* and *Cultura y Democracia*, were closed down and more than one hundred activists were deported to Algiers, Corsica, Czechoslovakia and East Germany.¹²⁶ The leaders of the party had been aware of the possibility of police action and managed to avoid arrest.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, their new clandestine condition further limited the PCE's sphere of political action.

For security matters, Vicente Uribe, Enrique Lister and Antonio Mije moved to Czechoslovakia and established a new centre of the party in Prague.¹²⁸ In this manner, they wanted to create an alternative and more fluid communication channel with Moscow, where the General Secretary Dolores Ibárruri had been residing since 1948.¹²⁹ Carrillo and Francisco Antón stayed behind in Paris in a semi-clandestine condition, the former in charge of the party organisation inside Spain and the latter of the rest. In reality, the new structure of the party, which now had headquarters in Prague, Moscow and Paris, only made its functioning more complicated and provoked serious problems within a leadership that was already divided.¹³⁰ In fact, these confrontations were the first hint of a new power struggle that would come to its peak in later years; a generational conflict inside the PCE between the old guard

¹²⁵ Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*, p. 169.

¹²⁶ Azcárate, *Derrotas*, p. 332; Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 432; Morán, *Miseria*, p. 193; Jáuregui and Vega, *Antifranquismo, 1939-1962*, pp. 133-134. Malagón says that they were first sent to Tunisia and Algiers and later on received by countries like East Germany or Poland, who would then grant them their nationality, Asenjo y Ramos, *Malagón*, p. 177.

¹²⁷ Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 432.

¹²⁸ Uribe, Mije and Gallego were not in France at the time of the party's banning. For security reasons, they would not return and would soon meet with Lister in Prague, Carrillo, *Memorias*, pp. 432-434.

¹²⁹ In December of 1948, Dolores underwent gall bladder surgery. The operation had complications and Dolores would not fully recover until the middle of 1950. For more information on her fight between life and death see Law, *La Pasionaria*, p. 155.

¹³⁰ Mexico ceased to be a party centre at the end of the Second World War when the leaders who were living there returned to Paris. Mexico, nevertheless, retained its position as the party's most important enclave in America.

and the so-called Parisians, or young guard. But before it actually exploded, a new purge would take place: the political elimination of Francisco Antón.

Francisco Antón had been Commissar General of the Republican Army during the Civil War and since 1937 belonged to the Political Bureau of the PCE. A year earlier, he had started a romantic relationship with Ibárruri, a fact that many believed to be behind his rapid rise on his road to power. In 1943, the affair came to an end.¹³¹ Six years later, Antón was to marry a younger comrade in Paris, again a fact many believed to be behind his equally rapid descent. As has been described above, by the time the party was banned in France, the leadership of the PCE was anything but unified.¹³² Carrillo and Antón had a strong dislike for Uribe and accused him of ignoring his duties and hiding behind the bottle. Pasionaria was also displeased with Uribe's work and attitude. Apparently, when Carrillo and Antón talked to her about the "Uribe question" in 1947, she had agreed with their complaints but decided not to act on them as she thought doing so could lead to the division of the party leadership.¹³³ Uribe in return did not have much respect for Antón, Mije and Líster, and complained to Pasionaria in the spring of 1951 about the lack of information the group in Prague was receiving from the comrades in Paris.¹³⁴ He demanded to be notified of their activities on a regular basis. Carrillo and Antón considered this demand to be physically impossible and, by June, they sent a report to Pasionaria complaining about the burden imposed on them by those in Prague.¹³⁵

¹³¹ Preston, *Comrades!* p. 307.

¹³² Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 100.

¹³³ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 101

¹³⁴ Morán, *Miseria*, p. 189.

¹³⁵ Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 435.

This would mark the turning point in the political future of Francisco Antón. After receiving the report from the Paris group, Dolores Ibárruri called Antón to Moscow where he arrived at the end of 1951. There, she unexpectedly accused him of trying to take over Uribe's position in the party and behaving in a dictatorial fashion.¹³⁶ A period of turmoil began within the leadership. It was clear to all that Pasionaria wanted Antón out of the picture and punished. During two years, from 1952 to 1954, a series of discussions, or what could be described as trials, took place in Paris during which Antón was accused among many other things of abusing his power and attempting to divide the party. His former lover was never present. As we shall see, the explanation for this episode in the history of the PCE and in the life of Dolores Ibárruri is very complex.

Two different versions have come out of this affair. The most commonly held states that Pasionaria was outraged by Antón's marriage to a younger comrade and decided to take revenge on him.¹³⁷ It is important to remember, however, that Ibárruri's comrades never forgave her for having a younger lover. In fact, throughout the years there were plenty of denigratory comments made by other Communists regarding her romantic relationship with Antón.¹³⁸ Moreover, those who defend the first argument usually forget to mention that the relationship between Pasionaria and Antón had already been over for some years by the time Antón was purged and it had been Pasionaria who had ended it.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Law, *Pasionaria*, p. 158.

¹³⁷ Morán, *Miseria*, p. 206; Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 102; Law, *La Pasionaria*, pp. 155-156.

¹³⁸ Tagueña, *Testimonio*, p. 356; Líster, *Carrillo*, p. 97; Hernández, *Ministro de Stalin*, pp. 99-100.

¹³⁹ Irene Falcón maintains that their relationship was over by the summer of 1943 and that it had been Ibárruri who had decided to break it up, Falcón, *Asalto*, pp. 216, 230. Paul Preston also places their break up at this time, Preston, *Comrades!* p. 307.

The second version argues that in a time of great instability for the leadership of the Communist world, when the trials in Czechoslovakia were taking place, Pasionaria decided to sacrifice Antón in order to avoid any possible repercussions because of her affair with him.¹⁴⁰ Her own secretary, Irene Falcón, had suffered from Stalinist repression because of her romantic relationship with one of the prosecuted leaders of the Czech Communist party, Bedrich Geminder. According to Paul Preston, Pasionaria was also trying to protect Falcón by presenting Antón as a new victim to the Soviets.¹⁴¹ The same thing happening to Pasionaria, if unlikely, was nevertheless possible. However, there is no evidence to prove that the Soviet leaders held anything against the PCE's General Secretary. On the contrary, it seems more likely that they would have preferred to protect her. Rather, the danger would have come from the enemies she had inside the party who had used her relationship with Antón in the past and could be willing to use it again.

Eventually, Antón would accept the most outrageous accusations made against him.¹⁴² After an agonising wait, in March 1953, he was sent to Warsaw without anyone knowing about it, not even his wife.¹⁴³ Antón was not allowed to come into contact with any of the PCE exiles living there.¹⁴⁴ A few months later, he was expelled from the Political Bureau and the Central Committee of the party.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ Carrillo, *Memorias*, pp. 434-437. Rafael Cruz seems to agree with this version of Antón's downfall. Though he does not say so explicitly, he transcribes Carrillo's explanations, and summarises the ostracism suffered by Irene Falcón "for a very similar case", Cruz, *Pasionaria*, pp. 166-167.

¹⁴¹ Preston, *Comrades!* p. 311.

¹⁴² For the whole description of the process see Morán, *Miseria*, pp. 187-207.

¹⁴³ Eventually, his wife with their two daughters would join him. But they had hardly enough to live on, especially since one of the girls was mentally handicapped and needed special care.

¹⁴⁴ Preston, *Comrades!* p. 309.

¹⁴⁵ He was partially rehabilitated in 1956. The party stated that the sanction imposed on him had been just but accepted that after following the proper investigation it became clear that he had not acted in accordance with the enemy and hence he could be readmitted into the party. By 1964, he was even readmitted to the Central Committee and moved to Prague. In May of that year, Santiago Carrillo would write to Dolores Ibárruri to ask her if she would consider the possibility of nominating Antón as the

On the other hand, Carrillo, who at first attempted to defend Antón, understood early enough that if he wanted to ensure his own political survival, he would have to join the accusation team, and so he did. In a meeting on 8 August 1952, he said:

I believe that the factional activity of Antón is due to his vanity, his egomania, and the practice of personal methods that in the Political Bureau can only lead to the division of the leadership, and it was these practices that led Antón to struggle against the comrades of the party leadership that were abroad, thus showing resistance and hostility to all of their opinions.¹⁴⁶

This meant that once more Carrillo had chosen his professional ambition over his personal feelings.¹⁴⁷ He would continue to be in charge of the party's affairs in Spain and was joined by Ignacio Gallego, Antón's replacement, who in the words of Claudín "had always seen Carrillo as his direct superior".¹⁴⁸ The purge of Francisco Antón had come to an end but the confrontation between the old guard and the so-called Parisians remained latent within the party.

E. Conclusion

As has been established throughout this chapter, after the Spanish Civil War, the PCE underwent a number of shifts in policy as well as a number of internal purges that throughout these years were to prove and confirm the Stalinist character of the

new editor-in-chief of the theoretical review *Realidad*. We can assume she rejected this proposal as Antón did not take the post. Law, *Pasionaria*, pp. 159-161; Vázquez-Montalbán, *Pasionaria*, pp. 126-128, 224-227; On the question posed by the Comrade Francisco Antón, 6 November 1958, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 39); Letter from Santiago Carrillo to Dolores Ibárruri, 20 May 1964, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Dolores Ibárruri, Correspondencia, Caja 16, Carp. 4).

¹⁴⁶ Morán, *Miseria*, p. 196.

¹⁴⁷ Not so long before this episode, Carrillo had publicly renounced his father for his involvement in the Casadist cop at the end of the Civil War, (see note 5).

¹⁴⁸ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 103.

party. As was the case with many other Communist parties, the Soviet Union dictated the policy to be followed by the PCE while the CPSU's democratic centralism was used as a guide and example to handle dissent inside the party. This led to incongruous and radical shifts of policy that further isolated the party from the rest of the Spanish opposition forces. In fact, as we shall see, due to its isolation and the repression inside Spain during the years that followed the aftermath of the Second World War, the PCE reduced its activities to those related to international issues, leaving the struggle against Franco to one side. On the other hand, the purges that had taken place since the end of the Spanish Civil War had exposed a culture of despotism that would eventually eliminate any attempt at renewal or autonomy inside the party. The leaders of the party, though settled in exile and hence with little idea of Spanish reality, would continue to impose their will on the Communist movement inside the country, thus curtailing its independence and chances of success. The effects of these factors, strongly intermingled, would in the long term prove to be extremely damaging for the PCE.

II. FROM APATHY TO ACTIVITY

A. Introduction

As we have seen so far, the history of the Spanish Communist Party from 1939 to the beginning of the Cold War was marked by three main international developments: the German-Soviet Non Aggression Pact in 1939, the entrance of the USSR into the Second World War in 1941 and the intensification of the Cold War after 1945. As the world split in two confronting camps, the PCE and its underground organisations entered a period of stagnation in the struggle against Franco. Unity with other political forces had been replaced by confrontation and to make matters worse for the party, the tactic of using the guerrillas was not producing results due to Francoist repression. As a consequence, the PCE continued to remain closely identified with the Soviet Union's foreign policy. The activity of the Spanish Communists during these years was shaped by the Movement for Peace supported by the Cominform, as well as the anti-American policy encouraged by the USSR. A further factor being the new relations between the United States and the regime of General Franco.

However, even if these years saw little activity from the Communists in Spain, the PCE still underwent important changes in policy which became all the more relevant in the years following destalinisation. As we shall see in this chapter, the tram strike of Barcelona in 1951 would prompt the PCE finally to confirm the long overdue termination of the guerrilla policy. It would also consolidate the

acceptance of a policy of infiltration into the regime's trade unions and mass organisations. More significantly, the death of Stalin in March 1953 started a process of opening up in the Soviet Union that would reach its peak during the XX Congress of the CPSU in March 1956. The destalinisation process would affect the entire Communist movement, including the PCE, which at this point was undergoing a brutal power struggle. The arrival of a new leadership in the Soviet Union would be a decisive factor in the consolidation of a new leadership in the PCE. The latter would renew its interest in Spain and would lead to the implementation of the so-called policy of National Reconciliation to fight the regime.

B. The dormant years

1. Peace

As has been mentioned in the introduction, during the years between the party's banning in France in 1950 and the death of Stalin in 1953, the two main concerns that marked the policy of the PCE were related to international politics rather than the underground struggle against the Franco regime.

The Movement for Peace was a policy that had originated in the USSR and was promoted by the Cominform against what they described as the imperialistic policy of war of the Western countries, including in this group the "traitor" Tito. In effect, as Azcárate argues, the movement for peace was an attempt by the USSR to

challenge the United States' presentation of itself as the champion of freedom.¹ It was expected that the movement would create currents of opinion, mainly among intellectuals, in favour of Soviet foreign policy, which would lead to the elevation of the USSR's prestige in the West. Moreover, it was hoped that a concept as broad as the "defence of peace" would gain support from many who were not particularly sympathetic to the Communist cause. To this end, the Communist parties of the world were used to propagate the movement, and several Congresses for Peace were organised. Aside from attending the congresses, the PCE also made a special effort to gather signatures in favour of the movement. However, the refusal of the rest of the anti-Francoist parties in exile to support what they clearly perceived as Soviet propaganda, met with strong criticism from the Spanish Communists, which would add to their isolation.

At the same time, the party supported in Spain an anti-American policy that can also be seen as part of the Soviet Union's campaign against the American camp, but that was also a response to the developing relationship between the USA and the Franco regime. From the beginning of 1950, the United States started to have contacts with Spain in an attempt to assure its position on the side of the Western democracies in the case of a coming international conflict. On 26 September, the Initiatives Commission of the United Nations voted to reconsider diplomatic relations with the Franco regime. Soon after, on 31 October 1950, the UN's General Assembly authorised the return of ambassadors to Spain, having advocated their withdrawal only four years earlier.

¹ Azcárate, *Derrotas*, pp. 319-320.

The PCE described the UN's ruling as an attempt by the Anglo-Americans to make Spain a centre of aggression and war against the Soviet Union and the Popular Democracies.² Consequently, it proposed the creation of a Republican and Democratic National Front that would fight against the Franco regime and for the reestablishment of the Republic. But this policy did not really attempt to bring all the opposition forces together, even though its name might suggest the opposite. In the same document in which Dolores Ibárruri called for the National Front, she also described the Socialists as those who "specialised in police service and the denunciation of Communists".³

At the end of 1950, the USA appointed Stanton Griffis as ambassador to Madrid. General Franco was relieved: to the Spanish people, he presented his new relationship with the United States as proof of the regime's strength and legitimacy. Moreover, an important financial contribution was also expected from the Americans to help alleviate the terrible effects Franco's economic policy of autarchy was having on the country.⁴ By November 1952, Spain had also been admitted into UNESCO. Less than a year later, two more events would consolidate the position of the country as part of the Western sphere of influence. On 27 August 1953, the regime signed a Concordat with the Vatican. According to Preston, "while significantly less important than the regime was to make out, the Concordat was a major step towards

² Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*, pp. 195-196. This interpretation would change with the United Nations' recognition of Spain in 1955, which was also approved by the USSR.

³ Dolores Ibárruri, *Por la paz, la independencia nacional y la democracia*, 25 October 1951, in Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*, pp. 195-196.

⁴ The autarchic model was meant to transform the country into a self-sufficient economic unit and achieve rapid industrialization by replacing imports with national goods, protecting non-competitive and costly private industries, using protectionist tariff barriers and quantitative restrictions on imports, José María Maravall, *Dictatorship and Political Dissent. Worker and Students in Franco's Spain* (Tavistock Publications, London, 1978), p. 19.

international recognition for the Caudillo”.⁵ A month later, on 26 September 1953, Spain signed the Pact of Madrid with the United States.

(The Pact) was an important landmark in a slow change of economic orientation within the Spanish regime, which consisted of a progressive shift away from autarchic industrialisation to a liberalisation of economic policies.⁶

By the late 1950s and especially the 1960s, these economic changes would have an important effect on the country's industrial relations and the development of the Communist trade union, *Comisiones Obreras*, which also benefited from the PCE's decision to infiltrate the regime's trade unions and mass organisations, and in 1956, from the policy of National Reconciliation. While the latter will be looked at in the next section, it is important to explain here the context that prompted the adoption of the policy of struggle-from-within to fight against the Franco regime.

This move by the PCE away from the violent confrontation of the guerrillas, came during the developments surrounding the tram strike of Barcelona in March 1951 that had begun as a response to the announcement of a 40 percent increase in the tram fares at the beginning of February.⁷ In contrast, the fares had not been increased in Madrid. This led to people in the street spontaneously reacting by boycotting public transport and stoning the trams. In effect, the protests were an expression of the frustration felt by the Catalans as a result of the terrible living conditions produced by an enduring post-war economy and an extremely repressive regime. Among those who participated in the strike, mainly industrial workers and students, were also many Falangists whose presence reflected the bitterness that had developed in certain sectors of the Falange against a regime that since the end of the

⁵ Preston, *Franco*, p. 621.

⁶ Maravall, *Dictatorship*, p. 23.

⁷ This strike was followed by similar strikes in Bilbao and Madrid in May 1951. For an extensive account on the Barcelona general strike of 1951 see Michael Richards, "The Barcelona General Strike

Second World War had been reducing the party's power. As the protests escalated, the central government finally agreed to return the prices back to normal. However, the pressure exercised by the rank-and-file of the official trade unions resulted in the latter calling a strike on 12 March. The claims of the demonstrators had now extended to questions of wages, working hours and political freedom. The strike was a great success with mass participation. However, by 1 p.m. the Civil Guard had already managed to restore order to the streets of Barcelona. The reprisal carried out by the authorities led to about 1,000 arrests. On 17 March, the Civil Governor of the region was dismissed by the regime; the sectors inside the Falange which had been involved in some manner in the protests were also punished.⁸ Nevertheless, as Michael Richards writes on his article about the strike, "it signalled a shift from the brutal military-fascism of the 1940s, characterized, in part, by anti-Catalanism, to a more rational-bureaucratic authoritarian rule in the 1950s".⁹

Though the PCE had little to do with the strike, it still wanted to capitalise on it.¹⁰ The official history of the PCE describes the events in the following unrealistic terms; "The patient and insistent work of the PCE and the PSUC to elevate the consciousness of the workers and to organise them for the struggle was finally paying off."¹¹ It is important to mention here that the Comorera crisis was at its height at this point. The party took credit for the strike not only for the obvious implications it had

of 1951" *European History Quarterly*, n. 29:4, 1999.

⁸ These sectors had supported the tram boycott but not the subsequent strike and indeed participated in the following "clean up" operations carried out by the authorities. They, nevertheless, criticised the leadership for allowing the protest to escalate as it did, Richards, "The Barcelona General Strike of 1951", pp. 569-570.

⁹ Richards, "The Barcelona General Strike of 1951", p. 573.

¹⁰ According to Richards, a few PSUC militants that had entered the official trade unions as part of the PCE's tactic to infiltrate the latter encouraged the continuation of the protests during the Assembly of the local trade union organisation on 6 March. In addition, they were responsible for producing one of the printed notices calling for a new strike on 12 March, Richards, "The Barcelona General Strike of 1951", pp. 562-563.

¹¹ Ibárruri & VVAA, *Historia del PCE*, p. 236.

in the fight against the regime, but also to kill any attempt by the Catalan leader to take credit for the action.¹² More importantly, however, the success of the strike consolidated the party's decision to start work from inside the official trade unions, something they had never contemplated until Stalin had so "recommended" during his 1948 interview with the PCE delegation. However, as is explained in Chapter I, this policy would not bear fruit until 1957-58. In addition, the PCE also accepted that the guerrilla strategy had now become obsolete and should finally be called to an end. As Carrillo explains, "when we decided to start working inside the official trade unions, we realised this was incompatible with the policy of guerrillas".¹³ This strategic and tactical change that took the PCE from a policy of violent confrontation against the regime to struggle-from-within would become very important in later years, when the economic and social changes of the Franco regime would allow for an actual infiltration of the activists into the official institutions of labour bargaining. For the time being, however, the impact of the party in Spain and its infiltration in the trade unions still remained minimal.

2. The V Congress

¹² Gregorio López Raimundo, who had been in Barcelona ever since the arrival of Comorera but just happened to be in Paris at the time of the demonstration, went back into the country with the following challenging tasks: to destroy Comorera, to become a new leader for the PSUC, to capitalise on the March strikes in Barcelona and to reorient policy regarding the official trade unions. López Raimundo and another 26 activists were then arrested by the Francoist police under the accusation of being the organisers of the Tram strike, which brought about a large solidarity campaign organised by the PCE for their release, partly explained by the exiled leaders' desire to shadow Comorera. The massive international attention achieved through the campaign helped in the reduction of the prosecutor's demands from a sentence of twenty years' imprisonment to one of four years. The party would then accuse Comorera of having been responsible for the arrest of López Raimundo, Morán, *Miseria*, pp. 184-185; Preston, *Franco*, p. 618; Caminal, *Comorera*, p. 315. Gregorio López Raimundo entered the party during the war and fought in the 31 Division of the X Corp. After the war, he went to France and from there to Mexico, where he worked as an accountant. López Raimundo returned to Europe at the end of the 1940s where he was in charge of improving the relations with the activists in Spain.

¹³ Interactive interview with Santiago Carrillo, *El Mundo*, November 2000.

One of the few events that would break the monotony of the PCE activities during these years was the organisation of its V Congress. It came a year and a half after the death of Stalin in March 1953, whose effects on the PCE will be looked at in the next section. It is worth pointing out that, regardless of its timing, the V Congress of the PCE was not an example of the process of destalinisation that spread through the Communist movement after Stalin's death. Though there was some internal criticism and some of the cadres that had fallen in disgrace during the party's past purges were rehabilitated, the congress still retained most of the Stalinist characteristics of previous years. Those present in the Congress avoided the flattering and venerating verbosity normally dedicated to Stalin, but more than anything else this suggests that while aware of things changing, they did not yet know in which direction or how far these changes would go.

The V Congress of the PCE took place in Prague from 12 to 21 September 1954.¹⁴ It had been more than 22 years since the Spanish Communists had held their last Congress on 17-23 March 1932 in Seville. In fact, the V Congress had been scheduled for 15 August 1936 but it had to be cancelled after Franco's military uprising on 17 July. In subsequent years, and following the Soviet example, no more congresses took place even though the party would have been able to organise one during its legal period in France from 1944 to 1950.

¹⁴ There is great confusion on the dates of the Congress as well as in those of many other events in the history of the party, mainly due to the fact that the PCE was trying to confuse their Francoist persecutors. The official account given by the party places the Congress on 1-5 November 1954, and that is in fact the date most commonly used by historians. In his memoirs, Lister places it from 1 to 15 of November. I will be using those given by Gregorio Morán in his book, *Miseria y Grandeza del PCE*, as he seems to be the first one to point out the mistake. The Congress in his account took place from 12 to 21 September.

At any rate, the V Congress was finally held in September 1954, at a time when the PCE was in a position of extreme isolation from other political forces.¹⁵ During the Congress, the idea of an Anti-Francoist National Front was strongly defended. With this Front, the PCE wanted to bring Republicans, Monarchists and even disappointed Falangists, under a common roof to fight for the re-establishment of a democratic government.¹⁶ The party's attitude towards the leaderships of the rest of the Spanish opposition forces, however, did not change. During her eight-hour long speech, Pasionaria described the Socialist leaders as the "Social-Democrats who helped Fascism on its road to power". Subsequently, she called on the Socialist rank-and-file to unite with the Communists in the fight against Francoism. She said:

Due to its clear and well-determined stand, the Communist Party is at the head of all the other parties and forces of the anti-Francoist opposition. Only the PCE offers a way out of the current situation, gives a perspective for other forces to follow and presents a concrete, precise and real programme. This programme answers the needs of our country today and in the immediate future, and it can be accepted by the different forces of the opposition.¹⁷

Though there was a certain degree of criticism about the autocratic manner in which the party had been run until that date, the leadership made sure to place the blame elsewhere. Most of the responsibility was attributed to the erroneous judgement of middle cadres or leaders who had already fallen in disgrace, such as Francisco Antón. The party did welcome back some of the activists that had been

¹⁵ The data gathered by the organisation of the party showed some interesting figures. Of the 94 people (106 with the Political Bureau) that attended the V Congress, 31 of them came from inside Spain and the other 65 from France, the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and Latin America. 53 were workers, 5 peasants, 23 intellectuals, 11 shop assistants and employees and 2 military men. The number of the intellectuals in this Congress being a bit less than half of those of the workers and peasants showed the new prominence this class was gaining on the eyes of the PCE leaders. Only 3 percent of those attending were younger than 30, which meant that people who either had fought in or remembered the Civil War formed the immense majority of those present. In addition, the numbers also showed that the students were not yet represented in the party. For more information see Material on the preparation of the V Congress/ biographies of the delegates and guests to the V Congress, AHPCE (V CONGRESO, Carp. 35).

¹⁶ Programme of the PCE, September 1954, AHPCE (V CONGRESO, Actas Congreso).

¹⁷ Report by Dolores Ibárruri, AHPCE (V CONGRESO, Actas Congreso, Tomo 1).

expelled from the party under irregular circumstances. However, purges like the ones carried out against Comorera or Monzón still retained the approval of the leadership.¹⁸ This was not at all surprising taking into account the direct responsibility that those still in power had in the latter. In fact, Ibárruri was far from shy when describing the crimes of such old “traitors”:

We have had to fight ... the betrayal of the people who accidentally came into our ranks with the hope of making a career and who after seeing their hope evaporate, they became like stinking dogs that salivated their hydrophobia of impotence and idiocy over the party.¹⁹

Regarding Spain, the party reaffirmed its belief in the regime’s crisis and its imminent downfall. The agreements with the United States, they argued, were clear evidence of the country’s deep economic crisis. Moreover, they told the rank-and-file, the regime was losing support among its own people. Pasionaria added:

There is in Spain a petty bourgeois ... whose life is every day more difficult, and even though their mentality approaches that of the bourgeois, as they attempt to reach the same status, their interests are every day closer to those of the working class.²⁰

Further proof of this deterioration was found by the PCE in the recent disturbances created by the students in Spain. Though these will be looked at in the next chapter, suffice to say here that during 1954 the students had started to show their opposition to the regime through various demonstrations and cultural events. In response to this awakening, the party published in April of that year a document called, “Message from the PCE to the patriotic intellectuals”.²¹ This report was supposed to serve as an explanation of the party’s policy towards the intellectuals and as an accusation against the imperialistic policies of the United States in Spain.

¹⁸ Programme of the PCE, September 1954, AHPCE.

¹⁹ Report by Dolores Ibárruri, AHPCE.

²⁰ Report by Dolores Ibárruri, AHPCE.

According to this message, the Americans were not just colonising the country's economy but also its culture. In addition, the PCE advocated the application of Socialist Realism to express artistic and literary concerns against Franco and the imperialist forces.²² As for the V Congress, the role of the intellectuals and students was also strongly emphasized.²³ Among other things, Carrillo said:

We appreciate the role of the Communist and progressive intellectuals that are successfully taking advantage of all the possibilities to break with official conformism, to give a sense of opposition to the activity of the intellectuals and students, in favour of peace, freedom and independence.²⁴

This new interest of the party in the intellectuals and the students would develop in a strong underground movement in Spain, as we shall see in the next chapter.

In the programme of the PCE, delivered by Vicente Uribe, there was further mention of what the Communists called the 1953 "Yankee-Francoist Agreement", which it was said to have reduced Spain to nothing more than a military base for the United States.²⁵ The anti-American agenda was well absorbed by the rank-and-file: it is

²¹ "Mensaje del PCE a los intelectuales patriotas", April 1954, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS PCE, Carp. 35).

²² Socialist Realism was proclaimed as the only method for Soviet art during the First All-Union Congress of Soviet writers in 1934. Socialist realist works were to "display a historically concrete representation of reality in its revolutionary development." Under this principle, the arts were meant to glorify the political and social ideals of communism with a realist aesthetic and educate the people in the spirit of socialism.

²³ "I want to point out the role of the intellectuals in the road towards progress and democracy. It is not coincidental that the PCE has published a document called "A message to the intellectuals" of which you all know about. The role of the students and intellectuals in the different democratic and liberal revolutions in Spain is not unknown to us, or to our people. ... From this Congress, I greet the intellectuals, students and men of science that are coming towards us, coming towards Communism, as they believed that Communism is the only way to give man the measure of his human value, and the possibility to develop their capacities..." Report by Dolores Ibárruri, AHPCE.

²⁴ Report by Santiago Carrillo, AHPCE (V CONGRESO, Actas Congreso, Tomo Tercero).

²⁵ Report by Vicente Uribe, AHPCE (V CONGRESO, Actas Congreso).

almost impossible to find a speech that forgot to attack the pacts made by the United States with the Franco regime.²⁶

As in the past, the Congress was anything but democratic. Not only did the leadership use more than suspicious methods to gather the mandatory approval of the Central Committee to hold the Congress, but they also had agreed on the party's programme before hand.²⁷ In the view of Azcárate:

To call a meeting like the one in 1954 a "Congress" is an exaggerated euphemism. The "delegates" were people chosen by Carrillo and Uribe to attend. Not even in France, where it was possible to do it, was there anything close to an election of delegates.²⁸

In contrast, Líster argues that the Programme and Statutes of the party, which were delivered by Carrillo during the XII session of the Congress, had in fact been given to the rank-and-file ahead of time so that they could study and discuss them long before they arrived at the Congress, as the regulations demanded.²⁹ But this is very hard to believe. Only the leaders of the party would have had access to it and time to discuss it before the Congress.³⁰ In fact, as can be seen in the minutes of the Congress, everything was approved by unanimity without any previous discussion.³¹ More importantly, however, the Congress reflected the arrival of a new generation of leaders who, though not yet in control of the party, were gaining important ground. They were defined as the *Jóvenes* (youngsters or young guard), for they came from

²⁶ AHPCE (V CONGRESO, Actas Congreso).

²⁷ Morán, *Miseria*, pp. 238, 240.

²⁸ Azcárate, *Derrotas*, pp. 334-335.

²⁹ Líster is most likely trying to prove the existence of democratic methods before the arrival of Carrillo to the General Secretariat, but this is very unlikely, Líster, *¡Basta!*, p. 177.

³⁰ Morán maintains that before the Congress, the programme had been previously discussed in Paris for two days by those responsible of the party organisation in Spain. By the end of the two days, the programme had hardly changed from what Vicente Uribe and Tomas García had previously written in Paris, Morán, *Miseria*, pp. 240-241.

³¹ AHPCE (V CONGRESO, Actas Congreso).

the ranks of the party's youth organisation, the JSU. As their main centre of action was in Paris, they will be referred to throughout this thesis as the 'Parisians'. Among these were Fernando Claudín and Santiago Carrillo, whose main role was the organisation of the party in Spain. When the Congress came to an end, many of their followers, such as Victor Velasco, Julián Grimau, Jorge Semprún or Tomas García, and activists from the interior, such as Simón Sánchez Montero, had become members of the Central Committee, presaging the changes in the leadership that took place two years later.

C. *The breaking of the deadlock*

The death of Stalin on 5 March 1953 had been one of the biggest shocks ever to hit the Communist world. Ramón Mendezona, director of *Radio Pirenaica* at the time, wrote:

The scenes of authentic pain in Moscow and the whole of the Soviet Union were very impressive. There were endless lines of people waiting to walk by his coffin displayed in the Room of Columns at the House of Syndicates. On one occasion, at the Trubnaia Square, the floor collapsed due to the excessive weight, taking many lives.³²

It would only take three years for the pain to turn into shame. During the XX Congress of the CPSU in February-March 1956, Nikita Khrushchev accused Stalin of the most horrible crimes. Thereafter, the "father" became the villain; thousands were rehabilitated; and some of those responsible for crimes during the Stalin's era, such as the NKDV's chief L.V. Beria, were sentenced to death and executed.

³² Mendezona, *La Pirenaica*, p. 105.

“Dogmatism” was considered the new danger that could damage the prospects for the success of Communism. The so-called thaw brought about a new openness in the Communist world. As a consequence, this soon led to many questioning Soviet power and Communist institutions, especially in the satellite states of Eastern Europe. However, as we shall see below, the limits to the thaw were set by the Soviet Union with the invasion of Hungary in the autumn of 1956.

In the case of the PCE, the shock produced by Nikita Khrushchev’s secret speech came at a time when the party was in the middle of one of its most important crises. A few months before the XX Congress of the Soviet Union in March 1956, significant signs appeared inside the PCE of a new power struggle developing between the old guard of the party and the so-called ‘Parisians’ or young guard. The old guard were those such as Pasionaria and Uribe who had become important during the Civil War and had since then been in command of the party. The ‘Parisians’ included those such as Carrillo and Claudín who came from the party’s youth organisation, the JSU. They had gained prominence only after the end of the Second World War, and as their name indicated, they were based in Paris. Differences between these two factions had already appeared after the banning of the party in France in 1950. The PCE’s new illegal status prompted the creation by Uribe, Líster and Mije of a new party centre in Prague. Confrontations between the latter and those who like Antón and Carrillo had stayed behind in Paris soon arose. At the time, however, the Antón affair managed to disguise and postpone the prospect of open challenge for a few more years. As we shall now examine, the transition that the USSR went through as a result of Stalin’s death would become a decisive factor in the imminent confrontation inside the PCE.

1. Spain's incorporation into the UN

On 8 December 1955, Spain was incorporated into the UN with the approval of the USSR and the Socialist Republics. This shift in the treatment accorded to the Franco regime was the first in a series of events that honoured the new policy of “peaceful coexistence” between political regimes in absolute contradiction with each other, which could nevertheless live in harmony by respecting each other’s spheres of influence. At the same time as Spain, the West had incorporated into the UN countries such as Nepal, Libya, Cambodia and Jordan, while the USSR sponsored the incorporation of countries such as Mongolia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Rumania and Albania. The recognition of Spain by the UN coincided with Dolores Ibárruri’s birthday on 9 December, which as the tradition of the Communist parties demanded, was celebrated in a magnificent manner. Uribe, Mije and Lister decided to wait until the celebrations were over to voice the party’s opinion on the new international situation.³³ On 30 December 1955, they aired through *Radio Pirenaica* a declaration approved by Pasionaria that criticised Spain’s incorporation into the UN and blamed it on the imperialistic policies of the USA, while at the same time it relieved the USSR of any responsibility. However, as the pro-Francoist Luis Suárez Fernández makes clear in his book *Franco y la USSR*:

Because of the rotation in the presidency, Sobolov, the Soviet delegate, was the one to invite the Security Council to accept the entry of Spain in the UN. It was thus confirmed that unless it was approved by the USSR, Spain would not be able to join the Assembly; such approval was expressed and not tacit.³⁴

In the meantime, those in Paris had come to a very different conclusion about this event. The young guard argued that the fact that Socialist states such as Hungary,

³³ Morán, *Miseria*, p. 254.

³⁴ Luis Suárez Fernández, *Franco y la URSS* (Madrid: Ediciones Rialp, 1987), p. 145. Luis Suárez

Bulgaria, Rumania and Albania were being incorporated into the UN at the same time as Spain, would strengthen the peaceful coexistence policy proclaimed by the USSR, as well as end the international isolation of Spain and prevent the United States' total control over the UN.³⁵ Their views were expressed in an article written by Carrillo that was already at the printers of *Nuestra Bandera* by the time the old guard aired their opinion through *Radio Pirenaica*. At this point, the 'Parisians' decided to send Jorge Semprún to Prague to talk to Uribe and Líster about the matter.³⁶ They wanted to assess the possible consequences if they decided to go ahead with the publication of an article that contradicted the view of the old guard. According to Semprún, on his arrival in Prague, he explained to the old leaders the details of their difference of opinion. Uribe and Líster were both scandalised by his boldness and concluded that he had to meet with Pasionaria to discuss the matter.³⁷ He did so the following day in a train that took them from Prague to Bucharest. Later on:

In the house where she was staying, she communicated to me the decision she had taken. She read the notes she had on the table. In view of the profound divergences that had come to the light and with the objective of not aggravating them, she had decided to withdraw the declaration on the entry of Spain in the UN that had been written by those in Bucharest, a majority of the Political Bureau. The discussion had to be postponed until a meeting of the Political Bureau, which would take place shortly.³⁸

Pasionaria also told Semprún that she had not had the time to read the article, something which the Parisians did not believe.³⁹ Irene Falcón, in an attempt to

Fernández was in charge of editing the documents of General Franco after his death.

³⁵ Claudín, *Carrillo*, pp. 108-110; Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 442; Jorge Semprún, *Autobiografía de Federico Sánchez* (Editorial Planeta, Barcelona, 1977), p. 217.

³⁶ Meeting of the PCE's Political Bureau (restricted), Claudín's second speech, February-March 1956, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Reuniones).

³⁷ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 219.

³⁸ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 223.

³⁹ Meeting of the PCE's Political Bureau (restricted), Claudín's second speech, February-March 1956, AHPCE.

present Pasionaria as a democratic leader, gives a different version of this whole affair: “Semprún went to see Dolores. She listened to the arguments expressed by those in Paris. She did not say anything. A few days later, Dolores let them know that she was in favour of the recognition of Spain by the UN”.⁴⁰ However, as we shall see, she took much longer to side with the young guard.

When Semprún returned to Paris after his conversation with Ibárruri, the Parisians agreed the time had come for them to move ahead and publish the article, therefore challenging the old guard. They would later argue that they had proceeded in this manner for they had not received any kind of indication from Ibárruri that the article should not be published.⁴¹ Nevertheless, as we shall see, they were well aware what their action was about to unleash. In the article the Parisians argued that to leave Spain out of the UN and therefore, out of the policy of peaceful coexistence “meant that the American imperialists, supporters of Franco, would have a free hand in the country”. The only reason why the acceptance of Spain in the UN “had sowed confusion among many anti-Francoists” was due to the fact that some of them believed that a “solution to the Spanish problem had to come from the Great Powers”.⁴² Here, Carrillo was referring to the Spanish Socialist Party, which he accused of having destroyed the unity of the anti-Francoist forces after the Second World War in order to assure the support of the imperialist powers for a change of regime in Spain, a policy that Carrillo seemed to have conveniently forgotten the PCE had also supported at the time.⁴³ In addition, he later said: “The article I wrote approving Spain’s incorporation in the UN practically marked the starting point of

⁴⁰ Falcón, *Asalto*, p. 311.

⁴¹ Meeting of the PCE’s Political Bureau (restricted), Claudín’s second speech, February-March 1956, AHPCE.

⁴² “Sobre el ingreso de España en la ONU. Una victoria de la política de paz”, *Nuestra Bandera*, n. 15, 1956.

the policy of National Reconciliation”.⁴⁴ This policy, as we shall see, would be confirmed with the arrival of the Parisians into the high command positions of the party.

However, before going any further, it is worth taking a moment to understand the political implications behind the UN affair. Although the fact that the international community was giving its approval to the Franco regime could not be taken lightly at the time, the differences between both factions inside the PCE were greater than just divisions on this particular question. In fact, a split of opinion within the leadership had drastic connotations. As we have seen, inside the PCE there was no space for discussions. According to Carrillo, “I, as well as the others, was conscious that what we were doing could lead to our expulsion from the party”.⁴⁵ However, if they were victorious, that would signify the beginning of a change of leadership in the Party. For quite sometime, those who belonged to the young guard of the PCE had been feeling restrained by the leaders in Prague and Moscow. Vicente Uribe and Dolores Ibárruri had lost touch with the reality of the situation in Spain, ignoring the possibilities of action that could be taken in a society that was now quite different from the one existing in the immediate post-war. On the other hand, those working in Paris, more ambitious in their approach, considered that the time had come for the PCE to assume a new course that would take advantage of the present situation and push the underground organisations to the front line in the struggle against Franco. Spain’s incorporation into the UN was a useful device over which to start a power struggle. The Parisians realised that the old guard’s position was out of touch with

⁴³ See Chapter I, section D (The PCE and the Republican forces).

⁴⁴ Carrillo, *Memorias*, pp. 442-443.

⁴⁵ Carrillo, *Memorias*, pp. 443.

the changes taking place in the Soviet Union. They took a chance. As Carrillo says, “I knew that I was confronting the leadership, but I was sticking my neck out. There are moments, however, when you have to stick your neck out.”⁴⁶ It was the turning point of Carrillo’s political career, but he would have to overcome a few obstacles before knowing if it was actually turning in the right direction.

2. The XX Congress of the CPSU

After the Parisians published the article that defended their position, Pasionaria asked Fernando Claudín to come to Moscow and be part of the PCE delegation that would attend the XX Congress of the CPSU. There, the meeting of the Spanish Political Bureau would also take place, during which it was expected that the Parisians would collapse under the weight of the old guard. Claudín explains in his biography of Carrillo that behind this invitation, the old guard was hoping to split the Parisians: “They thought that I, having originated in the Communist youth (unlike Carrillo who had been a Socialist), would be more receptive to the patriotic arguments about the party, that I would be more easily recovered and then could be used against Carrillo”.⁴⁷ Nor was Carrillo more optimistic about the situation: “Waiting for me was not a debate about a new policy of the party, but an indictment trial. They were calling Claudín with the intention of convincing him to lean in their favour”.⁴⁸

Once Claudín arrived in Moscow in February 1956, and at the same time as the XX Congress of the CPSU was taking place, the Spanish Political Bureau held its own parallel meetings to discuss the problems that had arisen inside the PCE over the

⁴⁶ Interview with Santiago Carrillo, January 2001.

⁴⁷ Fernando Claudín, *Documentos de una divergencia comunista. Los textos del debate que provocó la*

UN question. As expected, the old guard tried to win Claudín over by placing the blame on Carrillo, who was accused of factional activity and of trying to eliminate the old leaders. Pasionaria said:

I want to draw attention to something that we have never questioned but which we may have to. It might not be a danger today but it could in the future. Santiago was the leader, very much respected by all of us, of the JSU. And we find ourselves facing the following situation: Santiago is no longer the leader of the JSU, but there are a series of comrades, old leaders of the JSU, who work today not under the orders of the Political Bureau but under the orders of Santiago, even if that has not been Santiago's intention. But that is the reality. And in my opinion this is where what has been called Santiago's apparatus comes from, as well as a number of vicious practices to which comrade Fernando has not been giving enough attention ... This is something that will have to change if we want to have a united leadership that does collective work.⁴⁹

However, back in Paris, the two young leaders had already agreed to stick together to the end. "Before I left for the Soviet capital, I had come to an agreement with Carrillo on the position that we were going to take and on the need to hold firm to our opinions, no matter the consequences", writes Claudín.⁵⁰ The boldness of the young guard could only be explained by the fact that the changes in the Soviet Union brought them hope for changes taking place in their own party. In the view of Claudín, "Carrillo had the advantage that he, and not the tandem Pasionaria-Uribe, was swimming with the current set by the new Soviet leaders, regarding both the question of foreign policy and the problems of the leadership".⁵¹ Such had been the case with the incorporation of Spain into the UN, during which as we have seen, the Parisians had understood better the new Soviet foreign policy of Peaceful Coexistence. In fact, their timing could not have been more appropriate as the events during the CPSU's XX Congress would soon surpass their expectations.

exclusión de Claudín y Jorge Semprún del PCE (Barcelona: El viejo topo, 1978), p. II.

⁴⁸ Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 444.

⁴⁹ Meeting of the PCE's Political Bureau (restricted), Pasionaria's speech, February-March 1956, AHPCE.

⁵⁰ Claudín, *Documentos*, p. II.

Khrushchev's secret speech on 24 February 1956 accused Stalin of the most horrible crimes and blamed the Communist system's inability to stop them on the cult of personality and the CPSU's lack of internal democracy. The speech was eventually revealed to the top command of the world CPs. As Falcón explains, its content came as a great shock to Pasionaria:

According to what Dolores told me later on, a few days after the secret session of the XX Congress, a party official of the Central Committee of the CPSU came to her house with a small black case that contained the speech. He looked at her, and without saying a word, he gave it to her to read. She took it and read it with curiosity and surprise. It was unbelievable but true! Once she recovered she thanked the party official and he disappeared from where he had come with the copy of the speech. What a sad moment in her life! Alone and shocked by the revelations, as she would later reveal.⁵²

The meaning of the new shift in Soviet politics did not go unnoticed by the Spanish General Secretary. Since the Communist parties of the world had grown and developed under the image of the CPSU, their leaders and structure by implication were suffering from the same problems. Moreover, among the Spanish Communist leaders, the cult of personality had been carried out mostly around the figure of Pasionaria. She had been politically nurtured under the wing of Stalin and Stalinist culture, and represented the type of leader and organisation that had suddenly come into question. After living in Moscow for almost twenty years and seeing many established leaders fall into disgrace, Pasionaria knew how unstable her position could become. Her power over the PCE was based on the support she had from the Soviets. With the new changes in the Soviet Union, this support could very well shift to the Parisians, more in agreement with the new line and image of the CPSU. So by the time the Spanish Political Bureau resumed the meetings, it was clear to all that

⁵¹ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 110

⁵² Falcón, *Asalto*, p. 304.

things were no longer the same. Pasionaria was now favouring the challengers.

According to Claudín:

One day, an unexpected change of attitude in the General Secretary took place. She suddenly said that maybe it was more convenient to examine in depth our positions, that maybe they had positive aspects, that in any case the presence of Carrillo was necessary. As I found out later, this shift was determined by the impact that the secret speech of Khrushchev had had on her, of which she had knowledge before the rest of us.⁵³

On the other hand, Lister argues that the victory of the Parisians was not due to Pasionaria's change of heart but to the fact that they had eventually gained a majority in the Political Bureau after Gallego moved towards their position.⁵⁴ In the minutes of the meetings held by the Political Bureau, it is clear nevertheless that up until the CPSU held its secret session, the fate of Carrillo and Claudín was to be none other than expulsion.⁵⁵ Only when Pasionaria shifted positions did the young guard begin to gain ground. As Claudín says:

What nobody could imagine is that the internal struggle among the Soviet leadership would go as far as it did in February 1956, and that its outcome would give Carrillo, by pure chance, the victory over Uribe –and in effect over Pasionaria–, creating in this way the conditions for his rise to the General Secretariat.⁵⁶

3. The young guard wins

On 5 April 1956, the Political Bureau held a new meeting and this time with Carrillo present.⁵⁷ He first had a chance to talk to Pasionaria alone and, according to his

⁵³ Claudín, *Documentos*, p. II. It is not true that the rest of the Spanish delegation only found out about the speech later. Uribe also received a copy at the same time as Pasionaria, and since he could not read Russian, Lister was asked to translate it.

⁵⁴ Lister, *Carrillo*, pp. 121-122.

⁵⁵ Meeting of the PCE's Political Bureau (restricted), Claudín's second speech, February-March 1956, AHPCE.

⁵⁶ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 110.

⁵⁷ Meeting of the PCE's Political Bureau, April-May 1954, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Reuniones

memoirs, he stood up before her and rejected her earlier accusation that he had been carrying out factional activity.⁵⁸ More likely, however, Carrillo had already been informed by Claudín about the General Secretary's shift towards their positions, and took this occasion to agree with her on the tactic to follow during the coming meeting.⁵⁹ When the Political Bureau convened, Carrillo felt confident enough to criticise within the PCE the same things that were now being criticised in the CPSU. He argued against the lack of democracy and the cult of personality, finding in the person of Uribe the origin of all crimes:

Comrade Uribe, especially in the latter years, has characterized himself by a conceit, by an egotism, which has led him to establish around himself a true cult of personality. He is always ready to call attention to his own role, the decisive importance of his activity, the role of his ideas in the running of the party. He behaves like this with us on every occasion, with a truly appalling lack of modesty and sense of ridicule. When Uribe emphasizes his role, he is diminishing the role of the Political Bureau and the General Secretary of the party without any respect for either one of them.⁶⁰

It not surprising that Uribe was used as the scapegoat, as Pasionaria was still a very charismatic leader much venerated by the rank-and-file. According to Carrillo, "I thought myself at the time to be extremely lucky that the indisputable leader of the Party, Pasionaria, had qualities of which once again she was giving proof."⁶¹ Moreover, as described by one of Pasionaria's biographers, "to invoke the figure of Dolores simplified, synthesised and symbolised the Communist struggle against injustice. That is why her symbolic figure was a major political recourse for the PCE".⁶² This proved to be the case in the following years. Hence, when the time came, Carrillo was careful not to put too much blame on her. According to Lister, "of

C.C. 5 vols. I Tomo 7).

⁵⁸ Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 447.

⁵⁹ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 111.

⁶⁰ Meeting of the PCE's Political Bureau, April-May 1956, AHPCE; Carrillo, *Memorias*, pp. 448-453.

⁶¹ Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 453.

⁶² Cruz, *Pasionaria*, p. 177.

the 167 pages of the minutes of the meeting, 59 belong to one single intervention by Carrillo, and of those, 30 are dedicated to demolishing Uribe and to setting Dolores against him and sweetening the pill for her.”⁶³ Among other things, Carrillo said regarding Ibárruri when speaking about the cult of personality:

There are in the party certain external expressions of the cult of personality with comrade Dolores. ... It is only fair to say that comrade Dolores has always expressed her displeasure, in one way or the other, before these exaggerations. ... In her attitude with us and other comrades, Dolores has always shown great modesty. It has always been possible to discuss and disagree with Dolores. Showing great courage, she herself has given the example of putting her own opinion up for review and under criticism. To express disagreement with Dolores has never been difficult. She created and creates an atmosphere of trust.⁶⁴

He also refuted the idea that he had ever doubted Ibárruri’s capacity to run the party:

Since the death of José Díaz, Dolores is the General Secretary of the party. And she is so, not just because of her great popularity, but also because she is the person most capable, most intelligent, best prepared among us; because her thought is the freshest, in tune with what is new. No one at the head of the party could embody as she does what it is at the same time both traditional and new as it emerges in the party.⁶⁵

Pasionaria in return admitted:

For the satisfaction of comrade Carrillo, I have to declare that he was right and I was not; and that his article pointed at the mistake of our own declaration, which avoided dealing with the fact that the party had not clearly appreciated the significance of the Soviet Union’s vote in favour of the entry of Spain in the UN.⁶⁶

Subsequently, the Central Committee of the PCE met in a Plenary Session from 15 July to 4 August 1956.⁶⁷ The outcome of the Session was far-reaching and varied. Ibárruri lost her dominance and was displaced by the young guard. She would retain the post of General Secretary until 1960 but in effect, Carrillo had now taken

⁶³ Lister, *Carrillo*, p. 122.

⁶⁴ Meeting of the PCE’s Political Bureau, Carrillo’s speech, April-May 1956, AHPCE.

⁶⁵ Meeting of the PCE’s Political Bureau, Carrillo’s speech, 2 May 1956, AHPCE.

⁶⁶ Meeting of the PCE’s Political Bureau, Ibárruri’s speech, 10 May 1956, AHPCE.

over the command of the party. The political death of Vicente Uribe was settled and made public. There was a light revision of the Party's history: its lack of democracy and the cult of personality were criticised by the newcomers. Following the Soviets' actions, the Spanish Communists began their reconciliation with Yugoslavia: Titoism was no longer considered a heresy. Moreover, Jorge Semprún gained prominence and appeared as the most important connection between the activists inside Spain and the leaders in exile, a role he had been playing since 1953. He became part of the Political Bureau with Simón Sánchez Montero and Santiago Álvarez⁶⁸ Owing to Semprún's influence, the intellectuals would increasingly be accepted as an important and influential fighting force in the eyes of the PCE. Finally and most importantly, in harmony with the USSR's policy of Peaceful Coexistence, the PCE shifted to a policy of National Reconciliation, leaving behind the Anti-Francoist National Front of previous years. Already a month before the Plenary Session, the party had published a document entitled "For the National Reconciliation of all Spaniards".⁶⁹ In the view of Claudín:

Its basic idea was that the division between winners and losers, prevalent as a part of Spanish reality since the Civil War as being greater than any class antagonism, was being pushed aside by the division between those who were the great beneficiaries of the dictatorship and the rest of the groups and social classes that were harmed by it. From here, we advocated 'the understanding between the forces of the left and right' so that 'the changes towards democracy can take place peacefully'.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ "Resolución sobre la situación en la dirección del partido y los problemas del reforzamiento del mismo", August 1956, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 37).

⁶⁸ Simón Sánchez Montero was an important activists from inside Spain. He had been arrested in 1945 and spent the next 7 years in jail. He would become the person in charge of the workers organization in Madrid. Santiago Álvarez was a former leader of the JSU where he had met Santiago Carrillo. He left Spain after the Civil War but returned in 1944, only to be arrested short after. Álvarez spent the next ten years in jail and was expelled from the country in 1954. Tomás García, Francisco Romero Marín and Sebastian Zapiráin also became reserve members of the Political Bureau at this time.

⁶⁹ It called for an amnesty, the suppression of censorship, democratic trade unions and free peasant associations, respect to the university jurisdiction and freedom of association. "Por la Reconciliación nacional, por una solución democrática y pacífica del problema Español", AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 37).

⁷⁰ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 118.

On a practical level, this shift was followed by a new approach towards the Communist organisations in Spain. Unlike the old leaders, the party's young guard put much more emphasis on the underground opposition movement. Carrillo was to a certain extent aware of the changes taking place under Franco, if only because a new generation that had not fought during the Civil War was now old enough to be politically active. After the events of February 1956, which will be looked at in the next chapter, the students and intellectuals became the new paladins of the Spanish Communist Party. As Ramón Buckley notes in *La doble transición*:

In the 1950s, the Communist Party, under the leadership of Carrillo, abandoned Stalinist doctrine and initiated its so-called 'national reconciliation' programme. For this reconciliation, in order for the party to be accepted again by the Spanish people who live in Franco's Spain, the intellectuals would have to play a major role. The intellectuals -and the writers in general- had to be the bridges, or rather, the Trojan horses to achieve the establishment of the party in Spain.⁷¹

All these changes regarding the policy to follow in Spain could wrongly be interpreted as the onset of a political opening inside the PCE. The policy of National Reconciliation is said to have marked the beginning of a new era in the PCE's approach to Spain.⁷² Furthermore, 1956 has been described as the starting point of the Eurocommunist process of 1968.⁷³ However, these interpretations are not substantiated by close examination. First of all, it is important to remember that a similar formulation of "reconciliation" and "unity" between all parties had already been advocated by the Spanish Communists with the policy of National Unity in the 1940s and the subsequent Anti-Fascist Front, and it could even be argued that there

⁷¹ Buckley, *La doble transición*, p. 7.

⁷² Interview with Santiago Carrillo, January 2001; Claudín, *Carrillo*, pp. 118-119; Carrillo, *Memorias*, pp. 455-457; Mujal-León, *Communism*, pp. 1, 22; Hermet, *The Communists*, p. 57; Morán, *Miseria*, pp. 276-277; Carabantes and Cimorra, *Un mito*, p. 287.

⁷³ Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*, pp. 225, 246; Sánchez Montero, *Memorias*, p. 230; Falcón, *Asalto*, pp. 308, 355-356, 358; Asenjo and Ramos, *Malagón*, p. 223; Preston, "The PCE's long..." in Kindersley,

were also strong similarities between the policy of the Popular Front and that of National Reconciliation.⁷⁴ Though some authors have noticed such precedents, it is still pointed out that, on this occasion, the shift of policy was accompanied by internal reform and the self-criticism of past dogmatic and sectarian positions, which had not been the case previously.⁷⁵ Superficially, this might seem to be true but on closer inspection it becomes clear that the party's internal reform and self-criticism would not lead to any real change in the long term.

As can be seen during the Plenary Session of the PCE's Central Committee in the summer of 1956, the non-democratic procedures of the party in the past were still apparent. Everything that was discussed during the Session had already been decided during the Assembly of the Political Bureau. The power struggle that had just been won by the Parisians was a private matter and the Central Committee, theoretically the governing body of the party, did not have a say in its outcome. They were presented with the final results, which they were expected to accept not to discuss. Moreover, the manner in which Uribe's downfall had been resolved behind closed doors further emphasized that Stalinist culture was still an intrinsic part of the party's internal structure. There is an obvious contradiction in Carrillo's criticism regarding the procedures used by the old guard against the Parisians, since they were the same as the ones now being used by Carrillo against Uribe.⁷⁶ Prosecutor and accused had switched places while the methods employed to deal with dissent remained unchanged. Hence, this criticism was not just superficial but also opportunistic, and the same applies to the party's review of previous purges. The Parisians used the

Eurocommunism, p. 57; Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 457.

⁷⁴ See Arasa's explanation about José Díaz's speech in 1938, "Lo que España enseña a Europa", Arasa, *Maquis*, p. 31. On the 1940s, see Falcón, *Asalto*, pp. 312, 319; Cruz, *Pasionaria*, p. 183; Fernández Vargas, *La resistencia*, p. 168; Estruch Tobella, *Historia oculta*, p. 197.

⁷⁵ Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*, p. 226.

same tactic that the old guard had used during the V Congress: they placed the responsibility for past mistakes on the erroneous judgement of those who were no longer in power. In this manner, the sins from the past were redeemed without any real analysis: no one was guilty, except the scapegoat Vicente Uribe. In fact, the purges of the Quiñonistas, Monzonistas, or the Comoreristas, were never reviewed.

As Semprún writes:

Even if you (Semprún) do not share a direct responsibility in the campaigns of the time against 'Quiñonismo', 'Monzónismo', 'Comorerismo', and 'Titoism', you do share responsibility for the fact that, after 1956, the leadership of the PCE has refused any public self-criticism, limiting itself to placing Stalinist rubbish in someone else's backyard, rejecting any kind of objective historical analysis of its past.⁷⁷

In the view of Irene Falcón:

The changes in the model of the party, in its internal workings and in its leadership never had the profundity of an authentic political opening. It was radical in form, with generational renewal, but superficial in what was fundamental, among other reasons because the persistence of clandestine conditions would not allow for the implementation of a democratic culture.⁷⁸

Finally, as we shall see, although at first Carrillo's new approach to Spain seemed to be in agreement with the changes taking place in the country, in the following years the exiled leadership would yet again lose touch with this reality, assuming a much too optimistic view of the situation. Dissent from inside the country began to grow, mainly from the intellectuals who demanded greater participation in the party's decision-making processes. As a result, Santiago Carrillo increasingly resorted to the old way of keeping order: critical voices were simply ostracised from the organisation and the conflict between the leaders in exile and the activists in Spain once again rose.

⁷⁶ Claudín, *Carrillo*, pp. 114-115.

⁷⁷ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 131.

⁷⁸ Falcón, *Asalto*, pp. 309, 310.

Hence, it can be argued that the Communist rebirth of the XX Congress had only given the old structures a new legitimacy. As in most of the Communist parties, the destalinisation process in the PCE became little more than just a process that gave more credibility to its procedures and dictatorial organisation. There was no need for a profound analysis of the Communist structures such as that the Italian leader Togliatti had had the courage to suggest.⁷⁹ Carrillo had cleverly used the party's critique of Stalinism to win the battle over the old guard of the PCE. In effect, the transition of 1956 did not develop into a profound reform of the party's Stalinists structure.

D. Conclusion

As we have seen, the banning of the PCE in France was followed by a period of inactivity by the party, particularly of its underground organisations in Spain. There were, nevertheless, significant policy changes: the tram strike of Barcelona in 1951 prompted the party to abandon the guerrilla policy and confirm the use of legal platforms, such as the official trade unions, to fight against the Franco regime. In later years, this change would have an important effect in the development of *Comisiones Obreras*.

However, the turning point during this period was the death of Stalin and the subsequent destalinisation process that affected the entire Communist movement. In the Spanish Communist Party, this process materialised in a change of leadership that gave rise to the youngest members of the politburo over the hard-line Stalinists. The

⁷⁹ For more information on the position of Togliatti after the XX Congress of the CPSU see Morán,

policy of the party then shifted towards the so-called National Reconciliation policy, which, as we have seen, was not as new as some have suggested. In addition, these changes were accompanied by the flowering of an active underground movement in Spain, mainly among the intellectuals and students.

Nevertheless, the manner in which the outcome of the power struggle had been handled by the Parisians and the lack of any serious analysis of the party's past mistakes, meant that the destalinisation process already in its early days was not developing, as expected, into a profound reform of the party's internal structure. The years to come would serve to mark the limits of reform within the PCE as well as exposing the problems between the activists in Spain and the leaders in exile. However, before everything turned sour, the PCE would embark on one of its most successful ventures in the country: the revival of the underground organisation in Spain.

III. THE BIRTH OF A NEW OPPOSITION

A. *Introduction*

This chapter will examine the relationship between the PCE and the intellectual and student opposition movement that developed in Spain during the 1950s. The birth of this relationship, which as we shall see was almost non-existent in the 1940s, reflected the changes that were taking place in the party after the death of Stalin in 1953, particularly the Parisians' emphasis on the underground organisation in Spain. In this manner, the party worked as a catalyst in expressing the feelings of discontent and frustration of a new generation against a stifling and repressive regime. At the same time, this generation initially helped the party to re-establish contact with the real situation in Spain.

During these years, the opposition movement among students was particularly intense at the University of Madrid.¹ The organisation of events such as the Poetry Encounters and the Congress of Young Writers, the death of the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, the publication of the Manifesto of 1956, which led to the famous events of February 1956, will be examined in this chapter to explain the development of a party organisation within the university and intellectual realm.

¹ The University of Madrid will be the focus of this chapter. There was hardly any party activity in other universities at the time. The University of Barcelona will receive some attention in the next

B. From Culture to Politics

1. The PCE and the intellectuals in the 1940s

Since the end of the Spanish Civil War, the activity of the PCE regarding its relations with the intellectual world had been minimal.² A harshly repressed society such as the Spanish one made it very difficult for new cultural groups to emerge. In exile, this world was limited to a small group in Paris and another in Mexico.³ In fact, the party never welcomed the intellectuals with open arms. When talking about the standards required to take new members into the PCE during the Civil War, Aurora Arnáiz, a party activist exiled in Mexico, wrote in her memoirs:

The high, middle and lower cadres of the party were chosen, first, by their working class origin, they should not be *desclasados*, which was the word used to refer to the people that came from the middle classes, especially against the academics, professors and intellectuals.⁴

In Spain, one of the few undertakings worth mentioning during this decade was the creation of the *Union de Intelectuales Libres* (Union of Free Intellectuals, UIL). This

chapter as the party's student organisation in this city became more active after February 1956.

² During the 1940s, Felix Montiel was in charge of the PCE's relations with the intellectuals. He was a professor in Administrative Law and had been a Socialist deputy for Murcia during the Spanish Second Republic. In 1936, he had joined the PCE. Montiel was very critical of the attitude of the party leadership during the Casado coup. He would later argue that the coup had been nothing but a scheme planned by the Soviets to have an excuse to abandon the fight in Spain. The German-Soviet pact made him leave the party but he would later return when the USSR joined the Allies in the war. He left the party again in 1950 and ended up joining José Del Barrio in the creation of the *Movimiento de Acción Socialista* (MAS) that year. For more information see Francisco-Félix Montiel, *Un coronel llamado Segismundo* (Madrid: Editorial Criterio-Libros, 1998); Morán, *Miseria*, pp. 210-211; Estruch Tobella, *1939-1956*, pp. 43-44. In 1950, Felix Montiel was replaced by Victor Velasco, a member of the party's Central Committee and editor of the theoretical journal of the JSU, *La hora*. He died in July 1956, Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

³ In Paris, the group was formed by the painter Antonio Muñoz, the writer José Quiroga Pla, the musicians Mauricio Bacarisse and Palacios, the historian Emilio Gómez Nada, the journalist Victor Velasco and the self-taught Benigno Rodríguez, and at that time the poet, Jorge Semprún. In Mexico, the group was formed by Wenceslao Roces, Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, painters such as José Bardasano, Antonio Rodríguez Luna, Josep Renau and writers such as Luisa Carnés, Juan Rejano, Pedro Garfias, Gabriel García Narezo. For more information see Morán, *Miseria*, pp. 222-223.

⁴ Arnáiz, *Retrato*, p. 43.

organisation, however, originated in Spain and did not represent a revival of the interest of the party in the intellectual world. It was rather an expression of the opposition to the Franco regime felt among certain progressive intellectuals that had remained in the country after the Civil War. It is important to note that at this point in time, the PCE continued to support guerrilla activity to overthrow the regime. It would not be until the mid 1950s that a policy of National Reconciliation was established.

The idea of the UIL began to emerge at the end of 1944, coming to life in March 1945. Initially, four people belonging to the teaching profession formed the secretariat of the organisation. The group's main promoter was Rafael Guisasola, a teacher.⁵ Very soon, however, the UIL expanded to include doctors, lawyers, engineers and writers. The political affiliation of the members was varied: Communists, Socialists, Republicans, Anarchists and those without a party, all had a place in the organisation.⁶ As they themselves described it, "the UIL is not a political party and it is open to all the Republican intellectuals, without distinction of party ideology. And it is organically independent, at least for the time being, of any political or syndical entity".⁷ However, the Communists dominated and had the most influence. In fact, the UIL had from its foundation a few contacts with the exiled leadership of the party though these were described in an internal report as "demoralising" and subsequently ended. Nevertheless, a relationship with the party was renewed in June 1946.⁸ The UIL supported the reestablishment of a Republic

⁵ Jáuregui and Vega, *Antifranquismo 1939-1962*, p. 82; A. Ruiz Ayucar, *El Partido Comunista. Treinta y siete años de clandestinidad* (Madrid: Editorial San Martín, 1976), p. 294.

⁶ Report by the *Unión de Intelectuales Libres* explaining what they are all about, March 1947, AHPCE (UIL, Caja 126, Carp. 1.8).

⁷ Message from the UIL to the Italian government and Italian intellectuals, November 1946, AHPCE (UIL, Caja 126, Carp. 1.8).

⁸ Report by the *Unión de Intelectuales Libres* explaining what they are all about, March 1947,

through the union of all the Republican forces, and published manifestos encouraging the Spanish people to fight against the Franco regime: “JOIN THE RESISTANCE AND FIGHT AGAINST TERROR! DOWN WITH THE TERRORIST REGIME OF FRANCO! LONG LIVE THE REPUBLIC!”⁹

The organisation also advocated the rebirth and democratisation of culture in Spain. To spread this message, two illegal intellectual reviews, *Demócrito* and *Cuadernos de Estudio*, were published by the UIL between 1945 and 1947. According to one of the organisation’s leaders, Manuel Tuñón de Lara, the UIL at one point had up to 500 members. However, the conditions for the development of such a project in 1940s Spain were extremely harsh. The isolation in which the members of the UIL had to carry out their activities, as well as the police repression against them, meant that it could not possibly last very long. In April 1947, the entire secretariat of the organisation was arrested.¹⁰ Among others, Guisasola was sentenced to 10 years in prison. Tuñón de Lara, on the other hand, avoided detention and subsequently went into exile.¹¹ By the end of 1947, the UIL had disappeared.¹²

From this point onwards, the only person who kept alive any kind of Communist influence amongst the intellectuals in Spain was Cirilo Benítez Ayala, a civil engineer who lived in Madrid. On his own initiative, he worked as a contact between what was left of the UIL and the new poetry magazines that were surfacing in the country such as *Cuadernos de Poesía*, edited by the brothers Millares in Las

AHPCE.

⁹ Manifesto by the UIL’s Provincial Counsel in Malaga, 26 January 1947, AHPCE (UIL, Caja 126, Carp. 1.8).

¹⁰ For more information on the UIL see “Report by Tuñón de Lara”, November 1947, AHPCE (FUERZAS DE LA CULTURA, Microfilms 98-101) and “Report by the General Secretary of the UIL”, March 1947, AHPCE (FUERZAS DE LA CULTURA, Microfilm 96).

¹¹ For more information on the UIL see Jáuregui and Vega, *Antifranquismo 1939-1962*, pp. 80-84.

¹² Dossier about the UIL sent by Felipe Comarero, no date, AHPCE (UIL, Caja 126, Carp. 1.8).

Palmas, and *Espadaña*, edited by Gabriel de Nora in Leon.¹³ He also became very close to Juan Antonio Bardem and together they would carry out some activities on behalf of the PCE.¹⁴ Benítez Ayala died in a train accident on 6 April 1950.¹⁵

As far as the university was concerned, the 1940s were a dark period for the opposition movement in Spain, let alone that of the Communists. In 1940, the Fascist Sindicato Español Universitario (SEU), which had been created shortly after the Falange in 1933, became the only authorized political organisation for students.¹⁶ In this manner, the SEU came to replace the pre-war *Federación Universitaria Escolar* (FUE), whose members were now being persecuted by the authorities. The SEU's goal was to give the students a political, professional and military education.¹⁷ Membership was compulsory. In addition, the regime carried out a "witch-hunt" against those teachers or professors that had any kind of liberal inclination. This left an academic vacuum that was never properly filled by the less apt Falangists and immensely damaged the development of the university in Spain.¹⁸ The Law of University Organisation (*Ley de Ordenación Universitaria*) on 29 July 1943

¹³ To *Espadaña* contributed authors such as Gabriel Celaya, Blas de Otero, José Hierro and Ágela Figuera, Juan Pablo Fusi, *Un siglo de España. La cultura* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 1999), p. 120.

¹⁴ Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001; Juan Antonio Bardem, *Y todavía sigue. Memorias de un hombre de cine* (Barcelona: Ediciones B, 2002), p. 33.

¹⁵ For more information see Morán, *Miseria*, p. 230; Jáuregui and Vega, *Antifranquismo 1939-1962*, p. 162; Bardem, *Memorias*, pp. 130-134; Statement at the police headquarters of Juan Antonio Bardem, 15 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, pp. 209-216. This book edited by Mesa includes a massive amount of police reports written during the period surrounding the events of February 1956.

¹⁶ Salvador Giner de San Julián, "Power, Freedom and Social Change in the Spanish University, 1939-75" in Preston, *Spain*, p. 184.

¹⁷ Manuel Juan Farga, *Universidad y democracia en España (30 años de lucha estudiantil)* (Mexico: Ediciones ERA, 1969), p. 37.

¹⁸ By 1944, 155 of the 278 professors in the university had been appointed since 1939. For more information also see José María Nasarre López, "Depuración de maestros en la provincia de Huesca" and Manuel Ortiz Heras, "La depuración del Magisterio en la provincia de Albacete. El lenguaje de los expedientes de depuración" both in Juan José Carreras Ares and Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer (Ed.), *La Universidad española bajo el régimen de Franco (1939-1975)* (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 1991), p. 115; and Giner de San Julián, "Power, Freedom and Social Change..." in Preston, *Spain*, p. 184.

established that the university was also Catholic and had to be administered in accordance with the principles of the Falange. The Rector of the University had to be a member of the *Falange*, and those who opted for a post in the University needed to prove their “firm adhesion to the fundamental principles of the state, credited by a certificate from the General Secretariat of the Movimiento”.¹⁹ During this harsh repressive period, some small clandestine groups of students would be formed. However, the first real attempt to reorganise the opposition would not take place until the victory of the Allies in the war became clear and, the attempt to “fascistize” the university, as described by Salvador Giner, was reversed by those inside the regime who wanted to marginalize the Falange.²⁰ In the academic year 1944-1945, at the same time as the SEU held its first mock elections for student delegates, a clandestine FUE began to function. One year later, in January 1946, the FUE published a manifesto, created committees in the main universities and during a short period, published a magazine called *Península*.²¹ However, in April 1947, the national committee of the clandestine FUE was arrested following a police search at the *Licéo Francés*. Its members were sentenced to jail and the organisation disappeared completely in Spain.²² As we shall see, the fighting spirit of the students would not recover until the mid 1950s, and on that occasion, the PCE would find itself in the middle of the action.

¹⁹ Carlos París, *La universidad española actual: Posibilidades y frustraciones* (Madrid: Editorial Cuadernos para el Diálogo, 1974), pp. 56-57.

²⁰ Giner de San Julián, “Power, Freedom and Social Change...” in Preston, *Spain*, pp. 185, 187.

²¹ Carreras Ares y Ruiz Carnicer, *La Universidad*, p. 120; Farga, *Universidad*, p. 41

²² Two of those condemned, Nicolás Sánchez Albornoz and Manuel Lamama, managed to escape in August 1948, Carreras Ares y Ruiz Carnicer, *La Universidad*, p. 120; Farga, *Universidad*, p. 41. The FUE continued to exist in exile until 1952, Giner de San Julián, “Power, Freedom and Social Change...” in Preston, *Spain*, p. 187.

On the other hand, the work of the exiled leadership among the intellectuals in the 1940s and early 1950s consisted of unofficial meetings with isolated figures that would often contact the party through the PCF in Paris.²³ In 1949, the PCE leaders in the French capital met the engineer and professor José Entrecanales.²⁴ Though not a Communist, Entrecanales belonged to the opposition against the regime and was willing to provide the PCE leadership with information concerning the situation in Spain. His view about the possible support for the Communists among the country's university youth was rather pessimistic. Talking about the students at the Civil Engineering School, he said, "I don't think you have anybody there that supports you, though I do not personally talk to them...".²⁵ The party held new interviews with Entrecanales and with his wife and daughter in 1950 and 1951, and again in 1953, but nothing much came out of them.²⁶ Others that became involved with the PCE in exile during this period were the painters José Guinovart and Juan Guanse. The party got in touch with them through Emilio García, a Spanish student that met Jorge Semprún while studying in Paris on a scholarship.²⁷ The musician Luis Cobos, another contact of this period, would be one of the few to end up joining the PCE.²⁸

A more important example of these initial contacts of the party with the intellectuals was the relationship between the poet Eugenio de Nora and Manuel Azcárate. In 1950, Santiago Carrillo asked Azcárate to travel to Switzerland to meet De Nora, who had expressed interest in contacting the party. De Nora had a degree in philosophy and was a well-known young poet in Spain. He had won a scholarship to

²³ Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

²⁴ Interview of the PCE with Entrecanales, 20 May 1949, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Caja 11, Carp. 3).

²⁵ Interview of the PCE with Entrecanales, 17 and 20 August 1950, AHPCE (ACTIVISTAS, Carp. 47).

²⁶ Interviews of the PCE with Entrecanales and his wife and daughter, 20 and 21 April 1951, and 1953, AHPCE (ACTIVISTAS, Carp. 47).

²⁷ Conversation with Emilio García, 31 October 1952, AHPCE (INFORMES, Caja 126, Carp. 1.9.2).

study in Switzerland and took the opportunity to arrange a meeting with the PCE. According to a report written by Azcárate, when they finally met, De Nora said, “I am as close to you as one can be without belonging to the party, because I do not know it well enough”. Azcárate had to explain to De Nora basic things such as the difference between a bourgeois revolution and a Socialist revolution. “He would immediately agree with what I said. He seemed to be honest. He agrees with the party, with the policies of the party and he wants to get to know it better, because he knows nothing”. According to Azcárate, when talking about the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, the young poet said that he was totally despised by the people, “that he was a speaker for snobs and nothing more; that there was no one younger than 30 who had any respect for him; maybe some old Republicans but only a few. His prestige is alive only among the ladies of the aristocracy”.²⁹ This proved not to be the case in later years, when the death of Ortega set off a radical response by the students against what they perceived as the regime’s lack of respect for the philosopher, a response that eventually culminated in the famous events of February 1956, as we shall see later in this chapter.

Azcárate went on to criticise the fact that the young poet was not proposing any specific action to be carried out in Spain and that he was looking at his professional future developing within the parameters of the regime. Nevertheless, he added:

He (De Nora) says that he is at the total disposal of the party, for whatever it feels would be useful, either something general or among the intellectuals. He wants help for his training, books, etc, and a link that will allow him to become a party activist.³⁰

²⁸ Report about conversations held between the party and José Guinovart, Juan Guanse and Luis Cobos, 1953, AHPCE (INTELECTUALES PCE-PSUC, Informes, Caja 126, Carp. 1.9.2).

²⁹ Report by Azcárate about his meeting with Eugenio de Nora, 11 February 1950, AHPCE (INTELECTUALES PCE-PSUC, Informes, Caja 126, Carp. 1.9.2).

³⁰ Report by Azcárate about his meeting with Eugenio de Nora, 11 February 1950, AHPCE.

As mentioned above, De Nora, as well as other young writers of progressive inclinations such as Gabriel Celaya, had created the intellectual review *Espadaña*.

Azcárate wrote:

Everything that Nora was telling me had nothing to do with the “Francoist Spain” of hunger and terror that was talked about in *Mundo Obrero*. In 1950, when we had our first meeting, that black Spain was still predominant but a new reality was starting to grow, especially among the youth. And Nora was the first one to show us this.³¹

Once Azcárate returned to Paris after their first meeting, he was told by Carrillo to keep in contact with De Nora, and in the future, maybe even with the progressive friends the young poet had referred to during the interview. Azcárate and De Nora would see each other on several occasions. Soon, De Nora started to write Communist poems, using the alias Carlos del Pueblo (Carlos of the People).³² They were published in the party’s newspapers and theoretical journals. Subsequently, the poet Blas de Otero arrived in Switzerland and joined De Nora in meetings with the party. Blas de Otero had left the country intending to become an exile and publish an incendiary book of poems.³³ Azcárate became close to both De Nora and Blas de Otero and predicted a bright future for the PCE inside Spain. By 1951, De Nora’s optimism about the party’s possibilities of action with intellectuals increased rather unrealistically. According to Azcárate, De Nora believed that “more than half of the students are open and well-disposed to contacts with the Communists. ... A quarter of the students could be considered already to sympathise with the Communists”.³⁴

³¹ Azcárate, *Derrotas*, p. 323.

³² Poems by Carlos del Pueblo, AHPCE (POESIAS, Caja 29); *Cuadernos de Cultura*, n. 4, 1952.

³³ In 1952, Azcárate introduced Blas de Otero to Jorge Semprún who became in charge of the poet’s well being. According to Semprún, Blas de Otero became very anxious as the time for the publishing of the book came closer. Eventually, with the agreement of the party, he decided not to publish the book and returned to Spain. Semprún, *Autobiografía*, pp. 95-96.

³⁴ Report by Azcárate about his meeting with Eugenio de Nora, 20 and 21 April 1951, AHPCE (INTELECTUALES PCE-PSUC, Informes, Caja 126, Carp. 1.9.2).

These new contacts were evidence, more than anything else, of the PCE's awakening to the student/intellectual opposition in Spain, emphasizing, nevertheless, the limited information and direction that the exiled leadership still had regarding these matters. Azcárate's work with the intellectuals came to an end when he was suddenly called to answer for his past sins as Monzón's associate. "Overnight, I became a persona-non-grata on whom a file had to be opened. I received Carrillo's order to leave my work at once to other people and to terminate my contacts with the intellectuals".³⁵ However, as Azcárate's door to the intellectuals closed, a new more daring one had begun to open.

In 1950, a young intellectual called Jorge Semprún was put in charge of the party's new theoretical journal, *Cultura y Democracia*.³⁶ At the age of fourteen, Semprún had left Spain with his family in 1937 and had lived in The Hague for two years before settling in Paris in 1939. During the Second World War, he joined the French resistance against the Nazi invasion. He was arrested by the Germans in 1943 and deported to the concentration camp of Buchenwald on January 1944, where he belonged to the clandestine Communist organisation. Semprún returned to Paris in 1945 and worked as a translator for UNESCO before becoming fully involved with the PCE. From 1953, he would transform the party's relationship with the cultural opposition movement that was starting to grow in Spain. Subsequently, he became the most influential person in the revival of intellectual and student underground organisations. The young leader had a perfect profile to take over the party's

³⁵ Azcárate, *Derrotas*, p. 325.

³⁶ *Cultura y Democracia* was created as an attempt to influence the intellectual world. However, the ideological restrictions imposed by the era of Zdanov, meant that the cultural and theoretical journal became nothing more than a space for dogmatic representation. For more information see "Cultura y Democracia", AHPCE (PUBLICACIONES PERIÓDICAS, Sig. 208) and Estruch Tobella, 1939-

relationship with the cultural world in Spain. As with most of those who would later move closer to the Communist cause, Semprún came from a comfortable family, had been to university and wrote poetry.³⁷ In his own words:

I was there at a moment when they needed someone without a prison record, that knew languages and with some intellectual education. As it happened, I was the identikit of this description. A few years earlier nobody would have noticed me and a few years later there would have been many others with the same qualities.

According to Carrillo:

From very early on, I considered Semprún as a possible leader of the party, at a time when there were no intellectuals among our leadership. Until then, the established criteria meant that the leadership had to be formed exclusively by workers ... With Jorge Semprún a new period opened during which the veto against the intellectuals would disappear.³⁸

In August 1953, Jorge Semprún travelled to Spain for the first time under the name of Jacques Grador, a French friend of the young Communist leader who lent him his passport to cross the frontier. There, he would encounter a generation about to wake up to the world of the opposition. His arrival would herald the transformation into real activists of those isolated cases the party had encountered in exile.³⁹

One month before this trip took place, the PCE leadership had had a meeting with the cinematographer Ricardo Muñoz Suay in Paris, which would serve as a boost to the party's influence in the intellectual world and help Semprún during his visit to the country.⁴⁰ Muñoz Suay had been part of the UIL and had belonged to the PCE in Valencia, as a result of which he had spent time in Francoist jails. At that

1956, pp. 158-159.

³⁷ He had a degree in Philosophy from the Sorbonne University. Gregorio Morán wrongly points to Semprún as the first university figure in the party when the first one had actually been Gabriel León Trilla, Morán, *Miseria*, p. 224.

³⁸ Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 437.

³⁹ Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

⁴⁰ Muñoz Suay was contacted by Víctor Velasco upon his arrival to Paris for a cinema event, interview

time, he was involved with a group of progressive cinephiles in Spain with whom he founded a magazine called *Objetivo*, which according to Morán would serve “as a vehicle of progressive culture” and gave birth to the influence of the PCE in the cinematography world.⁴¹ Muñoz Suay eventually became an important member of the party’s Committee of Intellectuals in Spain and participated in the first contacts of the party with the students.⁴²

Semprún’s first visit to Spain was prepared by Victor Velasco and Santiago Carrillo. Given the lack of experience the party had in Spain, the trip was badly organised. In three weeks he was supposed to visit Barcelona, Zaragoza, Valencia, Alicante, Las Palmas, Seville, the Canary Islands, Madrid, Salamanca and San Sebastian.⁴³ In all of these places, he was expected to establish contacts with groups of intellectuals with whom the party had had no previous organic relationship.⁴⁴ Most of the information they had about potential sympathisers had been gathered through visiting students in Paris at the *Colegio de España* in the *Cité Universitaire*. “We had to look hard for contacts because there was no party organisation left in Spain amongst middle class sectors”, Semprún recalls.⁴⁵ Moreover, he was not even given enough money to survive during this period. In his memoirs, he explains:

As always, on that occasion reality also prevailed, and I had to modify the programme on the way. I went neither to Andalusia nor to the Canary Islands. In that manner, from my first experience, I was able to verify, with something as

with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

⁴¹ Morán, *Miseria*, pp. 232-233; Report on the different aspects of the work with the intellectuals written by Jorge Semprún, April 1954, AHPCE (INFORMES, Caja 126, Carp. 1.9.2). Also see Bardem, *Memorias*, pp. 115-116.

⁴² Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001; Report on the different aspects of the work with the intellectuals written by Jorge Semprún, April 1954, AHPCE.

⁴³ Schedule of Semprún’s trip, 1953, AHPCE (FUERZAS DE LA CULTURA, Microfilm 14); Semprún, *Autobiografía*, pp. 55-56. In *Autobiografía*, Semprún does not include Las Palmas as part of his trip. In contrast, a document found in the archives states that Semprún was supposed to go to Las Palmas but there is nothing regarding Seville and the Canary Islands. At any rate, he does say in his memoirs that he did not go to either one. It could be assumed that he did not go to Las Palmas either.

⁴⁴ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, pp. 55-56.

⁴⁵ Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

simple as a visit of that kind, the enormous distance that existed between the illusions of the party and the demands of reality.⁴⁶

During this visit, Semprún met with people such as the poet Gabriel Celaya and his wife Amparo Gastón, the doctor José Antonio Hernández, and the poet Vicente Aleixandre. Semprún would introduce himself as a French Hispanist and, “only in exceptional cases would the conversation develop in such a manner that I would reveal my identity as a clandestine party delegate, as happened with Celaya and his partner Amparo Gastón”. At Celaya’s house, Semprún also met Enrique Múgica, a contact that in the following years “made possible an opening in the University of Madrid”. As soon as he arrived, Múgica started to rave against the regime to an extent that Celaya felt obliged to caution him: “You don’t know who this person is... He could be a policeman”.⁴⁷ Even so, Semprún did not reveal his real identity to the young Basque. It would take another year of Múgica’s tireless activity for the two finally to hold a meeting with an “official character”.⁴⁸ Back in Paris, Semprún presented to the Party an optimistic view on the potential for a student and intellectual Communist movement in Spain. According to Carrillo:

The fact that before the victory of the young guard over the old guard, I had been in charge of the work of the party in Spain made me aware of what was happening inside the country instead of amongst the émigrés. This very much helped me to perceive the new things that were happening and to promote people such as Semprún, who could help us connect with the new generations.

Semprún’s years as a Communist clandestine figure had finally begun, a role he played in masterly fashion until 1963. During this time, he would travel regularly back to Paris to keep the exiled leadership up-to-date with developments inside

⁴⁶ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, pp. 55-56.

⁴⁷ Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

⁴⁸ Report on the different aspects of the work with the intellectuals written by Jorge Semprún, April 1954, AHPCE.

Spain. He immediately became an important party leader, embodying to a certain extent the PCE's new emphasis on underground organisations after the arrival of the Parisians to the high command of the party. However, his presence in Spain also meant that he was exchanging the bureaucratic world of exile for the active world of the underground. As a result, the young leader would eventually become an "activist" and this could only mean that his perception of Spanish reality would at some point come into confrontation with what he himself had described as the "illusions of the party". However, before this happened, the PCE and the intellectual class were about to embark on what Morán has fittingly described as a "honeymoon".

2. The early stages of a new opposition

As explained above, in the early 1950s the party took a new interest in the intellectual and student opposition in Spain. The latter would soon develop into a movement that for many years would be seen by the PCE as essential for their struggle.

It was initiated in 1954 when several events of a progressive character, such as the Legal Poetry Encounters and the Congress of Young Writers, were organised at the University of Madrid. These activities were possible thanks to the cultural opening promoted by the new Minister of Education, Joaquín Ruiz Giménez, and the Rector of the University of Madrid, Pedro Laín Entralgo, both disillusioned Falangists who were also close to the poet Dionisio Ridruejo.⁴⁹ In fact, the approach taken by these men echoed the cultural awakening of a generation that had not fought in the Civil War, and therefore did not feel closely connected to the regime. Its

⁴⁹ For more information about the role of Ruiz Giménez in the Ministry of Education see Pablo Lizcano, *La generación del 56*, pp. 79-80.

members expressed their protest against repressive Francoist society through the arts. Intellectual reviews such as *Índice*, *Ínsula* and *Aldebarán*, novels such as *El Jarama*, the so-called Cine-Clubs and the social poetry of writers such as Blas de Otero, Gabriel Celaya or Eugenio de Nora, were all manifestations of a political drive that aimed at the awakening and mobilising of the people against the regime. As in the novel *El Jarama*, the mere reflection of reality was used by this generation to expose a negative image of Franco's Spain, its inequalities and the political apathy that had taken over the people.⁵⁰ In the view of Josep María Castellet, one of the most influential literary critics of this period:

The writers of the generation of the "mid century" constituted, to a certain extent, a special case. Astounded observers, passive victims of the war, they grew up at the end of the latter, in a cultural desert ... and were trained under the principles of the "new order". Nevertheless, and maybe due to different motivations, they soon rebelled against the principles under which they had been educated. This rebellion found different expressions and can be seen already in the first works of these authors. ... They not only felt linked to each other by a common political activity of resistance but also they subscribed to a certain aesthetic creed, that of realism.⁵¹

Enrique Múgica, a Basque born in 1932, was one of the main promoters of opposition activity at the University of Madrid. Jorge Semprún would in later years describe Múgica in the following manner:

Active, imaginative, full of projects. During those early years, his contribution to the activities of the Party in the university was decisive. Without him, the Poetry

⁵⁰ Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio, *El jarama* (Ediciones Destino, Barcelona, 1955). *El Jarama* was very well received when it was published and won the Nadal Prize in 1955 and the Crítica Prize in 1956. It was also very innovative, specially its tape-recorder style dialogue. The book recounted the story of a group of friends who went for a picnic in El Jarama (where one of the bloodiest battles of the Spanish Civil War took place). "His work exposes the vacuity, the tedium of life in post-Civil War Spain, the political anomie of the period", Fusi and Carr, *Spain*, p. 115. Juan Goytisolo, one of Spain's best known contemporary novelist, would say about it in later years: "*El Jarama* represented the apotheosis of Spanish neo-realism, which explains why those works that followed seemed redundant, branches that don't add anything to the trunk. ... *El Jarama* puts a brilliant end to a whole cycle of our novel, excluding, because of its own perfection, the possibility of descent", Juan Goytisolo, *Disidencias* (Barcelona: Seix-Barral, 1977), pp. 163, 165.

⁵¹ Josep María Castellet, *Literatura, ideología y política* (Barcelona: Editorial Anagrama, 1976), p. 137. For more information on the literary movement of the 1950s see Fernando Morán, *La novela realista en la España de los años 50* (Madrid: Tauros Ediciones, 1971); José María Martínez Cachero, *Historia de la novela española entre 1936 y 1975* (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1972) pp. 151-223.

Encounters in the university, the Congress of Young Writers and the University Manifesto of February 1956 would not have been possible.⁵²

Música is in fact a very good example of the members of this generation that would eventually join or become fellow travellers of the PCE. As was the case with many of them, he became acquainted with the Communist movement by first being active in the cultural world. In 1949, he entered the *Círculo Cultural Guipuzcano*.⁵³ “It was there that I heard for the first time Marxist terminology, concepts such as class struggle and the seemingly eternal discussions between Socialists and Communists.”⁵⁴ Then, in 1952, he travelled to Paris with his grandfather and his brother Fernando. He saw his first Soviet films in the French capital and visited a few bookshops where he was able to buy Soviet books as well as poetry by Antonio Machado and Pablo Neruda. “I discovered a free country and an atmosphere where left wing ideas were manifested with strength, which signified a new stage in my salutary and surprising progress towards Communism.”⁵⁵ Indeed, Paris became a reference point for many intellectuals, not only because of its value as an example of political freedom and cultural openness, but also because there, they would often meet the exiled leaders of the PCE. At the end of that year, Música became acquainted with the Communist poet Gabriel Celaya who would serve as his first contact with the PCE. Celaya introduced him to several people related to the underground Communist movement, amongst others the cinematographer Eduardo

⁵² Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 59.

⁵³ The *Círculo Cultural Guipuzcano* was the successor of the *Ateneo*, which had been closed down after the end of the Civil War.

⁵⁴ Enrique Música, *Itinerario hacia la libertad* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés Editores, 1986), pp. 23-24.

⁵⁵ Música, *Itinerario*, p. 26.

Ducay who had recently joined the party.⁵⁶ These encounters gave Múgica something the cultural circles he had been relating to did not:

My early encounters with the Communists seemed to offer me ample possibilities of action to influence reality. It was not just about having a sense of history acquired from prior knowledge, but being able to express it through determination and social change, taking us to an active leadership from a convincing ideology, and this was something that the rest were not proposing.⁵⁷

In October 1953, Múgica moved to Madrid to complete the fourth year of his law degree. At university, he would soon meet fellow students Javier Pradera and Ramón Tamames, who would also become important members of the PCE's intellectual and student organisations in Spain. Soon afterwards, in January 1954, an event took place that gave expression to the discontent and potential revolutionary value of the students.⁵⁸ Laín Entralgo himself would later describe 1954 as the year that marked the beginning of the political disorders in Spanish universities.⁵⁹ It began when the Falangist student union, SEU, organised a demonstration against the presence in Gibraltar of the Queen of England.⁶⁰ Once the protesters were in front of the British Embassy, things got out of hand and the police suddenly charged against them under orders from the Minister of the Interior to dissolve the demonstration. José Luis Abellán, a writer and student who was very active in the democratic opposition inside the university during these years, writes:

A demonstration that had been 'officially' called by a Falangist organisation was at the same time being 'officially' repressed by the members of the Mounted Corps of

⁵⁶ Interview with Enrique Múgica, September 2000.

⁵⁷ Múgica, *Itinerario*, p. 27.

⁵⁸ In general, there are a lot of contradictions on the dates and order of events of this period at the University of Madrid. Whenever this happens, I always choose the most likely version of events, whether it is confirmed by a second source or whether it is the only one that fits in the chronology of the period. As many of the sources are, or rely on, memoirs, it is only normal that sometimes the dates or events are confused and even changed over.

⁵⁹ Pedro Laín Entralgo, *El problema de la universidad* (Madrid: Cuadernos para el Diálogo, 1968), p. 30.

⁶⁰ Fernando Sánchez Dragó, *Una vida mágica* (Madrid: Anjana Ediciones, 1985), p. 41.

the Armed Police. It would be difficult to forget for those who lived through the events, the mixture of surprise, irritation and rage that we felt as a result.⁶¹

The following day the press acted as though nothing had happened, which irritated the students who had attended the demonstration.⁶² Ramón Tamames with other left wing students organised a small meeting during which it was decided that a new demonstration in front of the *Dirección General de Seguridad* should be called under the slogan of freedom of the press.⁶³ They also published a manifesto complaining about the manipulation they had been victims of. "We have been betrayed!" they claimed.⁶⁴ In the view of Múgica:

That, which had started as a pro-SEU demonstration against Great Britain, therefore with Falangist antecedents, became a demonstration of students that had directly experienced police repression, a police force that was describing them as hooligans. This was the first awakening, albeit indirect, of the University of Madrid.⁶⁵

The demonstration was a success and around 10,000 students gathered at the *Dirección General de Seguridad*. The students called for freedom of the press and burned newspapers.⁶⁶ Once the demonstration dissolved, a small group took over the radio station Madrid in an attempt to broadcast a proclamation. The police, which until that point had not intervened, now moved to evict the students. Later that afternoon, new clashes took place around the University as the police tried to apprehend the students that were in the street.⁶⁷ As a result, those who were already

⁶¹ José Luis Abellán, *Ortega y Gasset y los orígenes de la transición democrática* (Madrid: Espasa, 2000), p. 245.

⁶² Julio Fernández, *Enrique Múgica* (Madrid: Grupo Libro 88, 1991), p. 47.

⁶³ Jáuregui and Vega, *Antifranquismo 1939-1962*, p. 171; Múgica, *Itinerario*, p. 32; Lizcano, 56, p. 97.

⁶⁴ Manifesto of the Madrilean students denouncing the manipulation they had been object to during the demonstration in front of the British Embassy, AHPCE (FUERZAS DE LA CULTURA, Microfilm 62).

⁶⁵ Interview with Enrique Múgica, September 2000.

⁶⁶ Interview with Enrique Múgica, September 2000.

⁶⁷ Lizcano, 56, pp. 97-98.

in the University building locked themselves inside, throwing anything they could find at the authorities that were besieging them.

At this point, a group of students went to talk to Pedro Laín Entralgo, the Rector of the University, to complain about the police attack and informed him about a student who had been shot in the leg. Laín went to see the injured boy and also took the chief of the SEU, Jorge Jordana, who was inside the building, to a safe place.⁶⁸ He then went out with his hands in the air, to work as a mediator. According to Laín's recollection, he managed to prevent the students' arrest on the condition that they would immediately evacuate the building. "In the evening, I managed to get those besieged back to their houses. But they had to come out with me in groups of 40 or 50. Not a single arrest took place."⁶⁹ The following day, Laín felt obliged to lecture the students on the wrongfulness of their behaviour. "The prestige of Laín as a liberal man almost collapsed," writes Múgica. "The most important thing, however, was to emphasize what Laín really was and not the image he was giving at that point."⁷⁰ Laín would prove his liberal inclinations in the following years.

At any rate, this incident brought into the open the students' disagreement with the imposition of an official student union, which did not answer their demands for a more open and free atmosphere at the University. According to Pablo Lizcano, author of *La Generación del 56*, the SEU "had been damaged beyond repair".⁷¹ In 1955, Laín wrote a report called, *On the spiritual situation of Spanish youth*, in an attempt to make Franco aware of the relevance of the student problem.⁷² As Paul

⁶⁸ Pedro Laín Entralgo, *Descargo de conciencia, 1930-1960* (Barral Editores, Barcelona, 1976), p. 404.

⁶⁹ Laín, *Descargo*, p. 405.

⁷⁰ Múgica, *Itinerario*, p. 34.

⁷¹ Lizcano, *56*, p. 98.

⁷² Laín argued that the mood of the students was a reflection of the popular mood that only dared be expressed in private. He thought that more freedom was needed. Otherwise, the dissatisfaction of the

Preston writes, Laín's report "was a plea for the windows of the regime to be opened before Marxism began to grow in its fetid atmosphere". Franco, nevertheless, answered the problem with a speech that oozed contempt for Ortega and the liberal intelligentsia, calling "upon the loyal intelligentsia to combat subversion". This was a disappointment for many of his supporters, Preston writes, and "found echo only in the most reactionary sections of the Falange".⁷³

In contrast, the leaders of the PCE in Paris, the so-called young guard who would soon reach the highest position in the party, was already starting to appreciate the development of a student opposition.⁷⁴ Once informed about the university riots of January 1954, they concluded that what the students were implicitly demanding was a change of regime; "their fight is essentially political, and they are spontaneously fighting it on the same positions as our party". Semprún was strongly encouraged to continue with the good work: "We are now convinced that in our work we have to give special attention to the students. ... Carry on!".⁷⁵ Moreover, it was argued that this opposition movement would not develop to its full potential unless it had some leadership, and this had to come from the Communists.⁷⁶ Hence, the time had arrived for the PCE to have the first official contact with Múgica, which was arranged by his friend and party member, Eduardo Ducay.⁷⁷ In great secrecy, Ducay took Múgica to

students could eventually develop towards dissidence, Laín, *Descargo*, pp. 414-416; Mesa, *Jaraneros*, pp. 45-53; Farga, *Universidad*, p. 47.

⁷³ Preston, *Franco*, pp. 646-647.

⁷⁴ Letters written by an activists using the name of "Celso" to the exiled leadership about the student demonstrations, 28 January 1954, AHPCE (ORGANIZACIÓN UNIVERSITARIA DEL PCE EN MADRID, Informes, Caja 123, Carp. 2.1.2).

⁷⁵ Letter from the Political Bureau to Semprún, February 1954, AHPCE (FUERZAS DE LA CULTURA, Microfilm 79).

⁷⁶ Report on the discussion between the party leadership about a Congress of the Falange, 24 February 1954, AHPCE (ACTIVISTAS, Caja 92, Carp. 67).

⁷⁷ By this time, Eduardo Ducay was being considered by the party as a good candidate to direct the work of the party among intellectuals. Semprún writes about him: "Regardless of his age (26 years

meet “someone” in a Café at the *Plaza de Manuel Becerra* in Madrid.⁷⁸ Waiting for him was Jorge Semprún, who went by the alias Federico Sánchez. The two would work closely for the next few years. As mentioned above, Múgica had already met the young Communist leader a year earlier at Celaya’s house in San Sebastian, when Semprún was visiting Spain on his first clandestine mission with the PCE.⁷⁹ Now, Semprún revealed to Múgica his true identity as a party delegate. They then engaged in a conversation about the latest events that would be the onset of the party’s involvement in the students’ opposition activities at the University. According to Múgica:

I gave him a short explanation of what was happening, the development of events and how the meaning of the demonstration had changed. He interrogated me about the possibilities of creating a broad organisation of opposition against the Falange and I replied that those possibilities existed and that until then I had been alone, since there was no Communist organisation in the University, but just a few dispersed students with rebellious ideas.⁸⁰

The interview marked Múgica’s enrolment in the party as a full member and his appointment as the person in charge of the party’s activity in the Law Faculty. For some time afterwards, Múgica and Semprún held bi-weekly meetings in order to discuss events and the party’s approach in many different areas.⁸¹ Semprún, nevertheless, believed that Múgica underestimated the revolutionary nature of the recent student riots. In a report to the leadership, he wrote about their encounters:

It was possible to convince him (Múgica) that no matter how much spontaneity characterized the students’ actions, the students were more radicalised than he

old), Ducay is a man of certain experience in different areas of intellectual work and could pay a great service to the party. Moreover, he has the great advantage of being completely unknown to the repressive apparatus. Due to his social and family origins and his age, he is a person without any kind of police dossier or suspicious antecedents”. Report on the different aspects of the work with the intellectuals written by Jorge Semprún, April 1954, AHPCE.

⁷⁸ Interview with Enrique Múgica, September 2000.

⁷⁹ Report on the different aspects of the work with the intellectuals written by Jorge Semprún, April 1954, AHPCE.

⁸⁰ Múgica, *Itinerario*, p. 33.

⁸¹ Report on the different aspects of the work with the intellectuals written by Jorge Semprún, April 1954, AHPCE.

thought, that it was necessary to make a considerable effort to find these students or group of students.⁸²

Already in this and other reports written at the time by the party delegates coming from France, differences in the perception of the reality of the situation in Spain between those inside the country and those in exile becomes clear. For instance, when talking about the anti-American policy, Semprún criticised Múgica's argument that the installation of American bases was unavoidable, a conclusion that for someone living in Spain seemed rather obvious. Another party delegate also mentioned Múgica's underestimation of the forces of the masses, but he added: "Semprún has told me that they have argued about this quite a lot and that he is beginning to correct his point of view".⁸³ This different appraisal of the conditions for a struggle against Franco would eventually lead to the disenchantment with the party of many intellectuals and students who felt the leadership in exile was applying the wrong policies to fight the regime. As we shall see, even Semprún as well as another party leader, Fernando Claudín, would in later years object to the party's evaluation of the situation in Spain, something that would eventually lead to the crisis of 1964.

Soon after the student riots of January 1954 and the first meetings with the party, Múgica organised the legal Poetry Encounters at the University, which were sponsored by the SEU's *Aula de Cultura*.⁸⁴ By this time, he had become part of the

⁸² Report on the different aspects of the work with the intellectuals written by Jorge Semprún, April 1954, AHPCE.

⁸³ Report by Carlos Semprún Maura, April 1954, AHPCE (ORGANIZACIÓN UNIVERSITARIA DEL PCE, Comité Universitario Estatal, Informes, Caja 123, Carp. 1.1).

⁸⁴ The name Poetry Encounters is not the one used by Múgica in his memoirs, he uses the name Encounters between Poetry and University. Nevertheless, I will use the name Poetry Encounters because it is better known and the one used by most of the Encounters' protagonists. As for *Aula de Cultura*, it had been founded by the *Sección Femenina* of the SEU to give access to all students to

Cultural Activities Committee of the student union, which gave him good cover for his other role as a “Communist agitator”. According to Semprún:

Música was the brains and the animator; his activism was immense. The Poetry Encounters in the University and everything that comes after that was done in contact with the party but not everything is the result of the party’s initiative or suggestion. The Encounters were Música’s initiative.⁸⁵

For this event, Música had also managed to obtain the support of the ex-Falangist poet Dionisio Ridruejo.⁸⁶ The Encounters were held in the spring of 1954 and basically consisted of a series of lectures by known poets, after which a debate took place between the poet and the students. A number of the poets that were present, or whose poems were recited by others, belonged to the left or to the opposition to Franco, such as Eugenio de Nora, who had actually been contacted by Jorge Semprún himself to attend the Encounters.⁸⁷ The latter’s brother, Carlos Semprún Maura, who at this point had been sent into Spain as an instructor of the PCE’s Central Committee, was present during De Nora’s recital. “My brother/boss ordered me to go to the conference as a thermometer, that is, to measure the pulse of the masses”, he writes in his memoirs.⁸⁸ Semprún Maura soon became the secretary of the Committee of Communist Students in Madrid.⁸⁹

seminars in different fields such as Theology, Philosophy, Physics, Biology and Anthropology. The seminars, held by the *Aula* most often in the old Law Faculty in San Bernardo, would usually have an attendance of no less than 200 students.

⁸⁵ Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

⁸⁶ Dionisio Ridruejo was a poet who had entered the Falange in 1933. He became the chief of Propaganda in 1938 and held the post until 1940. That year, he founded the theoretical journal *Escorial* with Pedro Laín Entralgo. In 1941, Ridruejo joined as a volunteer the Spanish *Division Azul* that fought with the Nazis in the Soviet Union. On his return, he moved away from the regime, and eventually left and resigned from the posts he held in the Falange. Consequently, Ridruejo was ostracised by the regime and had difficulties obtaining work. He eventually left for Rome to work as a correspondent for the newspaper *Arriba*. Ridruejo continued his political evolution towards more liberal positions and became involved with the student opposition in the mid 1950s.

⁸⁷ Report on the different aspects of the work with the intellectuals written by Jorge Semprún, April 1954, AHPCE. Gabriel Celaya was also contacted by Semprún but was unable to attend the Encounters.

⁸⁸ Carlos Semprún Maura, *El exilio fue una fiesta* (Editorial Planeta, Barcelona, 1999), pp. 66-67.

⁸⁹ Carlos Semprún Maura would leave his work as a party delegate in Spain at the beginning of 1957. In July of that year, he would leave the PCE altogether. Subsequently, he would join other political

The scheduled programme of the Encounters was followed by spontaneous student gatherings to discuss what had taken place at the session. Among those who attended the *Aula de Cultura* in the spring of 1954 were Julio Diamante, Jesús López Pacheco, Jaime Maestro, Julián Marcos, José López Moreno, Javier Muguerza, Fernando Sánchez Dragó and Ignacio Sotelo. The peak of the Encounters came when the poet Leopoldo Panero read his *Canto Personal*, which was a critique of Pablo Neruda's *Canto General*. Outraged, the students made a strident protest.⁹⁰ In a report to the authorities written after the events of February 1956, which will be looked at below, Ridruejo described the session in the following manner:

The day on which the poet Panero had to talk, it was clear that between a poet that had been honoured by the regime and a poet against the regime, a great number of youngsters preferred the second one just because of that. However, I could see that the majority of those who preferred the second one had read neither the *Canto General* nor the *Canto Personal*.⁹¹

Ridruejo still thought that the debates that took place during the Encounters had been “lively and interesting, but each a little more polemical than the one before”. Moreover, he added, it was possible to discern “the beginning of the circulation of certain confused ideas that are usually described as dangerous and extremist ... The inclination towards all that is prohibited and proscribed, all that is officially condemned, was the dominant note in this aspect.”⁹² Nevertheless, he never suspected the Communist affiliation of Múgica, or others participating in the Encounters. In the above-mentioned report, he included a passionate defence of these students denying any possible relationship between them and the PCE. Regarding Múgica, Ridruejo wrote, “he is not a Communist nor does he sympathise with any

parties, such as the FLP in 1962. For more information see his memoirs, Semprún Maura, *El exilio*.

⁹⁰ Abellán, *Ortega*, p. 246.

⁹¹ Declaration by Dionisio Ridruejo after the events of February 1956, written to the members of the *Junta Política* of the FET that were to pass judgement on the situation, AHPCE (FRENTE

Communist theses, nor has he seen in his life, any more than the rest of them, a Communist in the flesh.”⁹³ Little did he know that not only was Múgica a Communist himself but he had been using the Encounters as a recruiting ground for the PCE. In fact, since the event attracted the most politically conscious students at the University, it was a good opportunity for Communist students to single out those who had the potential to join them. In the view of Múgica:

At that time, social poetry was itself a way of doing politics, a type of political activism, a political action that was not clandestine but that could be manifested through social poetry. At the Encounters, we could see who was in favour of social poetry, and those who are closest to us we could bring in the organisation of the party at University.⁹⁴

Indeed, during the organisation of the Encounters, Múgica met Julián Marcos, from the Law Faculty, and Jesús López Pacheco, from the Humanities Faculty, who knew each other and apparently considered themselves to be Communists. Soon enough, Múgica received Semprún’s approval to ask both students to join him in leading the Communist organisation at the University of Madrid. There followed meetings between Marcos, Pacheco, Múgica and Semprún to discuss the PCE’s legal and non-legal possibilities of action. The fight against the SEU and the creation of a strong organisation in the University were established as their most important goals. They were also in charge of distributing the party’s propaganda in the university.⁹⁵ “Organise, organise, organise,” Semprún told them.⁹⁶ At one point, he talked about the possibility of sending Múgica, López Pacheco and Marcos to Paris in order to

UNIVERSITARIO ESPAÑOL, Caja 125, Carp. 4).

⁹² Declaration by Dionisio Ridruejo after the events of February 1956, AHPCE.

⁹³ Declaration by Dionisio Ridruejo after the events of February 1956, AHPCE.

⁹⁴ Interview with Enrique Múgica, September 2000.

⁹⁵ Report by Carlos Semprún Maura, April 1954, AHPCE.

⁹⁶ Report on the different aspects of the work with the intellectuals written by Jorge Semprún, April 1954, AHPCE.

receive political and ideological education from the party leadership.⁹⁷ Indeed, at the end of that year in the French capital, Enrique Múgica would meet Santiago Carrillo for the first time.⁹⁸ The future General Secretary was pleased with the PCE's new acquisition: "He was a Basque of good appetite, with a lot of vitality, very enthusiastic, very imaginative... at that time Enrique Múgica played a very interesting role. He was one of the first".⁹⁹

Javier Pradera, who met Semprún through Julio Diamante, also became involved with the party during this period.¹⁰⁰ Pradera's position, nevertheless, was special. As Carlos Semprún would later describe, his link to the party was "*individual* and because of this, he did not have to go to cell meetings, and he only had to account for his activity to the party hierarchy, almost always that would be Federico Sánchez, or in his absence, me".¹⁰¹ Pradera himself defines his role as Semprún's "kind of personal assistant".¹⁰² In the view of Semprún, Pradera's special situation was mainly a result of the party's attempt to protect such a significant member:

The day that I met him we talked until four in the morning, I realised he was an extremely brilliant man and a fantastic signing for the party. But since he was a Pradera (the grandchild of a very important pro-Francoist journalist) and he had just passed the examinations for the judicial Air Corps, becoming a Second Lieutenant, I did not want him to fall in any small police raid. A person like Pradera had access and could talk to many different people. It was appropriate for him to have a direct relation with the party. He did not always join those activities that could most easily be hit by the police. This was also the case of Ramón Tamames (who worked with Pradera and Múgica from early on but would not join the party until 1956).¹⁰³

⁹⁷ For more information see report on the different aspects of the work with the intellectuals written by Jorge Semprún, April 1954, AHPCE.

⁹⁸ Interview with Enrique Múgica, September 2000.

⁹⁹ Interview with Santiago Carrillo, January 2001.

¹⁰⁰ Julio Diamante belonged to one of the first Committees of Intellectuals of the PCE. He was involved in the so-called *Cineclubs*.

¹⁰¹ Semprún Maura, *El exilio*, p. 68.

¹⁰² Interview with Javier Pradera, September 2000.

¹⁰³ Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

In the late 1950s, Pradera would become the person in charge of the party's relations with other political forces that appeared at the time in the Spanish underground scene.¹⁰⁴

It is clear from the reports written after January 1954 that the Communist leadership in Paris was very excited about the new opposition movement flourishing in the student and intellectual sectors. In the view of Santiago Carrillo, "this opposition was the only thing we could hold onto at the time, the only link that would allow us to connect with the new things that were appearing in the country".¹⁰⁵ Moreover, as Semprún explains, the policy of the Anti-Francoist National Front (the National Reconciliation policy would not be established until 1956) meant that the party had to disseminate its ideas among a wider sector of society. "Even though our policy was very sectarian regarding the party's internal structure and procedures, there was little sectarianism when it came to propaganda and the diffusion of ideas. Therefore, we had to reach out".¹⁰⁶

3. The Congress of Young Writers

The next stage for the young Communist organisation at the University in Madrid was to organise the Congress of Young Writers, a project on which they worked for more than a year. With this activity, Communist students were attempting to build on what had been achieved with the Poetry Encounters. Although the Encounters had a progressive character, they were, after all, organised within the parameters of the

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Javier Pradera, September 2000.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Santiago Carrillo, January 2001.

SEU and had taken place at the SEU's *Aula de Cultura*. The organisers of the Congress, on the other hand, felt confident that on this occasion the event could be carried out independently of the official student trade union. They also hoped that the scope of the Congress would enable them to reach more students than had been possible through the Encounters. However, their intentions, while subtle, were to say the least suspicious for the zealous guardians of order at the university. As a result, the organisers went through a great deal of tense negotiations with the SEU's leaders that concluded with the Congress being cancelled. Nevertheless, the events surrounding its preparation would serve to strengthen and make more apparent the student's resistance to remaining under the control of the official trade union.¹⁰⁷

It is not at all clear where exactly the idea of the Congress came from. In the view of Ridruejo, it was he who incited the students to go ahead with such a project. "It (the idea of the Congress) did not come from a specific order coming from a mysterious place," Ridruejo wrote referring to the regime's accusation of a Communist conspiracy behind the organisation of the Congress.

It might not be convenient for me to confess it but it is the truth. They formalized their project and drew it up according to the line that I had suggested, with no intention of using it as political propaganda or action outside the university.¹⁰⁸

On the other hand, Morán maintains that the idea was born at Semprún's house in Paris during the first meeting between Múgica and Santiago Carrillo in December 1954, but this cannot be the case as the preparation for the Congress had

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

¹⁰⁷ "Los universitarios españoles en la lucha contra la dictadura franquista y por la amnistía", June 1960, AHPCE (COMITÉ DE COORDINACIÓN UNIVERSITARIA DE MADRID Y BARCELONA, Caja 124, Carp. 27)

¹⁰⁸ Declaration by Dionisio Ridruejo after the events of February 1956, AHPCE.

already been started by the spring of that year.¹⁰⁹ It is likely, then, that the meeting Morán is referring to was used to confirm the details surrounding the organisation of the event.

The most plausible explanation is the one given by Múgica, who places the idea for the Congress right after the celebration of the Encounters during a meeting between López Pacheco and Semprún in a field next to the University of Madrid.¹¹⁰ As explained above, they used these occasions to discuss the latest events, their implications and the opportunities for further action. On this occasion, López Pacheco suggested the possibility of organising a Congress of Writers.¹¹¹ There and then, they began to develop the details of the new project. Initially, the Congress was supposed to take place as part of the SEU's cultural activities. "Given the chaotic situation of the SEU it would be easy to have Múgica, Pacheco and Marcos in the Secretariat of the Congress," Semprún wrote in a report to the leadership in exile.¹¹² Later, as has already been mentioned, they abandoned this idea for a more daring one. As Múgica explains:

It (the Congress) had to break somehow the monopoly of the SEU. ... We considered that it was very important to break it because that would have a very attractive connotation for many students who rejected the imposed organisation and refused to participate in its activities.¹¹³

The following stage in the organisation of the Congress was to obtain the support for the project of the Rector of the University, Pedro Laín Entralgo.¹¹⁴ According to Laín, "a group of students wanted to organise in Madrid a Congress of

¹⁰⁹ Morán, *Miseria*, p. 281; Interview with Enrique Múgica, September 2000.

¹¹⁰ Múgica, *Itinerario*, p. 37.

¹¹¹ There are other accounts that point to López Pacheco as the person behind the idea of the Congress, Abellán, *Ortega*, p. 246; Jáuregui and Vega, *Antifranquismo 1939-1962*, p. 191. Jáuregui and Vega say that the idea came from Jesús López Pacheco and Julián Marcos.

¹¹² Report on the different aspects of the work with the intellectuals written by Jorge Semprún, April 1954, AHPCE.

¹¹³ Múgica, *Itinerario*, p. 37.

Young Writers and they asked for my help: Dionisio Ridruejo had already talked to me in positive terms about these students.”¹¹⁵ Laín agreed to help them, allocating 15,000 pesetas from the cultural funds of the Rector’s office to the project.¹¹⁶ In his memoirs, he places this meeting sometime before December 1955. However, this is probably a lapse of memory since it is clear that, during the 1954-1955 academic year, the organisation of the Congress was at full speed and had had from its beginning the support of Laín. Furthermore, the Congress had already been cancelled by the time Laín places the students’ decision to organise it. The students must have talked to Laín about their project sometime during the spring of 1954 since their first intention was to hold the Congress in May of that year, an unrealistic deadline due to the amount of work necessary to carry out a project of that size.¹¹⁷ In addition, there are a series of letters between Laín, Múgica and the chief of the SEU, Jorge Jordana, regarding the Congress that date from June-July 1954.¹¹⁸ In one of them, Jordana specifically mentions Laín’s support of the Congress and complains about the SEU not having been informed about the matter.¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, Laín told the students that his support ultimately depended on their understanding with the SEU, since the latter was the only official student organisation in the University. For the Rector, however, it was more a matter of formality than anything else. Laín, just as Ridruejo and the students, agreed that it was best to keep the Congress as independent from the SEU as possible. In a letter to Múgica, Ridruejo wrote:

¹¹⁴ Múgica, *Itinerario*, p. 38.

¹¹⁵ Laín, *Descargo*, p. 418.

¹¹⁶ Laín, *Descargo*, p. 418; Múgica, *Itinerario*, p. 38.

¹¹⁷ Report on the work and situation of the students, summer 1954, AHPCE (ORGANIZACION UNIVERSITARIA DEL PCE, Comité Universitario Estatal, Caja 123, Carp. 1.1).

¹¹⁸ Letters between Dionisio Ridruejo, Pedro Laín, Gabriel Elorriaga, Jorge Jordana and Enrique Múgica, June-July 1954, AHPCE (CONGRESO DE JOVENES ESCRITORES UNIVERSITARIOS, Caja 125, Carp. 7).

¹¹⁹ Letter from Jorge Jordana to Pedro Laín, 26 June 1954, AHPCE (CONGRESO DE JOVENES ESCRITORES UNIVERSITARIOS, Caja 125, Carp. 7).

Pedro Laín tells me that the SEU has vehemently claimed its right to intervene formally. I think he has managed to convince them that nobody ever thought about ignoring them or leaving them aside, but also that it was convenient not to affiliate the Congress to any political discipline. His intention is to defend your argument about not having the SEU as the head of this action even if it is and must be part of it, a thing that, on the other hand, will be unavoidable inside the university.¹²⁰

The national character of the Congress also meant that Múgica needed to contact the Minister of National Education, Joaquín Ruiz Giménez, and the General Director of Education, Joaquín Pérez Villanueva. Múgica met with Pérez Villanueva, who gave the Congress his approval, but he too insisted that the SEU's support for the project was essential.¹²¹ Inside the SEU, Múgica was on good terms with Gabriel Elorriaga, who welcomed the idea of the Congress. He saw as plausible a joint organising committee made up of those members selected by the Rector's office and those selected by the SEU.¹²² Some time afterwards, Elorriaga and a few other Seuists became part of the organising committee of the Congress, along with Múgica and those students selected by the latter with the approval of Laín.¹²³ Elorriaga belonged to the left wing sectors inside the Falange and was rather cynical about the attitude of some of the leaders of the SEU towards the Congress. That summer, in a letter to Múgica, he wrote:

I read in ABC a few days ago a note on the Congress of Young Writers. It is being talked about in the upper circles of the SEU. Moreover, I had consecutive conversations with Jaime Ferrán and Jorge Jordana himself, with "naïve" interventions by Marcelo Arroita. Oh well, you have probably heard about the reaction of the chief through D. Pedro Laín (he reacted in a logical and reasonable manner, more intelligent than that of his subordinates). We will talk when we see each other, hopefully soon, about the already well-known Congress.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Letter from Dionisio Ridruejo to Enrique Múgica, 10 July 1954, AHPCE (CONGRESO DE JOVENES ESCRITORES UNIVERSITARIOS, Caja 125, Carp. 7).

¹²¹ Múgica, *Itinerario*, p. 38.

¹²² Laín, *Descargo*, p. 418.

¹²³ For more information see Múgica, *Itinerario*, pp. 39-41.

¹²⁴ Letters between Enrique Múgica and Gabriel Elorriaga, June-July 1954, AHPCE (CONGRESO DE JOVENES ESCRITORES UNIVERSITARIOS, Caja 125, Carp. 7).

The Congress had become known after Múgica, encouraged by the PCE, had written and printed a leaflet about it.¹²⁵ Copies were then handed out at the university and among those outside the university realm that would be interested in such an event. The organisers significantly printed the leaflet containing only the University's shield, and not the mandatory SEU shield.¹²⁶ According to Múgica, "for the first time, and due to the fact that it was not accompanied by the Falangist symbol, an important university activity was undertaken by self-aware students in a way that foreshadowed a break with the system".¹²⁷

Initially, the organisers of the Congress worked from the premises of the *Pabellón de Gobierno* of the University of Madrid, which had been assigned to them by Laín. They also began to write an intellectual review for the Congress called *Boletín Informativo*, which managed to publish three numbers during 1955 before it was banned.¹²⁸ *Boletín Informativo* covered a wide range of issues on events of a progressive character such as the Cinema Conversations in Salamanca organised by Juan Antonio Bardem, a review of Bardem's film *Death of a Cyclist* (1955), and an illustration of Don Quixote by Pablo Picasso, a known Communist.¹²⁹ By May 1955, and due to the conspicuous political nature of *Boletín Informativo*, Múgica and the other organisers of the Congress were asked to move from the *Pabellón* to an office outside the university, a measure aimed at isolating them from the students. Even

¹²⁵ Report on the work and situation of the students, summer 1954, AHPCE.

¹²⁶ Announcement on the Congress of Young Writers, June 1954, AHPCE (CONGRESO DE JOVENES ESCRITORES UNIVERSITARIOS, Caja 125, Carp. 7).

¹²⁷ Múgica, *Itinerario*, p. 41.

¹²⁸ *Boletín Informativo*, AHPCE (CONGRESO DE JOVENES ESCRITORES UNIVERSITARIOS, Caja 125, Carp. 7).

¹²⁹ Interview with Enrique Múgica, September 2000.

Ridruejo, who strongly favoured the students, would later say that some of the opinions expressed through *Boletín Informativo* had caused alarm.¹³⁰

Even so, the preparations for the Congress continued to take place in the recently assigned premises. During this time, the party came into contact with new students, such as Emilio Sanz Hurtado, Fernando Sánchez Dragó and José Luis Abellán, developing with some of them a strong relationship. According to Sánchez Dragó, for two years after July 1955, when Julián Marcos first introduced him to Jorge Semprún, he held meetings with the party delegates almost every week.¹³¹ It was then that the PCE's first Committee of University Students was established.¹³² Nevertheless, it is important to remember that many of those joining the party were doing so as "anti-Francoists not as Communists".¹³³ In the view of Pradera, "politically we had grown up under the dilemma 'Franco yes, Communism no' so we had turned it around and said 'Franco no, Communism yes'".¹³⁴ Múgica explains this attitude in the following manner:

During the Franco regime, the memory of the Civil War gave a different tone to Communism. Many of those who joined the PCE were not Marxists but they became involved out of other sensibilities and because they believed that the Communist Party was the only party from which to struggle against Francoism.¹³⁵

Carrillo further corroborates this argument when he says: "the PCE managed to be the only anti-Francoist party really in existence and many who did not have ideologically a Communist education, but who wanted to fight Franco, joined the party."¹³⁶

¹³⁰ Declaration by Dionisio Ridruejo after the events of February 1956, AHPCE.

¹³¹ Interview with Fernando Sánchez Dragó, September 2000.

¹³² It was formed by Julián Marcos, Jesús López Páheco, Javier Pradera and Enrique Múgica. Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

¹³³ Interview with Fernando Sánchez Dragó, September 2000.

¹³⁴ Interview with Javier Pradera, September 2000.

¹³⁵ Interview with Enrique Múgica, September 2000.

¹³⁶ Interview with Santiago Carrillo, January 2001.

Finally, on 27 May 1955, more than a year after they had come up with the idea in the first place, the students conducted a ceremony to present the Congress at the Economics and Political Science Faculty. It was presided over by Pedro Laín Entralgo, Julio Diamante, Enrique Múgica and the president of the Association of Young Spanish Writers and Artists, Enrique Chena.¹³⁷ The Congress was expected to take place the following November. However, that summer, Múgica had a conversation in San Sebastian with the chief of the SEU, Jorge Jordana, which exposed the inevitable failure of the project. According to Múgica, after explaining to Jordana that their only aim was to expose the problems of literary creation and the student's thoughts on the matter, the SEU leader responded: "Sure, I have heard that enough times, and maybe an inexperienced observer would buy it. But I know that it (the Congress) has other goals and we are not going to allow you to take advantage of us."¹³⁸ Though it was unlikely that he suspected that the PCE was behind the Congress, Jordana was obviously aware that the "problems of literary creation" were not the real agenda of the project. When Múgica tried to reply to this, the SEU leader cut him off. "You defend your interests and I mine, which are obviously different and, therefore, I will prevent the Congress from happening."¹³⁹ Nevertheless, the threat took some time to materialise and actually, it would not be Jordana who carried it out, as we will see further down. In the meantime, nevertheless, the plans for the Congress proceeded.

¹³⁷ Jáuregui and Vega, *Antifranquismo 1939-1962*, p. 191.

¹³⁸ Múgica, *Itinerario*, p. 43. Pablo Lizcano in *La generación del 56* describes this same meeting as having taking place between Múgica and Serrano Montalvo, who came to replace Jordana as a chief of the SEU. However, Múgica explains in his memoirs that the meeting took place with Jordana. Lizcano, *56*, p. 118.

It is worth mentioning here other cultural projects and fronts for struggle that appeared around the same time as the Congress of Young Writers and represented similar political concerns. Principally, the foundation of the intellectual review *Aldebarán*, and the Cinema Conversations in Salamanca. In the words of Sánchez Dragó:

At the same time as the Congress of Young Writers was being organised, I, as well as J. R. Marra-López, Carlos Romero, Manuel Morales and eventually Javier Muguerza, founded the intellectual review *Aldebarán*. It was an intellectual review of poetry that eventually became an intellectual review of prose in homage to Ortega y Gasset the day that he died. Therefore, the Congress of Young Writers, *Aldebarán* and the Cinema Conversations in Salamanca, became the three legs, the three mainstays of the intellectuals' effervescence and the students that opposed the dictatorship.¹⁴⁰

As soon as the founders of *Aldebarán* had the first issue in their hands, they went to the literary circle of the established theoretical journal *Revista de Occidente* to introduce to its members their new creation. In the view of Abellán, "they were completely astonished. It was obviously rather unusual that regardless of the dead weight of the Franco dictatorship, a generation like ours could have emerged from the catacombs of the regime".¹⁴¹

At the same time, Jorge Semprún was keen to emphasise the work of the party in the literary world outside the university. He promoted the relationship of the PCE with Communist writers that had first contacted the leadership in the early 1950s. However, his efforts in this respect were not particularly successful. Semprún reported back to Paris on his failure to get writers such as Gabriel Celaya, Blas de Otero or Gabriel de Nora to be as involved as he had hoped in the activities of the party. He talked about Gabriel Celaya's disillusion with the role he could play in the

¹³⁹ Múgica, *Itinerario*, p. 43.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with Fernando Sánchez Dragó, September 2000. Aside from Sánchez Dragó, the other editors of *Aldebarán* were Carlos Romero Muñoz, Javier Muguerza, Julián Marcos, José Ramón

struggle against Franco. "I am a bit tired of being the 'enfant terrible' of our poetry", Celaya wrote in a letter to Múgica as an explanation for his refusal to attend the Poetry Encounters at the University. Semprún also told the leadership that Blas de Otero was unavailable because he had entered what he described as a "neurasthenic silence". In addition, De Nora, one of the party's most important contacts, was living abroad and only worked for the party during his short holidays back in Spain. That left only the contacts of Múgica with young writers and poets.¹⁴²

Regarding the Cinema Conversations of Salamanca, they were organised in May 1955 by Juan Antonio Bardem and the team of the magazine *Objetivo*, fellow travellers Basilio Martín Patino and Luciano González Egido, and the Seuist Cine-Club of the city's university.¹⁴³ It was then and there that Bardem launched his famous attack on Spanish cinema. He defined it as being "politically inefficient, socially false, intellectually wretched, aesthetically void and industrially stunted."¹⁴⁴ In contrast, Bardem, as well as other young directors, such as Luis García Berlanga, preferred the neo-Realism of Italian cinema, which could be found as a strong influence in his film, *Death of a Cyclist*, an international success and a clear critique of Francoist society.¹⁴⁵ As already mentioned, Ricardo Muñoz Suay, soon joined by Juan Antonio Bardem and Eduardo Ducay, helped to increase the party's influence in the Spanish cinema world. It was considered that through the Cine-Clubs, the magazine "*Objetivo*" and the *Instituto de Investigaciones y Experimentos*

Marra López and Manuel Morales. For more information see Lizcano, 56, pp. 114-115.

¹⁴¹ Abellán, *Ortega*, p. 218.

¹⁴² Report on the different aspects of the work with the intellectuals written by Jorge Semprún, April 1954, AHPCE.

¹⁴³ Bardem, *Memorias*, p. 140.

¹⁴⁴ Bardem, *Memorias*, p. 145.

¹⁴⁵ Carr and Fusi, *Spain*, p. 116.

Cinematográficos, the party could create an important front for agitation amongst students and the middle classes.¹⁴⁶

As the students continued to prepare the Congress, an event took place that would permanently change the course of their plans. The death of José Ortega y Gasset on 18 October 1955 would provoke a series of protests that eventually culminated in the banning of the Congress of Young Writers by the SEU authorities and would lead to the student riots of February 1956.

C. The turning point: February 1956

1. The death of Ortega y Gasset

José Ortega y Gasset, probably the most important Spanish philosopher of the twentieth century, returned to Spain 8 August 1945 after a ten year exile that had started with the outbreak of the Civil War.¹⁴⁷ Before leaving the country, Ortega had been actively involved in public debate, often about the so-called idea of Spain. However, following his departure on 20 August 1936, the philosopher retired from public life and refused to comment upon the war that was tearing the country apart, something for which he was later criticised. On his return from exile, Ortega continued to keep silent on anything related to politics, expressing neither criticism

¹⁴⁶ Report on the different aspects of the work with the intellectuals written by Jorge Semprún, April 1954, AHPCE.

¹⁴⁷ For an extensive study of Ortega's life after his return to Spain see Gregorio Morán, *El maestro en el Erial. Ortega y Gasset y la cultura del franquismo* (Barcelona: Tusquets Editores, 1998).

nor praise about the Franco regime. In 1953, he was implored by Pedro Laín Entralgo to return to the University, where he had held a chair at the Philosophy and Humanities Faculty during the Second Republic. Ortega declined. In the view of Laín, his failure to achieve the return of the old professor back into the Spanish University system was the “most emotive and pleasant failure” of his years as Rector, “even if such an affirmation seems a parody”.¹⁴⁸ The refusal by Ortega to teach at the University was taken by Laín as part of Ortega’s silent protest against the regime, which explained Laín’s “emotive and agreeable” feelings about his “failed mission”.¹⁴⁹ However, as Morán points out in his book about Ortega under Franco, the philosopher still accepted his salary as a professor until his death; “the regime was not granting him a voluntary leave of absence, but rather it was simply giving him a salary to keep him quiet”.¹⁵⁰

On 18 October 1955, Ortega died. Regardless of the “silence” he had kept during the last 10 years of his life, the authorities thought that the philosopher’s death could still have a dangerous effect among progressive sectors of the intellectual world. Preventive measures were taken in order to avoid any exaggerated demonstrations of mourning by his admirers. In fact, as we shall see, these precautions were not unfounded. When talking about the feelings provoked by Ortega’s death, Abellán writes:

The fact that only a few steps away from the University rooms, the most eminent Spanish thinker of the twentieth century had died, without anyone of us having had the slightest opportunity to hear his voice or listen to his teachings, became automatically an emphatic and unequivocal accusation against the political regime that allowed for these things to happen. The reaction was blunt and violent.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Laín, *Descargo*, p. 412.

¹⁴⁹ Javier Tusell, *La oposición democrática al franquismo* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1977), p. 286.

¹⁵⁰ Morán, *Ortega*, p. 14.

The *Dirección General de la Prensa* only permitted three articles and one biographical note about the philosopher to be published in each newspaper, and all of them had to emphasise Ortega's mistakes on religious matters. Moreover, in the biography, the fact that Ortega had received confession before his death had to be mentioned, a much questioned matter.¹⁵²¹⁵³ The day of the funeral, on 19 October 1955, thousands of students gathered at the mortuary house to give their farewell to the philosopher. As Preston says, "the students knew little about Ortega but he symbolized critical thought and the free interplay of ideas, things ruthlessly suppressed under Franco."¹⁵⁴ The fact that the press described Ortega's death as Catholic did not help to soothe the anxiety felt by those who thought the regime was using it to its own advantage. As Abellán explains, "this was an unworthy manipulation that pretended to distort a life that –according to his own manifestations- had tried to behave *a-Catholically* in all of its acts".¹⁵⁵

At this point, the organisers of the Congress of Young Writers handed out at the university an obituary on Ortega's death. It had a black border and it did not include a cross. At the bottom of the page, the following words could be read: "DON JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET. LIBERAL SPANISH PHILOSOPHER. The University Congress of Young Writers is saddened by the loss of such a significant Spaniard, at the time when his contribution was most necessary".¹⁵⁶ In the view of Múgica:

That obituary represented an important step forwards on our symbolic road, and it led to a unique anti-establishment demonstration of students to the cemetery,

¹⁵¹ Abellán, *Ortega*, p. 214.

¹⁵² Tusell, *Oposición*, p. 286; Morán, *El Maestro*, p. 515. A transcription of the orders given by the regime about what could be published about the death of Ortega, which are not exactly what both Tusell and Morán described, can be found in Enrique Bordería Ortiz, *La prensa durante el franquismo: represión, censura y negocio. Valencia (1939-1975)* (Valencia: Fundación Universitaria San Pablo C.E.U., 2000), pp. 167-168.

¹⁵³ Ortega, Tusell, *Oposición*, p. 286; Morán, *El Maestro*, p. 515.

¹⁵⁴ Preston, *Franco*, p. 645.

¹⁵⁵ Abellán, *Ortega*, p. 216. For more information on this matter see pp. 216-219.

¹⁵⁶ Morán, *Ortega*, p. 523.

independent from official projects, that culminated in a fervent reading of his most exciting texts on freedom.¹⁵⁷

Múgica was referring here to the demonstration that took place two days after Ortega's burial, on 21 October 1955. Aware of the students' discontent regarding the official funeral of the philosopher, Múgica's group decided to capitalise on it and organised a tribute to "the teacher they never had" that would express their classmates' true and deepest distress.¹⁵⁸ These actions, the Communists believed, would also serve to express the anti-Francoist feelings in the University of Madrid.¹⁵⁹ Firstly, a meeting was held at the courtyard of the old Law Faculty in San Bernardo. There, Julio Diamante and López Pacheco among others, read texts from Ortega's *Misión de la Universidad*, *La Rebelión de las masas* and *El tema de nuestro tiempo*.¹⁶⁰ At this point, the dean of the University, Manuel Torres López, appeared in an attempt to keep the event under control, but failed to do so.¹⁶¹ As soon as the readings were finished, it was decided to go to the cemetery and place on Ortega's tomb a laurel wreath the students had bought for the occasion. On the wreath, in large golden letters, could be read "UNIVERSITY YOUTH, TO THEIR TEACHER".¹⁶² The procession was headed by a group of female students from the Philosophy and Humanities Faculty, where the old philosopher had been a professor during the Second Republic.¹⁶³ In this manner, the students hoped to make clear to the regime

¹⁵⁷ Múgica, *Itinerario*, pp. 43-44.

¹⁵⁸ Lizcano, 56, p. 119.

¹⁵⁹ "Los universitarios españoles en la lucha contra la dictadura franquista y por la amnistía", June 1960, AHPCE.

¹⁶⁰ Police report on active Communist and Institutional groups at the University of Madrid, 10 November 1955, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 33. The police would later blame Julio Diamante for the organisation of the whole event and the decision to bring people to the cemetery.

¹⁶¹ Lizcano, 56, p. 120.

¹⁶² Police report about the development of events in the university, 14 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 120.

¹⁶³ Sánchez Dragó, *Una vida*, p. 49.

their rejection of the ideological manipulation of the philosopher's death.¹⁶⁴ As Abellán writes in reference to Ortega's death, "we wanted to give a public testimony of our attitude, so instead of going directly into the cemetery by the shortest way, we took a detour through the busiest areas."¹⁶⁵ Once the funeral procession was in front of the philosopher's tomb, a manifesto was read. Among other things, it said:

This posthumous tribute to Ortega y Gasset, professor of the Philosophy and Humanities Faculty, is a tribute by those who could have been his disciples; those who are not and are suffering the void he left after abandoning his chair in Metaphysics for well-known reasons. It is the tribute of the university youth, of the university students without a university. We who have had to learn many things outside the classes, in books that are not textbooks, in languages that are not Spanish.

We are disciples without a master. Between Ortega y Gasset and us there is an empty space, badly occupied. Everyday we notice something is missing; someone is missing. No one tells us what is the purpose of the university. And we are convinced that it is worth very little, and that it is necessary to change it a lot. But no one tells us how to do it. No one defends us as the basis of the university.

The police were scandalised by the students' refusal to read a funeral oration before the tomb of the philosopher: "One of the ladies present hinted at the convenience of praying a *paternoster*; but one of the organisers, apparently Enrique Múgica, said that the event was over, therefore emphasising its secular character".¹⁶⁶ The authorities concluded that the Spanish Communist Party was behind students such as Múgica, Tamames, Pradera, Diamante and Pacheco.¹⁶⁷

At this point, *Aldebarán* printed a special edition that included a report on everything that had happened during the student's tribute to the philosopher. As a

¹⁶⁴ Abellán, *Ortega*, p. 216.

¹⁶⁵ Abellán, *Ortega*, p. 221.

¹⁶⁶ Police report on students' activities in Madrid, 4 December 1955, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 40.

¹⁶⁷ Police report on active Communist and Institutional groups at the University of Madrid, 10 November 1955, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, pp. 34, 39; Police report on students' activities in Madrid, 4 December 1955, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 41.

result, the intellectual review, already under suspicion, was closed down.¹⁶⁸ The police called one of its editors, Fernando Sánchez Dragó, to give testimony:

They asked me if *Aldebarán* was financed by Moscow. I was left bewildered. Then I started laughing. 'How could it be financed by Moscow?!' I asked them. 'Aldebarán means Red Star' they told me. And it was true, it meant Red Star, something that we did not know, we had chosen that name because it was the title of a poem written by Unamuno.¹⁶⁹

The intellectual reviews *Alcalá* and *Laye* were also closed down due to a special issue on Ortega. And *Ínsula* and *Índice* were penalised too for the same reason.¹⁷⁰ *Boletín Informativo*, whose team had been responsible for the obituary that was handed out at the University right after Ortega's death, eventually published their own special issue dedicated to the philosopher that led it to suffer the same fate as the other intellectual reviews.

In the meantime, aware of the significance behind such an act of contempt by the students against the regime, the PCE was happy to embrace it in the party's newspaper, *Mundo Obrero*. The homage to Ortega was seen as a "political act, not an act of mourning" that expressed "a national conscience that is rising before the tyrant and his fascist tyranny." After many years of despising the philosopher, the PCE now described him as a "liberal man that knew how to pronounce himself worthily in favour of the Republic and freedom, and later on he did not give way before

¹⁶⁸ Police report on active Communist and Institutional groups at the University of Madrid, 10 November 1955, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 36.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Fernando Sánchez Dragó, September 2000. Dragó was described by the police as a "furious atheist and recalcitrant blasphemer ... He is completely opposed to the word God appearing in *Aldebarán*. Others accused of him of being juvenile and hot-headed but it is unlikely they will break with him because they rather like him." For more information see police report on active Communist and Institutional groups at the University of Madrid, 10 November 1955, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 36.

¹⁷⁰ Morán, *Ortega*, p. 523.

Francoism".¹⁷¹ *Mundo Obrero* added that the inability of the police to stop the students' demonstration was further evidence of the "weakness of the Francoists".¹⁷²

Finally, on 18 November, an official tribute took place at the Philosophy and Humanities Faculty, where Ortega had taught. Professors and different personalities were present during the act, which unlike the one organised by the students, had the blessing, albeit reluctant, of the authorities. Nevertheless, it was still feared that the act could suddenly turn into a protest. Apparently, the Minister of Education, Joaquín Ruiz Giménez, followed by telephone the development of the event to make sure that at all times things were going smoothly.¹⁷³ Everything went according to plan though there were those who during their speeches made references on various occasions to the limitations imposed on Spanish society by the Franco regime, and even placed themselves outside its boundaries. However, as Abellán explains:

The tribute did not placate the high spirits. An 'official' and 'academic' act, no matter how sincere its intentions were, could not repair what had been a historical injustice of great dimensions. After the Christmas break, when the academic year restarted, the university atmosphere was heating up. It did not take long for incidents to arise, which culminated in very violent confrontations.¹⁷⁴

2. The cancellation of the Congress of Young Writers and the University Manifesto of 1956

The repression that followed the death of Ortega y Gasset against certain progressive publications, including *Boletín Informativo*, and those who had participated in the students' homage to the philosopher, would soon reach the Congress of Young

¹⁷¹ "Enseñanzas que se imponen", *Mundo Obrero*, 30 November 1955.

¹⁷² "Una gran manifestación estudiantil antifranquista en Madrid", *Mundo Obrero*, 15 November 1955.

¹⁷³ Laín, *Descargo*, p. 413.

Writers. Jorge Jordana had been replaced by José Antonio Serrano Montalvo in September 1955 and though Jordana had from the very beginning opposed the Congress, Serrano Montalvo had been appointed with only one end in mind: to cancel the event at any cost. A few weeks before the Congress was meant to take place, the organisers were no longer allowed to use the premises that had been assigned to them. Significantly, Múgica was described by the police as the “brains” behind the Communist organisation in the University.¹⁷⁵ Subsequently, the authorities cancelled the Congress and explained their decision as follows:

Due to the terms on which it was supposed to take place, the Ministry of National Education and the SEU banned the Congress of Young Writers because it presupposed a general attack on the regime while seeking protection in matters of an intellectual character.¹⁷⁶

Nevertheless, as Múgica explains, they might have frustrated the eager expectations of the Congress’ celebration, but “they could not avoid the role of the latter in the awakening of the student sector, which was the Congress’ true objective.” Moreover, the Communist organisation at the University was not about to let the idea of a Congress slip away so easily. After the Christmas break, on 24 January 1956, Múgica, Ramón Tamames and Javier Pradera met in a café at the Plaza de Alonso Martínez where they came up with an even more challenging plan. They decided to call a National Congress of Students completely independent from the SEU, a Congress that would directly question the legitimacy of the official student union. Learning from their previous experience, they resolved that on this occasion they would inform the foreign correspondents in Madrid about their intentions, so

¹⁷⁴ For more information see Abellán, *Ortega*, pp. 225-227.

¹⁷⁵ Police report on active Communist and Institutional groups at the University of Madrid, 10 November 1955, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 30.

¹⁷⁶ Police report on the document (Manifiesto) handed over on 1 February in the University of Madrid, 1 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 68.

that the attention of the international media could be used as a safeguard in case of repression. If the new Congress were to be cancelled, as had happened with the Congress of Young Writers, at least news would spread on the important opposition student movement developing at the University of Madrid, and on the students' legitimate demand for democratic representation.¹⁷⁷

However, contacting the foreign correspondents in Madrid was not an easy task at the time. "We knew they existed, but we did not have their names. And this simple factor explains how we worked and under what conditions" writes Múgica. The Seuist Gabriel Elorriaga would be the individual to provide the addresses and names of the journalists. During a dinner in honour of the writer Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio for his novel *El Jarama*, Múgica and Pradera also came into contact with Miguel Sánchez Mazas, the editor of the theoretical review, *Theoría*, and a collaborator with the *Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas*. They described their plans to him and enthused by the idea, he offered them the possibility of holding a meeting to get more people involved at the club *Tiempo Nuevo*, of which he was a member.¹⁷⁸ It was the coming together of those behind the Congress of Young Writers, who were frustrated with its failure, and, more moderate elements, who nevertheless wanted to find an alternative to the SEU.

It is interesting to point out that the exiled leadership of the PCE had not been informed about this new step taken by the party's activists inside Spain. Clearly, with names such as Múgica, Pradera and Tamames, the National Congress of Students had a very important Communist component. Nevertheless, Jorge Semprún would not hear about it until the idea of the Congress was made public. While he was telling

¹⁷⁷ Múgica, *Itinerario*, pp. 44, 46-47.

¹⁷⁸ Múgica, *Itinerario*, pp. 48-49. The Club *Tiempo Nuevo* (Alcala 93) belonged to the Ministry of Education. For more information on the Club *Tiempo Nuevo* see Lizcano, 56, p. 127.

Música that the party believed the time had come for the students to embark on more daring action, the young Basque replied that on their own initiative they were already doing so. Astonished, Semprún then said that Carrillo had to be informed immediately because otherwise “he would read it in the press and think that we are not involved”.¹⁷⁹ At this point, the power struggle in the PCE was about to take place. The ‘Parisians’, as we have seen in the previous chapter, would emerge as the victors and would continue to emphasize the role of the underground organisations in Spain.

On 29 January 1956, the brains behind the idea of a National Congress of Students met at the club *Tiempo Nuevo*. Among those present were Ridruejo, Sánchez Mazas, Tamames, Pradera, Música and López Pacheco. As the meeting progressed, the idea of a manifesto in support of the Congress was developed, and its main outline elaborated. However, the manifesto’s aim was not completely clear. On the one hand, there were those like Ridruejo who did not want the manifesto to have an obvious political posture so that it could be accepted by a wider range of students. On the other, there were those like Miguel Sánchez Mazas who preferred the manifesto to have a more evident political commitment that would not only address the problems of the students at the university but also the situation of the country as a whole.¹⁸⁰ This position would eventually prevail, and the manifesto would criticise different aspects of the existing situation in Spain.¹⁸¹ A commission formed by Pradera,

¹⁷⁹ Música, *Itinerario*, p. 52.

¹⁸⁰ Abellán, *Ortega*, pp. 249-250.

¹⁸¹ The University Manifesto of 1956, February 1956, AHPCE (RECORTES DE PRENSA, Caja 125, Carp. 6). The police reports of this time suggest that Sánchez Mazas, who was the person responsible for printing the Manifesto, added at the last minute two more paragraphs “that went beyond the projects of the students and invaded in some way the political arena”. Police report on the activity of students and its possible leaders, 8 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 92.

Tamames, López Pacheco, Múgica and Sánchez Mazas, was assigned to write it. They met that very night in a bar close to the premises of the club *Tiempo Nuevo*, where they completed the final version of what would be known as “The University Manifesto of 1956”.

The document, which was addressed to the Government, the Ministry of National Education and the General Secretary of the *Movimiento*, dedicated a great deal of space to complaints about the economic difficulties of the students. However, behind this façade, its main purpose was still obvious: to attack the SEU that was denounced as having “an artificial structure that does not allow, and distorts, the authentic expression and representation of students.”¹⁸² The manifesto went on to call for the summoning of a National Congress of Students that would “give a representative structure to the corporative organisation of the students”. This Congress, it was further demanded, should have representatives from all the different centres of higher education who would be freely elected by the students. In this manner, the authors of the manifesto were directly questioning the legitimacy of the non-democratically elected members of the SEU. As expected, the authorities quickly identified this demand as an attempt to create a Free Student Union, something strongly opposed by the regime at the time.¹⁸³

On 31 January 1956, Jesús López Pacheco read the manifesto before more than 70 people present at the club *Tiempo Nuevo*. It was then agreed to submit the text for signature by students at the University of Madrid the following day. According to Ridruejo, “I told my young friends that it was very likely we would end up in jail, which in terms of agitation could be more important than collecting

¹⁸² The University Manifesto of 1956, February 1956, AHPCE.

¹⁸³ Police report, expanding the previous one, on the activities registered on the same date, 1 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 69.

signatures or circulating manifestos".¹⁸⁴ At this point, the director of the club, Gaspar Gómez de la Serna, interrupted those gathered and asked them to leave the premises immediately.¹⁸⁵ Nonetheless, that night, foreign correspondents in Madrid received a copy of the manifesto and as planned, the following day those involved in the project interrupted classes taking place in the university to read it out and ask for students' support.¹⁸⁶ According to Múgica, they managed to gather more than three thousand signatures in one hour.¹⁸⁷ Though this number might be an exaggeration, even the police would say that the action had succeeded "more than had been expected".¹⁸⁸ In the view of the historian Pablo Lizcano, the Manifesto and the gathering of signatures "were, perhaps, the first public defiance of the Franco regime that was undertaken from inside Spain, backed by an ample confluence of political options and endorsed in such a massive manner".¹⁸⁹ As the students themselves would write four years later in a report to the party analysing this period, "the repercussions of the manifesto was immense; it produced a true commotion among the students".¹⁹⁰

In fact, the police had for some time been wary of the danger in the activities of the progressive students at the University. Six young agents had been sent undercover to infiltrate these students and inform on their activities. Among other things, they would write regarding the organisers of the Congress:

Enrique Múgica Herzog, who has political ideas different to the Falange and the regime, has been in contact for a long time with the exiles in France. His father was

¹⁸⁴ Dionisio Ridruejo, *Casi unas memorias* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1976), p. 335.

¹⁸⁵ Police report on the document (Manifesto) handed out on 1 February at the University of Madrid, 1 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 67.

¹⁸⁶ The international press indeed covered to a great extent the events of February 1956. For more information see Gema Martínez de Espronceda Sazatornil, "La crisis universitaria del 56 en la prensa europea" in Carreras Ares and Ruiz Carnicer, *La Universidad*.

¹⁸⁷ Múgica, *Itinerario*, p. 51. Abellán, on the other hand, says it took a few days to arrive to such a number, Abellán, *Ortega*, p. 251.

¹⁸⁸ Police Report, 4 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 76.

¹⁸⁹ Lizcano, *56*, p. 131.

¹⁹⁰ "Los universitarios españoles en la lucha contra la dictadura franquista y por la amnistía", June 1960, AHPCE.

executed by the *Nacionales*. Miguel Sánchez Mazas, son of the writer Rafael Sánchez Mazas, and Jesús López Pacheco have not wasted any opportunity to oppose the actions of the SEU and show their repudiation of the actual regime and all its institutions.¹⁹¹

Following the publication of the Manifesto, the police interrogated many of those involved in recent events, such as Tamames, Garrigues, Gallardón and Sánchez Mazas.¹⁹² The authorities were concerned about the influence that these “elements” could have on the mass of students who were disappointed with the poor performance of the SEU.¹⁹³ In fact, the Manifesto led the members of the student Falangist group *Primera Linea* to publish on 3 February their own declaration on what they saw as the problems and goals of the students, most of which coincided with those mentioned in the Manifesto.¹⁹⁴ They shared a feeling of disenchantment about the SEU and complained about the lack of identification between representatives and those represented in the union. In contrast to the progressive students, however, these Falangists believed that the solution for the situation could still be found in the doctrine of National-Syndicalism.¹⁹⁵ Nevertheless, as the police predicted, the stand of these sectors proved that those inside the system had become bold enough to criticise it and hence, it was feared, they could eventually fall prey to more radical political orientations.¹⁹⁶ In fact, soon after, the authors of the Manifesto

¹⁹¹ Police report on the document (Manifesto) handed out on 1 February at the University of Madrid, 1 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, pp. 68, 121, 144-145.

¹⁹² Lizcano, 56, pp. 134-135.

¹⁹³ Police report, 4 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 77.

¹⁹⁴ *Primera Linea* was formed by a group of very active students who believed to be themselves the “real” Falangists. They were supposed to be in charge of running activities of political agitation but with the passage of time, they had come into trouble with the Falangist hierarchy whom they accused of having departed from the Falange’s original doctrine. *Primera Linea* was from then onwards ostracised in the Falange. For more information see Lizcano, 56, pp. 99-101, 109.

¹⁹⁵ Declaration by *Primera Linea*, 3 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, pp. 71-73.

¹⁹⁶ Police report about the Sindical Chamber celebrated at the Law Faculty on 4 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 77.

and some members of *Primera Linea* met to exchange views and find a common ground from which to solve the problems of the students at the University.

The first meeting took place on the morning of 5 February at the house of Juan Sebastián Garrigues Walker (by invitation of his son Juan) and the second one that same night at the house of the Monarchist José María Ruiz Gallardón, assistant professor in the Law Faculty.¹⁹⁷ Though the members of *Primera Linea* were not acting as official representatives of the Falange, their presence still meant that the ideas of the Manifesto had reached a wide range of political options in the University. The Falangists also confirmed how even at the highest level of the SEU, there were those who supported the need for a Congress of Students as called for by the Manifesto.¹⁹⁸ It was then decided to draw up a document that would establish the bases for a new student organisation as well as report on the success of the Manifesto.¹⁹⁹ Their plan was to distribute it at the university on 8 February. In addition, the Falangists agreed to talk to their friends inside the SEU about the ideas of the Manifesto in an attempt to gather support.²⁰⁰ It was also decided that the Manifesto, with all the signatures of the students, would be taken to a notary and then sent to the University's Rector, Pedro Laín Entralgo.²⁰¹ However, as we shall see, things got out of hand faster than anyone could have predicted, ultimately culminating in the student riots that would lead to one of the most important crises of the Franco regime.

¹⁹⁷ Police report about the students, 7 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 86.

¹⁹⁸ Statement at the police headquarters by D. Miguel Sánchez Mazas, 8 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 165.

¹⁹⁹ Statement at the police headquarters by D. Juan Sebastián Garrigues Walker, 8 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 161.

²⁰⁰ Statement at the police headquarters by D. José María Ruiz Gallardón, 8 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, 171.

3. The student riots

Regardless of the meetings between the authors of the Manifesto and the members of *Primera Linea*, and the attempts of the latter to gather support inside the Falange, the majority of the SEU's high command was irritated by the recent activities of the progressive sector inside the University. Not surprisingly they ordered their supporters to oppose the signing of the Manifesto and "to provoke incidents so that the police could intervene and to eliminate from the university the promoters of the so-called agitation".²⁰² To further complicate matters, the Law Faculty planned to hold a Syndical Chamber on 4 February.²⁰³ More than 700 students attended. The SEU representatives were jeered and there were calls for the Chief of the University District to resign. On the other hand, there were cheers for those who proposed to reform the SEU and who supported free elections. The Dean of the Law Faculty, who was presiding over the meeting, agreed that from that point onwards Syndical Chambers would be held on a yearly basis and would include the presence of a student delegation per class-year elected freely by the students. There followed the elections for the representatives of the Second and Third year of the Law Faculty and the subsequent defeat of the Seuist candidates. Three days later, the voting for the rest of the classes resumed.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ Police report about the students, 7 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 87; Statement at the police headquarters by D. Juan Sebastián Garrigues Walker, 8 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 162.

²⁰² Declaration by Dionisio Ridruejo after the events of February 1956, AHPCE.

²⁰³ The dates that I use in the following description of the events of February 1956 are based on the police reports of this period. Even though one cannot expect a fair description of events from this reports, the dates are reliable enough since they were written as things were happening.

²⁰⁴ Police report on the students-Syndical Chamber, 4 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, pp. 77-78; Public statement of the students of the Law Faculty, 27 February 1956, AHPCE (ESTUDIANTES DE LA FACULTAD DE DERECHO DE MADRID, Caja 124, Carp. 44). Again, there is a great deal of confusion about the dates of the elections, mainly due to the fact that they were split into two days, which has led many authors to believe they took place only on 7 February. However, the police reports clearly stated that the elections first took place on 4 February and were supposed to resume on 7 February. As mentioned above, these reports, written as the events were happening, can be taken as a

However, the development of the latest events had kept the Falangists wary and they refused to quietly wait for what they saw as a further blow to the SEU's power. On the morning of 7 February, a meeting took place among the representatives of the SEU from all of the different Faculties. It was decided then that the elections had to be stopped. As a result, members of the Falangist *Frente de Juventudes*, wearing their traditional blue shirts, went into the university soon after and hung up a note ordering the suspension of the elections and claimed that the votes that had already been cast were not valid. A large group of anti-Seuist students confronted them and started to scream "We Want Elections". The Falangists responded by singing *Cara al Sol*. This led to confrontations between the two factions with some people being injured. The Dean, Manuel Torres López, tried to intervene to stop the Falangists, insisting that the elections had to be held. He was then "harassed, insulted and shaken" and even threatened with a gun, news of which would soon spread and further upset anti-Seuist students.²⁰⁵ The fighting continued inside the University and at some point, a student grabbed an arrow from the wooden Falangist emblem that was on the wall of the building's stairs, probably to use it as a defensive weapon. Once the fight was over, the chief of the SEU found it on the floor and interpreted the act as a symbolic insult to the Falange.²⁰⁶ As the sociologist Sergio Vilar points out in his book about the opposition against Franco, "the students and the Falangists chiefs considered this action graver than a provocation, almost a sacrilege, and they organised themselves to carry out a violent response".²⁰⁷

reliable source when it comes to establishing the chronology of this period.

²⁰⁵ "El régimen de Franco en el banquillo", *Boletín de Información (Unión de Intelectuales Libres in Mexico)*, 15 August 1956.

²⁰⁶ Police reports on the students at the Central University, 7 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, pp. 81-88.

²⁰⁷ Vilar, *Anti-franquismo*, p. 250.

In the afternoon, the Governing Body of the University held an extraordinary Session to discuss the recent events. Rather optimistically, their only proposition to deal with the problem was to appeal to the students' sense of responsibility and ask them to avoid future confrontations.²⁰⁸ The police, on the other hand, predicted that the worst was still to come. It was feared that the agitation was being directed from abroad by the Communists. As was reported:

The biggest conspiracy against the regime since its birth is being hatched. A conspiracy that has the collaboration of all the exiled forces but that is really promoted by Communism. A conspiracy in which, though perhaps in an incipient way, masons, liberals, monarchists and certain Falangists are collaborating.²⁰⁹

This was an exaggeration. According to Semprún, what happened next surpassed everyone's expectations and was not the result of a planned action. "In 1956, the PCE was behind the Manifesto and the Congress, everything was prepared, but nobody could have imagined the repercussions, nobody could have imagined the riots, the shooting... that was unpredictable."²¹⁰

On 8 February from 10 am to 11 am, the University was taken over by groups of people, who were clearly not students, wearing the Falangist blue shirt and carrying truncheons and other weapons.²¹¹ They had received orders from the Chiefs of the Falange to congregate in the University. Even the Minister of the Interior, Blas Pérez González, had given his approval to the action in a meeting with the latter the

²⁰⁸ Minutes on the extraordinary Session of the Directing Board of the University Complutense of Madrid, 7 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, pp. 89-90; Laín, *Descargo*, pp. 418-419.

²⁰⁹ Police report on the students, 7 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 88.

²¹⁰ Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

²¹¹ Letter from a student of the Law Faculty, 15 February 1956, AHPCE (ESTUDIANTES DE LA FACULTAD DE DERECHO DE MADRID, Caja 124 Carp. 44); Report by Manuel Torres López on the events of February 1956, 8 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 100; Minutes of the Directing Board of the University Complutense of Madrid, 8 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 102; Laín, *Descargo*, p. 420.

previous afternoon.²¹² The Falangists started their offensive by attacking students and destroying University property. They also replaced and then guarded the arrow of the Falangist emblem that had been damaged the day before, their excuse for “invading” the university. The Dean of the Law Faculty and the Rector of the University asked them to leave but both were ignored, and the Falangists continued to harass students and some of the professors. Finally, they walked out of the building as they sang *Cara al Sol*, leaving behind a group of outraged students that, in retaliation for the Falangists’ attitude, assaulted the premises of the SEU and caused considerable damage. As Laín recounts, the Falangists left “feeling very proud about their punitive heroic action. And after that, violence for violence, the students assaulted the university premises of the SEU, destroying part of the furniture.”²¹³ The violence then spread to the streets where there were new demonstrations by both the Falangists and the anti-Seuist students, which again resulted in confrontations. Eventually, the police was forced to intervene and dissolve the demonstrators with the use of water cannon.²¹⁴

That afternoon, the Governing Body of the University held a new extraordinary Session during which they expressed their absolute condemnation for what they called “the intolerable violence against the University by elements totally alien to university life that, organised and directed by their bosses, have entered the Law Faculty.” The fact that the Falangists were not students particularly upset the

²¹² Letters to the Minister of Government from the Vice-Secretary of the *Movimiento*, Jesús López Cancio, and the National Chief of the Falange, J. A. Serrano Montalvo, 10 to 22 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, pp. 117-119.

²¹³ Laín, *Descargo*, p. 420.

²¹⁴ Letter from a student of the Law Faculty, 15 February 1956, AHPCE; Police reports on the students, 8 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, pp. 89-108.

University authorities. They also asked for the identification, and subsequent resignation, of those who had ordered the violent occupation of the University.²¹⁵

Finally, on 9 February, the mounting tension of the previous days exploded. The sparks flew during a ceremony, scheduled for that morning, in memory of the student Matías Montero, a Falangist killed during the Second Republic. As it happened, a group of progressive students were having a parallel demonstration against the recent actions of the Falangists. The two demonstrations collided between Alberto Aguilera and Guzman el Bueno streets, and a fight ensued. In the middle of the riots, a 19-year-old Falangist called Miguel Álvarez was shot in the back of the head. Among the Seuists the shooting was attributed to one of their own.²¹⁶ Nevertheless, the police reported that the perpetrator had been a student from the progressive sector. Sixty people were arrested. Later that day, the University Governing Body suspended classes until 13 February in order to express their condolences for the incident.²¹⁷ The rage of the Falangists, nevertheless, was not to be placated by any symbolic measure. They threatened to seek bloody revenge if Miguel Álvarez did not survive. There followed the preparations for what came to be known as “The Night of the Long Knives”. So-called death squads gathered weapons and made lists of the people they would “take for a walk”. As Ridruejo explains, “I was told that my modest corpse, conveniently bruised, was among those which were supposed to appear the following day in the morgue.”²¹⁸ Many did not sleep at home that night. The Rector of the University, Pedro Laín Entralgo, spent the night at the house of the Minister of

²¹⁵ Minutes on the extraordinary Session of the Directing Board of the University Complutense of Madrid, 8 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, pp. 101-103; Laín, *Descargo*, pp. 419-421.

²¹⁶ Morán, *Miseria*, p. 282.

²¹⁷ Suspension of classes at the University of Madrid by the University Board, 9 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 112.

Education, Joaquín Ruiz Giménez, after being told by different sources it was unsafe for him to return to his house.²¹⁹ These individuals as well as the Dean of the Law Faculty, Torres López, headed the lists of the Falangists.

Fortunately for those on the lists, Miguel Álvarez did not die but the Falangists remained ready to go into action in case his condition deteriorated.²²⁰ The press in the mean time exacerbated the situation, feeding the rage of the Falangists. The aggression was blamed on Communist elements and dramatic accounts of events were published. The newspaper *YA*, for instance, would say: “The blood of the injured Falangist was taken by one of his comrades, who soaked his blue shirt in it”.²²¹ The cancellation of articles 14 and 18 of the *Fuero de los Españoles* on 10 February further increased the sensation of panic and chaos.²²² Sánchez Dragó gives a graphic description of how the events developed from there:

The Falange was ordered to return to barracks. Ruiz Giménez, who was my uncle, called my mother and told her, ‘The Falange has been ordered to return to barracks. There is a list with 40 names, among the first is your son, and they are going to take them for a ride if the kid dies’. The list was headed by Laín Entralgo, Torres López, Gil Robles, and then us, the juniors. We were all terrified, and I went to Ferrol to my uncle’s house. Actually, everyone went to some relative’s house in the countryside to wait for the police to come to arrest us, because it was going to be the police that saved us from the Falange. So I went to Ferrol and two days later I got a phone call from my mother, telling me that the police had come for me and that I should go back. We were all put into jail. On that occasion, only Julián Marcos, Jaime Maestro, José Luis Abellán and myself were prosecuted by the military courts, by code 288 of military justice, concerned with ‘those that take arms under the orders of a foreign power’ and the sentence could be from twelve years to the death penalty. After three days, the Military Court decided that the claim had to be submitted to the Ordinary Court. Two months later, one by one we all started to be released. It took several years for the trial to take place and we were then acquitted.²²³

²¹⁸ Declaration by Dionisio Ridruejo after the events of February 1956, AHPCE.

²¹⁹ Laín, *Descargo*, p. 422.

²²⁰ Miguel Álvarez would spend 18 months in a critical condition before he recovered.

²²¹ “Agresión contra un grupo de estudiantes”, *Diario YA*, 10 February 1956, Archivo Agencia EFE (AAEFE).

²²² “El Gobierno usará del rigor de la ley contra quienes directa o indirectamente perturban el orden, la paz y la unidad. Se suspende la vigencia de los artículos 14 y 18 del Fuero de los Españoles, relativos a la detención y el confinamiento”, *Arriba*, 11 February 1956, AAEFE.

²²³ Interview with Fernando Sánchez Dragó, September 2000. For more information on the whereabouts in the years to come of those who were arrested see Lizcano, 56, pp. 152-153.

The police raids that followed the events of 9 February were directed at anyone who had had anything to do with the activities of a progressive character inside the University. The first to be arrested were Gabriel Elorriaga, Enrique Múgica, Javier Pradera, Dionisio Ridruejo, José María Ruiz Gallardón, Miguel Sánchez Mazas and Ramón Tamames.²²⁴ These names showed that the regime was not only targeting Communists. Moreover, as Múgica writes in his memoirs, there was something out of the ordinary about the whole affair:

For the first time in the list of the political arrests, the names were preceded by the title Don, and this was significant as until then the victims were usually referred to just by their first name, a nickname or a pejorative label.²²⁵

Pradera, a Lieutenant in the army, could not be arrested by the regular police and was instead detained at the Airport of Getafe having given his word of honour not to escape. According to Semprún, "I visited Pradera there, nobody asked you for your identity card to have access. I went with his wife and with Sanchez Ferlosio and visited him without any problem".²²⁶ Soon José Luis Abellán, Jesús López Pacheco, Jaime Maestro, Julián Marcos, Fernando Sánchez Dragó, and Julio Diamante joined the others in Carabanchel jail.²²⁷ According to Abellán, this second list of arrests reflected the need of the regime to make credible the theory of a Communist

²²⁴ Enrique Múgica was arrested in San Sebastian where he was doing military service, and later taken to Madrid.

²²⁵ Múgica, *Itinerario*, p. 55. The newspaper *Arriba* published on 11 February 1956: "La Dirección General de Seguridad nos remite la siguiente nota: 'Con ocasión de las alteraciones del orden producidas en Madrid, y además de las detenciones ya comunicadas en nota anterior, han ingresado como detenidos en esta Dirección General de Seguridad don Miguel Sánchez Mazas Ferlosio, don Dionisio Ridruejo Jiménez, don Ramón Tamames Gómez, don José María Ruiz Gallardón, don Enrique Múgica Hertzog, don Javier Pradera Cortázar y don Gabriel Elorriaga Fernández, todos los cuadros han quedado a disposición de la autoridad.'" *Arriba*, 11 February 1956, AAEFE.

²²⁶ Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

²²⁷ Police dossier on the actions and declarations of the arrested, 17 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, p. 216. There were other people arrested after the shooting, such as Pedro Schwartz Girón, María Luisa Cutanda Sánchez Cogolludo, José Gáret Murillo, Alfonso Sastre and Juan Antonio Bardem,

conspiracy, which could not be believed when names such as Ridruejo, Gallardón or Sánchez Mazas, all known conservatives, were involved. “There were no more Communists in this list than in the first one but, since they were not as well-known, it (the idea of a Communist conspiracy) could be more credible for the average person”.²²⁸ Though understandably the students’ first feelings were of anxiety and concern about their futures, their spirits rose as soon as they began adapting to life in prison. “During the day, the guards would leave the door of the cells open so we could pass from one to the other,” continues Abellán.

We played chess, read books, could have visitors who would bring us food, we could go out to the patio during the breaks... and there was even some political activity through the notes that we passed to the lawyers in the visiting rooms.²²⁹

This peculiar group of prisoners composed behind bars the famous “Ballad of the imprisoned students”, a hilarious ironic poem about their whereabouts and circumstances.²³⁰ On a more serious note, Ridruejo, who was outraged by the overreaction of the authorities, wrote then his famous declaration to the members of the *Junta Political* of the Falange. Among other things, he repudiated the government for having given an image “of confusion and fear that will be difficult to repair.”²³¹ He was convinced that there was no relationship between the progressive students he had so willingly helped and the Spanish Communist Party. He said:

The magnifying factor has been –according to the press- the discovery of a Communist infiltration. The judicial way will refute, I believe, such a hypothesis,

Mesa, *Jaraneros*, pp. 189-196, 200-203, 209-216.

²²⁸ Abellán, *Ortega*, p. 254.

²²⁹ Abellán, *Ortega*, p. 260. For more information on his experience in prison see pp. 256-262.

²³⁰ “Compañeros, compañeros / quien os mandó protestar.

Tenéis en libros profundos / la Ciencia para estudiar.

Tenéis un sindicato / si os queréis sindicarse

Sindicato, cato, cato / Sindicato Nacional

de estudiantes sindicados / por su propia voluntad”

Report by Carlist students on the student movement and the crisis of the SEU, 12 July 1956, Ballad of the prisoner students, AHPCE (INFORMES EN GENERAL SOBRE EL MOVIMIENTO ESTUDIANTEL, Caja 125, Carp. 5).

²³¹ Declaration by Dionisio Ridruejo after the events of February 1956, AHPCE.

because the police investigations have not proven –and I believe they have totally dismissed– any kind of contact of the students with any organisation of a subversive character.²³²

However, despite Ridruejo's claims, the police continued to pursue their theory of the involvement of the Spanish Communist Party in the student' riots. They referred to the "Message from the PCE to the Patriotic Intellectuals" that had been published in 1954 as evidence of the party's activity among the students. Múgica, López Pacheco, Marcos and Sánchez Dragó were thought to be in direct contact with the PCE. Múgica was pointed out as the main intermediary between Madrid and Paris.²³³ This led to a press campaign that reached its peak when the newspaper *El Español* published an article called "La conjura tiene nombres propios" (There are real people behind the conspiracy and we know who they are), which described the events that culminated in the riots of February as a conspiracy orchestrated by "diabolic" Communist forces from abroad. Subsequently, under an official order, the article had to be published by the press of the entire country.²³⁴ It argued that the PCE had given the orders for the riots to the students through an article signed by Jorge Semprún/Federico Sánchez in *Mundo Obrero*. The article, nevertheless, had been published on 10 February, the day after the riots. In the words of Semprún:

By pure coincidence, right before the student riots, the Pirenaica and *Mundo Obrero* made an analysis regarding the party's recent activity of a purely propagandistic matter. The article was called "Without preconceived dogmatisms".... *Without preconceived dogmatism you have to work among the students, with a democratic line, using legal possibilities, no sectarian attitudes, etc.* And hence, this article was thought to have been the one giving the orders for the battle of February 1956. The article was pure analysis and it had already been written and prepared before the riots. *Mundo Obrero* then published it on 10 February when the riots had already occurred. As a result, the Francoist press transcribed it into their papers and said, "see, the riots were a machination, a conspiracy, they were not spontaneous". And since the article was signed by Federico Sánchez, it was at this point that in the

²³² Declaration by Dionisio Ridruejo after the events of February 1956, AHPCE.

²³³ Police report about the Communist infiltration in the university of Madrid, 20 February 1956, Mesa, *Jaraneros*, pp. 148-152.

²³⁴ Abellán, *Ortega*, p. 263.

police reports the search for Federico Sánchez began, a name that did not ring any bells to anyone.²³⁵

However, the arrests of those who had been involved in the Manifesto were only a side effect of the riots of 1956. More dramatic was the government crisis that ensued. Franco blamed the loss of control over the students on the liberalising policies of the Minister of Education, Joaquín Ruiz Giménez, and on the weakness of the Minister-Secretary of the *Movimiento*, Raimundo Fernández Cuesta, both of whom were forced to resign.²³⁶ Fernández Cuesta would be replaced with José Luis de Arrese, who had held the same post in 1942 and would have a great impact on the dictatorship the following year. In addition, the Rector of the University, Pedro Laín Entralgo, the dean of the Law Faculty, Manuel Torres López, and the Rector of the University of Salamanca, Antonio Tovar, were also dismissed. What had begun as a problem of public order had turned into a political problem. This crisis would come to reflect the divisions between the political families of the regime. However, as Preston says, the changes implemented by Franco on this occasion “were not deliberate and considered changes of direction but rather botched emergency repairs along the road”.²³⁷

In any case, the change of cabinet would serve to raise many hopes in the PCE about what the opposition could achieve in Franco’s Spain. In the Official History of the PCE, the events were said to have emphasized the political crisis of the regime “which had now entered its most acute and open phase”.²³⁸ The student riots were

²³⁵ Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

²³⁶ Ruiz Giménez was replaced by the Falangist Jesús Rubio García-Mina.

²³⁷ Preston, *Franco*, p. 651.

²³⁸ Ibárruri & VVAA, *Historia del PCE*, p. 252.

widely covered in the party's newspaper, *Mundo Obrero*, including a transcription of the University Manifesto of 1956.²³⁹ Among other things, it was reported:

The facts are clear: the university youth, in a few hours, has shaken the pillars of the Franco regime. The fear caused by the cries of the students calling for freedom has made the regime nervous and has led the authorities to cancel articles 14 and 18 of the *Fuero de los Españoles*. People that not so long ago were collaborators of the *Movimiento*, such as Don Miguel Sánchez Mazas and Don Dionisio Ridruejo, have been arrested.²⁴⁰

In effect, the riots had ended up strengthening the democratic opposition in Spain. For many, the reaction of the regime revealed the impossibility for reform from within. As Abellán states:

I suffered the experience of living under a regime imposed by fear and terror; my decision to fight against the Franco dictatorship became irrevocable. I think I was not a unique case, but rather I was following an impulse that overcame us. The opposition inside Spain had irreversibly become stronger.²⁴¹

In addition, the repression that followed further contributed to the SEU's loss of power and prestige. Though the official student union would try to democratise and reform itself from within, its days were numbered. 1956 would be a turning point in the development of a democratic student movement that became particularly strong in the 1960s. As Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi in Spain explain in *Spain: Dictatorship to Democracy*:

It was also the beginning of the 'university problem', that sea of troubles which, advancing and retreating over the next twenty years, was to embarrass the regime and erode its legitimacy. ... the events were revealing as evidence of the increasing politicisation of university students; a process which even if it affected only a minority of students from the privileged sectors of society, proved nevertheless to be irreversible, an indication of the failure of the efforts of the regime to attract the post-war generation.²⁴²

²³⁹ *Mundo Obrero*, February 1956.

²⁴⁰ "The university youth points to the way to follow", report to the party from the university of Madrid, February 1956, AHPCE (ORGANIZACION UNIVERSITARIA DEL PCE EN MADRID, Informes, Caja 123, Carp. 2.1.2)

²⁴¹ Abellán, *Ortega*, p. 261.

²⁴² Carr and Fusi, *Spain*, pp. 146-147.

In contrast, the PCE proved capable of doing the exact opposite. In return, and albeit involuntarily, the students provided the party with a new vehicle to transmit their new policies. The PCE was no longer the advocate of a violent strategy, an image that had been established through its role in the Civil War, its submission to the USSR and its promotion of the guerrilla movement in the 1940s. Now, they were about to embark on the policy of National Reconciliation, which would be established after the victory of the 'Parisians' over the old guard. The children of the victors of the Spanish Civil War, the so-called Generation of 1956, would help the party to change their image and come closer to the reality of a new Spain. In an article in the French Communist newspaper, Carrillo wrote: "The working class greets the admirable fighting spirit of the students that, once more, as in the past throughout our history, fight alongside it for democratic liberties and national independence".²⁴³ In the words of Manuel Azcárate:

The Student movement of 1956 was for the PCE like a new birth in the eyes of Spanish society. It appeared different from the Party's traditional image, with new leaders like Javier Pradera, Enrique Múgica and some others that became figures with an important national projection. This was due mainly to the extraordinary work carried out by Jorge Semprún on his clandestine visits to Spain.²⁴⁴

D. Conclusion

The development of a student organisation can be said to have been the PCE's first successful project in Spain since the end of the Civil War. The party was able to use the discontent of a new generation to create a crisis that, while failing to overthrow the regime, strengthened the democratic opposition in Spain and exposed the

²⁴³ "La lucha del pueblo español contra el Franquismo", *L'Humanité*, February 1956.

²⁴⁴ Azcárate, *Derrotas*, p. 339

weaknesses of the Francoist system to deal with a generation that was meant to inherit and welcome the values of the Crusade. One of the main reasons for the success of the party in attracting the members of this generation lies in the fact that the exiled leadership, particularly those in Paris, allowed activists inside the country to mark the rhythm and direction of their actions. Semprún proved able to catalyse and understand the potential of the opposition that was emerging at the University of Madrid. Many of those who participated in the Poetry Encounters, the Congress of Young Writers, the homage to Ortega and the Manifesto of 1956, were not Communists and of those who were, many would in later years leave the party. However, the events that led to the student riots of 1956 laid the foundations for a democratic movement inside the University that in the 1960s would achieve their most precious goal, the disappearance of the SEU, and more importantly, would help to undermine the Franco regime.

Moreover, the success of the PCE with the University underground movement and its impact on many different fields of the Spanish cultural world, are essential to understanding the failure of the party to continue down the path initiated with the arrival of Jorge Semprún to Spain. As we shall see, based on this success, the leaders in Paris became increasingly overconfident regarding the party's potential to overthrow the regime. Once in power, the 'Parisians' would once again impose the will from exile upon the activists in Spain; the "illusions of the party", as Semprún described them, imposed upon reality.

IV. THE EXILE RULES

A. *Introduction*

The previous two chapters have established the initial impact of the destalinisation process in the Spanish Communist Party, both in exile and in Spain. In Chapter II, it was shown how the secret speech of Khrushchev in February 1956 was decisive in ensuring the victory inside the PCE of the Parisians over the old guard. At the same time, Chapter III has shown how the Parisians had been able to catalyse and direct the revival of the student and intellectual opposition against Franco. These changes seemed to point towards a new beginning for the PCE, even more so after the party proclaimed the policy of National Reconciliation. However, it would not take long before the extent of the reforms would be challenged by new events. As we shall see, the invasion of Hungary by Soviet troops in October 1956 marked the limits of this process in the Soviet Union and by implication in the international Communist movement. The Spanish Communists not only eagerly supported the invasion but also reacted in a similar manner to the Soviets when criticism arose within their own ranks: such was the case with the group in Mexico.

As for the organisation inside Spain, the months that followed 1956 witnessed a continuation of activity in Madrid and the birth of a new student and intellectual opposition in Barcelona, which eventually became organised under the PSUC. Communist activity in the Catalan capital reached a critical point during the tram

strike of January 1957, which served to detonate a number of demonstrations against the regime in other parts of the country. The success of these actions would eventually give rise to what the journalist Gregorio Morán has described as *Jornadismo*, a strategy by the PCE aimed at organising a series of major peaceful strikes in order to create a crisis that would lead to the overthrow of Franco's regime.

B. Setting the limits

1. Hungary and Poland

Before explaining the limits of the destalinisation process inside the PCE, it is important to first look at how these limits were set in the Soviet Union and the international Communist movement. As was described in chapter II, the death of Stalin in 1953 had led to the relaxation of the worst features of Stalinism in the USSR, which eventually culminated in Khrushchev's condemnation of the dictator himself during the XX Congress of the CPSU in March 1956. The shock wave produced by Khrushchev's secret speech would quickly travel throughout the Communist world, strengthening the feeling of anti-Sovietism in the satellite states of Eastern Europe, especially in Hungary and Poland. As a result, the Soviet leadership was forced to face the effects of the destalinisation process among those who had been most oppressed by the Stalinist system. Their reaction would mark the limits of the reform started after the death of Stalin.¹

¹ Aside from the attitude of the Soviet Union towards the movements that developed in Hungary and Poland, another factor clearly exposed the limits of the destalinisation process. In June 1956, Palmiro

In Poland, problems began in June 1956 in the city of Poznan where thousands of workers demonstrated to demand better economic conditions. During the months that followed, the opposition against the control of the Soviet Union over the country escalated: Soviet officials were asked to leave the Polish army, and Wladyslaw Gomulka, who had been jailed in 1951 under the Stalinist regime, returned to the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party and would soon become its General Secretary. Subsequently, a liberalisation of the Communist system took place, which led among other things to the reestablishment of the Government's relationship with the Polish Catholic Church. The Polish people demanded the formation of a multiparty system and the institution of free elections.

However, the Soviet leadership, refusing to remain inactive before such a challenge to its authority, threatened the new Government with military intervention. This was followed by negotiations between the Polish leaders and Nikita Khrushchev as well as other leaders of the Politburo who had arrived in Warsaw at this point. Once the Soviets became aware of the volatile situation they were dealing with, they agreed that Gomulka would be left in power for he was the only one capable of controlling the people. In exchange, the commitment of the country to Soviet foreign policy was re-established: Poland would stay in the Warsaw Pact and the Communist Party would retain its supremacy in the country. This compromise would also allow for the relaxation of internal policies.

Togliatti in an interview to the theoretical magazine *Nuovi Argumenti*, would take much further than anyone else the critique of the Stalinist years, arguing that Stalin alone was not responsible for what had happened, and rather there was something intrinsic in the Soviet system that had allowed him to act as he did. He then received harsh criticisms from the Soviets whose unwillingness to take the analysis of Stalinism any further was confirmed in Hungary and Poland.

Such a peaceful outcome would not be the case of Hungary, however. In this country, Khrushchev's secret speech had discredited the pro-Soviet leadership of the Hungarian Communist Party led by Matyas Rakosi since the end of the Second World War, which had been responsible for much of the repression carried out during the worst years of Stalinism. In July 1956, the Soviets appointed the Stalinist Erno Gerö as the party's new leader, instead of Imre Nagy, a more popular choice amongst the Hungarian people.² Unwilling to bring the expected reforms to the country, the new government soon faced increasing social upheaval, which eventually led to ongoing student demonstrations starting on 23 October. The students, partially inspired by the events that were taking place in Poland, demanded reforms, democratisation, and the return of Imre Nagy. As the Soviet troops intervened against the demonstrators, Nagy was appointed Prime Minister in an attempt to control the situation, which was now turning into a revolution. Subsequently, Janos Kadar replaced Gerö as the party's general secretary, a change that allowed the new government to implement the promised opening and reform. Political prisoners were released and censorship relaxed. By 27 October, Nagy formed a coalition government that included non-Communist elements, something unheard of in the Soviet sphere of influence, and continued to announce a series of drastic reforms in the country.

The tolerance of the Soviet Union with the events taking place in Hungary came to an end when, after many unmet requests for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungarian soil, Nagy declared the country's neutrality and its withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact. The challenge was soon taken up by the Soviet Union. On 4

² Imre Nagy had been appointed Primer Minister in 1953 but was dismissed in 1955 because Moscow considered him to be too liberal. Erno Gerö had been a delegate of the Comintern in Spain during the Civil War.

November, Soviet forces attacked Budapest, facing fierce resistance. The Hungarians, nevertheless, had little chance, especially after the government's calls for help from the Western democracies were left unanswered. By 9 November, the revolution had been defeated. Nagy's regime was replaced by a puppet government and massive repression against the Hungarian people followed. In 1958, Nagy and his closest associates were executed.³ Not long after the secret speech of Nikita Khrushchev, the true character of the destalinisation process had been dramatically revealed in Hungary.

2. The PCE's reaction

Officially, the USSR claimed that the Red Army had acted in response to a call for help from the Hungarian government -a puppet government formed behind Nagy's government- to fight the Fascist counter-revolutionaries that were trying to destroy socialism in Hungary. As it happened, the Spanish Communist Party had no problem in accepting this explanation. In an article defending the invasion, *Pasionaria* wrote:

There is no single honest worker, unless he is mistaken or confused by reactionary propaganda, that does not feel a deep appreciation towards the Soviet Union for having responded to the call of the Hungarian government for help in counter-acting the criminal situation of the counter-revolution in Hungary.⁴

Moreover, she added:

The international reactionaries sympathise with the Hungarian counter-revolution. The working class, and first of all the Communists, sympathise with the Hungarian people in their fight to maintain and defend their socialist conquests. We sympathised with the Soviet Union which once again presents itself to the masses of the entire world as the defender in all terrains of the democratic and socialist conquests of each country and its right to independence and national sovereignty.⁵

³ Westwood, *Endurance*, pp. 421-422.

⁴ "No podemos ser neutrals ante el fascismo", article by Dolores Ibárruri on the Soviet intervention in Hungary in 1956, Montalbán, *Pasionaria*, p. 475.

⁵ "No podemos ser neutrals ante el fascismo", article by Dolores Ibárruri on the Soviet intervention in

A few weeks after the invasion, Jesús Izcaray would confirm the party's line in a report that stated: "The fascists had taken over the situation in the streets of Budapest and in other places in Hungary. They hung and burned alive Communist workers and other defenders of the regime of the popular democracy."⁶ On the other hand, Carrillo would later argue that he and Claudín always had some reservations about the invasion. They decided not to voice their doubts for they did not want "to create a friction that would put the renewal initiated through the Plenum of National Reconciliation at risk".⁷ Nevertheless, Claudín challenges Carrillo's version and maintains that he was the only one to question the invasion. In his own words:

Carrillo, without reservations, made the official Soviet thesis his own that it had been a counter revolution organised by the imperialist and Hungarian reactionary forces taking advantage of the errors made by the Communist Party. I maintained, on the contrary, that the role of both factors –imperialism and the Hungarian reactionary forces- was secondary. The main factor, the factor that had unleashed the revolution was, I thought, the policy of the Communist Party. In my opinion, this experience confirmed the need to get to the bottom of the Stalinist phenomenon. We both held intransigently to our points of view and the discussion took a very violent turn. In the end, the position of Carrillo was approved.⁸

In contrast, at the time of the invasion, Claudín gave a different appraisal of events in a letter written to the party's centre in Andalusia dated 1 November 1956. While acknowledging the mistakes of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party in Hungary, he nevertheless maintained that these mistakes had been corrected since the CPSU's XX Congress. He then attributed to the reactionary forces in Hungary a much more important role than he would do in later years:

The imperialist agents, the Hungarian reactionary forces, have taken advantages of the profound disappointment created among the masses by these mistakes (the

Hungary in 1956, Montalbán, *Pasionaria*, p. 476.

⁶ "Lo que ellos dicen de Hungría", report by Jesús Izcaray, 12 December 1956, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Jesús Izcaray, Caja 12, Carp. 5.1).

⁷ Carrillo, *Memorias*, pp. 461-462.

⁸ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 126.

mistakes of the Communist Party), to inflict a harsh blow to popular democracy in Hungary and the socialist camp in general.⁹

Two months later, in December 1956, he posed the following question regarding the Soviets' possible response to the events in Hungary:

Should the Soviet Union, acting in this case as a representative of the interests of the working class worldwide, of all the people, passively allow the fascist and imperialist forces to reach their objectives, as was done with Hitler in 1933?¹⁰

Claudín acknowledges to a certain extent some of the contradictions between what he actually said in 1956 and what he later claimed to have thought. He explains the discrepancy by what he describes as his “schizophrenic years”, during which he thought one thing but said another. By his own account, in 1956 Claudín questioned the superficial analysis of the destalinisation process in the Soviet Union and argued that rather than just blaming Stalin for all mistakes, an investigation of the internal contradictions of the Soviet system, which had allowed for Stalinism to happen, was necessary.¹¹ This argument was in line with the comments made by Togliatti to the intellectual review, *Nuovi Argomenti*, in June 1956. However, Claudín continues, after he had a confrontation with Carrillo over the Hungarian issue, he held back from pursuing the “Stalin question” following the advice of Jorge Semprún, who agreed with his point of view but thought it was better to introduce these polemical opinions into the party gradually.¹² Claudín's doubts in 1956 have been confirmed by different sources, including Carrillo himself.¹³ Hence, his contradictory behaviour during this period is to a certain extent understandable given the implications of

⁹ Letter of Fernando Claudín to the party's centre in Andalusia on the invasion of Hungary, 1 September 1956, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Correspondencia, Caja 111, Carp. 3)

¹⁰ “Sobre una respuesta negativa”, *Mundo Obrero*, November-December 1956.

¹¹ Claudín, *Documentos*, p. III; Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 127.

¹² Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

¹³ Falcón, *Asalto*, p. 336; Carrillo, *Dialogue*, p. 117.

acting against the party line. The gap between Claudín and Carrillo would continue to widen in the coming years, leading to the expulsion of the former from the party in 1964. The confrontation, as it will be argued here, was finally triggered by the subjectivism of the party's perception of the situation in Spain and how this subjectivism affected the policies taken to fight the regime.

Returning to the Spanish Communists' position towards the Soviet invasion of Hungary, a third international conflict, the Suez Canal Crisis, was further used to justify the USSR's action.¹⁴ On 26 July 1956, in an act of defiance to the West, the president of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser, nationalized the Suez Canal as part of his strategy to achieve strategic predominance in the area. This led to an alliance between Great Britain, France and Israel to challenge this action, as the three countries had strong interests in the area. After diplomatic attempts to solve the situation failed, the Israelis, supported by the French and the British, launched an attack on Egypt on 29 October, achieving a quick victory. British and French troops moved in and occupied the Canal. In the meantime, the Soviet Union, which had strong ties with Egypt and was keen to enhance its position in the Middle East, gave its support to the Egyptian government in the form of an arms deal through Czechoslovakia. It further threatened to intervene if the aggressors did not leave the country at once. Without the support of the United States and under pressure from the UN, Britain, France and Israel were forced to abandon the area. Subsequently, a UN emergency force replaced the British and French troops. The implications in world politics of these events fall beyond the scope of this thesis, but it is interesting to point out that, effectively, the Suez Canal Crisis and the Soviet invasion of Hungary, exposed to the international community

the division of the world into two superpowers, the USSR and the USA. Moreover, the Russians used the whole affair to repair their image in the eyes of the world, damaged after the invasion of Hungary. They could now claim to be the liberators of the oppressed in the Third World. In the view of Carrillo:

It (the Suez Canal Crisis) helped us conclude that any weakening of the Soviet block would carry the danger of the imperialistic power starting dangerous adventures that would threaten the peace and independence of other countries, something that in such a situation seemed to be true.¹⁵

The contradiction between protecting the freedom and peace of the people against the “imperialistic powers” but not against the Soviet Union did not seem to concern Carrillo then or subsequently.¹⁶ Azcárate would say in later years: “The invasion of Hungary was the moment when the Western Communist parties touched bottom: our strategy was reduced to nothing more than backing the state interests of the Soviet Union”.¹⁷

Predictably, these conflicts at an international level resulted in a reversal of the liberalisation process started after the death of Stalin in the Soviet Union. This process would briefly recover following the failed attempt of the Stalinist elements inside the CPSU to overthrow Nikita Khrushchev in June 1957. However, only four months later, the first meeting of the Communist Parties of the World took place in Moscow where “revisionism” instead of “dogmatism” was once again described as the main enemy of the Communist movement.¹⁸ Moreover, the position defended by Mao and Thorez that saw the CPSU as the “leading party” within the Communist

¹⁴ Law, *Pasionaria*, p. 175; Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 462.

¹⁵ Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 462.

¹⁶ For the party's explanation on the Suez Canal crisis see “Declaración del Buro Político del CC del PCE sobre la situación internacional”, 12 November 1956, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 37).

¹⁷ Manuel Azcárate, *Luchas y transiciones. Memorias de un viaje por el ocaso del comunismo*

movement, prevailed over Togliatti's, who defended a "polycentric" approach that respected the possibility of different national paths to reach Communism. At the same time, the congress brought into the open the divisions inside a Communist movement that until then had prided itself on its unity. The Sino-Soviet conflict was beginning to emerge and the recent reconciliation with Yugoslavia was again becoming more problematic. As for the PCE, it supported the idea of the CPSU as the leading party and was happy to embrace the attack on revisionism.¹⁹

3. Mexico

Soon after the Hungarian invasion, the Spanish Communist Party would face its own internal opposition from those who wanted to take the destalinisation process further. The problem would first arise in Mexico, the most important enclave of the PCE in Latin America.

Following the Civil War, the Mexican government opened its doors to Spanish exiles. As a result, many PCE activists and leaders fled to Mexico, especially when the Second World War broke out and France was invaded by the Germans. Mexico DF would then become one of the headquarters of the PCE in exile, the other being Moscow. Once the war was over, Paris regained its status as a main party centre and Mexico's importance declined. Throughout this time, the relationship between the PCE leadership and the party's local organisation in Mexico, which had around 500 members, survived various crisis, such as the assassination of Trotsky, the expulsion

(Madrid: El País Aguilar, 1998), p. 60.

¹⁸ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 129.

of Margarita Nelken and the problems with Jesús Hernández.²⁰ In 1953, conflict arose with the rank-and-file. According to the philosopher Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, one of the leading figures among the Spanish Communists in Mexico, around this time the local activists began to feel growing unease and dissatisfaction with the behaviour of the leadership's representative, Felipe Muñoz Arconada, who was perceived as being too authoritarian.²¹ However, they would keep quiet for some time due to the "political climate of terror" Arconada had imposed.²² This would change when, in accordance with the new spirit that had followed Stalin's death, the PCE leadership sent two documents to the organisation in Mexico denouncing such behaviour among party leaders.²³ As a result, those dissatisfied figures came out into the open and began criticising Arconada's methods.²⁴ The situation became so tense that the leaders in Paris asked Arconada to send a report on the situation. Unconvinced by his explanations, they wrote a resolution on the matter to the local organisation: though the leaders seemed to be agreeing with the rank-and-file's complaints, they nevertheless shifted the blame from Arconada's tyrannical leadership onto that of his assistant, Esteban Vega, who was removed from his post in Mexico and expelled from the Central Committee.²⁵ At the same time, they asked the local organisation in Mexico to organise an Assembly to discuss the recent

¹⁹ Ibárruri & VVAA, *Historia del PCE*, pp. 256-257.

²⁰ XXXXXX.

²¹ Aside from Arconada, the PCE also had a delegation of the Central Committee in Mexico composed by Juan José Manso and Wenceslao Roces.

²² Interview with Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, May 2002. Also see Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, *Del exilio en México. Recuerdos y reflexiones* (México: Editorial Grijalbo, 1997), p. 219; documents from Mexico received between the 9 and 11 June 1954, AHPCE (Documentos, Carp. 35); Santiago Álvarez, *Memorias V. La larga marcha de una lucha sin cuartel (1954-1972)*, (A Coruña: Edicions do Castro, 1994), pp. 58-60.

²³ Letter from Dolores Ibárruri to the organisation in Mexico and Letter of the Central Committee. References made to these documents in "Resolution on the work of the party in Mexico", 1953, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 34).

²⁴ Interview with Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, May 2002.

²⁵ Resolution on the work of the party in Mexico, 1953, and "Información sobre el cojo", 1 June 1954, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 34).

problems.²⁶ It began on 19 September 1953. Arconada did not attend. Apparently, he had to go to the Soviet Union for a medical operation (which never took place).²⁷ Again, it would be up to Vega to deal with the complaints expressed by the local members. After three months and 60 sessions, those present decided that Arconada would have to be removed from his post in Mexico. However, the Political Bureau did nothing in this regard. The following June, a meeting of the delegates of the party's cells took place. This time it included Arconada who had just returned from his lengthy Russian visit.²⁸ As the talks began, the divisions between delegates became clear. One small group supported Arconada. A second wanted his expulsion from the party (his old assistant, Vega, was the apparently the main leader of this group). The third, more conciliatory, asked for Arconada's removal from his post in Mexico and his expulsion from the Central Committee but not from the party. The latter group also addressed the need for a more general democratisation process inside the party.²⁹ However, once again, no measures in this direction were taken by the Political Bureau.

The problems would still be unresolved when the V Congress of the PCE took place the following September. It was during its celebration that the confrontation between the Mexican local organisation and the leadership's representative would turn into a confrontation between the local organisation and the PCE leadership itself. As it happened, the Mexican delegation to the Congress was formed by three members of the Central Committee, Juan José Manso, Wenceslao Roces and J. Ambou, who did not share the majority's criticisms against Arconada

²⁶ Interview with Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, May 2002.

²⁷ On Arconada's trip to the Soviet Union, see contribution by Vicente, April 1957, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 38).

²⁸ Documents received from Mexico on 9 and 11 June 1954, AHPCE.

²⁹ Interview with Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, May 2002.

and wanted to avoid any sanction against him, and four activists democratically elected by the members of the local organisation, Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, Gonzalo Sanz, Barreiro and Gonzalo López, the last two also in favour of Arconada. Therefore, only Sánchez Vázquez and Sanz represented the critical position of the majority of the Mexican organisation. Their mission was to start a discussion in the Congress on the problems they had been facing as well as to combat the re-election of Arconada to the party's Central Committee. However, according to Sánchez Vázquez, just before the Congress began, he was approached by Santiago Carrillo who asked him not to address the matter for it was better to concentrate on the struggle of the party in Spain. Sánchez Vázquez told Carrillo that the problems in Mexico were not exclusive to their organisation and that the whole party suffered from the authoritarian leadership criticised in Arconada, which would justify debating the issue in the Congress. He did not convince Carrillo, however, though they agreed that a discussion between the Mexican delegation and the Political Bureau would take place after the Congress.³⁰ Nevertheless, while Sánchez Vázquez and Sanz did as ordered by Carrillo, Manso, Roces and Ambou addressed the problems in Mexico and accused those who criticised Arconada of being a threat to the principles of the party. The discussion did not go any further and Arconada was re-elected to the PCE's Central Committee.³¹

Following the Congress, the meeting between the leadership and the representatives of the local organisation took place. Though the leadership accepted the criticisms made by Sánchez Vázquez and Sanz against Arconada, it still justified his re-election to the CC on the basis of him "being an old cadre who had to be saved

³⁰ Interview with Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, May 2002.

³¹ AHPCE (V CONGRESO, Actas Congreso).

or recovered”.³² Moreover, the organisation in Mexico was prevented from expressing “petit-bourgeois democratism” and asked to overcome past problems.³³ Nevertheless, as Arconada’s situation in Mexico seemed to be unsustainable, they decided to replace him with Santiago Álvarez.³⁴ After the return of the delegation to the Mexican capital, a new Assembly took place on 11 December 1954 at which the local activists were informed about recent events. The majority of those present were pleased with the replacement of Arconada but thought such an action lacked any meaning for he had still been re-elected to the CC.³⁵ At the same time, those who had wanted the expulsion of Arconada from the party now began openly to attack the Political Bureau. In contrast, Arconada’s supporters were delighted with the action taken by the leadership as they felt it backed their position and strengthened them vis-à-vis the other activists.

Therefore, the intervention of the Political Bureau had served only to deepen divisions. Furthermore, as Sánchez Vázquez points out, “there was a considerable reduction –almost a halt- in the activity of the organisation in practical matters”. During the following months, there were several attempts to lessen the tension between the different factions inside the organisation. A new Committee of the party in Mexico was elected in June 1955, when the representatives of the most conciliatory position prevailed (Sánchez Vázquez and Manuel Barberan among others).³⁶ They were, nevertheless, unable to find a solution to the problems, among

³² Interview with Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, May 2002.

³³ Resolution of the Political Bureau on the problems of the organisation in Mexico, 1 September 1956, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 37).

³⁴ Álvarez, *Memorias V*, p. 57.

³⁵ Álvarez, *Memorias V*, p. 74.

³⁶ Álvarez, *Memorias V*, p. 80.

other reasons because the Political Bureau never showed its clear support for their actions.³⁷

The tension came to a head in March 1956, when Khrushchev gave his secret speech during the XX Congress of the CPSU. A great number of the activists in Mexico identified the criticisms and problems acknowledged by Khrushchev with those that had crippled their own organisation and which they had been denouncing since 1953. A meeting took place between the Committees of the PCE and the PSUC in Mexico to discuss the resolutions adopted by the CPSU during its XX Congress and the subsequent resolution of the PCE, whose delay on this question was also criticised. In the conclusions drawn during this meeting, the Committees accepted the resolutions of the CPSU's XX Congress and pointed to the clear existence inside the PCE of the cult of personality as denounced by Khrushchev. They then criticised the party's failure to recognise that dimension of the resolution. In addition, they also questioned the policy of National Reconciliation and the manner in which it had been adopted. However, according to Sánchez Vázquez:

While the criticisms made by the Committee had been welcomed by the majority of the organisation, they were not accepted by the delegation of the Central Committee and a sector in the organisation that had in the past resisted changing the authoritarian methods of Arconada therein.³⁸

Santiago Álvarez and the members of the Central Committee resident in Mexico would subsequently impugn the authority of the local Committee on the basis of the contradictions between its conclusions and the PCE's resolution on the CPSU's XX Congress. To this, the local Committee replied by appealing to the local organisations for the right to disagree with the representatives of the PCE. With the situation getting out of hand, the leaders in France invited two representatives of the

³⁷ Interview with Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, May 2002.

local Committee to come to Paris for a discussion. The Committee replied that the position of the Political Bureau had been made clear to them by its representatives in the Mexican capital and that there was no longer any reason for holding the meeting: the invitation was therefore declined. This was the first challenge to the leadership's authority since the beginning of the destalinisation process and the response was emphatic: the invitation was now an order that if refused would mean a break-up with the PCE.³⁹ "We, the members of the Committee, thus faced a demand we could not ignore", says Sánchez Vázquez, who was one of the two delegates chosen to go to Paris for the meeting.⁴⁰

There, they once again challenged the leadership by criticising what they saw as a superficial reform of the party's internal structure and the contradictions of the National Reconciliation policy. The Mexican delegation questioned the delay in the application of this policy as well as the fact that the party was agreeing to support a liberal coalition government in Spain while rejecting the same thing for Hungary. They were told that, though such an option in Spain meant the overthrow of a fascist government, it meant the opposite in Hungary and the victory of the counter-revolution. The leadership went on to accuse the Mexican organisation of harbouring "divisive and conflict-ridden elements" that, as a result of distorted interpretations of the XX Congress and events such as the one in Hungary, suffered from "strong revisionist tendencies and are in conflict with the Party's ideology, policy and leadership".⁴¹ The spread of so-called revisionism was blamed on the fact that a large number of the activists in Mexico did not belong to the working class; too many were

³⁸ Interview with Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, May 2002.

³⁹ Morán, *Miseria*, pp. 302-303.

⁴⁰ Interview with Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, May 2002. Aside from Sánchez Vázquez, the meeting included Manuel Barberán, Santiago Álvarez, Santiago Carrillo, Fernando Claudín and Ignacio Gallego, Álvarez, *Memorias V*, pp. 187-188.

intellectuals and their interests were linked to those of the petit and middle bourgeoisie. "In the name of an abstract democracy ... there now exists a putrefied liberalism", Carrillo alleged.⁴² As their criticisms were all dismissed and their backgrounds brought into question, the Mexican delegates submitted. In his only reference to this episode, Claudín writes:

I also had to contribute to the critique of "revisionism" in our ranks, as it happened in relationship to comrades exiled in Mexico that had been infected a bit by such a dangerous virus –among them my good friend Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, a known Marxist philosopher. I was forced, in short, to think one thing and say another.⁴³

According to Sánchez Vázquez, Fernando Claudín in fact played the "leading part" during the meetings in which the Mexican delegation was under attack.⁴⁴ Being the only intellectual equal to Sánchez Vázquez, it seems understandable that he was given this job. Subsequently, the two delegates would retreat to Mexico where the local organisation was informed about their defeat. Afterwards, the party published a document called "Letter to the members of the organisation of the PCE in Mexico".⁴⁵ It gave the bureau's version of the whole affair. From then onwards, the Mexican organisation would never cause any further problems. In the view of Sánchez Vázquez:

The conflict was resolved in accordance with the usual application of the rules of democratic centralism: the unconditional submission of the inferior organisation to the centre. In this conflict one could find already, *in nuce*, all the problems of dogmatism, authoritarianism, centralism, exclusion of internal democracy... etc, which called for a new solution in the Communist world movement. The old solution given to our conflict seriously affected my practical, militant activity; from then onwards I promised to be only a regular activist and devote myself mainly to my work in the theoretical field.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Report by Santiago Carrillo, April 1957, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 38).

⁴² Report by Santiago Carrillo, April 1957, AHPCE.

⁴³ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 127.

⁴⁴ Santiago Álvarez also confirms in his memoirs the main role played by Claudín during the meeting, Álvarez, *Memorias V*, p. 188.

⁴⁵ "Carta a los miembros de la organizacion del PCE en México", 21 April 1957, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 38). Álvarez maintains that it was he and Gallego who wrote the "letter", Álvarez, *Memorias V*, p. 188.

⁴⁶ Ana Galván Chávez, *Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez y el marxismo*.

The party's attitude towards the organisation in Mexico as well as its support of the Soviet Union's invasion in Hungary had revealed the limited scope of the changes that had taken place since the death of Stalin. Shortly afterwards, these limits would be felt in Spain where the policies of the party in the years that followed the student riots of February 1956 would lead the underground organisation into a series of failures.

C. *The aftermath of the Student riots in February 1956*

1. The University of Madrid

As explained in Chapter III, the student riots of February 1956 had led to the arrest of many of those who had been involved in the activities of a progressive nature in the University of Madrid. Those arrested would gradually be released from jail during the months that followed. Apart from the disruption to their lives, February 1956 would have an important effect on the opposition movement inside the university.

On 27 February, a new manifesto was published by a sector of students in the Law Faculty, demanding the release of those arrested and affirming their support for the Manifesto of 1 February.⁴⁷ As there was no response to their demands, a new appeal was published on 16 March, criticising the SEU as well as the Minister of

⁴⁷ "Escrito de los estudiantes de la Facultad de Derecho a la opinión", 27 February 1956, AHPCE (ESTUDIANTES DE LA FACULTAD DE DERECHO DE MADRID, Caja 124, Carp. 44).

Government, Blas Pérez, who they referred to as Blas-Himmler.⁴⁸ On 1 April, a new document was published that condemned the regime and called on the students to go on a general strike on 12-13 April to demand a National Congress of Students.⁴⁹ The manifestos were all followed by further arrests, which aside from preventing the strike, led to trials and sentences against the accused.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, regardless of the repression, these actions consolidated the continuation of the struggle initiated by Múgica's group in 1954. Behind the manifestos were the efforts of new political organisations that had started to grow in the aftermath of February 1956.

One of these organisations was the *Agrupación Socialista Universitaria* (ASU) created on 26 February. Its founders were Luis Alcaide, Pedro Ramón Moliner, Miguel Rubio, Carlos Zayas, Emilio Sanz Hurtado, Alfonso Laso de la Vega and Luis González, and their aim was to bring Socialist students under a common roof.⁵¹ The ASU was responsible for the March appeal as well as for the April manifesto, which was printed and distributed with help of the PCE.⁵²

⁴⁸ "Llamamiento que los estudiantes de las Facultades de Derecho y Ciencias Económicas de Madrid dirigen a sus compañeros de toda España y a toda la opinión pública en general", 16 March 1956, AHPCE (ESTUDIANTES DE LA FACULTAD DE DERECHO DE MADRID, Caja 124, Carp. 44).

⁴⁹ "Llamamiento de huelga a los estudiantes madrileños para el 12 y 13 de abril 1956, con motivo de las detenciones que siguieron a la petición universitaria del 1 de febrero", 1 April 1956, AHPCE (ORGANIZACIÓN UNIVERSITARIA DEL PCE EN MADRID, COMUNICADOS, Caja 123, Carp. 2.1.4); "Prosigue la agitación estudiantil en Madrid", *Mundo Obrero*, April 1956.

⁵⁰ More than 200 arrests followed the April manifesto according to Farga, *Universidad*, p. 49. Some of those who were arrested in March would later go to trial and be defended by Gil Robles who used this platform to carry out a critique against the regime. For more information see "Los universitarios españoles en la lucha contra la dictadura franquista y por la amnistía", June 1960, AHPCE; Mesa, *Jaraneros*, pp. 259-353; Jáuregui and Vega, *Antifranquismo 1939-1962*, pp. 201-203; Tusell, *Oposición*, pp. 294-295.

⁵¹ Lizcano, 56, pp. 174-175. At first, the ASU did not have any contact with the PSOE in exile. In August 1956, one of its members, Victor Pradera, would contact Llopis and they would agree on the organic relationship between both groups while respecting the political autonomy of the ASU in the university. Nevertheless, their relationship would always be tense. For more information see Abdón Mateos, "La Agrupación Socialista Universitaria, 1956-1962" in Carreras and Ruiz, *La Universidad*, p. 544. Also see Lizcano, 56, pp. 181-183.

⁵² Abdón Mateos, "La ASU..." in Carreras and Ruiz, *La Universidad*, p. 544; Lizcano, 56, p. 176.

According to Semprún, he himself was responsible for the text of the manifesto.⁵³

Sánchez Dragó argues that the help of the PCE in fact went much further than that:

The PCE realised that in the University there was a group of young people not radical enough to enter the PCE but radical enough to enter the Socialist Party, but since there was no Socialist Party in the University, the Communist party founded the Socialist party.⁵⁴

Though Sánchez Dragó is correct in pointing out the PCE's infiltration of the ASU, it does seem, according to other accounts, that this was undertaken after the organisation had been created, and not before.⁵⁵ As Lizcano explains in his book on the generation of 1956, the ASU was formed as an alternative to the organisation of the PCE in the university, but unlike its older brother the PSOE, the Socialist students did not bear any grudges against the Communists. On the contrary, they recognized and appreciated their role in the opposition movement in the university and hence, considered them as a natural ally in the fight against Franco. This trust proved to be their undoing. The Communists went on to recruit members of the ASU such as Carlos Zayas, Emilio Sanz Hurtado and Raúl Asensio Peral, and obliged them to a double militancy as a secret. In the words of Javier Pradera:

The "mole" was Emilio Sanz Hurtado. We put him in contact with Semprún, and then Semprún, in bold, sexist and metaphorical terms, "screwed" him. He joined the PCE, as did Carlos Zayas. And then the party, instead of doing what it should have done, which is to let it be known that they had entered the PCE, told them to continue without mentioning it.⁵⁶

In this manner, the Communists were able to control the ASU and use it for a variety of purposes. Under the ASU cover, they came into contact with other political

⁵³ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, pp. 43-44.

⁵⁴ Interview with Fernando Sánchez Dragó, September 2000. It is true that the manoeuvres of the PCE damaged its relation with other political forces in Spain. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that, as has been explained throughout this thesis, the relationship between the PCE and other forces in exile was already damaged before 1956, which also accounts for the mistrust about Communist activists that the rest of political groups in Spain eventually developed.

⁵⁵ Interview with Javier Pradera, September 2000; Semprún Maura, *El exilio*, pp. 68-69.

forces that it would have been impossible to reach were they known as Communists. It was also used to give to their actions the appearance of wide support among the opposition against Franco.⁵⁷ And as Sánchez Dragó mentions, it served to recruit moderate left-wing students who would not join the PCE, and would otherwise have nowhere to go. However, in the summer of 1956, Carlos Zayas was invited by the party to visit the Soviet Union.⁵⁸ When he returned to Spain, he was upset and disappointed by what he had seen. Zayas then confessed to the rest of the members of the ASU his double militancy as well as that of the other “moles” in the organisation.⁵⁹ This obviously led to a crisis and the expulsion of the PCE’s members from the ASU. More dramatically, the relationship between the Communists and the Socialists was damaged as a result.

To a certain extent then, the monopoly the PCE had had amongst the left opposition movement in the university was ending with the appearance of these groups. Their attempts to control them would only work as long as the Communist activists in these organisations remained under cover. A similar case to the ASU would be that of the *Frente de Liberación Popular* (FLP).⁶⁰ This group brought together left wing Christians and independent Marxists. Though the FLP, also known as Felipe, really took shape in 1958 and would reach its pinnacle during the 1960s, its first steps were taken in the period that followed the events of February 1956. The future Felipes came together around the person of Julio Cerón, a young diplomat that

⁵⁶ Interview with Javier Pradera, September 2000.

⁵⁷ Morán, *Miseria*, p. 285.

⁵⁸ Estruch Tobella, *Historia oculta*, p. 202.

⁵⁹ Interview with Javier Pradera, September 2000. Javier Pradera also explained during this interview how after the “moles had been discovered”, some members of the ASU took a picture of Jorge Semprún, which the police would have been delighted to get their hands on. But according to Pradera, they had no intention of using the picture in this manner but rather they hoped to protect themselves with it from any possible Communist reprisals. Incidentally, the picture is the one used on the cover of Jorge Semprún’s *Autobiografía de Federico Sánchez*.

⁶⁰ Semprún Maura, *El exilio*, pp. 68-70.

had been holding social gatherings in his house since 1955 among Catholics of left wing inclinations. Ignacio Fernández de Castro was also another important figure in the group. By the beginning of the academic year 1957-1958, Cerón's group had created a university organisation called *Nueva Izquierda Universitaria* (New University Left), which would lead to the creation of the FLP. As we shall see in the next chapter, the FLP was one of the two organisations that supported the PCE in the *Comités de Coordinación Universitaria* and the national strike of 1959.⁶¹

2. The policy of National Reconciliation

As has already been explained in Chapter II, the aftermath of the student riots in February 1956 also witnessed the outcome of one of the most important power struggles in the history of the Spanish Communist Party. The confrontation between the party's old guard and the 'Parisians' was resolved in favour of the latter. In addition, the changes in the Communist leadership also prompted the adoption by the PCE of a new policy called National Reconciliation. On 18 June 1956, two months after the meeting of the Political Bureau that confirmed the downfall of Uribe and the promotion of Santiago Carrillo to the leadership of the party, a document was published entitled *Declaración del PCE por la Reconciliación Nacional, por una solución pacífica del problema español* (Declaration of the PCE for National Reconciliation, for a peaceful solution to the Spanish problem).⁶² The document explained to the rank-and-file the main points of the doctrine of National

⁶¹ Aside from these left-wing groups, a more conservative opposition also began to organise itself during this period, among others, groups of Christian Democrats, such as *Acción Democrática Española* (ADE), led by Dionisio Ridruejo, or the *Accidentalistas*, led by Jesús Barros de Lis.

⁶² "Por la Reconciliación nacional, por una solución democrática y pacífica del problema Español", AHPCE.

Reconciliation, such as the union of all of those who opposed Franco so that the changes towards democracy could take place peacefully. It also specified the party's demands for the new government: the suppression of censorship, amnesty, and the unions and freely-elected peasant associations. National Reconciliation has often been portrayed as a breakthrough in terms of the party's previous policies regarding the internal situation in Spain.⁶³ It is important to expand here on the arguments used in Chapter II to challenge this view.

First of all, the abandonment of a violent route to overthrowing the regime had already taken place following the tram strike in Barcelona in 1951 and was part of the PCE's Anti-Francoist National Front policy. Second, the idea of unity between all forces, including those of the right who did not support Franco, was already present in the 1940s policy of National Unity as well as the subsequent Anti-Francoist National Front and even the Popular Front of the Civil War period.⁶⁴ During the Political Bureau's meeting of April-May 1956, Pasionaria herself acknowledged the existence of this concept in past policies of the PCE but she argued, "we saw the main base of the Anti-Francoist Front in the old forces of the Republican camp."⁶⁵ This leads us to the third point. The abandonment of the emphasis on the Republican forces to fight Franco was not a novelty of the policy of National Reconciliation, as Ibárruri suggests above. Already in September 1942, the PCE had published a manifesto where it was specified that it should be for the people to choose the Constituent Assembly that would elaborate the constitution of the new

⁶³ Interview with Santiago Carrillo, January 2001; Claudín, *Carrillo*, pp. 118-119; Carrillo, *Memorias*, pp. 455-457; Muijal-León, *Communism*, pp. 1, 22; Hermet, *The Communists*, p. 57; Morán, *Miseria*, pp. 276-277; Carabantes and Cimorra, *Un mito*, p. 287.

⁶⁴ Santiago Carrillo himself remarked on this similarity during the discussions with the Mexican delegation in January 1957. For more information see report by Santiago Carrillo, January 1957, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 38).

⁶⁵ Meeting of the PCE's Political Bureau, Pasionaria's speech, 10 May 1956, AHPCE. This similarity

government after Franco's overthrow.⁶⁶ This shift had been taken in order to attract into an alliance right wing forces such as the Monarchists, who obviously would not join a coalition that called for the return of the Republic. It nevertheless resulted in an enhancement of the other pro-Republican forces' animosity towards the PCE. From then onwards, the Republican option would be advocated or abandoned depending on how convenient it was for the PCE to maintain good relations with the Republican forces, something that varied throughout these years.⁶⁷

Therefore, it can be concluded that the policy of National Reconciliation was a continuation of previous party policies, not a dramatic break. National Reconciliation did however emphasize more than previous party doctrines the very idea of reconciliation by incorporating it into its name. In this manner, the party leadership made the policy more attractive to the new generations that had not fought in the Civil War. It is true, however, that now the idea of "reconciliation" was a bit closer to reality than ever before. Whether for this reason or because the leadership managed to convince the rank-and-file that they were actually taking a groundbreaking step, National Reconciliation was generally welcomed with open arms and excitement as a great change of direction by the party. According to Sánchez Montero:

Federico (Jorge Semprún) gave me a copy and I told him what I thought the following day. I was very excited about it and I thought it had a great significance, even historically. The policy of national reconciliation was attempting to overcome a history of military coups and civil wars, of violence and hatred in the political and social life of Spain.⁶⁸

with past policies is also noticed by Irene Falcón, *Asalto*, p. 319.

⁶⁶ Again, this is acknowledged by Santiago Carrillo during the discussions with the Mexican delegation in January 1957. For more information see report by Santiago Carrillo, January 1957, AHPCE.

⁶⁷ Moreover, the Anti-Francoist Front, referred to by Pasionaria, called not just for the Republicans but also for the Monarchists and disappointed Falangists to unite under a common roof for the establishment of a democratic government, not necessarily a Republic.

As we shall see, in the years that followed, the party would stick to the main goals of the policy of National Reconciliation. However, the PCE itself would become the biggest obstacle in the achievement of unity among the forces that opposed Franco.

3. The University of Barcelona

The PCE's adoption of the policy of National Reconciliation would also coincide with the awakening of a student opposition in the University of Barcelona. Here, a feeling of opposition against the regime and the SEU had been growing for some time, but it only turned into political activism after the student riots of February 1956 in Madrid. At first, there were groups of students and intellectuals coming together to discuss politics, literature and cinema. One of the best-known places for these encounters was the seminar "Juan Boscán" at the *Instituto Iberoamericano*.⁶⁹ Among the Catalan intellectual opposition, Josep María Castellet, Juan and José Agustín Goytisolo, Jaime Gil de Biedma and Carlos Barral were the most influential figures. In the University, this role belonged to students such as Luis Goytisolo, Jordi Solé Tura, Joaquín Jordà and Salvador Giner.⁷⁰ Eventually, the student gatherings become more and more concerned with politics and the route to follow that would help in the overthrow of the dictatorship. A major influence in the shift from words to action was Manuel Sacristán, who joined many discussions and encouraged those in attendance to go a step further in their opposition to the regime. Sacristán was a rather mysterious figure, a professor of Philosophy who had abandoned his early

⁶⁸ Sánchez Montero, *Memorias*, pp. 228-229.

⁶⁹ Vilar, *Anti-franquismo*, p. 251.

Falangism after spending some time at Münster University in Germany, where he had joined the Communist Party. According to Solé Tura, “he reappeared in the University scene of the 1950s with a halo of the clandestine activist, the universal wise man, the master without limits, the tireless pedagogue, the strict and relentless activist”.⁷¹

Then came the homage to Ortega y Gasset by the students in Madrid. In the view of Solé Tura, “it had great repercussions in our university, but we neither had the necessary drive nor the minimum organisation to initiate a movement equivalent to the one in Madrid”.⁷² The students in Barcelona tried to show their solidarity with small actions such as throwing a chicken from the top floor of the university into the patio, an act that was supposed to be perceived as a metaphor of how they were being treated by the authorities and thus incite their fellow students to recover their “virile honour” and carry out solidarity actions with the students in Madrid. However, as Solé Tura has noted, “the majority of the people did not give a damn about the matter and some said that maybe we were right but that they pitied the poor sacrificed chicken”.⁷³ More daring activities included the painting of the university walls or an attempt to bring to the stage a play by Salvador Espriu, *Primera Història d'Esther*, a work concerned with the division and reconciliation of Spanish society after the Civil War. The students even met the poet who was pleased with the idea, but the project never took off.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Jordi Solé Tura. *Una historia optimista. Memorias* (Madrid: Aguilar, 1999), pp. 84-85.

⁷¹ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, p. 86.

⁷² Solé Tura, *Memorias*, pp. 87-88. Among the intellectuals, the Literary Seminar Boscán in Barcelona, which included people such as Josep Maria Castellet and Carlos Barral, held an open conference on the occasion of the death of Ortega y Gasset and was dissolved as a result, Salvador Giner de San Julián, “Power, Freedom and Social Change...” in Preston, *Spain*, p. 190.

⁷³ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, p. 88.

⁷⁴ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, pp. 88-89.

Finally, an opportunity arrived to take the opposition movement out of the shadows of private gatherings and “rudimentary activities” and place it in the front line of the fight against the regime. The University of Barcelona organised a demonstration against the Soviet invasion of Hungary, which the students then turned into a protest against the Franco regime. Once the authorities realised what was happening, they tried to put an end to it. Semprún would write about the event:

An attempt by the SEU to organise a demonstration for ‘freedom’ in Hungary has turned into a violent and decisive anti-Francoist university demonstration. This is very interesting as a clear symptom of the students’ mood.⁷⁵

Mundo Obrero praised the students’ great political consciousness and elevated sense of initiative.⁷⁶ Moreover, according to Luis Goytisolo:

For the first time there were portraits of the dictator thrown out of the windows of the *Paraninfo*. The police charged against the protesters, an action that raised hell. We were all completely surprised by the turn of events, and there were many arrests. But the police did not know us yet and they arrested those close to the left of the Falange.⁷⁷

After the demonstration, Octavi Pellisa, a very active student in Solé Tura’s group, suggested to the rest that the time had come to contact the PSUC.⁷⁸ He then organised a meeting with a member of the PSUC’s Political Bureau, Miguel Núñez, with whom Pellisa had had previous contact. Following this meeting, many of the students joined the party. Ironically, a protest against a Soviet action had somehow

⁷⁵ Letter from Semprún to Carlos (most likely his brother) on the demonstration in Barcelona against the invasion of Hungary, 17 November 1956, AHPCE (FUERZAS DE LA CULTURA, Microfilm 200).

⁷⁶ “Los Estudiantes de Barcelona se manifiestan en la Universidad al grito de ¡Abajo la dictadura! ¡Viva la libertad!” *Mundo Obrero*, November-December 1956.

⁷⁷ Interview with Luis Goytisolo, September 2000.

⁷⁸ As has been explained, ever since the expulsion of Comorera from the PSUC, the Catalan party had lost its autonomy from the PCE and though it still maintained the structure of an independent party, it was in fact run by the Spanish Communist leadership in exile. It would take some time for it to regain its status as an independent party other than on paper.

led to the creation of the first Communist organisation in the University of Barcelona.

According to Goytisoló:

We knew the party supported the invasion, they had told us so. But we had read an edition of the magazine *Temps Moderns*, edited by Sartre, about the changes in Hungary. It was written by those who had been arrested, and we realised that they were right. I cannot talk for the people that I don't know, but for those I do, I can say our attitude of support to the party was almost a moral attitude of support to the only existent opposition in the country. But real Communists, aside from Sacristán, I don't think that there were many others.⁷⁹

Moreover, the students were being taken over by a sense of destiny. As Solé Tura says about his first meeting with Núñez:

The truth is that I was captivated by Miguel Núñez. He was a legendary character, even if we had not heard anything about him until that moment. He was so because he was a clandestine leader and also because he behaved very naturally. We felt that we were talking to a myth, but a myth that was offering us the possibility of sharing his condition as such. We, students without experience, called on him to take an active role in the final struggle against Francoism. That humble and accessible hero was opening a door that we felt to be immensely distant and was putting within our reach the possibility of being real protagonists in a collective moment.⁸⁰

Whether it is for reasons of morality or as a way to participate in the overthrow of the regime, the first Communist organisation in the University of Barcelona had finally been established two years after that of Madrid. Pellisa became the person in charge and was also responsible for the contacts with the leadership of the party. There followed a period of activity that reached its peak during the tram strike of January 1957. .

D. The Transport Strikes

⁷⁹ Interview with Luis Goytisoló, September 2000.

⁸⁰ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, p. 92.

1. Barcelona 1957

On 9 January 1957, the people of Barcelona were faced with a new increase in the tram fares. The PSUC, as well as other organisations, carried out an intense campaign calling for a boycott against public transport to start on 14 January. Their efforts proved to be very successful. For two weeks, the trams were hardly used.⁸¹ The students participated massively in the strike and portraits of Franco and José Antonio Primo de Rivera were burned. As a result, the police occupied the University and arrested several students, among them Joaquín Jordà who was detained on 17 January. Two days earlier, Emiliano Fábregas, a member of the PSUC's Political Bureau, had also been arrested and accused of printing the leaflets of the boycott.⁸² Classes were suspended until the following month and many students expelled from the University.

However, the effects of the strike were not over and the regime would soon have to face a new outburst of activity in the University. In fact, the students' support for the cause had been considerably increased by the repression. As soon as classes were resumed in mid February, they began to organise an assembly for the following 21 February. When the day came, more than 700 students locked themselves in the *Paraninfo*. Domènec Madolell, who had been very active during the actions of the previous months, proclaimed the meeting in the *Paraninfo* to be the first Free Assembly of Students of the University of Barcelona. His colleagues embraced the idea. A number of resolutions were then approved and a manifesto read out: the students called for the police to stop entering the university campus; for the abandonment of the disciplinary proceedings started against some students as a result

⁸¹ Jáuregui and Vega, *Antifranquismo 1939-1962*, p. 230.

of the tram strike of January; for the dissolution of the SEU; for the celebration of a National Congress of Students and the organisation of a free student trade union; and for freedom of speech, language and association.⁸³ According to Solé Tura:

That half-improvised, half-structured meeting with almost a thousand students, ended up becoming a great encounter, an act of confraternity and a collective affirmation and, overall, an act of denunciation of the regime and a general call for freedom.⁸⁴

Shortly afterwards, the police arrived and surrounded the *Paraninfo*. The students refused to come out and stayed for several hours. Eventually, they were forced to leave one by one with their student identities to hand so that the police could check them. Those who were suspected of being the leaders of the action were arrested. A few days later, the authorities announced that the female students involved in the action would be reprimanded and the male students expelled from the university until the following academic year. Subsequently, an important number of intellectuals and personalities connected to university life, such as Buero Vallejo, Gregorio Marañón and Enrique Tierno Galván, wrote a letter to the Minister of Education asking for these sanctions against the students to be lifted.⁸⁵ A similar letter also addressed to the Minister was signed by a significant number of students at the University of Madrid a few days later.⁸⁶

Aside from the sanctions on the students, important activists were also arrested by the police such as Francesc Vicens, who had just taken charge of the small intellectual organisation of the PSUC, and Octavi Pellisa. The repression represented the first important blow against the Communist intellectual and student

⁸² For more information about those arrested see Vilar, *Anti-franquismo*, pp. 262-264.

⁸³ "Los universitarios españoles en la lucha contra la dictadura franquista y por la amnistía", June 1960, AHPCE.

⁸⁴ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, p. 97.

⁸⁵ "La anulación de las sanciones contra los Estudiantes de Barcelona", *Mundo Obrero*, March 1957.

organisations in Barcelona, which according to Goytisolo were almost dismantled at that point.⁸⁷ However, the events of February 1957 in Barcelona would eventually lead to the adoption of some of the changes called for by the students as the authorities felt sufficiently pressured to bring about a certain degree of reform in the University. This could be most clearly seen in the reorganisation of the SEU in October 1958, when democratic representation of the students at Faculty level was introduced.⁸⁸

A few weeks after the Assembly, the university organisation of the PSUC began to regroup under the command of Solé Tura who had replaced Pellisa. “Without any experience and with a rather rudimentary political education, I found myself acting as the person in charge of the university cell”, he writes.⁸⁹ At first, it was almost impossible for them to carry out anything of importance. This was particularly the case following the arrest in the autumn 1957 of Miguel Nuñez, who was blamed for the organisation of the tram strike the previous January.⁹⁰ However, shortly afterwards the organisation of the party in Barcelona would become involved in one of the most ambitious projects of the PCE: a general strike that came to be known as the *Jornada de Reconciliación Nacional* (National Reconciliation Day, JRN). As we shall now see, the idea for this action, decided and orchestrated in exile, was sparked off by the transport boycott in Madrid that came as a direct result of the tram strike in Barcelona.

⁸⁶ “Lo que piden los estudiantes”, *Mundo Obrero*, March 1957.

⁸⁷ Interview with Luis Goytisolo, September 2000.

⁸⁸ While the president of the SEU and the presidents of the districts would still be appointed by the government, the Chamber of Delegates in each faculty was now to be formed by elected representatives, Maravall, *Dictatorship*, p. 103; Salvador Giner de San Julián, “Power, Freedom and Social Change...” in Preston, *Spain*, p. 192.

⁸⁹ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, p. 98.

2. The transport boycott in Madrid

For the duration of the tram strike in Barcelona, there had been several attempts to carry out solidarity actions in the city of Madrid but all had been unsuccessful. In late January, however, Simón Sánchez Montero, the person in charge of the PCE's workers' organisation in the capital, had a meeting in his house with two party delegates, Luis Lucio Lobato and Juan Soler. To respond to the events in Barcelona, it was then decided to organise a two-day long boycott of transport in Madrid 7 and 8 February 1957. Montero wrote an appeal for the strike to the people and sent the text to Paris so that it could be aired by *Radio Pirenaica*. Among other things, it said:

People of Madrid! As in *Fuenteovejuna*, WE MUST ALL UNITE TOGETHER! The route marked out by the people of Barcelona is the road to victory. It is the road which will lead to the end of all the thefts by the government, the expensive living standards and the misery. It is the road which will lead to the overthrow of the dictatorship of General Franco and which will achieve democracy in Spain.⁹¹

A few days later, Semprún met with Sánchez Montero and expressed reservations about the possible success of the action. He thought that the people might not react to their call since, unlike in Barcelona, the tram fares had not been raised in Madrid. "You'll see", Sánchez Montero replied. With Semprún was Francisco Romero Marín, an associate member of the party's Political Bureau who at the time was only visiting the capital to report on events back in Paris but who would later become part of the clandestine apparatus of the PCE in Madrid. The next step for the Communist organisation was to print and distribute all around the capital leaflets about the strike. When the day came, the people reacted as Sánchez Montero had predicted. In the words of Semprún:

⁹⁰ He was tortured and then sentenced to twenty-five years and six months in prison, Jáuregui and Vega, *Antifranquismo 1939-1962*, p. 231.

⁹¹ Radio España Independiente, 5 February 1957, AHPCE.

The boycott was massive, a surprise for us. We were shocked by the success, I think it was the most exciting political day of my life, the day that Madrid did not take the trams and a flow of people went to work and returned from work by foot, walking... it was really something. Romero Marín, who we called Aurelio, was in Spain at that moment. It was his first time in Madrid when he suddenly run into a 'river of people' flowing down the Cibeles, walking up and down because they were not taking the trams.⁹²

The students also tried to show their solidarity with the strike by congregating around the front doors of the old University, but the police managed to disperse most of them before they reached their destination.⁹³ They then walked to the *Calle Gran Vía* calling for freedom and cheering for Barcelona.⁹⁴ The success of the strike had been such that even the Francoist press reported on it.⁹⁵ More significantly, this strike as well as the one in Barcelona the previous month and the student riots in Madrid in 1956, served to increase the optimism of the PCE leadership in exile regarding the actions that could be carried out against the regime. *Mundo Obrero* published the following headline: "In an impressive civic demonstration, the people of Madrid tell Franco to go".⁹⁶ It is important to remember that the workers' movement until then had been rather quiet. Since the tram strike in Barcelona in 1951, the only strikes of importance had taken place in the spring of 1956 in Pamplona, the Basque Country and Asturias, and these were economic protests. The workers were reacting to the drastic rise in the cost of living. They demanded a minimum salary, something to which the government eventually agreed though not at the level the workers had hoped for. It would be the success of the transport boycott in Madrid, a political demonstration, that had the most impact on the party's expectations on both the power of strikes and the workers' movement. The latter was starting to regain its

⁹² Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

⁹³ Farga, *Universidad*, pp. 49-50; "Las manifestaciones estudiantiles", *Mundo Obrero*, February 1957.

⁹⁴ "Los universitarios españoles en la lucha contra la dictadura franquista y por la amnistía", June 1960, AHPCE.

⁹⁵ Sánchez Montero, *Memorias*, p. 233.

prominence in the eyes of the exiled leadership after a period of emphasis on the student and intellectual organisations. However, as Semprún points out:

On the basis of this initiative in Madrid, without analysing it thoroughly, just because it had worked out, Carrillo began to elaborate the idea of enlarging these strikes. At first, I thought that it was only logical that we gave more consistence, more organisation and more coherence, even ideological, to the strikes, which until then had been partially spontaneous, or done with very little resources. On the other hand, these strikes succeeded because there was a spontaneity in the struggle, but if you raise the targets too quickly, on the basis of your own wishes, that are laudable and respectable but that are not the wishes of those who actually have to go on strike (the workers who are not Francoist but from whom you're asking that they should risk losing their job and freedom), then, a big gap appears and it is a gap that is humanly legitimate and real. So from that point onwards, we tried to impose a single shape to these strikes, when the good thing would have been to continue to support the movements that would spontaneously emerge.⁹⁷

As we shall see in the next chapter, the PCE would then embark on a policy aimed at organising a series of major peaceful strikes in order to create a crisis that would lead to the overthrow of Franco's regime. The first attempt in this direction was the *Jornada de Reconciliación Nacional*.

3. The workers' movement

At this point, it is important to give some general background to the effects that the recent economic changes in Spain were having on the workers' movement. This will help to put into context the policy of general strikes followed by the PCE and some of the reasons for its failure. As has been explained above, the beginning of the Cold War had marked the end of Spain's political isolation, especially through the development of relations with the USA that had soon taken the form of economic aid. In exchange for this assistance, the regime of General Franco was forced to

⁹⁶ *Mundo Obrero*, February 1957.

abandon its policy of autarchy and gradually embraced new liberal economic policies. This change led to an expansion in economic activity, which also influenced industrial relations.

In 1956, two decrees were introduced to allow management to work more independently from the state, and make firms more competitive while stimulating productivity. As the economy developed, the labour movement began to gain strength. State control over labour relations and the Vertical Syndicates no longer responded to the demands for agreements on productivity and wage increases in the growing economy. A new type of workers representation, which did not exist within the corporatist order, needed to be established. As a result, there was a development in informal collective bargaining and workers representation at the shop-floor level in the mid 1950s. The government tried to respond to this by creating between 1953 and 1958 the so-called *Jurados de Empresa* (similar to the shop steward committees) and a system of collective bargaining.

These changes allowed for the reorganisation of the working-class movement. The *Jurados de Empresa* came to be used by underground groups as legal platforms for working class mobilizations. As we will see below, this would eventually lead to the creation of *Comisiones Obreras* in the 1960s. Nevertheless, the party saw in this transformation evidence only of the weakness of the regime but failed to appreciate the change of mentality that was taking place. As happened during the economic strikes of March 1958 in the mines of Asturias, their successful resolution was achieved by the use of a new system of collective bargaining. Subsequently, it became less likely that a general strike would take place as the workers came to see

⁹⁷ Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

the possibilities opening up in the new system and became less willing to risk their livelihoods.

E. Conclusion

The months that followed the secret speech of Khrushchev in March 1956 set the limits of the destalinisation process in the Soviet Union and the satellite states of Eastern Europe. Hungary and Poland were the first victims of the false expectations created by the thaw that had taken place in the Communist movement after the death of Stalin. As for the PCE, its support of the Soviet Union and its reaction to the criticisms emanating from their own organisation in Mexico, confirmed that the party was not willing to take reform any further. The Stalinist methods that had been so suddenly rejected after two decades of praise were back in action.

In Spain, the aftermath of February 1956 also brought about a period of activity in the university that saw the emergence of several organisations, which would join the Communists in the opposition against the regime. However, the party's desire to control these forces often ended in failure, as was the case with the ASU. This would in the future damage the Communists' chances of achieving a coalition among the opposition forces in Spain, since many of them would find it difficult to trust the PCE. At the same time, the party was involved in a number of strikes and demonstrations against the Franco regime that often surpassed the leadership's expectations. As had been the case in the University of Madrid from 1954 to 1956, by supporting the movements that would spontaneously emerge in the country, the PCE had been able to help direct the action and focus the discontent of the people into political protest. However, this strategy would not prevail. Based on

recent successes, the party would embark on a policy of general strikes that ignored the structural changes that were taking place within Spanish society and overestimated the readiness of the people to struggle under the leadership of the Communists.

V. DISSENT

A. *Introduction*

This chapter will look at the policy followed by the PCE after the events that culminated in the transport strikes of Barcelona and Madrid in 1957. The exiled leadership, after years of claiming that the regime was about to fall with a frustrating lack of results, was quick to embrace the successes of these strikes as a precursor to “the final assault”. This led to the party advocating the organisation of national general strikes in Spain to overthrow the regime. Though there were voices inside the country that urged caution, the leadership ignored them. Those who had left Spain almost twenty years before argued that activists in Spain were too isolated to be able to see the true reality of the situation.

In September 1957, the party summoned the so-called *Jornada de Reconciliación Nacional* for 5 May 1958. Less than a year later, the party embarked on the organisation of a new general strike, the *Huelga Nacional Pacífica* (National Peaceful Strike, HNP). Both actions called for high commitment from the activists in Spain, who put themselves at risk in the preparations. However, their efforts would be in vain. Though the leadership insisted on portraying both the JRN and the HNP as successful, the truth was that both actions failed dramatically. As we shall see, this would mark the beginning of the divisions within the leadership that had reached the highest positions in the party after the power struggle of 1956. In addition, the

intellectuals and students who had joined the party in the mid 1950s and played such an important role in rebuilding the opposition movement in Spain would now start to question the party's policy and its internal structure. Carrillo's insistence on the success of the strikes only created further suspicion among them since they were well aware of the barrenness of their efforts. Moreover, the celebration of the VI Congress, aimed at neutralizing the negative effects of the party's recent failures, would eventually have the opposite effect when most of those who had attended were arrested on their return to Spain. As we shall see, this period would mark the beginning of the end of the most powerful underground organisation the PCE had had in Spain since the end of the Spanish Civil War.

B. *"Jornadismo"*

1. The JRN

After the success of the transport strikes in Barcelona and Madrid, the party began preparing a press boycott in the capital to take place on 28 March. This would become the first example of the PCE's failure to adjust to or clearly perceive the real situation in Spain. The attempt failed and actually led to several arrests. The party was forced to take Sánchez Montero and Soler out of the country, as there was fear for their safety during the ensuing repression. Soler would actually remain in Paris for many years while Montero would return to Madrid seven months later.¹ Nevertheless, the press boycott did not deter the party from the idea of a national

strike to overthrow the Franco regime, a policy known as *Jornadismo*.² Several factors contributed to the leadership's decision to follow this route.

Firstly, as mentioned, the success of the February transport strike in Madrid made the party believe that the time was ripe to move forwards in the struggle. As was pointed out in an article published in *Mundo Obrero* the following April:

We have reached a situation in which the masses not only feel the need to act but also can see the material possibility of doing so. What an immense force this lever represents! Through the experience of the masses and the forces that are organising for action, the conditions are being created for a leap to superior forms, for the culmination of a great national demonstration in which the whole of Spain will affirm itself in a unanimous plebiscite.³

Secondly, according to Santiago Carrillo, the party's abandonment of a violent route to overthrow the dictator had made a national peaceful strike the only choice:

The idea of a national strike, of a movement with a pacific national character, emerged because we had renounced the violent popular revolt that we thought was possible during the 1940s. When the perspective of an armed movement against Franco was shown to be impossible, we came to the conclusion that a national strike, in which the bourgeoisie would participate with demonstrations in the streets, could develop into a peaceful movement that would eventually overthrow the dictatorship. We were basing this concept also on other experiences such as the one in Colombia, where an apparently spontaneous movement that went out in the street and demonstrated in a unanimous manner forced the dictator to leave.⁴

Thirdly, the reshuffle in Franco's cabinet in February 1957 convinced the PCE leadership that the regime was now weaker than ever before. Carrillo would say: "this is not a simple governmental crisis, but a crisis of the ruling dictatorship."⁵ Hence, the leadership reasoned, the time had come for the Communists to lead the final blow against the dictator with a mass action. To place this change of cabinet of

¹ Sánchez Montero, *Memorias*, pp. 234-235; Juaregui and Vega, *Antifranquismo 1939-1962*, p. 233.

² "La opinión nacional en marcha", *Mundo Obrero*, 15 April 1957.

³ "La opinión nacional en marcha", *Mundo Obrero*, 15 April 1957.

⁴ Interview with Santiago Carrillo, January 2001. The Dictatorship of General Rojas Pinilla was overthrown on 10 May 1957.

Franco's government in context, we have to go back to 1956 and the nomination of Arrese as the new Minister-Secretary of the *Movimiento* following the student riots of February 1956.⁶ From that point onwards, Arrese worked to regain a central role for the Falange and eventually elaborated a draft of *Leyes Fundamentales* for this purpose. However, when the text became known, it received strong criticisms from all quarters. As Preston explains, "Monarchists, Catholics, archbishops and generals joined in opposing a text which proposed giving the *Movimiento* totalitarian control over all aspects of Spanish life".⁷ Eventually, the battle was won by those such as Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco and the administrative lawyer Laureano López Rodó, who defended an authoritarian monarchy instead of a single party to guarantee the continuity of Francoism. This confrontation between the political families inside the regime combined with the economic crisis the country was going through and the strikes that had been taking place in recent weeks, forced Franco to reshuffle his cabinet. On 22 February, he announced the changes to his ministers. The new appointments confirmed the decline of the historic Falange and the rise of the technocrats of Opus Dei who would initiate the much-needed reform of the Spanish economy.⁸ As has been mentioned, the economic reform would have important effects in the country, transforming among other things the workers' movement.

According to Preston:

Over the next two years, it would become clear that the new appointments had meant the abandonment of every economic idea that the Caudillo had ever held dear and the uninhibited embrace of modern capitalism.⁹

⁵ Statement of the PCE, 9 February 1957, and comment of the PCE on the crisis, 2 March 1957, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 38).

⁶ See chapter III, section C (The Student riots).

⁷ Preston, *Franco*, p. 662.

⁸ Carr and Fusi, *Spain*, p. 173.

⁹ Preston, *Franco*, p. 666.

The last factor that contributed to the PCE's embrace of a national strike came from a development in the opposition movement in exile. On 23 February 1957, Spanish political forces in exile met in Paris, without the PCE, to discuss their response to a document recently signed by Enrique Tierno Galván, Dionisio Ridruejo and José María Gil Robles that favoured a Monarchist solution to Spain.¹⁰ They proceeded to sign their own document that came to be known as the "Pact of Paris", where they advocated the replacement of Franco's regime with a provisional government that would consult the people to decide on whether Spain was to be a Monarchy or a Republic. Initially, the Spanish Communists reacted to their exclusion from the meeting by expressing their support for the main points of the Pact of Paris, hoping to obtain a positive reaction from the signatories.¹¹ However, their conciliatory attitude did not pay off: they continued to be ignored by those that, during the last two decades, had grown more and more suspicious of their every move. Consequently, as Morán explains:

The only possible resort was "to go to the masses", something which when translated in plain language meant that they had to foster popular actions that would serve to hound both the regime and the anti-Communist opposition through the exhibition of the PCE's potential.¹²

In September 1957, during a meeting of the Central Committee, the leadership decided to issue a call for the organisation of a national strike to overthrow Franco's regime, the so-called *Jornada de Reconciliación Nacional*.¹³ Sánchez Montero, the person responsible for giving the report on the JRN during the meeting, described the

¹⁰ Jáuregui and Vega, *Antifranquismo 1939-1962*, pp. 207-208; Tusell, *Oposición*, pp. 362-366.

¹¹ Meeting of the Political Bureau, March 1957.

¹² Morán, *Miseria*, p. 312.

¹³ Resolution on the Jornada de Reconciliación Nacional, September 1957, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 38); Ibárruri & VVAA, *Historia del PCE*, p. 261.

JRN as “a demonstration against the high cost of living, against the economic policy of the dictatorship, for a wide-ranging amnesty of prisoners and exiles and for freedom”.¹⁴ Moreover, according to the official history of the PCE:

The party conceived it (the JRN) as the culmination of a series of small and large actions; as the work of thousands of organisers and agitators of all social classes, of all anti-Francoist ideologies and parties; as the coming together of Catholics, Monarchists, Liberals, Republicans, Nationalists, Socialists, the CNT and Communists.¹⁵

A few weeks later, the date for the strike was set for 5 May 1958.

Regardless of the leadership's expectations, many party activists inside Spain did not believe that the situation was ripe for an action of this magnitude. They received the news for the planning of the JRN with disbelief. According to Solé Tura, the idea was seen as a “leap into the abyss”.¹⁶ When they expressed their reservations about the project, the leadership refused to listen and told them that they lacked faith and were too isolated to perceive the mood of the masses and the weakness of the dictatorship. The changes in the cabinet, the recent strikes and the widening of the opposition movement were seen by those in exile as clear indications that the moment had come for a national strike. It was up to the Communists to steer the masses and other political forces into such an ambitious project. The rest of the political forces in exile that had dared to exclude the PCE from their plans would now see with whom they were dealing. However, time would show that the leaders in exile were allowing their illusions to take precedence over the reality in Spain: the crisis of the regime, the protests of the masses and even the rise in activism of groups

¹⁴ Meeting of the Central Committee, “Las luchas de las masas y la Jornada Nacional de Demostración Pacífica” by Vicente Sainz (Simón Sánchez Montero), September 1957, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 38); also see Resolution of the Central Committee on the JRN, September 1957, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Actas del Pleno del CC, Carp. 10 Tomo III).

such as the Christian-Democrats, Socialists, Liberals and Nationalists, might all have been true to a certain extent. However, these advances did not necessarily mean that the great majority of people were willing to go out in the streets on the command of the Communists, risking their livelihoods and freedom. Nor did the party have the strength to organise such a massive enterprise. As pointed by Solé Tura when speaking about Catalonia:

The party was forgetting that in Barcelona and Catalonia there was hardly anyone, that the organisation of the party had been destroyed, that we did not know of any other group who would be willing to fling itself into such an action and that we, particularly, did not have the people or the means to organise a strike in Barcelona, let alone Catalonia.¹⁷

Such problems were not restricted to Catalonia, of course. As we shall see, the strike proved to be a failure throughout Spanish territory. In his memoirs, Carrillo justified the organisation of the JRN and the national strike of 1959 as experiments, rehearsals: “By the end of the 1950s, it was thought among the party leadership that the idea of a peaceful national strike had to be popularised amongst the Spaniards before it came off; that some rehearsals were needed.”¹⁸ However, as the Communists well knew, 1950s Spain was no place for rehearsals: organising and participating in a strike was a risky enterprise that could lead those involved to arrests and long periods in imprisonment, and even the death penalty. In fact, nothing suggests the party’s goal at the time was simply to popularise the idea among Spaniards. The organisation of the JRN was taken very seriously, a great deal of time and effort went into its preparation; and, as the documents of the time suggest, great results were expected. The methods used to organise the strike were, nevertheless,

¹⁵ Ibárruri & VVAA, *Historia del PCE*, p. 262.

¹⁶ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, p. 107.

¹⁷ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, pp. 107-108.

¹⁸ Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 487.

rudimentary. In Barcelona, the party organisation in the university led by Solé Tura had only a simple manual duplicating machine for printing the leaflets calling for support for the action. Around 30,000 leaflets were claimed to have been handed out in the city.¹⁹ In Madrid, the resources were similar to those in Barcelona. In February 1958, Sánchez Montero arrived in the capital to help with the preparations, but confronted a difficult situation with little support from other political groups of the opposition. It did not help the Communists that Javier Pradera, the activist in charge of the party's relation with other political groups, had been in prison since the new-year after being arrested for attending the VI Youth Festival in Moscow in the summer of 1957.²⁰

Moreover, in exile, the PSOE was refusing to talk to the PCE and did not even reply to a letter written by Santiago Carrillo for a meeting to discuss the possibility of a national strike. The PCE had been attempting to have talks with the PSOE since the summer of 1956. The Socialists ignored their calls and by the end of 1956, Fernando Claudín published an article in *Mundo Obrero* comparing the Socialist leadership to the Francoist leadership and to the "most reactionary elements of the whole world".²¹ In April 1957, Carrillo and Lister decided to pay a surprise visit to Llopis at the PSOE's headquarters in Paris. Under pressure, he agreed to see them but the conversation did not lead anywhere. Moreover, before long, Llopis informed the PSOE's rank-and-file that the meeting had no significance whatsoever

¹⁹ "Los universitarios españoles en la lucha contra la dictadura franquista y por la amnistía", June 1960, AHPCE.

²⁰ Basic precautions were overlooked by those in charge of sending the students to the Congress. For instance, the students returned to Spain in groups instead of one by one and did not bother using aliases. As they arrived, the authorities proceeded to arrest them. Among the 44 arrested were Javier Pradera, Emilio Sanz Hurtado, Fernando Sánchez Dragó, Julián Marcos, Javier Maguerza, Carlos Álvarez and Eloy Terrón. Their case came to be known as the "prosecution of the 44". They would be liberated a few months later thanks to the general pardon given by the regime after the death of Pope Pío XII in October 1958. For a tale of the events surrounding the arrests see Sánchez Dragó, *Una vida*, pp. 57-59, 65-66.

and warned them against any contacts with the PCE.²² A new attempt was made the following October without results.²³ Finally, in March 1958, the PCE published a document calling for the unity of all political forces that opposed Franco and blaming the Socialists for being “one of the main obstacles” to its achievement.²⁴

Even so expectations continued to grow, a result both of the activists’ desire to go into action and the leadership’s insistence that the time was ripe. According to Múgica, who travelled to Paris to finalize the details of the JRN with the exiled leaders, “we, the Communist youth of the time, would go to Paris and after conversing with the leadership, our possible doubts would disappear and we would return with the same spirit to the fatherland”.²⁵ However, the fighting spirit of the activists and their trust in the party leadership were about to be tested by more than words.

2. The failure and “success” of the JRN

During the long months of preparation, the party did not manage to gather support from other political groups for the *Jornada* and also found it hard to get their message across to the masses due to the difficulties imposed by clandestinity and the lack of propaganda tools. Nevertheless, throughout this time, the leadership

²¹ “Sobre una respuesta negativa”, *Mundo Obrero*, November-December 1956.

²² Morán, *Miseria*, p. 320.

²³ Letter of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the PCE, October 1957, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 38).

²⁴ “Ante la situación en España el PCE se dirige a todas las Fuerzas políticas y sociales del país”, March 1958, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS Carp. 39).

²⁵ Múgica, *Itinerario*, pp. 60-61.

maintained that they were getting a terrific response from the people and that the JRN was going to be a success. One month before the Jornada, *Mundo Obrero* said:

During this time, very many intellectuals have been the spokesmen of this idea (the JRN) that Spain has made its own. Repeatedly, they have announced the *Jornada de Reconciliación Nacional* in cultural associations and universities, in professional gatherings and literary circles.²⁶

According to Múgica, one of the reasons the leadership in exile thought the strike was going to succeed was because they believed the positive reports that came from the activists in Spain. At the same time, the activists in Spain would transmit to the leaders in exile the positive reports they knew those in Paris wanted to read. “They all lived in a bubble. Carrillo even told me that they had been forced to exercise moderation among the comrades in Valencia because the masses could not wait to go out on the streets...”²⁷ It is not surprising that this catch-22 situation arose: not only was the perspective of a positive outcome very attractive but also, whenever anyone had previously expressed doubt about the party line they had been admonished. Such had been the case of Solé Tura and Múgica himself.

As the day came closer, the activity of the party increased. There were calls to the students, the workers and the peasants, even to those in exile who were asked to donate their salary of the day of the JRN to the party as a gesture of solidarity with the people in Spain and to help the activists in their task.²⁸ However, when the day came, the masses did not respond to the call of the PCE, as some activists had warned. Solé Tura’s description of the day goes as follows:

We distributed ourselves among different neighbourhoods so that we could directly check the results of the strike and the force of the demonstrations. I had to cover Poble Nou and there I went with my motorbike, ready to count the thousands and

²⁶ “La participación de los intelectuales”, *Mundo Obrero*, 30 April 1958.

²⁷ Interview with Enrique Múgica, September 2000.

²⁸ Manifesto of the Spanish Communist party for the 1st of May, 30 April 1958 (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 39); “A las organizaciones y militantes del partido que se encuentran en la emigración”, April 1958, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 39).

thousands of demonstrators and participate in the massive struggle. But to my great surprise and consternation, I could see that in Poble Nou not a single factory or commercial enterprise had closed down, all the trams were working normally and not the least symptom of a strike could be felt, not even ten people together. That night we met to make a balance and we all arrived to the same conclusion: there had been no strikes, neither large nor small. The *Jornada* had been a failure.²⁹

In San Sebastian, the most successful and expressive sample of the action was the scattering of leaflets in the streets by an activist who had a motorbike.³⁰ As Múgica explains:

When the moment of truth came, the inevitable happened and the *Jornada* went flat as a balloon that had been punctured by mere contact with reality, because reality had many more edges than the wise promoters of the great idea thought.³¹

Luis Goytisolo points to the lack of information the masses had regarding the JRN. While everyone had been aware of the tram strike in January 1957, on this occasion the PCE had proved incapable of transmitting the message. “The people in the street did not know about the strike, and even if they had known, they would have never understood it,” Goytisolo explains.³² Semprún, who at the time praised the strike, would later say that by the party’s standards, the JRN had in fact been a failure, “a failure when compared to what had been thought, expected and announced.”³³ Claudín would describe the mobilization for the action as “minimal”.³⁴ Still the party refused to recognize that their project had failed and regardless of the evidence, the JRN was portrayed as a great success. *Mundo Obrero* dedicated a special issue to the *Jornada*, which was said to have brought to Spain “hours of excitement and hope”. As its description of the day became more detailed, it also became more surreal:

²⁹ Solé Tura, *Un historia*, p. 109.

³⁰ Múgica, *Itinerario*, p. 61.

³¹ Múgica, *Itinerario*, p. 61.

³² Interview with Luis Goytisolo, September 2000.

³³ Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

During the course of 5 May, the almost totality of workers in construction in Madrid and Valencia; and a great number of workers in the metallurgical, graphic arts, chemistry and transport industries of these cities, including the Valencians Dockers, have gone on a total or partial strike.

A considerable number of workers have participated in the *Jornada* in the same manner in Murcia, Guipuzcoa, Seville, Zaragoza, Malaga, Alcoy, Sabadell, Jaén, Valladolid, Asturias, Galicia, Leon, Torrelavega, Santa Cruz de Tenerife and other places.

In many agricultural towns of the Levant, Andalusia, Extremadura and Castile, the agricultural workers have stopped working for the first time since fascism has existed; thousands of peasants have joined the action in different ways, for instance, by not going to buy products to the market.

A very exciting feature has been the participation of women in the *Jornada*, handing out leaflets, refusing to do their shopping, etc.

In a general manner, the small and medium merchants and industrialists have contributed actively to the *Jornada* becoming a success and popularising it. Employees and civil servants sympathised openly with the demonstration, and in Madrid, Valencia and other places, they have shown this by refusing to use the trams and buses and in some cases, remaining inactive in their offices.³⁵

A year later, in a letter to Pasionaria talking about the preparation of the forthcoming HNP, Carrillo described to her how the repressive forces had been totally “overwhelmed during the JRN and did not know where to go”.³⁶ In 1960, the official history of the PCE continued to give credence to this version of events:

The Francoist government used all its repressive apparatus against the *Jornada*. The Army was mobilized with the excuse of a military parade on 4 May; the big cities were militarily occupied. The VI Fleet of the USA placed itself in the main Spanish harbours of the Mediterranean, backing the dictatorship with its presence.³⁷

Those who had supported the JRN could be counted in the millions, they maintained.³⁸ Of course, the party leaders could not explain how under such pressure the regime had not crumbled that day, something which should have occurred had any of their interpretations been backed up by reality. Those who had seen with their

³⁴ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 134.

³⁵ “Declaración del Partido Comunista de España sobre la Jornada de Reconciliación Nacional”, *Mundo Obrero*, 15-31 May 1958.

³⁶ Letter from Santiago Carrillo to Dolores Ibárruri, 9 June 1959, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Dolores Ibárruri, Correspondencia, Caja 16, Carp. 4); also see “A las jerarquías eclesiásticas, a los católicos españoles”, 24 May 1958, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 39)

³⁷ Ibárruri & VVAA, *Historia del PCE*, p. 264

³⁸ Ibárruri & VVAA, *Historia del PCE*, p. 264.

own eyes the failure of the JRN not surprisingly demanded answers from the leadership. According to Solé Tura:

From the initial disappointment we moved to a feeling of rage: we had already told them that there were no conditions for a general strike, they had not listened to us and the result was a failure, a step backwards. We demanded an explanation and we refused to accept new orders just like that one for the JRN unless they would be well founded. That was the message I had to transmit to the leadership when a few weeks later I was summoned to Paris to analyse events.³⁹

Upon his arrival in Paris, Solé Tura was taken to Prague where he then met Santiago Carrillo and Jorge Semprún. He would soon be introduced to other historic leaders such as Dolores Ibárruri, Antonio Mije, Enrique Lister and even Vicente Uribe. From Prague, he travelled with the leadership to East Germany where a meeting would finally take place to discuss the latest events. Once in East Germany, he had dinner with Josep Moix, General Secretary of the PSUC, and Gregorio Lopez Raimundo. The transcript of their conversation evokes very well the parody of the situation. Once Solé Tura confirmed his intention to reveal that the strike had been a total failure, he was told by Moix:

-We understand very well your worries and your disenchantment after the effort that you made. But we want to clarify a few things for you so that you have a global perspective that you unavoidably lack. You will then be able to explain it in detail to the other comrades. We appreciate your immense work and surely, you were in no condition to do much more, but you did not go all the way and you missed some things. For instance, where were you on the day of the strike?

-In Poble Nou- I replied-. And the other comrades had been posted around every neighbourhood of Barcelona.

-And what did you see?

-Nothing, absolutely nothing. Not the most remote sign of strikes. No one stopped.

-But this was in Barcelona, right?- insisted Moix-. And who was in Badalona? And in L'Hospitalet?

-We did not get to Badalona and L'Hospitalet- I answered-, but we did not hear about any big factory closing there for the strike.

-So- exclaimed Moix- You do not know that in Badalona the whole *Cros* and the whole industry halted. And in L'Hospitalet the whole metal industry stopped too? And in Sabadell the whole textile industry stopped as well?

I was bewildered and I did not know if I had understood well.

³⁹ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, p. 109.

-Are you telling me that there was a strike in the whole of Catalonia except for Barcelona?- I finally asked.

-Exactly.⁴⁰

Furthermore, he was told the JRN had also been a success in Madrid and Andalusia. After the meeting, Solé Tura concluded that, just as the leadership had been insisting, activists in Spain indeed had a limited point of view. He could not distrust what he was being told and hence felt he could no longer talk about a failure at the coming meeting with the PCE leaders. Instead, he gave them an optimistic appraisal of the situation in the University and Catalan society in general. Only Claudín would later question him in private about what had really happened in Barcelona during the JRN. According to Solé Tura, by the end of the meeting, the leadership was euphoric and the decision was reached that they should organise as soon as possible a new general strike, even greater than the last one. "Optimism was necessary, but as we would see early enough, an optimism removed from tangible facts and the immediate reality could take you directly to crisis and confrontation", Solé Tura explains. He then went back to Barcelona and told the rest of the activists about the success of the JRN that they had somehow missed. Their response was not very enthusiastic and even Solé Tura's recent optimism started to evaporate. Eventually, he wondered about the reasons behind the leadership's misrepresentation of reality. The JRN was the first test of the new leaders and their new political orientation. Hence, to recognize failure would have meant to diminish their value before the old guard. "Was it us, those in Spain, who had to endorse, precisely, the new policy with the immediate evidence of action?", Solé Tura asked himself.⁴¹ There seems to be some truth behind his reasoning, as the 'Parisians' had only

⁴⁰ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, pp. 115-116

⁴¹ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, pp. 122-123. Pradera agrees with this interpretation, interview with Javier

recently reached the high command of the party and there were still those who felt bitterness because of this. Nevertheless, subjectivism was nothing new to the PCE. Since the end of the Civil War, they had been foretelling the immediate downfall of the regime and exaggerating the successes of the opposition against Franco. This approach might, at the very beginning, have been a mistake but, as time passed by, it could only have been deliberate, as Carrillo would later recognize.⁴²

At any rate, Solé Tura was not the only one who experienced doubts regarding the JRN and the party's appraisal of the action. Among others, Enrique Múgica said:

Once the strike was over, we knew that it had not really worked out. Then the party said that indeed it had and that made me start doubting. But the argument was that even if it had not been a success here, it could have been a success 300 km away, and how are you going to doubt what the party tells you?⁴³

Luis Goytisolo would describe the leaders' attitude as grotesque, "it had been a total failure and still they would not accept it".⁴⁴ Moreover, the strike had also led to the arrest of fellow comrades. Enrique Múgica, arrested with other activists from San Sebastian, would spend the next four months and half in prison. During this time, he would meet and become close to the Socialist Antonio Amat, his mentor in the years to come and an important influence in Múgica's move from the PCE to the PSOE in 1963.⁴⁵ In addition, while in prison, Sánchez Dragó and Julián Marcos would face a serious clash with the PCE that would lead to their temporary

Pradera, September 2000. So does Jorge Semprún, interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

⁴² Contribution to the discussion by Santiago Carrillo to the meeting of the PCE, 11 February 1964, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Plenos Comité Central); Claudín, *Documentos*, pp. 61-63.

⁴³ Interview with Enrique Múgica, September 2000.

⁴⁴ Interview with Luis Goytisolo, September 2000.

⁴⁵ Fernández, *Múgica*, p. 59. This meeting would lead to Múgica leaving the party a few years later. Antonio Amat had joined the PSOE in 1952 and was the person in charge of the activity of the party inside Spain.

abandonment of the organisation.⁴⁶ Through a jail officer of left wing inclinations, Sánchez Dragó had managed to have access to a copy of the newspaper YA. Soon after this happened, he was contacted by the party leadership in jail:

They told me: 'Fernando, you cannot pass the YA to your comrades, because it is the press of Franco... they read it and they get demoralized. You can read it because you are the one who receives it so we allow you to, but once you have read it you have to pass it to a censure committee that will be responsible for elaborating a newsletter with the news that we think the comrades should read.' I told myself enough was enough; I let the cat out of the bag and told the rest what was happening. Then, those from the philosophy faculty (Julián Marcos, myself and others) decide to break with them and we built our own liberal party.⁴⁷

They would eventually return to the PCE but their case exposes the distress that was starting to be felt by many intellectuals with the ways of the party.

In addition, the failure of the strike further strained the relationship between the PCE and other political forces that had been opposed to it from the very beginning. According to Claudín, this was also the result of the sectarian and disproportionate self-appraisal of the Communist leaders.⁴⁸ Still, the official history of the PCE claims, "the JRN promoted Unitarian currents in the anti-Francoist camp."⁴⁹ In later years, Carrillo would recognize the failure of the national strikes but he would put the blame on those political forces that did not support the action:

While the Socialists, the Christian-Democrats and the liberals were waiting for Franco to die, we wanted to overthrow the regime. This idea was from an early stage criticised by the political groups who did not want the Spanish problem to be solved in the streets. We defended this position because we wanted a peaceful outcome but also we wanted to end the dictatorship. We did not want to wait for Franco to die in bed. This was the idea behind the national strikes, and though there was no national strike in the end, during the transition there were a lot of strikes, a lot of demonstrations that contributed to making acceptable that change had to include the PCE, *Comisiones Obreras* and the forces of the left.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Sánchez Dragó, *Una vida*, pp. 72-73.

⁴⁷ Interview with Fernando Sánchez Dragó, September 2000.

⁴⁸ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 135.

⁴⁹ Ibárruri & VVAA, *Historia del PCE*, p. 264

⁵⁰ Interview with Santiago Carrillo, January 2001. The same argument can also be found in Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 487.

Moreover, as Claudín would later explain, inflating the results of the JRN for propaganda purposes had other dangerous results, as the party's evaluation of the strike would "actually became the basis for the appreciation of the political situation, in which they took as real the possibility of a rapid overthrow of the dictatorship".⁵¹

3. The HNP

The failure of the JRN and the refusal of other political groups to join the PCE in this action did not deter the party from pursuing this policy again. During the months that followed, the leadership continued to play with the idea of a national strike though it was not summoned until March 1959. The decision to go-ahead was triggered after an important meeting of the members of *Unión Española* (UE) took place on 29 January 1959 at the Hotel Menfis in Madrid.⁵² *Unión Española*, a political organisation of liberal Monarchists founded in 1957, favoured a democratic solution for Spain and was willing to negotiate with other opposition forces, but not with the PCE. The Spanish Communists, feeling alienated, decided to demonstrate their strength to the UE, as well as to any others who objected to working with them, by calling a new general strike. According to a party report, the Communists' power to mobilize the masses would push these groups into talks: "There came the decision to publish three successive editorials in *Mundo Obrero*, where the idea of a national action is outlined that finally shaped into a general strike of 24 hours".⁵³ The strike

⁵¹ Claudín, *Documentos*, p. 77.

⁵² Jáuregui and Vega, *Antifranquismo 1939-1962*, p. 211. For more information on *Unión Española* see Tusell, *Oposición*, pp. 340-349.

⁵³ Letter from Tomás García (Juan Gómez) to Dolores Ibárruri, 1959, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Tomás García, Caja 10, Carp. 3.2).

known as the *Huelga Nacional Pacífica* (HNP) would eventually be set for 18 June 1959.

The quest for support began earlier with a meeting on 11 March between the PCE and members of the Christian-Democrat group *Izquierda Democrática Española* (IDC), including its leader Jesús Barros de Lis.⁵⁴ According to the Communist delegation, the IDC expressed its desire to establish an alliance with the PCE on the HNP but warned them about the difficulties they could encounter in making pacts with other political forces in Spain, such as *Unión Española*. “All these groups say: What guarantees does the PCE offer that it is going to comply in the future with any agreements that would be adopted?”⁵⁵ This attitude, which the party had been facing in exile since the end of the Spanish Civil War, made the leadership ever more determined in finding further allies for the action in Spain. There were conversations between Jorge Semprún, Javier Pradera and Dionisio Ridruejo, now leader of a group called *Acción Democrática Española* (ADE), who was not convinced about the plan.⁵⁶ Santiago Carrillo also held talks in Paris with the leader of the FLP, Julio Cerón.⁵⁷ Just like Ridruejo, Cerón was reticent about the wisdom of a general strike though eventually the FLP would agree to join the action.⁵⁸ The PCE then proposed to hold a round table the following May with the IDC, the ADE and the FLP in the hope that they could achieve better results. However, it never took

⁵⁴ For more information on the IDC see Tusell, *Oposición*, pp. 327-336.

⁵⁵ Meeting with the representatives of IDC, 11 March 1959, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Activistas, Caja 92, Carp. 15).

⁵⁶ Dinisio Ridruejo had always maintained a very good relationship with both Pradera and Semprún. For more information see Semprún, *Autobiografía*, pp. 296-297.

⁵⁷ Claudín, *Carrillo*, 138.

⁵⁸ Letter from Tomás García (Juan Gómez) to Dolores Ibárruri, 1959, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Tomás García, Caja 10, Carp. 3.2); Meeting with the representatives of IDC, 11 March 1959, AHPCE. The ADE had been constituted in November 1956. For more information on how this group came about see Tusell, *Oposición*, pp. 309-310.

place.⁵⁹ Nor did the PCE succeed in its attempt to approach Gregorio Marañón and the members of *Unión Española*. In the end, only the FLP and the *Agrupación Socialista Universitaria* (ASU) would join the Communists on the strike. The IDC would pull out a day before it took place.

The case of the ASU's support for the HNP deserves some explanation. The arrival at a decision to collaborate with the PCE turned out to be anything but smooth. The ASU had faced strong opposition from the Socialist leadership in exile regarding their position on this matter, though the tension between the two organisations was nothing new. Ever since its foundation, the ASU had kept an organic relationship with the PSOE while still trying to maintain a certain degree of autonomy. The PSOE agreed to this as long as the young organisation limited its sphere of action to the University, something to which its members resisted. Friction with the Socialist leaders in exile developed during the following years due, not just to structural problems, but also to ideological differences between both organisations. The relations of the ASU with the PCE did nothing to improve this. From 1956 to 1958, the ASU expanded considerably with sections in San Sebastian, Valladolid, Valencia and Salamanca. The organisation also came into close contact with the Socialist group in Barcelona, *Moviment Socialista de Catalunya* (MSC). In June 1957, the ASU founded the unitarian platform, *Unión Democrática de Estudiantes*

⁵⁹ Letter from Tomás García (Juan Gómez) to Dolores Ibárruri, 1959, AHPCE; Letter from Dolores Ibárruri to Santiago Carrillo, 1 June 1959, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Dolores Ibárruri, Correspondencia, Caja 16, Carp. 4); Letter from Santiago Carrillo to Dolores Ibárruri, 9 June 1959, AHPCE.

(UDE).⁶⁰ The MSC would take a similar step in Barcelona with the creation of the *Federación Nacional de Estudiantes de Cataluña* (FNEC) on February 1958.⁶¹

However, the PCE was not invited to take part in any of these projects. The Communists would eventually achieve their unitarian goals with the creation on February 1958 of the *Comités de Coordinación Universitaria*, a platform that aimed to unite the efforts of the university opposition to fight for a democratic student union. The presence of the ASU and the MSC meant that they had abandoned their respective unitarian platforms, the UDE and FNEC, and had joined with the Communists, therefore helping them out of their isolation.⁶² Moreover, the ASU also collaborated with the Communists in specific activities, such as the protests of the medical students in Barcelona on 25 March 1958 and the homage to Antonio Machado on the twentieth anniversary of his death on 20 February 1959.⁶³ During this period, the PCE would define its relationship with the ASU as excellent. "The ASU has returned to its original idea, meaning, an autonomous organisation, not organically dependent on the PSOE".⁶⁴ Not surprisingly, the Socialist leadership in exile was opposed to this emerging amity. The tension reached its peak when the ASU insisted on supporting the HNP.⁶⁵ The MSC and Vicente Girbau, who was

⁶⁰ This organisation included the *Partido Social Acción Democrática*, the *Unión Democrática Cristiana* (later on known as *Izquierda Democrática Cristiana*) and the *Asociación Funcionalista*, Jáuregui and Vega, *Antifranquismo 1939-1962*, p. 550.

⁶¹ This organisation would include the Christian Democrats of the UDC and the nationalists of the *Front Nacional de Catalunya* (FNC), Jáuregui and Vega, *Antifranquismo 1939-1962*, p. 550.

⁶² The first manifesto of the *Comités de Coordinación Universitaria* came out on 28 February 1958. These Committees would eventually develop into the FUDE in 1961. For more information on everything relating to the expansion of the ASU see Jáuregui and Vega, *Antifranquismo 1939-1962*, pp. 549-550.

⁶³ The protests of the medicine students had been preceded by protests at the University of Barcelona on 21-22 February in commemoration of the Free Congress of Students the previous year. The homage to Machado's death took place in Collioure where the poet was buried. For those who could not attend, another homage took place in Segovia, Abdón Mateos, "La ASU..." in Carreras Ares y Ruiz Carnicer, *La Universidad*, p. 551. For more information on the homage in Collioure also see Miguel Dalmau, *Los Goytisolo* (Barcelona: Editorial Anagrama, 1999), pp. 344-347.

⁶⁴ Letter from Tomás García (Juan Gómez) to Dolores Ibárruri, 1959, AHPCE.

⁶⁵ The same problem arose within certain sectors of the UGT in Spain who also wanted to support the

responsible for the relationship between the ASU and the PSOE in exile, had intervened with the Socialist leadership in Toulouse in favour of the HNP.⁶⁶ As in the past, Llopiès refused to collaborate with the Communists and publicly announced the party's position in *El Socialista* on 2 April 1959.⁶⁷ The PCE replied on 1 June with a declaration broadcast by Radio Pirenaica in which the Socialist leadership was strongly criticised yet asked one last time to join the action.⁶⁸ Subsequently, the PSOE made a public declaration against the strike.⁶⁹ The ASU and the MSC, on the other hand, continued to support the HNP. In the aftermath of 18 June, the PSOE would threaten to break any organic relationship with the ASU unless it agreed to fully integrate into the structure of the party. In this manner, the Socialist leaders in Toulouse wanted to prevent any new independent stand from the young organisation in the future.⁷⁰

The support of the ASU and the FLP for the HNP was important, but the PCE had been expecting to get many other organisations involved. The lack of support from groups such as the ADE, IDC and the UE was upsetting for the Communist leaders who had remained optimistic until the end about their possibilities of achieving a

HNP.

⁶⁶ Letters from Santiago Carrillo to Dolores Ibárruri, 7 April/6 June 1959, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Dolores Ibárruri, Correspondencia, Caja 16, Carp. 4).

⁶⁷ To the Executive Commission of the PSOE, 1 June 1959, AHPCE (REI); Letter from Santiago Carrillo to Dolores Ibárruri, 7 April 1959, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Dolores Ibárruri, Correspondencia, Caja 16, Carp. 4). Also see Abdón Mateos, "La ASU..." in Carreras Ares y Ruiz Carnicer, *La Universidad*, p. 555.

⁶⁸ To the Executive Committee of the PSOE, 1 June 1959, AHPCE.

⁶⁹ "La crisis en el Partido Socialista", *Nuestra Bandera*, n. 24, August 1959. Also see Morán, *Miseria*, pp. 326-327.

⁷⁰ This happened a few weeks after the HNP took place. The PSOE first demanded that the ASU's delegation in exile to publicly repudiate the ASU in Madrid for their collaboration in the HNP. By July 1959, they received an ultimatum: either the ASU was affiliated to the PSOE and its youth organisation JJSS, or the party would break any organic relationship with it. For more information see Abdón Mateos, "La ASU..." in Carreras Ares y Ruiz Carnicer, *La Universidad*, pp. 555-566.

broad coalition. However, it did not come as a surprise. The PCE's isolation during the JRN probably contributed to their caution on this occasion. In a letter to Pasionaria, Juan Gómez wrote:

The morale of the party is excellent. In these days the position of other forces is being decided. If we managed to get their collaboration, it will be an extraordinary success. We have never been so close to forcing them to take a decisive step. If after all they turn back, ... we can still, through the masses, strike a new blow against the Francoists, much harder than during the *Jornada*. In this manner, the process of decomposition of the regime, the radicalisation of the situation, will be accelerated considerably.”⁷¹

Carrillo also emphasised on several occasions the possibility that some of the forces that were showing signs of support for the HNP could change their mind at the last minute, as indeed happened with *Izquierda Democrática Española* (IDC). In a letter to Ibárruri, he warned her against false hope regarding the organised participation of other forces in the strike. “Action speaks louder than words”, Carrillo wrote.⁷²

Aside from the search for allies, the PCE also put a great deal of effort in reaching the masses. In Barcelona, to upgrade the party's propaganda apparatus, the leadership made financial contributions to the clandestine organisation and sent two experts from France to help, though apparently neither one really knew what they were doing.⁷³ According to the writer and PCE sympathiser Juan Goytisolo, who arrived in Barcelona at the end of May, an atmosphere of hope had taken over the city, “an enthusiasm and effervescence almost pre-revolutionary had taken over the

⁷¹ Letter from Tomás García (Juan Gómez) to Dolores Ibárruri, 1959, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Tomás García, Caja 10, Carp. 3.2).

⁷² Letter from Santiago Carrillo to Dolores Ibárruri, 7 April/6 June 1959, AHPCE.

⁷³ A year later, after the PCE's VI Congress, these two experts would be arrested by the police and would “talk” during the interrogations. This eventually led to the exile of Jordi Solé Tura from Spain. For more information see Solé Tura, *Memorias*, pp. 134-144.

opposition.”⁷⁴ In Madrid, there were plans to distribute a million leaflets and strike committees were created to direct the organisation in each different industry. Expectations were rising: “All the comrades agree that the idea of the HNP has been accepted faster than the JRN”, Pasionaria was told at one point.⁷⁵ Jorge Semprún, Simón Sánchez Montero and Francisco Romero Marín were in charge of the preparations in the capital, and soon would be joined by the party’s number two, Fernando Claudín. According to Semprún, “Claudín told us how the strike was going to be according to the leadership in Paris: an Apocalypse. And we thought, are they crazy or could this be true? Maybe we did not notice because we were focused on only one area.”⁷⁶ Claudín went back to Paris and gave a very positive report to Carrillo. “I still interpreted the doubts and reservations of those in Madrid as an expression of the logical difficulties of such a wide-ranging action and not of something more fundamental”, he would explain later.⁷⁷ Other party heavyweights such as Ignacio Gallego and Julián Grimau were also sent from Paris into different parts of Spain to lead the preparations. In addition, the party published announcements directed at specific groups less likely to sympathise with them, such as the army and the Civil Guard.⁷⁸

Nevertheless, as had been the case with the JRN, there were still those who questioned the party’s decision to summon a new strike. According to Solé Tura:

Our circumstances and the experience of the JRN made us see the new initiative with a lot of scepticism. Even if the organisation of the PSUC was better than the previous year, it was still precarious and lacked resources.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Dalmau, *Los Goytisolo*, p. 341.

⁷⁵ Letter from Tomás García (Juan Gómez) to Dolores Ibárruri, 1959, AHPCE.

⁷⁶ Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

⁷⁷ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 138.

⁷⁸ “To the generals, chiefs and officers of the land, sea and air armies”, April 1959; “To the members of the Civil Guard Corps”, May 1959, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 49).

⁷⁹ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, p. 134.

Sánchez Montero expressed his doubts about the potential of the HNP to the Political Bureau, “I thought that the strike would not be widespread, not because the workers did not wish to join in but rather out of fear. They thought it was a very grave matter, a challenge to the Government.” Still, Sánchez Montero explains, he worked as hard as he could on the preparation of the strike as “I did not want anyone to think that I had not put all my effort in achieving its success”.⁸⁰ His doubts were justified: as we shall see, the repressive forces were very active before and after the strike. Pasionaria also questioned the idea of the HNP.⁸¹ According to Falcón, “she was concerned about the risks both direct and indirect that such an initiative implied”.⁸² In a letter Ibárruri wrote to Carrillo during this period, she seems rather upset at the fact that the decision had been taken without seeking her approval. She wrote: “I was impatient to know the reasons that have driven you to take such a brave step that could be a serious blow to the dictatorship.”⁸³

However, the blow never came. In the words of Claudín, the HNP was “an unmitigated disaster”. The party had sent a number of French comrades to act as observers of the action. They all returned and reported to the leadership that there had been no sign of mobilization: normality had been absolute.⁸⁴ Juan Goytisolo, who was also in Spain working as an under-cover correspondent for the French magazine *L'Express*, described how on the date of the strike he had only found “open shops and commerce, packed public transport, factories working in apparent normality”. He

⁸⁰ Sánchez Montero, *Memorias*, p. 241.

⁸¹ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 140; Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 8.

⁸² Falcón, *Asalto*, p. 319. Álvarez also says that at first Ibárruri was not happy with the idea of the HNP and that he was sent by Carrillo to Moscow to try to convince her, which he did, Álvarez, *Memorias V*, p. 212.

⁸³ Letter from Dolores Ibárruri to Santiago Carrillo, 1 June 1959, AHPCE.

⁸⁴ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 138.

had spent three days in Madrid and Barcelona waiting for the “peaceful explosion of the masses” that never came. Moreover, he added:

The leaders of the opposition in Madrid that I was able to see, all admitted the failure. The explanations given were the following: in the preceding years, the strikes that had taken place in Barcelona, Madrid, Asturias and the Basque country had been partial successes because they emerged spontaneously from the base. On this occasion, the order came from above and the date was set by the leadership of the political groups not, in accordance with the Spanish situation, but according to the date that they managed to agree on.⁸⁵

Nevertheless, just as had happened with the JRN, the HNP would not be accepted as a failure. It was argued that even though the action may not have been the popular demonstration the Communists had hoped for, the political agitation and the propaganda of the idea for a national strike that preceded the 18 June meant that the party’s strategy had succeeded.⁸⁶ Only a year later after the failure of 18 June 1959, Carrillo was telling the press in La Habana:

If the anti-Francoist forces would agree to organise a general national strike with mass manifestations and the sympathy of the armed forces, such an action would provoke the overthrow of the Franco regime. Franco would not be able to resist for more than a few weeks, maybe months, against the unity and struggle of the anti-Francoist forces.

Carrillo might have been right about this but nothing guaranteed that his desires would turn into reality. The PCE had not achieved the union of anti-Francoist forces, nor had the party managed to incite the people to go out on to the streets and much less did the Communists enjoy the sympathy of the armed forces. In fact, the Spanish Communists were now to face the terrible effects of their latest failed enterprise.

⁸⁵ Dalmau, *Los Goytisolo*, pp. 342-343.

C. The hangover from the HNP

1. Arrests

After months of hectic activity, the day of the HNP had passed by without the slightest indication of mass agitation. Moreover, the repression before and after the event was ferocious. On 19 May, eleven members of the ASU were arrested in Madrid, Valencia and Salamanca.⁸⁷ Eighteen members of the FLP, including its leader Julio Cerón, were arrested a few days after the HNP. As for the PCE, one of its most prominent figures, Simón Sánchez Montero, was arrested on the eve of the action.⁸⁸ Other Communist leaders such as Luis Lucio Lobato, Emilio Sanz Hurtado and Enrique Múgica, as well as hundreds of activists, suffered the same fate.⁸⁹

Unavoidably, the work needed to prepare for the HNP had placed the activists in a much more vulnerable position vis-à-vis the repressive forces. For instance, the leaders of the party in Madrid, Sánchez Montero, Romero Marín and Semprún himself, would under normal circumstances meet once a week in a safe house. As the day of the HNP came nearer, the number of meetings rose and often would take place in the street. On the day of Sánchez Montero's arrest, they had scheduled three appointments. By the time of the last one, Sánchez Montero was already in the hands of the *Brigada Social*, as the secret police were known. Certainly, the activists were

⁸⁶ "Declaración del PCE sobre la Huelga Nacional", July 1959, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carpeta 40); Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 488; Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 139.

⁸⁷ On the arrests of the members of the FLP, as well as its leader, Julio Cerón, see Tusell, *Oposición*, pp. 338-340 and Morán, *Miseria*, p. 329. According to Vilar, Cerón was arrested before the HNP not after, Vilar, *Anti-franquismo*, pp. 274-275. On the arrest of the members of the ASU see Abdón Mateos, "La ASU..." in Carreras Ares y Ruiz Carnicer, *La Universidad*, pp. 553-554 and Lizcano, 56, pp. 249-250.

⁸⁸ For information on his arrest see Sánchez Montero, *Memorias*, pp. 243-258 and Jáuregui and Vega, *Antifranquismo 1939-1962*, pp. 236-237.

⁸⁹ Luis Lucio Lobato was arrested on 12 May. For more information on his arrest see Jáuregui and

aware of the risks involved in their activity, which were impossible to avoid when acting against a dictatorship. However, the fact that the strike failed to achieve any results made the arrests all the more difficult to swallow. This was particularly so among those who had experienced doubts on the policy being followed by the party. Moreover, the arrests did not help the PCE become any more popular with the political forces that had opposed the action. In a way, it confirmed the reasoning behind their refusal to collaborate. There was no point in encouraging the sacrifice of so many activists when the results were not going to have a major effect on the country.

At the same time, an increasing number of Communist intellectuals began to criticise the PCE leadership. Many were becoming aware of the contradictions between Spanish reality and the party's claims. Luis Goytisolo, for instance, abandoned his political activism, though not yet the party, soon after the HNP. Miguel Dalmau, author of a biography on the Goytisolo brothers, describes how the failure of the strike had a strong effect on Luis: "To his progressive political disenchantment one could now add the failures of the strikes."⁹⁰ Another intellectual who questioned the leadership was Sánchez Dragó:

At first we had mythologized the leaders in exile but later, we realised that it was all very grotesque, those strikes that they would call for and no one would follow.... A fracture between the PC in Spain and the PCE in exile began to take place. We were more reasonable mainly because we were in contact with reality and we knew what was happening, but those in Paris had no clue. Hence, a dichotomy was created.⁹¹

As we shall see, the disenchantment of the intellectuals would, from this point onwards, only deepen.

Vega, *Antifranquismo 1939-1962*, p. 236.

⁹⁰ Dalmau, *Los Goytisolo*, p. 343.

2. Dissent at the top

Problems were also arising in higher circles. Claudín, who had shared the high expectations about the strike, now questioned the wisdom of the policy and subsequently clashed with Carrillo during a leadership meeting to analyse the results of the HNP. As previously stated, Carrillo argued that the action had succeeded because the party had managed to carry out an important propaganda campaign for it. Moreover, he also maintained that the support from other political groups received by the PCE had exposed the attempt by forces such as *Unión Española* and the PSOE to isolate the Communists. In turn, these forces had been the ones cut off from the rest. Claudín challenged his statements and insisted that it was very important for the party “to see things as they were”, and to recognize the total failure of the action so that they draw the pertinent conclusions. He then maintained that the failure of the HNP had been a political blow to the prestige of the party as well as facilitating further repression. It had helped the dictatorship and diminished the PCE’s credibility in the eyes of its allies. “However, the most important lesson that in my opinion we should draw from this failure is our mistaken perception of the working class’ political consciousness and the real force of the people”, Claudín added. Subsequently, he suggested that a letter should be sent to the party’s organisations in the country in order “to open up a discussion that will examine carefully the weaknesses of the party and discover the causes behind our subjectivism in the analysis of the situation of the country.”⁹²

Apart from Ignacio Gallego and Santiago Álvarez, who at first supported Claudín’s views, the rest agreed with Carrillo. Claudín believes that the future

⁹¹ Interview with Fernando Sánchez Dragó, September 2000.

General Secretary was afraid of losing authority if the party were to take such measures. On the other hand, Carrillo argues in his memoirs that Claudín was just very negative and did not want to emphasize the positive results of the HNP, “even if they were limited”. In the end, Claudín submitted to the opinion of the majority, with which Gallego and Álvarez had already aligned themselves. It is difficult to know the exact content of this meeting. Other than the recollections of the participants, there is no record of it. Nevertheless, Claudín’s position fits in with the versions given by Semprún and Solé Tura about the meeting and the shift he began to make from this point onwards.⁹³ On the other hand, the position of the PCE regarding the effect of the HNP proved to be the one that Claudín attributes to Carrillo. As early as July 1959, the party published a document called “Declaration of the PCE on the HNP” where those positions were defended.⁹⁴ According to Claudín, the Declaration was an effort “to close the path to any divergent opinion inside the party by accusing it ahead of time of exploiting our failure in the same manner as done by the government, the Francoist press and the international press.”⁹⁵ When talking about this whole episode, Semprún, who would in later years join Claudín in his divergence, says:

The failure of the strike was a terrible intellectual blow for Claudín, and it was then that his sedition against Carrillo started. I knew that the strike had been a mistake, but I thought that the leadership would not be able to easily accept this. We had to make them understand step by step. ... The difference between Claudín and I is that he broke away with such brutality that in a way made sense given his previous dogmatic vision. He made a break and, while I had a clearer vision than he did, I also thought that you had to give it time. The goal was the same: the transformation of the party, a democratisation of its internal structure.⁹⁶

⁹² Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 139.

⁹³ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, p. 135; interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

⁹⁴ “Declaración del PCE sobre la Huelga Nacional”, July 1959, AHPCE.

⁹⁵ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 141.

⁹⁶ Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

Carrillo argues in his memoirs that during the leadership's meeting, Semprún confronted Claudín and Gallego and defended the opinion of the majority.⁹⁷ However, Semprún writes in his memoirs that at this time he was still in Spain and therefore, could not be at the meeting.⁹⁸ On the other hand, Claudín maintains that Semprún sided with him but believed that it was not a good idea to have a direct confrontation with Carrillo.⁹⁹ In fact, it would still take some time for Semprún to express his disagreement with the party line and Santiago Carrillo. As we shall see later, only a year after the HNP, Semprún would clash with Javier Pradera when the latter challenged the party's perception of Spanish reality.

3. Pasionaria resigns

There was another important event that took place in the aftermath of the HNP, though it was not a direct result of the strike's failure and would have occurred sooner or later anyway. In July 1959, a delegation of the party's Political Bureau formed by Santiago Carrillo, Jorge Semprún, Enrique Lister and Santiago Álvarez arrived in Moscow for a meeting with Ibárruri to analyse the outcome of the HNP.¹⁰⁰ Pasionaria must have been aware that the action had not succeeded. However, by then she would also have seen in the party's journals the distorted view the leaders in Paris had given of the whole affair. Rather than passively wait for Carrillo's explanations about the "success" of the HNP, Ibárruri surprised all of those present with her resignation. According to Semprún:

⁹⁷ Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 488.

⁹⁸ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 8.

⁹⁹ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 142; Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

¹⁰⁰ Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 475; Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 8; Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 142; Falcón, *Asalto*, p. 320.

We went to Moscow to convince Pasionaria that the recent and definite failure of the HNP was no such thing but, on the contrary, a terrible success. Then, like a blow from nowhere, Dolores suddenly announced her irrevocable resignation of the post of General Secretary.¹⁰¹

Claudín also agrees on how unexpected her resignation was.¹⁰² Carrillo, on the other hand, argues that there was no surprise as there had already been talks within those in Paris about Ibárruri's future replacement and the possibility of creating the post of President of the party.¹⁰³ However, even if Pasionaria was aware about their plans, as her secretary Irene Falcón also suggests, to resign was still something unheard of in a Communist Party: a leader had either to die or be ejected.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, despite the fact that since 1956 Santiago Carrillo had been basically running the PCE single handedly, Dolores Ibárruri was still a very popular figure in the party and probably the person with most influence among the Soviets. According to Claudín, when Pasionaria broke the news to the delegation, Carrillo whispered to Semprún: 'What manoeuvre is she preparing now?'¹⁰⁵ In his memoirs, Carrillo denies ever saying this.¹⁰⁶ At any rate, Ibárruri did not have a hidden agenda. As Claudín says, "it was a gesture that honoured Pasionaria, her sense of dignity".¹⁰⁷ She was now 64 years old and had been in politics for more than 46 years. Following her resignation, the members of the Political Bureau nominated Santiago Carrillo as the new General Secretary. Next, someone proposed Dolores Ibárruri as the new President of the party, a post that did not exist but was now being conveniently created. In addition, the Political Bureau was renamed as the more Spanish sounding

¹⁰¹ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, pp. 7-9.

¹⁰² Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 142

¹⁰³ Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 476.

¹⁰⁴ Falcón, *Asalto*, p. 320.

¹⁰⁵ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 142. Santiago Álvarez says in his memoirs that Ibárruri had been expressing her feelings about resigning for quite some, Álvarez, *Memorias V*, p. 221.

¹⁰⁶ Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 475.

¹⁰⁷ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 143.

Executive Committee. All these changes would become official during the VI Congress of the PCE.

D. Criticism from below

1. The VI Congress

Soon after the disappointment of the HNP, the Spanish Communist Party embarked on the organisation of its VI Congress. Behind such activity was the need to make official Santiago Carrillo's nomination as the new General Secretary and Dolores Ibárruri's as the first President of the PCE. In the words of Solé Tura, "the goal of the VI Congress was to give a definite solution to the problem of the leadership".¹⁰⁸ Since 1956, Carrillo had been running the party *de facto* and now the time had come for him to start doing so in name. Moreover, the Congress was also used to reconfirm the policy of National Reconciliation through the organisation of general strikes whose wisdom and practicality had been questioned by so many activists after the fiasco of the HNP.

On 24 December 1959, the members of the party's Central Committee met on the outskirts of Prague in what was supposed to be "an important party meeting". Once there, they were informed that the following day the VI Congress of the PCE would take place. This was done in order to prevent the spread of news about it and hence protect those delegates coming from Spain on their return. In addition, the date of the Congress had been chosen to make the activists appear to the Francoist

authorities as if they were going abroad for a Christmas vacation.¹⁰⁹ Postcards were written in Paris and left with a comrade who then sent them to the activists' families in Spain on different days to make their "holiday" more credible. However, as we shall see later, the hasty preparations meant that the Congress lacked other basic security measures that would prove fatal for those returning to Spain.¹¹⁰

Once the Congress started, everyone became aware that major changes were about to take place. Santiago Carrillo gave the opening speech. Shortly afterwards, the party delegates were informed about his nomination as General Secretary. Claudín delivered the report of the party's programme which set the following short term goals: the development of a united struggle against the dictatorship through a peaceful general strike; the reestablishment of all political liberties, without discrimination; a general amnesty for both sides in the Civil War; the improvement of the living conditions of the workers, peasants, employees, civil servants and the people in general; a foreign policy in favour of peaceful coexistence; and constituent elections with full democratic guarantees to choose a new government. The party's long-term goals were the socialist transformation of Spanish society as a first step towards the establishment of Communism in the country.¹¹¹ Dolores Ibárruri, now the new President of the party, gave a speech on the less relevant topic of the PCE's 40th anniversary. She was not on full form and missed some of the Congress' sessions on account of the flu. Jorge Semprún's speech was mainly based on the so-called "system of contacts", which referred to the method used by the party leaders to communicate with the rank-and-file in Spain by the use of one to one meetings. The

¹⁰⁸ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, p. 139.

¹⁰⁹ Dalmau, *Los Goytisolo*, p. 352.

¹¹⁰ There were 24 delegates from exile and 60 delegates from inside Spain, Morán, *Miseria*, p. 335.

¹¹¹ "Se ha reunido el VI Congreso del PCE", *Mundo Obrero*, 15 February 1960; Programme of the Spanish Communist Party, VI Congress, 28-31 January 1960 (this date was given in order to confuse

activists were then expected to pass on information to those comrades in their industry or field of work. Semprún pointed out the limitations of this system which only allowed for “unilateral” communication and which put the activists at risk as the number of meetings increased during times of great activity. He advocated the creation of committees that would give more independence to the rank-and-file and increase the reach of the party. This went well with the leadership’s idea, promoted during the Congress, to make the PCE in Spain a “mass party”. Semprún said: “What we need nowadays are political committees that are able to work by themselves, even if they temporarily lose contact with the party’s provincial leadership or its Central Committee”. Moreover, he added:

A Communist leader not only has to know how to explain our policy, he also has to know how to listen. And to know how to listen is not as easy as it seems: to know how to listen to the comrades, to know how to listen to the masses, to know how to listen to the voices and rumours of the social reality of our country.¹¹²

According to his memoirs, these extracts were an indication of his coming divergence with Santiago Carrillo. Nevertheless, as we will see through the tension that arose between Semprún and Pradera soon after the Congress, he still had a long way to go before arriving at the conclusions that led to his expulsion.¹¹³ A similar case was that of Claudín whose speech showed no discrepancies with the PCE’s line. However, according to Solé Tura, when the proposed party programme was being “discussed”, it was obvious that Claudín “was not sure of some of the things he was himself saying, and even more, of the things other members of the leadership were saying.”¹¹⁴

the Francoist secret service), AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 41).

¹¹² Speech by Jorge Semprún, 1960, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 41).

¹¹³ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 205.

¹¹⁴ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, p. 140.

Regarding the restructuring of the party, the VI Congress saw the promotion of Jorge Semprún, Simón Sánchez Montero, Ramón Mendezona, Santiago Álvarez and Tomás García to the Executive Committee.¹¹⁵ The long disregarded Secretariat of the Central Committee, which was supposed to be the governing body of the party between congresses, was revived. It included Santiago Carrillo, Fernando Claudín, Ignacio Gallego, Antonio Mije and Eduardo García, hence making it not much different from the Political Bureau.¹¹⁶ Among those elected to the Central Committee were Manuel Azcárate, Domingo Malagón, Miguel Nuñez, Jesús Izcaray, Lucio Lobato and Pere Ardiaca.

In conclusion, the VI Congress served to reaffirm the party line and erased the doubts that the failure of the HNP had created. There was nothing dramatic about it and no obvious divergences of opinion. Just as had happened during the V Congress, the changes that took place had already been agreed beforehand by the leadership. As the Congress came to an end, euphoria and what Goytisolo describes as “fake smugness” had taken over those present. This was encapsulated in the notion of the coming downfall of the regime that once again was accepted, if temporarily, by everyone.¹¹⁷

2. Welcome home

The euphoria of the VI Congress was soon overshadowed by the repression that followed the Communist activists' return to Spain. Their arrests led to hundreds more, affecting the whole structure of the party's underground organisation in Spain.

¹¹⁵ Gregorio López Raimundo and Francisco Romero Marín were elected as associate members.

¹¹⁶ “Se ha reunido el VI Congreso del PCE”, *Mundo Obrero*, 15 February 1960.

The blow was tremendous, reaching Barcelona, Madrid, Santander, Seville, Asturias, Vizcaya, Guipuzcoa, Valencia, Zaragoza, Valladolid, Badajoz, Leon and the Canary Islands.¹¹⁸ “It is the most serious repression carried out against us in many years”, wrote Santiago Carrillo to Dolores Ibárruri on 2 February 1960.¹¹⁹ Those who managed to avoid the authorities were forced to lay low for a few months before they could resume any kind of activity.

Among the many arrested, special mention should be made of Luis Goytisolo for it created a great deal of stir. As we saw above, Goytisolo had become disenchanted with the possibilities of the PCE against Franco after the failure of the HNP. He had come to the conclusion that the only way to fight the regime was through literature. A few months before the Congress, Goytisolo had informed the PCE leadership that he was leaving Barcelona to have some time off to write. It was during this retirement in the town of San Julián de Vilatorra that he was called back by the party to attend “an important meeting”.¹²⁰ Goytisolo agreed only after Solé Tura insisted, “I really did not feel like it. I was not even in Barcelona, I was in the countryside writing my second novel”. The days of the Congress are described by Goytisolo as depressing.¹²¹ However, the worst was still to come.

On the night of 5 February, Goytisolo was arrested and spent the next 24 hours being interrogated. He soon realised that the police inspector in charge was the same person he had suspected of following him since his return from the Congress. Goytisolo describes the interrogations as tough, but not extreme. In his opinion, the

¹¹⁷ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, p. 140; interview with Luis Goytisolo, September 2000.

¹¹⁸ Letter from Santiago Carrillo to Dolores Ibárruri, 23 March 1960, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Dolores Ibárruri, Correspondencia, Caja 16, Carp. 4).

¹¹⁹ Letter from Santiago Carrillo to Dolores Ibárruri, 22 February 1960, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Dolores Ibárruri, Correspondencia, Caja 16, Carp. 4).

¹²⁰ Dalmau, *Los Goytisolo*, p. 351.

¹²¹ Interview with Luis Goytisolo, September 2000.

authorities were probably careful with him because they were aware that as a well-known writer news of his arrest could easily spread and cause protest, as indeed happened. During the interrogations, Goytisolo was shown a photograph of the fake passport he had used to cross the frontier, which gave weight to the theory of the presence of an undercover agent at the Congress. In fact, Morán believes that the possible infiltrator could have been the delegate from Pamplona, who was hardly known by anyone and was never heard from again.¹²² It is not clear if that is the same person that Carrillo refers to in his memoirs, where the existence of an informer is taken as a matter of fact. In 1960, however, he expressed serious doubts about this and, as we will see below, would put the blame somewhere else.¹²³

Jordi Solé Tura, also affected by the repression, blames the party organisers for being too flexible regarding the Congress' security measures: a year earlier during his trip to Prague for a meeting with the leadership the precautions taken on his behalf had been far greater.¹²⁴ Now, after his return to Spain from the Congress, he was informed that the two experts on propaganda the party had sent to Barcelona during the preparations for the HNP had been arrested. His close relationship with them meant that the police could soon find out about him. His situation became all the more uncertain when Luis Goytisolo was also arrested. The party would then ask Solé Tura to hide and eventually to travel to France. He would stay there for the next five years.¹²⁵

¹²² Morán, *Miseria*, pp. 339-340.

¹²³ Carrillo, *Memorias*, pp. 477, 481. On the other hand, Líster says that the arrests were due to the fact that during the Congress many delegates went to the home of Santiago Álvarez in Prague, who was most likely being watched by the Spanish secret service, Líster, *Carrillo*, p. 126.

¹²⁴ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, p. 141.

¹²⁵ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, pp. 141-144.

The risks taken by the party during the Congress received a lot of criticism from the activists working in Spain, who began seriously to doubt the authority of the leadership. Goytisolo would publicly complain about the PCE's disregard for security during the event. It was becoming clear that the delegates had not been properly checked before inviting them to the Congress. "One day in a corridor, Santiago Carrillo even called me by my real name instead of my alias", a basic security measure for those who came from Spain, Goytisolo recalls. In addition, the celebration of the Congress had been publicly announced in *Mundo Obrero* soon after it had taken place, which would have put the police on its guard if they did not know about it already.¹²⁶ According to Claudín, this oversight took place because of the Communists' perception of the dictatorship's imminent downfall and hence their belief in the need for the party to start emerging from clandestinity.¹²⁷ There were also many pictures taken during the Congress, another basic security measure that was breached.¹²⁸ At one point, the rumour spread that the arrests had actually been provoked by the leadership for propaganda purposes. According to Goytisolo:

The people arrested were not very important for the party but their dispersal gave the idea that the PCE was a very important organisation. I do not believe anyone would recur to such things because it could be extremely dangerous, but in practice the party used the arrests for this purpose.

There is indeed no evidence that the leadership itself would have provoked the arrests. Moreover, just as Goytisolo points out, it seems very unlikely that they would have embarked on such a dangerous scheme. The results of the repression affected the whole organisation and not just a few delegates from the Congress. Nevertheless, it is true that on a practical level, the leaders in exile appreciated in

¹²⁶ "Se ha reunido el VI Congreso del PCE", *Mundo Obrero*, February 1960.

¹²⁷ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 145.

¹²⁸ Morán, *Miseria*, p. 339.

positive terms the propaganda effect that the repression was having for the party. At the same time, there was resistance to accepting the party's responsibility in the onset of the arrests. Even though a commission had been appointed to investigate the reasons behind the raid, Santiago Carrillo was making it clear before obtaining results that the operation had been organised by the police before the Congress and without it having any knowledge about it. The repression against the delegates was explained by the fact that some of those first arrested had "talked" during the interrogations. The party was particularly keen to point its finger at Luis Goytisolo. In a letter to Dolores Ibárruri, Carrillo maintains that the picture of Goytisolo's passport was given to the police by his girlfriend who had been interrogated before him as a result of her relationship with another detainee. The General Secretary then went on to accuse the writer of "talking" more than he should have without even being maltreated, and provoking the downfall of the Congress' delegates.¹²⁹ Taking into account the mistakes made by the party regarding the security of the event, it seems that the accusations against Goytisolo were invented to cover the leadership's back on the matter and discredit his criticisms at the same time. The PCE was reluctant to defend the writer in the amnesty campaign for those arrested carried out during the months that followed.¹³⁰ Indeed, it was up to his brother, Juan Goytisolo, to get a protest in his favour moving. According to Luis:

The party did not do anything. Juan did it quite well and gathered a lot of signatures in Mexico and France. It is fair to say also that the party did not have the capability to mobilize so many people, while through the left wing intelligentsia in Paris, it was much easier for Juan to reach everywhere.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Letter from Santiago Carrillo to Dolores Ibárruri, 23 March 1960, AHPCE.

¹³⁰ "Saludo a los presos y llamamiento por la amnistía", *Mundo Obrero*, 15 February 1960; "La protesta internacional contra la represión", *Mundo Obrero*, 15 March 1960; Letter from Santiago Carrillo to Dolores Ibárruri, 8 June 1960, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Dolores Ibárruri, Correspondencia, Caja 16, Carp. 4).

For a letter denouncing his brother's arrest, Juan managed to obtain the signatures of many prominent European intellectuals, such as Picasso, Jean-Paul Sartre and Carlo Levi. The stir he was causing was soon acknowledged and criticised by the Francoist press. At one point, the authorities visited his father and promised to liberate Luis if the protest initiated by Juan would stop. This only made Juan more eager to continue with it.¹³² In the meantime, Luis had been sent to Carabanchel where he was kept in solitary confinement for five weeks.¹³³ Finally, thanks to his brother and the help of his cousin, Juan Berchmans Vallet, a notary who intervened with the authorities for his liberation, Goytisolo was let out on probation on 18 May 1960.¹³⁴

As we have seen, the party's mistakes during the VI Congress had led to hundreds of arrests that had destroyed the underground organisation in Spain. The leadership not only refused to take any responsibility for this but, after the initial shock, also denied something as obvious as the extent of the blow inflicted on the PCE: "The trust in the party has not been weakened: we have verified this with the intellectuals in Madrid and Barcelona that were not arrested. ... The organisation is still standing", Carrillo wrote in the middle of the raid. This statement shows the extent to which the leaders in exile were removed from the real situation in Spain. Though the underground organisation would eventually recover, the gap between the leaders in exile and the activists in Spain that had opened during the fiasco of the HNP was now becoming

¹³¹ Interview with Luis Goytisolo, September 2000.

¹³² On the campaign organised by Juan Goytisolo for the liberation of his brother see Dalmau, *Los Goytisolo*, pp. 357-361; Letter signed by intellectuals to the editor-in-chief of the journal *El Pueblo*, 2 April 1960, AHPCE (INTELECTUALES – PROFESIONALES – ARTISTAS, Manifestos, Caja 126 carp. 1.1).

¹³³ It was during this time in prison that Goytisolo worked out the idea for his most important book, *Antagonia*. For more information see Dalmau, *Los Goytisolo*, p. 361.

insuperable. Aware of this danger and in an attempt to disguise it, Carrillo wrote that April in *Nuestra Bandera*: “The political and ideological unity, the fusion between the interior and the immigration, between the veterans and the young generations of our party is a reality that the VI Congress has brilliantly shown.”¹³⁵

3. A widening gap

While the PCE’s underground organisation was facing repression, the leadership in exile was still promoting the idea of a coalition of the opposition forces in Spain to call for a general strike. In addition, the party was very critical of the stabilization plan implanted by the regime in 1959 to bring Spain from an autarchic economy to a market economy.¹³⁶ The perception of the regime collapsing in the near future was widely defended by the leaders, as well as the prominent role the Communists would play in the subsequent transition. In an interview to the French journal *France Nouvelle*, Carrillo warned that the longer these forces took to join the Communists, “the stronger our voice will be, the more weight our word will carry”.¹³⁷ In a letter to Ibárruri, he argued that this was also the view of the rest of the opposition forces, including those that did not hold the Communists in great regard. Nevertheless, this was nothing more than wishful thinking as in the same letter he himself recognized

¹³⁴ All these information can be found in Dalmau, *Los Goytisolo*, pp. 355-365.

¹³⁵ “Cuarenta años de lucha por la democracia y el socialismo”, *Nuestra Bandera*, n. 26, April 1960.

¹³⁶ Interview of Santiago Carrillo with *France Nouvelle*, 11 March 1960, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Santiago Carrillo, artículos, Caja 3. carp. 1.1.5); Letters from Santiago Carrillo to Dolores Ibárruri, March-June 1960, AHPCE; Declaration of the PCE, 1 July 1960, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 40); “El fortalecimiento del partido y la lucha contra la represión policiaca”, *Nuestra Bandera*, n. 27, July 1960. The stabilization plan had been adopted by the regime on 6 March 1959. It meant the freezing of wages, a devaluation of the peseta, a reduction of public spending and the opening of Spain to foreign investment. Though at first Spain went through a period of massive unemployment and high inflation, after 1962 the economy would recover and slowly change the country’s social structure. For more information see Maravall, *Dictatorship*, pp. 24-26.

¹³⁷ Interview of Santiago Carrillo with *France Nouvelle*, 11 March 1960, AHPCE.

the difficulties the party was facing in finding allies.¹³⁸ The Communists' reputation, especially among the Socialists and their sympathisers, made them come across as untrustworthy. This negative image was emphasized by the arrests that had followed the HNP and the party's VI Congress, which made them appear careless as well. It is ironic that around this time Carrillo was telling Ibárruri about the shame felt by those political groups that had not supported the PCE on 18 June 1959, and how they would now gladly support the next general strike under the leadership the Communists. "It is very true that the so-called 'failure' has provoked very important changes, that could be decisive for all future developments".¹³⁹ Carrillo was not giving up his ambitions to organise a round table that would include all the opposition forces in Spain though this idea was eventually replaced by that of a meeting of "those who supported us on the 18 June", which ended up not taking place anyway.¹⁴⁰ The activity of the party during these months was hence limited to words: on the one hand, the repression had played havoc with the underground organisation; on the other, the party continued to apply a policy that had already proved ineffective.

Indeed, by May 1960, a new critical voice coming from the underground organisation reached Paris. On this occasion, the complaint originated from one of the most important party activists at the University of Madrid, Javier Pradera, an old time favourite of Jorge Semprún. Pradera, who had been the person in charge of the

¹³⁸ In its publications, the PCE would nevertheless continue to call the opposition to attend a round table, letter from Santiago Carrillo to Dolores Ibárruri, 23 March 1960, AHPCE; Declaration of the PCE, 1 July 1960, AHPCE.

¹³⁹ Letter from Santiago Carrillo to Dolores Ibárruri, 23 March 1960, AHPCE.

¹⁴⁰ Letter from Santiago Carrillo to Dolores Ibárruri, 23 March/7 May 1960, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Dolores Ibárruri, Correspondencia, Caja 16, Carp. 4); Interview of Santiago Carrillo with *France Nouvelle*, 11 March 1960, AHPCE.

party's relations with other forces between his stays in prison, was asked by the leadership after the VI Congress to write a report on the situation in Spain. He took the opportunity to criticise the optimistic portrayal of the HNP the leadership had forced upon the rank-and-file. According to Pradera, "I did not believe what they had told me about the strike being a success in the rest of Spain."¹⁴¹ He argued that the underground activists would not have been discouraged by failure alone. In fact, they rejected not so much the development of the strike but the party's "previous previsions and the later interpretation." He challenged Carrillo's view that the strike had been a success as a propaganda tool and maintained that such a purpose was not good enough to justify its organisation. It was clear to him that the party had rushed into the HNP without the conditions existing to carry it out successfully. "As for the relationship with our allies, the immediate effect has been that the moderate right wing now underestimates the value of mass actions and reject any contact with us."

Pradera concluded:

It is important to accept that last June we overrated our chances of success, that there is a lot left to do, and that an excessive optimism could break the morale of those who do not see the resistance and difficulties faced in the struggle of the masses.

Moreover, Pradera not only criticised the party's perception of the situation in Spain but also questioned its belief in a future alliance between the working class and the non-monopolistic bourgeoisie to lead to the overthrow of the regime, for there were too many contradictions between the two.¹⁴² This was the more so since Spain was going through important economic changes. Pradera argued that the possible

¹⁴¹ Interview with Javier Pradera, September 2000.

¹⁴² Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 146.

entry of Spain in the Common Market could have many implications for the party's strategy, which had therefore to be reconsidered.¹⁴³

As we have seen, such bold criticisms were extremely uncommon in the PCE and were obviously not welcomed by the leaders in exile. It is easy to imagine the bewilderment they must have felt in Paris when they read Pradera's letter. Semprún was the one responsible for putting the young intellectual in his place. According to Claudín, Carrillo entrusted to Semprún such an "ungrateful task" because he had realised that Pradera was defending similar views to the ones recently defended by Claudín:

In this manner, he was not just obliging him (Semprún) to use his prestige among Communists intellectuals in Madrid in order to cut the *Praderista* "revisionist" outbreak, but also to leave written proof of the differences in position from the one I had maintained a few months earlier.¹⁴⁴

Hence, in June 1960, Semprún replied to Pradera with a remarkably harsh and derogatory letter. He started by describing Pradera's letter as "anti-dialectical" and his arguments as abstract "not to say frankly metaphysical". He then argued that this was partially the result of Pradera's isolation in relation to real problems, further aggravated by his stay in prison, and was also due to his theoretical education, that Semprún described as being "excessively bookish". At one point, when talking about Pradera's references to the contradictions between the working class and the non-monopolistic bourgeoisie, Semprún replied: "your analysis of the contradictions is simplistic, dogmatic, and overall, anti-dialectical, I have been startled by it. ... All

¹⁴³ Letter from Javier Pradera to the party leadership in Paris, May 1960, AHPCE (FUERZAS DE LA CULTURA, Microfilm 106)

¹⁴⁴ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 146.

your comments are infested with contradictions.”¹⁴⁵ He then accused Pradera of lacking faith in the force of the masses.

However, things did not stop with this letter. Pradera would write back to Semprún and reply to the storm of accusations he had naively unleashed. His letter is very long and detailed and shows his distress and disappointment at Semprún’s reaction, “In my opinion, you have not chosen a good path to be convincing”, he tells him. “I thought that one thing was dialogue with a friend and another polemics with the enemy; one thing controversy and the other impertinence.”¹⁴⁶ The last paragraph of the letter reads:

I don’t like this tone for discussing with friends. Since you are twice a friend, a “friend” and a personal friend (to whom I owe a lot in all fields), it upsets me even more. As in the fights between children, I say to you “I did not start it”. If “I have continued” it is because when things are not taken out into the open, they end up rotting and rotting you.

Though it would take two years for Pradera to go to Paris and talk to the leadership about the problems that had risen over his report, the effects of the disagreement were instantly noticeable. Pradera became an outsider and was removed from the party’s everyday activities. In his view, Carrillo now considered him to be the origin of all evils.¹⁴⁷ As he explains:

I was cut off, isolated, they told me I could not talk to anyone in the party. Semprún said that it was very dangerous to open a discussion; that any discussion would have to take place in Paris with the leaders of the party. He told me I could not have this discussion with the activists in Madrid. FORBIDDEN!¹⁴⁸

Ironically, Pradera’s views that so infuriated Semprún were very similar to the ones later defended by Semprún and Claudín against Carrillo. It seems that in 1960

¹⁴⁵ Letter from Jorge Semprún to Javier Pradera, June 1960, AHPCE (FUERZAS DE LA CULTURA, Microfilm 107).

¹⁴⁶ Letter from Javier Pradera to Jorge Semprún, July 1960, AHPCE (FUERZAS DE LA CULTURA, Microfilm 221-222).

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Javier Pradera, September 2000.

Semprún was not as clear as he later claimed on his vision about the mistakes of the party or was just not ready to confront the General Secretary. Though a break was about to take place, at this point Semprún sided with the leadership in exile and acted in accordance with the party's usual manner of dealing with criticism from below. Semprún and Claudín would take a few years to fully develop their positions and eventually formed a common front against Santiago Carrillo.

In fact, when two years later the meeting between the Executive Committee (former Political Bureau) and Javier Pradera took place in Paris, neither Claudín nor Semprún sided with the dissident. As Claudín recognizes in his biography of Carrillo, when the latter criticised the opinions defended by Pradera, "neither myself nor Semprún expressed any objections".¹⁴⁹ According to Pradera, the meeting was extremely unpleasant, "it did not finish well on an ideological level". However, Carrillo avoided a total confrontation by blaming Pradera's isolation from the party on Ricardo Muñoz Suay, the person in charge of the intellectual organisation in Madrid who had recently left the party.¹⁵⁰ Muñoz Suay had been very important in building up the PCE's influence in the cinematography world, first through the magazine *Objetivo* and then through UNINCI (*Unidad Industrial del Cine Español*). The production company included several members of the party such as Juan Antonio Bardem, Domingo Dominguín and Francisco Rabal. The problems of the party with Muñoz Suay arose in 1961 around the film *Viridiana*, directed by Luis Buñuel and produced by Uninci (against the wishes of Bardem who found it to be too "reactionary").¹⁵¹ *Viridiana* had not been chosen by the Spanish Association of

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Javier Pradera, September 2000.

¹⁴⁹ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 151.

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Javier Pradera, September 2000.

¹⁵¹ Introduction to the film *Viridiana* by Agustín Sánchez Vida at the "Rencontres du Cinéma Espagnol de Nantes", 3 March 1995.

Producers to represent the country at the Cannes Festival for it was considered to lack “enough technical and artistical qualities”. However, those involved in the film had subsequently managed to get an invitation for its entry from the director of the Festival, Fabre Le Bret. *Viridiana* would then go on to win the Palme D’Or. The prize was accepted by the Spanish General Director of Cinematography and Theatre, José María Muñoz Fontán, who would lose his job as a result: only a few days after the film’s success in Cannes, it was declared blasphemous by *L’Osservatore Romano*.¹⁵² Subsequently, under some complicated financial premise, the Francoist regime managed to prohibit the screening of *Viridiana*. The film was still shown elsewhere in Europe but this meant that Uninci had now to face a legal battle in Spain. The situation for the company became extremely delicate.¹⁵³

What happened after this is confusing. On the one hand, Juan Antonio Bardem maintains that just as Uninci was being forced to reorganize and reduce costs, Muñoz Suay decided to sell his shares in the company and threaten to report its commercial relationship with the USSR, China and other Eastern European countries, if he were not immediately paid. Gregorio Morán, who gives a similar version, adds nevertheless that Muñoz Suay did not have much choice as his livelihood was solely based on the income he received from Uninci.¹⁵⁴ At any rate, in order to cover the costs of the latter, the company was forced to borrow money from the PCE. Santiago Carrillo would then write a letter to Muñoz Suay that, according to Bardem, had a conciliatory tone and tried to avoid his break with the party. At the

¹⁵² Juan Antonio Bardem, “Gloria y Martirio”, *El Cultural*, número especial.

¹⁵³ Bardem, *Memorias*, pp. 305-306.

¹⁵⁴ Morán, *Miseria*, p. 348.

same time, he would tell Bardem, “in a different era, this traitor would have turned up in a ditch”. Soon after, Muñoz Suay was expelled from the party.¹⁵⁵

On the other hand, Carlos Semprún Maura, who had become a close friend of Muñoz Suay while working for the PCE in Spain during the mid 1950s, maintains that he was actually expelled from the party because he had become an uncomfortable element inside Uninci.¹⁵⁶ Bardem, particularly, was upset at Muñoz Suay for having insisted on the production of *Viridiana*.¹⁵⁷ According to Semprún Maura, “Bardem thought that Uninci was his production company, that it should produce his films and only his.”¹⁵⁸ Moreover, in Semprún Maura’s account, his brother Jorge Semprún would later tell him that the reason Muñoz Suay had been “separated” from the party was because he had “talked too much” during an interrogation by the police after his return from a holiday in Crimea, and that they were evaluating the consequences of his actions before taking a definite decision. Muñoz Suay would deny this and give the following explanation:

Federico (Jorge Semprún), Bardem (mainly him), Domingo Dominguín and Pradera, for a number of reasons ... and given the Stalinist mentality that they all had, which had also been my own, thought that the cheapest and simplest way to get me out of Uninci was by expelling me from the party.¹⁵⁹

The animosity between Muñoz Suay and Bardem as well as the latter’s opposition to the production of *Viridiana* has been reported in different sources.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ Bardem, *Memorias*, pp. 307-308.

¹⁵⁶ Semprún Maura, *El exilio*, p. 297.

¹⁵⁷ Jorge Berlanga also makes a reference to the problems between Bardem and Muñoz Suay who according to him, “acabaron a hostias”, in *Berlanga. Perversiones de un soñador*, interview by Juan Cobos, J. L. Garci, Antonio Giménez-Rico, Miguel Marías y Eduardo Torres-Dulce in “Rafael Azcona: Estudios Críticos”, Centro Virtual Cervantes.

¹⁵⁸ Semprún Maura, *El exilio*, p. 294. Moreover, he argues that his brother Jorge Semprún would later tell him that the reason Muñoz Suay had been “separated” from the party because he had “talked too much” during an interrogation by the police and that they were evaluating the consequences of his actions.

¹⁵⁹ Semprún Maura, *El exilio*, p. 296.

¹⁶⁰ Bardem, *Memorias*, pp. 307-309; Semprún Maura, *El exilio*, pp. 295-296; Introduction to the film *Viridiana* by Agustín Sánchez Vida at the “Rencontres du Cinéma Espagnol de Nantes”, 3 March

Nevertheless, it is not enough to assess the reasons behind the departure of Muñoz Suay from the PCE. Rather, what we do know is that he would be used by Carrillo as an excuse for the way Pradera had been treated by the party during the previous two years.¹⁶¹ It seems that the General Secretary did not want to give up an activist as influential as Pradera. The loss of Muñoz Suay had already sufficiently weakened the intellectual organisation in Madrid. Nevertheless, it would turn out to be a quick fix: the relationship was doomed and Pradera would soon be involved in a new disagreement between the intellectual organisation in Madrid and the leadership in exile.¹⁶²

E. Conclusion

As we have seen in this chapter, during 1958 and 1959 the exiled leadership imposed its will on the activists in Spain and entered a number of projects that did not take the existing situation into account. Not only did the JRN and HNP fail but they also resulted in the arrests of hundreds of activists and the alienation of the party from other political forces that had not approved of these actions. The PCE's refusal to accept the failure of the strikes would also create distress among the party's intellectuals and students. The irreconcilable distance between the Spain as perceived by the exiled leadership and the Spain the underground activists were living amongst, was about to be exposed. Among others, Javier Pradera criticised the party's policy

1995.

¹⁶¹ Interview with Javier Pradera, September 2000.

¹⁶² In addition, 1962 was also the year that saw the definitive departure of Luis Goytisolo from the PCE. It was at this time that he met the leaders in Paris and informed them about his decision to leave, interview with Luis Goytisolo, September 2000.

and the unrealistic perception about Spain held by the leaders in exile. The VI Congress did nothing to improve the situation. Many activists would blame the arrests that followed on the recklessness of the leadership.

In addition, the failure of the HNP created divisions within the Communist leadership and marked the beginning of the dispute between Santiago Carrillo and Fernando Claudín. This would eventually develop into the crisis of 1964, which, as this thesis argues, will give further evidence that the old Stalinist internal structure of the PCE never disappeared: the destalinisation process was nothing more than a facelift.

VI. STALINISM STRIKES BACK

A. Introduction

As we have seen so far, the successful period that followed the arrival of the Parisians to the high command of the PCE in 1956, had been replaced by a period of failures mainly in the form of general strikes. This created tension within the Communist leadership as well as among its student and intellectual organisations in Spain. Already after the HNP, there had been a clash between Fernando Claudín and Santiago Carrillo. From this point onwards, their relationship would slowly deteriorate. The party's number two thought that the time had come for the party to face the reality of the situation in Spain, and apply its policy accordingly. His views were in a similar tone to the criticisms made by some intellectuals in Spain, such as Javier Pradera and Luis Goytisolo. Carrillo, however, refused to listen.

It was just a matter of time before the tension escalated into a full-scale confrontation, Fernando Claudín, supported by Jorge Semprún, would shortly attempt to change the party's policies inside Spain as well as its internal structure. The varying motivations behind this struggle are almost impossible to establish with total certainty though an attempt will be made in the conclusion of this thesis to give a plausible explanation. At any rate, the two Fs (as Fernando Claudín and Jorge Semprún, whose alias was Federico Sánchez, came to be referred to by the leadership)

would fail, exposing with their downfall the limits of the destalinisation process in the Spanish Communist Party.

B. Spain in the early 1960s

1. The workers

Regardless of the growing unease with the PCE's policy in Spain, the leadership declared during a meeting of the Central Committee in August-September 1961, that the first phase of the policy of National Reconciliation had been achieved and that the PCE was stronger than ever before. "The Spanish Communist Party will not vacillate in assuming the initiative and leadership of a struggle to overthrow Franco and ensure peace. It will not vacillate in leading the new democratic situation we will have in Spain as a result".¹ The General Strike, which now became defined as the General Political Strike, was still the party's main strategy to achieve this goal. On the other hand, just as had happened in the early 1950s, the international situation was about to capture the attention of the leadership. Not only had the conflict between the Soviets and Chinese come out into the open during the Conference of the Communist Parties of the World in 1960, but other matters such as the break down of relations between Cuba and the United States in January 1961, the erection of the Berlin Wall the following summer and the conflicts in the Congo, all marked the opening of a new critical period of the Cold War.² However, it would not take

¹ III Plenum of the Central Committee of the PCE, October 1961 (August), AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 42).

² Under such radicalisation, the Spanish Communists renewed their criticisms against the presence of American military bases in Spain and, according to Gregorio Morán, even considered the organisation of armed groups for an eventual intervention against them. The plan was rejected in 1962, Morán,

long for events in Spain to receive the full attention of the PCE: the end of the Stabilization Plan in 1962 would lead to an explosion of workers' protests that would reach a peak in April-May of that year. The workers movement would then regain its prominence in the eyes of the party. As a result, the weakening of the intellectual and student organisations would no longer be mourned by the leadership.

As was explained in Chapter IV, the workers movement had experienced drastic changes since the early 1950s when the Regime started to move from an autarchic to a market economy. This shift had begun with the opening of relations between the United States and Spain and continued to strengthen after the arrival of the technocrats to the government in 1957. As the Vertical Syndicates and the state control over labour relations no longer responded to the needs created by the economic changes, a new system of collective bargaining and the so-called *Jurados de Empresa* (shop steward committees) were slowly introduced into the country. The austerity of the 1959 Stabilization Plan, which aimed to lessen the effects of the previous economic policy, would bring with it a wage freeze and massive unemployment (palliated to a large degree by the immigration of workers to Northern Europe). However, by 1961 and especially with the end of the Stabilization Plan a year later, the economy started to experience a speedy recovery, which translated into an increase of collective bargaining through the use of legal platforms such as the *Jurados de Empresa* as well as other illegal forms of workers' representation.³ This created the space the workers needed to begin reorganising. As we have seen, infiltration of legal platforms was the tactic supported by the PCE, which in 1961

Miseria, p. 347.

³ Maravall, *Dictatorship*, p. 28.

created its own trade union *Oposición Sindical Obrera* (OSO).⁴ On the other hand, the CNT, the UGT and the *Solidaridad de Trabajadores Vascos*, rejected “infiltration” and would form their own alliance, *Alianza Sindical*, to fight the regime through open boycott.

By the beginning of 1962, the increase in collective bargaining led to a wave of strikes that reached Valencia, Barcelona, Madrid, Cartagena and the Basque Country. Between April and June, the strikes spread to the mining industry in Asturias; metal, chemical, electrical and shipbuilding industries in the Basque Country; the metal industry in Barcelona; and parts of Madrid. This would result in a major change in the Regime’s approach to labour relations. According to Maravall, the large number (425) of industrial conflicts during 1962 meant that they could no longer be declared acts of sedition as defined in the penal code. Economic strikes were subsequently legalized under a complicated mechanism of compulsory mediation and arbitration, which meant that the workers now had a new tool to negotiate with management.⁵ In addition, a movement of workers’ committees (shop-floor committees democratically elected and independent from the official trade unions) appeared around this time. It would eventually develop into the trade union *Comisiones Obreras* (mainly controlled by the Communists), which also combined the use of legal platforms with semi-legal ones to fight the regime.⁶

⁴ This would also be the case of other groups like the left-wing Catholics who would create their own syndical organisations, *Acción Sindical de Trabajadores* and *Unión Sindical Obrera*. The PCE had created in the late 1950s the *Oposición Sindical Obrera*, and it would not be until 1966 that the party would give it up in favour of *Comisiones Obreras*.

⁵ Maravall, *Dictatorship*, pp. 29, 30.

⁶ The first Workers Commission would be the one of the Metal Industry of Madrid in 1964. *Comisiones* had a semi-legal existence: they were carrying out a struggle both from within and from outside of the corporatist organisation.

For the Spanish Communists, the strikes of 1962, to which they had contributed (particularly in Asturias), seemed to confirm the wisdom of the party line: the workers had managed to organise in a common action and an important number of their demands had been subsequently met. Carrillo interpreted these results as a step forward for the use of a general strike to overthrow the Regime, and concluded that 1959 had just been too early for this strategy.⁷ According to Pradera, “the strikes of April and May seemed to prove the party right in the discussion we had had. Subsequently, I started to work with the party again, jumping on the merry-go-round of the strikes.”⁸ However, as time would prove, Carrillo was mistaken about the events’ significance: the workers’ demands were all economic and the strikes had been used as a bargaining tool, not a revolutionary one. The working class of the early 1960s was very different from the working class of the 1930s and 1940s, and it now wanted to benefit from the country’s economic expansion. Hence, industrial conflict was the result of an expanding economy, not a failing one as the party thought. In the long term, the workers movement would make an important contribution to the erosion of the Regime, and the strikes, which eventually became more political, would indeed play a major part in this strategy. Nevertheless, what the party was unable to see was that Spain’s social structure was changing, and in doing so it diminished any desires among the working class to carry out a revolution. Essentially, the goals of the working class were now increasingly similar to those of the working classes of the European democracies.

⁷ Report by Santiago Carrillo, meeting of the Executive Committee of the PCE, April 1962, AHPCE (PLENOS, Carp. 27); Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 488; Claudín, *Documentos*, p. 71; Morán, *Miseria*, p. 352.

⁸ Interview with Javier Pradera, September 2000.

2. The opposition

At the same time as the recovery of a working class movement was giving new hope to the leaders of the PCE, another front was leaving the Communists behind. Since the beginning of 1960, the opposition forces against Franco had been working to achieve some kind of coalition but without taking the Communists into account. One of these projects would be the so-called *Unión de Fuerzas Democráticas* (UFD). This organisation, founded in 1961, included groups such as *Acción Republicana*, *Partido Nacionalista Vasco*, *Izquierda Democrática Cristiana* and the PSOE. Their goal was the re-establishment of a democratic regime in Spain with all guaranteed freedoms. As was specified in the agreement they would sign soon after, this could only be achieved through the union of all democratic forces against the Regime:

The democratic political forces of the country, conscious that only a common action of the different groups could precipitate the downfall of the totalitarian dictatorship that Spain suffers, and to avoid the chaotic situation that a new dictatorship of any sign would carry, agree to make a commitment.

However, the PCE was not to be part of this common action:

Reaffirming the open opposition to all types of dictatorship, the forces signing the present agreement will not accept any kind of coalition with forces of a totalitarian character, whether Communist or Fascist.⁹

Hence, the forces in the UFD were claiming to be doing exactly what the Communists had been urging them to do for many years, but without taking them on board. Carrillo refused to accept the party's exclusion and would privately insist on the Communists' imperative "to reinforce those positions in the alliance that

⁹ Tusell, *Oposición*, p. 379.

favoured an agreement with us.”¹⁰ In public, however, he would adopt a more aggressive attitude towards those who were choosing to ignore them:

Today the popular disenchantment is more profound than in 1959 and the dictatorship weaker. If the forces of the opposition on the left and on the right would come to an agreement, a national strike could be achieved in the near future. That is why the responsibility of those political leaders who reject or postpone such an agreement is so immense.¹¹

According to Múgica, around this time Carrillo would ask him to meet Dionisio Ridruejo and Joaquín Ruíz Jiménez and inform them that if they did not make a pact with the Communists, Soviet submarines could easily access the Spanish coast and provide arms for guerrilla action to take place.¹² There was no reaction to such an absurd threat. Moreover, in less than a year, these political leaders, whose responsibility Carrillo had questioned, carried out a new project that once again did not include the PCE. In June 1962, short after the wave of strikes carried out by the workers, a wide spectrum of political organisations including *Unión Española*, the FLP, the IDC and the PSOE, were invited to attend the IV Congress of the European Movement in Munich.¹³ In the days preceding the Congress, they met to discuss “the eventual integration of Spain in Europe”, which gave them an excuse to discuss the steps necessary for the arrival of a new democratic regime in the country and the characteristics of the latter.¹⁴ There were 38 delegates representing the Spanish forces in exile and 80 from inside the country. Certain tension developed between the two

¹⁰ Letter from Santiago Carrillo to Dolores Ibárruri, 4 July 1961, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Dolores Ibárruri, Correspondencia, Caja 16, Carp. 4).

¹¹ “Organizar la lucha de masas”, *Nuestra Bandera*, n. 31, August 61.

¹² Múgica, *Itinerario*, p. 67.

¹³ Tomás García would go to Munich as a PCE representative and held talks with some of those present but he would not attend the meetings. For more information see Jáuregui and Vega, *Antifranquismo 1939-1962*, pp. 272-273. Carrillo would later emphasize the importance of a Communist presence during Munich and use it to justify the party’s support to the resolutions taken by the rest of the forces. Report by Santiago Carrillo, meeting of the Executive Committee of the PCE, April 1962, AHPCE.

¹⁴ Tusell, *Oposición*, p. 392.

factions but they would eventually manage to draw up a basic agreement that called for a representative elected government, respect for basic human rights, recognition of national minorities and union freedoms.¹⁵ The consequences of the *Contubernio de Munich* (the Munich Conspiracy), as the meeting came to be described by the Franco regime, were varied: on the one hand, it confirmed that the opposition forces inside Spain were becoming more important than those in exile; on the other, the repression carried out by the Spanish authorities against those returning from “the Munich conspiracy” and Franco’s subsequent criticisms against the European Movement, hurt the Regime’s image and weakened even further the chances of Spain joining the European Market.¹⁶ According to Preston, after Munich, “Franco undid much of the patient labour of his technocrats and diplomats, and also provoked ridicule at his own expense”.¹⁷

As for the PCE, the agreement between the opposition forces was seen as an advance for its policy of National Reconciliation. Ignoring the fact that they had purposely been left out from the negotiations, the leadership published a declaration on 13 June 1962 that affirmed the party’s approval of the agreement signed in Munich, which was described as having the potential to become “the fundamental basis for a political agreement between the left and right wing forces of the opposition”.¹⁸ The PCE went on to call for the opposition forces to unite in the preparation of a national strike that would lead to the overthrow of the dictatorship.¹⁹ The Communists’ support for Munich could only be explained by their fear of isolation, which puts into

¹⁵ Preston, *Franco*, p. 702.

¹⁶ The regime had requested on 9 February 1962 joining the European Economic Community. For more information on Franco’s reaction to Munich see Preston, *Franco*, pp. 702-704.

¹⁷ Preston, *Franco*, p. 703.

¹⁸ Declaration of the PCE, 13 June 1962, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 43).

question the authenticity of the leaders' belief in their claims about the strength of the party as well as the working class and the imminent downfall of the regime. Otherwise, it is hard to explain why they would give their support to those who did not want it and to an agreement that favoured Spain's incorporation into the European Market, something to which the Communists had been openly opposed. Fernando Claudín would explain the party's position in the following manner:

Our Party has just given new evidence of its political realism by the position it has taken on the agreements of the forces that met in Munich. Our opposition to the integration of Spain into the Common Market has not been an obstacle for us in proclaiming our agreement with a platform that coincides, essentially, with the minimum programme that for many years we have been defending for the transition period.²⁰

Still the same argument applies: had the party believed in the strength it claimed to have, the leadership would not have felt the need to take such a desperate measure. On the other hand, it is interesting to look at Claudín's praise of the party's political realism in the context of his relationship with Santiago Carrillo at this time. A few months earlier, in March 1962, both leaders had had a clash over the party's agrarian policy: "the land for he who works it" was the new slogan being considered to propagate this policy among the Spanish people. Claudín, supported by Semprún, believed it to be dangerous and unrealistic taking into account Spain's economic development, and argued that it would only serve to alienate an important sector of agrarian capitalism that did not sympathise with the regime. Claudín wrote:

It is now essential to promote the most ample coalition between the social and political forces against the fascist form of domination of the monopolist oligarchy; from the working class and working peasants to the non-monopolistic bourgeois, of which the agrarian bourgeoisie is a part.²¹

¹⁹ "Urgencia de la unidad", *Mundo Obrero*, 1 July 1962; Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 149.

²⁰ "Urgencia en la unidad", *Mundo Obrero*, 1 July 1962.

²¹ "Mi opinión sobre el texto definitivo de la resolución interna acerca de la consigna 'la tierra para quien la trabaja'", letter from Claudín to the members of the Executive Committee, 26 March 1962,

Carrillo, on the other hand, believed the slogan to be the best way to mobilize the masses. Furthermore, he said, the struggle of the party was not just against the regime but also against its social structure. The question then turned to the implications this had in the party's claim for a peaceful solution to the Spanish problem. The struggle against the regime's social structure could hardly be peaceful, Claudín and Semprún argued, and would make impossible the policy of alliances with other forces sought by the PCE. In a way, their awareness of the changes taking place in Spain meant that they were losing their ability to share Santiago Carrillo's voluntarism. Semprún describes the moment he realised things were no longer the same as follows:

I had arrived in Spain in 1953: it was a gloomy, grey, humiliated and sad country. I remember perfectly well the day I realised Spain had changed and that our policies were directed towards a country that no longer existed. It was at the beginning of the 1960s, a Sunday afternoon at the *Plaza de España*. I was killing time while I waited for a comrade. The people of Madrid that had spent the day at the *Casa de Campo* were returning home and I suddenly realised that those young men and women that were coming back had nothing to do with that miserable Spain we were directing our propaganda towards. The self-confidence of the young women, the way they all talked, their scooters, the colours of their clothes. What is happening here? I wondered.²²

In a similar fashion, Goytisolo explains:

Claudín and Semprún were both in closer contact to Spanish reality and they realised what was causing the failures of the party: the economic expansion. Suddenly, the people were no longer thinking about taking or not taking a tram but rather about buying a *Seiscientos*. That made the policy of the PCE unworkable and that is what the two Fs (Claudín and Semprún) began to notice.²³

At any rate, the dispute was won by Carrillo but only after it was voted on, something that had never been done before in the Executive Committee. This difference of opinion within the PCE leadership hinted at a wider ideological

AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS, Claudín-Semprún, Caja 110).

²² Josep Ramoneda, "Entrevista a Jorge Semprún", *El País*, 19 November 2000.

²³ Interview with Luis Goytisolo, September 2000.

divergence that would explode in the following months, the details of which will be looked at below. Indeed, Carrillo would describe the problems over the agrarian question as the turning point in his relationship with Claudín: “It was at this point that I could feel I had lost him: he had broken away from me, even our personal relationship started to cool”.²⁴

Hence, it can then be concluded that in the article about the party’s support for Munich, Claudín was praising the PCE for taking the realistic and pragmatic position he had been demanding in the previous months. Though for different reasons, supporting Munich was a decision that had been accepted by everyone: those who believed the party had to adapt their strategy to the changes taking place in Spain and those whose voluntarism let them overcome any contradiction involved in their policies.

3. The students

As we have seen so far, 1962 was a turning point for the situation in Spain: the foundations of the type of transition that would take place in the following decade were being created. On the one hand, the economic expansion that began after the end of the Stabilization Plan forced the regime to open up its policy towards labour relations. The working class, whose structure had been evolving since the economic changes of the early 1950s, now had different goals than those of the previous decades. The use of both legal and illegal platforms by the workers to achieve their demands would be a major factor in the erosion of the regime, especially after the emergence of *Comisiones Obreras*. On the other hand, the economic expansion also

²⁴ Interview with Santiago Carrillo, January 2001.

changed the political coalition within the regime itself, as the ruling elite's interests ceased to be linked to the regime's. Those conservative forces that had been to Munich, the so-called moderate opposition, were aware that for the continuation of Spain's economic evolution, a gradual political opening would have to follow. After Munich, a cabinet reshuffle took place. On 10 July 1962, Manuel Fraga was appointed Minister of Information; among other things, he would carry out a partial liberalisation of the press. However, the supposed political opening of the regime during this period would never come close to sufficient, which in turn made the need for Spain's political transformation all the more evident for those conservative forces. In addition, Munich also helped to convince the left opposition about the eventual participation of these forces in any future transition. According to Paul Preston, "during the 1960s, as the opposition came gradually to terms with the implication of economic development, they also began to realise that significant change without the collaboration of the Christian Democrats would be difficult."²⁵

These changes in the social structure of the country were ignored by Carrillo and his followers, who as we have already seen, interpreted recent events as a step forward in the direction marked out by the PCE's policy. However, where the Communists found evidence of the coming downfall of the regime, the door permitting a political transformation from within was actually beginning to open. The PCE would still remain very influential in the workers' movement all the way to the transition (through *Comisiones*) and in the student movement during the 1960s. Nevertheless, while their policy of infiltration in both of these movements was successful in eroding the regime, it also contributed to the success of the type of

²⁵ Preston, "The Anti-Francoist Opposition..." in Preston, *Spain in crisis* (Sussex: The Harvester Press Limited, 1976), p. 145.

transition that the Communists did not seek: that reached by reform from within, the so-called *ruptura pactada*, instead of a clean break.

As for the student movement, we will now briefly look at where it found itself during this period, which will complete our general picture of the situation in Spain during the early 1960s. The arrests that had followed the JRN, the HNP and the party's VI Congress, had imposed a period of inactivity on the student movement, from which it only began to emerge in 1961. The small secret organisations of the mid 1950s began to be replaced at this point by a movement that could reach a wider spectrum of students through the use of the existing legal platforms of elective representation in the University, the so-called Chambers of Delegates.²⁶ The struggle against the SEU continued to be a priority for the students but now they also began to resist the increasing control of Opus Dei over education. One of their most important achievements would be the creation in the autumn of 1961 of a democratic student union, the *Federación Universitaria Democrática Española* (FUDE), founded among others by a member of the 1956 generation, Fernando Sánchez Dragó.²⁷ Just like the UDE and the *Comités de Coordinación Universitaria* had tried to do, the FUDE was meant to be an alternative to the SEU. Its founding manifesto claimed that the organisation did not have a political affiliation: "The FUDE ... is not a pact between political groups and it does not accept the orders of any political party".²⁸ However, it

²⁶ Maravall, *Dictatorship*, pp. 105-111. The Chambers of Delegates had been set in 1958.

²⁷ Interview with Fernando Sánchez Dragó, September 2000. Sánchez Dragó actually claims that he founded the FUDE by himself and that it was only later that the PCE took over, Sánchez Dragó, *Una vida*, pp. 76-77. The FUDE published its first manifesto in January 1962, "FUDE: Federación Universitaria Democrática Española", January 1962, AHPCE (FUDE, Caja 124, Carp. 56). At the beginning of 1963, the Christian-Democrat students would form their own organisation, the UED (*Unión de Estudiantes Democráticos*) as an alternative to both the FUDE and the SEU. For more information see Carr and Fusi, *Spain*, p. 147, and Lizcano, 56, pp. 269-270.

²⁸ Statutes of the FUDE, March 1962, AHPCE (COMITÉ DE COORDINACION UNIVERSITARIA DE MADRID Y BARCELONA, Caja 124, Carp. 27).

was formed mainly by members of the PCE, the FLP and the ASU (which by now was under the control of the Communists).²⁹ As with *Comisiones*, the FUDE advocated from early on the use of legal and illegal platforms to fight the SEU.³⁰ Indeed, together with the Chambers of Delegates, the FUDE would play an active role in organising student demonstrations in solidarity with the workers during the strikes of 1962. By December 1963, and regardless of the repression its members often faced, the FUDE had expanded to Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao, Granada, Oviedo, Sevilla, Valencia, Valladolid and Zaragoza.³¹ It would play a major role in the erosion of the SEU, which was finally dissolved in 1965 after a period of great protests.³² From then onwards, the student opposition against the Regime would continue to grow. A new illegal trade union, the *Sindicato Democrático de Estudiantes* (SDE) would come into full operation during the academic year 1967-68. It was also controlled by the Communists but would soon face serious problems with the FUDE, which had been taken over by more radical elements in the university. Throughout the 1960s, the PCE would manage to maintain its influence on the student movement, but by the early 1970s, the Communists would come to be seen as too “reformist” and their space taken over by much more radical movements.³³

²⁹ As Lizcano points out on his book on the generation of 1956, the ASU “was a fiction maintained by the PC to add to the confusion and have one more vote,” Lizcano, 56, p. 263.

³⁰ “Manifiesto fundacional de la FUDE”, March 1962, AHPCE (COMITÉ DE COORDINACION UNIVERSITARIA DE MADRID Y BARCELONA, Caja 124, Carp. 27).

³¹ Maravall, *Dictatorship*, p. 108. For information on the arrest made during 1962 see “La repression en el presente año”, 1962, AHPCE (COMITÉ DE COORDINACION UNIVERSITARIA DE MADRID Y BARCELONA, Caja 124, Carp. 27).

³² For more information see Maravall, *Dictatorship*, p. 108

³³ Carr and Fusi, *Spain*, p. 149; Maravall, *Dictatorship*, p. 114.

C. *Prelude to a rupture*

1. Julián Grimau

In the summer of 1962, several party leaders in the Basque Country were arrested, among others Ramón Ormazabal, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Euzkadi, and Enrique Múgica. It would be during this imprisonment that Múgica would finally leave the party. As mentioned earlier, his meeting with the Socialist leader Antonio Amat while in prison during 1958/59 had had a great influence on Múgica. Subsequently, the failure of the JRN and the HNP had weakened his faith in the PCE. By 1963, once again in prison, Múgica informed his comrades that he wanted to leave the party. His girlfriend would then tell Amat of his decision to join the PSOE.³⁴ According to Múgica:

The break with the PCE was very bad, as happens in the PCE to all of those who leave the Party with a capital P. First, they tell you that you're going to a sister party and therefore it is important to keep a good relationship with each other. And then they start to play dirty tricks on you.³⁵

The loss of Múgica was significant but was nothing compared to the shock felt by Communists with the subsequent fall of another party leader, Julián Grimau, who would be executed by the Franco regime in April 1963. He had been working in Spain since 1957 and had acted as Simón Sánchez Montero's replacement in Madrid after his arrest in 1959. Grimau was a committed and hard-working activist; he had joined the PCE in October 1936 and had moved to Cuba after the Civil War. In 1947, he went to Paris where he would work under Carrillo's orders until his departure to

³⁴ Múgica, *Itinerario*, pp. 76-78.

³⁵ Interview with Enrique Múgica, September 2000. For more information on the period that followed his departure from the PCE see Múgica, *Intinerario*, pp. 77-78.

Spain ten years later.³⁶ Semprún would later describe the party's decision to send him into the country as reckless: Grimau had belonged to the Criminal Brigade of the police in Madrid during the Civil War and this alone should have prevented the leadership from sending him back inside. There was little doubt that the Francoist authorities would be particularly brutal to him were he to be arrested.³⁷ For this decision, Semprún blames Carrillo:

A general secretary that sent to work inside Spain an activist who has the background of Julián Grimau, without discussing this decision at least in the Executive Committee, without giving the members of the Executive all the information needed to make a proper judgement, that leader is irresponsible. Or better, he is responsible for what might happen later.³⁸

Claudín writes in his biography of Carrillo that neither of them knew that Grimau had belonged to the Republican police during the Civil War. Nevertheless, as Morán brings to light, the leadership had to have known since Grimau had submitted to the Political Bureau an autobiography that specified this fact at least three years before he was sent into the country.³⁹ It is possible that Claudín might never had read it or been told about it. At any rate, as he himself points out, "Grimau was already 'burnt', as we used to say, and our delay in taking him out of Madrid was fatal."⁴⁰ In fact, Semprún had brought the matter to the attention of the leadership during a meeting of the Executive Committee in the summer of 1962. He described Grimau as imprudent and impulsive and warned about his tendency to spend too many hours in the street from one appointment to another, often making direct contact with irregular

³⁶ Morán, *Miseria*, p. 360.

³⁷ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, pp. 210-211.

³⁸ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 212.

³⁹ All Central Committee's members were required to write their autobiography (most of which can actually be found in the archives of the PCE), Morán, *Miseria*, pp. 359-360. In fact, Grimau's autobiography is included in the documents of the PCE's V Congress where an explicit reference to his role during the Civil War is made, AHPCE (V Congress, Carp. 35). Moreover, in his memoirs, Domingo Malagón, the activist in charge of the falsifying team of the PCE, also confirms that Carrillo knew, Asenjo and Ramos, *Malagón. Autobiografía de un falsificador*, p. 243.

Communist groups that would suddenly come together and whose trustworthiness could not be guaranteed. Indeed, Grimau was turned in by an informer in one of these groups. In the view of Semprún:

Maybe one could say that this defect of Grimau was the reverse of his abnegation to his work, of his fighting spirit. No doubt. But it was mainly the direct consequence of the leadership's erroneous conception of the timing and rhythms of the struggle, of the weakness of the dictatorship, always on the verge of collapse according to the PCE. It was mainly the consequence of our smugness, our arrogance, our subjectivism. Grimau was another victim of the subjectivism of the PCE.⁴¹

Semprún would then argue that unless his working methods were immediately corrected, Grimau would have to be removed from his post in Madrid. A letter was sent to him and Romero Marín in Spain but apparently they rejected all the criticisms made against them. Carrillo, who had not been present at the meeting, would later agree with Semprún that indeed something had to be done anyway. However, "weeks passed by, nothing was done and in the early days of November 1962, Julián Grimau was arrested in Madrid," Semprún recalls in regret.⁴²

After his arrest on 7 November, Julián Grimau was brutally tortured. The police would later say that he had jumped out of a window but it seemed clear, taking into account the type of injuries Grimau had, that they were trying to conceal the terrible beating inflicted on him.⁴³ With numerous legal irregularities, his trial took place on 18 April. He was condemned to death. Grimau was executed two days later, despite the PCE's campaign and the great number of petitions from all over the world for his pardon, including a plea by Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini, Archbishop

⁴⁰ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 154.

⁴¹ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 199.

⁴² Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 207.

⁴³ Grimau received a major blow to the head. It is believed that he had been hit with a gun on the head and that the police had then thrown him out of the window to cover up what they had done. Grimau himself could not remember anything that had happened at that time. For information on his arrest see Jáuregui and Vega, *Antifranquismo 1939-1962*, pp. 25-30.

of Milan.⁴⁴ This act exposed the brutality of the regime and discredited both at home and internationally its supposed liberalisation. The failure to save Grimau was also a big blow for the PCE and was felt with impotence by the activists in Spain. Many thought the party did not have the strength it claimed and was carelessly exposing its leaders to repression.⁴⁵ In contrast, Carrillo would later value in positive terms the effects of the political assassination. He wrote to Ibárruri: "Grimau with his heroism has resolved many problems, many of the difficulties the party was facing to achieve the recognition of its role in the national struggle against the dictatorship by other forces and sectors".⁴⁶ Moreover, he also said: "The reaction that took place in relation to this crime, which nobody expected because everyone thought in the last minute Franco would stop it, has a profundity we cannot yet measure."⁴⁷ His optimism contradicts Claudín's view on the matter. He believed the fall of Julián Grimau needed to be assessed in the context of the general situation:

The analysis that the party leadership had been making for many years –extreme fragility of the dictatorship, the proximity of its collapse– were leading us to force premature actions: the *Jornada* of 1958, the strike of 1959, diverse "partial fights"... We were using these actions to prepare for the "great day", but were also making the police strikes against us very easy, resulting in the subsequent exhaustion of the organisation. Obviously, the clandestine struggle against Francoism could not take place without losses, but the tactic of forcing the struggle on the basis of an unrealistic analysis of the existing situation could not but aggravate them.⁴⁸

Behind the PCE's unrealistic analysis of the existing situation lay the main reasons for the coming crisis.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Preston, *Franco*, p. 709.

⁴⁵ Letter from Santiago Carrillo to Dolores Ibárruri, 23 March 1963, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Dolores Ibárruri, Correspondencia, Caja 16, Carp. 4).

⁴⁶ Letter from Santiago Carrillo to Ramón Mendezona, 23 April 1963, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Dolores Ibárruri, Correspondencia, Caja 16, Carp. 4).

⁴⁷ Letter from Santiago Carrillo to Dolores Ibárruri, 29 April 1963, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Dolores Ibárruri, Correspondencia, Caja 16, Carp. 4).

⁴⁸ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 155.

⁴⁹ Soon after the execution of Grimau, Manuel Sacristán would call for a demonstration (without the party's approval) that would lead to his arrest. Morán describes this reaction as the result of

2. The merging of the opposition

As we have seen, since the failure of the JRN and the HNP, the Spanish Communist Party had been suffering from two internal confrontations: one within the leadership and the other one between the leadership and a number of intellectuals and students inside the country. The party's official interpretation of the different events that had taken place in Spain during 1962 only served to deepen these two conflicts, which were about to merge and lead to one of the most dramatic purges ever to take place in the history of the PCE.

At first, as explained in the previous chapter, the problems with the intellectuals developed on an individual basis. Javier Pradera, Ricardo Muñoz Suay, Luis Goytisolo, Fernando Sánchez Dragó and Enrique Múgica were among those who first faced clashes with the leadership in Paris, in some cases ending in their departure from the party altogether. By 1963, these individual confrontations had generalized and were affecting the whole of the intellectual organisation in Madrid. The activists were unhappy with their status in the party: they felt themselves to be nothing more than conduits for the orders coming from Paris. Instead, they wanted to contribute towards the development of the party's strategy for they believed that they had a better understanding of Spanish reality than the leaders in exile.⁵⁰ For instance, according to their view, the PCE leadership had done "insufficient theoretical elaboration" concerning the entrance of Spain in the Common Market and should

Sacristán's frustration with the party's inability to affect the course of events. Sacristán would subsequently ask for the party to return more orthodox positions.

reconsider its position on the matter.⁵¹ They criticised the party's presumption about the imminent collapse of the regime and its insistence on organising major actions instead of accumulating forces for the long term: Spain was now going through a neo-capitalist development and a monarchical outcome had to be taken as a real possibility.⁵²

The situation was worsened by the arrival of José Sandoval to the capital in December 1962. He had been chosen by Carrillo to replace Semprún but had not been welcomed at all by the intellectual organisation.⁵³ Sandoval had spent the previous seventeen years between the Soviet Union and Rumania and had little rapport, if any, with the Spanish intellectuals and students of the 1960s.⁵⁴ Semprún, who had been much more popular among them, had been taken out of Spain by Carrillo for his safety. The young leader would later question the sincerity of this measure: Carrillo's concern for security was expressed only in his case and not in that of other activists who were actually at greater risk, such as Julián Grimau and Romero Marín. In addition, the presence of José Sandoval in Spain was at every level more dangerous than Semprún's since the former had spent half of his life behind the iron curtain and would have an extremely hard time to escape notice (he was actually arrested only a year after he arrived in Madrid).⁵⁵ In effect, there was no more danger now in Semprún's situation than there had been ever before: he was an excellent clandestine leader who had successfully avoided the Francoist authorities for almost ten years. It

⁵⁰ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 153.

⁵¹ Letter from Costa (José Sandoval) to Santiago Carrillo, 24 March 1963, AHPCE (FUERZAS DE LA CULTURA, Microfilms 164).

⁵² Letter from Costa (José Sandoval) to Santiago Carrillo, 24 March 1963, AHPCE; Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 153.

⁵³ Letters from Costa (José Sandoval) to Santiago Carrillo, 24 March and 15 April 1963, AHPCE (FUERZAS DE LA CULTURA, Microfilms 164).

⁵⁴ Letter from Costa (José Sandoval) to Santiago Carrillo, 24 March 1963, AHPCE; Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 153.

⁵⁵ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 246.

would not be until September 1963, through a mistake made by Sánchez Dragó, that the police would make the connection between Federico Sánchez (Semprún's alias) and Jorge Semprún.⁵⁶ Hence, it seems most likely that Carrillo decided to replace him after he had become aware about the seriousness of the developing differences between himself and Claudín and Semprún.

Hence, when José Sandoval informed Carrillo at the beginning of 1963 about the state of the intellectual organisation in Madrid, the General Secretary was not taken by surprise.⁵⁷ He would tell Ibárruri about these activists: "They refuse to accept Sandoval's help, they want to transform their committee into some kind of *Central Ideological Committee*".⁵⁸ Sandoval, nevertheless, took a conciliatory approach to the problem and suggested that the Committee of Intellectuals in Madrid should be reorganised and Pradera, whom he described as being the soul of the group, elected as its leader. In this manner, Sandoval reasoned, he would be forced to behave properly and the situation could be expected to improve.⁵⁹ Following his advice, a meeting was organized in Paris between the leaders and the dissenting elements from inside Spain.⁶⁰ Pradera did not attend it, however. José Ruibal, a student that had recently been elected as the secretary of the Committee, would be the one to defend the position of those in Madrid. His behaviour during the meeting

⁵⁶ Interview with Fernando Sánchez Dragó, September 2000. According to Sánchez Dragó, in September 1963, he was arrested by the police and while he was being interrogated he made the mistake of answering to a question about Federico Sánchez using the name Jorge Semprún. The police was startled as the link between the two names was finally made. Fortunately for those involved, Semprún was no longer in Spain and the mistake had no further repercussions. On the other hand, Semprún pointed out while interviewed by the author that Carrillo would also reveal his identity in his book *Dialogue on Spain*. When asked by Debray about Semprún, Carrillo replied using his alias Federico Sánchez. According to Semprún, he did this on purpose for "he wanted people to know that the Semprún that was starting to be well-known as a scriptwriter was the Semprún that had been expelled for being a 'revisionist'", interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

⁵⁷ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 153. Juan Gomez, who had been in Madrid at the same time, also confirmed the delicate situation of the intellectual organisation in the capital.

⁵⁸ Letter from Santiago Carrillo to Dolores Ibárruri, 23 March 1963, AHPCE.

⁵⁹ Letter from Costa (José Sandoval) to Santiago Carrillo, 15 April 1963, AHPCE.

⁶⁰ Letter from Costa (José Sandoval) to Santiago Carrillo, 24 March 1963, AHPCE.

would shock the leadership. As Claudín explains, Ruibal “did not have party experience” and was not aware “about the mandatory corollary of devoted respect for the leaders”. He therefore felt no constraints in launching a critique against their “lapsed working methods” which those in Spain blamed for slowing down the party’s numerical growth, political efficiency and ideological creativity. “There is a young generation of activists that detests these methods,” Ruibal told the leadership. He then asked for “material with less indications of admiration and more ideas”. According to Claudín, those present tried to find a conciliatory outcome to Ruibal’s attack. Even an irritated Carrillo made a controlled defence of the party’s policy and methods and was careful “not to provoke an irremediable rupture”. After the discussion, Claudín would try to convince Carrillo about the importance of including Pradera in the new Committee of Intellectuals that would shortly be elected. The General Secretary agreed but when the time came ignored Claudín’s suggestion, hence adding to the tension developing between the two leaders.⁶¹ Several accounts confirm Carrillo’s suspicion and dislike for Pradera at this time.⁶² The General Secretary believed the young intellectual to be carrying out a conspiracy and to be using Ruibal as a cover. Carrillo was only too aware about the similarities between the opinions of the intellectuals and those held by Claudín and Semprún.⁶³ He was on the right track: those similarities would become all the more evident the following

⁶¹ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 154.

⁶² Interview with Pradera, September 2000; Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 154; Morán, *Miseria*, p. 350.

⁶³ Speech by Santiago Carrillo, January-February 1964, AHPCE (REUNION DEL COMITÉ EJECUTIVO DEL PCE). Around this time, Juan Goytisolo would publish an article in *L'Express* which argued against the image of Spain sustained by the PCE (though he did not directly mention the party). Since he was a good friend of both Semprún (who he had met during a holiday in Capri in the summer of 1962) and Claudín, Carrillo suspected that Goytisolo was acting in accordance with them. Text on the decision to suspend Fernando Claudín and Jorge Semprún from the Executive Committee, 2 April 1964, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Comunicados y Declaraciones, Caja 111, Carp. 2); Claudín, *Carrillo*, pp. 154-155; Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 480.

summer, during a seminar on philosophy and aesthetics for party intellectuals and students.

The Seminar of Arras, as the event came to be known, took place in July and August 1963 with more than one hundred activists coming from inside Spain. Among them, two tendencies would clearly develop. On the one hand, there were those who like Pradera defended Spain's incorporation into the European Market and criticised the internal functioning of the party. This group was therefore closer to the positions held by Claudín and Semprún. On the other hand, there were those who, inspired by the recent events in the international Communist movement, wanted to go back to more orthodox positions. This group would become known as the pro-Chinese.⁶⁴ The discussions went on for several weeks and covered a varied number of topics. Francesc Vicens gave a talk criticising the existence of dogmatism in the arts, which displeased the General Secretary.⁶⁵ Carrillo had been suspicious about the seminar from early on, particularly about the discussions on the policy of the party. Already during its preparations, he wrote in a letter to Pasionaria:

Now they are more interested not in the seminar about philosophical or economical questions but the political seminar. This one I am going to supervise personally. For that I need the collaboration of Manolo.⁶⁶ He should spend two months here. The preparation for the subjects needs time; they are subjects for people who will be measuring every word and every comma.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ This group would eventually split from the party and form a Maoist group known as the PCEm-I, which in the following years would also go through its own splits as well as absorb new splits from the PCE. It will not be covered in detail here as it would mainly achieve prominence in the late 1960s. For more information see Fernando Jáuregui and Pedro Vega, *Crónica del antifranquismo, 1963-1970* (Barcelona: Argos Vergara, 1983-1985), pp. 81-83; Hermet, *The Communists*, pp. 66-73; Ruiz Ayucar, *El Partido*, pp. 322-328. According to Jordi Solé Tura, the existence of a pro-Chinese faction inside the party contributed to the tension provoked by Claudín's positions and to the radicalisation of the confrontation that followed as a result, Jordi Solé Tura, "La oposición comunista..." in Fontana, Joseph (Ed.), *España bajo el franquismo* (Barcelona: Biblioteca de Bolsillo, 2000), p. 133.

⁶⁵ Jáuregui and Vega, *Crónica 1963-1970*, p. 80. Francesc Vicens used the alias Ferrán.

⁶⁶ Manuel Azcarate, who at the time was in Moscow writing with Pasionaria the official history of the PCE.

⁶⁷ Letter from Santiago Carrillo to Dolores Ibárruri, 10 June 1963, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Dolores Ibárruri, Correspondencia, Caja 16, Carp. 4).

Indeed, Carrillo would give a speech in one of the last sessions of the seminar whose purpose was to put the intellectual organisation back in its place. He was particularly critical of Vicens' lecture and indirectly accused him of being a revisionist. Semprún received similar treatment from Carrillo who was also happy to remind the intellectuals and students about their limited knowledge due to their restricted access to Marxist texts. Dogmatism, he argued, could be confused with revisionism and Semprún and Vicens were manipulating the activists by not making a proper distinction between the two. Their approach did not take into account the specific conditions of the ideological struggle in Spain and its specific problems, the General Secretary continued.⁶⁸ He then asked those present to focus on the fight against "the reactionary, fascist and bourgeois tendencies in the university and cultural centres of the country" before focusing on the destruction of dogmatism. His attacks felt ever more offensive to those involved because Carrillo had only attended the last part of Semprún and Vicens' lectures and had also been absent from the majority of the other discussions. The irritation increased when as soon as he finished his speech, he left the Seminar without waiting for its closure. Vicens would then express his dissatisfaction with Carrillo's comments and according to Claudín, "he addressed the fact that in a seminar such as the one we were holding, the didactic should not prevail".⁶⁹ To the surprise of those watching, Claudín responded to the absent General Secretary with a speech that brought their differences into the open. He would justify this action in the following manner:

I thought Carrillo's appreciation of the general orientation and focus of the seminars of philosophy and aesthetics was mistaken, and since he had expressed them openly

⁶⁸ Speech by Santiago Carrillo, Arras Seminar, August 1963, AHPCE (FUERZAS DE LA CULTURA, Microfilms); Speech by Fernando Claudín, January-February 1964, AHPCE.

⁶⁹ Speech by Fernando Claudín, January-February 1964, AHPCE.

before all those present, I thought I had the right to do the same thing, to express my opinion openly.⁷⁰

Claudín defended the critiques made during the seminar against what he described as “the dogmatic sclerosis that has crystallized for a long period in Marxist philosophy”. His generation might have had easy access to Marxist texts but these were interpreted in the same way as religious people take the Bible. Hence, he argued, the young activists’ attitude was better because it was more critical. In reference to how the Spanish leadership had been able to accept, and carry out, the cult of personality, he said: “We had been educated under a spirit of unconditional acceptance of the revealed truths and that is why it was very difficult to react to what was happening in our field, the field of Marxism”. One could say that with this speech, Claudín was preparing the ground for the battle that was about to emerge between himself and Semprún and the rest of the Executive Committee, especially when he added:

Someone has asked in one of our sessions: What is the guarantee that the cult phenomenon will not repeat itself? ... One of the guarantees, I believe, is that each Communist says what he/she thinks, expresses clearly his/her opinions, even if these do not coincide with the opinions of the highest authorities of our movement.⁷¹

As we shall see, Claudín would later be attacked by other members of the Executive Committee for the comments made during his speech in Arras.⁷² The seminar, which had attempted at reunifying positions, had in fact done the opposite. Many of the intellectuals and students present would soon leave the party, among them Javier Pradera, whom Carrillo had now managed to exclude from the new

⁷⁰ Speech by Fernando Claudín, January-February 1964, AHPCE.

⁷¹ Speech by Fernando Claudín, Arras Seminar, August 1963, AHPCE.

⁷² Speech by Manuel Azcarate, January-February 1964, AHPCE.

Committee of Intellectuals in Madrid. The confrontation inside the leadership was by this time unavoidable.

3. Preparing for battle

After the Arras Seminar, Fernando Claudín and Jorge Semprún continued with their struggle against the positions of the majority of the Executive Committee. *Nuestras Ideas* had been closed the previous year, hence taking away an important forum for the two leaders. However, following the complaints from the intellectuals in Madrid about the lack of material produced by the party, the Executive Committee decided to go ahead with the publication of a new theoretical review called *Realidad*. In order to avoid any possible repercussions from the French Government, as had happened with *Nuestras Ideas* in March 1962, *Realidad* was printed in Rome and financed by the Italian Communist Party.⁷³ As a result, Claudín and Semprún took over its first issue which must not have been hard to do since they were in fact moving closer to the positions of the Italians. They each published an article that made clear their new attitude towards the party's leadership: they were no longer prepared to keep quiet. "Without consulting Carrillo", Claudín recalls, "Federico (Semprún) and I published two texts in which a position critical of the Soviets was transparent".⁷⁴

Semprún's article analysed the changes that had taken place in the Communist movement since 1956 in which a critique of the preceding period in the PCE was implied. During the following months, the article would be violently attacked by the members of the Executive Committee. However, Semprún writes, "as

⁷³ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 277; Morán, *Miseria*, pp. 378-379.

I read this text again, what grabs my attention is rather the extreme prudence –not to say timidity- of its formulations”.⁷⁵ It is likely that the PCE leadership was very much irritated by his reference to the new relationship that was being established between the Communist parties of the world: the replacement of a monolithic movement that saw the CPSU as the guiding party by the polycentrism defended by Togliatti.⁷⁶ As he points out, this position would be embraced by the PCE with the arrival of Eurocommunism but at that time, it was the cause of great “scandal”.

Claudín’s article criticised the dogmatic implications of “socialist realism” and made a defence of freedom in artistic creation.⁷⁷ The party’s number two also describes his text as “timid and moderate” but still “inadmissible to the philo-Sovietism that prevailed in the Executive Committee of the PCE”.⁷⁸ Indeed, Carrillo would later say that the publication of the articles had been “an act of indiscipline”.⁷⁹ Claudín and Semprún would never be able to publish a second issue of the magazine, whose editorship was soon assigned to other “more reliable” party members.⁸⁰

In November 1963, the PCE held an Assembly of its Central Committee. It was now Carrillo’s turn to prepare his ground for the coming battle. The analysis of the Communist movement, particularly the confrontation between the Chinese and the Soviets, gave him space to warn, as he had done during the Arras seminar, against any attempted “revision” of the past.⁸¹ At the same time, the appraisal of the situation

⁷⁴ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 161.

⁷⁵ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 277.

⁷⁶ “La revolución pictórica de nuestro tiempo”, *Realidad*, n. 1, September-October 1963.

⁷⁷ “Observaciones a una discusión”, *Realidad*, n. 1, September-October 1963; Semprún, *Autobiografía*, pp. 277-279.

⁷⁸ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 161.

⁷⁹ Speech by Santiago Carrillo, January-February 1964, AHPCE.

⁸⁰ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, p. 202.

⁸¹ Speech by Santiago Carrillo, 1-3 November 1963, AHPCE (Actas del Pleno del comité central del PCE).

in Spain, delivered in a speech by Horacio F. Inguanzo, served to challenge any possible criticism against the strategy of the party. The strikes in Asturias during the previous summer, which had led to numerous arrests and weakened for years to come the workers movement in the area, were described now as the decisive step towards the Political General Strike:

The party was correct when it made the preparation of the General Political Strike the centre of its activities. ... The strike during this summer of the Asturian and Leonese miners is the most efficient contribution to the General Political Strike. It is the liveliest expression of the agreement of the Spanish working class' main vanguard with the party's idea of a general political strike. The Asturian and Leonese miners have shown, practically, that the general political strike is within reach of the workers and could give a mortal blow to the dictatorship.⁸²

As we can see, not much had changed since the early days of the JRN (*Jornada de Reconciliación Nacional*). Carrillo would argue that if the general strike had been impossible then, it was however possible now:

What seemed impossible before, is now real for the great mass of our people... I believe on this matter it is important to point out the following: our JRN -with its less positive and more positive aspects-, our attempts of a strike in 1959, and all of our propaganda campaign in relation to the National Strike and the General Political Strike -and not just all of our propagandistic work but also our actions- have had an enormous importance in the achievement of this political result which I consider to have great value.⁸³

As for Claudín and Semprún, the latter did not attend the meeting and the former did not intervene. "To say what I thought about the situation in Spain would have meant breaking (with the party); to say what I did not believe would have been impossible. I opted for silence."⁸⁴ Not for long, however.

A last attempt to unify positions took place on 8 January 1964 after Santiago Carrillo asked Fernando Claudín to meet for a private discussion about their recent

⁸² Speech by Comrade Inguanzo, 1-3 November 1963, AHPCE.

⁸³ Speech by Santiago Carrillo, 1-3 November 1963, AHPCE.

differences. The meeting has been documented by both participants and while they agree on the general content, they each have a different interpretation of its meaning, just as could be expected.

The ideological differences between the two were soon addressed but the discussion was centred on the internal functioning of the party. The main problem was “one of method”, Claudín would tell Carrillo. He criticised the General Secretary for the manner in which he carried out discussion inside the Executive Committee, relying on his authority to impose his opinion. It was not uncommon for a member of the Executive immediately to change his point of view as soon as he realised it was not in agreement with Carrillo’s. Recalling this part of the conversation, the General Secretary would later say: “I asked Claudín if he thought I was making the discussion between us difficult. ‘No, you do not make it difficult but then everyone agrees with you.’ And so I asked him, but how is that my fault?”⁸⁵ Clearly, Claudín did not mean to imply that the other members of the Executive changed positions because they were convinced by the arguments of the General Secretary, but rather that they would not dare express disagreement with him. Claudín continued to express his dissatisfaction with the internal functioning of the party. He wanted more diversity as there was in the Italian Communist Party, to which Carrillo replied by accusing the Italians of being rightists.

Their relationship was also addressed. Claudín complained about Carrillo’s total disregard for his opinion during the meeting with the intellectuals in May 1963, when he “forgot” to include Pradera in the new Committee of Intellectuals after having agreed with him to do so. A similar thing had happened during the meeting

⁸⁴ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 162.

⁸⁵ Interview with Santiago Carrillo, January 2001.

about the agricultural policy of the party, when Claudín and Semprún were told by Carrillo to be more careful about expressing their opinions. The differences in their opinions, Claudín believed, were the reason behind Carrillo's decision to separate Semprún from his work.⁸⁶ However, while Carrillo expressed some regret on the Pradera affair and claimed that he had probably forgotten about it, he totally rejected the possibility of having an agenda against Semprún. It was Semprún who had been neglecting his work, he said. The General Secretary then said about the man who had successfully led the clandestine organisation of the PCE in Madrid for almost ten years: "Fede (Semprún) is not a man for one specific political or organisational task, for that you need constant work, to be organized."⁸⁷

Next came Carrillo's turn to criticise Claudín: he accused him of having questioned his authority during the Arras seminar.⁸⁸ "After talking to some people, I suspected there was something weird but I could not imagine you could give a speech like that. You presented me as someone opposed to a critical spirit, as a champion of dogmatism opposed to the new generations".⁸⁹ Claudín denied this to ever have been his intention.⁹⁰ The conversation continued along these lines with both combatants maintaining firmly their position whilst continuing to express an apparent desire to find an agreement. At this stage, however, agreement was no longer possible. The discussion seemed to be more about assessing each other's position than an authentic attempt at reconciliation. Still, the meeting ended on an optimistic, if false, tone regarding the future. The stage was set and the actors ready, the curtain about to rise for the final act.

⁸⁶ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 163.

⁸⁷ Santiago Carrillo, *Memoria de la transición* (Barcelona: Editorial Grijalbo, 1983), p. 192.

⁸⁸ Claudín, *Carrillo*, pp. 162-163.

⁸⁹ Carrillo, *Memoria transición*, p. 193.

⁹⁰ Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 163.

D. The purge of Claudín and Semprún

1. The battle

In 29 January 1964, the Executive Committee of the PCE would meet to examine a document on the situation of the country written by Santiago Carrillo to be sent to Dolores Ibárruri and later presented at a conference of the Western Europe Communist parties that had formed a Commission of Solidarity with Spain.⁹¹ Only two weeks had passed since the conversation between Carrillo and Claudín mentioned above.

As expected, everyone, except Claudín and Semprún, accepted the optimistic portrayal of the situation in Spain given by Carrillo. According to Claudín, “we took the positive aspects of the document and tried to take them further than its author”.⁹² For instance, at one point he conceded: “The improvement of the economic situation of the masses is the result of their struggle and the fact that the bourgeoisie has had to make concessions”. Then, he added: “If on the one hand this stimulates the struggle, on the other -as happened in Asturias- it could contribute to containing it.”⁹³ Claudín asked the Executive to take into consideration the rise in salaries after 1962, the effects of tourism and the emigration to other European countries. It was also important not to overlook the possible effects of the *Plan de Desarrollo*, which could

⁹¹ Claudín, *Carrillo*, pp. 163-164; Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 267; Morán, *Miseria*, p. 381. The meetings would take place on the 29 and 30 January and again on 4, 10, 11 and 12 February.

⁹² Claudín, *Carrillo*, p. 164.

⁹³ Speech by Fernando Claudín, January-February 1964, AHPCE.

in effect lead to economic development (even if unfairly distributed) and present the oligarchy with new options. Moreover, Claudín was cautious about the growth of the opposition within the regime for he believed it had a double edge: while its members were critical about the limits of the actual reforms, they were also against the revolutionary forces. Nevertheless, both Claudín and Semprún seemed to be trying to avoid an open confrontation and made several optimistic remarks about the “excellent discussions” that were taking place. Such was also the case with Carrillo.⁹⁴ This would not last for long.

Eduardo García and Enrique Líster would be the ones responsible for throwing the first stone.⁹⁵ In their speeches, they directly addressed the divergences that were building up at the heart of the Executive Committee. It is difficult to know exactly why the General Secretary did not take the initiative himself. He argues that he was still hoping to come to an agreement with them and therefore did not want to spoil the chances of this happening.⁹⁶ Claudín believes that behind closed doors, Carrillo had asked the two middle ranking leaders to carry out the attack themselves.⁹⁷ In this manner, it would not look as if he were imposing his view on anyone, as Claudín had accused him of doing. Morán gives another possible explanation: Carrillo did not want to have the confrontation at this point and was waiting for a better moment, probably later that year. However, he was forced to change his tactics when Eduardo García, who had worked in very close contact with

⁹⁴ Speeches by Fernando Claudín, Jorge Semprún and Santiago Carrillo, January-February 1964, AHPCE.

⁹⁵ Speeches by Eduardo García and Enrique Líster, January-February 1964, AHPCE.

⁹⁶ Carrillo, *Memorias*, pp. 480-481.

⁹⁷ Claudín, *Carrillo*, pp. 164-165.

the Soviets and could have been encouraged by them to initiate the rupture, made the first attack against the two Fs.⁹⁸

At any rate, however intentional or unintentional his reasons might have been, the war had finally begun. The developments in the Arras Seminar were strongly criticised. The Executive accused Claudín of starting a rumour about the crisis inside the Executive with his speech in reply to Carrillo, an action that could easily be portrayed as factional activity. Semprún defended their position in the Seminar by demolishing Carrillo's intervention and his criticism against their lectures. He had no right to criticise, Semprún argued, for the General Secretary had heard only the last part of each talk. He also complained about the fact that ever since the meeting with the intellectuals in May 1963, he had been removed from political activity and had not been called to attend any new meetings. Once again, Carrillo refuted this accusation by turning the blame on Semprún:

There is a phenomenon of separation on his part: he could have come to the seminar; he could have come to the second part of the Central Committee meeting and he did not; he could have had contact with me and he is avoiding it. He has abandoned work with the youth. He abandoned *Nuestras Ideas*. What is going on?

He later added:

I think Federico knows much less philosophy than he thinks. The philosophical knowledge of Federico is still something to be seen. And I have to say the day he shows it to us I will jump for joy. ... Federico bombards us with all those words about the "institutional system", many of us get very confused. Maybe you could say, 'how ignorant you are!' But the party is run by 'ignoramus' and there is no chance that the 'philosophers' will run the party. ... Experience shows that Federico is an intelligent man who has political qualities but when it comes to the practical work of the organisation, he is a total calamity.

Other accusations about Semprún's work inside the country followed. Then came Claudín's turn to receive blows from the General Secretary:

⁹⁸ Morán, *Miseria*, pp. 382-383. As stated in the introduction, Fernando Claudín and Jorge Semprún

Fernando has given us a piece of his mind; he has got even about the agrarian discussion, and the discussions of 1956 and 1959, all the grievances he had been accumulating. If this gives Fernando some peace of mind, if it resolves his traumas, we should thank God for having raised the issues in such a way.⁹⁹

The two Fs were also accused of representing the concerns of the oligarchy. In addition, their attitude during the debate about the agricultural policy of the party was questioned. In turn, Semprún and Claudín openly attacked the party's subjectivism and lack of internal debate. Semprún accused some members of the Executive of being nothing more than the puppets of the General Secretary. Though no names had been mentioned, Lister felt particularly offended and irritated.¹⁰⁰ Semprún pointed to the everyday more obvious division between the activists inside Spain and the leaders in exile. Finally, aware about their minority status in the present discussion, both Claudín and Semprún asked for a Congress or a Central Committee meeting to be called where their differences of opinion could be discussed with other members of the party. Their demand was rejected.¹⁰¹ Instead, Lister suggested continuing the discussion about "serious divisions within the leadership" in a new meeting of the Executive Committee that would include all its members, since some such as Dolores Ibárruri were not in attendance.¹⁰² His proposal was approved hence ruining the chances the two Fs might have had of success: inside the Executive, they were significantly outnumbered.

(Federico Sánchez) came to be referred to by the party's leadership as the two Fs.

⁹⁹ Speech by Santiago Carrillo, January-February 1964, AHPCE.

¹⁰⁰ Speech by Enrique Lister, January-February 1964, AHPCE.

¹⁰¹ Speeches by Fernando Claudín and Jorge Semprún, January-February 1964, AHPCE.

¹⁰² Speech by Enrique Lister, January-February 1964, AHPCE.

From 27 March to 2 April 1964, the leadership of the party met close to Prague in what has been described by Jorge Semprún as a Kafkaesque castle.¹⁰³ While the lack of internal democracy was still addressed by the contenders, the discussions were now mainly centred on the interpretation that each side gave about the situation in Spain and the political outcome of the Regime.

After a long and harsh exchange of opinions during which Claudín and Semprún were once again attacked from all corners, the following arguments on each side could be drawn: On the one hand, Carrillo and the majority of the Executive Committee believed that Spain was in a similar social situation to where it had been in the 1930s. The Regime was on the brink of collapse. The time had come for the working class and the bourgeoisie to make an alliance and lead a democratic revolution with an anti-feudal and anti-monopolistic character. This would come about most likely through the organisation of a general strike. Once the revolution had been achieved, there would be a gradual transition to socialism and eventually to communism.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, Claudín and Semprún believed that Spain had achieved such capitalist development that a democratic revolution was no longer possible. Claudín argued that the bourgeoisie would not pact with the working class to overthrow the system because the bourgeoisie was actually benefiting from that system. In contrast, he predicted that monopoly capital would move through a number of reforms towards a new stage of capitalist development, which could be more or less democratic, depending on a number of factors. Claudín said:

We are not heading towards a revolutionary crisis but rather we are living through a political crisis, which will be solved by the struggle of those below and on the initiatives of those above, through a series of phases, partial reforms, both political and economic, through a path more or less gradual and peaceful.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 231.

¹⁰⁴ March 1964, AHPCE (REUNION DEL COMITÉ EJECUTIVO DEL PCE).

¹⁰⁵ Speech by Fernando Claudín, March 1964, AHPCE (REUNION DEL COMITÉ EJECUTIVO DEL

Hence, belief in the imminent collapse of the regime was not a realistic appraisal of the situation. The party had to be looking at a long-term project and change its policies accordingly. This was not something the rest of the Executive Committee could accept, nor could it let others hold such opinions without classifying them as traitors to the cause: defeatists, rightists and at one point, even Francoists. The lack of democratic culture inside the PCE made such differences of opinion impossible. Hence, a counterattack against the two Fs began. Santiago Álvarez would say that Claudín was suffering from “objectivism” while Manuel Delicado accused him of having a total lack of faith in the party and the working class.¹⁰⁶ José Moix, on the other hand, believed that Claudín and Semprún actually suffered from “subjectivism” and were holding rightist positions. He then added: “We should fight against dogmatism but without forgetting about the dangers of revisionism, opportunism and the bourgeois influences that try to distract our Party from its goals.”¹⁰⁷ Dolores Ibárruri, who had not attended the first meeting, seemed to be particularly irritated by Semprún and she interrupted him constantly during the delivery of his speech. At one point, she gave the following explanation about the attitude of the dissidents:

Age, exile, family and the environment in which one lives, all have an impact on the willingness to struggle and the readiness for combat, even more so if one does not have firm convictions. ... Fernando (Claudín) appears before me under a new light. He appears before me as a sceptical, pessimistic man who does not believe in anything, who doubts everything, who doubts the capacity for struggle of the working class, who doubts the theory of Marxism-Leninism, who doubts his own partners in the struggle and the leadership of the party that he is treating in a manner which is uncharacteristic of a comrade. ... His conclusions, more than those of a Marxist-Leninist, are the conclusions of a bourgeois sociologist or a Social Democrat.¹⁰⁸

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¹⁰⁶ Speeches by Santiago Álvarez and Manuel Delicado, March 1964, AHPCE.

¹⁰⁷ Speech by José Moix, March 1964, AHPCE.

¹⁰⁸ Speech by Dolores Ibárruri, March 1964, AHPCE.

Neither Claudín nor Semprún were willing to back off before these attacks. Soon, it became clear that no solution would be reached. The two Fs were asked to rectify their positions, something they categorically refused to do. As Semprún explains:

Everything that could be said had already been said, decided, *atado y bien atado*. It was clear that neither Fernando nor you could convince the rest, nor could the rest convince either Fernando or you. On the other hand, it was also clear that you were not going to capitulate. Everything was clear, therefore. There was no solution, at least not through the channels of Democratic Centralism.¹⁰⁹

In later years, Semprún would describe the problems of the party at the time as follows:

Our objectives in 1963 –the National Strike, the democratic revolution, the liquidation of the power of the financial bourgeoisie and monopolistic industrial capital as the main corollary for the disappearance of Francoism- did not reflect the true economic structure or the dynamic of classes that there was in Spain. At first sight, these goals seemed very radical but since they did not take into account the whole capitalist transformation of the social structure of our country, they became an archaic programme that hid the problems of a strategy towards socialism. So, these conclusions were not the result of an analysis based on reality that could have taken us directly to our goals. In just a few words: we could either modify our strategic objectives in function of a specific analysis of reality, as Claudín and I wanted to do in 1964, or we could keep our illusory goals and close the door to any possibility of analysis.¹¹⁰

The party chose to keep the illusory goals. At the end of the meeting, Claudín and Semprún were suspended from the Executive Committee until a decision was taken by the Central Committee, which would be informed about the divergences through the dispatch of the necessary documentation concerning the disagreements.¹¹¹ By accepting this channel, Claudín and Semprún were losing their

¹⁰⁹ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 30.

¹¹⁰ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, pp. 161-162.

¹¹¹ Text on the decision to suspend Fernando Claudín and Jorge Semprún from the EC, 2 April 1964, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Comunicados y Declaraciones, Caja 111, Carp. 2).

chance to hold a proper discussion before the CC and were entrusting to the Executive their “fate”. Indeed, the documentation sent to the CC’s members was as biased as might be expected when one side in the discussion does not contribute to it. Morán suggests that Claudín and Semprún were by now so tired of argument that they chose this method even if it did not favour them. It could also be, however, that though well-aware about the manner in which the leadership would deal with the “documentation” about the divergences, they thought this was a good opportunity to expose the PCE’s despotic internal structure. What followed closely matched the party’s previous manner of dealing with dissent, and hence, its deeply rooted Stalinist culture.

2. The knock-out

While Claudín and Semprún were waiting for the verdict of the Central Committee, the campaign of the Executive against them began. On 19 April 1964, an Assembly of the Party in Paris was organized to commemorate the anniversary of Grimau’s death. The occasion presented Carrillo with an opportunity to give to the rank-and-file his own version of the recent divergences. He spent a great deal of time defending the policies of the party since his rise to power as well as refuting any possible criticisms of intolerance. “Our party has shown that it rejects any kind of sectarianism, dogmatism. Our Party has not vacillated in criticising the final period of Stalin ...”¹¹² The General Secretary then went on to defend the thesis of the majority of the Executive and compared the thesis of the “others” to those held by the

¹¹² “Discurso ante una Asamblea de militantes del Partido”, 19 April 1964, AHPCE (DIRIGENTES,

Mensheviks against Lenin and the Bolsheviks.¹¹³ The existence of currents of opinion inside the PCE was challenged on the basis that they “would break the party into a thousand pieces.” Carrillo never mentioned Claudín and Semprún by name but it was soon clear to everyone that they were the targets of his attacks: the two Fs were the only members of the Executive not present at the Assembly and rumours about a division within the leadership had already been spreading since the Arras Seminar the previous year. Moreover, according to Semprún, some party cadres had been ordered by Carrillo to pass on the word about who was on the receiving end of his accusations. “Carrillo was launching a public and general offensive against our positions, or better, against a grossly deformed interpretation of our positions, which he described as ‘revisionist’, ‘defeatist’ etc,” as he wrote in later years.¹¹⁴ Among those present was Jordi Solé Tura who felt as he were witnessing one of the trials that took place at the height of the Stalinist era.¹¹⁵ Since he sensed that those on “trial” were none other than Claudín and Semprún, he decided to visit the latter and told him about the Assembly. Semprún confirmed his fears. Solé Tura would then talk to Claudín and immediately identified himself with his positions in the Executive. As we shall see, the young Catalan would be one of the few to support the two Fs.¹¹⁶

Once they became aware about the launch of an attack against them, Claudín and Semprún wrote to Santiago Carrillo a letter of protest to be sent to members of the CC. They denounced the development of events at the Assembly and accused the leadership of violating the agreement taken a month earlier whereby no one could informed about the divergences until a decision had been made. They furthermore

Santiago Carrillo, *Discursos*, Caja 4, Carp. 1.1.1).

¹¹³ “Discurso ante una Asamblea de militantes del Partido”, 19 April 1964, AHPCE.

¹¹⁴ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 190.

¹¹⁵ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, p. 204.

¹¹⁶ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, pp. 204-205.

accused Carrillo of deforming their views. "All this makes us think that it has been decided to precipitate the course of events, to make impossible or at least hamper ... a serious discussion between the party's cadres and activists about the recent problems."¹¹⁷ They received no reply.¹¹⁸ By mid May, Claudín asked the party to provide him with the minutes of the Executive meeting so that he could study them. Though he had not had a chance to look at the documentation that was being sent to the members of the CC, he was now expressing his doubts about its potential accuracy and believed that only the complete minutes of the Executive meeting could give a fair account of the divergences. Once again, we cannot know whether this "bias" on the part of the Executive truly took the two Fs by surprise or whether they had been expecting it all along. It seems strange that, experienced as Claudín and Semprún were in the ways of the party, they had at any point believed that the leadership would actually produce a fair account of events. At any rate, while Claudín's demand to see the minutes was not rejected, he was told that he could not keep the documents at his house as had been the case in the past, and had to work on them somewhere else. Subsequently, Claudín wrote to the Executive:

I have to tell you that this measure worries me It is a symptom of attitudes and procedures that should had been banished from the party. Unfortunately, this action, as well as the campaign initiated in the Assembly of 19 April against a supposed reformist and revisionist current in which you presented a grossly deformed version of mine and Federico's views, seem to indicate that these methods of "bad memory", themselves typical from a Stalinist period, are taking hold in our party again. While the CC has not yet reached a conclusion, the party is already being "prepared" to have an opinion, not about our real opinions, but about a falsification of them.¹¹⁹

Indeed, the members of the CC had already begun to send to the Executive

¹¹⁷ Letter from Fernando Claudín and Jorge Semprún to Santiago Carrillo and the EC, 22 April 1964, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Correspondencia, Caja 111, Carp. 3)

¹¹⁸ Letter from Claudín to the EC and the CC, 3 September 1964, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Correspondencia, Caja 111, Carp. 3).

¹¹⁹ Letter from Fernando Claudín to the EC, 1 June 1964, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-

their replies on the divergences and there seemed to be unanimous support for the majority's position.¹²⁰ The letters are generally tedious and few actually discuss the divergences in any detail. A number of comments made against the accused reveal a hidden scorn against them: "It is a sad role played by an arrogant and pedantic leader who is in reality nothing more than the echo of a frightened writer" one reads about Claudín.¹²¹ Manuel Azcárate, who would in later years become an advocate of Eurocommunism in the PCE, argues in his memoirs that he never read the information sent by the Executive and in this manner avoided giving a response on the matter, for he feared he might have been closer in several aspects to the positions of the two Fs.¹²² This is not true, however: Azcárate sent his response to the leadership on 7 July 1964 where he explained in detail why he supported the resolution taken by the majority of the Executive.¹²³ Around this time, the Executive would also publish a Declaration on the situation in Spain that defended the positions of Carrillo and his followers and defied those held by the two Fs.¹²⁴ This upset Claudín and Semprún for they had not been consulted about it (they were still members of the Executive) and strengthened their argument that the leadership had been preparing the rank-and-file to agree with the majority's position before any solution had actually been reached by the CC (the replies from its members kept on coming until late summer). Solé Tura, who wrote a letter to the Executive making clear his disagreement with the Declaration, stated at the time: "The declaration of June is the touchstone: you have to be either for it or against it. If you are for it then

SEMPRÚN, Correspondencia, Caja 111, Carp. 3).

¹²⁰ Letter by the members of the CC to the EC, March-July 1964, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Informes, Caja 110).

¹²¹ Letter by Pedro Mendez to the EC, May 1964, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Informes, Caja 110).

¹²² Azcárate, *Luchas*, p. 79.

¹²³ Letter by Manuel Azcárate to the EC, 7 July 1964, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-

you are a good boy. If you make an effort to analyse things by yourself and express doubts, then you are a traitor".¹²⁵ As we have seen, Solé Tura had been having doubts about the party's policy for quite some time. However, it would actually be the methods used by the leadership against the two Fs, which he described as the "morbid rituals of a Stalinist era I had never known", that made him side with the dissidents.¹²⁶ It is clear when looking at the history of the PCE that these methods were anything but alien to its leaders. Divergence inside the party had always been dealt with in a similar way: by shutting up those who differed. Now, there were no executions or tip-offs to the police against the "traitors" but the strategy used against the two Fs was beginning to confirm that the destalinisation process had never taken a true hold of the party's internal structure.

On 3 September 1964, the leadership held a meeting with the two Fs to discuss the Central Committee's results; Santiago Carrillo was not present.¹²⁷ The resolution on their suspension from the Executive Committee had been approved almost unanimously and some cadres had even proposed their exclusion from CC. While accepting the will of the majority, both Claudín and Semprún still expressed their disagreement with the resolution and presented an appeal against it for the next Congress. This was their right according to the statutes of the Party. However, they must have known the Executive would deny them this opportunity, as indeed

SEMPRÚN, Informes, Caja 110).

¹²⁴ Declaration by the PCE, June 1964, AHPCE (DOCUMENTOS, Carp. 45).

¹²⁵ Letter from Fabra (Jordi Solé Tura), 14 September, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Correspondencia, Caja 111, Carp. 3); Letter from Fabra (Jordi Solé Tura) to Gregorio López Raimundo on the PCE's Declaration of June 1964, August 1964, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Informes, Caja 110).

¹²⁶ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, pp. 206-207.

¹²⁷ In the different documents of this period, there is several references to two meetings that the General Secretary held with Jorge Semprún during the summer. It seems they discussed the same topics that had been addressed during the meetings of the Executive earlier that year as well as the

happened. Claudín also demanded that new material on the divergences be sent to the whole party, including documents written by the dissidents. He was already preparing his own document, he told the leadership. Furthermore, he wanted the results of such an enquiry to be published in a Bulletin for everyone to read. Once again, it is difficult to believe that Claudín was actually expecting any of these demands to be met. More likely, he wanted to accumulate further evidence against the leadership and its autocratic manner of dealing with dissent.

During the meeting, Claudín and Semprún were accused of factional activity. Throughout the summer, they had held talks with a number of activists coming from Spain to see them and Semprún had come into contact with the Italian Communist Party through Rossana Rossanda, a member of its Central Committee, in an attempt to inform its leader, Palmiro Togliatti, about the character of the divergences.¹²⁸ The two Fs argued that since the leadership had been carrying out a campaign against them, they had had no choice but to give their own version of affairs to those who asked. This was done in accordance with the party's Statutes in Article 2, which stated that it was the duty of every party member to avoid the hiding of the truth.¹²⁹ "If the majority of the EC would have given the 'truth' to all the members of the party, none would have been forced to obtain it from Federico Sánchez and me", Claudín replied.¹³⁰ Semprún made similar arguments attacking the PCE's lack of internal democracy and the existence of vestiges of Stalinism and dogmatism that should have long been eradicated:

Assembly of 19 April. No agreement was reached.

¹²⁸ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, pp. 274-275. One of these meetings was organized by Jordi Solé Tura at his house in Paris and was discovered by chance by a party activist who immediately informed the leadership, Solé Tura, *Memorias*, p. 209. Also references in the minutes of the meeting between Fernando Claudín, Jorge Semprún and other members of the EC, 5 November 1964, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Correspondencia, Caja 111, Carp. 3).

¹²⁹ Letter by Fernando Claudín to the EC and the CC, 5 September 1954. (REUNIONES, Reunión

The manner in which a large part of the CC has found out about the discussions taking place in the Executive Committee is neither correct nor does it agree with Leninist principles. ... A large part of the members of the CC has only found out about it through verbal information, or a summary of the discussion, elaborated without the participation of comrade Claudín or myself. And in this summary, you have given a distorted, incomplete, grossly deformed version of our opinions. The problem has been taken outside of the framework of the CC, therefore violating the party's Statutes. Since the Assembly of 19 April, and always following the same deformities and distortions, ... the opinions of Claudín and myself have been the object of a violent campaign of aggression, ... and we have never been allowed to be present at the meetings during which we were on the receiving end of serious political consequences.¹³¹

It is interesting to note here how, by this time, Claudín had moved his arguments on Spain further to the left. He was now claiming that as the democratic revolution was not feasible due to the development of capitalism in the country, the only possible solution to the problem of the Regime would be a socialist revolution, even if the latter could not take place in the short term. This more extreme position was presumably taken, as Morán suggests, to close down those who were accusing him of being a right-winger and a defeatist.¹³²

After the meeting of 3 September, the campaign against the two Fs continued to escalate in tone. At a new Assembly of the party on 13 September, Santiago Álvarez insinuated that Claudín and Semprún (who once again were not present) were working for the Francoist Minister, Manuel Fraga. "We cannot subjectively say that Fraga is paying them. They are still getting their wages from the party, hence they do not have the need yet to get money from anyone else".¹³³ Whether or not he meant it

Comité Ejecutivo, Caja 111, Carp. 1).

¹³⁰ Letter by Fernando Claudín to the EC and the CC, 5 September 1954, AHPCE.

¹³¹ Declaration by Jorge Semprún, 3 September 1964, AHPCE (REUNIONES, Reunión Comité Ejecutivo, Caja 111, Carp. 1).

¹³² Morán, *Miseria*, p. 397.

¹³³ Letter from Fernando Claudín to the EC and the CC, 22 September 1964, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Correspondencia, Caja 111, Carp. 3); Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 185.

literally, the implications of such a comment were obvious to everyone. Once word got to Claudín, he wrote to the party to renounce his salary, giving back what he had left from the last wages:

The method you are using is the method used by Stalin to destroy those in the party who dared have a different opinion: first, by deforming their positions and opinions; second, by proclaiming that those positions, previously deformed, and those who defend them, are working objectively for the enemy; third, by accusing those who objectively work for the enemy to subjectively be in his service, getting money from them, etc.¹³⁴

The slander campaign was not limited to Claudín and Semprún. Those who had expressed any agreement with their views, such as Jordi Solé Tura and Francesc Vicens, were also beginning to suffer the consequences.¹³⁵ In a letter to Gregorio López Raimundo, the PSUC's General Secretary, Solé Tura wrote:

You are now carrying out a campaign of "information" in which those who express their disagreement are slandered and insulted, without given them, moreover, the chance to explain their position. ... How cannot anyone see that the party Statute which says that "the activists should participate in the elaboration of the party's policy" means nothing to the leadership and that reality is very different? Inside the PCE, there is a minority that decides and a majority that executes. This contradiction could function at a given moment if the political analysis made by the minority is fair and produces a policy in agreement with reality. ... But when the analysis of the minority is false or partial –as it is the case in the Declaration of June- the contradiction explodes.¹³⁶

Moreover, as Solé Tura explains, a political rupture at this time was also a personal rupture that affected all the members of the family. When describing Claudín and Semprún's situation at the time, he wrote:

Jorge Semprún was also isolated but he was a personality in France, a well-known writer and scriptwriter and, therefore, with wider means of personal, intellectual and political survival. Claudín's family, on the other hand, was a clandestine family who faced a lot of economic and personal difficulties. ... Suddenly, Carmen (Claudín's wife) was losing her friends and the daughters were losing theirs.

¹³⁴ Letter from Fernando Claudín to the EC and the CC, 22 September 1964, AHPCE.

¹³⁵ Letter from Fabra (Jordi Solé Tura) to Gregorio López Raimundo on the PCE's Declaration of June 1964, August 1964, AHPCE; Letters between Fabra (Jordi Solé Tura) and Gregorio Lopez Raimundo, 14-25 September 1964, AHPCE; Semprún, *Autobiografía*, pp. 184-186.

¹³⁶ Letter from Fabra (Jordi Solé Tura) to Gregorio López Raimundo, 24 September 1964, AHPCE. For more information on Jordi Solé Tura's fate at the time see Solé Tura, *Memorias*, pp. 208-214.

As the situation deteriorated, a new meeting between the leadership and the dissidents was arranged for 5 November 1964. Once again, the General Secretary did not attend it, a clear sign that he considered the matter over and done with.¹³⁷ The arguments and accusations on both sides did not differ from those expressed in the September meeting. The tone, on the other hand, was much more aggressive and the frustration felt by the two Fs very apparent. In fact, there was no real discussion... just a brawl of low punches. At one point, following several attempts by those present to obtain from Claudín and Semprún the names of the party activists that had contacted them, Claudín replied:

We are not telling you about those comrades that have talked to us because the methods the party is using against us in the first place, and with those who have similar opinions to ours, do not offer guarantees that you will not falsify the opinions of those comrades too and use them as an excuse to accuse them of factional activity and in this manner put at risk their position in the party.¹³⁸

Once the meeting had finished, the leadership sent to the PCE's organisations and committees an Internal Report refuting the two Fs' criticisms against the accuracy of the documentation on the divergences sent during the previous spring to the members of the Central Committee. It was claimed that 54 out of 66 members of the CC had actually received the complete minutes of the Executive Committee meeting in March 1964, which amounted to 700 pages. Only those who were in prison, the leadership argued, received a summary of the meeting.¹³⁹ This is very hard to believe, however, not just because of the logistics involved in such a vast task, but also because it is unlikely they would have expected the CC's members to

¹³⁷ Representing the Executive Committee were Ignacio gallego, Enrique Líster, Francisco Romero Marín and Gregorio López Raimundo. Internal Report of the EC of the PCE, November 1964, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Comunicados y Declaraciones, Caja 111, Carp. 2).

read them. Claudín would later maintain that only those in exile received a copy of the complete minutes. In any case, even if the information was indeed an accurate account of the divergences, it is most unlikely that many would have risked their position in a fight that could not be won. As for the Internal Report now being sent to the party's organisations and committees, the leadership had to be given the name of each person that would receive a copy, all of which were numbered. The person in charge would then proceed to read it to the activists under his control and immediately send it back to Paris. No notes could be taken and no discussion would follow.¹⁴⁰ These strict measures, which have strong reminiscences to the measures taken for Khrushchev's secret speech, probably aimed to achieve two different things: on the one hand, to finalize the discussions that had been dragging on for almost a year; on the other, to find those who were still in contact with the two Fs by tracing back any possible leaks.

At the same time, the members of the Central Committee received, aside from the Internal Report, the letters that Semprún and Claudín sent to the Executive after the September meeting and the minutes of the October meeting. They were asked to approve the following resolutions:

1. To expel Claudín from the PCE's Central Committee and to allow the Executive Committee to expel him from the party if he were to continue with his factional activity.
2. To relegate Semprún to a post of associate member of the Central Committee and to allow the Executive Committee to expel him from the party if he were to continue with his factional activity.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Internal Report of the EC of the PCE, November 1964, AHPCE.

¹³⁹ Internal Report of the EC of the PCE, November 1964, AHPCE.

¹⁴⁰ Orders by the EC on the knowledge and use of the internal report about Fernando Claudín and Jorge Semprún, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Comunicados y Declaraciones, Caja 111, Carp. 2).

¹⁴¹ Standard document sent to Sebastian Zaparian on the two Fs, 5 December 1964, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Correspondencia, Caja 111, Carp. 3).

Once again the members of the Central Committee replied just as the Executive wanted them too. Not only were the resolutions approved but some asked for Semprún to also be expelled from the CC.¹⁴² Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that the enquiries surrounding the purge of the two Fs were never anything more than simple formality. As Claudín and Semprún argued, the leadership had distorted and deformed their views and refused to give them the chance to discuss them in public. Moreover, the CC had never really taken any autonomous decisions but just approved those which came from the Executive: it was not part of the PCE's culture for the cadres and activists to question the leadership or the policies of the party. As we have seen, even during the downfall of the old guard and the rise to power of the Parisians in 1956, there had been no real criticism of the party's past nor any analysis of its internal structure. Not surprisingly, the few who now attempted actually to discuss the divergences that were taking place, were ostracised and eventually expelled. The purge of the two Fs would therefore confirm that 1956 had not been a turning point in the history of the PCE. The purge fits in well with the pattern that the Communists had followed since the end of the Spanish Civil War: the party's internal Stalinist structure was preventing any attempt at renewal or any sort of autonomy to develop among its organisations, which in turn led to the exiled leadership applying the wrong policies to fight Francoism in Spain, also provoking friction with other political forces.

3. Farewell

¹⁴² Letter by the members of the CC to the EC, December 1964-February 1965, AHPCE

During the months that followed the meeting of October 1964, the relationship between the two Fs and the Executive would be limited to an exchange of letters and a few publications on each side.¹⁴³ On 8 December, Claudín wrote to the Executive informing them that he had finished his Report on the divergences, of which a copy was attached. Since the party had only published a deformed interpretation of their views, he argued that he now had the right to correct it and would therefore start to distribute the Report among party members. With the help of Francesc Vicens, Claudín would actually manage to publish the text as a book in France early the following year. The latter would become an important source for anyone trying to understand the purge of the two Fs and a source of irritation for the leadership of the PCE. A second letter by Claudín written on the same day asked the Executive to return to him a passport that he had been given by the Cubans in the past and which he had left at the party's headquarters in Prague. He had already requested the passport in October but had received no reply from the party on the matter. Claudín's situation in France was rather delicate as he had no legal documentation; the Cuban passport could at least provide him with a semi-legal status.¹⁴⁴

José Serrán, who Morán describes as a "sinister party cadre", replied to Claudín ten days later taking notice of his decision to pass on his Report on the divergences and hence continue with what he defined as his "factional activity".¹⁴⁵ Claudín was also told that the Report, with his letter attached, would be sent by the Executive to the members of the Central Committee. There is no evidence that this

(DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Informes, Caja 110).

¹⁴³ As the crisis of the two Fs was taking place in the PCE, an important change took place in the Soviet Union. On 16 October 1964, Nikita Khrushchev was replaced in the leadership of the USSR by Leonid Brezhnev.

¹⁴⁴ Letters by Fernando Claudín to the EC, 8 December 1964, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Correspondencia, Caja 111, Carp. 3).

¹⁴⁵ Morán, *Miseria*, p. 400; Letter from José Serrán (alias Ramos) to Fernando Claudín, 18 December

was ever done but the following January the party would publish a mishmash of the text in a special issue of *Nuestra Bandera*. It was printed in tiny letters, split in 24 sections and accompanied by critical notes written in a much bigger font that took 75 percent of the total space.¹⁴⁶ It was also at this time that the party announced the expulsion of Fernando Claudín and Jorge Semprún from the Central Committee.

As for the passport, Serrán referred to the offer Claudín had received from the party during the October meeting to move to a socialist country. At the time, Gallego argued that since Claudín had been brought undercover by the party into France to do a job that was also clandestine and, he was no longer doing such a job, it was only “logical” for him to move to a Socialist country. Not surprisingly, Claudín refused to do so. Now he was told that the passport had been given to him by the Cubans “not to establish himself legally in the country where he was living but to facilitate his movement while serving the party”. Hence, the PCE no longer had an obligation to return it. Nevertheless, the letter went on, the Cubans would be informed about the matter and if they agreed to still give him the passport, the Executive would proceed to do so.¹⁴⁷ This was not the only “delicate matter” Claudín had to work out with the party’s leadership. A year later, when the last traces of the crisis were fading away, problems arose over the house he and his family were occupying, which had originally been rented by the party. On 9 October, Claudín wrote a letter to the Executive asking them to cover the rent of the house from April 1962, when the last payment had been made, to January 1965, when he stopped being a member of the Central Committee.¹⁴⁸ A meeting followed with a party cadre who told Claudín that

1964, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Correspondencia, Caja 111, Carp. 3).

¹⁴⁶ “Documento-plataforma fraccional de Fernando Claudín”, *Nuestra Bandera*, January 1965, n.40.

¹⁴⁷ Letter from José Serrán (alias Ramos) to Fernando Claudín, 18 December 1964, AHPCE.

¹⁴⁸ Letter from Fernando Claudín to the EC, 9 October 1965, AHCPE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Correspondencia, Caja 111, Carp. 3).

the PCE would cover those expenses as long as he left the house; if he did not leave, no payments would be made. Claudín replied that he could not afford to leave the house for the time being, as it was almost impossible to find anything similar for a low price and he was still struggling to make a living. He was told that such an argument was not valid since he had found the money to publish his book as well as other expenses, all related to his “factional activity” against the PCE. His financial problems were his own responsibility. Just as he had so proudly returned his salary in the past, he should now have the dignity to return the party’s house.¹⁴⁹ In a letter to Santiago Carrillo that November, Ignacio Gallego wrote:

We are going to show the crookedness of Claudín, clearly and strongly. We have not done that yet. But I think that element will not leave his house. In that case, I think we should not spend a penny on it. But if he pays for the rent himself, it will not be so easy to get him out. If he does not pay then he is out of there, we can report him to the landlord. The first thing is to expose things clearly and of course never to pay the rent to a swine.¹⁵⁰

Fortunately for Claudín, he knew that legally he could postpone his departure for quite some time, and we can assume that this is what actually happened.¹⁵¹ These two examples of the party attitude towards Claudín revealed how far the leadership was willing to go in order to fight against those who would abandon the ship. In all fairness, after the October meeting, there is little doubt that the activities of the two Fs had clearly been directed at discrediting the leadership. Still, one cannot forget the context which led to this attitude on their part and the need they felt to clear their names.

¹⁴⁹ Conversation between Pepe (a party cadre) and Fernando Claudín, 26 November 1965, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Informes, Caja 110); Letter from Fernando Claudín to the EC, 26 November 1965, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Correspondencia, Caja 111, Carp. 3).

¹⁵⁰ Letter from Ignacio Gallego to Santiago Carrillo, 17 November 1965. AHPCE (DIRIGENTES, Ignacio Gallego, Caja 10, Carp. 10.2).

¹⁵¹ Just as was the case with the passport, the author has not found any more records on this matter.

As for Jorge Semprún, he wrote to the Executive in January 1965 accusing them of spreading a rumour among party activists that he had made his own self-criticism about the whole affair. Semprún denied that he had ever done such a thing and stated that the chances of him doing it in the future were now even slimmer in view of the developments taking place in Spain and the methods that had been used by the party to deal with the divergences. He also expressed his support to the Report written by Claudín and added that he himself would also find the way to get to the activists a truthful account of his opinions and situation.¹⁵² Carrillo would write back to Semprún a harsh and ironic letter which in turn received a similar reply. In reference to the coming publication of *Mundo Obrero* in which the expulsion of the Fs from the party was going to be announced, Semprún wrote:

My decision to be a Communist –during the time of the military struggle against the Nazi invaders- cannot be broken by any resolution that you take. I will continue to be a Communist, acting as a Communist. That depends only on me and in that decision you cannot intervene, whatever you do and whatever you say.¹⁵³

Later that year, Semprún was preparing the script for a film that would come out the following year, Alain Resnais' *La Guerre est finie*, whose plot was strongly linked to Semprún's experience as a clandestine figure working in Spain for the PCE. In the same letter that Ignacio Gallego told Carrillo about the tactics to follow in order to evict Claudín from his house, he wrote regarding Semprún:

I have told the French comrades about the matter with the other swine. Manolo (Azcárate) has told me that the film they are preparing is garbage. Apparently, there is even a characterization of the General Secretary of the party. It is the film of a renegade. Aside from what the French comrades might be able to do about it, we could also find a way to let the people who are making the film know that the film is a stab in the back by a force that is in clandestinity, in the resistance. In one word, to bring down that garbage before it comes out. Clearly, Semprún is an authentic

¹⁵² Letter from Jorge Semprún to the EC, January 1965, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Correspondencia, Caja 111, Carp. 3).

¹⁵³ Letter from Jorge Semprún to Santiago Carrillo, 12 February 1965, AHPCE (DIVERGENCIAS CLAUDÍN-SEMPRÚN, Correspondencia, Caja 111, Carp. 3).

renegade. The *señorito* does not know yet that he is playing with fire.¹⁵⁴

The film would come out the following year with great success and Semprún's reputation as a writer would only rise after that.¹⁵⁵ Similarly, Claudín would go on to write several books on Communism and become the most important Spanish figure on the subject. The PCE would remain as one of the main forces of the opposition against Franco in Spain, but during the transition it would fail spectacularly to the astonishment of some, particularly Santiago Carrillo.

E. Conclusion

The expulsion of Fernando Claudín and Jorge Semprún from the Spanish Communist Party was made public in *Mundo Obrero* in April 1965.¹⁵⁶ The purge mainly affected the organization of students and intellectuals in Madrid, with an estimated 200 activists leaving the party as a result.¹⁵⁷ Though this number is not very high and new generations of students and intellectuals would continue to join the PCE in the coming years, the purge of the two Fs was still one of the most important crises ever to affect the party.

This purge had all the characteristics of those that took place inside the party during the Stalinist years. The main difference now was that no denunciations to the police or executions occurred anymore. While this was in no way an unimportant

¹⁵⁴ Letter from Ignacio Gallego to Santiago Carrillo, 17 November 1965. AHPCE.

¹⁵⁵ In 1963, Semprún had already won the prestigious prize Formentor for his novel *Le grand voyage* (Paris: Gallimard, 1963).

¹⁵⁶ "Resolución sobre la expulsión de Fernando Claudín y Federico Sánchez", *Mundo Obrero*, April 1965.

¹⁵⁷ Morán, *Miseria*, p. 402. Jáuregui and Vega report that in the organization of the party in the University of Madrid, the membership decreased from 117 to 3. Jáuregui and Vega, *Antifranquismo, 1963-1970*, p. 82.

change in the overall history of the PCE, the expulsion of Fernando Claudín and Jorge Semprún still proved that the liberalization process that had supposedly started in 1956 had never been completed. Discussion of the party's line was not permitted as it had never been allowed in the past, not just in the party's organizations and committees in exile or in Spain, but also inside the Executive Committee. This is an important distinction to make for in later years many PCE leaders would argue that the party's clandestine status did not allow for a normal running of its internal democracy.¹⁵⁸ The fate of the two Fs, both members of the Executive where the conditions for open discussion were theoretically much better, revealed that at no level could the decisions of the General Secretary be questioned, whether or not they were backed up by reality.

Moreover, the divergences of Claudín and Semprún with the party line were the result of the party's unrealistic appreciation of what was happening in Spain. This, as we have seen throughout this thesis, was in turn the result of the party's refusal to listen and give any autonomy to its forces within Spain. Indeed, since the end of the Civil War, the party's autocratic internal structure had eventually led to the destruction of every strong organization that had flourished in Spain. Claudín and Semprún and the intellectual and students organizations in Madrid that had flourished in 1956 were just the newest victims of this structure.

¹⁵⁸ Falcón, *Asalto*, p. 338; Manuel Azcárate, "Comentarios personales sobre la *Autobiografía de Federico Sánchez*", *El País*, 4 January 1978. Also references to this explanation given by Communist leaders in Mujal-León, *Communism*, p. 95, 164.

CONCLUSION

In November 1977, the prestigious Spanish literary prize Planeta was awarded to Jorge Semprún for his book, *Autobiografía de Federico Sánchez*.¹ The novel narrated his experience as a leader of the Spanish Communist Party from the early 1950s to the day of his expulsion in April 1965. Its publication had been preceded a few months earlier by the legalization of the PCE, an important step towards democracy in the transition process of Spain. In this context, *Autobiografía* became “the centre of attention of a polemic in which the whole of the Spanish media participated, turning into one of the reference points of the transition process itself.”² Soon after, Claudín’s book on the divergences that he had published privately in France during 1965 was published commercially in Spain, which added fuel to the debate initiated by Semprún.³ The attention received by both works is not surprising. As we have seen in this thesis, the events that led to the expulsion of Semprún and Claudín portrayed a Communist party disconnected from Spanish reality and in which no discussion could take place. This was not the image Santiago Carrillo wanted to present to the Spanish electorate, hence the party’s break from Moscow in 1968 and its subsequent adoption of Eurocommunism. At a time in Spain when the general consensus was to forget the past and look to the future, Semprún and Claudín were

¹ Semprún, *Autobiografía*.

² Buckley, *La doble transición*, p. 51. For instance see Manuel Azcárate, “Comentarios personales sobre la *Autobiografía de Federico Sánchez*”, *El País*, 4 January 1978, and Jorge Semprún, “Contraréplica a Manuel Azcárate sobre la *Autobiografía de Federico Sánchez*”, *El País*, 8 January 1978. Also for more information about the debate that followed see Preston, “The PCE’s long road...” in Kindersley, *Eurocommunism*, pp. 39-43.

³ Claudín, *Documentos*.

breaking the “Pact of Forgetfulness” and bringing the PCE’s past right into the present. It is no wonder that when asked about *Autobiografía*, Carrillo would always reply that he had never read it. Doing otherwise would have forced him to enter a discussion he clearly wanted to avoid. Could this episode have contributed in some way to the PCE’s inability to take advantage of its position as the best-organised opposition movement under Franco and thus find itself as a major political force in democratic Spain?

By looking at the crucial period between 1956 and 1964, I hope to have shed some light on one of the main reasons the Spanish Communist Party lost its way in democratic Spain. It was during that period that the party failed to undergo a profound transformation of its internal structure. The purge of Claudín and Semprún, in effect, marked the limits of the destalinisation process started inside the PCE in 1956. This conclusion has been reached by revealing two different aspects in the history of Spanish Communism. First, like his predecessors, Carrillo had enforced a despotic rule ever since he had gained power in 1956, which prevented the PCE from renewing itself. Moreover, as in previous decades, party-reformers were still denied a foothold. Second, the situation was further worsened because the PCE leadership attempted to rule the party from its position in exile. For fear of losing control over the underground party, the leadership anxiously smothered any new ideas and initiatives coming from the rank-and-file in Spain itself. This meant that the policies the PCE adopted often failed to take into account the existing situation in Spain.

As a result of these factors, when the first elections came in democratic Spain, the two main figures representing the PCE were Santiago Carrillo and Dolores Ibárruri, both of them too closely associated with the Civil War. Unlike the Socialists, the PCE disregarded the potential value of the activists inside Spain to

transmit a younger image of the party.⁴ The changes that took place in 1968 and thereafter were not enough to convince anyone that the party was now different from what it had been in the past. That is, while the party did in fact pragmatically adopt a moderate ideological programme, the way it was run proved to be less flexible. The PCE itself remained under the control of Santiago Carrillo, who, prepared to compromise on programmatic points, was not as willing to give up any of his power by democratising the party. The effect of this organisational ossification was crucial because it effectively undermined the more moderate ideological image that the PCE publicly aspired to during the Spanish transition.⁵ It led the party into a hybrid position that proved impossible to sustain. On the one hand, it embraced the spirit of the new era but, on the other, it firmly remained committed to the methods and individuals of a bygone age. In addition, the party's attempt to present a more moderate ideological image also alienated, though for opposite reasons, those voters further to the left, particularly the youth whose support shifted to the Socialists.⁶ Paradoxically, Santiago Carrillo would still make an important contribution to the establishment of democracy in Spain, which as much as the central role and sacrifice of the Communists activists during the Franco dictatorship, should be recognized. Nevertheless, it was not enough to make the PCE the option chosen to represent the

⁴ In contrast, the leadership of the PSOE was formed by a new generation of Socialists that had actually lived in Spain during Francoism, and hence were much closer, both physically and in spirit, to the people. There were other factors influencing the Socialists' capability to take over the leftist vote, such as the support they received from the Socialist European parties. For more information see Pilar Ortuño Anaya, *European Socialists and Spain. The Transition to Democracy, 1959-1977* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2002).

⁵ Mujal-León makes an excellent case in his study of the Spanish Communist party about the damage that the party's ambiguities had on its success in democratic Spain. For more information see Mujal-León, *Communism*, pp. 76-102, 156-. This ambiguities are also pointed out by Paul Heywood to explain the collapse of the party, though he argues that it was not just the party's internal inflexibility itself which caused its failure, but the way it was manipulated. For more information see Paul Heywood, "Mirror Images: The PCE and the PSOE in the Transition to Democracy in Spain", *West European Politics*, Volume 10 Number 10, April 1987, pp. 193-210.

⁶ Carr, Raymond & Fusi, Juan Pablo, *Spain. Dictatorship to Democracy*, (George Allen & Unwin LTD, London, 1979) pp. 240.

interests of the left in the new democracy.

It can be argued, however, that political parties are often run in a despotic manner and that does not destroy the people's confidence in them as participating agents in a democratic regime. However, as Mujal-León points out, unlike the PCE most other parties "did not have totalist aspirations to effect radical and profound changes in society".⁷ Moreover, the situation in which the Spanish Communists found themselves after Franco's death was particularly tricky. The PCE's image had been shaped by its submission to the Soviet Union, its role in the Civil War, the guerrilla actions during the 1940s and, more than anything else, 36 years of negative propaganda by the regime. Consequently, the party's programmatic reforms could easily be taken as nothing more than a cynical ploy to lure voters, whilst beneath the surface not much had really changed. Indeed, the road followed by the party thereafter proved that this had been the case.

One wonders whether or not the PCE could have actually taken a different course. After all, it was a clandestine party working under an anti-Communist dictatorship. Democratising its internal structure under these conditions was, to say the least, difficult.⁸ Nevertheless, while the party would have faced serious problems in carrying out discussions with the activists inside Spain, there is little justification for the manner in which the divergences of Claudín and Semprún were handled. Both men belonged to the party's Executive Committee in exile and therefore, discussion inside this organism should have been feasible and, actually, necessary. Moreover,

⁷ Mujal-León, *Communism*, p. 98.

⁸ Paul Heywood argues that if any relaxation of democratic centralism inside the PCE had been allowed, the party's identity would have been called into question, as had been the case with the PCI. While he does not extend on this point, it would be interesting to see to what extent democratic centralism forms the identity of a Communist party. Heywood, "Mirror Images...", pp. 202-203.

the party's autocratic structure was also partially responsible for the leaders' unrealistic appreciation of the conditions in Spain. This was so much the case that even when the results proved the failure of its policy, they simply chose to ignore them and silenced those who urged a change. Hence, while it is not possible to know to what extent the party could have undergone a true democratisation process, it is clear that not doing so seriously hurt its chances of success. In the long term, the PCE's autocratic internal structure, which arguably served to keep its leader in power and, to a certain extent, a united organization during the difficult Franco years, would ultimately prove to be the party's undoing in democratic Spain.

Both Claudín and Semprún believed that things would have been very different had the party initiated its transformation in 1964. When interviewed by the author, Semprún said:

The party was eliminated by history. The people of Spain eliminated it because for the progressive left-wing middle Spaniard, the PCE, regardless how heroic it had been, represented the past. If in 1964 a profound shift had been made, the PCE would have played the role of the PSOE in the transition.⁹

In the updated introduction of his book about the crisis republished in 1978, Claudín wrote in reference to the party's future had the discussions about their divergences ended differently:

Possibly, its role would have been more relevant and efficient in the fight for democracy. It would have established its credibility earlier as a truly democratic party, independent from Moscow. It would have made a greater contribution to the theoretical debate on the revolution in the West, and especially on the analysis of the Spanish situation. Its moral and intellectual authority would have been greater.¹⁰

This, of course, is a matter for counter-factual speculation, as is the question of the possible effect that Claudín and Semprún's perception of reality would have

⁹ Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

¹⁰ Claudín, *Documentos*, p. X.

had on the activists' morale. Many have argued that it would have discouraged them and that, in fact, it was the party's subjectivism that kept them active in the struggle.¹¹ Carrillo himself said during the discussions on the divergences:

Under the conditions we endured, against a Fascist dictatorship, with enormous difficulties, that by their own nature could sow and actually do sow in the people a lack of faith, would it be possible to have a political struggle without a certain degree of subjectivity and voluntarism? Comrades: a certain degree of subjectivity, regarding the pace of events – not their ultimate conclusion, not their character – is without doubt one of the inevitable ingredients of the tactics of any revolutionary force, and even more so when the situation in which it struggles is so difficult. The subjectivity, the voluntarism – I am always referring to the rhythm and not to policies, I am actually talking about tactics – are factors of weight in the historical process.¹²

However, as this thesis has shown, the leadership's subjectivity led the underground party into an range of failed actions which resulted in the demoralisation of the rank-and-file, and furthermore, in the weakening of the underground organizations due to the repression that their ambitious actions would unleash. Thus, the potential negative effects that a less optimistic view of the situation of the regime would have had on the activists, has to be measured against the negative effects of the party's failed policy. Once again, this cannot be established with total certainty but I believe that a more objective appreciation of reality is at the centre of any successful strategy. As Semprún wrote in *Autobiografía*:

Subjectivism means that one is not analysing correctly the correlation of forces or the real possibilities of action. It means that one is underestimating the enemy. It means that one is setting erroneous goals that once they are not met provoke the demobilisation or demoralisation of the revolutionary forces.¹³

Finally, as I stated in the introduction of Chapter VI, I would like to attempt an

¹¹ Jáuregui and Vega, *Antifranquismo, 1939-1962*, p. 229; Múgica, *Itinerario*, p. 74; Falcón, *Asalto*, pp. 336-337; Preston, "The PCE's long road..." in Kindersley, *Eurocommunism*, pp. 53-54, 60-61; Mujal-León, *Communism*, p. 96.

¹² Speech by Santiago Carrillo, January-February 1964, AHPCE (REUNION DEL COMITÉ EJECUTIVO DEL PCE).

explanation to the reasons behind Claudín and Semprún's decision to initiate their crusade against the party line. Clearly, both men had become aware of the leadership's misperception of reality, particularly as Spain's social and economical transformation became more evident in the early 1960s. However, this alone would not explain why they began an assault that they must have known could not be won.¹⁴ After all, Claudín and Semprún were familiar with the PCE's autocratic internal structure and manner of dealing with dissent. In fact, Claudín had been part of the party leadership during its most Stalinist years; he had been responsible for the discipline of the exiles in Russia in the 1940s. Even after 1956, he had witnessed the treatment received by those activists in Mexico who questioned the policies and internal running of the party. In the same manner, Semprún, whether pushed or not by Carrillo, had himself punished Pradera for expressing a different perception of reality than that of the leadership. Moreover, as he himself recognizes, he was well aware that in 1956 "the leadership of the PCE had refused any public self-criticism, limiting itself to placing the Stalinist rubbish in someone else's backyard, rejecting any kind of objective historical analysis of its past".¹⁵ What, then, made them enter a conflict with little chance of success and which, at least on the short term, would hurt them on a professional and personal level? Semprún gives the following reply:

We never wondered whether or not we could actually transform the party, but if someone had asked me I would have said that no, we could not transform it, but we still had to fight that battle. We had to fight it and moreover, we had to make it public. We had to publish the documents on the divergences, explain them publicly. The only thing I decided at the time was not to publish anything that a regular activist would find difficult to interpret, not until the party was legal. That is why *Autobiografía*, which was conceived and prepared in my head in 1964, was not published until 1977, once the party had been legalized.¹⁶

¹³ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 214.

¹⁴ According to Preston, Francesc Vicens would describe as tactical lunacy for Claudín to have raised the issue at Executive Committee level, Preston, "The PCE's long road..." in Kindersley, *Eurocommunism*, p. 53.

¹⁵ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 131.

¹⁶ Interview with Jorge Semprún, May 2001.

Semprún seems to be hinting at an ultimate responsibility for the cause and the party activists, which also appears to be behind Claudín's comment during the last meeting that they both held with the leadership in November 1964 when he said: "I am talking here not so much for you as for the party." On the other hand, Carrillo would always say that Claudín had initiated his struggle in order to be expelled from the PCE because he was tired of the fight. He had stopped "believing", had stopped being a "Communist", had lost his "faith". Unable to accept this, he then choose to find problems and mistakes in the party so that it would become easier for him to leave it.¹⁷ As for Semprún, Carrillo argues that he wanted to fulfil his vocation as a writer and was therefore "stifling under the burden of party tasks".¹⁸ These explanations seem too simple, however. Neither Claudín or Semprún gave any symptoms of "political fatigue" after their expulsion from the party, though Carrillo is probably right to say they had lost their "faith". According to Semprún:

The voices and rumours of social reality continue to get louder for me until they become deafening, until they silenced the beatific purr of our ideological discourse, more and more removed from reality. I had to choose between the reality of the discourse or the discourse of reality. I chose the latter.¹⁹

The "faith", so often referred to by the Spanish Communists, seemed to be at the core of their Communism, an essential part of their struggle (which stood in contradiction to the scientific base that Marxism claimed to have). It was also this "faith" that allowed them to defend their "subjectivism" and in the same manner, to accuse those who did not share it of defeatism and pessimism. It was a "faith", after all, that prevented discussion. This lack of a culture of debate inside the PCE meant

¹⁷ Carrillo, *Memorias*, pp. 477-478; Carrillo, *Memoria transición*, pp. 83, 93-95; Carrillo, *Dialogue*, p. 117.

¹⁸ Carrillo, *Dialogue*, p. 118

that any questioning of the party line would be immediately translated into an attack against the leadership that had implemented it. Solé Tura argues that in 1959 the party leaders refused to accept the failure of the General Strike because they feared it would diminish their value before the old guard they had so recently replaced.²⁰

Indeed, Santiago Carrillo had won the battle against Ibárruri and Uribe on this basis. It had been a small disagreement over Spain's entry into the UN that had released a power struggle at the end of 1955. Not surprisingly, there were those who thought that a coup against Carrillo's leadership was at the heart of Claudín and Semprún's criticisms.²¹ While this seems unlikely taking into account that neither one of them attempted to create a rival organization to the PCE once they were expelled, Carrillo's refusal to open a proper discussion can still be explained by his fear of losing authority over the party. Its autocratic internal structure was so intrinsic that discussion could never be taken at face value and was rejected as a personal attack. And it is in this context that Claudín and Semprún's decision to question the leadership can be explained. Once they had realised the contradictions between the party's line and the reality of the situation in a new Spain, they could not possibly continue with the work of the party without carrying on a discussion about it. As this was not possible, their job as intellectuals could no longer occur within the parameters of the PCE. I believe that Claudín and Semprún began discussions inside the party because they had no other choice. It was, therefore, a personal journey in which expulsion was a price they willingly paid.

As for the intellectuals and students that joined them, their split was less

¹⁹ Semprún, *Autobiografía*, p. 205.

²⁰ Solé Tura, *Memorias*, pp. 122-123.

²¹ "Many friends told me then and after that they were convinced that Claudín's attitude was due to his aspirations to become the General Secretary of the Party. I always thought this was not the case." Carrillo, *Memorias*, p. 478.

traumatic and easier to explain. They were not as integrated into the party as Claudín and Semprún and had joined the movement under a different premise. As has been pointed out in this thesis, their Communism was an expression of their anti-Francoism, a threshold they had to cross in their political emancipation.²² Once they began to feel constrained by the party and became aware of the sterility of their activities, they moved away from it just as they had previously moved away from the oppressive Francoist regime. Indeed, the new generations of intellectuals and students that joined the PCE after 1964 would eventually go through a similar process. This is why a Communist party such as the Spanish could not succeed once democracy arrived in Spain. Its role as an opposition movement against the regime died with Franco and an alternative function was not found. The crisis of 1964, therefore, represented the party's failure to transform itself into a credible democratic choice for the future. Therein lies the beginning of an explanation of its ill fortune in the 1970s and 1980s and its marginal standing in Spanish politics today.

²² Interview with Fernando Sánchez Dragó, September 2000; Interview with Javier Pradera, September 2000; Interview with Enrique Múgica, September 2000; Interview with Santiago Carrillo, January 2001.

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