

Spanish Communism during the Comintern Period

1. On the history of the Communist Party of Spain

Prior to 1936, the Communist Party of Spain (*Partido Comunista de España*; PCE) only ever managed to win the support of a small minority of Spanish workers and this explains, but only partially, why research into the history of the PCE has been relatively limited. One must also take into account the general weakness of modern Spanish historiography, at least as concerns the workers movement. Prior to the mid-seventies, the destructive influence of forty years of Francoist dictatorship prevented any serious study inside Spain of recent historical events.

There has yet to be written a rigorous and well-documented study of the PCE, which covers satisfactorily the whole of the period we are considering.¹ The first general history of the party was produced by a special commission appointed by its Central Committee and was published in 1960.² This work suffers from the defects of many such "official" histories.³ Nevertheless, it does contain fragments of documents unavailable elsewhere. In 1965, the Francoist historian Eduardo Comín Colomer published his history of the PCE⁴ which, not surprisingly, is principally a propaganda exercise to show the evils of communism. Yet given Comín Colomer's access to police files, the two volumes contain a certain amount of documentary information of interest. Subsequent general party histories, published in the seventies during the transition to democracy, have tended to base themselves on Comín Colomer's work.⁵ In contrast, several well-researched studies on specific aspects of the PCE's history have been published since 1977.

Nowadays, we have access to documentation, albeit fragmented, which can provide the basis for further research.⁶ Many of the PCE's publications from 1920 to 1939, can be found either in Madrid or Barcelona.⁷ In addition, material from the war period, mainly press, is available in Salamanca⁸ and Amsterdam.⁹ The PCE's

¹ This problem is discussed in, Juan del Alcázar Garrido, "En torno a la historia del PCE: varias consideraciones y una aproximación", *Estudios d'Historia Contemporanea del País Valencià*, no. 4 (Valencia, 1982), pp. 155-179 and Ramón García Cotarelo, "Las vicisitudes del comunismo español y su bibliografía", *Revista de Estudios Políticos* (Madrid, May-June 1978), pp. 133-141.

² Comisión del Comité Central del PCE (Dolores Ibarruri, Manuel Azcárate, Luis Balaguer, Antonio Cerdón, Irene Falcon, José Sandoval), *Historia del Partido Comunista de España* (Paris and Warsaw, 1960). Another sympathetic history of the party is Cesare Colombo, *Storia del partito comunista spagnolo* (Milan, 1972).

³ In the words of historian and party member, Manuel Tuñón de Lara, the official history has "more errors than lines". Antonio Elorza, Josep Fontana, Manuel Tuñón de Lara and Manuel Azcárate, "La historia del PCE", *Nuestra Bandera*, no. 100 (Madrid, 1979), pp. 9-25.

⁴ Eduardo Comín Colomer, *Historia del Partido Comunista de España* (Madrid, 1967).

⁵ For example, Victor Alba, *El Partido Comunista en España* (Barcelona, 1979); Joan Estruch, *Historia del PCE 1920-1939* (Barcelona, 1978); Antonio Padilla, *El movimiento comunista español* (Barcelona, 1979); Guy Hermet, *Los comunistas en España* (Paris, 1972; French edition 1971), pp. 9-46.

⁶ Few of the party's documents have been published apart from a limited selection by the Hermandad Obrera de Acción Católica, *El PCE en sus documentos 1920-1977* (Madrid, 1977), and extracts and appendices in various related studies.

⁷ Principally in the Biblioteca Nacional and Hermeroteca Municipal, Madrid; and in the Institut Municipal d'Història de la Ciutat, Barcelona.

⁸ Archivo Histórico Nacional.

own archive¹⁰ has been open for over ten years, although few historians seem to have taken advantage of the fact. Most of the material in this archive is from the post-Civil War period, but there is some interesting documentation, particularly relating to the Republican period (1931-1936), available on micro-film.¹¹ The PSUC archive in Barcelona has little material connected to the period we are considering.¹² Police records are generally unavailable.¹³

A brief survey of the PCE's history from 1920 to 1943 can best be considered on the basis of the main periods of Spain's political development at the time: from the foundation of the first Spanish Communist Party in 1920 to Primo de Rivera's coup d'état in 1923; the subsequent period of military dictatorship, 1923 to 1931; the Second Republic, 1931 to 1936; the Civil War, 1936 to 1939; the first years of clandestinity and exile until the dissolution of the Communist International (CI) in 1943.

2. 1920-1923. Early years¹⁴

The background to the foundation of Spain's first Communist party was, like elsewhere in Europe, one of social unrest and deep political crisis. The end of the First World War marked the end of the expansion that the Spanish economy had undergone as a result of the country's neutrality. The re-emergence of older and stronger competitors led to price rises, unemployment and a general decline in living standards. This provoked an explosion of working class militancy, an additional stimulus to which was provided by the example of the Russian revolution. The terminal crisis of the Restoration system, aggravated the situation further.¹⁵

Despite its traditionally "leftist" image, most leaders of the Spanish Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*; PSOE) saw the Allies as a modernising and democratic force, whose victory could only help the establishment of true bourgeois democracy in Spain and thereby favoured their country's intervention in the war. Opposition to the leadership's stance came from a variety of groups inside the party, of which the the Federation of Young Socialists (*Federación de Juventudes Socialistas*; FJS) was the most important. From within these anti-war groups would emerge the nucleus of Spain's future Communist Party.¹⁶

By early 1918, most of the anti-war factions inside the PSOE had taken up the cause of the Russian revolution. The Socialist leaders, in contrast, opposed the Bolshevik seizure of power because it undermined the

⁹ Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedens (IISG).

¹⁰ Archivo del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de España, Madrid.

¹¹ See the four volume catalogue issued by the PCE Archive in 1980. Regarding material in the party archive related to the Civil War, see Victoria Ramos, Severiano Hernandez Vicente and Luis Hernandez Olivera, "Fuentes para la historia de la guerra civil española: El Archivo Histórico del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de España", in Julio Aróstegui (Coordinador), *Historia y Memoria de la Guerra Civil*, vol. 2 (Valladolid, 1988), pp. 9-47.

¹² Arxiu del Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya, Arxiu Nacional de Catalunya, Barcelona. Material relating to the PSUC can also be found in the Arxiu Comorera-Massip, Centre d'Estudis d'Història Contemporània, Barcelona.

¹³ Civil Governors' reports, which are based on information from the police, are available but those relating to the period we are considering have mostly been destroyed.

¹⁴ Gerald H. Meaker's classic study, *The Revolutionary Left in Spain 1914-1923* (Stanford, 1974) covers both the party's origins and the general development of the revolutionary movement in Spain at this time.

¹⁵ See Antonio Elorza, "Contexto histórico de la formación del PCE", Fundación de Investigaciones Marxistas, *Para una historia del PCE*, pp. 1-36.

¹⁶ On the Spanish workers movement and the First World War see Carlos Forcadell, *Parlamentarismo y bolshevisación. El movimiento obrero español 1914-1918* (Barcelona, 1978).

struggle against German imperialism. With the end of the war and the growing radicalisation of many Spanish workers and peasants, pro-Bolshevik sentiment grew inside the PSOE.

The founding of the CI in March 1919 met with a cool response from the leaders of the PSOE and the Socialist trade union federation, the General Workers Union (*Unión General de Trabajadores*; UGT). In contrast, its creation was welcomed by the majority of FJS members, in particular its important Madrid section,¹⁷ which had already declared its support for the Zimmerwald Conference and which soon affiliated to the new International. Over the next two years the question of whether the PSOE as a whole should affiliate to the CI dominated the party's internal life. The First Extraordinary Congress called to debate the issue took place in December 1919. This Congress voted by 14,000 to 12,497 for a compromise motion which called on the Second and Third Internationals to unite.

The PCE, because of its weakness, would always be excessively dependent on the Comintern, however the arrival of its first emissaries on Spanish soil was to be completely fortuitous. In late 1919, the Russian Michael Borodin, the Indian M.N. Roy and the Mexican "Ramirez", arrived by chance in Spain on their way back to Russia from America. They entered into contact with various leading left Socialists in Madrid, particularly from the FJS, and apparently urged them to form a Communist party as soon as possible.¹⁸ Borodin's advice found a ready audience among the stridently pro-Bolshevik leaders of the Socialist Youth, who were already convinced they were wasting their time inside the PSOE. The procedure used by the FJS leaders to found Spain's first Communist party would be unique in the history of the Communist movement and amounted to little more than a coup. On 15 April 1920 the Socialist Youth's National Committee, in a confidential letter to all sections, announced the organisation's transformation into the Spanish Communist Party (*Partido Comunista Español*).¹⁹

Despite its pretensions, the new party only took with it around 700 of the FJS's 5-7,000 members.²⁰ Its weekly paper, *El Comunista*, into which the FJS's *Renovación* (Renovation) was soon converted, printed between two and three thousand copies per issue.²¹ Although its youthful members were predominantly workers, its leaders tended to be from a more intellectual background. The new party led a precarious existence, lacking funds and being the victim of police persecution. Its organisational weakness and isolation was further aggravated by its tendency towards ultra-leftism²² and its sectarian behaviour towards its most immediate rivals. The PC

¹⁷ Daniel Rubio Caballero, "El socialismo madrileño 1918-1921: el problema de las internacionales", in Jesús T. Alvarez *et al.*, *La sociedad madrileña durante la restauración 1876-1931*, vol. 2 (Madrid, 1989), pp. 505-525.

¹⁸ It is possible that the PC Español exaggerated Borodin's role, see Luis Arranz, "Los 'Cien Niños' y la formación del PCE", in *Para una historia*, p. 93(*).

¹⁹ On the foundation of the PC Español see *ibid.*; and the accounts by founder-members, Amaro del Rosal, "Consideraciones y vivencias sobre la fundación del PCE y sus primeros años", in *Para una historia*, pp. 65-84; Luis Portela, "El nacimiento y los primeros pasos del movimiento comunista en España", *Estudios de Historia Social*, no. 14 (Madrid, 1980), pp. 190-213; and Juan Andrade, *Apuntes para la historia del PCE* (Barcelona, 1979) which covers the period 1920-1936. Luis Arranz, "La ruptura del PSOE en la crisis de la Restauración", *Estudios de Historia Social*, nos. 32-33 (January-June 1985), pp. 7-91 deals with the crisis in Spanish socialism, the early years of the PC Español and its relations with the PCOE.

²⁰ Arranz, "Los Cien Niños", p. 94(***), Portela, "El nacimiento", and Andrade, *Apuntes sobre la historia*, p. 31 put this figure at 2,000 and Joaquín Maurín, "Sobre el comunismo en España" [1964], in *Revolución y contrarrevolución en España* (Paris, 1966), p. 271 at 1,000.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 271; on the Communist press at this time also see Carlos Forcadell, "La nueva prensa obrera en la escisión del socialismo español", in Jesús Timoteo Alvarez *et al.*, *Prensa obrera en Madrid 1855-1936* (Madrid, 1987), pp. 251-272.

²² They were, in particular, influenced by the Dutch ultra-leftists; see the correspondence between Juan Andrade and G.J. Geers, the complete collection of which is kept in the IISG and part of which has been reproduced in Juan Andrade, *Recuerdos personales* (Madrid, 1983), pp. 149-180.

Español's ultra-leftism manifested itself most clearly in the party's rejection of participation in parliamentary elections, although this aspect of the party's politics has perhaps been overstated.²³

Meanwhile, the majority of pro-Bolshevik Socialists, known as "Terceristas"²⁴, had stayed on inside the PSOE still hoping to win over the party. At the latter's Second Extraordinary Congress in June 1920, a clear majority of 8,269 to 5,016 favoured affiliating to the CI, but on condition that the two Internationals eventually re-united and that the Spanish party maintained a high level of autonomy. The introduction of the "21 Conditions" at the CI's Second World Congress two months later ended the illusion that unity could be maintained inside the PSOE. The party's third and final Extraordinary Congress, in April 1921, voted by 8,808 to 6,025 to adhere to the recently formed Vienna Union. The "Tercerista" delegates withdrew and founded the Spanish Workers Communist Party (*Partido Comunista Obrero Español*; PCOE). Unlike the PC Español, this new Communist party had a small, but important, working-class base, mainly in the industrial centres of Asturias and Vizcaya. Immediately following the PSOE Congress, the FJS Congress voted by 3,181 to 440 to join the PCOE.

Under pressure from the CI, unity talks immediately began between the two Spanish Communist organisations. However, such was the hostility of the PC Español towards the "centrists" of the PCOE, that these talks soon broke down.²⁵ After the CI Third World Congress, to which both Spanish parties sent separate delegations, the International's Executive Committee (ECCI), determined to end the division, sent the Italian Antonio Gaziadei to Spain to organize a unity agreement. The main obstacle remained the PC Español, which having been recognized as the official Spanish section of the CI in August 1920, demanded that it had a majority in the unified party's leadership and that the ranks of the PCOE be purged of opportunists. Gaziadei acceded to the first demand and the two parties finally united in November 1921. The mutual distrust which had characterized relations between the two Spanish Communist Parties continued after their unification. The PCE was further weakened by state repression, a chronic shortage of funds and a certain "localism" due to the different labour milieus in which it operated.

Sympathy for the Bolshevik revolution in Spain was not confined to among the Socialists alone but also was present inside the powerful anarcho-syndicalist National Confederation of Labour (*Confederación Nacional de Trabajo*; CNT). By 1919, the latter was leading many of the strikes that were taking place throughout the peninsula. Consequently, the CNT's membership grew between September 1918 and December 1919 from 85,000 to 700,000. In contrast, the Socialist UGT had only 160,000 members by the end of 1919. Confident of the imminent triumph of the revolution in Spain, the anarcho-syndicalists were far more enthusiastic about events in Russia than their Socialist rivals.

To this background, the CNT's Second Congress in Madrid in December 1919 agreed to affiliate to the CI. The following summer, CNT leader, Angel Pestafia attended the CI's Second Congress but was unimpressed with what he saw. By 1921, the Catalan CNT was in disarray, victim of systematic state repression and the murderous attentions of the "Sindicatos Libres" (Free Unions). With many experienced militants either dead or in prison, new and younger activists came to the fore. Thus, in the spring of 1921 the most pro-Communist faction inside the anarcho-syndicalist unions briefly took over the local CNT leadership. This group described itself as "revolutionary syndicalist" and was grouped around the newspaper *Lucha Social* (Social Struggle) which was edited by Joaquín Maurín in Lerida. Ideologically this faction was heavily influenced by the French syndicalist Georges Sorel, whose ideas it believed were being put into practice in Russia. Although few in number, the "revolutionary syndicalists" were able to persuade the CNT National Plenum in April 1921 to send a delegation to the founding Congress in July of the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU). The delegation included Maurín and the talented Andreu Nin, a former Socialist who had recently become Secretary to the CNT National Committee. Given the strength of the CNT, the Spanish delegation played an important role at the RILU Congress, particularly in placating the criticisms and doubts of other syndicalists present. Following the CNT's adhesion to the RILU, the CI leadership took more interest in the anarcho-syndicalists as a potential mass base

²³ See Portela, "El nacimiento".

²⁴ From "tercera" meaning third, literally "thirdist".

²⁵ See Luis Arranz, "Las negociaciones PCE-PCOE de mayo de 1921: Problemas para la formación de un grupo dirigente comunista", *Nuestra Bandera*, no. 103 (April 1980), pp. 58-64 and no. 104 (September 1980), pp. 68-73.

for communism in Spain.

Meanwhile, anti-Bolshevik sentiment was growing inside the CNT as news of the "authoritarian" nature of the Communist regime in Russia and, in particular, its persecution of the anarchists, filtered back to Spain. A debate now raged inside the CNT between the supporters of the RILU and its opponents which culminated in the anarcho-syndicalists voting overwhelmingly in June 1922 to disaffiliate from both the CI and the RILU. The revolutionary syndicalists now evolved towards more orthodox Communist positions and their press became the official mouthpiece of the RILU in Spain. However, the pro-Communist CNT group retained certain syndicalist ideas and did not formally integrate into the PCE until October 1924.

From the end of 1921 through to 1923, the PCE was involved in several important struggles in its only real strongholds at this time: Vizcaya²⁶ and Asturias. In both areas the party had benefitted from the crisis that hit local industry following the First World War and the general disillusionment, especially among younger militants, with the moderation of the locally powerful Socialist organisations. The PCE managed to win considerable influence among miners in both Asturias and Vizcaya and in particular, in the latter province, among metal workers.²⁷ However, the party's work in the North of Spain was hindered by its aggressive tactics and lurches into terrorism. Relations with its Socialist rivals were so bad, despite calls in the summer of 1922 in line with CI policy for a united front, that violent clashes between the two tendencies were quite common. This violence culminated in a shooting incident involving Communist delegates at the UGT's Fifteenth Congress, which resulted in one Socialist being killed. As a consequence fifteen Communist-controlled unions were expelled from the UGT.

Partly as a result of their expulsion from the Socialist unions, although principally due to a call from the CI, the Communists established the Revolutionary Syndicalist Committees at a Conference of its trade union supporters in December 1922. These Committees aimed at defending the RILU's programme inside the unions and stood for the "unity of all revolutionary tendencies" - anarchist, syndicalist and Communist - inside the CNT. The Committees' limited strength rested mainly on the PCE's trade union base in Vizcaya and Asturias and not on the Catalan group led by Maurín, as has often been stated.²⁸

By the PCE's Second Congress in July 1923, the party had been unable to overcome its general isolation and only had 1,200 members.²⁹ Internally the party was still divided, although opposition to the leadership now included the Vizcaya and Valencia organisations and, from outside, Maurín's group in Catalonia. Jules Humbert-Droz, the CI's representative at the Congress, blamed the poor state of the PCE on its use of terrorism, lack of activity, bad organisation and indiscipline. In an attempt to remedy these weaknesses and to overcome internal division he imposed a new leadership which united all tendencies.³⁰

The PCE's inability to build a mass organisation in the post war period cannot be put down to internal failings alone. By the time the party was founded, the revolutionary upsurge of 1918-1921 was already in serious decline. The "leftist" image of the PSOE had also hindered the Communists in their attempts to win over the majority of Socialists. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, unlike most other Communist parties, the PCE had to compete with a mass revolutionary alternative: the CNT.

²⁶ On the party's origins in the Basque Country see Juan Pablo Fusi, *Política obrera en el País Vasco* (Madrid, 1975), pp. 429-483.

²⁷ For example see the memoirs of local Communist and union leader, Leandro Carro, "En torno a mis recuerdos sobre el movimiento obrero y comunista de Euskadi", *Estudios de Historia Social*, nos. 32-33 (January-June 1985), pp. 335-373.

²⁸ See Andrew Durgan, *Dissident Communism in Catalonia* (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1988), pp. 22-26.

²⁹ José Bullejos, *La Comintern en España* (Mexico, 1972), p. 27.

³⁰ Jules Humbert-Droz visited Spain on behalf of the CI in 1922 and again in 1923, see his memoirs *Memories. De Lénine à Staline* (Neuchâtel, 1971), pp. 63-71, 185-192; and *Archives de Jules Humbert-Droz*, vol. 1: *Origines et débuts des Partis Communistes des Pays Latins (1919-1923)* (Dordrecht, 1970).

3. Dictatorship. 1923-1931

Humiliation in the Moroccan war, continuing social unrest and a general loss of faith by the ruling classes in ineffective politicians laid the basis for General Miguel Primo de Rivera to launch a successful coup d'état in September 1923. The workers movement, seriously weakened by repression and defeats, offered little resistance to the military take-over.

For the Spanish Communists, the dictatorship would mark a particularly bleak period in its history.³¹ For the next eight years party membership never rose above 500, over half of which was in prison at one time or another. The new regime was more interested in repressing the anarcho-syndicalist movement than an increasingly irrelevant Communist Party. Thus the PCE, despite suffering constant arrests and police raids, was allowed to publish its weekly newspaper, *La Antorcha* (The Torch), albeit heavily censored, until 1928 and it maintained a circulation of between five and eleven thousand copies. The first major blow against the PCE was the arrest in December 1923 of the majority of its Central Committee on fake charges of organising an armed uprising. The party's fortunes were slightly revived with the belated incorporation of Maurín's group in October 1924. The new Catalan-Balearic Communist Federation (*Federación Comunista Catalano-Balear*; FCC-B) had about a hundred members and sided with the Bilbao Communists in ousting the party leadership at a National Conference in Madrid in November 1924. They were supported in this task by the CI's representative, Jacques Doriot. However, within a few weeks most of the new "leftist" leadership, based on the Catalan and Vizcayan Federations, was also arrested. The party was now, effectively, led by exiled members in Paris.³² In 1925, the ECCI resolved the problem of the PCE's leadership with the appointment of José Bullejos, an ex-leader of the Vizcayan Miners Union, as the new General Secretary. Bullejos and other former oppositionists from Bilbao would form the core of the party leadership until 1932.

The party's internal life was now increasingly characterized by factional struggles and arbitrary expulsions, as the new leadership set about the "Bolshevisation" of the organisation in line with the latest CI turn. The PCE was also hit by the desertion of some former leaders back to the PSOE or, in the cases of Ramon Merino Gracia and Oscar Perez Solís, to the far right.³³ The PCE's only real success in the mid-twenties was the recruitment of several CNT leaders in Seville, thus laying the basis for the party's influence in this city in the thirties.³⁴ During 1927, the Spanish Communists benefitted from a slight revival in the class struggle and played a leading role in strikes in Asturias and Vizcaya. This brief success for the party came abruptly to an end in 1928 when most of the leadership, including Bullejos, who had recently returned to Spain, were imprisoned. Until 1930, the PCE was led from Paris by Vicente Arroyo and two delegates from the PCF, Jaques Duclos and Claude Rabaté. In August 1929, the party organized its Third Congress in Paris where, not without opposition, the CI's new "Third Period" line was adopted.

The ousting of Primo de Rivera in January 1930, opened up new possibilities for the whole of the Spanish Left. The party was taken by surprise by the dictator's fall. At its Third Congress, five months before, it had stated that there was "a regroupment of reactionary forces around the dictatorship" and a general "radicalisation among the masses". Neither was true. Now the situation was changing fast, both the PCE and the

³¹ On the PCE during the dictatorship see Pelai Pagés, *História del Partido Comunista de España 1920-1930* (Barcelona, 1978) and Manuel Tuñón de Lara, "De la Dictadura de Primo de Rivera al Congreso de Sevilla", in *Para una historia*, pp. 105-133.

³² For a rather imaginative account of the PCE activities in France during the twenties see the memoirs of party organiser in exile and later POUM leader, Julian Gorkín, *El Revolucionario Profesional* (Barcelona, 1975).

³³ Merino Gracia was the former General Secretary of the PC Español, see Colin M. Winston, *Workers and the Right in Spain* (New Jersey, 1985), pp. 259-260; Perez Solís was the nominal Spanish representative on the ECCI, see S. Carrasco, "Oscar Perez Solís. Del comunismo al Falange (1921-1951)", in *Segundo Coloquio Internacional sobre la Segunda Republica Española* (Tarragona, 1981).

³⁴ On the PCE in Seville during the Second Republic see Manuel Tuñón de Lara, *Luchas obreras y campesinas en la Andalucía del siglo XX. Jaen 1917-1920. Sevilla 1930-1932* (Madrid, 1978), pp. 125-271 and José Manuel Macarro Vera, *La utopia revolucionaria. Sevilla en la Segunda Republica* (Sevilla, 1989).

CI appeared incapable of understanding the fact. The International's leaders having initially dismissed events in Spain, then proceeded to speak of the fall of Spanish "fascism". The PCE's National Conference in Bilbao in March 1930 responded to the new situation by calling for a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry".

During the summer of 1930, taking advantage of the relative liberalisation of the military regime, there was a massive outbreak of strikes. Those few unions under Communist control, principally in Seville and Vizcaya, actively participated in this movement. Their attitude contrasted with that of the UGT leadership, which had collaborated with the dictatorship, and even with the anarcho-syndicalist leaders which counselled moderation. Impressed by this new outburst of working class militancy and urged on by the CI, the PCE tried, with very little success, to organize its own "Red" trade union federation, the "Committee for the reconstruction of the CNT". The party's radicalism, however, hardly helped it overcome its weaknesses and after the loss of several local organisations to the opposition (see Appendix) it had only a few hundred members by the beginning of 1931.³⁵

4. *The Republic. 1931-1936*³⁶

In an attempt to head off the growing political crisis facing his regime, the King was persuaded to call municipal elections for 12 April 1931. The result was a landslide victory for the Republican-Socialist alliance. Two days later, the King fled the country, opening the way to the declaration of the Second Republic.

The PCE played hardly any role in the fall of the monarchy. Not only because of its lack of forces but also because it dismissed the Republican movement as little more than a plot to save Spanish capitalism. Its intervention in the municipal elections was extremely limited.³⁷ The establishment of the Republic was greeted with wild enthusiasm by the majority of the population but rejected by the PCE with the slogan, "Down with the bourgeois Republic!".

The PCE's line was modified after several party leaders visited Moscow in May 1931. The ECCI, and in particular Manuilski, accused the Spanish party of not understanding that the declaration of the Republic had represented more than just a "change of face" but had placed the democratic revolution at the centre of the political agenda. However, the basic analysis of the CI of the situation in Spain was the same as the PCE's - the real divergence of opinion was over the party's strategical and tactical application of its programme.³⁸

The CI's, and therefore the PCE's, analysis was roughly as follows: the bourgeoisie had been favoured by the establishment of the Republic, as opposed to the remnants of feudalism that still existed; the new Republican government was counter-revolutionary and should not be supported under any circumstances by the PCE; the alternative was the creation of a Soviet Spain. The Socialist Party, in particular, was singled out for having betrayed the working class and the Spanish Communists repeatedly appealed to the PSOE rank and file

³⁵ CI sources vary, giving a figure of 800 or 120 members at the beginning of 1931, cited in Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (Harmondsworth, 1961), p. 106. On the difficulties facing the PCE in early 1931, see Humbert-Droz, *Memoires*, pp. 403-457; and *Archives de Jules Humbert-Droz*, vol. 3: *Les Partis Communistes et l'Internationale Communiste dans les années 1928-1932* (Dordrecht-Boston-London, 1988), pp. 189-305.

³⁶ For a well-documented and relatively thorough history of the party during this period see Rafael Cruz, *El Partido Comunista de España en la II República* (Madrid, 1987).

³⁷ See William J. Irwin, "Electoral Politics of the Spanish Communist Party during the Second Republic", in William D. Phillips and Carla R. Phillips (eds.), *Margined Groups in Spanish and Portuguese History* (Minneapolis, 1989), p. 143.

³⁸ On the CI and the PCE, see Edward H. Carr, *The Twilight of the Comintern* (London, 1982), pp. 289-318.

to abandon their "social-fascist" leaders.³⁹

The party had an opportunity to intervene in the national political arena with the celebration of elections in June 1931. But it only managed to win about 40,000 votes, less than 2% of the total cast, and none of its candidates were elected.

By the summer of 1931, a strike wave was sweeping the country, led principally by the CNT. The PCE's unions, mainly in its only real stronghold at this time, Seville, intervened actively in these struggles. Despite the militancy of the anarcho-syndicalists, their leaders were denounced in the PCE press as "reformists", if not "anarcho-fascists". The only alternative to the treachery of the workers leaders was the "united front from below", the creation of factory committees (embryonic soviets) and a policy of "class against class".

Despite its sectarianism, and general isolation, the PCE, like all Spanish workers organisations at this time, grew rapidly during 1931. Between April and December its claimed membership rose from 1,000 to 8,800. A similar figure was given at the party's Fourth Congress in March 1932, of which over 5,000 were from Andalusia. By the end of the 1932 membership was supposedly at around 15,000, at which it, more or less, stayed until the end of 1935.⁴⁰ The party's social composition was overwhelmingly working class - 77.5% by the end of 1932 were described as "workers", although this included farm labourers. Like most Communist parties, the leaders were relatively young - an average age of twenty-nine in 1932 - but in contrast to other parties at this time many PCE leaders - around 30% - were ex-anarchists.

The general level of political education in the PCE was very low but plans to set up a "party school" came to nothing. The party issued numerous pamphlets in an attempt to popularize its line and various publishers during the Republic brought out cheap versions of marxist classics as well as works by contemporary Communist leaders.⁴¹ The PCE press suffered from frequent confiscations and suspensions throughout the Republican period. Its principal publication, *Mundo Obrero* (Workers' World), daily from 30 November 1931, claimed a circulation of 24,000 by 1933 and 40-50,000 in early 1934. It also published a variety of provincial and regional newspapers, most of which came out on a fairly sporadic basis.⁴²

The most important development for the PCE during 1932 was the change in its leadership. Despite the show of conformity at the party's Fourth Congress in March, the CI continued to be critical of the Spanish party's failure to overcome its lack of political consolidation and, although not stated explicitly, its leadership's relative independence from Moscow. The PCE's Political Bureau's call for a "revolutionary defence of the Republic" in response to the attempted coup led by the head of the Civil Guard, General José Sanjurjo, on 10 August 1932, signalled the beginning of the end for Bullejos. The latest CI delegate to arrive in Spain, the Argentinian Vittorio Codovila, severely criticized the party leadership for having taken this position and Bullejos and three of his closest collaborators, Manuel Adame, Gabriel Trilla and Evtelvino Vega were accused of being "counter-revolutionaries" and expelled in late October from the PCE and then from the CI.⁴³ The core of the new leadership, recommended by the ECCL, with the Seville Communist leader José Díaz as General Secretary, remained at the head of the party until after the Civil War.⁴⁴

³⁹ On the PCE and social-fascism, see Marta Bizcarrondo, "Appendice sobre el 'social-fascismo' en España", *Estudios de Historia Social*, nos. 16-17 (January-June 1981), pp. 105-116.

⁴⁰ Cruz, *El Partido Comunista*, pp. 58-60.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 71.; Gonzalo Santonja, *La Republica de los libros* (Barcelona, 1989), pp. 39-76.

⁴² See Rafael Cruz, "La prensa comunista madrileña durante la II República", and Jesús Timoteo Alvarez, "Propaganda de élite en la III Internacional: Imprekor, 1932-1939", in *Prensa obrera*, pp. 353-368 and 397-410. On the party press in Mallorca see Antoni Nadal, "Notas sobre 'Nuestra Palabra' (1931-1936)", *Randa* (Barcelona, 1991), pp. 5-18.

⁴³ Bullejos later wrote a critical account of the party's history in the period 1920-1936, *La Comintern en España*.

⁴⁴ For a short biographical article about José Díaz, see Nuria Plá, "José Díaz. 1895-1942", *Nuestra Bandera*, no. 53, 1967; also, José Díaz, "Autobiografía manuscrita", *Revista de Historia Moderna y Contemporánea*, no. 4 (Madrid, December 1980). His major speeches and articles from 1935 to 1938 have

Once the new Political Bureau was appointed, relations with the CI, in particular with its principal and most influential representative in Spain, Codovila, improved considerably. The new party leadership's general analysis, however, was that of its predecessors, which despite the attacks on Bullejos and others, had never really differed in any important way from that of the CI.

The significance of Hitler's victory in Germany made little impact on the PCE at first. This was partly rectified in March 1933 when the party, urged on by the CI delegates, emphasized that it would be wrong to believe that there was no fascist threat in Spain. The PCE's propaganda in favour of the "united front" thus intensified and in April it founded an "Anti-Fascist Front" with the support of various intellectuals and Communist-led trade unions and front organisations, such as the Workers Sports Clubs and International Red Aid. Most of the "Front's" backers were little more than appendages of the Communist Party and its main activity centred on the organisation of public meetings.⁴⁵

The withdrawal of Socialist support from the Republican government led to elections in November 1933 and a new chance for the PCE to intervene on a national level. The party declared its aim to "transform the elections... into an implacable trial [of] Spanish social-fascism by the workers and peasants". It also ruled out any alliances with other parties,⁴⁶ at least in the First Round. The elections resulted in a victory for the Centre (Radical Party) and Gil Robles' reactionary Catholic "Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Rightists" (*Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas*; CEDA). Unlike in 1931, the PCE stood candidates in every constituency and obtained around 170,000 votes, about 2% of the total cast. In the Second Round in those constituencies where a sufficient percentage of votes had not been won by any candidature, the Communist Doctor Cayetano Bolívar became the party's first ever deputy when he was elected in Malaga as part of an "Anti-Fascist Coalition" based on the PCE, PSOE and the Independent Radical Socialist Party. Rather than a precursor to the Popular Front, as it has sometimes been presented, the Malaga coalition was the result of a very specific agreement to obtain the popular Bolívar's release from prison and came within the guidelines laid down by the CI's Sixth Congress for limited local pacts in exceptional circumstances.⁴⁷

The 1933 elections allowed the participation for the first time of women and most political parties, including the PCE, paid some attention to winning the female vote. The Spanish Communists' position on women's oppression was fairly typical of most marxist organisations at this time.⁴⁸ What little propaganda it directed specifically at women related almost exclusively to their unfavourable position in the labour market. One exception was Dolores Ibarruri,⁴⁹ appointed to the party's Political Bureau in 1932, who occasionally made re-

been republished in *Tres años de lucha* (Barcelona, 1978).

⁴⁵ On the PCE and the question of the united front, see David Ruiz, "Los obstáculos a la unidad de acción en España 1931-1934", *Estudios de Historia Social*, nos. 16-17 (January-June 1981), pp. 75-80.

⁴⁶ On the PCE's rejection of the socialists' offer for an alliance in Asturias, see José Girón, "Asturias, Octubre de 1934: el fracaso de un intento de alianza electoral entre socialistas y comunistas", in Gabriel Jackson *et al.*, *Octubre 1934* (Madrid, 1985), pp. 197-208.

⁴⁷ On the PCE's intervention in the 1933 elections, see Irwin, "Electoral politics", pp. 149-156. On the Malaga by-election, Cruz, *El Partido Comunista*, pp. 171-173 and for the view that this was a forerunner of the Popular Front, Encarnación Barranquero Texeira, "El Frente Unico Antifascista de Malaga en 1933 como primera experiencia de Frente Popular", in E. Barranquero *et al.*, *Estudios sobre la II Republica en Malaga* (Malaga, 1986), pp. 177-204.

⁴⁸ For the PCE's position on women's oppression, see Mary Nash, *Mujer y movimiento obrero en España 1931-1939* (Barcelona, 1981), pp. 175-208.

⁴⁹ On Dolores Ibarruri, see her memoirs *They shall not pass* (New York, 1966), *Memorias de La Pasionaria 1939-1977* (Barcelona, 1984) and *Memorias de Dolores Ibarruri: Pasionaria, la lucha y la vida: el unico camino: me faltaba España* (Barcelona, 1985). Her Civil War speeches and articles in Dolores Ibarruri, *En la lucha* (Moscow, 1976). Also see Jaime Camino, *Intimas conversaciones con La Pasionaria* (Barcelona, 1977); Andrés Carabantes and Eusebio Cimona, *Un mito llamado Pasionaria* (Barcelona, 1984); Peru Erroteta and Luis Haranburu, *Dolores Ibarruri* (Bilbao, 1977); Teresa Pamies, *Una española llamada*

ferences to the general subordination of women in society. Attempts were made to recruit women through several short-lived periodicals, but the percentage of women members was extremely low. The formation of a broad front organisation, "Women against War and Fascism" in April 1933 did little to change this situation.

The coming to power of Alejandro Lerroux's Radicals at the end of 1933 was to open up a new chapter in the Republic's short, but turbulent, history. For the PCE, the new government was the "preparatory stage" to the introduction of "integral fascism", as indeed the previous Republican-Socialist administration had been. Lerroux, with the support of the Right, set about dismantling those few reforms introduced since 1931. The response of the workers movement to the Left's defeat was a general radicalisation of its positions. This was particularly the case with the Socialists. "Workers Alliances against Fascism" were now formed in various parts of Spain involving the Socialists, syndicalists ("Treintistas"), the Workers and Peasants Bloc (*Bloc Obrero i Camperol*; BOC), the Trotskyists and, in Asturias, the CNT. The PCE, however, denounced the radicalisation of the Socialists as a manoeuvre to divert the masses away from the "true" Communist-led united front. The party stepped up its agitation in favour of its own Anti-Fascist Front and launched a new daily paper, *La Lucha* (The Struggle), at the beginning of 1934 dedicated to popularize its united front tactic.

By the summer of 1934, the gradual thawing in the international Communist movement's sectarian line began to be seen in Spain, as elsewhere. On 12 July, fifteen days before the agreement for joint action against the Right made by the French Socialists and Communists, the PCE made an identical set of proposals to the PSOE. The only immediate result of this and other "open letters" to the Socialists was a meeting on 26 July between the leaders of FJS and the Union of Communist Youth (*Unión de Juventudes Comunistas*; UJC), to discuss unity in action. Finally on 11 September, and under direct instructions from the CI, the PCE announced its decision to join the Workers Alliances, with the only proviso that it would be allowed "freedom of criticism". The party now argued that under its guidance the Alliances would be converted into truly democratic bodies, broadened out to include the peasantry and thus become embryonic soviets.⁵⁰

On 4 October the CEDA entered the government and the Socialists responded by calling a general strike. In Asturias, the strike resulted in a full scale armed insurrection in the mining zones led by the Workers Alliance. It was bloodily suppressed, but the heroic example of the Asturian miners would serve both as a warning to the Right and as an inspiration to the workers movement.

The PCE participated enthusiastically in the October movement despite doubts about it being premature.⁵¹ In Vizcaya and Asturias, party members held leading positions in the insurrection. Along with thousands of other activists, many Communists were jailed and several hundred fled to France or the Soviet Union. Solidarity with prisoners and refugees, and their families, was organized by the party's "Red Aid", which, with considerable help from Moscow, was re-organized after October. Material assistance was also extended to members of other organisations, especially the Socialists. The PCE also took part in a "National Committee to support the victims of October" set up in Paris with the participation of the Socialists and other left groups. Similar committees were also established inside Spain. At an international level, the CI and International Red Aid attached great importance to the October events and organized a massive campaign of solidarity.⁵²

October 1934 marked a turning point for the PCE and during the coming year the party lay the basis for a period of unprecedented growth. This would be due principally to two factors. Firstly, the CI's change of line during 1935, culminating in the Popular Front policy, meant the PCE could begin to break out of its political isolation. Secondly, the creation of a myth, both inside and outside Spain, around the PCE's supposed role in

Dolores Ibarruri (Mexico, 1975; Barcelona, 1977); A. Sorel, *Dolores Ibarruri: Pasionaria. Memoria humana* (Madrid, 1989).

⁵⁰ On the PCE and the Workers Alliances, see Marta Bizcarrondo, "De las Alianzas Obreras al Frente Popular", *Estudios de Historia Social*, nos. 16-17 (January-June 1981), pp. 83-104 and "Socialistas y comunistas ante la unidad: las Alianzas Obreras en 1935", in *Estudios sobre la historia de España. Obra homenaje a Manuel Tuñón de Lara* (Madrid, 1981), pp. 95-113.

⁵¹ For the PCE's position after the October events, see Marta Bizcarrondo, *Octubre del 34* (Madrid, 1977), pp. 191-225.

⁵² Bernhard Bayerlein, "El significado internacional de Octubre de 1934 en Asturias. La comuna asturiana y el Komintern", in *Octubre 1934*, pp. 34-36.

the October events. While the left Socialist leader, Francisco Largo Caballero, denied being responsible for what had happened, José Díaz proudly affirmed that his party had indeed been behind the revolutionary movement. The CI was interested in presenting the October uprising as a demonstration of the united front in action and thus as a precursor to the Popular Front. Moreover, the Comintern used the events in Spain and the subsequent solidarity campaign as a means to make specific unity proposals to the Socialist International.⁵³

The first public declaration by the PCE in favour of a united front that went beyond the workers movement, was at the end of October 1934, when its Catalan organisation called for an "Anti-Fascist Bloque" to include "all anti-fascists". Such a strategy in relation to Spain had already been formulated by Codovila while in Moscow at the end of July 1934 and was soon known as the "Anti-Fascist Popular Bloque" or "Concentration", later the "Anti-Fascist Popular Front", and by May 1935 had become a central part of the party's propaganda.⁵⁴ Parallel to calls for such a "Bloque", the party still urged that "Workers and Peasants Alliances" be built in every locality and workplace to ensure "working class hegemony" over the anti-fascist struggle. During the first half of 1935, the Spanish Communists, albeit working in semi-clandestinity, had some success in establishing new Alliances, mainly in Vizcaya.⁵⁵ By April, the party claimed to lead 75% of the 207 Alliances which it said existed throughout Spain.

Apart from trying to broaden the base of anti-fascist unity, the PCE increasingly worked for bi-lateral agreements with the PSOE. In November 1934, the PCE leadership proposed the formation of a Liaison Committee between itself and the PSOE Executive Committee and the creation of similar committees at a local level. The Socialists, formally at least, accepted this proposal, but this had few repercussions in practice thus provoking repeated calls by the Communists throughout 1935 for genuine "unity in action". The PCE was particularly critical of the Socialists' ambiguous, if not hostile, attitude towards the Workers Alliances. Liaison Committees only really existed in a few localities, mainly in the Basque Country, during the first half of 1935. There was, however, growing collaboration between the UJC and the FJS.⁵⁶

After the CI's Seventh Congress, the PCE sought to intensify its relations with the PSOE at all levels. But although the Socialist left expressed its approval of the Seventh Congress's new line, it only offered a common front on a few specific issues.

In contrast, the UGT leadership was prepared to consider organisational unity with the Communist trade union organisation, the General Unitary Confederation of Labour (*Confederación General de Trabajo Unitaria*; CGTU). The party's attempts to build its own "red" trade union federation in the early thirties had brought few results outside of Seville and a few other localities in Andalusia. The CGTU, formally constituted in April 1934, had only 46,000 members a year later, compared with probably over one million workers in the UGT. Thus the Socialist unions had little to fear from the integration into their ranks of their Communist rivals. Unable to obtain a "unification congress" between the two federations, the Communist unions were left with no alternative to joining the UGT on an individual basis.⁵⁷

The PCE made more progress towards political unity with the Socialists in Catalonia. Following the loss of its Catalan Federation in 1930 (see the Appendix), the PCE had barely any members in the region. In order to overcome this weakness, and on the CI's insistence, the Communist Party of Catalonia (*Partit Comunista de Catalunya*; PCdC) was founded in October 1932. The new party was totally subordinated to the PCE and never

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁵⁴ Manuel Tuñón de Lara, "El Bloque Popular Antifascista", *Estudios de Historia Social*, nos. 16-17 (January-June 1981), pp. 119-129.

⁵⁵ Bizcarrondo, "Socialistas y comunistas ante la unidad", p. 101.

⁵⁶ On Communist-Socialist relations in Spain during 1935, see Santos Juliá, *La Izquierda del PSOE. 1935-1936* (Madrid, 1977), pp. 139-216. On Communist-Socialist relations in the Basque Country between 1934 and 1936, see Ricardo Miralles, *El socialismo vasco durante la II República* (Bilbao, 1988), pp. 224-264.

⁵⁷ Cruz, *El Partido Comunista*, p. 241; also on the fusion of the UGT and CGTU, see Juliá, *La Izquierda del PSOE*, pp. 171-184.

had more than a few hundred members prior to 1936.⁵⁸ To try and compensate having "ignored the national question", as Manuiliski had put it in 1930, the PCdeC defended the need for a revolutionary struggle in favour of self-determination and even complete independence from Spain. Unlike the rest of the left, the Catalan Communists called for the rejection of the proposed Statute of Autonomy in the referendum of August 1931 and appealed, with some limited success, to the separatist groups for a united front against Spanish imperialism.⁵⁹ The Communists took a similar position in the Basque Country and in 1935 the local PCE converted itself into the Basque Communist Party.⁶⁰

The divisions inside the Catalan workers movement were even greater than in the rest of Spain, and thus the need for unity was even more pressing. In early 1935, six organisations - the PCdeC, the PSOE's Catalan Federation, the Catalan Socialist Union (*Unió Socialista de Catalunya*; USC), the Catalan Proletarian Party (*Partit Català Proletari*; PCP), the BOC and the Communist Left (Trotskyists) - met to discuss the possibility of forming one united marxist party in the region. Although no agreement could be reached, in part because the Catalan Communists insisted on the exclusion of the Trotskyists and that any new party should adopt the programme of the CI, these talks represented the first step towards the eventual unification of the PCdeC, USC, PCP and Catalan PSOE.

Financial scandals in the autumn of 1935 led to the collapse of the Radical-CEDA government and elections were called for the following February. This provided the PCE the opportunity to step up its campaign for a broad anti-fascist front, which had produced few results as yet. According to the party, there were only fifteen local "Anti-Fascist Popular Bloque" committees in existence by December 1935. Initially, the PCE argued that the workers organisations should be hegemonic inside any electoral alliance with the Republicans. But establishing such proletarian hegemony proved impossible due to both the opposition of the Republican parties and of the Socialist right. The final electoral programme adopted was that of the Republicans.⁶¹

The PCE centred its electoral propaganda on the existence of "two Spains": that of the "Inquisition" and that of "Culture and Work". Parallel to the Left Electoral Pact programme, the party still defended the need for a Workers and Peasants Government in terms very similar to those used in 1933. The party's prestige was greatly enhanced by its participation in the Left's campaign and subsequent victory at the polls on 16 February. Of the 21 Communist candidates in the Left's lists, seventeen were elected, thus giving the PCE an effective voice in parliament for the first time.

The basic social and political problems that had faced the Republican-Socialist government in 1931, had not only not been overcome by 1936, but, in general, had worsened. Following the elections, Spanish society was more polarized than ever. Encouraged by the Left's victory, there began a series of strikes and land occupations which the new all-Republican government tried hard to control. The political "centre", principally the Radicals, had collapsed leaving the authoritarian Right as the only real opposition. For most of the ruling oligarchy the introduction of an authoritarian regime through legal means was no longer a possibility. Plans to overthrow the Republic by force now began in earnest inside the upper echelons of the army; while on the streets fascist para-military groups were increasingly active.

For the PCE, the best way the new government could both avoid a repeat of the experience of 1931-1933 and fight the threat of fascism was to implement the Left's electoral programme. The party did not

⁵⁸ On the development of the PCdeC, see Josep Lluís Martín i Ramos, *Els orígens del Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya (1930-1936)* (Barcelona, 1977), pp. 74-86; and Albert Balcells, *Marxismo y catalanismo* (Barcelona, 1977), pp. 41-75.

⁵⁹ On the PCdeC and the national question, see the collection of documents edited by Roger Arnau, *Marxisme català i qüestió nacional catalana 1930-1936*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1974).

⁶⁰ Carlos Alonso Zoldívar, *Notas sobre el Partido Comunista de Euskadi* (San Sebastian, 1977), p. 15; on the PCE and national question in the Basque Country, see Antonio Elorza, "Comunismo y cuestión nacional en Euskadi", *Estudios de Historia Contemporánea del País Vasco* (Vizcaya, 1982), pp. 139-200.

⁶¹ On the origins of the Popular Front in Spain, see Santos Juliá, *Orígenes del Frente Popular* (Madrid, 1979) and "Luchas obreras y políticas del Frente Popular en Madrid", *Estudios de Historia Social*, nos. 16-17 (January-June 1981), pp. 131-141; and Manuel Tuñón de Lara, *Tres claves de la Segunda República* (Madrid, 1985), pp. 289-365.

renounce its belief in the need for an armed insurrection and for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but its propaganda continually stressed the most immediate danger was fascism and thus the defence of the Republic and democracy had to be the workers' main concern. If a criticism was to be made of the new administration, it was its slowness in pushing through reforms. The PCE was more critical of the strikes and declared itself instead for "Republican order" because disorder could only serve reaction.

Following the elections the question of unity continued to be at the centre of the PCE's work. The Spanish Communists still called for the creation and generalisation of both "Popular Anti-Fascist Blocque" or "Popular Front" committees and "Workers and Peasants Alliances". However, while some local Popular Front committees were formed, there appear to have been no new Alliances created. In fact, according to the PCE, by the end of 1935 there were 158 Alliances in existence - 49 less than eight months earlier. The PCE was successful in popularising the term "Popular Front" and the Left Pact's "Central Committee" functioned after the elections under this name.

Relations with the Socialists continued to improve, although not as much as the Communists would have liked. The PCE was most successful in attracting the FJS. Youth organisations played a very important part in the country's political life at this time and, as often has been the case, provided the main base for both left and right wing radicalism. The UJC's membership had, like other youth groups, grown steadily since 1931 - from a claimed 4,050 in March 1932 to 14,000 by February 1936.⁶² Collaboration between the FJS and UJC had increased since October 1934. The FJS had moved towards the Communists because of both its own failure to "Bolshevize" the PSOE and the political turn by the CI and its Youth International (CYI) towards Socialist-Communist unity and a new form of youth organisation. Moreover, the FJS leaders seemed to have ignored those aspects of the CI's new line which were at variance with its own: principally the Communists' calls for an alliance with the petty bourgeoisie. The visit of a joint FJS-UJC delegation to Moscow in March 1936 resulted in an agreement to form one united organisation, the Unified Socialist Youth (*Juventudes Socialistas Unificadas*; JSU), which would be a sympathising section of the CYI. While a national congress was planned, the fusion between the two organisations went ahead at a local level although, not without some opposition. The FJS General Secretary, Santiago Carrillo,⁶³ held the same post in the new organisation. Although the ex-Socialists made up the majority of the united organisation's claimed 140,000 members in July 1936 most of the FJS leaders had been won over to communism while in Moscow if not before. The creation of the JSU deprived the PSOE of control over its most dynamic section while providing the PCE with an unprecedented opportunity to extend its influence.⁶⁴

Meanwhile, in Catalonia the unification process which had begun in 1935 led in July 1936 to the creation of the United Socialist Party of Catalonia (*Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya*; PSUC).⁶⁵ The most important component of the new party, the social democratic USC, had evolved towards the CI after October 1934. The Popular Front policy, the calls for one working-class party and the Communists' preparedness to accept that such a party could be independent from Madrid had combined to draw the USC's new leadership, headed by Joan Comorera, closer to the Communists.⁶⁶ The radical nationalist group, the PCP, had always

⁶² Cruz, *El Partido Comunista*, p. 57.

⁶³ On Carrillo, see Fernando Claudin, *Santiago Carrillo* (Barcelona, 1983); José Antonio Vidal Sales, *Biografía de Santiago Carrillo* (Barcelona, 1977); María Eugenia Yagüe, *Santiago Carrillo* (Madrid, 1977); and his conversations with Régis Debray and Max Gallo in Santiago Carrillo, *Dialogue on Spain* (London, 1976).

⁶⁴ Ricard Viñas, *La formación de las Juventudes Socialistas Unificadas 1934-1936* (Madrid, 1978).

⁶⁵ On the origins and foundation of the PSUC, see Martín i Ramos, *Els orígens del Partit*; L.V. Ponamariova, *La formación del Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya* (Barcelona, 1977); Josep Solé Barberá, *La fundació del PSUC* (Barcelona, 1977); and Pere Ardiaca, *La fundació del P.S.U. de Catalunya* (Barcelona, 1986).

⁶⁶ On the USC, see Ricard Alacaráz i González, *La Unió Socialista de Catalunya* (Barcelona, 1987); and Miquel Caminal, *Joan Comorera*, vol. 1 (Barcelona, 1984), pp. 199-238.

looked towards the CI but had balked at fusing with the Communist Party because of its domination by Madrid.⁶⁷ The acceptance by first the USC, and then the PCdeC, of the PCP's proposal to form an exclusively Catalan marxist party removed this obstacle to unity. A Liaison Committee between the PCP and USC had been formed in July 1935, which the Catalan Communists joined the following January and the Catalan PSOE in March. Apart from the political evolution of the USC, PCP, and the Catalan PSOE, the general social and political situation in Catalonia by 1936 appeared to favour what has been described as "popular frontism".⁶⁸ Outside the ranks of the CNT, especially among white collar and skilled workers and some sections of the petty bourgeoisie, the CI's new line found a ready audience. An important factor in this was the PCdeC's more flexible approach to the national question. Although formally the party's position remained the same as before - the defence of the right of self-determination - the Popular Front tactic opened up the possibility of closer relations with nationalist-inclined groups such as the USC and PCP. Although the PSUC had under 3,000 members at its foundation on 23 July 1936, at least half being from the USC,⁶⁹ its political potential soon became clear during the first year of the Civil War. The new party's programme contained the basic conditions for Socialist-Communist unification established by the CI's Seventh Congress and thus represented a major political victory for the Communists.

In the five months that separated the Left's electoral victory and the beginning of the Civil War, the PCE claimed its membership had risen from 20,000 to 83,967.⁷⁰ This dramatic change in the party's fortunes would prove to be a starting point for even more spectacular growth during the next three years.

5. Civil War. 1936-1939

The outbreak of the Civil War following the military uprising of 18 July 1936 was to lead to the most important period in the PCE's history. From being a minority tendency inside the working class movement, the party would end up dominating political life in the Republican zone.⁷¹

The strategic position of the Republican forces at the beginning of the war was fairly favourable. Nearly all the major industrial areas and two thirds of Spain was under their control but militarily the situation was more

⁶⁷ On the PCP, see the article by the former PCP leader Emili Vilaseca, "Notas sobre els orígens del Partit Català Proletari", *Nous Horitzons*, no. 4 (Mexico, 1964).

⁶⁸ See Ricard Vinyes, *La Catalunya Internacional. El frontpopulisme en l'exemple català* (Barcelona, 1983).

⁶⁹ Durgan, *Dissident Communism*, p. 284.

⁷⁰ Cruz, *El Partido Comunista*, p. 60.

⁷¹ There has been very little specific work done on the PCE in the Civil War. An exception is Burnett Bolloten's monumental study, *The Spanish Civil War: Revolution and Counter-revolution* (University of North Carolina, 1991; Spanish edition, Madrid, 1989) which deals exhaustively with the Communists rise to power in the Republican zone. Less satisfactory is David T. Cattell, *Communism and the Spanish Civil War* (Berkeley, 1956). For the party's own version of the war see Comisión del Comité Central del PCE, *Guerra y revolución en España 1936-1939*, 4 vols. (Moscow, 1966). For the view of leading PCE members that participated in events, see Santiago Alvarez, *Memorias*, vol. 2: 1936-1939 (La Coruña, 1988); Enrique Castro Delgado, *Hombres made in Moscow* (Mexico, 1960); Antonio Cerdón, *Trayectoria. Memorias de un militar republicano* (Paris, 1971 and Barcelona, 1977); Jesús Hernández, *Yo fui un ministro de Stalin en España* (Madrid, 1954 and 1974); Enrique Lister, *Nuestra guerra: aportaciones para una historia de la guerra nacional revolucionaria del pueblo español 1936-1939* (Paris, 1966); Pedro Mateo Merino, *Por vuestra libertad y la nuestra* (Madrid, 1986); Juan Modesto, *Soy del quinto regimiento* (Paris, 1969); and Manuel Tagüena, *Testimonio de dos guerras* (Barcelona, 1978); on the war in Catalonia, Joaquín Almedros, *Situaciones españolas 1936-1939. El PSUC en la guerra civil* (Barcelona, 1976); and Manuel Benavides, *Guerra y revolución en Cataluña* (Mexico, 1978); on the war in the north, Juan Ambou, *Los comunistas en la resistencia nacional republicana. La guerra en Asturias, el País Vasco y Santander* (Madrid, 1978).

complicated. The rebels, well supplied by Italy and Germany, soon made inroads into Republican territory. The militias, spontaneously organized by the left parties and trade unions, despite their heroism lacked the cohesion to fight an orthodox war. With the virtual collapse of the state machine in many areas of loyalist Spain, power lay in the hands of a myriad of committees, workers' and peasants' collectives and militias. There immediately arose a division on the Republican side between those who insisted that the war and social revolution were inseparable and those who sought to restore "Republican order". The first position was defended by the CNT, the Workers Party of Marxist Unification (*Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista*; POUM) and some sectors of the Socialist left, the second by the Republican parties, the more moderate wing of Spanish socialism and the PCE.

The Civil War in Spain was soon one of the CI's central concerns.⁷² Not only was a fascist victory to be avoided at all costs, but also a social revolution that could put in danger the USSR's attempts to form an anti-Hitler alliance with the western democracies. Given the importance of events in Spain, the number of CI representatives in the country soon increased and their role inside the PCE during the war would be decisive. So much so, that the most influential of them, Palmiro Togliatti, complained that these "advisors" often "considered themselves masters of the party".⁷³

The Comintern's initial view of the conflict was most clearly explained by Togliatti in October 1936 when he stressed that the remnants of feudalism and the general backwardness of Spanish society meant that the "tasks faced by the Spanish people were the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution". However, the political and social reality of much of Republican Spain was hardly that of a "normal" bourgeois democracy. Dimitroff had already stated in August 1936 that the Left in Spain was fighting for "an authentic popular democracy... a special anti-fascist state with the participation of the authentically leftist sector of the bourgeoisie".⁷⁴ Thus José Díaz would claim that the PCE's aim was the establishment of a "parliamentary and democratic Republic of a new type" with a "deep social content" and to "destroy the material basis of reaction and fascism". This was not to be a "democratic Republic like that of France or any other capitalist country". The Spanish situation was so unique that Stalin, in his famous letter to Spanish Premier Largo Caballero in December 1936,⁷⁵ argued that it was "very possible that the parliamentary road" was a "more efficient way to revolution in Spain than [it had been] in Russia". In the meantime, in order to win the support of the Western democracies the Spanish government, the Soviet leader stressed, had not to appear revolutionary in any sense. Thus, it followed that the anti-fascist alliance with the democratic sectors of the middle classes had to be maintained at all costs. The class nature of the Spanish conflict, even the fact that it was a "civil" war were eventually ignored altogether by the PCE. Instead the conflict was increasingly presented as a war for "national independence" against "foreign invasion". Any other interpretation of the Spanish situation was to be denounced as "counter-revolutionary".

The growth of the PCE in the first months of the war was spectacular. According to José Díaz,⁷⁶ in March 1937 the party had 268,440 members, of which 87,660 were industrial workers, 62,250 agricultural workers, 76,700 peasants, 15,485 "middle class", 7,045 "intellectuals" and 19,300 women (no class or occupational breakdown being given). In addition, the Basque Communist Party had 20,000 members and the PSUC 50,000. Unlike in the rest of Spain, the Communists in Catalonia dominated the UGT, whose membership had grown from around 85,000 in July 1936 to 436,000 three months later, compared with 361,000 in the Catalan CNT.⁷⁷ Moreover, the JSU,⁷⁸ under Communist leadership, supposedly had 300,000 members by April

⁷² See Edward H. Carr, *The Comintern and the Spanish Civil War* (London, 1984; Spanish edition, Madrid, 1986).

⁷³ See Palmiro Togliatti, *Escritos sobre la guerra de España* (Barcelona, 1980), p. 144.

⁷⁴ Cited in Carr, *La Comintern y la guerra civil*, p. 46.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 111-114. There is soon to be published a new study on Stalin and the Spanish Civil War by Pierre Broué.

⁷⁶ Díaz, *Tres años*, p. 390.

⁷⁷ Caminal, *Joan Comorera*, vol. 2 (Barcelona, 1984), p. 149; Andrew Durgan, "Sindicalismo y marxismo en Cataluña 1931-1936", *Historia Social*, no. 8 (Valencia, Autumn 1990), p. 44.

1937, many of whom were also members of the PCE.

It is generally accepted that many of the PCE's recruits during the war were peasants, state functionaries, army officers or at least white collar workers or other sectors with little tradition of labour organisation. The figures given by Diaz only partially substantiate such a view. It is not clear if "industrial workers" include technicians, foremen or state-appointed managers to nationalized industries. Former party leader, Fernando Claudin, confirmed that many petty bourgeois elements entered the party during the war. The workers who joined tended to be young, not yet "shaped by unions or traditional workers organisations" and were "attracted by the party's military virtues and by a simplified ideology in which the idea of revolution was identified with anti-fascism mingled with patriotism".⁷⁹ The fact that the traditional workers organisations did not lose members in this period but grew and that most petty bourgeois parties collapsed, gives credence to this over-view of the social composition of the PCE's mass base.

In Catalonia, the PSUC was also described as having had a similar social base. In early 1938, Togliatti bemoaned that the Catalan party was "weak in the factories, especially in Barcelona" and that its cadres were "predominately petty bourgeois". Nevertheless, information given by the PSUC itself contradicts this view. In July 1937, it claimed that 62% of its members were industrial workers, 20% peasants, 16% non-industrial workers and 2% "intellectuals".⁸⁰

There were three principal reasons for the PCE and PSUC's growth during the war: their defence of Republican order, the prestige of the USSR and their military policy. It is widely recognized that the Communists' defence of private property and their opposition to anarchist radicalism won them support among the "petty bourgeoisie", in particular peasants opposed to, at times, "forced" collectivisation. Not only former Republicans, but even elements previously sympathetic to the Right, joined the PCE and PSUC at this time.

The influence of the USSR unquestionably helped the PCE, although it is worth bearing in mind that the first Russian military aid did not arrive until late October 1936 when the party had already won masses of new recruits. The Soviet Union, despite its commitment to "non-intervention", soon became the main supplier of aid, military and otherwise, to the beleaguered Republic. Around 2,000 Soviet military personnel, including various high-ranking officers, served in Spain at the time. In addition, the CI launched a massive campaign of international solidarity with the Republic and organized the International Brigades. The latter amounted to some 30,000 volunteers recruited mainly, although not exclusively, from Communist parties throughout the world. The brigades played an important role as shock troops and, in particular, in boosting Republican morale.⁸¹

Parallel to the sending of military personnel, the NKVD also set up its own structure inside the Republican zone. Its agents were among the many Communist cadres sent by the CI to Spain during the war, ostensibly to work with both the PCE and the International Brigades. At a political level, the official Soviet representatives, ambassador Marcel Rosenberg in Madrid and consul Vladimir Antonov-Ovseenko in Barcelona, also tried, often successfully, to influence governmental decisions. Without entering into the question of the overall effect of Soviet intervention on the outcome of the war, it is clear that the prestige of the USSR in the eyes of many Spaniards grew enormously, at least during the first year of the war. The fact that direct criticism of the Soviet government was soon banned in the press in the Republican zone helped maintain its image as the champion of the anti-fascist cause.

It was in the military field that the Spanish Communists made most impact. With good reason one CI

⁷⁸ There is no specific study of the JSU during the war, except for Ramon Casterás, *Las Juventudes Socialistas Unificadas de Catalunya: ante la guerra y la revolución 1936-1939* (Barcelona, 1977) which deals with the Catalan (PSUC) youth organisation.

⁷⁹ Fernando Claudin, *The Communist Movement. From Comintern to Cominform* (Harmondsworth, 1975), pp. 230-231.

⁸⁰ Cited in Caminal, *Joan Comorera*, vol. 2, p. 180.

⁸¹ There have been numerous works produced relating to the International Brigades, most of them in the form of memoirs. For a general overview the most useful are: Jaques Delperrie, *Las Brigadas Internacionales* (Madrid, 1982; French edition, Paris, 1968) and the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Soviet War Veterans' Committee, *International Solidarity with the Spanish Republic* (Moscow, 1974; published in various languages).

delegate, "Stepanov" (Stepan Mirev), could describe the PCE as "essentially a military party". More than any other organisation on the Republican side, the PCE grasped from the beginning of the war the centrality of the military question. Its insistence on the need for a centralized army run on a traditional military basis meant the Communists' military policy soon won widespread support, particularly among regular army officers who had remained loyal to the Republic. In Madrid the party's Fifth Regiment became a model of military efficiency. It attracted various professional army officers and by December 1936 was 60,000 strong.⁸² The fact that the Regiment was given preferential treatment in receiving Russian arms also helped it gain recruits. The Communists' role in the defence of Madrid in November 1936, which coincided with the arrival of Soviet aid and the first International Brigades, also increased their military and political standing.

Meanwhile the process of converting the militias into a unified army was underway with the creation in October 1936 of a Corps of Political Commissars within which the PCE was soon the dominant force.⁸³ In March 1936, over half the party's members were in the newly constituted "Popular Army" and by November twelve of the twenty-one army corps were commanded by Communists or their sympathisers, as were twenty-nine of the fifty-two divisions.⁸⁴ The JSU also proved very important in the organisation of the new army, both in terms of mobilising recruits and in installing discipline into them, while at the same time organising campaigns in the rearguard to help maintain morale.

The process of "pushing the revolution back into a bourgeois democratic framework"⁸⁵ began in earnest with the formation of a new Popular Front government in September 1936 under the premiership of Largo Caballero and including two Communists - Vicente Uribe as Minister of Agriculture and Jesus Hernandez as Minister of Education. At this stage Caballero was the best candidate to preside over such a government. His recent conversion to revolutionary positions meant he was more acceptable to the most radical sections of the masses and the ambiguity of his politics meant that he was unlikely to be capable of leading the revolution that the Communists' feared. The inclusion of the CNT in the government in November completed anti-fascist unity and compromised the anarcho-syndicalists in the re-building of the state.

In Catalonia, the principal stronghold of the CNT and the POUM, the situation was particularly delicate for the PSUC. The creation of a new Catalan government (*Generalitat*) on 28 September involving all anti-fascist groups brought an end, at least formally, to the situation of "dual power" that had existed in the region since the beginning of the war. Nevertheless, the revolutionary organisations were still a powerful force, both in the workplaces and on the nearby Aragon front. The new Catalan administration set about both legalising many of the revolution's conquests, such as collectivization, and, at the same time, laying the basis for one central authority.

In order to undermine and eventually destroy the revolution taking place in Catalonia, the Communists tried to isolate the more radical elements inside the workers movement. Thus, both the PCE and PSUC openly courted the CNT leadership while denouncing the activities of "uncontrolable" elements among its rank and file. This approach had some limited success during the first months of the war, for instance the pact signed between the CNT, the Iberian Anarhist Federation (*Federación Anarquista Ibérica*), UGT and PSUC in Catalonia on 11 August 1936, but relations between the Communists and the anarcho-syndicalists remained tense. As regard the Socialists, the situation was more complex. The more moderate sectors of the PSOE, led by Prieto, were natural allies for the PCE in its opposition to the revolution, but were generally anti-Communist. The Socialist left was divided between pro-Communists and supporters of Largo Caballero who resented the PCE's new-found

⁸² Several commanders of the Fifth Regiment, all of whom went on to play an important role in the Popular Army, have published memoirs, for instance Castro Delgado, *Hombres made in Moscow*; and Lister, *Nuestra guerra*; and Modesto, *Soy del Quinto Regimiento*. Also see the memoirs of the Italian communist and military advisor to the Regiment, Vittorio Vidaldi, *Il quinto reggimento* (Milan, 1973; Spanish edition, Mexico, 1977) and *Spagna, lunga battaglia* (Milan, 1975). On Communist military policy, Michael Alpert, *El ejército republicano en la guerra civil* (Madrid, 1989), especially pp. 48-54, 182-189, 219-257.

⁸³ Of 1,373 commissars by mid-1937, 808 were Communists, Carr, *La Comintern y la guerra civil*, p. 83.

⁸⁴ Togliatti, *Escritos sobre la guerra*, p. 159.

⁸⁵ Claudin, *The Communist Movement*, pp. 224-225.

influence. As a consequence, the PCE's calls for one "united proletarian party" received little support from among the Socialists.

The formation of broad anti-fascist governments in Madrid and Catalonia was not enough, however, to totally remove the threat posed to the Popular Front strategy by the revolution and the PCE/PSUC began to prepare the ground for more decisive action. Thus, pressure from the Soviet government led to the removal of the POUM from the Catalan government in December 1936. Parallel to this the PCE orchestrated an increasingly virulent campaign against the more radical anarchists and, in particular, the "Trotskyists". The existence of the POUM was particularly irksome for the Communists due to its constant denunciations of the Moscow trials and the non-revolutionary nature of CI policies and its claim to represent "true Bolshevism". The PCE also turned against Largo Caballero who had proved less pliable than hoped.

Throughout the first months of 1937, tension in Catalonia between the PSUC and its Republican allies on the one hand and the POUM and sections of the CNT on the other increased daily. After numerous incidents and armed clashes, the Catalan government was determined to "disarm" the rearguard and finish with the remaining baulwarks of revolutionary power. On 3 May security forces under PSUC control tried to dislodge CNT members from Barcelona's central telephone exchange. This action provoked a general uprising throughout the city and five days of intermittent fighting and several hundred casualties. The insurgents soon dominated Barcelona but the CNT leadership, fearing that the situation could only benefit the fascists, persuaded its supporters to lay down their arms.

The events in Barcelona in May 1937 led to a crisis in the central government when Largo Caballero refused to illegalize the POUM which the Communists blamed for the uprising. On 17 May a new government was formed headed by the former Minister of Finance, Juan Negrin, and without the presence of the CNT or Largo Caballero or any of his supporters. The new administration proceeded to complete the process started by its predecessors - the total centralisation of the war effort and the elimination of the last vestiges of the social revolution. All opposition to the Popular Front government was now to be suppressed. One of the first victims was the POUM which was illegalized and its leader Andreu Nin arrested and most probably murdered by NKVD agents. In August, troops under the command of the Communist General Enrique Lister⁸⁶ moved against the last stronghold of the revolution, the anarchist-dominated Council of Aragon.

Despite having only two ministers in the government, the PCE had become by the end of 1937 the most important political force in the Republican zone due principally to its influence inside the army and the police, particularly the newly-created Military Investigation Service (*Servicio de Investigación Militar*, SIM), and the support of the USSR. The party also had at its disposal a massive propaganda machine.⁸⁷ By January 1938, the PCE claimed to have 339,000 members, although Togliatti described the effective membership as around 200,000. On 28 August 1937, the JSU, various Republican and Catalan Nationalist and, in some localities, Libertarian, youth groups established the Anti-Fascist Youth Alliance (*Alianza Juvenil Anti-Fascista*, AJA). The latter, which was heavily influenced by the JSU, aimed to help win the war by supporting the government, by calling for greater production of war material and discipline in the army and by defending the "independence of Spain against fascism". According to the PCE, 70% of all youth in the Republican zone supported the new Alliance.⁸⁸ The JSU itself claimed to have 500,000 members by September 1937, 200,000 of which were in the army.⁸⁹

The party also sustained numerous front organisations. In particular, the PCE had some relative success in organising a number of Spain's best known writers, poets, artists, actors and other intellectuals into the Militias of Culture and the Alliance of Anti-Fascist Intellectuals. The Spanish branch of International Red Aid greatly increased its activity during the war, distributing aid sent by its counterparts throughout the world and

⁸⁶ For Lister's memoirs, see Enrique Lister, *Memorias de un luchador* (Madrid, 1977).

⁸⁷ Unfortunately we have no specific details on the PCE's press and publications during the war. The most important Communist dailies were, *Frente Rojo* (Valencia and Barcelona), *Mundo Obrero* (Madrid) and the PSUC's *Treball* (Barcelona).

⁸⁸ On the AJA, see Cattell, *Communism and the Spanish Civil War*, p. 187; and Casterás, *Las Juventudes Socialistas*, pp. 184 and 262-263.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

by 1937 claimed 353,000 members organized into 992 local committees.⁹⁰ The impact of the war also meant the PCE took a greater interest in trying to recruit women⁹¹ This interest had a very practical side to it and involved encouraging women to work in hospitals, organize shock brigades to help peasants with the harvests and replace men in industry. Women PCE members were urged to accept posts of responsibility in the party and the unions and to carry out political work among women workers. Women's oppression was constantly associated with fascism in party propaganda and the Communists organized unitary bodies such as the "Anti-Fascist Women" and the "Union of Women of Catalonia".⁹² However, very few women actually joined the party. According to the figures given by the party in 1937, around 7.5% of the PCE and 5% of the PSUC were female.

Relations with the Socialists seemed to be improving when in late August 1937 a joint programme of common action was agreed on. Nevertheless, there was still considerable opposition to an actual fusion of the two parties. The PCE was more successful in increasing its influence inside the UGT, where it was waging a campaign to oust Largo Caballero and his supporters. With the help of unions led by more moderate Socialists, an alternative Executive Committee was elected on 1 October 1937, which, for the first time, included two Communists. Most of Largo Caballero's supporters finally accepted a compromise solution in January 1938 to overcome the division of the union and a new Executive Committee was established in which they held four of the fifteen seats. Largo Caballero and the handful of union leaders who remained loyal to him were now completely isolated and were accused by the Communist press of being "enemy agents" or "Trotskyists". The UGT and its national leadership now became, according to Togliatti, the "best support for [the PCE's] unitary policy". Inside the JSU, the Communists also met with opposition from Largo Caballero's supporters, who in the latter stages of the war broke away in an attempt to re-organize the FJS.

At a military level, Negrin's government was no more successful than its predecessor. On 20 October the last remaining Republican territory in the north (Asturias) fell to Franco's army and by the end of 1937 two thirds of Spain was in fascist hands. In April 1938, fascist troops reached the Mediterranean, thereby splitting the Republican zone in two.

The effect of continued military defeats was to lead to increasing calls in the Republican camp for a negotiated peace. Moreover, despite the optimism of the CI and PCE, it was clear by now that the western democracies were not going to come to the aid of the Republic and this was another factor which strengthened tendencies, especially among the petty bourgeoisie, towards capitulation. The PCE, with support from sections of the Socialist Party and the CNT led the struggle against such defeatism and urged Negrin to maintain resistance.

Opposition to the party now came from more moderate quarters, in particular, the Minister of Defence, Indalecio Prieto. The latter sought to undermine Communist influence with a decree in June 1937 against proselytism inside the armed forces and by vetoing the appointment of commissars who were party members or sympathizers. The PCE responded to this pressure by mounting a campaign against Prieto which, following a series of military defeats in early 1938, resulted in his removal from the Ministry of Defence in April and the re-organisation of the government. Despite there being only one Communist minister in the new cabinet (Uribe in Agriculture) the party's identification with Negrin's administration became even greater.

Communist influence was such that the new government's thirteen-point programme was originally drawn up by a special commission appointed by the party's Central Committee and headed by Togliatti and Stepanov. This new programme was within the framework of the PCE's proposal for a "National Union" in which the emphasis was placed even more firmly on the war as one for Spanish independence from foreign domination. Nothing in the programme was to suggest that the Spanish Republic differed in any way from other western democracies. The aim of the National Union was to split the Franco camp. Thus, the PCE stressed that patriotic industrialists had everything to lose from a fascist victory because this would lead to their enterprises being handed over to foreign control. Likewise, Catholics, if Franco won, the Communists claimed, would be subject to "bloody persecution" as they had been in Nazi Germany.

Having neutralized Prieto and his supporters, the only force capable of challenging Communist

⁹⁰ Cattell, *Communism and the Spanish Civil War*, p. 115.

⁹¹ Nash, *Mujer y movimiento obrero*, pp. 191-201.

⁹² On the Union of Women of Catalonia, see the memoirs of former JSUC leader Teresa Pamies, *Quant érem captans (memories d'aquella guerra)* (Barcelona, 1974).

hegemony was the CNT. However, the anarcho-syndicalists were not in a position to provide a coherent alternative to the PCE. On 18 March 1938, the CNT had signed a pact with the UGT which by recognising the state as the supreme authority in such matters as the nationalisation of industry and the army, was a complete negation of anarchist doctrine. The return of the CNT to the government in April 1938 confirmed its commitment to the Republican regime.

During 1938, the PCE, although extremely powerful, especially in the army, increasingly found itself isolated politically. The middle classes had become tired of state control of the economy, they no longer looked to the Communists to protect their property and they were now increasingly under the illusion that a compromise could be reached with the Francoist regime in order to protect their privileges. Among workers, hit by two long years of constant sacrifice, repression and the ineffectiveness of their traditional organisations, there was also extensive demoralisation and exhaustion. The PCE's desperate attempts to sustain resistance by making more concessions to facilitate the "national unity" of "all patriotic Spaniards", for instance the reduction of the "thirteen points" to three, merely served to "convince the most optimistic that the Republic was on the brink of disaster".⁹³

According to Togliatti, the isolation of the PCE was due, in part, to its own failings, in particular its "sectarianism" and "arrogance". Such deficiencies, he claimed, had led the party to overestimate its own strength. Despite the impressive growth in membership, the party's "links with the masses" remained weak. Neither in Madrid nor Barcelona had the Communists really won the leadership of the working class. Instead of attempting to overcome this problem, the Spanish Communists, Togliatti complained, spent too much time trying to win positions inside the state machine, particularly in the armed forces. Another problem, according to Togliatti, was the weakness of the party's cadres. Most had been recruited during the war and had not been "educated, assimilated or bolshevized with necessary speed". More specifically, the recruitment into the party of "career elements" in the army had led to the "betrayal" of many Communist officers.

The weaknesses which were apparent in the PCE were not only reflected inside the PSUC, but were compounded, from Togliatti's point of view, by this party's "petty bourgeois nationalism". Throughout the war the Catalan party retained a certain, albeit limited, degree of independence which continually irritated both the PCE leadership and most of the CI representatives. Because of its heterogeneous origins, the PSUC, unlike the PCE, contained among its leaders experienced militants from different political backgrounds. Not only was the PSUC prone to "separatism", but Togliatti accused various of its leaders of being "masons" or of being influenced by "anarchism" and "Trotskyism". Problems had also arisen in the Basque Communist Party, which never had the autonomy or importance the PSUC had, and had led to the removal of Juan Astigarrabía as General Secretary in 1938 because of his supposed "subordination" to "petty bourgeois nationalism".⁹⁴

With the failure of the Ebro offensive in November 1938 the situation took a dramatic turn for the worse and on 26 January Franco's troops entered Barcelona. Despite desperate last-minute efforts, the PSUC was unable to organize even the most minimal resistance in the Catalan capital. The PCE leadership, abandoned by nearly all its former allies, reacted to this latest calamity by issuing a manifesto which violently attacked the weakness of the government for failing to have regrouped its forces after the fall of Barcelona. As a consequence of this manifesto relations with the other parties and workers organisations reached a new low and the Communists were expelled from the Popular Front in some provinces and in two or three cities the military authorities ordered their arrest.

With the Republican government now installed in France, an alliance of Republicans, anarcho-syndicalists and Socialists, whose only real point in common was their anti-communism, formed on 5 March 1939 a "National Defence Junta", headed by Colonel Segismundo Casado, with the aim of reaching a negotiated peace. Despite being the principal victim of the coup, the PCE refused to mobilize its forces against the rebels and most of the party's leadership soon fled to France. Only in Madrid did Communist-led troops, apparently unaware of their party's position, enter into fierce combat with Casado's forces. It has been speculated that the failure to organize any serious resistance to the Casado coup was due to the imminence of the

⁹³ Claudin, *The Communist Movement*, p. 236.

⁹⁴ For Astigarrabía's memoirs, see Carlos Blasco Olaetxea, *Conversaciones con Juan Domingo Astigarrabía* (San Sebastian, 1990).

Hitler-Stalin pact.⁹⁵ Togliatti claimed it was to avoid having to remove troops from the front. Up until Franco's troops marched into Madrid on 28 March, the PCE appears to have done little to prepare for the inevitable catastrophe that final defeat would bring.

6. *Clandestinity and exile 1939-1943*

The first years of Francoist rule were marked by brutal and systematic repression and the desperate conditions in which the majority of the population had to live. Demoralisation was rife and the possibilities of organising resistance to the new regime extremely limited. The seemingly unstoppable progress of Nazi Germany encouraged the Francoist authorities to be even more implacable with their enemies. In these circumstances the PCE was unable to make much progress, either organisationally or politically until near the end of the Second World War.⁹⁶

In the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, the attempts of the anti-Francoist forces to re-organise themselves focussed mainly on the exile. Most PCE members who had managed to escape were concentrated in France, where they soon became the dominant force inside the camps set up by the French authorities to accommodate the hundreds of thousands of Republican refugees. Around 1,000 Spanish Communists and their families were allowed into the USSR. This group included the majority of the party's main leaders. Most of the latter were integrated into the work of the ECCI. The PCE's principal military cadre were sent to the Red Army's Frunze Academy and about 150 other militants to the Leninist School. The rest of the Spanish Communist exiles in the USSR were employed in factories dispersed throughout the country. The other centre of exile was Latin America where around 2,000 party members ended up, principally in Mexico.

The signing of the Hitler-Stalin pact in August 1941, was not so traumatic for the Spanish Communists as it was for their French counterparts. Bitterness towards Britain and France because of their abandonment of the Republic made the pact relatively more acceptable to the PCE's membership. The party soon adapted its position to the new leftist line of the CI. In autumn 1939, the PCE's Central Committee called for a "Popular Front from below" against the "treacherous Socialist, anarchist and Republican leaders". The general tone of the party's declaration was highly sectarian and reminiscent of its pre-1934 position. The PCE even spoke of the "revolutionary content" of the Civil War and called for a "Popular Republic" that had nothing in common with the Republic of 1931. To a certain extent, this turn to the left had been pre-empted by the PCE in the last days of the Civil War when its criticisms of the rest of the Republican organisations had become increasingly harsh. Moreover, relations between the PCE and other organisations had continued to deteriorate, for instance in July 1939 the JSU was expelled from the Socialist Youth International.

Organized discontent with the change in position is only known to have occurred inside the PSUC. During the summer of 1939 the Catalan party had been accepted as a section of the CI. This was an unprecedented step, given that the International's statutes stipulated that there could only be one section in any state, and was taken in order to encourage further examples of Socialist-Communist unification. Recognition of the PSUC as a section of the CI confirmed its status as a "national" party but in exchange it appears that Comorera, who was called to Moscow at this time, dropped any pretence to independent political leadership and accepted unquestionably the authority of the ECCI. Meanwhile in Mexico, where most of the PSUC leadership was, opposition to the new line was growing. This culminated in November 1940 with a group of leading PSUC members issuing a manifesto protesting about the imposition of new leaders from Moscow, the failure to recognize in practice that the PSUC was an independent section of the CI, the fact that the Comintern exclusively defended the interests of the USSR, the Hitler-Stalin pact and that Spanish refugees in France had been abandoned to their fate by the Soviet government. Because of the crisis inside the PSUC, Comorera had already been sent to Mexico in August 1940 with the aim of "Bolshevising" the party. The signatories of the manifesto, nearly all of whom were originally members of the USC and PSOE, were duly expelled and in July 1942

⁹⁵ Estruch, *Historia del PCE*, p. 115.

⁹⁶ On the PCE in this period, see Joan Estruch, *El PCE en la clandestinidad 1939-1956* (Madrid, 1982); Gregorio Morán, *Miseria y grandeza del Partido Comunista de España. 1939-1985* (Barcelona, 1986); and Hartmunt Heine, *La oposición política al Franquismo. 1939-1952* (Barcelona, 1983). For a Francoist version of the party's post-Civil War history see the account by Civil Guard Lieutenant Colonel Angel Ruiz Ayúcar, *El Partido Comunista: 37 años de clandestinidad* (Madrid, 1976).

organized the Catalan Socialist Party which in 1944 fused with the more "Catalanist" sector of the POUM to form the Catalan Socialist Movement (*Moviment Socialista de Catalunya*). These expulsions, combined with the loss of various ex-USC leaders once they had reached France and the conversion of Comorera into an even more loyal Stalinist, effectively marked the end of the PSUC's, albeit limited, heterogeneity. By 1943, only nineteen of the forty-six members elected to the Catalan party's Central Committee in 1937 were still part of the leadership.⁹⁷

Inside Spain itself, nothing had been done to organize an infrastructure to work under conditions of clandestinity. This failure was possibly due to the PCE's very conception of the war as one of the whole nation against a few rebel generals and their foreign backers.⁹⁸ Pedro Checa, who led the party along with Togliatti in the last weeks of the war, had begun to organize such an infrastructure but abandoned this work afraid of being accused of "defeatism". The only real party organization at this time consisted of nuclei inside the concentration camps and prisons. These groups were linked to an outside network which organized aid for Communist prisoners and their families until it was smashed by the police in September 1939. In the terrible conditions following Franco's victory, only a few of the thousands who had joined the PCE during the course of the war were prepared to continue being active. Until the arrival of "Heriberto Quiñones"⁹⁹ in Madrid from Valencia in April 1941, the party lacked a serious organisational structure.

Quiñones was to incur the wrath of the exiled leadership by insisting that the party should be led from inside Spain. Thanks to information obtained by the police from two inexperienced emissaries sent to make contact with the interior, many of Quiñones' collaborators were arrested, as was a group of party cadres that had recently been sent to Lisbon to try and establish links between the party in Mexico and the organisation in Spain. Quiñones, who was arrested in December 1941, was unjustly accused by the PCE leadership of having betrayed his comrades to the police and of being an "agent of English imperialism". Most of the victims of this latest police action, including Quiñones, and like many others captured since the end of the war, were brutally tortured before being shot.

The invasion of the USSR by Germany on 22 June 1941 meant the PCE, like all other Communist parties, had once more to subordinate its line to the change in the Soviet Union's circumstances. At a more practical level, many Spanish exiles in the USSR fought in guerrilla units behind enemy lines, some in a special "Spanish" unit of the NKVD. In August 1941, the PCE's Central Committee¹⁰⁰ issued a call for a "National Union of all Spaniards" which was aimed not only at the Republican opposition but also at those former supporters of Franco now dissatisfied with his regime, in particular the monarchists. The only exceptions, apart from the most die-hard Francoists, were to be those who had supported Casado and the "Nazi-Trotskyist spies" of the POUM. The programme of the National Union centred on the recognition of Republican legality, the provisional re-establishment of Negrin's government and the participation on the side of the democracies and the USSR in the war against fascism. One result of this return to an anti-fascist line was the establishment in Latin America of the Spanish Democratic Union (*Unión Democrática Española*; UDE) in February 1942 supported by the PCE and PSUC and leaders of Negrin's faction of the PSOE, the UGT and various Republican parties. A similar agreement, the National Alliance of Catalonia, was reached between exclusively Catalan organisations three months later. In September 1942, on Dimitrov's suggestion, the PCE's position was modified further in a new attempt to win allies from the Right. The party now spoke of "national reconciliation" and the need to "overcome the divisions produced by the Civil War". A new dividing line now existed between those

⁹⁷ On the PSUC in the immediate post-Civil War period, see Joan Oliver, *L'oposició catalana davant el franquisme. Els socialistes catalans: el POUM 1939-1956 i el PSUC 1939-1945* (Ph.D. thesis, Universitat de Barcelona, 1979); Caminal, *Joan Comorera*, vol. 3 (Barcelona, 1985), pp.7-161; and Leandre Colomer, "Joan Comorera, el PSUC i el moviment comunista (1939-1943)", *Bulletin d'Information* (F.I.E.H.S. Barcelona, April 1980), pp. 122-124.

⁹⁸ In the opinion of Estruch, *El PCE en la clandestinitat*, p. 19.

⁹⁹ According to Moran, *Miseria y grandeza*, p. 46, Quiñones was a Moldavian Communist, Yefin Granowdiski, who was originally sent to Spain by the CI in 1931.

¹⁰⁰ Despite the many declarations in its name, the Central Committee did not actually meet between 1937 and 1956, Estruch, *El PCE en la clandestinitat*, p. 70.

"Germanophiles" in the Francoist regime who wanted to participate in the war on the side of Hitler and the "rest of the country" who knew that such an intervention would ruin Spain. The party now made no mention of either the Negrin government or the Constitution of 1931. The PCE's new position made no impact inside the Francoist camp but it did serve to alienate some of its Republican allies and the UDE soon fell apart.

The entrance of the USSR into the war dramatically changed the situation of those Spanish Communists in France. Many perished in German concentration camps¹⁰¹ but others joined the Resistance where their military experience proved invaluable.¹⁰² In April 1942, Spanish exiles, under Communist leadership, formed the XIV Guerrilla Corps, which operated mainly in the Midi area. This corps was transformed into the *Agrupación Guerrillera Española* in 1944 and with 9,000 fighters provided the basis for the PCE's later guerrilla campaign in Spain.¹⁰³ The Spanish Communists, working through their newly-formed front organisation the Spanish National Union (*Unión Nacional Española*; UNE), were the dominant force in exile circles in France, especially in the south. The strength of the French Communist Party in the *Résistance* helped its Spanish counterparts maintain their hegemony.

With the more favourable political situation created by its return to anti-fascist activity, the PCE leadership in France sent a series of cadres into Spain during the first half of 1942. As a result, the beginnings of rudimentary organisation were established and contacts were made between the main industrial centres. However, the arrest of the party's main organizer, Jesus Carreras, in February 1943 led to the break-up of many of its nuclei. Attempts at this time to form a "National Union" inside Spain, similar to the UNE in France, came to nothing because of the hostility of the other anti-fascist organisations.

Meanwhile, a struggle had developed inside the PCE in the USSR over the succession to José Diaz as General Secretary who, after a long illness, had committed suicide on 19 March 1942. Jesus Hernandez, supported by a few other leading party members, made an unsuccessful bid for the leadership against Dolores Ibarruri. Thanks to her rousing speeches and radio broadcasts, Ibarurri ("La Pasionaria") had become the party's best known leader during the war and the obvious successor to Diaz. Hernandez was eventually expelled from the PCE in 1944 after trying to organize a faction against the leadership and later became one of a number of well-known Spanish Communists who, disillusioned with the realities of Stalinist Russia, turned violently against their former party.¹⁰⁴

The dissolution of the CI in June 1943 was accepted uncritically by the PCE and PSUC. Ibarurri represented her party at the meeting of the ECCI Presidium on 15 May which took the historic decision and both the PCE and PSUC were mentioned in the Comintern's last resolution on 8 June as being among the parties that

¹⁰¹ Neus Català, *De la Resistencia y la Deportación* (Barcelona, 1984) contains the testimonies of fifty Spanish women, mostly Communists, about their experiences in the concentration camps.

¹⁰² On the PCE in France during the Second World War, see David Wingate Pike, *Jours de Glorie, Jours de Honte* (Paris, 1984) and specifically on its participation in the French *Résistance*, Alberto Fernandez, *Españoles en la resistencia* (Madrid, 1973); Miguel Angel Sanz, *Los guerrilleros españoles en Francia* (Havana, 1971); Manuel Tuñón de Lara, "Los españoles en la II Guerra Mundial", in *El exilio español*, vol. 2 (Madrid, 1976), pp. 11-88; and Louis Stein, *Beyond Death and Exile. The Spanish Republicans in France* (London, 1979), pp. 147-170.

¹⁰³ On the PCE and guerrilla war in Spain, see, for example, Francisco Aguado Sanchez, *El Maquis en España: su historia* (Madrid, 1975); José Gros, *Abriendo camino. Relatos de un guerrillero comunista español* (Paris, 1971); Carlos J. Kaiser, *La guerrilla antifranquista. Historia del maquis* (Madrid, 1976); Fernanda Romeu Alfaro, *La Agrupación Guerrillera de Levante* (Valencia, 1987); Secundino Serrano, *La guerrilla antifranquista en León 1936-1951* (Valladolid, 1986); and José Antonio Vidal Sales, *Después de 39: La guerrilla antifranquista* (Barcelona, 1977).

¹⁰⁴ See Castro Delgado, *Hombres made in Moscow and Mi fe se perdió en Moscou* (Barcelona, 1964); Valentín González ("El Campesino"), *Comunista en España y Antistalinista en la U.R.S.S.* (Madrid, 1979); Jesús Hernandez, *Yo fui un ministro de Stalin* and *En el país de la gran mentira* (Madrid, 1974); Ramon Moreno Hernandez, *Rusia al desnudo. Revelaciones del comisario comunista español Rafeal Pelayo de Hungría, comandante del ejercito ruso* (Madrid, 1956); Eudocio Ravines, *La gran estafa* (Mexico, 1952); and Tagüeña, *Testimonio de dos guerras*.

had approved of this move.

Appendix: Dissident Communist groups

The first independent Communist grouping to be formed in Spain had its origins outside the PCE. The Catalan Communist Party (*Partit Comunista Català*; PCC) was founded in November 1928 by young militants, most of whom were new to political activity, although some came from a left nationalist background or Maurín's FCC-B.

They were principally attracted to communism because of the apparent "solving" of the national question in the USSR. However, they rejected the Madrid-based PCE as too bureaucratic and centralist. The PCC had around four hundred members by 1930, based mainly in Barcelona and Lérida.¹⁰⁵

The struggles inside the Soviet Communist Party and, consequently, the CI had few repercussions in Spain. A handful of exiled PCE members living in Belgium and Luxembourg came into contact with the French Trotskyists during 1929 and in February 1930 founded the Communist Opposition of Spain (*Oposición Comunista de España*; OCE).¹⁰⁶ In Spain itself, a few experienced party members were recruited to the Trotskyist group. In September 1930, Andreu Nin, who had joined the Left Opposition in the USSR while working for the RILU, returned to Barcelona and soon became the OCE's most prominent leader.¹⁰⁷ A more serious threat to the PCE came from what can be described as a "national" opposition that blamed the mistakes of the Spanish party on the Bullejos leadership against which the opposition appealed to the CI to intervene. Although this opposition had its roots firstly in the "Bolshevization" of the party in the mid-twenties and secondly in the application of the "Third Period" line after 1928, few of its components held the CI responsible for the PCE leadership's failings.

This "national" opposition became such a problem for the party leadership that by early 1931 the Catalan (FCC-B), Madrid and Duero Federations, along with much of the Asturias and Levante Federations, had either been expelled or had separated from the PCE. The most important of these dissident groups was the FCC-B, which had never really integrated into the PCE and whose leader, Maurín, had clashed frequently with the party leadership since 1926.¹⁰⁸

In March 1931, the PCC fused with the FCC-B. The unified party kept the name FCC-B and established a broader organisation of sympathisers, the Workers and Peasants Bloc (BOC).¹⁰⁹ The latter's main political

¹⁰⁵ On the PCC, see Francesc Bonamusa, *El Bloc Obrer i Camperol. 1930-1932* (Barcelona, 1974), pp. 52-72; and Durgan, *Dissident Communism*, pp. 36-40.

¹⁰⁶ On the Spanish Trotskyists, see Pelai Pagès, *El movimiento trotskista en España (1930-1935)* (Barcelona, 1977).

¹⁰⁷ On Andreu Nin, see Francesc Bonamusa, *Andreu Nin y el movimiento comunista en España* (Barcelona, 1977); and Pelai Pagès, *Andreu Nin: su evolución política* (Bilbao, 1975). For the most complete collections of articles by Nin, see *Por la unificación marxista* (Madrid, 1978), *La revolución rusa* (Barcelona, 1979) and *Socialisme i Nacionalisme* (Barcelona, 1985); the following books by Nin have been republished in recent years: *Las dictaduras de nuestro tiempo* (Barcelona, 1977), *Los movimientos de emancipación nacional* (Barcelona, 1977) and *Las organizaciones obreras internacionales* (Barcelona, 1978).

¹⁰⁸ On Maurín, see Victor Alba, *Dos revolucionarios. Joaquín Maurín y Andreu Nin* (Madrid, 1975), pp. 13-320; Antoni Monreal, *El pensamiento político de Joaquín Maurín* (Barcelona, 1984). Also Maurín's principal writings have been republished, see Joaquín Maurín, *Los hombres de la dictadura* (Barcelona, 1977), *Revolución y contrarrevolución en España* (Paris, 1966) and *La revolución española* (Barcelona, 1977).

¹⁰⁹ On the BOC, see Victor Alba, *El marxismo en España*, vol. 1 (Mexico, 1973); Bonamusa, *El Bloc Obrer i Camperol 1930-1932*; Durgan, *Dissident Communism*. For the memoirs of BOC/POUM members, see Victor Alba, *Sísif i el seu temps*, 2 vols. (Barcelona, 1990); Ramon Fernández Jurado, *Memòries d'un militant obrer (1930-1942)* (Barcelona, 1978); and Carmel Rosa-Roc, *Quan Catalunya era revolucionaria*

differences with the "official" Communists, were its characterisation of the pending revolution in Spain as "democratic", its emphasis on the importance of the national question, its rejection of what it saw as the party's attempt to split the trade union movement and its defence of the united front tactic as conceived by the CI in 1921. In common with the Trotskyists, Maurín's party also had a more far-sighted analysis of fascism than the PCE. The BOC was instrumental in the creation of the Workers Alliance in Catalonia and elsewhere.

After several unsuccessful attempts by the dissident groups to bring about the re-unification of the Spanish Communist movement, the FCC-B transformed itself in 1932 into the Iberian Communist Federation (*Federación Comunista Ibérica*; FCI), but outside of Catalonia it only had a small base in the Levante region and in Asturias. By 1934, the BOC and FCI were effectively the same organisation and had 4,423 members, most of whom were in Catalonia where it was the principal workers party prior to the Civil War. The BOC received most of its support within the Catalan-speaking sectors of the masses, such as in the provinces of Girona and Lleida and white collar workers in Barcelona, in contrast to the tendency of both the more radical anarchists and the PCdC to be based among immigrant workers.

The Trotskyist organisation, although never having more than 800 members, included in its ranks some experienced Communist militants whose level of political sophistication contrasted to the generally poor level to be found among the PCE's cadres.¹¹⁰ The OCE attacked the lack of internal democracy inside the PCE, its "ultra-left sectarianism" towards the anarchists and Socialists, called for a united front against fascism and advocated the need to defend "democratic demands". The Trotskyists criticized the BOC because of its vague organisational basis, its "petty bourgeois nationalism", its "syndicalism" and its failure to take a position over the divisions inside the international Communist movement. In March 1932, having flirted with the idea of working inside the FCC-B and similar groups, the OCE converted itself into the Communist Left of Spain (*Izquierda Comunista de España*; ICE), thus effectively pre-empting the decision a year later of the International Left Opposition to build independent parties rather than to act as a faction of the "official" Communist movement. The creation of the ICE was one of a series of divergences with the international organisation which culminated in the Spanish group breaking with the Trotskyist movement in 1935.

In September 1935, the BOC and ICE united to form the POUM.¹¹¹ Both groups had moved closer politically since 1932. In particular, the BOC had adopted an analysis of the international Communist movement which differed little from that of the Trotskyists. Although the Bloc rejected the latter's perspective of establishing a new (Fourth) International in the short term, it accepted the need for a regroupment of revolutionary marxist organisations at an international level and was affiliated to the International Bureau of Revolutionary Socialist Unity. The general clamour for unity in the Spanish workers movement, especially after the events of October 1934, provided a further impetus towards fusion. The new party was presented as a step towards a further and broader unification to involve all revolutionary marxist currents, in particular the Socialist left.

In January 1936, the POUM, in what it saw as a necessary compromise to defeat the Right at the polls, signed the Left Electoral Pact and its General Secretary, Maurín, was elected as part of the coalition's list in Barcelona. Nevertheless, both during and after the electoral campaign, the POUM denounced the Pact as subordinating the workers organisations to the middle class Republican parties. The new party counterposed to the Popular Front the taking of power by the working masses through the Workers Alliances. By July 1936, the POUM had 6,000 members and, in Catalonia, controlled the recently-formed Workers Federation of Trade Union

(Salt, 1986).

¹¹⁰ See, for instance, the collection of articles from the ICE's theoretical journal, *Revista "Comunismo" (1931-1934)* (Barcelona, 1978).

¹¹¹ On the POUM, see Reiner Tosstorff, *Die POUM im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg 1936-1939* (Frankfurt/M., 1987); also Alba, *El marxismo en España*, vol. 2; Victor Alba and Stephen Schwartz, *Spanish Marxism vs. Soviet Communism* (New Brunswick, 1989). Documents and articles by the POUM from the period have been published in Victor Alba (ed.), *La Nueva Era* (Madrid, 1977); Victor Alba (ed.), *La revolución española en la práctica. Documentos del POUM* (Madrid, 1977). Also see Juan Andrade, *La revolución española día a día* (Barcelona, 1979) and *Notas sobre la guerra civil* (Madrid, 1986).

Unity (*Federación Obrera de Unidad Sindical*) which had the support of 50,000 workers.¹¹²

By December 1936, the POUM had around 30,000 members and 6,000 militiamen under its control.¹¹³ Its relationship with the official Communist movement now degenerated even further. While the PCE and PSUC denounced the POUM as "Trotsky-fascists", the latter was implacable in its criticism of these parties' "reformism" and "menshevism". The POUM defended the position that the war and revolution were inseparable and called for the creation of a "Workers and Peasants Government". However, the POUM's relatively small size and its lack of a base outside of Catalonia, meant that it remained fairly isolated. Attempts to influence the CNT brought few results. Although continually described as "Trotskyist" by its Communist adversaries and by some historians, the POUM was harshly criticized by Trotsky as "centrist".¹¹⁴ The Trotskyists, in fact, organized their own group, the Bolshevik-Leninists.¹¹⁵

Following the crisis of May 1937 and its illegalisation,¹¹⁶ the POUM continued to be active until the end of the war. None the less, it had little influence on events, given the problems of working clandestinely and the general decline of the revolutionary movement after 1937. Meanwhile, the PCE and PSUC still blamed "Trotskyists" for many of the Republic's problems and campaigned for the execution as "fascist spies" of those POUM leaders who had been imprisoned. When seven of the latter were finally brought to trial in November 1938, the accusation of "spying" was dropped and they were convicted to long prison sentences for having aimed to "overthrow the Republican regime" and instal a "Communist" one in its place.¹¹⁷

¹¹² See Durgan, "Sindicalismo y marxismo" and Andrew Durgan, "Els comunistes dissidents i els sindicats a la Catalunya republicana", *L'Avenc*, no. 142 (Barcelona, November 1990), pp. 22-28.

¹¹³ On the POUM's militias on the Aragon front, see Josep Coll and Josep Pané, *Josep Rovira. Una vida al servei de Catalunya i del socialisme* (Barcelona, 1978), pp. 91-214; George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (Harmondsworth, 1975; first published in 1938), pp.18-105; on the Madrid front see the memoirs of Mika Etchebéhère, *Mi guerra de España* (Barcelona, 1977).

¹¹⁴ The most complete collection of Trotsky's writings on Spain can be found in Pierre Broué (ed.), *Leon Trotsky. La revolución española*, 2 vols. (Barcelona, 1977); for the Trotskyist view of the Civil War, see M. Casanova, *La Guerra de España* (Barcelona, 1978; published in French in 1971 and soon to be published in English); Felix Morrow, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain* (New York, 1974); and Grandizo Munis, *Jalones de derrota, promesa de victoria* (Bilbao, 1977); for a critique of the Trotskyist position by a former POUM leader, see Ignacio Iglesias, *León Trotski y España (1930-1939)* (Madrid, 1977).

¹¹⁵ On the Bolshevik-Leninists, see Pelai Pagés, "Le mouvement trotskyste pendant la guerre civile d'Espagne", *Cahiers Leon Trotsky*, no. 10 (Grenoble, June 1982), pp. 47-65; and the notes and appendices provided by Pierre Broué in *Leon Trotsky. La Revolución Española*.

¹¹⁶ On the POUM and the May events, see Fundación Andreu Nin, *Los sucesos de mayo de 1937. Una revolución en la República* (Madrid, 1988).

¹¹⁷ On the persecution and trial of the POUM, see Andrés Suarez, *El proceso contra el POUM. Un episodio de la Revolución Española* (Paris, 1974); Fundación Andreu Nin, *El proceso de 1938 contra el POUM. Barcelona no fué Moscú* (Madrid, 1989); *El proceso del P.O.U.M. Documentos Judiciales y Policiales* (Barcelona, 1989); and Julián Gorkin, *El proceso de Moscú en Barcelona* (Barcelona, 1974).