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El largo viaje/The Long Journey:
The Cultural Politics of the Communist Party of Spain, 1920-1939.

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Ya hay un español que quiere
vivir y a vivir empieza,
entre una España que muere
y otra España que bosteza.
Españolito que vienes
al mundo, te guarde Dios.
Una de las dos Españas
ha de helarte el corazón.

There is a Spaniard today, who wants
to live and is beginning to live,
between one Spain dying
and another one yawning.
Oh, Spaniard just coming
into the world, may God save you.
For one of the two Spains
will freeze your heart.

Antonio Machado, Proverbios y cantares LIII

Abstract

El largo viaje/The Long Journey deals with the cultural politics of the Communist Party of Spain from 1920, when Communism first emerged in the country, until 1939, when the Spanish Civil War ended. The aim of this dissertation is two-fold. On the one hand, by looking at the Party's cultural discourse, its attempts to provide the working class with a political education, and its relationship with communist intellectuals, it aims at explaining the Party's evolution from its original proletarian line in the early 1920s to its democratic line in the mid-1930s, after it joined the anti-fascist Popular Front alliance. On the other, it aims at investigating how, between the years of 1936 and 1938, the Communist Party ended up fulfilling the democratic revolutionary dream of the Spanish bourgeoisie. Through its work in the Ministry of Public Instruction, the Party brought back to life the cultural discourse and aspirations which the reformist and Republican bourgeoisie had been holding on to since the mid- and late nineteenth century. In doing that, Spanish Communists were using cultural practice to further advance the cause of the democratic revolution, and, perhaps more importantly, to make the Spanish people full participants in that revolution for the very first time.

El largo viaje/The Long Journey traite des politiques culturelles du Parti Communiste d'Espagne de 1920, depuis l'émergence du communisme au pays, à 1939, au moment où la guerre civile prit fin. Cette thèse poursuit deux objectifs. D'une part, l'analyse du discours culturel du Parti, les tentatives de fournir à la classe ouvrière une éducation politique, les relations avec les intellectuels communistes visent à expliquer l'évolution de la pensée prolétarienne du Parti au début des années 20 et à la pensée démocratique du milieu des années 30, après son adhésion à l'alliance du front populaire antifasciste. D'autre part, l'étude de cette évolution montre comment, entre 1936 et 1938, le Parti Communiste finit par réaliser les rêves démocratiques révolutionnaires chez la bourgeoisie espagnole. Le travail du Parti sein du ministère de l'Instruction Publique redonne vie au discours culturel et aux aspirations auxquelles la bourgeoisie républicaine et réformiste s'accrochaient depuis le milieu et la fin du 19e siècle. Ainsi, les communistes espagnoles ont utilisé les pratiques culturelles pour faire progresser la révolution démocratique, et surtout, peut-être le plus important, pour la première fois faire du peuple espagnol les protagonistes de cette révolution.

PREFACE
On Train Stations, Photo Exhibits and Spanish History

I was getting off a train when I saw her. She dressed in black, as always, and may have even been smiling, though there was no trace of happiness or joy in her face. She was still young, but already looked ancestral; for ancestral were her wisdom, her courage and her pain. I was so spellbound looking at her that it took me a few seconds to see him, to notice his face distorted by grief and humiliation, to realize that he was wounded. Only she, with the strength that a lifetime of suffering had given her, could console him, and that she did, walking next to him, embracing him, feeling the pain from his wounded body and his wounded heart, opening her soul to him and offering him her words of wisdom.

I stood still in the middle of the station platform, my eyes fixed on them, so completely mesmerized that I vaguely noticed other passengers moving swiftly all around me. But I was no longer there, I had already traveled in time and space, as if something had mysteriously transported me from a train station in Madrid during a hot afternoon in the month of June 1998 to an ordinary day, any day, anywhere in Republican Spain, some time between July 1936 and April 1939, a day in which Dolores Ibárruri, *la Pasionaria*, had gone to visit the battlefront and had helped a wounded soldier go back home.

And they were not alone, either. Not too far away, thousands of *madrileños* had taken to the streets in a joy beyond description and had rushed to the town council to hang a Republican flag. It was April 1931. Next to them, other *madrileños* had also taken to the streets – and perhaps too with some degree of joy – this time to witness the triumphant entry into the city of General Franco's troops, marking the end of a bloody civil war. It was April 1939. Unaware of them, workers and peasants went on their daily chores in

factories and fields, while intellectuals talked and talked away in their literary circles in the cafés, some of them trying to change the world, others not bothering at all. Watching them all was General Millán Astray, hero of the Spanish imperialist war in Morocco. Next to him, poet Antonio Machado looked introspective and remained silent.

The miracle of photography had brought them all to me, and as I moved away from *la Pasionaria* and the wounded soldier, away from the Republican flags and the busy intellectuals – all while struggling to get through the rush-hour crowd in a busy train station – I moved along many other walls of photographs and the images I saw brought to life the joys and sorrows of yesteryears. They were all there for me to see, on my journey home. It was *El largo viaje: PhotoEspaña 98*, a retrospective photo exhibit on twentieth-century Spain, an extremely original and people-oriented exhibit which had literally filled the train station – and the rest of the city too – with images of the century coming to an end, from the loss of the Spanish colonies in 1898, through the years of the transition to democracy in the late 1970s, right to the present day. At train stations, on subway platforms, on the street and on buses, Spanish history was coming powerfully alive for those who had the eyes to see.

PhotoEspaña 98 seemed to be the perfect ending for two long years of retrospectives, exhibits, anniversaries and celebrations, as if Spaniards had first chosen to remember their convoluted and passionate twentieth century in bits and pieces, as it were, and the exhibit had come at the end to put it all together for them. 1997 marked the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of democracy in the country after Franco's forty-year-long dictatorship, and the eighteenth anniversary of the current Spanish Constitution. In 1998, Spain commemorated the one-hundredth anniversary of its war

with the United States, the final loss of its empire, and the beginning of a social, political and cultural regeneration in which the country set out on its journey toward modernity (all of which is referred to as "*el noventayocho*"). That year also marked the anniversary of one of Spain's most famous literary generations, the Generation of 1898, and the birth of Federico García Lorca, the most universal of Spanish poets and playwrights, events which brought back to life the black-and-white images of a long-past era, the memories of a history so recent and yet so distant.

In the last few years, the richness of Spanish intellectual life during the early part of the century has been revisited through a myriad of academic launchings.[1] Above all, however, this has been a sentimental, not an academic, journey. History has been on television, in the newspapers, in exhibits, on the street. 1997 was the year in which Spaniards witnessed the arrival of the most venerable senior citizens ever to set foot on that land. They were the *brigadistas internacionales*, men and women from all over the world who sixty years earlier had come to Spain to defend the Republican government against the army rebels, elderly people who were coming back to a place they had once called home. Despite the lukewarm response from national authorities, the presence of the *brigadistas* in the country was a deeply emotional event in which many of the Spaniards who had lived through the war, and many more who had not, paid tribute to those who once had come to fight against fascism. A few months later, the city of Madrid witnessed

[1] These include the posthumous publication of Canadian scholar Victor Ouimette's *Los intelectuales españoles y el naufragio del Liberalismo* (Valencia: Pre-Textos, 1998); Ramón Buckley's *La doble transición: política y literatura en la España de los años setenta* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1996); and the reprints of academic classics such as José Carlos Mainer's *La edad de Plata* (Cátedra) and Tuñón de Lara's *Medio Siglo de Cultura Española* (Tecnos) and *Antonio Machado: Poeta del Pueblo* (Editorial Nova).

the celebration of the one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of *la Pasionaria*, an event which generated in the people attending an emotion difficult to match.

The war of 1936 was revisited not only through the physical presence of the *brigadistas* or the memories of *la Pasionaria*, but also thanks to movies like Ken Loach's *Tierra y Libertad*[2] and Vicente Aranda's *Libertarias*;[3] and much of what happened in that war was dealt with in best-sellers such as Paul Preston's latest biography of Franco,[4] and Stanley Payne's new book on Spanish Fascism.[5] The years under Franco's dictatorship were remembered somewhat more irreverently in a humorous theatre show depicting the primary educational system of those years;[6] and much more seriously, indeed, in the program of cultural institutions, which were swamped with panels about anything from philosophical thought to cinema to daily life during that period. Perhaps most remarkably, one could walk into any bookshop and purchase a 1998 edition of the children's Encyclopedias which my parents' generation had used in the early 1940s, and why not get as well a copy – who would have thought such a thing possible – of the First Reader which the Republican Ministry of Public Instruction used between 1936 and 1938 to teach soldiers to read in the battlefront.[7] A few steps away, in the New Releases audio-visual section, a red-and-black anarchist flag attracted attention toward a compact disc with classic songs from the Spanish Civil War. A nice treat for those who might have also

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[2] Written by Jim Allen, directed by Ken Loach (1995).
[3] Written and directed by Vicente Aranda (Sogetel-Lola Films S.A., 1995).
[4] *Franco: A Biography* (London: Blackwell, 1995). The Spanish version, *Franco*, was released in 1998 (Madrid: Grijalbo).
[5] *Franco y José Antonio: El extraño caso del Fascismo español* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1997).
[6] The play was based on Enrique Sopeña's *El florido pensil: memoria de la escuela nacional-católica* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1998) and it was produced by Tanttaka Teatroa, directed by Fernando Bermés and Mireira Gabilondo.

attended a concert by Catalonian-singer Pi de la Serra, where he had performed jazz versions of his favorite selection.

A long journey it has been, indeed, from the loss of the colonies to the CDs, from the not-so-far-away feudal past to the present of a modern democratic nation. The Spain of today is the result of that journey toward modernity which began exactly one hundred years ago, and of all the things which have marked that journey in one way or another: the turn-of-the-century feudal state in which a small oligarchy ruled over the masses of the dispossessed; the political and cultural activism of several generations of progressive intellectuals; the revolutions envisioned by socialist, anarchist and communist parties; the euphoria of one 14 April when Spaniards took to the streets to celebrate the proclamation of the Republic; three unforgettable years of civil war; forty long years of *Franquismo*; and a few more of transition to democracy. Today, however, the presence of a large middle class has made of past social conflicts little more than anecdotes in the history books; intellectuals prefer to have an "ethical", rather than a "political", role;[8] socialist, communist, and anarchist parties are but a shadow of what they once were; people boo the Republican flags which appear, defiant, in the middle of a Royal wedding; young people do not study the Second Republic at school nor are they aware that, hardly sixty years ago, the country went through one of its most devastating wars; and everyone talks about the years of *Franquismo* but no one dares admit that its heritage runs much deeper than what is, at first, apparent. The political class has skillfully fabricated the transition to

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[7] *Cartilla Escolar Antifascista* (Madrid: Viamonte, 1997). Foreword by Antonio Muñoz Molina. This is a facsimile reproduction of the original published by the Ministry of Public Instruction in 1937, and written by Eusebio Cimorra.

democracy as "peaceful", the country enjoys relative peace and prosperity after seventy-five long and painful years of social and military conflicts, and so the past is just that, the past. The Spain of today, however, is the result of all those things mentioned above, of all those things Spaniards have commemorated in the past two years, and all of those which they have not bothered to commemorate at all, of all the black-and-white photographs in the train stations, and of those in color too, of those which the people stop to look at, and of those which hardly anybody sees.

The country moves on toward the twenty-first century. It turns the page. It closes a chapter. It begins anew. Forever lost and forever remembered will be a Republic which cannot be resuscitated, a multitude of mistakes which cannot be corrected, a war which cannot be avoided, forty years of *Franquismo* which cannot be erased and a number of intellectual movements which cannot be imitated, indeed a number of intellectual figures simply impossible to match.

Before we turn the page, however, before those black-and-white photographs are taken down from the train stations and the history of the 1930s in Spain is stored away in cardboard boxes, before that long journey which the twentieth century was can truly come to an end, we need to begin another journey. We need to fill some voids. The pages which follow are an attempt to take a long journey back.

Spending almost two years in Spain doing research for this thesis was an experience as delightful as it was painful, as rich as it was overwhelming, and I could go through all of it thanks to the support of my friends and family in that country, who were

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[8] A debate on the role intellectuals (in Spain and elsewhere) can play at the end of the twentieth century was the subject of several media debates in Spain, most appropriately during 1998. See, for example, Marías (1998); Marichal (1998); Savater (1998).

always there to help with all those non-academic things which made academic work possible. I am most grateful, though, to a person who was never there with me, but without whom my life there, and, as a result, the writing of this work, would have been much more difficult. I am very grateful to my friend Verónica Garza, in Montreal, who during my long absence from Canada spent much time taking care of my personal and academic needs there. As if she had not done enough for me, Verónica and her husband, Juan Manuel Ramos, were very generous to invite me to live in their house when I came back to Montreal for the last few months of writing and before going back to Toronto. Their kindness and support has made my life so much easier for the writing of this thesis that my gratitude to them is simply beyond words. For his all-round support during my last weeks of writing I am also most thankful to my friend, Montreal film-maker Jorge Fajardo.

In the process of writing this dissertation, and through the many hours spent in libraries and archives, big and small, I have become indebted to a number of people, from the staff librarians at the *Biblioteca Nacional* in Madrid, to those in different branches of the *Archivo Histórico Nacional*, especially the Civil War Section in the city of Salamanca. In particular, I would like to thank Ms. Victoria Ramos, head of the Historical Archives of the Communist Party of Spain, who was extremely helpful and who always went out of her way to help me do my research. I would like to express my gratitude as well to Ms. Carmen Motilva and her fellow staff members in the Historical Archives and Library of the *Fundación Pablo Iglesias* (Spanish Socialist Party), who were not only helpful but also much fun to be with. In both institutions I was delighted to work with people who were extraordinarily approachable. I am happy to say that I look forward to working with them

again. I thank them all as well for their readiness to provide me with last-minute bibliographic information when I was no longer in Madrid, an effort coordinated by my friend and colleague, Dr. Maribel Fernández, for which I thank her.

Throughout my years of doctoral work, first in Montreal and later in Madrid, I have received generous funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRCC) and the Graduate Program in Communications at McGill University. During the writing of this thesis, I have had the benefit of the scholarship of three professors. I am grateful to Professor Francisco Caudet, from the *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid*, who so eagerly agreed to act as a co-director of my thesis and who gave me not only intellectual but also emotional support during my stay in Madrid. At the Graduate Program in Communications in Montreal, I have worked with Professors George Szanto and William Straw, who have been mentors and supporters all through my doctorate and who have supervised this thesis at different points. I want to thank them both for believing in this project, for supporting it and for giving me their insights. I am especially grateful to Professor Straw, for recharging my batteries and helping me put the whole thing into perspective during the last few months of work. Needless to say, as thankful as I am to them for their insights and support, the shortcomings and imperfections of this thesis are exclusively mine.

That hot afternoon in the month of June 1998, the day the image of *la Pasionaria* went with me all the way home, I felt such an encounter had been a most remarkable way to end my own journey in Spain. Almost two years earlier, I had set out to start my research there looking forward to the great deal of social analysis, political rivalry, ideological disagreement and cultural critique I was expecting to find, even if coming from

an unspecified number of dead individuals from a long-gone era.[9] Yet by the end of my stay there, as I left the train station with the images of history so vivid in my mind, it dawned on me that what I found was far more than that. Indeed rather than dead people, I found men and women in the flesh, and instead of mere academic discussions I found passion like I had never known before. I found eagerness and fear in equal doses. I found anger and anguish. I found so much despair and so much hope, so many dreams and so much disillusionment. I found pain, lots of pain; and I certainly found courage, a great deal of courage.

During the months I was there, I felt I was much more than a student of history or culture, much more than a scholar come from overseas. I was in the crowd who shivered with emotion when the *brigadistas* joined their frail voices to sing old Civil War classics, and inside the smaller circle who had the privilege of shaking their hands, embracing them and listening to their stories. I was also one of those deeply touched by the simplicity and grace of a happy birthday song sung to the memory of Dolores Ibárruri. I was there in the midst of it all. I attended the conferences, lined up for the exhibits, rushed to see the movies, read the books, and listened to the CDs. As I did all that, the history of Spain, the intellectuals whose work I dare criticize, the Party members whose politics I analyze, the *pueblo* of which all of them spoke, the proletariat with which they fought, and all those historical events they were lucky or unfortunate enough to live through – especially the

---

[9] As far as I know, only four prominent members of the Communist Party who lived through the years of war are still alive today. They are: poet Rafael Alberti, outstanding and only surviving member of the Generation of 1927, who is now 96 and lives in his native Cádiz; Santiago Carrillo, leader of the Communist Youth during the Civil War and later Party Secretary-General, who is now 84 and lives in Madrid; Irene Falcón, a journalist and long-time personal assistant of Dolores Ibárruri, who is now 92 and lives in Madrid; and Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, cultural critic and philosopher, who has lived in Mexico ever since the end of the war and is an eminent professor at the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma*. He received a honorary doctorate from that University in November 1998.

Civil War – became gloriously and painfully real to me in ways I could never have imagined.

This very modest work is dedicated to the memory of all those extraordinary men and women, communist, socialist and bourgeois alike; the ones whom I mention here and the ones I do not, the ones who made it into the history books and the ones who have been forgotten; for all they gave of themselves to a country which in many cases has been tremendously ungrateful to them; for the visions they had of a new and modern nation, most of which, sadly, never materialized; for all the political battles they won and for the many more they lost; for their intellectual discussions about a future they never got to live; for the pain those who were lucky enough to survive the war had yet to endure in exile. Whatever Spain is today, Spaniards owe it to them. For all of that, I only hope I have done them justice with my work, because they are, quite simply, irreplaceable.

María Teresa (Mayte) Gómez
Madrid-Montreal 1997-1999

Abbreviations used in text, footnotes and bibliography.

AHPCE	Archivo Histórico del Partido Comunista de España [Historical Archives of the Communist Party of Spain].
AHNSGC	Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Guerra Civil, Salamanca [National Historical Archive of Spain, Section Civil War, Salamanca].
BOC	Bloque Obrero y Campesino
CEDA	Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas
CNT	Confederación Nacional del Trabajo
CSR	Comités Sindicalistas Revolucionarios
ECCI	Executive Committee of the Communist International
FCCB	Federación Comunista Catalano-Balear
FJSE	Federación de Juventudes Socialistas de España
GCE	Grupo Comunista Español
ICE	Izquierda Comunista Española
ILE	Institución Libre de Enseñanza
JCI	Juventud Comunista Ibérica
MIP	Ministerio de Instrucción Pública
OCI	Oposición Comunista de Izquierda
PC	Partido Comunista Español
PCC	Partido Comunista Catalán
PCE	Partido Comunista de España
PCOE	Partido Comunista Obrero Español
POUM	Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista
PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español
UCP	Unión Cultural Proletaria
UGT	Unión General de Trabajadores

INTRODUCTION
On Spanish Cultural History and Communist Cultural Politics

> The past is that very obscure dimension
> which history begins to make intelligible.
>
> Manuel Tuñón de Lara.[1]

From the final third of the nineteenth century and into the first four decades of the twentieth, Spain experienced the most extraordinary – and at the same time convoluted – journey toward modernity, a seventy-year-long resolute struggle to break away from a feudal Monarchy and become a modern, democratic republic. After too long an agony, the Monarchy finally collapsed in April 1931, giving way to the Second Republic, which lasted exactly eight years. During that period, the Republican government was made up first by the reformist bourgeoisie, later by a coalition of right-wing parties, and in early 1936 by the progressive alliance of the Popular Front, under whose leadership the country would enter a three-year-long civil war. These seventy years, from around 1870 until 1939, were a time in which the social and political leadership of the country was in the hands of the intelligentsia – first as the only organized and outspoken alternative to the status quo, later as part of the government, and finally as mentors of the Popular Front and community leaders during the Civil War. From the *Krausistas* and the *Regeneracionistas* at the turn of the century, to the novelists of 1898, to the philosophers of 1914, to the poets of 1927, to the writers of 1936, several generations of intellectuals were involved in one way or another in making social change possible, bringing about the end of a system

[1] "El pasado es la dimensión oscura que la historia va haciendo comprensible". All citations in this Introduction are my own translations from originals in Spanish.

and the beginning of a new one. The academic scholarship on these literary and cultural generations is, needless to say, quite extensive, not only in relation to their artistic, literary or philosophical contributions, but also, and not less importantly, to their political involvement in Spanish society. The relationship between several of these generations of intellectuals and specific political ideologies or parties, such as republicanism or socialism, has also received considerable scholarly attention. To add to the study of the general cultural milieu of this period, there is also a great deal of material on Republican, Socialist, and, to a lesser extent, Anarchist cultural politics. In the late 1970s, more attention began to be paid to the less known circles of proletarian intellectuals who were active from the late 1920s until the Civil War, and to the debates on proletarian education and culture which took place in the country during those two decades. Although these last two topics are probably still understudied, there are a few major works which have very quickly become classics.

One would immediately assume, perhaps, that some of the scholarship above should have dealt to some extent with the Communist Party of Spain, its cultural politics and its intellectuals, given the fact that all across Europe, communist parties were such key political players during those years, and given as well the strong ties between the European intelligentsia and international communist organizations.

Yet there is no major study of the cultural politics of the Communist Party of Spain or of its relationship to intellectuals throughout the decade of the 1930s, let alone going further back into the early 1920s, when communism first appeared in the country. Even the studies of the proletarian cultural debates have often dismissed the Communist Party as "dogmatic" or irrelevant, merely including it in the discussion as part of the

background information on revolutionary intellectuals themselves. Either way, the Party has not been the main object of inquiry.

A few scattered paragraphs – all of them expressing similar points of view – are all there seems to be about communist cultural activities in Spain during the early 1920s, and there is hardly any more than that on the relationship between the Communist Party and the group of revolutionary intellectuals who were political and cultural activists during the late 1920s, many of whom belonged to the Party or would at a later date. Historian Pablo de Luis justifies the absence of communism in the cultural history of Spain during this decade on the grounds that the Communist Party of Spain was small, that it did not have in its ranks as many intellectuals as the Socialist Party did, and, more importantly, that during those years "communists did not have a defined cultural policy (except for what they used for political indoctrination) nor did they show any interest in issues related to the education and culture of [Party] members" (1994, 5).

Although it is true that before 1931 the Communist Party of Spain was small and had fewer intellectuals than other proletarian parties, the rest of the claims made by de Luis are by no means completely fair and may even be somewhat misleading. To say that the Communist Party had fewer intellectuals than other working-class organizations or parties, ignores two equally relevant facts: one, that most of the founders of the Communist Party were themselves intellectuals; the other, that those who were in the ranks of the Socialist Party were mostly from the reformist bourgeoisie while those in the Communist Party were from the petite bourgeoisie and the working class. Further, although the Communist Party did not have a cultural policy *per se*, it is unfair to conclude that it did not show "any interest" in the political education of its members. Instead, I find

it much more accurate to suggest that for a variety of reasons the Party was unable to transform its interest into any kind of practice. What is at issue here is much more than mere linguistic subtleties. The differences I point to and which I will look at in detail in the body of this thesis, make it possible to see pre-1931 communist cultural politics in a very different light.

Pablo de Luis and others have acknowledged that the Communist Party had a stronger presence in the Spanish political and cultural scene after the proclamation of the Republic in 1931. However, the magnitude of communist involvement in cultural theory and practice after 1936 was such that it seems to have overshadowed the very evolution which the Party followed until it got there. Very little has been said about the Party's ideas on culture around the time of the proclamation of the Second Republic, and most of it has merely served to state that the Party followed a very strict proletarian cultural line, following the lead of Soviet organizations, such as the Union of Proletarian Writers (RAPP). Although a number of communist intellectuals who were cultural theorists and/or practitioners during those years have received some scholarly attention (Rafael Alberti, Ramón J. Sender, César M. Arconada, Josep Renau, among others), their membership in the Communist Party has been more a piece of biographical information than a determinant factor in the analysis of their work. A few articles have looked at how some of these writers emulated the Party's political line in their novels, but there is hardly any interest in studying how they influenced the Party's cultural line or how, in turn, the Party influenced their political views.

What is more remarkable about this body of scholarship, however, is not that it is truly scanty, but that it takes an extraordinary leap from the proclamation of the Second

Republic in 1931 to the signing of the Popular Front alliance in early 1936, a time when the Communist Party was calling on all intellectuals (bourgeois and communist alike) to participate in a common struggle against fascism. Yet there seems to be no explanation for such a remarkable change, from the "dogmatism" and "lack of interest" of the 1920s and early 1930s, to the "openness" of the mid-1930s.

The study of the Communist Party's cultural policy and practice during the Civil War has been much more prolific, and yet for all its comprehensiveness such a study is still surprisingly schematic. A few works have looked at the Party's contribution to the policy and practice of the Republican Ministry of Public Instruction – in bits and pieces, as it were, since none of those works has been fully dedicated to that topic. Many more, however, have managed to speak of cultural practice during the war – and even of its political implications – by studying "Republican" cultural policy without even mentioning that the minister and his most immediate team of collaborators were all high-profile members of the Communist Party. On the other hand, and not at all surprisingly, whenever the focus of the scholarship has been the role of the Communist Party in the Ministry of Public Instruction, the conclusion has very often been that the Ministry was "dogmatic" and that it had "no cultural projects at all", only "propagandistic goals" (Alvarez Lopera 1982, 29).

All attempts to delineate a narrative for the evolution of Spanish intellectual, cultural, or artistic life during the period known as the *Edad de Plata*[2] [Silver Age] – from 1898 until the mid 1930s – have been forced to come to terms with the political and cultural significance of the Civil War itself. Leaving aside the issue of whether or not the

three years of war should be included in such a Silver Age,[3] the fact remains that it has not always been easy to decide the impact such a conflict had on the overall evolution of Spanish cultural politics.

Narratives mainly concerned with the evolution of art, literature or the bourgeois intellectual opposition to the political status quo have incorporated the Civil War only as an abrupt end to it all, a "wall" which separates two historical periods very well differentiated. Thus the Civil War is but a mere epilogue to an age suddenly brought to an end by a military uprising; a parenthesis, at best, in which cultural activities were carried out in response to a number of "special circumstances" (Gamonal 1987; Brihuega 1981).

A number of narratives concerned with the evolution of government educational and cultural policy, however, seem to have found no "wall" at all, since they have been able to move from the projects of the pre-war reformist and bourgeois government to those of the war-time Popular Front with remarkable ease. In this case, these narratives speak about the educational and cultural projects from the two different periods as if both were a historical and political unit merely interrupted by the presence of a retrograde right-wing government in between and by the outbreak of civil war. In some cases the connection between the first bourgeois Republican government and the war-time Popular Front government has been taken much further, to the point of suggesting that their cultural policies and practices had a common origin in the ideology of the learned bourgeoisie of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, an ideology grounded in

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[2] This term was coined by José Carlos Mainer in his academic classic *La edad de plata* above mentioned (Madrid: Cátedra, 1987).

[3] In his introduction to an anthology of the journal *Hora de España*, cultural historian Francisco Caudet wonders why, in the light of all the cultural work carried out during the Civil War, the *Edad de Plata* is

liberalism as well as political and cultural reformism (Tuñón de Lara 1990b; Salaün 1985). These narratives have not really accounted for the fact that the first Republican government had been a coalition of reformist Republican parties and that the war-time government was under the flag of the Popular Front. That, however, was not an irrelevant historical fact, since it meant that the Ministry of Public Instruction had been led, in the first case, by a reformist Republican and, in the second, by a Communist.

Other narratives equally concerned with the evolution of government educational and cultural policy have presented a very different scenario and consequently reached extremely different conclusions. Indeed these narratives have placed the "wall" toward the end of the Silver Age, although not so much during the three years of war but just before them, so that a clear difference is drawn between the cultural policy and practice of the first Republican government in 1931 and those of the Popular Front after 1936. In these cases, it has often been suggested that, after the victory of the Popular Front, the "populist" (Fernández Soria 1984) or "populist/ culturalist" (Bilbatúa 1976) attitude of the former (inherited from nineteenth-century ideology), in which ordinary people were considered to be "recipients" of culture, gave way to a more "popular" attitude, in which ordinary people were allowed to be protagonists of the cultural event.

All of the above have been suggestions rather than in-depth explorations, and that may very well account for the fact that the paradoxes and questions they raise seem to have been left completely unresolved. Indeed was government cultural activity during the Civil War still grounded in nineteenth-century bourgeois philosophy or was it surpassing its ideological (populist) bias? The Communist Party and the Ministry of Public

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always said to go from 1898 to 1936, but never includes the years of the Civil War itself, from 1936 to

Instruction, as so many scholars would have it, used war-time cultural activities to "spread communist propaganda" (Alvarez Lopera 1982, 29). How could it be doing that while at the same time embracing the cultural philosophy of nineteenth-century bourgeois reformism? And if it was not – if it, in fact, surpassed its ideological bias – how did it do it?

A partial answer to these paradoxes is rather simple, and is provided by the political context of the years previous to the Civil War, in particular by the ideological evolution of international communism and the historic policy turn of the Communist International in the summer of 1935, when the organization abandoned the proletarian line it had held since its foundation in 1919 and opened up toward anti-fascist alliances with social-democrat parties, giving way to the creation of Popular Fronts across Europe. European communist parties thus moved from a strictly proletarian line which had historically excluded socialists and the bourgeoisie as political enemies and which had pursued the government of workers and peasants, to embracing the cause of the democratic revolution. Since the Communist Party of Spain followed a similar line, it could very well be argued that, between 1936 and 1939, to be part of the Popular Front, to aid the bourgeoisie in making its dream of a democratic revolution possible, and to spread communist dogma were really one and the same thing. It would thus follow that the ideology behind the communist Ministry of Public Instruction during the Civil War could have been, to some extent, grounded in nineteenth-century bourgeois reformism.

A complete answer to the paradoxes above may be as simple as this partial answer I have just outlined. Yet it needs to be pursued in radically different terms. Such a

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1939 (1975, 15).

complete answer will not be possible unless we attempt to formulate it in diachronic rather than synchronic terms, that is, by looking not so much at the way in which Spanish communism in late 1935 and throughout the years of civil war was informed by policy turns in the Comintern, but by exploring the previous evolution of Spanish communism itself. In order to understand the cultural discourse and practice of the communist-led Ministry of Public Instruction during the war, it is thus necessary to take another look at the cultural politics of the Communist Party before 1936, during the earlier part of the 1930s, and even further back, during the early 1920s, when the first Communist Party was founded.

In fact, the paradoxes I pointed out above are possible precisely because of the gaps which exist in that cultural history, gaps which have made the study of communist cultural politics in Spain so sketchy and insubstantial. It is only by pursuing this diachronic study, by attempting to fill those gaps, that the paradoxes may be resolved. Perhaps then it could be possible to understand what happened to the Communist Party of Spain during the Civil War, how it could be "spreading communist dogma" and aiding in a democratic cultural revolution at the same time, what that meant to the overall picture of Spanish cultural politics, and whether or not such a cultural effort was at all different from the one made by previous (bourgeois) generations of intellectuals, that is, whether or not it perpetuated nineteenth-century "populism". The goal of this dissertation is to address these questions by looking at the evolution of communist cultural politics in Spain from the time in which the first Communist Party was founded in 1920 until the end of the Civil War in 1939, thus providing a historical outline which might help put events in perspective. My goal here is not to explain *why* the Communist Party arrived at the

cultural position it occupied during the Civil War – since that was the result of a change in political strategy – but *how* it did so, what sort of a journey the Party undertook until it arrived there, and the terms in which it was done.

In order to understand that "long" journey of hardly nineteen years, something must be explained about the kind of society in which Spanish communism emerged. As a result, the journey truly begins much earlier, with a short introduction to the kind of monarchical, feudal society Spain was during the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth. That introduction includes as well a brief presentation of the different generations of bourgeois intellectuals who offered cultural and political critiques of the status quo, both politically and intellectually. The goal is to offer an overview of the terms on which such bourgeois critique was based – on the one hand, the appeal to the Spanish *pueblo* as a political subject to rise against the feudal status quo; on the other, the ideology of political and cultural reformism, that is, the belief that political change could be the result not only of political reform but also, and perhaps more importantly, of the education of the masses. Only by understanding the nature and the implications of this critique will it be possible to understand the ideology against which later generations of revolutionary intellectuals would rebel.

While the last few decades of the nineteenth century and the first twenty years of the twentieth were dominated by the presence of the reformist bourgeois intelligentsia, the cultural scene after 1920 was dominated by the emergence of a revolutionary petite bourgeoisie for whom the political aims of bourgeois reformism were but a pathetic attempt to continue pursuing a revolution which the irruption into political life of the proletariat had already made anachronistic. This difference between the two concurrent

critiques of bourgeois society and culture coming from different groups of intellectuals – on the one hand, the reformist critique of the feudal status quo and, on the other, the revolutionary critique of reformism – is the basic premise of this work, for the answers I seek to provide here are deeply grounded in the circumstances under which each of those critiques appeared, and how they evolved and informed each other throughout the years.

Having provided the background information, the journey of the Communist Party itself begins in Chapter Two, with a study of the Party's original proletarian, anti-reformist discourse as it applied to both politics and culture. That chapter deals with a short period of three years, from the founding of the first Communist Party in 1920 to the coming to power of General Primo de Rivera in 1923, when the Party was declared illegal. The cultural activity of the Communist Party during these three years has practically been reduced to nil, for it has been barely mentioned that a number of "communist renegades" founded a cultural organization called the *Unión Cultural Proletaria*, an organization which has subsequently been dismissed as "dogmatic" and "sectarian". The UCP, however, was much more than that, and in this chapter I set out to reveal both its political origins and raison d'être as well as its intentions to carry out a revolutionary cultural program. I will argue that the organization was the result of ideological and political differences within the Communist Party of Spain, differences which had to do with the anti-reformism of an internal current fighting against the ever-increasing dominance of a reformist platform in the mainstream Party. From that anti-reformist position, the UCP attempted to provide a program for the education of the proletariat which went far beyond what other working-class organizations, mainly under the sponsorship of the Socialist Party, had managed to do. These facts are something more than mere historical or

political curiosities, for I believe a better understanding of the UCP will serve to shed light on the origin of later revolutionary critiques of bourgeois reformism, and to help scholars fully understand the journey which the Communist Party completed in 1939.

In Chapter Three, I look at the cultural politics of the Communist Party between the years of 1923 and 1931, years marked by Primo de Rivera's dictatorship. Although at this time the Party's cultural discourse was somewhat more sophisticated than it had previously been, its internal contradictions prevented any of those ideas from becoming practice. On the one hand, while the Party rejected the reformist politics of the bourgeois and socialist intelligentsias and called for an alliance of petit-bourgeois and proletarian intellectuals, it did very little to pursue such an alliance and nothing at all to support those which were being created outside its realm of influence. On the other, the failure of the Party leadership to agree on questions of revolutionary theory and practice meant that the Party could offer very little in terms of political education to its members or the working class as a whole. In this chapter, I attempt to reveal how the cultural projects of the revolutionary intelligentsia which was beginning to get organized by then, did, in fact, go beyond the deadlock in which the Party found itself, both by creating the intellectual alliance the Party had been calling for, and by looking at the issues the Party was unable to resolve.

While these two chapters are a study of the Communist Party's proletarian and anti-reformist discourse, Chapter Four is the actual mapping out of its journey toward a democratic and reformist one. It is mainly in this chapter that I endeavor to answer the question I have posed earlier, of *how*, rather than *why*, the Party arrived at that discourse. The chapter is divided into three sections, with the emergence of fascism in Europe and

the Seventh Congress of the Comintern as dividing lines. In each of those stages I look at the relationship between the Party's cultural discourse and the work of Party intellectuals, pointing out how they influenced each other. Overall, the chapter aims at showing how the Party and the new generation of intellectuals who joined it traveled together from addressing the proletariat to addressing the Spanish *pueblo* – the very same *pueblo* whom the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie had already appealed to – and how they replaced an interest in proletarian culture with one in popular culture. As the result of the new political strategy of anti-fascism which international communism adopted, Spanish communists embraced a political and cultural discourse and a narrative of Spanish history in which the protagonist was no longer the proletariat rising against bourgeois Spain, but the popular masses rising against fascism. The Party thus abandoned the revolutionary critique of bourgeois reformism and embraced the reformist critique of feudalism, effectively shifting from class struggle to a national-popular struggle which would advance the democratic revolution.

As we enter the Civil War period in Chapter Five, we no longer arrive there as the result of a historical leap, but with an understanding (hopefully clear) of the evolution of the Party's cultural discourse until the turning point of July 1936. In that chapter, I deal with the wide array of cultural activities sponsored by the communist-led Ministry of Public Instruction – activities through which ordinary people became producers of culture – and with the overall debates in which communist intellectuals participated. The question of educational and cultural activities as vehicles for political propaganda is not one on which I wish to dwell. Rather, I will take for granted and assume as a premise that such a thing was exactly what both the Ministry and the Communist Party set out to do, and will

try to look, once again, at *how* they did it, and at the kind of propaganda which was being spread.

It is at this point that I try to answer the second question I formulated earlier. The Party behind the Ministry of Public Instruction had abandoned the revolutionary cultural critique and embraced the postulates of bourgeois cultural reformism. However, did communist cultural discourse or practice reproduce the populist ideological biases of nineteenth-century reformism, or did it surpass them? By allowing the Spanish people to become producers of culture in ways theretofore unknown, the communist-led Ministry of Public Instruction surpassed the "populism" (culture as charity) of previous generations of bourgeois intellectuals. However, it also reproduced a "populist" discourse in other ways. Indeed the Ministry used a populist discourse which interpellated the *pueblo* in opposition to a reactionary force, much in the same way former bourgeois generations of intellectuals had done. In fact, I will argue – using some of the responses to Laclau's theory of populism – that the Ministry not only "interpellated" the Spanish people as ideological subjects against a reactionary force, but that it actually "constituted" them as such via the cultural activities it sponsored, which were intended to bring people together and instill in them a sense of community. That "constitution" of the Spanish people as a subject of a democratic struggle against feudalism was but one of the signs which proved that Spanish communists had not only embraced the discourse of the reformist bourgeoisie, but had, in fact, embraced wholeheartedly the goals of the democratic revolution itself.

Starting the journey as early as 1920 and finishing it toward the end of the war – just when a much longer journey was about to begin – means that a number of obstacles are inevitably in the way, for the attempt to reconstruct the early history of communism in

Spain, specially the cultural politics, is anything but an easy task. Although I do not wish to use this fact in order to justify any of the possible shortcomings of my research, I do feel that some of the problems need to be exposed.

One is the lack of original sources. In recent years, the Communist Party of Spain has made considerable efforts to organize its archival material and to make it available to professional researchers,[4] but the weight of financial constraints has turned that effort into a constant struggle and there is still a great deal of material which remains unclassified and therefore inaccessible. More importantly, the thirty-eight long years of exile that the Party had to endure from 1939 until 1977,[5] the three years of civil war before that, and the sixteen of clandestine life before all of that have had an obvious effect on the quantity and quality of records the Party has been able to keep, which means that even if the archives were to be fully organized, they would still be necessarily incomplete.[6]

A second problem is the bicolor discourse which comes through the material written on the history of the Communist Party during the period under scrutiny here. Since most of that material has been written by Party members, dissidents or enemies, and

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[4] The Communist Party of Spain opened its historical archives to the public in 1980, three years after the Party was legalized by the first democratic government after Franco's death. For a brief history of the archive, see Ramos Bello (1997).

[5] That is, from the end of the Civil War and the beginning of exile period in 1939, until it was legalized by Adolfo Suárez's government in 1977.

[6] In March 1939, when it was already obvious that the Republic had lost the war, the Communist Party of Spain sent two truckloads of Party documents through the Catalonian border, under the care of José del Barrio. Those trucks were lost. During the previous weeks, the Political-Military Committee of the PCE, in agreement with the leadership in Madrid, destroyed an important part of the Party archives, as it was later confirmed by the last person in charge of that committee, Jacinto Barrios. Enrique Líster, a high-profile member of the Party and a Republican military commander, has also related how before escaping to France he himself destroyed most of the documents which had to do with his army forces, the Fifth Regiment. See Blanco Rodriguez (1993). During the long period of exile, from 1939 to 1975, there were Party sections all throughout Europe and the Americas, and each section kept its own archives, though the largest portion was in the former Soviet Union, where the Party's top leadership resided for decades.

very little by independent scholars,[7] its content ranges from the simplistic, propagandistic, self-indulgent and self-complacent Party discourse, to the equally simplistic and accusatory discourse of its adversaries. The suggestion made by Spanish historian Alvarez Junco that Spanish historiography is grounded in "value judgments rather than [on] functional rationality" (1990a, 444) seems to be most appropriate here.

The problems I have foregrounded so far have been summed up quite eloquently by Pilar González Guzmán, who has argued that the knowledge we may have today of the Communist Party "is in part lost as a result of the amnesia produced by a forty-year-long trauma; partly beautified by communists themselves, in an attempt to have their myths survive one of the most fierce political persecutions in history; partly stained by the intellectual contributors to that repression; partly simply eliminated before the firing squads" (1977, 5).

Although I have stated the goal of this dissertation to be an attempt to fill a variety of "gaps", I am afraid I have left others seriously unfulfilled. The gap which the absence of communist cultural politics has left in the cultural history of Spain is one which I by no means can claim to fill completely in this work. Early fears of having chosen an issue on which there would be hardly anything to write, very soon gave way to much worse fears of not knowing what issues, projects, or historical periods to address. As I approached the research and attempted to resolve the problems it raised, I made a number of choices which I should clarify now. The most important of those choices is that rather than

[7] As an illustration for this point it might suffice to say that among the seventeen pieces of academic work (books and articles) on the history of the Communist Party of Spain listed in the Bibliography of this thesis, five were written by a person or team of people who at the time of writing had abandoned the Communist Party and were part of the communist opposition; eight were written by Party members; one was written by an officer in Franco's police, and only three were written by independent historians.

dealing with a specific year, or a specific cultural project (on each of which indeed a dissertation could have been written), I have chosen to look at the period 1920-1939 as a whole, in order to outline an evolution which I think must be acknowledged. I am fully aware of the fact that in the process I have left many other gaps, that indeed I may have opened too many doors and perhaps closed very few of them, if any. After the writing of this thesis, most of the communist intellectuals I mention here still need to receive further individualized academic attention which I could not provide.

The second choice I have made has been to speak of individual intellectuals only as their cultural discourse or practice related to Party politics. Scholarship on Spanish culture has a very obvious tendency – and one which I think should be corrected – to study the political involvement of (mainly bourgeois) intellectuals during this "Silver Age" through individual biographies rather than through the analysis of the politics of the organizations, journals and other cultural projects in which these intellectuals participated. I have attempted to redress the balance (however symbolically) by speaking more about organizations, institutions, and projects than about individual intellectuals, whose personal biographies I have provided as background, rather than as the object of inquiry.

During these years of heated literary and cultural debates, the projects undertaken by the communist intelligentsia were mainly literary and cultural journals. I have endeavored to look at these journals as cultural projects carried out by a specific group of people in a historical context which informed their political and cultural agenda. The vehicles to reveal that agenda were, necessarily, the articles published in the journal. This dissertation, however, provides no analysis of texts, whether as literary pieces or as examples of Marxist analysis. Rather, individual texts are studied as part of a collective

editorial voice which was informed both by Party politics and national political events, and are treated as examples of the position of communist intellectuals *vis-à-vis* the above. That also means that the intellectuals who are studied here are studied as *communist* intellectuals and not as *Marxist* ones.[8] In most cases I have assumed the individual journals to have a single editorial voice, which is why I have spoken indistinctly about the journals themselves as projects and the collective of intellectuals who founded them.

A comprehensive analysis of communist cultural politics in Spain between the years of 1920 and 1939 would have to include a myriad of political parties, and not only the Communist Party of Spain. In the first half of this work, I deal to a large extent with the political and cultural role played by oppositional currents within the Party because I consider that to be central to my main arguments. Yet, as those internal currents become independent organizations and parties, the focus narrows in the Communist Party of Spain and its activities in Madrid. This has been a conscious decision which I needed to make in order to be able to enter the maze of communist cultural politics during these years in a way which could be feasible, given the limits of a dissertation, as well as the result of geographical and linguistic considerations. Once again, I have to acknowledge, however, that the analysis I try to begin here will be far from complete until it includes a more in-

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[8] Víctor Alba has argued that a clear division should be established between those intellectuals who joined socialist organizations but who did not use dialectical materialism in their work, and those who "d[id] Marxism", that is, who put forward a dialectical-materialist analysis. He has suggested that the first group was much larger than the second (1975, 207). Alba's argument applies not only to bourgeois intellectuals in the Socialist Party but also to petit-bourgeois and proletarian intellectuals in the Communist Party. Although some of the intellectuals whom I study here (especially Maurín, Arconada, Sender, Piqueras) did use dialectical materialism to study the evolution of culture in Spain, I think it is still possible to say that, between 1920 and 1939, communist intellectuals did not produce a major body of cultural analysis using dialectical materialism as the main theoretical tool. Jorge Semprún (a member of the Communist Party in later years and Minister of Culture in the early 1980s) has argued that "[i]n the past, before and during the Civil War, Spain had *communist* intellectuals. . . but not *Marxist* ones" (qtd. in Estruch 1978, 78; emphasis in the original).

depth look at the myriad of communist organizations coming out of the Communist Party during its earlier years, and in later years at the *Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista* [POUM] in Catalonia.[9] Further, when dealing with the Civil War in my very last chapter, I have quite consciously shifted the focus away from the Party toward the communist-led Ministry of Public Instruction, since my goal is to discuss the full circle of communist politics once the Party became a member of the Popular Front government. I have been thus forced to let go of an analysis I consider equally relevant: that of the cultural policy and practice of the Communist Party itself, and how they may have compared to the kind of work the Party was doing in the Ministry.

Throughout this thesis, I use the word "intellectual" and "intelligentsia" as synonyms, the former as both a noun and an adjective. Neither word makes reference to social class but exclusively to professional activity. Thus I use these two terms to refer to any person who "participates in the creation, distribution or administration of cultural products" (Mohan 1987, 67), a definition which includes professors, teachers, journalists, theorists, writers, cultural critics, poets, visual artists, cultural activists and the like. Precisely because this thesis deals so much with the different social classes to which the Spanish intellectuals of the first third of the century belonged, and the political positions they embraced, I will rarely use the noun "intellectual" without an adjective to specify membership in a social class or a political ideology. Thus at different points I will speak

[9] There are a number of studies on the opposition to the orthodox (Stalinist) Communist Party of Spain and these have dealt to a small extent with issues of artistic and cultural policy within these organizations and parties. See Alba and Schwartz (1988); Alba, ed., (1976). Yet, the kind of study to which I refer here and which still remains to be done is one which would take into account the full spectrum of Spanish communism across the Iberian Peninsula. Some efforts have been made to study communist cultural politics in specific nations and regions of the Spanish state, the most recent of which is a book published by the Asturian chapter of the Communist Party. See Erice, ed. (1996). This work includes an essay on

about "reformist" or "bourgeois" intellectuals, about "proletarian", "petit-bourgeois" or "revolutionary" intellectuals, as well as "Party" or "communist" intellectuals. I think most of those adjectives are self-explanatory, since they appear in a particular political context. Those which might not be, I have explained as I have used them.

Other terms which may need clarification from the outset are those of "education" and "culture". In a most basic sense, of course, the word "culture" was used by Spanish intellectuals in order to refer both to "society" as a whole (that is, a whole way of life) as well as to "art" (the artistic manifestations in that society). Historian Pablo de Luis has pointed out that in the late nineteenth and throughout the twentieth century, Spanish socialists and anarchists used the terms "education" and "culture" indistinctly to refer to two things: on the one hand, the "intellectual, moral and political training of the worker"; on the other, the "tools and channels to pursue that training" (1994, 4) whether of a formal or informal nature.

When at the turn of the century the bourgeois intelligentsia argued that the country's problem was one of "culture", they were speaking about the lack of education of the average Spaniard. In that argument, the term "culture" was used to refer to the "knowledge" (general, scientific, artistic, political, moral, or of any other kind) which Spanish citizens needed to acquire in order to be worthy citizens of a democratic state, as much as to the process through which such knowledge would be provided to them. In that sense, the terms "education" and "culture" were practically interchangeable.

Embracing all the definitions of culture above, both the reformist and the revolutionary cultural critiques were directed toward a whole way of life, its educational

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the cultural politics of the Asturian section of the Party during the same years I consider here. See Uría

schemes, as well as to its artistic and intellectual products. As a result, the term "cultural politics" I use here includes the critique of bourgeois society (its culture and its politics) put forward by the Party and its intellectuals (as a unit or independently of each other), Party efforts to provide its members and the working class in general with a much-needed political education, the Party's attitude toward (bourgeois or revolutionary) intellectuals, and Party policy on art and literature.

The final clarification I want to make is about translations. To a very large extent, the primary sources I have used for this work (literary and cultural journals, personal memoirs, newspapers articles, pamphlets, archival documents and the like) were originally written in Spanish by Spanish-speaking authors. I have also used, however, primary sources written by non-Spanish authors but which at some point were translated into Spanish, some others written by Catalonian authors in that language and then printed in Spanish in translation, and still others written by Spanish authors but published in English or French for a foreign publication later distributed in Spain. In terms of secondary sources, again, a large part of the material I have used has been written by Spanish-speaking scholars and has been published in Spanish, but I have also quoted extensively from the work of foreign scholars which may have been originally published in Spanish, English, or French, and to a lesser extent from the work of Spanish scholars writing in Catalonian or Valencian.[10]

González (1996).

[10] The language we commonly call "Spanish" is, in the strict sense, really "Castilian", the language of Castille which at some point in history became the language of the whole Spanish state. Other nations within that state have kept their historical languages, which, like Castilian itself, originated in Latin. The only ones from which I have needed to translate here have been Catalonian and Valencian.

In this respect, the first thing I would like to clarify is that all translations, unless otherwise specified, are mine. I have translated from original texts found in Spanish (and to a lesser extent from Catalonian and Valencian), while I have quoted literally from original material found in English and French. As to the original language in which any of the sources above were found: unless otherwise specified, it should be assumed that all primary sources cited here in English (whether of Spanish or foreign origin, written by Spanish-speaking or foreign authors) were found in Spanish. As far as secondary sources are concerned, it should be assumed that the work of Spanish scholars was found in Spanish and that of foreign scholars in English. I have pointed out the instances in which the case may have been different, and have explained the particular circumstances.

The pages which follow are an attempt to explore the cultural aspects of a historical process of which we barely know the political side. To some extent, the suggestion which I want to make from the beginning of this work until the very end is that a closer look at the cultural evolution of the Communist Party of Spain is of paramount importance in order to have a better understanding not only of the Party's political discourse but, more importantly, of the overall revolutionary process which Spain went through during the first forty years of this century. As I attempt to recreate the evolution of communist cultural politics, I will endeavor to establish connections which I believe have been missed. For a great deal of this work, the most important connection I explore is that between the Communist Party and the work of its intellectuals. The most obviously forgotten and thus underestimated, however, and the one which informs the whole of this work, is the connection between communist cultural practice and the democratic revolution which had been so long in the making. What I render here is my own

interpretation and reading of that evolution and of those connections, in the process hoping to open the way first for more empirical research and, even more importantly, for more theoretical explorations. A thorough study of the Spanish revolution – which has otherwise proven to be so worthy of academic attention – will not be possible until we consider how the cultural politics of all those involved affected the way in which that revolution was envisioned and, to some extent, put into practice as well. Living in a post-Soviet world in which the talk of revolution is so unfashionable, it would be too easy to continue dismissing Spanish communists as "dogmatic" and their cultural politics as non-existent. It may be a challenge to try to prove it otherwise. That does not mean, however, that it should not be done.

CHAPTER ONE

On the Bourgeois Revolution that Never Was: The Spanish State, Bourgeois Intellectuals and the Rise of the Proletariat in Spain from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to 1917

- Our Spaniard yawns.
Would it be hunger? Sleepiness? Boredom?
Doctor, would his stomach be empty?
- The emptiness is rather in his head.

Antonio Machado[1]

In his analysis of Spanish revolutionary history, Joaquín Maurín pointed out that in 1800 "Spain was the first feudal nation of the world", followed by Russia and Austria. At that time, Spain was mainly a rural country in which the nobility, which accounted for 4% of the population owned 51.5% of the land, and in which the second largest landowner was the Church (1.3% of the population), with 16.5% of the land (1966, 5).[2]

While most of the Western world had already gone through national bourgeois revolutions which had changed its social, economic and political structures, in Spain the whole of the nineteenth century would still be marked by late and unsuccessful attempts on the part of the national bourgeoisie to carry out its own. As a result of those failures, well into the 1800s, Spain continued to be a feudal society, economically and politically ruled by an oligarchy made up of the absolute Monarchy, the Church and the nobility.

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[1] "Nuestro español bosteza/¿Es hambre? ¿Sueño? ¿Hastío?/Doctor, ¿tendrá el estómago vacío?/ El vacío es más bien en la cabeza". Antonio Machado, *Proverbios y cantares*. "L". In Machado (1989, 581).

[2] This means that 5.3% of the population owned 68% of the land. The material power of the Church cannot be overemphasized. In the mid 1800s, the Spanish Church was made up of 85,546 clergymen, 8,659 members of the Inquisition and 92,727 nuns and monks, living in 3,126 convents. This was a rate of one person in the Church for every 50 people, a very high one, second only to Portugal. The income of the Church (including the usufruct of renting its lands and properties, as well as its tithes) reached the

From the liberal Constitution of 1812, drawn during the country's War of Independence against Napoleon, through the proclamation of the First Republic in 1873 and beyond, the history of nineteenth-century Spain is that of a struggle between absolutism and liberalism, a struggle which resulted in a great deal of political instability and no possibility of social change. Throughout the century, Spain continued to be highly impoverished, the result of an economy highly dependent on foreign capital.[3]

1874 marked the beginning of the period known in Spanish history as the *Restauración* [Restoration], a time in which the Bourbon Monarchy was restored, bringing about some degree of political stability and instituting the first Constitutional Monarchy in the history of the country, with sovereignty being shared by the King and the *Cortes* [Parliament]. The system of the *Restauración*, however, was nothing but a mere façade of Parliamentarianism and democracy behind which social and economic differences sharpened and political corruption spread. In fact, it was during the *Restauración* that the semi-feudal system of *Caciquismo*[4] reached its maximum expression: the Spanish oligarchy, which by then had managed to co-opt in its ranks a good part of the rural haute bourgeoisie[5] and the revolutionary liberal bourgeoisie of previous decades, exercised full control over the economic means of production and the mechanisms of political control, while all other social groups, such as the urban middle-

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sum of 1,042,000,000 *reales* per annum. This was as much as half of the net income originated by all lands and real estate in the entire country (de Jonnès 1834, 79).

[3] For a political history and economic analysis of nineteenth-century Spain, see Tuñón de Lara (1980); Palacio Atard (1978); McCabe (1931). A succinct overview of the history, politics and economic evolution of Spain during this period as well as the years under scrutiny in this thesis can be found in Manuel (1938).

[4] From the Spanish word "*cacique*". A "*cacique*" was a rural landowner (normally a man) who exercised economic and political control over an entire rural village or region.

class and lower and petite bourgeoisie (much smaller in number) remained socially and politically isolated. Needless to say, the masses of agricultural workers and peasants lived in complete misery, their wages being among the lowest in Europe.[6]

In 1876, President Sagasta's government inaugurated and institutionalized the system of *partidos turnantes* [rotational parties] in which the two political parties of the oligarchy – Conservative and Liberal (the latter no longer holding any resemblance to what Spanish liberalism had been during the earlier part of the century) – arranged to alternate in government peacefully, while real political power was exercised by a network of local powers which went from the Crown Governor down to the rural *caciques* and the local politicians. Those "networks" set out to control the government and administration of its respective areas in ways which openly contradicted the written law, a grievance for which they were accountable to no one.[7]

The system of the *partidos turnantes* definitely choked the bourgeois revolution to death, ensuring that the country remained unable to experience any real political or economic evolution, let alone undergo any kind of deep structural change. With intellectuals and professionals unable to enter the public service domain in areas like diplomacy, education or national politics, and the administration of the country in the hands of the supporters of the Monarchy, the Church and the parties of the oligarchy, the

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[5] Especially the rural bourgeoisie who had prospered with a partial *desamortización* (sale of Church land). For an evolution of the Spanish bourgeoisie during the nineteenth century, see Maurín (1966); Martínez Cuadrado (1974); Jesús Cruz (1996).

[6] In Catalonia, the average industrial worker was paid 3.50 to 4 pts per day, a skilled worker 5 pts, and women 2.50 pts., while living expenses were 23% higher than in Paris (Meaker 1974, 4).

[7] This political system was based on recommendations, absenteeism of public servants, favoritism, tolerance upon infringement of the law, partial justice, inefficient or non-existant public services, financial monopolies and the manipulation of elections in order to keep the peaceful turns in office of the two parties (Alvarez Junco 1994, 33). As Raymond Carr has suggested, this was not a political regime in

national political scene as well as public life in general remained dramatically impoverished (Becarud 1978, 6). These were the *años bobos* [years of stupidity][8] of the *Restauración*. As Maurín argued, "[e]verything, with the honorable exception of a minority, was stupid, petty, mean, small-minded and outdated" (1966, 22).

The death of Spanish liberalism and the co-option of the haute bourgeoisie into the system, however, had not brought an end to all political and intellectual currents of change, and during the second half of the nineteenth century, something could still be saved within that "honorable minority" Maurín rescued from the otherwise grim state of affairs. In opposition to the haute bourgeoisie which was feudalist, catholic, conservative, anti-democratic and, of course, monarchical, there rose a middle bourgeoisie which was highly educated, capitalist, lay, liberal, democratic, and above all, Republican – a social class with which feudal, absolutist Spain would have to reckon for the next eighty years.[9]

As Castro Alfín has pointed out, more than a political party, Spanish republicanism was a conception of the universe, a body of thought about the deeds and destiny of humanity, led by reason (1987, 203). Convinced as they were that Spain's impoverishment (cultural, scientific, economic and otherwise) was the result of a rotten political regime, the reformist bourgeoisie set out to make of Spaniards a modern people through a democratic revolution which would end the privileges of the Spanish oligarchy, bring about "political and social emancipation for the wage-earning classes" (Pérez Ledesma

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which there were "abuses". Rather, "the abuses were the essence of the system" (1966, 367). For further study of *Caciquismo*, see Varela Ortega (1977); Kern (1974).

[8] This expression was coined by nineteenth-century Spanish novelist Benito Pérez Galdós (Las Palmas 1843-Madrid 1920).

[9] Throughout this thesis I will refer to the bourgeoisie which was co-opted into the system of the *Restauración* as the "haute bourgeoisie" or "the bourgeoisie of the *Restauración*", and to the opponents to the status quo as "the reformist bourgeoisie" or "reformist intelligentsia".

1997, 212) and make progress, as well as scientific and technological evolution, possible. If the Spanish Monarchy meant "poverty and theocracy", the Republic meant "wealth and democracy" (Duarte 1997, 173).[10] Republican intellectuals and professionals sincerely believed that the Republic would make it possible for those who had true intellectual merits to become the new leadership of the country (Duarte 1997, 172).

A democratic system, however, would need to be sustained by an "intelligent and rich middle class", and the one Spain had not only was "ignorant and poor" (Albornoz 1920, 38-39), it also had lost all of its "bourgeois spirit", having become not only "acquiescent" to the regime, but also willing to be tempted by "aristocratic pomp" (Duarte 1997, 179). Republicans were thus forced to seek support for their democratic program in the masses of Spaniards. In a country where the industrial revolution had been but a foreign event, no identity of class had yet been forged among the wage-earning classes,[11] making it easier for Republicans to stage their "protest against political exclusion" (171) by appealing to all those Spaniards who happened to lie outside the feudal oligarchy, including the masses of peasants, agricultural workers, merchants, small proprietors, the middle classes and the petite bourgeoisie, all of which were addressed as one unit, called "*pueblo*".[12] Republicans considered themselves to be not merely "part" of this *pueblo*,

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[10] A Republican newspaper at the turn of the century was adequately called *El Progreso*. For further study of the Republican concept of progress, see Alvarez Junco (1994); Robles Egea (1987).

[11] For an analysis of the evolution of working-class consciousness in Spain, see Pérez Ledesma (1997).

[12] According to the *Diccionario provisional de la Constitución política de la Monarquía española* [Provisional Dictionary of the Political Constitution of the Spanish Monarchy] (Madrid 1820), the term "*pueblo*" meant "common citizens" or "plebeians" as opposed to "nobility". Bartolome José Gallardo defined the term as "common citizens who did not enjoy any specific distinction, either in rents or employment, and who live[d] off their work" (qtd. in Pérez Ledesma 1997, 211). In 1840, the "*pueblo*" was defined as "the crowd", a term which included "artisans, farmers, peasants, merchants [and] proletariats", that is, the "immense majority of the nation" (1975,120). Other definitions of "*pueblo*" also included the petite bourgeoisie, professionals, intellectuals and artists (García Ruiz 1862). For a discussion on the ambiguity of this term, see Castro Alfín (1987).

but the *pueblo* itself, the true representatives of the "livel[iest], health[iest] and most vital forces in the country" (qtd. in Duarte 1997, 195).

Under the weight of a tradition which went back to medieval political scholarship and was tainted by the ideals of Romanticism (Alvarez Junco 1990b, 160),[13] nineteenth-century Republicans not only advocated the supremacy of the will of the people, they also believed the *pueblo* was the "depositary of all social virtues of justice and morality", while the oligarchy and the powers-that-be were considered to be the personification of evil (1990a, 10).[14] The Republic wanted to be "the institutional framework of a social order which would have reconciled itself with human nature and the eternal laws of law and justice. . . ignored and violated by the dominant tyranny" (Castro Alfin 1987, 204). Republicans believed in a government of "tolerance, equality, reason and justice" grounded in the "laws which human nature had created for the happiness and well-being of the human race" (*El Republicano* 3 October 1842).

To belong to the *pueblo* meant to be unable to share in the economic resources of the country, to lack the most basic political rights. It meant to have a "common awareness of injustice" (Alvarez Junco 1990b, 159). Republicanism was the "government of the

[13] Alvarez Junco has argued that to the medieval concept of pueblo as *Vox Dei*, nineteenth-century Romanticism added a vision of people as a symbol of simplicity and naturalness, of equality, fraternity, self-organization and revolutionary will. This is what nineteenth-century Republicans inherited.
[14] Alvarez Junco has pointed out how such a view of the *pueblo* as the source of all virtues was a "false and optimistic interpretation of the 'popular'", since the daily life of the Spanish masses was ruled instead by much more traditional "values", such as "bullfighting, taverns, superstition, repressed sexuality, misogyny, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and racism" (1990b, 161). Angel Duarte has pointed out a similar contradiction, for while Republican leaders were against the death penalty, the *pueblo* turned public executions into mass exhibitions (1997, 180). For further analysis of the nineteenth-century concept of *pueblo*, see Castro Alfin (1987, 1997); Torres Ballesteros (1987).

people by the people" (qtd. in Battaner Arias 1977, 425),[15] and whatever was found outside the *pueblo* was simply the "enemy" (Duarte 1997, 195).

As a result of all the above, nineteenth-century Spanish republicanism has often been described as "populist".[16] According to Ernesto Laclau, however, not every political discourse which addresses people above classes or which mystifies them as the source of political redemption, should automatically be considered "populist". In Laclau's view, the emergence of populism is historically linked to a crisis of the dominant ideological discourse, in turn the result of a fracture in the power bloc, in which a class or class fraction needs, in order to assert its hegemony, to appeal to the 'people' against established ideology as a whole. The interaction between these two "antagonistic poles", people and power bloc, is the "dominant contradiction" through which all political and ideological relations of domination are expressed (1977, 172).[17]

Laclau then draws from the Althusserian concept of ideology in order to suggest that a populist discourse does much more than simply address or appeal to the people of a nation as one of those antagonistic poles. He suggests that the discourse, in fact, "interpellate[s] and constitute[s] [those people] as [political] subjects" operating within the binomy of relations of domination. Further, he draws from the Gramscian differentiation between class struggle and the national-popular struggle in order to suggest that populism begins at the point where popular-democratic elements are presented as an antagonistic option against the ideology of the dominant bloc (172-3). A populist discourse would

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[15] The original text quoted by Battaner Arias is from the *Cortes Constituyentes* of 1869.

[16] The term "populism" has been defined as a political ideology, a program, a movement or a discourse. For an overview of the many definitions given to this term and a discussion on its ambiguity, see Laclau (1977). For further information on how this term has been used in Spanish history, see Alvarez Junco (1988); Ortí (1988); Torrente Ballesteros (1987).

thus appear when the "popular-democratic" interpellation by a class or class fraction which needs a substantial transformation in the power bloc in order to assert its hegemony is presented as a "*synthetic-antagonistic complex with respect to the dominant ideology*" (172; emphases in the original).

This is, I believe, what other definitions of populism have failed to account for in relation to the study of nineteenth-century republicanism.[18] In their interpellation of the Spanish *pueblo* as a classless mass, and their use of discursive dichotomies such as *pueblo* vs. oligarchy, *pueblo* vs. reaction, laborious work vs. *señoritismo*[19] (Duarte 1997, 174), *pueblo* vs. king, national sovereignty vs. usurpation by the oligarchy (Juliá 1988, 29), or simply productive classes vs. the privileged,[20] nineteenth-century Republicans were doing much more than just foregrounding the contrasting natures of the oppressor and the oppressed, they were actually inscribing them both as "antagonistic poles" in the "dominant contradiction" democracy vs. feudalism. From its position in one of those

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[17] I cite from Laclau's book on populism published in English.

[18] It should also be pointed out that early Spanish republicanism does not quite fit under other classical definitions of populism. Shils has spoken about a "direct relationship between the people and its political leaders" which Castro Alfín has been quick to point out did not exist in Spanish republicanism, which conceived of the government as "a crusade of institutionalization" (1987, 198). Alvarez Junco includes in his definition of populism the suggestions that the "mobilized" "masses" are mainly urban, and that there exists a strong link between these masses and a charismatic leader whose personality, rather than a political program or a set of specific political strategies, guarantees the triumph of the movement (1990a, 10), neither of which was the case in Spain. Finally, Hofstadter has spoken about a populist belief in a "past" Golden Age, a past of well-being and justice which populist discourse presents as its goal. As Castro Alfín has also pointed out, however, Spanish Republicans did not believe such Golden Age had existed in the past but that they had to build it for the future (1987, 202).

[19] From the Spanish word *señorito* (young single man, masculine form of *señorita*). In nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century Spain, a *señorito* was the young, unmarried son of an oligarchic family, a man who did not do hard physical work, but whose main activity was to administer his family's properties, or simply live off the income from the family business. In contemporary Spain this figure is hardly significant, though the word may still be used in some rural areas of Extremadura and Andalusia, where the figure of the *cacique* disappeared much more slowly. In popular urban language, it is still used to refer to a man of fine taste and little disposition to do actual work.

[20] The term "privileged" referred to the members of the "aristocratic, nobility, military, clerical or stock-market oligarchies" (Fernando Garrido) or the "feudal classes" which ruled through "militarism,

"antagonistic poles", the *pueblo* was being interpellated as a political subject which could and should take action against the power bloc, in order to be included as full participants in the democratic struggle against feudalism. In the process, the "essence" and "natural order" which the country had never known could become a reality. "We only have the people", a Republican editorial argued during the years of the *Restauración*, "give it weapons to fight and it will guide you through the only possible path of honor and duty" (qtd. in Alvarez Junco 1990b, 160). Suffering gave the Spanish *pueblo* a moral superiority, and that superiority gave it the right to claim power. However, this was only part of the rhetoric. Political power was never meant to go directly to the people. The masses of Spaniards were interpellated so that the reformist bourgeoisie itself could make its own claim to power, so that it could – in Laclau's terms – "reassert its hegemony" within the power bloc.

The greatest obstacle to the modernization of the Spanish people and its complete redemption from being victimized by the *Ancien Régime*, however, was its lack of education and culture. Indeed although the Spanish *pueblo* may have been morally superior to its oppressors, a large part of it was in no position to lead a rebellion against the status quo because it lacked the most basic self-awareness of its own oppression, given the state of complete illiteracy and backwardness in which it lived. Thus the education of the agricultural and peasant masses became the most basic tool without which no other kind of economic, social or political change could ever be achieved. It was a tool, indeed, without which the Spanish masses could never be transformed into a collective political subject. As a result, Republican discourse became dominated by the idea that "politics

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bureaucracy, exploitation, speculation and fanatism" (Valentí Almirall) (qtd. in Pérez Ledesma 1997,

[was] a matter of Science" or that the triumph of the Spanish people would be "the triumph of reason" (Alvarez Junco 1989, 357). In Republican political slogans, the acquisition of scientific and rational knowledge was indeed constructed as the cure for all of the country's political and social maladies to the point that it was practically given an emancipatory role, in which the acquisition of culture and education could achieve as much change as the revolution itself (Castro Alfín 1997, 80).[21] Enticing as they were, these slogans translated into little practice.

Among the leaders of this bourgeois intelligentsia was a group of philosophers working out of Madrid's *Universidad Central* [Central University],[22] where they grouped around the study of German philosophy and, in particular, of Carl Krause,[23] whose influence gave them the name *Krausistas*.[24] Starting from the idea of God as an "immanent absolute" whose ultimate consciousness and expression were to be found, not outside the world, but in the human being itself, Krause's epistemology eased toward a redefinition of individual advancement and a re-interpretation of the nature of social progress. For Spanish *Krausistas*, Krause's "harmonious rationalism" – which Antonio Jiménez García has summed up as meaning "rationalism in philosophy, liberalism in politics, and reformism in the social" (1985, 188) – became a credo of great "intellectual

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[21] This point has also been argued and expanded on by Alvarez Junco (1993) and Duarte (1997).

[22] The former *Universidad Central* became the *Universidad Complutense de Madrid.*

[23] Karl Christian Friederich Krause (Eisenberg 1781-Munich 1832) developed a philosophical system called "panentheism" (a synthesis of pantheism and theism) which held that God is an essence that contains the entire universe within, although it is not exhausted by it. Krause's major works include: *Entwurf des Systems der Philosophie* (1804), *Vorlesungen über das System der Philosophie* (1828), and *Vorlesungen über die Grundwahrheiten der Wissenschaft* (1829).

[24] Leader among the Spanish *Krausistas* was Professor of Philosophy Julián Sanz del Río (Soria 1814-Madrid 1869). Among his followers were Fernando de Castro, Francisco Giner de los Ríos, Nicolás Salmerón and Gumersindo de Azcárate, all of whom played leading roles in the cultural and political scene of the time.

stimulus" (Mainer 1983, 79) well suited to explain Spain's wide range of political and social problems. The Spanish *Krausistas* thus embraced Krause's thought in order to seek first and foremost the intimate and personal transformation of the Spanish citizen, followed by the complete secularization of society,[25] both of which would move the country toward a full regeneration of the state[26] and of social and political life as it had theretofore been unknown.[27]

Once again, however, the creation of a *Krausista* type of citizen – an "educated, free, rational, sensitive and balanced" Spaniard much different from the obscure, ignorant, illiterate, and easily-influenced individual the average citizen was considered to be –[28] as well as the creation of a society grounded in individual realization as much as social justice were deemed impossible to achieve in a country where the average citizen belonged to the masses of the ignorant and the dispossessed. Necessarily, the education of the individual citizen became of crucial importance, as it was necessary "to seek out" people, to "initiate them in the mysteries of their humanist-krausist destiny" (Gómez Molleda 1981, 49). The individual progress and eventual conversion of individual citizens would be the best grounds "for the positive and real regeneration of social institutions" (de los Ríos 1922, 103). The *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* [Free Teaching Institution, ILE], founded by

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[25] Krause understood religion as an intimate relationship between an individual conscience and its idea of God. He further argued that this conscience, and not a state institution, was the only one to dictate at any given time what religious piety should be, an idea which effectively stripped the Church of any kind of moral authority and removed any possible grounds on which to justify its social and political influence (Villacorta 1980, 45-6).

[26] The individual's journey toward full awareness of its origin, its faculties and its goal in life (which was, in fact, the full realization of humankind) needed to find support in the social forms and structures in which humanity was organized, an idea which drove Krause to reject the absolute vision of the state.

[27] For more information on the *Krausista* movement, see Gómez Molleda (1981); López Morillas (1956).

[28] For a number of meaningful insights into the Spanish masses, see Alvaro de Albornoz's *El temperamento español* (1920).

Francisco Giner de los Ríos[29] in 1876, set out to emancipate the practice of education from the influence of the state and the Church, so that it could "redeem. . . the spirit" and the "weak moral character" of a nation "indifferent to its ruin" (de los Ríos 1926, 26). The *Institución* brought to Spain the modern pedagogical ideas of Froebel and Pestalozzi,[30] the search for a holistic, rationalistic, lay, active, intuitive kind of education which included ideas as truly revolutionary in the Spain of the time as an education based on reflexion, dialogue, personal work and a closer relationship between teachers and students, as well as on more practical matters such as laboratory practices, lack of exams, games, the study of art and folklore, technical education, outdoor sports and physical activity.[31]

Neither the *Krausistas* nor the *Institucionistas*[32] opened up the question of political power, nor did they get involved in national politics, since most of them remained skeptical about the changes which could be brought about by the government itself. The *Krausistas* "dreamt" about "a harmonious natural order" which would be achieved through the exercise of democracy, but such a democratic system was not meant to be the result of a revolution, whether peaceful or violent (Aubert 1993, 66).[33] Giner de los Ríos was interested in no revolution, whether "from above or from below". His goal was "to make men [sic]" rather than to seek power, a kind of reform which was "slow but sure" (Gómez

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[29] (Ronda 1839- Madrid 1915), a professor of Philosophy of Law and International Law at Madrid's Central University, and a disciple of Sanz del Río.

[30] Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852) was a German educational reformer, founder of the Kindergarten. Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) was a Swiss educational reformer who advocated for the education of the poor and who created a revolutionary pedagogical method which emphasized individual attention to students.

[31] For further information on the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, see Gómez Molleda (1981); Molero Pintado (1985); Millán (1983).

[32] The founders and mentors of the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* are known in Spanish history as the *Institucionistas*.

[33] Paul Aubert is a Hispanist whose work is mainly published in Spanish. All quotations from his work here are my own translation of originals in Spanish.

Molleda 1981, 419). He and the ILE were interested in creating a new generation of Spaniards who would understand the exercise of power differently, and who would thus enter the political arena already transformed as individuals, a process by which the system was eventually bound to change. As they saw it, "Spain needed a revolution, [a] profound moral revolution which would shake off its spiritual drowsiness" and that revolution could only be done through the school (*Boletín de la Institución* 351). Spain's political problems could indeed be reduced to a "problem of education".

In 1898, Spain's loss of the last vestiges of its empire to the United States – the "colonial disaster", as it soon came to be called – became a powerful explosive in Spanish society and political life.[34] Spain's failure to face the United States in order to defend its colonial presence in the world – at a time in which new colonial partitions were to begin in Europe – revealed the true magnitude of a political, financial and ideological crisis which could no longer be hidden. Crisis was everywhere: there was a national crisis, because there was no longer an empire to sustain the idea which had kept a nation together for over four hundred years; there was an economic crisis, because the country (read the haute bourgeoisie) would no longer benefit from the income of the colonies, while the war with the United States had drained public finances; and there was a political crisis, because the Spanish government had lost whatever prestige it may have had left. The "colonial disaster" would prove to be a great catalyst for change, perhaps like no other in Spanish history. A large part of the middle bourgeoisie and the middle classes, whose intellectual frustration had stewed for decades, exploded against the system. It was, as Manuel Tuñón de Lara has suggested, the awakening of a regime "rooted in the past. . . sleepy with

[34] Spain lost Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines.

nostalgia. . . which suddenly was forced to face not only the future but also an inexorable present" (1966, 9). The new and compelling need became to rethink Spain, to face the challenge of confronting a new era.

Among the most important cultural exponents of a bourgeoisie facing *el problema España* [Spain as a problem] at the turn of the century was the literary *Generación del 98* [Generation[35] of 1898] a group of writers and poets influenced by the European currents of positivism and Nietzschean anti-humanism.[36] The members of the Generation of 1898 were the first Spanish group of bourgeois writers to think of themselves as "intellectuals",[37] since they saw themselves as "a group with a certain degree of social conscience operating on the fringes of power and posing for the first time the question of their role *vis-à-vis* the powers-that-be and the ruling classes" (Aubert 1993, 27). Their challenge to the status quo, however, was reduced to playing the role of "agitator[s]" rather than "agent[s] of transformation" (Abellán 1993, 153).[38]

The members of the Generation of 1898 were part of a larger intellectual movement which emerged in Spain between the years of 1898 and 1901, known as

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[35] Twentieth-century Spanish literary and cultural history has often been organized into a number of successive "generations" of writers or intellectuals, from the "Generation of 1898" to those of 1914, 1927, 1936 and so on. There is a great deal of controversy, however, concerning the use of this word as a generic term under which to classify the work of extraordinarily different artists and thinkers. Although I agree with some of the concerns which have been raised, I find the term rather useful in order to refer to a group of intellectuals or writers whose work may, indeed, be different, but is nevertheless informed by the same political events. For a succinct overview of this debate, see Ramsden (1974).

[36] Novelists Pío Baroja, Azorín, and Miguel de Unamuno, poet Antonio Machado and playwright Ramón María del Valle-Inclán are all considered to be part of this generation.

[37] Writer and philosopher Miguel de Unamuno (Vizcaya 1873-Salamanca 1936) was the first to use this term to express his belief that he was part of a group which had civic concerns: "Strictly speaking, only those of us who are called, with more or less justice, *intellectuals* and some other public men [sic] are the ones who continue to be concerned about Spain's regeneration" (1898; emphasis in the original).

[38] For general information on the politics, society and literature of Spain around 1898, see the collective volume *Modernismo y 98* edited by Mainer (1980). There is an ample discussion in Spanish scholarship about this generation of intellectuals and their role both in political and cultural change. See Abellán (1973); Gullón (1990); Soria Olmedo (1988).

Regeneracionismo,[39] an intellectual movement concerned with Spain's many crises and the possible ways to achieve the regeneration of the country. Joaquín Costa,[40] the most famous of *Regeneracionistas*, argued that Spain "possessed only the appearance of a modern nation" (Wohl 1979, 124) and sought to bring to life a new liberalism – which he called "neo-liberalism" – as an attempt to find the true spirit which the revolutionary bourgeoisie of the nineteenth century had given to the term before being co-opted by the feudal status quo.

Costa argued that the battle against *caciquismo* and the oligarchy had to be won inside each Spaniard, inside each Spanish family, in each village and in each city (1900, 23) and the tool to do it was, once again, education. Spaniards had the obligation "to defend [their] homeland" by using "books" rather than weapons ("Los siete criterios de gobierno" 100). He demanded a new kind of education which would serve to "transform and purify the individual, the society and the people" (1900, 24). The Spanish citizen had to be "remade", he cried, or rather "made" anew (23). Spain had to "lock herself up in the school and in the university, as if in a new maternal womb [and] come out of it [when] *she may have obtained a new head*" ("Los siete criterios de gobierno" 101; emphasis in the original).

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[39] Tuñón de Lara has established a difference between *Regeneracionismo* as a philosophical current of change, and *Regeneracionismo* as a movement. The former would encompass *Krausistas*, *noventayochistas* [members of the literary Generation of 1898] and any other intellectual group seeking Spain's social regeneration at the turn of the century. As a term for a specific movement, it refers to the movement led by Joaquín Costa.

[40] (Huesca 1846-1911). Most scholars have agreed that Costa was not a progressive man. Tuñón de Lara has argued that Costa confused the cause of Spain's problems with the consequences, and thus raged against the Parliament and the existence of political parties as if they had been the reason for all of Spain's illnesses (1973, 64-5). Costa's political thesis, however, has been the object of interpretations as different as that of Tierno Galván (1961), who has seen in him the forefather of Spanish fascism to that of César Vidal, who is convinced that Costa defended democratic reforms of great social content (1998).

Unlike the *Krausistas*, *Regeneracionistas* were interested in some kind of a "revolution", understood as a complex network of reforms, from the rehabilitation of public works, the transformation of the educational system to the reform of the military. A revolution, as Tuñón de Lara has argued, which would happen *in* the state, but that would not be *of* the state (1973, 61; emphases in the original). Costa himself would define it as a "revolution from above", rather than "from the streets" (qtd. in Aubert 1993, 43). This meant, to some extent, as Angel Duarte has pointed out, that *Regeneracionistas* accepted "the rules of the game", since they were not concerned with changing the basic structure of the state, but with introducing patchy reforms (1997, 176).

Although *Krausistas*, *Institucionistas*, and *Regeneracionistas* seemed to share in the Republican vision of the people as the absolute good which would eventually find its way to fight the system,[41] they understood national regeneration as the education of the Spanish *individual* or *citizen* rather than of the people as a whole. Unlike Republicans, they did not believe so much in the existence of a Spanish *pueblo* full of redeeming virtues, but in a large mass of uneducated agricultural workers and peasants who needed to awaken to reality.[42] As a result, these intellectuals believed that only a selected minority of individuals could guide the entire country on a path of renewal through education and political reform. Thus Costa promulgated the notion, later elevated to the category of philosophical principle by José Ortega y Gasset, of the elites as an "organic aristocracy" to "lead", "conserve" and "direct" society, "keep its tradition of good government, and give it a high moral and intellectual culture" (qtd. in Tuñón de Lara 1973, 65). This meant, as

[41] For a discussion of the use of the term *pueblo* by the *Regeneracionistas*, see Ortí (1981).

Tuñón de Lara has suggested, that they "wanted to improve the lives of people, without counting on them for the process", and that the "revolution" they envisioned was "*para el pueblo pero sin el pueblo*", that is, "for the people but without the people" (1973, 57). This has been the reason why *Regeneracionismo* (in the widest sense of the term) has also been seen as "populist", insofar as it considered the Spanish people to be mere "recipients" of education and culture, "given [to them] out of charity" (Fernández Soria 1984; Bilbatúa 1976).

While Republicans continued to lucubrate on the education and enlightenment of the Spanish *pueblo*, and *Krausistas* and *Regeneracionistas* on the future of the masses, a new protagonist was due to come on stage. As capitalism and industrialization timidly advanced over the old structure of *caciquismo*,[43] the urban working class experienced a dramatic growth,[44] and soon tensions between employers and workers would start creating yet new conflicts: "On the street, in the press, even in Parliament, something new [made] an impact, [something which was] called 'the social question'" (Tuñón de Lara 1966, 80).

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[42] The only exception to this is poet Antonio Machado, whose work always spoke of "people" rather than the "masses", and who, in fact, made of that difference the essence of his philosophy. For a study of Machado's philosophy, see Gómez Molleda (1977); Tuñón de Lara (1963).

[43] Industrialization advanced in some areas from the North and Catalonia, with a special flourishing of the electrical, chemical and textile industries, all of which brought about the growth of the railroad, thus giving way to the growth of industries and services at the expense of agricultural growth. Mining expanded throughout the North, in Asturias, Vizcaya, Linares, and Cartagena.

[44] In Barcelona, a working-class population of 79,000 in 1887 became 145,000 in 1900. In Madrid, the number of workers would reach 90,000; in Bilbao, an industrial and mining city, it reached 80,000. Still, 2% of the population continued to own 47% of the land, and benefits from the industrialization of the country ended up increasing personal fortunes rather than being invested in the agricultural sector (Tuñón de Lara 1966, 19).

In 1889, these masses of workers found their first political representation in the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* [Spanish Labor Socialist Party, PSOE],[45] a party on which the economic and political circumstances of late-nineteenth-century Spain imprinted neither the spirit of revolutionary Marxism nor that of Revisionism, but rather that of French Guedism.[46] As a result, the PSOE was founded on a strong working-class ethics, a "class reductionism with a diffuse determinism and a somewhat moralist tone" which reduced class consciousness and struggle to the opposition between a bourgeois morale – of apathy, hypocrisy, etc. – and a working-class morale – of honesty, hard work, etc. (Tuñón de Lara 1990a, 142). Spanish socialists believed in the inexorability of the proletarian revolution, in which the working class would fulfill its historical goal. They were also convinced, however, that such a revolution would have to be indefinitely deferred until the Spanish bourgeoisie could first accomplish its own and capitalism could further develop in the country, circumstances which would then create the objective conditions for the proletariat to move into political action. As a result, despite such a moralist, anti-bourgeois line, socialists considered daily struggle for reforms – including Parliamentary participation – to be essential, since it would actually strengthen the revolutionary consciousness of workers. For much of its life, the Socialist Party would be driven by this combination of revolutionary discourse and political reformism, which

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[45] For the early history of the Socialist Party of Spain, see Juliá, ed. (1986); Heywood (1990); Meaker (1974).

[46] George Lichteim has described Guedism as a scheme in which "the antagonism of capital and labor is seen as leading inevitably to a dramatic confrontation which transfers the means of production to the collectivity" (qtd. in Meaker 1974, 10). Paul Heywood has called Guedism "reductionist and deterministic, characterized by the rigidity and simplicity of most of its postulates" and has referred to the PSOE's Marxism as "decaffeinated" (1990, 1). Meaker has suggested that what the PSOE embraced was but a "blurred reflection" of Guedism. If Guedism, in turn, as George Lichteim had suggested, was a "caricature" of Marxism, one could easily conclude that the PSOE was "somewhat [ideologically]

Gerald Meaker has called "revolutionary reformism", something which may have been theoretically unsustainable but reflected the Party's "instinctive understanding of [its]. . . situation in a country still so unready for socialism" (1974, 196). The result was that although the PSOE "proclaim[ed] the necessity and inevitability of socialist revolution to end the corruption of bourgeois democracy under the Monarchy", it also "engaged in the legalist reformism which their own arguments dismissed as useless", and that while it called "for the establishment of a Republic, it shunned all collaboration with other Republican forces" (Heywood 1990, 2).[47]

Given what they believed was the inexorability of the proletarian revolution's date with history, Spanish socialists had no confidence in the value of scientific or intellectual investigation, and believed exclusively in the dissemination and popularizing of the most basic Marxist ideas. Indeed, it was hardly useful to try to pursue a scientific explanation of Marxism when workers simply had to absorb its most basic principles and the inexorability of its predictions. As a result, the PSOE made no effort to attract intellectuals to its ranks, since it was assumed that their entry into the Party was as predictable as the revolution itself.

In early twentieth-century Spain, the reformist intelligentsia faced a powerful reality: the army remained belligerent, despite the international humiliation suffered at the hands of the United States (or perhaps because of it); the proletarian class was beginning to reveal itself as an organized, unified, boisterous, exigent, and even violent mass of

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impoverished" (1974, 10). Pérez Ledesma, however, has argued that such interpretations seem to be grounded more on speculation and hypotheses than on historical fact (1974, 26).

[47] Pérez Ledesma has pointed out that Spanish socialism can also be described the way Bernstein described German social-democracy as having "two souls": a "revolutionary soul" which inspired their "words", and the "reformist soul" which drove them toward action (1974, 39).

workers, rather than as the virtuous, submissive, passive and for-ever patient *pueblo* which the bourgeoisie had fancied for decades; the oligarchy remained submissive to the medieval forces of the Monarchy and the Church, and thus unwilling to foster social change; and the political class was made out of mediocre people who had proven to be unfit for government. In a society where the best educated had no role to play, the reformist bourgeoisie began to notice, much to their despair, that the Spanish revolution had already started without them, a suspicion which forced an entire new generation of Spanish intellectuals to abandon the more academic critique of the system provided by *Krausistas* and *Regeneracionistas* in order to move right into political action. "There will be no point in acknowledging the seriousness of the national problems if we do not make the next move to intervene in public life", said philosopher Ortega y Gasset.[48] In a statement which would have reminded many of Costa's spirit, he also announced that the time had come to start "a very long era of liberal reconstruction" (qtd. in Villacorta Baños 1980, 116).

Under the new banner of "bourgeois-democratic radicalism",[49] a new generation of intellectuals and professionals set out to resolve the problems which had troubled Spain for decades. If around 1870 the *Krausistas* had argued that a country could not renovate its structures without first changing its soul, these intellectuals would change the terms of the equation to suggest that the most urgent task of all was to achieve political change, since it was not possible to reform the country without first changing its most basic

[48] A philosopher and professor of Metaphysics at Madrid's Central University, José Ortega y Gasset (Madrid 1883-1955) is perhaps the most international and well-known intellectual in twentieth-century Spain. He founded some of the most important cultural journals of the century, among them, *España* (1915) and *Revista de Occidente*, as well as the newspaper *El Sol*. Among his best-known works are *La España invertebrada* (1921), *El tema de nuestro tiempo* (1923), and *La rebelión de las masas* (1929).

structures. The political system of the *Restauración* was considered to be "unreformable", and it was agreed that no political or social change could ever be achieved by any kind of "evolution" within that system (Elorza 1984, 25). These intellectuals clearly understood that the Constitutional and democratic system had not necessarily failed, but that it had been "kidnapped by a *caciquil* and oligarchic political class" (Villacorta Baños 1980, 186) which, quite simply, had to be removed from power. This was the *Generación de 1914* [Generation of 1914],[50] for it was around that year that they reached their highest level of social and political influence, with the creation of organizations like the *Liga de Educación Política* [League for Political Education, LEP], and of intellectual journals such as *España*,[51] as well as with their take-over of other cultural institutions such as the *Ateneo de Madrid*.[52]

Although the Generation of 1914 broke away from some basic principles of *Krausismo* and *Regeneracionismo*, it also inherited the belief that the first and foremost duty to be fulfilled by the intelligentsia was to educate the public conscience. Such an educational process, however, was no longer seen as a matter of renewing the school system in order to achieve the general "cleaning-up" [*saneamiento*] of the country, an idea which they believed was but a "residue" of the "idealism" of previous generations of intellectuals. If a people were "politically poor" [*políticamente vil*] it would be vain to expect any kind of change from the most perfect school (Ortega y Gasset 1960, 7). Their

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[49] This term was coined by Ramiro de Maeztu in 1910.
[50] Members of this intellectual generation were philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, writer and playwright Manuel Azaña – later to be President and Prime Minister of the Second Republic and to be a major political protagonist during the Civil War, historian Américo Castro, and philosopher and political scientist Fernando de los Ríos.
[51] For further information on the work and organizations of the Generation of 1914, see Wohl (1979).
[52] A cultural institution of great relevance and prestige in Spain, normally identified with the bourgeoisie.

critique of the formal educational system thus shifted emphasis from primary school to universities. More importantly, however, their educational and cultural organizations were embedded in the idea that political action was pedagogical, that it was an "agency of socialization" for politics which was to be pursued "*outside* all traditional political channels" (Elorza 1984, 73; emphasis in the original).

Still without a social class to represent or to receive feedback from, given the weakness of the middle classes and professional sectors from which they had come out, these intellectuals were forced to fall back on the masses, which they "invented as a subject, manipulated as a hope and sought for as an imagined auditorium" (Mainer 1983, 71). Once again, in opposition to the status quo of political and moral decadence, the bourgeoisie saw itself as the spokespersons of the people, representing their civic values (Alvarez Junco 1993, 106).[53] Yet these intellectuals had as little desire as their predecessors had had, to include the masses in their plans for political power. The Spanish people had to be educated by the intellectual elites of the middle classes, but only the elites themselves would be educated for the exercise of power. The events of the *Semana Tragica* [Tragic Week] of Barcelona in 1909[54] gave this bourgeois intelligentsia the chance to take the lead in the political protest against the system. It would be the

[53] José Carlos Mainer has argued that these intellectuals, unable to mobilize a society which "lacked solidarity", thought too much of their own strength and eventually believed that to speak about themselves and about the problems of the country were one and the same thing. This is why they believed that their autobiographies would also serve to explain the problems of the collective (1983, 66-70).

[54] The name "*Semana Trágica*" is given to a week-long succession of urban riots and Church burning spurred by the government's decision to use civilian reserves for the very unpopular colonial war it was waging in Morocco. The execution of Francisco Ferrer, founder of the *Escuela Moderna de Barcelona* spurred quite a great deal of protest from the intelligentsia, to the point that it has been compared to the earlier *affaire Dreyfuss* which had mobilized the French intelligentsia. For further reading, see Villacorta Baños (1980).

Republican-Socialist Alliance signed that same year, however, which allowed them to have full participation in political life.

After several decades of defending the *obrerista*[55] line on which it had been founded, the Socialist Party had come to understand that everything it could do in order to advance the bourgeois revolution would, in fact, take the proletariat a step closer toward their own revolution as well. In this line, the PSOE re-evaluated its relationship with the bourgeois Republican parties at the turn of the decade, and found itself ready to sign a political alliance with them.[56] Thus the Socialist Party ended up replacing its belief in the socialist revolution (no matter how far away in time the Party believed that revolution to be, and how little it actually did to pursue it) with a bourgeois vision of Parliamentary democracy in a Republican system.

Bourgeois intellectuals, on the other hand, were quite happy to accept the socialist creed that the Spanish revolution would have to begin with a bourgeois revolution and with social reform, and to that they added the *Krausista* principle that such reform was "a reform of the souls", for which education and culture were essential (Gómez Molleda 1981, 499). Not in vain, liberal Ramiro de Maeztu argued that what he called "liberalism", others "neo-liberalism", and some others "socialism" or "new liberalism" were one and the same thing, since they all included a similar desire for social reform, and the belief that "the salvation of each individual is found in the others, and the salvation of all is found in

[55] The Spanish word "*obrerista*" means, literally, "proletarian". Here it is used in reference to the above discussion on the Socialist Party: its strong proletarian morale and its lack of interest in having any relationship with the bourgeoisie. "*Obrerismo*" (a noun) and "*obrerista*" (an adjective) refer to a person or organization with an unequivocal, and often radical, pro-proletarian and anti-bourgeois line.

[56] It was approved by the PSOE at its Tenth Congress in 1909, despite strong opposition, led by Isidoro Acevedo (later to leave the Party and found the Communist Party). A detailed analysis can be found in Robles Egea (1986).

culture" (qtd. in Villacorta Baños 1980, 119). As Robles Egea has argued, this meant that for both liberals and socialist intellectuals, Spanish society could be rebuilt as something halfway between the classical liberal society about which the *Krausistas* and *Institucionistas* had dreamt and the socialist society which Marx had envisioned, a vision entirely in line with the philosophy of the Second International (134).[57] Indeed the "bourgeois-democratic radicalism" of the Generation of 1914 and socialist "revolutionary reformism" had really never been very far apart.

Not all intellectuals or artists working in Spain in the early years of the twentieth century, however, had a desire to be leaders of political change. The evolution of Spanish avant-garde art in the first few decades of the new century, unlike that of the Generations of 1898 and 1914, was hardly related to national political developments. Artistic concepts which in the rest of Europe were more or less coherent insofar as they were born of specific social and political circumstances (the contradictions of advanced capitalism, participation in World War I, etc.) arrived in the Spain of the 1910s and 1920s already transformed into something else – given the very different social and political circumstances – thus losing their original raison d'être. As a result, it is commonly held that Spain did not truly have avant-garde *movements* per se, but only avant-garde *elements* (Morales y Marín 1988, xv; emphases added).[58]

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[57] For an overview of the relationship between Spanish socialism and intellectuals, see Gómez Molleda (1980).

[58] The Spanish avant-garde in general, and the movements of *Futurismo* and *Ultraísmo* in particular, have been seen as "an occupation conducted in clothes borrowed from abroad", since they functioned "within borrowed horizons. . . seeking to adapt them to an indigenous circumstance" (Harris 1994, 1-2). The avant-garde lived as a separate, abstract artistic force, far removed from Spanish society, politics and general cultural life. As Esteban Salazar y Capella suggested then, the Spanish avant-garde behaved "as if the world did not exist" (qtd. in Buckley 1973, 402). Jaime Brihuega has argued that any attempt to juxtapose a calendar of historical dates or historical analysis with the development of the avant-garde is pure *sociologismo* [cheap sociology] (1981, 198). Ramón Buckley and John Crispin, however, have

Neutrality during the First Word War did, in fact, bring to Spain great economic benefits, as the country became the supplier of raw materials, weapons and food staples to the countries involved in the conflict. This newly acquired wealth did bring about some spectacular industrial expansion, which, in turn, resulted in the growth of the urban working class, as peasants and other agricultural workers from impoverished regions like Andalusia or Extremadura emigrated to the more industrial and flourishing areas of Catalonia and Vizcaya. This numerical expansion, however, did not result in any major structural changes in the means of production, nor did it improve the working conditions of the salaried class. While prices steeply rose as a consequence of the war in all of Europe, workers' salaries remained at the lowest level. As the bourgeoisie enjoyed the economic benefits of its improved business, the working class found only more misery, poverty and marginalization.[59]

Toward the end of the 1910s, both the bourgeoisie and the army had their own grievances against the system: the former because its greater economic power had hardly translated into any more political power, the latter because it resented the lack of interest in the colonial war in Morocco. Under mounting pressure from a rank-and-file undergoing severe hardship from inflation, the socialist *Unión General de Trabajadores* [Workers' General Union, UGT][60] joined the Spanish anarchist-syndicalist forces which back in 1911 had founded the *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* [National Workers'

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rejected the conclusion that the Spanish avant-garde was politically irrelevant, arguing that although it did not have a direct "political" goal, it did have one which was "social", since they aimed at transforming "man [sic]" via a technological revolution, thus seeking "liberat[ion]. . . from the old moral, economic and social schemes" (1973, 10). This is my translation from an original in Spanish.

[59] A study of Spain's economic conditions during this period can be found in Balfour (1997).

[60] This is the PSOE's Labor Union, founded in 1888 and still in operation today.

Confederation, CNT],[61] in order to lead a series of revolutionary actions against the government's economic policy. Faced with the threat of a proletarian revolution, both the bourgeoisie and the army temporarily forgot their grievances against the system. Without the support of the former, and with the latter's readiness to suppress any alteration of the status quo and public order, the first attempt of a proletarian revolution was simply bound to fail.[62]

In the following years and throughout the 1920s, Spain reached an unprecedented level of social conflict and political violence. The failed revolution of 1917 marked the beginning of a new period in Spanish history, one which historians have come to term the "ungovernable years", a time of political and social confrontation in which all classes and social groups continued to breed discontent. In the middle of that social war, communism appeared in Spain.

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[61] Spanish *anarchist-syndicalism* was an idiosyncratic mixture of anarchism and syndicalism. For the early history of anarchist thought in Spain and the founding of the CNT, see Kern (1978); Alvarez Junco (1976); Bar (1981). With the founding of the CNT, the Spanish workers' movement became clearly divided into two different areas of influence: the anarchist-syndicalists in Southern Andalusia as well as the east and northeast part of the country, including Catalonia, Levante, and Aragon; the socialists in the centre and north of the country. For an early history of the Spanish workers' movement and the influence of socialism and anarchism, see Forcadell (1978); Meaker (1974).

[62] For further information on the attempts at revolution in 1917, see Lacomba (1972).

CHAPTER TWO
The "ungovernable" years, 1917-1923
The *Unión Cultural Proletaria*: In the Spirit of the Third International

> Behold, another Spain is born,
> the Spain of the chisel and the war club,
> a Spain brought about by that eternal youth
> which comes from the solid roots of our race.
> Implacable and redeeming Spain,
> a Spain which dawns
> as it waves an axe in its avenging hand,
> a Spain of anger,
> a Spain of thought.
>
> Antonio Machado.[1]

The period between 1917 and 1923 was one of "ungovernability" in Spain in all spheres of political and social life. The peaceful alternation in power of the two main parties of the Spanish oligarchy had been violently thrown off balance by the crisis of 1917. As José Antonio Lacomba has pointed out, the Bourbon Monarchy came out of that revolutionary crisis "without any mechanisms of government" (1972, 139), and found itself forced to improvise several new cabinets until a *coup d'état* led by General Miguel Primo de Rivera in September 1923 made new improvisations unnecessary. Still in late 1917, the only thing the King could do was try to appease all sources of opposition, thus calling on Conservative leader Antonio Maura to build a government "*de concentración*" [of unity] in which all political forces, from the haute bourgeoisie to the military, to the rural oligarchy, could be represented.

Such a move by the national government to co-opt its opposition, however, failed to create any new sense of political renewal or stability, since the new parliamentary

alliance was as artificial as it was inoperative, all the while the economy continued to be under the fierce control of the oligarchy.[2] The disgraceful and bloody defeat which the Spanish army suffered in the Moroccan city of Annual in July 1921 only added fuel to the situation, deepening the breach among all the contending forces within the ruling classes and creating a new uproar in public opinion.[3]

The failed proletarian revolution of 1917 in Spain and the political crisis which had ensued from it had not taken place in isolation. They had been part of the social and political upheaval which had swept over Europe before, during and after the Great War, and which resulted, among other things, in revolutions in Russia in 1905 and 1917, as well as in the emergence of the Soviet Union and other new states from the former Austrian-Hungarian empire. The crisis inside the Second International over the issues of political reformism and of support for the European war gave way to an openly oppositional current which held its first conference in the Swiss town of Zimmerwald in September 1915 and which would come back in full force four years later with the founding of a third Workers' International. The Communist International, or Comintern, was launched by

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[1] Mas otra España nace/la España del cincel y de la maza/con esa eterna juventud que se hace/del pasado macizo de la raza./Una España implacable y redentora,/España que alborea/con un hacha en la mano vengadora/España de la rabia y de la idea". "El mañana efímero" (1989, 567-8).

[2] It was precisely that sense of "ungovernability" which would make this government fall in November 1918, just before the end of World War I in the rest of Europe. A new government "*de concentración*" would be tried out, this time co-opting historical republicanism as well, but it would fall again in March 1922. Subsequent attempts would also fail. For a political history and analysis of Spanish politics during these years, see Balfour (1997); Maurín (1966); McCabe (1931).

[3] In July 1921, Spanish troops suffered a tremendous and humiliating defeat in the Moroccan city of Annual. As Sebastian Balfour has pointed out, the army blamed the government for lacking the will and the funds to wage a proper war, while public opinion accused the army of incompetence and the King of complicity (1997, 225). For further information on the Annual disaster and the Moroccan war, see Woolman (1968).

Soviet communists on the basis of a new revolutionary program against bourgeois imperialism and reformism, as well as against participation in the war.[4]

Despite this international revolutionary scene, the worker's movement in Spain was about to enter one of its darkest periods. After the end of World War I, the industrial expansion which the country had experienced suddenly came to an end and the country went back to previous levels of international trade, with a subsequent reduction in wages and the lay-off of employees.[5] Workers' unions responded to this situation with violent demonstrations and revolutionary strikes. Under the rule of a government which could not even govern itself, patrons could hardly rely on the protection of the state to put down the workers' revolts, and they quickly moved to organize their own right-wing unions and death squads in order to deal with the increasingly violent workers' movement. What followed during the next few years was nothing short of a "social war".[6]

Union-led urban revolutionary violence was by no means the sign of a strong workers' movement, but perhaps the most obvious symptom of a deeply wounded one. All attempts to reproduce the kind of workers' alliances which had led the proletariat toward revolution in 1917 continued to fail, among other reasons, because of the lack of revolutionary momentum and of internal division within each of the workers' parties and unions.[7]

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[4] For a history of the foundation and original program of the Comintern, see Borkenau (1962); Hulse (1964); Degras (1956).
[5] For an economic history of Spain during these years, see García Delgado and Roldán (1973).
[6] For an account of these years and of this "social war", see Ignacio León (1981); Foix (1949).
[7] With its national leadership in jail because of their participation in the uprisings in 1917, the Socialist Party and the Socialist Union UGT went right back to pursuing reformist policies as an attempt to improve the lot of the working class within the bourgeois system, temporarily relinquishing the use of confrontational politics. On the other hand, the CNT was "deadly wounded" (Estruch 1978, 38) not only as a result of political repression, but also by the effects of internal division over the very issue of terrorist

The creation of the Communist International and the celebration of its founding congress in Moscow in March 1919 forced the Spanish Socialist Party to pay attention to the consequences of the Bolshevik revolution. As a result, the Party experienced a number of splits which ended up with the founding of the first Spanish Communist Party in November 1921, and some time later, in early 1922, with the creation of the first communist cultural organization in Spain, the *Unión Cultural Proletaria* [Union of Proletarian Culture, UCP].

The Union of Proletarian Culture was extremely short lived and it has warranted but a few scattered paragraphs in the study of Spanish cultural and political history. In his three-volume work on the Spanish intelligentsia from 1920 to 1939, Manuel Aznar has qualified the UCP as an organization "of rigid *obrerista* tones" which "emphatically declared it would reject all bourgeois elements" (1987b, 2:19). In his book on the political evolution of Spanish writers from 1917 to 1936, Víctor Fuentes has pointed out that the life of the UCP was "ephemeral" and that neither its newspaper *Comunismo*[8] nor its plans to run its own publishing house were successful, although it did have a book service which "offered readers whatever leftist and revolutionary works were being published at the time" (1980, 34). In a history of Spanish literature, critic Agustín Sánchez Vidal has pointed out that the UCP was of "little intellectual relevance" [*escaso eco intelectual*] because of its "stubborn *obrerismo*" at a time when it was a "luxury" to be "to the left of the communists" (1984, 620). Finally, in his classic work on half a century of Spanish

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tactics. For further reading on the Spanish worker's movement during these years, see Meaker (1974); Forcadell (1978).

[8] There was at least one issue published of the UCP's journal *Comunismo* in May 1922. I have been unable to find this publication, however, or to get any clarifying information about its possible whereabouts. Back in 1976, Víctor Fuentes pointed out the journal was "impossible to find" (1976a, 39).

culture, historian Manuel Tuñón de Lara has argued that the manifesto of the UCP suffered from a "highly infantile extremism" [*acentuado extremismo pueril*] (1973, 213).

It is not surprising at all that any study of the UCP should end here, given not only the lack of interest in early communist projects of any kind (and the assumption that because they were "dogmatic", "radical" or "*obrerista*" they should also be of no scholarly interest today) but also the fact that the only known record left from the UCP is its two-page founding manifesto.[9] Any attempt to find meaning in that manifesto, however, must go beyond those two pages and back into the political process of which the organization was a result, from the moment the Spanish socialists first responded to the Comintern's call to join the international communist movement in early 1920 to the moment when the UCP was founded in 1922. Indeed the UCP was not only short-lived but also, most likely, fully inoperative. Yet, no matter how little we can know about its trajectory and its real impact on the political and cultural lives of the Spanish working class, we are certainly able to understand its historical and political antecedents as well as the cultural context in which it was founded. This means that at the very least we are able to know its raison d'être, both politically and culturally.

My suggestion is that in political terms, the UCP was the result of *ideological differences* within the Communist Party of Spain, differences explained by the way in which the Party was founded and the ideological evolution of the Comintern itself in the short period between its first and its third congresses. The Communist Party of Spain was founded in late 1921 by bringing together two different and irreconcilable communist groups which brought to the fore two different readings of the role communism was to

[9] The UCP manifesto is found in the current archives of the Communist Party of Spain (Film I, Section 9).

play in Spain. While one of them was unequivocally anti-reformist, the other was much more open to embrace reformist tactics. The UCP was founded as a way to maintain the anti-reformist program of the first of those currents, and what was believed to be as well the founding spirit of the Comintern itself. As a cultural organization, the UCP set out to put anti-reformism into practice via the political education of the working class, something which neither the Communist International nor the Party itself could do.

In early 1922, to seek the education of the workers was hardly a new proposal. By the time the Union of Proletarian Culture was founded, the Socialist Party had already had time to abandon its original suspicion of educational and intellectual practice and was actively engaged in the creation of an impressive array of educational and cultural organizations. However, while those organizations ended up pursuing an educational model which was serving the goals of political reformism, the UCP foregrounded the first proletarian cultural model in which the political education of workers would not be a replacement for the revolution but a pre-requisite for it. Further, while socialist intellectuals had directed their pleas toward their bourgeois counterparts in order to lead the national bourgeois revolution Spain had repeatedly failed to accomplish, the UCP put forward the first communist call for proletarian intellectuals to emerge from within their own class and lead the proletariat toward revolution.

The Political Origins of the *Unión Cultural Proletaria*

When in late 1919 Lenin put out a call to create communist parties all over Europe and to come together in a new International,[10] the Spanish *Federación de Juventudes Socialistas de España* [Spanish Socialist Youth Federation, FJSE] – "the most conscious and combative part of the Socialist Party", as the late Dolores Ibárruri would put it many years later (1960, 3) – was first among Spanish socialists to heed the call. On 15 April 1920, in a move which was not too far from a *coup d'état*, the national leadership of the FJSE sent a circular letter to all its chapters, calling on its members to abandon the Socialist Youth and to proclaim the birth of the *Partido Comunista Español* [Spanish Communist Party, PC]. A considerable number of Young Socialists chapters followed the lead from Madrid, and the new Party was established practically overnight, being promptly recognized by Moscow as the official Spanish chapter of the Third International.[11] Because the PC was founded by a group of quite young people and its membership was necessarily small, the Party soon became known as "*el partido de los cien niños*" [the Party of the one hundred kids].[12]

Among these youths converted to communism, a group called the *Grupo de Estudiantes Socialistas* [Socialist Students' Group] exercised a decisive influence. Some

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[10] See "Invitation to the First Congress of the Communist International", reprinted in Degras (1956, 1-5).
[11] Although a number of young people followed the lead of the Madrid leadership, its methods were quite controversial. See Arranz (1980).
[12] The few articles which have been written on the history of the PC do indeed refer to it as "*el partido de los cien niños*". See Arranz (1980); del Rosal (1980a, 1980b) and Portela (1978, 1980). The number one hundred is, of course, symbolic. Luis Arranz has estimated the number of "kids" at about 700 (1980, 94). Although the majority of the rank-and-file were workers, most leaders were intellectuals. This professional division almost coincided entirely with a geographical line, since most of the manual workers were in the provinces, and most of the intellectuals in Madrid (Meaker 1974, 255). For short biographies of some of these young people, see Meaker (1974, 255-258).

of the best known members of this group were young men who would later play decisive roles in the evolution of Spanish communism and of communist cultural projects, among them Juan Andrade,[13] José Antonio Balbontín,[14] Gabriel León Trilla[15] and Angel Pumarega.[16] For the most part, they were middle-class young men who frequented the

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[13] Given his long career in Spanish communist organizations, from the founding of the PC in 1920 to the opposition to Stalinist communism during the Civil War, Juan Andrade is one of the most prolific communist intellectuals in pre-civil war Spain, and yet one who has received practically no academic attention. A journalist and writer, Andrade was a Young Socialist (Meaker has pointed out that he was a member of the Socialist Students' Group but not of the FJSE), "the Robespierre of the [*Partido Comunista Español*], filled with revolutionary ardor and ultra-Left idealism, austere, eloquent, and angry" (1974, 256). During the early 1920s, he was the editor of the PC's *El comunista*. He later collaborated with cultural projects such as the journal *Postguerra*, and was literary editor of the publishing house *Cenit*, for which he also did a number of translations. In the 1930s he co-founded and edited the journal *Comunismo*, the official publication of the *Oposición Comunista de Izquierda*. Besides a great deal of articles and essays on cultural and political issues, Andrade was the author of several important books on the history of Spanish communism. Among then, *La burocracia reformista en el movimiento obrero* (Madrid: Ediciones Gelba, 1935), *Apuntes para la historia del PCE* (Barcelona: Fontamara, 1975), and *Notas sobre la guerra civil. Actuación del POUM* (Madrid: Ediciones Libertarias, 1986). He also wrote an autobiography, *Recuerdos personales* (Barcelona: Ediciones del Serbal, 1983).

[14] A poet and novelist, José Antonio Balbontín was also a member of the Young Socialists in the early 1920s but would not join the PCE immediately. In the late 1920s he founded his own party, the *Partido Social Revolucionario* [Social Revolutionary Party, PSR], and was a key player in the alternative cultural movement of those years, as founding member of the journals *Postguerra* and *El Estudiante*, and the publishing house *Ediciones Oriente*. In February 1931, his PSR joined the PCE as a block, but he abandoned the Party in the spring of 1934, because of political disagreement over the question of the United Front, as we shall see in later chapters. Besides his many articles, essays, editorials and translations, Balbontín's best-known works are his first book of poems, *El suicidio del príncipe Ariel* (Madrid: Historia Nueva, 1929) and his memoirs, *La España de mi experiencia (Reminiscencias y esperanzas de un español en el exilio)* (Mexico: Colección Aquelarre, 1952).

[15] For a biography of León Trilla, see Chapter Three.

[16] Fellow Party-member Luis Portela said of Pumarega that he was "intelligent and educated, ambitious but unsteady", suffering from the kind of "imbalance" which often took him "to the verge of suicide" (1978, 44). In 1922, Pumarega left the Communist Party and, among other things, spent some time in Paris. In 1925, he returned to Spain and to the Party, and during a trip to Barcelona was jailed by Primo de Rivera's police. In order to be released from jail, he and fellow Party-member Ramón Merino Gracia signed an open letter in which they publicly rejected communist dogma and tactics and swore allegiance to the military regime, promising not to participate in any further revolutionary action or to seek membership in the Communist Party (these open letters were published in the Barcelona daily *La Vanguardia*, 24 December 1924, and 13 January 1925). During the late 1920s, he founded a publishing house, *Biblos*, which was a pioneer in its field, and worked as a proofreader for the elitist literary journal, *Revista de Occidente*, founded by Ortega y Gasset. In 1931, he went back to the Communist Party and was given the post of sub-editor of *Mundo Obrero*, the Party's official publication, something which raised great controversy within the Party, especially from the oppositional current in Barcelona. See "El traidor Pumarega". Little else is known about Pumarega, his life or his work. Even Juan Manuel Bonet, in his otherwise impeccable and comprehensive dictionary of the Spanish vanguard, which contains some information about communist authors and cultural activists, can only mention Pumarega as part of the biography of Gabriel García Maroto, co-founder with Pumarega of *Biblos*.

library of the *Ateneo de Madrid*, and who had begun their political self-education by reading anarchist classics. When the October revolution broke out, these students were the first to become "convinced Marxists". Finding in Marxism "the beginning of true human history", they were quick to abandon the anarchist prince and to take on *The Communist Manifesto* as their new "bible" (Balbontín 1952, 142).

In his memoirs, José Antonio Balbontín described these students as a group of "youths. . . entirely naive and utopian", who believed that "with the magic of [their] eloquence, [they] would be able to lift all Spanish workers to their feet". Balbontín described how they were ready to believe in the "Leninist utopia" that a world revolution was imminent, and were "convinced that [they] would see "the triumph of the Spanish revolution during [their] youth" (1952, 143-145). For them, the issues were easily reduced to the basics: either one was in favor of the Bolshevik revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the Comintern, or simply against them all, and thus was a victim of the political manoeuvres of the Second International. These young communists argued that what Spain needed was not merely to overthrow a monarchic regime, but to follow the Bolshevik example and create an Iberian Confederation of Soviet Republics. Caught up in their youthful "euphoria", however, they often mixed up their terminology and used the term "popular democracy" when they really meant "dictatorship of the proletariat" (Padilla 1979, 60)

While the "young kids" had already begun "to proclaim the 'good news' of the Russian dawn" (Balbontín 1952, 145), a group of adult socialists from the *Grupo Socialista de Madrid* (the PSOE's chapter in the capital city) called on the Party to hold a vote in order to decide whether or not it should join the Comintern. Nothing would

happen overnight, however. Instead, it would take almost two years and the celebration of three extraordinary Party congresses, for the PSOE as a whole to resolve the issue.

At the first of these extraordinary congresses held in December 1919, despite the presence of an organized *Tercerista*[17] wing within the Party, adherence to the Second International was confirmed and reinstated, the majority of the Party voting to send a delegation to the Geneva Congress of the international organization in January 1920 to insist on the need for the unification of the Second and Third Internationals.[18] The meeting of the Second International, however, was canceled, and as pressure mounted within the PSOE, another extraordinary congress was promptly, though reluctantly, called for June 1920.

The final resolution of the Second Extraordinary Congress proclaimed adherence to the Comintern, and a new National Executive Committee with a majority of *Terceristas* in it was struck. The PSOE, however, set a number of conditions for joining the organization, namely that "the Socialist Party would maintain its autonomy in all tactical questions, since tactics had to be conditioned by the situation of each moment and by the psychology of each people; that the PSOE would represent within the Comintern the ideal of the unification of all socialist forces desiring to coexist under the same ideals, and would oppose all unjustified excommunication and dogmatism; and that it would attend with this unifying purpose all congresses that might be held" (qtd. in Meaker 1974, 270).[19]

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[17] In reference to the fact that they supported the Third International, in Spanish "Tercera Internacional".
[18] This resolution was approved by the narrow margin of 14,010 votes in favor, and 12,497 against (Meaker 1974, 231). For more information on the First Extraordinary Congress of the PSOE, see Heywood (1990); *El Socialista* from 11 to 15 December 1919.
[19] The original conditions were published in *El Socialista* 23 June 1920.

In July 1920, the Socialist Party sent Fernando de los Ríos[20] – a cautious supporter of the Comintern – and Daniel Anguiano – an unconditional one – to the Second Congress of the Comintern in order to negotiate entry into it on behalf of the PSOE.

At its Second Congress, however, the Comintern, aware of the slow pace which the proletarian revolution was following in the rest of Europe, was deciding on a number of conditions of its own, aimed at strengthening communist parties and at intensifying the link between them and the international organization itself. Needless to say, the content of those conditions was in open contradiction with those which the PSOE had brought to Moscow, especially as they referred to democratic centralism and the obligation of all members to abide by the decisions taken in future Comintern congresses.[21]

Upon their return to Spain, de los Ríos and Anguiano presented different reports to the Socialist Party, the former recommending to stay in the Second International, the latter recommending to join the Third.[22] Neither report convinced the majority of the Party delegates, and a third and final extraordinary congress was called for April 1921.

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[20] The name Fernando de los Ríos will appear throughout this thesis, not so much because of the very important role he played in the Spanish cultural scene of the time, but because he was the target of much of the criticism of communists toward socialist intellectuals. De los Ríos (Granada 1879-New York 1949) studied in Spain and Germany, was a disciple of Giner de los Ríos – founder of the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* – and thus educated in the *Krausista* and *Institucionista* milieu. A professor of Political Law at the University of Granada, and member of the Reformist Party, he joined the Socialist Party in 1919, becoming a member of its Executive Committee and a Member of Parliament. After he returned from Moscow, he wrote *Mis viajes a la Rusia sovietista* (1922). His best known works are *El sentido humanista del Socialismo* (1926), *Estado e Iglesia en la España del siglo XVI* (1927), and *¿A dónde va el Estado?* (1934). He was a Minister of Justice in 1931, and Minister of Public Instruction between 1932 and 1933. During the war, he was the Spanish ambassador in the United States, where he died in 1949. Meaker has said that "with his lofty and immaculate presence, his well-trimmed beard, his sartorial conservatism, and his moderate, decent socialism", de los Ríos would become for the Russian Bolsheviks, after their confrontation with them in Moscow late in 1920, "the incarnation of all they found wrong with Spanish socialism" (1974, 271). Spanish communists, certainly, shared that very same opinion, and they attacked him viciously for a whole decade, as we will see throughout the next chapters.

[21] See "Conditions of Admission to the Communist International Approved by the Second Comintern Congress", reproduced in Degras (1956, 166-172). Further reading on the Second Congress of the

The kind of debate which had characterized previous congresses, however, was no longer possible. At the Third Extraordinary Congress, interventions by both sides seemed to be merely an exchange of immutable, pre-arranged opinions and ideas, all the while each fraction was preparing to abandon the Party should its side be in the minority after the final vote. With 6,025 votes in favor of adherence to the Third International and 8,808 against it (Meaker 1974, 367), the *Tercerista* wing was forced to split, and even before the congress had ended, a new Communist Party had been born, the *Partido Comunista Obrero Español* [Spanish Communist Labor Party,[23] PCOE].[24]

Thus by 1921 Spain had two communist parties: one, officially recognized as the Spanish section of the Communist International, made up of revolutionary youths with little theoretical preparation, a great revolutionary drive and readiness to combat, but with practically no influence in the masses; the other, not recognized by the Comintern yet, made up of older and more politically mature socialists with a reformist background and a much more contained revolutionary spirit, equally unfit as far as their ideological preparation was concerned, but with a somewhat stronger influence on the masses, given their trajectory within the PSOE.[25]

The Statutes of the Third International, however, made it clear that each country was to have only one national section. Despite the obvious differences between the two

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Comintern can be found in *Outline History of the Communist International*; Degras (1956); McDermott and Agnew (1997).

[22] See *El Socialista* 19 January 1921.

[23] I use Gerad Meaker's translation of this Party's name into English (1974, 369).

[24] Meaker uses the abbreviation PCO and Heywood that of PCOE. In Party documents, the Party is referred to both as PCO and PCOE.

[25] While the founding of the PC had only affected the Socialist Youth, which continued to exist, the scission of the PCOE had a deep impact on the core of the PSOE itself. As the *Terceristas* left, the Socialist Party returned to its *Pablista* hegemony and "collapsed. . . into a kind of self-contemplative stasis" of which it would not come out until the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (Heywood 1990, 82).

communist parties, and despite the fact that the Comintern had not been so impressed by the visit of the *Tercerista* leaders de los Ríos and Anguiano, the international organization deemed it necessary to bring the two parties together. As a result, soon after the foundation of the PCOE, negotiations between the two communist parties began, eagerly directed by Comintern representative Antonio Graziedi.[26]

Graziedi readily acknowledged that the majority of PCOE members were "centrists", while the majority of PC members were "ultraleftists". It has often been maintained, however, that the differences between the PC and the PCOE were personal rather than ideological. Further, the intransigence shown by the PC during the negotiations to bring the two parties together – the "kids" demanded that all those members of the PCOE whom they considered to be reformists be expelled – [27] has often been blamed on the youthful spirit of its members.

Historian Gerald Meaker has argued that "it was difficult to see real ideological differences between the two communist parties" and that "the whole record of the discussions and polemics which accompanied their unification efforts of 1921-22 may be searched in vain for substantive disagreements", since the conflict arose mainly as a result of the diverging temperaments of the two communist factions. Although Meaker has also acknowledged that the young communists were "leftists" and the older communists "centrists", he has reduced their differences to the clash between the "optimism and impetuosity of youth" of the former and the political wisdom of the latter, who were

[26] Italian communist, member of the ECCI since 1920.
[27] The full text of the conditions is found in "Condiciones para aceptar la unión".

"nearly a generation older, had absorbed the Pablista[28] ideology, and had mostly ceased to believe in miracles" (1974, 377).

Certainly, Meaker's argument is accurate, to some extent. Young students like Andrade, León Trilla or Pumarega, on the one hand, and adults like Daniel Anguiano or Nuñez de Arenas, on the other, were set apart by a number of important differences in character, which had to do with their age, political experience, expectations, methods, and, of course, their revolutionary zeal. After all, it was only reasonable to expect that younger people who had not taken part in the revolutionary wave of 1917 should feel a more urgent drive toward revolution and would be willing to believe the international scene was ripe for it. Whereas they took not only radical, but also authoritative measures, driven by a sense of urgency and immediacy as much as by a desire to break away from the Socialist Party, older socialists were much more conservative in their actions, and certainly more democratic, driven by a need to keep the Party united.

Given the fact, however, that the PSOE's "revolutionary reformism"[29] could hardly serve the political agenda of the new worker's international organization, what might at first appear to be a difference in "temperament" between the two groups of communists might have just been a mere facade behind which lay deeper political disagreements. The root of these disagreements, however, must be sought not so much in the disputes which ensued the Comintern's call to have the two parties join – a move which, indeed, brought to the fore power struggles and personality conflicts – but in the political impulse which had prompted the creation of each of those parties in the first place.

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[28] Another colloquial (and often pejorative) term for "socialist", by referring to the given name of the PSOE's founder and "grandfather": Pablo Iglesias.
[29] See Chapter One.

Despite the emphasis he has placed on the "temperamental" differences between the two communist parties, Meaker has also pointed out that the *Partido Comunista Español* was the most Leninist of the two. "In contrast to the *Terceristas* of the PCO[E]", he has suggested, "[the PC] was driven by an authentically revolutionary impulse; in contrast to the anarchist-syndicalists, it did not exaggerate the efficacy of the revolutionary spontaneity of the masses; and in contrast to the communist-syndicalists,[30] it did not deviate toward the notion of syndicalist supremacy" (1974, 373). The communists of the PC thought of the Party as a pure organization which would pursue the revolution of the masses through the work of a conscious leadership. Indeed the *Partido Comunista Español* may have been founded by a group of "euphoric" "kids" ready to embrace "Lenin's utopia", but the political program which it immediately put forward was a strong anti-reformist platform with a revolutionary vision for Spain, both of which were in complete line with the political strategy on which the Comintern itself had been founded in 1919.

After the Bolshevik victory in 1917, the revolutionary wave which had begun in Russia had expanded to countries like Germany and Hungary and was expected to sweep immediately over the rest of Europe. While a Socialist International perceived as "reformist" and "social-chauvinist" had taken sides in the European war and had encouraged workers to support their national bourgeoisie, the Third International called for "civil wars" against the bourgeoisie to spread all over Europe in order to fight all forms of imperialism, political opportunism and reformism (*Outline History of the Communist*

[30] Internal current of the CNT which responded favorably to the Bolshevik revolution, and which would eventually join the Communist Party. In later chapters it will become clear how it affected the evolution of Spanish communism.

International 1971, 52-53). The Comintern was founded on the grounds that the objective conditions the European war was providing could easily be turned into a revolutionary reality; the struggle was to be carried out through mass action, including an armed insurrection against the power of the capitalist state.[31] Communist parties were called on to seek political alliances with all those other revolutionary organizations for which the dictatorship of the proletariat was also a goal, and thus lead the struggle of the masses toward the conquest of power.

As far as the Comintern was concerned, the only obstacle on the road toward revolution was the existence of reformist organizations. Thus the greater intransigence a Communist Party showed toward reformism the greater its "revolutionary purity" (Gómez Llorente 1972, 415-6). Only that "purity" could serve as a guarantee of maximum effectiveness in opposing the centrist and right-wing elements both without and within.[32]

Although Spain had not participated in the European war, its army had been engaged in an imperialistic conflict in Morocco which would soon turn into open war and which would have dramatic repercussions on Spanish soil. In line with the Comintern's political interpretation of World War I, young communists interpreted the Moroccan conflict as an imperialist war waged by the Spanish capitalist class against the Rif's[33] working class. The *Partido Comunista Español* thus called on the Spanish working class to avoid falling into the political trap of an alliance with its national bourgeoisie and

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[31] See "Theses on Bourgeois Democracy and Proletarian Dictatorship Adopted by the First Comintern Congress", reprinted in Dergas (1956, 7-16).

[32] For further reading on the First Congress of the Comintern, see Degras (1956); *Outline History of the Communist International* (1971).

[33] Northern region of Morocco which extends from Quebdana to the Gibraltar Strait, where Spain had been waging its colonial war.

against fellow workers in another country, all for the sake of "capitalist greed" ("La guerra civil" 1).

In fact, young communists believed that the war which "French and Spanish imperialists" were carrying out in Morocco needed to be transformed into "an open and violent civil war" against capitalism and the bourgeoisie on Spanish soil (ibid). And just like the Comintern had assumed that world revolution was imminent, the PC also believed that such a civil war had already begun, and that Spain was experiencing the objective conditions for a proletarian revolution.

Unlike socialists, the young communists of the PC believed that to pursue patchy social reforms would eventually kill whatever revolutionary spirit might exist within the masses. As a result, the mission of the new Communist Party was to help the working class understand that reforms were not efficient enough, a goal the Party was to achieve by "educating [workers] in the Marxist concept of class struggle which would channel, guide and eventually settle the coming revolution" ("El Partido Comunista Español a los Socialistas españoles" 1). A Party still without a grassroots union, the PC set out to reach that objective by entering the existing unions in order to convert workers to communism. The final goal was to create a united working class, led by the "clear and conscious vision emanating from the best of the proletariat" instead of being left to suffer the "chaotic drive of the masses in revolt". Once united, the working class would have in the Soviets "the maximum expression of the proletarian state, of its strength and its economic and political power" ("Bases y Tesis" 1).

In line with the anti-reformist spirit of the Comintern, young communists accused the *Terceristas* of using their support for the international organization as an excuse "to

extend a pseudo-revolutionary veil over a Socialist Party which [had already been] completely assimilated to liberal, bourgeois and reformist republicanism" ("La biblioteca comunista" 4). As far as the young "kids" were concerned, the *Terceristas* may have been "very honest in the bourgeois sense of the word", but certainly "they [were] not "revolutionary" ("Hacia la revolución" 1). Given the socialists' "vacillating and timid stand", their "anti-revolutionary and democratic views" and their "spiritual cowardliness" (qtd. in Arranz 1980, 91), the PSOE was simply destined to "die a slow death" ("El congreso extraordinario del Partido Socialista" 1).[34]

The political origins of the *Partido Comunista Obrero Español*, however, could not have been more different. From among all the internal currents of opposition which had sprung up within the PSOE throughout the 1910s, the journal *Nuestra Palabra* and the educational institution *Escuela Nueva* had been not only the most important but also the ones from which the majority of *Terceristas* would eventually come. Although these two organizations had been born as a response to some of the most important political decisions made by the Socialist Party, they never cared to build a platform for secession from the Party, nor did they abandon the reformist spirit on which the PSOE had originally been founded, something which made of their political program – regardless of their intense desire to join the Comintern – simply no match for that of the younger PC.

Although the journal *Nuestra Palabra* was not founded until 1918, the group of socialists who would be its mentors[35] had already waved the flag of discontent inside the

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[34] For a succinct version of the PC's political program, see "Bases y Tesis del *Partido Comunista Español*".

[35] Mariano García Cortés, Ramón Lamoneda, Virginia González, Manuel Cordero, José Verdes Montenegro, César González, Juan José Morato, Luis Mancebo and José Callejas were all members of the *Nuestra Palabra* group. Among them were the Young Socialists Ramón Merino Gracia, Rito Esteban,

Socialist Party upon the signing of the Socialist-Republican Alliance of 1909, since they feared that political proximity with the Republicans would eventually drive the Party into a full pact with the bourgeoisie and away from its working-class roots and objectives. A few years later, when the Second World War broke out, they openly opposed the Party's official line in favor of the Allies, declaring they were unable not only to endorse the actions of either contending party but also to find any meaning at all in the war. The critical voice of the members of *Nuestra Palabra* rose yet again in 1917, as they made the Socialist Party responsible for the revolutionary failure of that year, accusing it of trying to pursue the revolution in alliance with Republican parties.[36] Overall, they disagreed with the Socialist Party leadership on the idea that Spain needed to go through a bourgeois revolution first, something which they argued was keeping the Party away from the real political work of directing the masses toward class struggle. The members of *Nuestra Palabra* believed that the only true revolution which was feasible in Spain was the one leading toward a dictatorship of the proletariat, for which the model to follow was the Bolshevik Party and the Russian revolution.

As Meaker has suggested, however, the members of *Nuestra Palabra* issued a "cautious response" to the Bolshevik call to create a new Workers' International, since as "left-centrists they remained committed to the concept of a broadly unified, albeit moderately purged, International", not to mention the fact that before their commitment to any international organization came their commitment to the PSOE itself, a Party they

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Jaime Aparicio, and Emeterio Chicharro, members of the *Grupo de Estudiantes Socialistas* who would eventually found the *Partido Comunista Español*. See Meaker (1974).

[36] See *Nuestra Palabra* 21 September 1918, and 12 October 1918.

might have actively criticized, but from which they had no desire to withdraw (1974, 207-8).

More importantly, the reading of Bolshevism which *Nuestra Palabra* presented suggests that its members had little interest in pursuing an original, let alone oppositional, political program. Indeed, despite its anti-reformist and anti-bourgeois stand, the members of *Nuestra Palabra* believed that "Bolshevism as a doctrine" did not exist; that, in fact, the only thing Bolshevism was doing was putting socialist doctrine into practice. Rather than identifying Bolshevism with communism and thus with a new working-class ideology which would supersede both socialism and reformism, they believed Bolshevism was simply "socialism in the hour of truth" (qtd. in Meaker 1974, 114; "Bolchevikismo" 1). Unable to find any differences between the goals of the Bolshevik revolution and the Socialist Party's maximum revolutionary program for Spain, *Nuestra Palabra* settled for a critique which was mainly directed toward the internal workings of the Party, its "rigid Pablista orthodoxy" and its "oligarchical. . . structure" rather than its overall revolutionary vision (1974, 115).

The *Escuela Nueva* represented a very different case of opposition within the Socialist Party,[37] although it has also come to be called "left wing" because of its eventual support for the Bolshevik revolution. Founded in 1911 in the socialist *Casa del Pueblo*[38] by Manuel Nuñez de Arenas and surviving right into the years of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship in the mid 1920s, the *Escuela Nueva* was founded as a cultural organization with several goals in mind, among them, facilitating a better rapport between the Socialist

[37] Officially, the organization was never part of the Socialist Party, but it was represented in Party Congresses throughout its life, although not without a great deal of controversy. See Tuñón de Lara (1973, 177).

Party and the intelligentsia and giving workers a general, technical and political education (Meaker 1974, 14; Tuñón de Lara 1990a, 148-149).[39]

Founder Nuñez de Arenas and most of the intellectuals who organized the *Escuela Nueva* with him in late 1910 were members of the Generation of 1914 who had joined the Socialist Party after the Republican-Socialist Alliance of 1909.[40] Before the war, the *Escuela Nueva* had shown certain interest in Revisionism, and, once hostilities broke out, it did not hesitate to adhere to the cause of the Allies. Overall, the members of the *Escuela Nueva* viewed themselves as an organization in the spirit of the British Fabian Society.[41]

The slow pace at which the PSOE had dealt with the issue of its allegiance to the Comintern meant that by the time the older members of *Nuestra Palabra* and the *Escuela Nueva* came together to found the PCOE, the international organization had held yet another congress, its third, in July and August of 1921. While the Second Congress of the Comintern had criticized the "infantile disorder of left-wing communism", it had placed more emphasis on the structural strengthening of national communist parties. The Third Congress, on the other hand, focused completely on the issue of reformism and anti-reformism.

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[38] Socialist cultural organization for the working class and the public at large.
[39] The original statement of purpose of the organization is reprinted in Tuñón de Lara (1973, 177).
[40] Other members of the Escuela Nueva were Andrés Ovejero, Eduardo Torralba Beci, Manuel Predoso, Julio Alvarez del Vayo, Luis Araquistáin, and Leopoldo Alas, all of them prominent members of the Socialist Party.
[41] I will deal with the *Escuela Nueva* later in this chapter. As has been the case with most cultural organizations of this time, the *Escuela Nueva* has been repeatedly mentioned but not necessarily studied in depth. For the most complete studies, see Guereña (1984); Meaker (1974) and Tuñón de Lara (1973). For a discussion on the *Escuela Nueva* as a copy of the British Fabian Society, see also Gómez Molleda (1981).

By the summer of 1921 it had become obvious that European reformist leaders had managed to maintain their influence over the working masses, and that the anti-bourgeois, anti-reformist stand of communist parties had not served to convince the masses that they should embrace a communist program. As a consequence, the Comintern believed communist parties could no longer afford to refuse to work with socialists and other reformists in democratic institutions, including Parliament. To continue to do so would only bring to the ranks of the communist parties those workers already converted to communism but would do little in terms of convincing the rest of the working class. As Jane Degras has pointed out, the Comintern's task became "to win positions from the social-democrats and the reformist unions, using the tactics of siege, not of assault" (1956, 225). The Comintern believed that although communist workers might not understand the move toward reformism at first, they would soon learn that joining reformist institutions could also be a path toward revolution. Thus communist parties were called to seek parliamentary participation.[42]

The Third Congress of the Comintern did not address the question of how small communist parties, which had just recently split from reformist socialist organizations, could go back to sharing a minimum program with them without alienating the masses in the process. That issue only came up in the final manifesto of the congress and later during the meeting of the Comintern's International Executive, which set up the bases for the United Front, a policy by which "joint defensive struggles with the socialist rank and file against the capitalist offensive would popularise communist methods and expose the

[42] For more information on the Third Congress of the Comintern, see McDermott and Agnew (1997); *Outline History of the Communist International* (1971).

hypocrisy of the reformist leaders" (McDermott and Agnew 1997, 27).[43] The issue was far from resolved, however, since there seemed to be two different interpretations of what the United Front meant. On the one hand, it was viewed as a temporary tactic which could be used in order to overwhelm reformists through the radicalization of the struggle of the working class, while waiting for a stronger spur of revolutionary impetus to take place. On the other, there was a will to embrace it as part of a wider political strategy, thus including Parliamentarianism as a necessary step in the revolutionary process (Arranz 1980, 88). Interestingly, either way, the policy of the United Front could fit very well under the description of the "revolutionary reformism" which had been the trademark of Spanish socialism for decades. Whether parliamentary reform was a temporary measure to be pursued while waiting for better revolutionary times or whether it was the very beginning of the revolution itself, it was all in line with what socialists had been saying for decades: seek reforms now, lead the revolution later.

As a result, in less than two years, the political turn of the Comintern had been such that the international organization had gone from meeting the expectations of a group of "kids" drunk with revolutionary euphoria to meeting those of the older "revolutionary reformists" of the PSOE.[44] When the *Terceristas* were to establish their new Communist Party, they found their classical combination of revolutionary discourse and reformist practice to be in complete line not only with the new pro-reformist stand of the Comintern, but also with an ambiguous definition of the United Front which could be

[43] See "Extracts from a Manifesto of the ECCI on the Conclusion of the Third Comintern Congress", in Degras (1956, 281-5).

[44] It was made clear in a letter which Juan Andrade sent to G.J. Geers (member of the Amsterdam Bureau of the Comintern) on 3 July 1920, that young communists were beginning to think of Lenin himself as an

interpreted as the need to pursue patchy reforms for the sake of convincing the masses to join the communist parties.

Despite these important political differences, the negotiations to bring the two parties together went along. As a result of its new line of cooperation with socialists and reformists, the Communist International was no longer interested in expelling the PCOE's "reformists", as the "kids" demanded, and the PC and PCOE eventually joined in order to form a new party.[45] With their unification in November 1921, there came to life the *Partido Comunista de España* [Communist Party of Spain, PCE], a name which the Party has borne to the present day.[46]

Although the negotiations to bring the two parties together were made difficult by the "temperament" of a number of "kids", it is also true that both parties had experienced some rather "temperamental" changes. The founding of both parties had been the result of rather temperamental changes in their political line prior to their foundation. Some of the "one hundred kids" were, indeed, rather impulsive and naïve and could have been rightly

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"opportunist", for while he refused "to have anything to do with the *leftist kids*", he was seen as openly flirting with the reformists (Andrade 1983, 158-162; emphases in original).

[45] Amaro del Rosal, a founding member of the PC, has suggested that some of the young communists outside Madrid who had already experienced the "coup d'état" which had transformed their Young Socialists chapters into the *Partido Comunista Español*, suddenly found themselves transferred yet to another Party "overnight" and many of them simply abandoned it. As a result, few of the original "one hundred kids" remained in the Party (1980b, 24-25). See the archival document "Acta de la fusión de los dos partidos comunistas".

[46] Historians as well as members of these original communist parties have used the abbreviations PC as well as PCE to refer to the original *Partido Comunista Español* and the unified *Partido Comunista de España* indistinctly. On the other hand, the names of these two parties have been translated into English as the Communist Party of Spain or the Spanish Communist Party, also indistinctly. Throughout this chapter, and at other points in this thesis, I will be dealing to a large extent with the differences between these two parties, thus I have found it necessary to establish a clear difference in the way I use their acronyms and the way in which I translate their full names into English. As a result, I will use the acronym PC to refer to the original *Partido Comunista Español* founded in 1920, the full name of which I will translate into English as the Spanish Communist Party. On the other hand, I will use the acronym PCE to refer to the *Partido Comunista de España*, founded in 1922 and which still exists today. I will translate that name into English as the Communist Party of Spain. Further, I will often refer to the

accused of making too quick a leap from anarchism to communism, or from an anti-war to a pro-Allies stand,[47] but that jump may be explained much more easily than the one made by some *Terceristas*, who moved from Revisionism to Bolshevism in a couple of years. In fact, one could even argue that the latter's "leap" was the most "temperamental" of the two (in the sense of "erratic"), despite being accompanied by a contained, rather than impetuous, behavior and by dialogue, rather than conspiracy.

What is much more important, however, is that the different political origins of the *Partido Comunista Español* and the *Partido Comunista Obrero Español* ensured that the Communist Party of Spain – which was founded very shortly after the Third Congress of the Comintern – would be split along the lines of the two possible interpretations of the meaning of the United Front. Whereas former members of the PCOE – revolutionary reformists – took the resolutions literally and accepted Parliamentarianism as one more step in the revolutionary process, former members of the PC – whose very raison d'être had been the struggle against reformism – believed the congress resolutions to be open to interpretation, depending on the specific national circumstances. Not surprisingly, the young communists' reading of Spanish national circumstances made it very clear to them that the country was not ready for such a tactic at all. As a result, when the PCE Executive decided to run in municipal elections late in 1921, a left-wing minority (former members of the PC Eduardo Ugarte, Emeterio Chicharro, Angel Pumarega and Juan Andrade) voiced their opposition to that decision, thus creating the first crisis within the newly-founded PCE.

Partido Comunista Español as "the original PC" and to its members as "the young communists", while I will refer to the *Partido Comunista de España* as "the unified PCE".

[47] See Portela (1978, 40).

Unable to find common ground with the Party majority, the dissidents organized in the *Grupo Comunista Español* [Spanish Communist Group, GCE], whose official voice was *El Obrero Comunista.*[48] While the mainstream PCE accused the GCE of "left-wing communism", the GCE – in effect, the founding core of the *Partido Comunista Español* – accused the Party's Executive Committee of "opportunism", of wanting to please Moscow and to look like "good communists" while ignoring important national issues ("Por la unidad" 1). Soon the pages of *El obrero comunista* were filled with calls on the youth (and it was not accidental they were calling on the Party youth – indeed they were calling on their fellow members of the former PC) to become the protagonists of a rebellion within the Communist Party, and to oppose the decisions of an Executive Committee which they believed had been taken over by the reformists of the PCOE.[49]

Had the *Grupo Comunista Español* presented no political program of its own, had it all been easily reduced to a matter of willingness or lack of willingness to accept Parliamentarianism as a political tactic, the differences between the rebelling minority and the mainstream Party could certainly be classified as "temperamental" without any further discussion. It is important to emphasize, however, that the GCE had not been founded on the mere rejection of a political tactic, but on the political belief that such a tactic was not appropriate for Spain at the time.

The members of the GCE believed that communism would be irremediably discredited if the Party were to join reformists right after having split from them, a move which would leave the masses without a revolutionary vanguard. They argued that the

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[48] Only the first issue of this publication, published on 28 February 1922, is left in the AHPCE (Folder 195, Document 24).
[49] See "A los comunistas españoles".

Comintern had called for Parliamentarianism not as an ideological principle but as a *tactic*, that is, as "a method to be used in the revolutionary struggle", which meant that it would not always be convenient to put it into practice. Thus the GCE chose to emphasize other aspects of what the Comintern had said about parliamentary action, namely, that because the goal of such a tactic was to discredit the enemy and unite the working masses, it would have to be "*subordinated at all times to the goals and tasks of the extra-Parliamentary mass struggle*". The fact that the PCE Executive had included in its draft for the Party by-laws a statement indicating that the Party "would *always* participate in the administrative and political elections in the state", proved to the GCE that the Party was not simply accepting Parliamentarianism as a tactic, but that it was, in fact, embracing it as a political strategy to be used indiscriminately. For the former members of the PC, to use Parliamentarianism as a political strategy would irremediably mean to go back to reformism and to the pursuit of a minimum program while deferring the revolution indefinitely. In that case, nothing would have changed in the workers' movement, since the only available anti-reformist option would have been absorbed by the bourgeois reformist left. Communism would thus have found accommodation within the system ("La experiencia de las elecciones" 4; emphases in the original).[50]

More importantly, the young communists of the GCE feared that the Spanish masses would neither understand such a political move as a tactic, nor would they be ready to make the leap that would eventually be needed in order to abandon Parliamentarianism and move toward open revolution. They argued the Party was not prepared to participate in Parliament, nor was it capable of launching the educational

[50] See also "A los obreros comunistas".

campaign which would be needed to explain such a tactical move to the workers. As a result, the opposition called on the PCE to show some tactical flexibility and to focus instead on some of the other Comintern resolutions, which were, in fact, much more relevant for Spain, namely, the call to seek a better rapprochement with the masses as well as the need to build a stronger Communist Party ("Contra la maniobra escisionista" 1).

The controversy reached its highest level when the GCE attended the First Congress of the PCE and put forward its interpretations there. The congress resolved that the creation of that internal current of opposition had been an act of insubordination against both the Party and the Comintern, and it consequently outlawed the organization, excluding its members from the Executive until the next congress. The GCE was declared illegal and its members were called on to sign a declaration stating that they would accept the discipline imposed on to them by the congress and would accept its resolutions.[51] Those who refused to accept the Party's conditions abandoned the Party altogether and founded the *Unión Cultural Proletaria*,[52] a move which drove the Comintern toward new efforts to save the unity of the Party.

Although Jules Humbert-Droz,[53] the new negotiator appointed by the Comintern, refused to dismiss the members of the UCP as mere "anarchists" or "anti-

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[51] See the manifesto of the GCE after the First Congress of the PCE: "A los obreros comunistas". On the First Congress of the PCE, see "Actas del Primer Congreso del PCE" and "Reseña de las sesiones del Congreso"; PCE (1922).

[52] These were Eduardo Ugarte, Juan Andrade, Luis Portela, Emeterio Chicharro and Angel Pumarega. The UCP may have received very little attention in Spanish cultural or political history, but in all cases there has been undue emphasis on the person of Angel Pumarega as its "founder". The Organizing Committee of the UCP was formed by Pumarega himself plus Andrade and Chicharro. Pumarega was the "secretary" (See UCP's manifesto).

[53] Member of the founding group of the Swiss Communist Party. Throughout the 1920s, he was the Director of the Comintern's Latin Secretariat, and in charge of several confidential missions in Spain, France, Italy and Portugal. The second volume of his memoirs, *De Lénine à Staline. Dix ans au service*

parliamentarianists", and the PCE's Central Committee as "opportunists" – which is how the two confronting Party factions saw each other – he was aware that the unity of the Party was rather frail as a result of both "luttes de personnes" and "divergences politiques" (1971, 63-66). For Humbert-Droz, those "divergences politiques" amounted to one issue only – that of participation in municipal elections – but that one issue, however, was not one without political substance, since it was rooted in the original anti-reformist struggle which the young communists still considered to be "le premier devoir communiste" (69). For the most part, however, Humbert-Droz still believed that the differences within the Party could and should be resolved through firm negotiation of the distribution of power and through the enforcement of discipline. He thus called on all members of the Party to "faire un effort pour vaincre le malaise des débuts de la fusion" and to show enough "bonne volonté. . . pour faire taire les vieilles luttes et pour collaborer loyalement á l'edification d'un grand parti communiste" (65-66). Eventually, the UCP was also outlawed and the entire Organizing Committee, except Angel Pumarega, re-joined the Party.

Humbert-Droz had been quite correct in his view that the "renegades" of the PCE had founded the UCP "en affirmant leur attachement à l'[Internationale Communiste] et leur fidelité à l'ideal communiste" (67). That "ideal communiste" was the same anti-bourgeois, anti-reformist stand which had been such an important part of the founding spirit of the Comintern and of the *Partido Comunista Español* in the first place, and which had moved the former members of the PC to rise against the mainstream Party via the creation of the *Grupo Comunista Español*. What this means is that the *Partido*

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de l'Internationale Communiste, 1921-1931 (1971), sheds a great deal of light on the origins of

Comunista Español, the *Grupo Comunista Español* and the *Unión Cultural Proletaria* were all one and the same thing, and that the political goals of any of them were the political goals of the three of them, since the three organizations were founded by the same group of young anti-reformist communists who were willing to adapt to changing political circumstances, but not willing to change their overall political strategy.

Gerald Meaker has given a short account of how the UCP was founded when Ugarte, Andrade, Portela, Chicharro, Pumarega and other young communists met at the Retiro Park in Madrid. According to Meaker, these young communists decided to dissolve the *Grupo Comunista Español* and to create the *Unión Cultural Proletaria* because the latter name "apparently seemed less factional to them", thus "hop[ing] to avoid any charge of seeking to split the Party even as they maintained their continuity with the old PCE" (1974, 415). This interpretation, however, misses both the political implications of the young communists' move – for it fails to acknowledge the anti-reformist agenda of those who could no longer work within the Party – as well as the cultural implications – for it denies the organization a role as a cultural enterprise. I believe that the name given to the UCP was in no way casual. The GCE's last manifesto made it clear that the young communists were looking for alternative ways to fight against the political reformism of both the PSOE and the PCE. As they declared their "polemic confrontations" with the Party to be over, the former members of the *Partido Comunista Español* encouraged all members of the GCE to return to the mainstream Party, explaining that it was no longer necessary to fight "within the Party". Instead, the young communists announced that from then on, they would fight "alongside" it, by doing what the PCE was

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communism in Spain.

most obviously not prepared to do: to contribute to the advancement of communism in Spain by providing the working masses with a solid political education. In the pursuit of such a goal, they hoped to prove that it was possible "to fight efficiently for communism and for the proletarian revolution from outside the Party" ("A los obreros comunistas" 2). Thus it should be clear that the name given to the new organization was far from being anecdotal or opportunist. Instead, the name was chosen with a specific agenda in mind. As the young communists let the GCE die, they set out to carry out the educational work they had hoped to do when they had founded the *Partido Comunista Español*, although no longer as a Party.

The *Unión Cultural Proletaria*, a New Model of Proletarian Education and Culture

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the Spanish Socialist Party started to move away slowly from its previous anti-intellectual and anti-educational line,[54] and began to pay more attention to the educational needs of its members. Eventually, the Party would experience a radical change in cultural and educational policy, embracing the idea that education and culture were indispensable tools for the political struggle of the working class.[55]

In the belief that the Spanish national school system was not educating people but making them absorb the ideology of the bourgeoisie (Pereira 1901, 3), the Party set out to create schools which would be "purely socialist" and out of which would come the "men [sic] of the future, free, just, and good" (Torralva Beci 1906, 303). This new strategy

[54] See Chapter One.

eventually gave way to the creation of a large Party network of educational and cultural institutions – the best known of which was the *Casas del Pueblo* – which offered a wide range of educational and cultural services to the working class, including the political education of Party members, professional training for technical workers, as well as general education and cultural activities for the public at large.[56]

The political education which the Socialist Party offered to its rank-and-file was grounded in the belief that workers needed to be "cautious" and "reflexive" in the political struggle so as not to threaten the very existence of the organizations which worked to defend their rights. This kind of political education was not concerned with the revolution *per se*, not even with a radical transformation of the state. Instead, it aimed at educating the workers on how to achieve much more "modest objectives", among them an eight-hour working day, the right to strike, new social legislation and an end to the political persecution of their unions (Pérez Ledesma 1993, 166).

In fact, socialist Juan José Morato justified his Party's educational and cultural line on the grounds that "the greater the moral and intellectual culture" of workers, "the stronger their thrust in the *vindication of [their] claims*", "the greatest the wisdom of [their political] actions", and, as a consequence, the "greater speed and efficiency in *achieving improvements*" (1902, 2; emphases added). This kind of "moral, intellectual elevation" was indeed the "driving force behind reformism" and, as a consequence, the

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]55 "Workers must seek education", read an article in *El Socialista* at the turn of the century, "[they] must acquire knowledge, [they] must perfect [their] technical and social education, as much as [their] means would allow" ("Instrucción obrera").

56 For further reading on Spanish socialism and cultural policy or practice, see de Luis (1994); Guereña (1991); Tuñón de Lara (1990a).

"greatest tool for the emancipation of workers", which was to be achieved through democratic practice (de Luis 1994, 125).

Despite these new concerns for educational issues and their criticism of the national school system, the Socialist Party never offered a blueprint for a new educational model. As a result, the PSOE remained vulnerable to the influence of the reformist intelligentsia which joined its ranks after 1909, bringing with it its own program for national education. After that year, the PSOE started to move away from speaking about culture in strictly proletarian terms (even if it was just to serve a reformist program, in any case) and moved on to speak about "culture" without any further qualification. As the old "dream" of a proletarian culture and art was abandoned, the Socialist Party began to be concerned with the intellectual regeneration of the country and the reorganization of national public education (de Luis 1994, 13), issues which had also been the main concerns of bourgeois reformists.

As I have suggested earlier, the cultural organization *per excellence* which was founded after the entry of bourgeois intellectuals into the Socialist Party was Nuñez de Arenas' *Escuela Nueva*. Nuñez de Arenas "deplor[ed] the doctrinal poverty of the [Socialist] Party, as well as the lack of contact between the working class and the world of learning", a sentiment which moved him to found the *Escuela Nueva* as "a center for theoretical studies and for facilitating contact between workers and intellectuals" (Meaker 1974, 14). In that line, the *Escuela Nueva* was made up of university professors and literary people who would offer workers a general, technical and political education, and

who would also vulgarize the social sciences and whatever ideas and experiences there may have been designed to improve the material conditions of the proletariat.[57]

Some of the intellectuals who participated in the *Escuela Nueva* were also members or collaborators of bourgeois cultural institutions such as the *Liga de Educación Política* or the *Ateneo*.[58] Despite that, Tuñón de Lara has suggested that the *Liga de Educación Política* and the *Escuela Nueva* meant two "diametrically opposed conceptions of the notion of culture in terms of the relationship between man [sic] and society" for while bourgeois institutions like the LEP had been founded on a "vertical" and "almost hierarchical" view of cultural work and of the relationship between intellectuals and the people, the *Escuela Nueva* tended to think of itself as immersed in a "horizontal", "non-paternalistic" kind of relationship with the workers, erasing the differences between those who were considered to be "select" and those who were considered "vulgar" (1984, 173).

Tuñón de Lara's suggestion may be contradicted by the very words of Nuñez de Arenas, who in the opening conference of the *Escuela Nueva* suggested that the organization was founded on the grounds of "collaboration in the task of education" for the sake of a "more just society", collaboration which was to take place between "those intellectual elements who in their scientific, literary, or artistic work may have also filled themselves with human generosity" and who may be thus "willing to work to help those who are more humble" (1916, 7). Indeed these words point toward a relationship between intellectuals and workers of a "vertical" rather than a "horizontal" nature.

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[57] Contemporary scholars have seen the *Escuela Nueva* as "a positive attempt to deepen into socialist theories from a pluralist and objective standpoint" (Tuñón de Lara 1973, 176) and as one more attempt to break away from the *obrerista* and Guedist line of Pablo Iglesias and his followers, moving the Party toward British Laborism (Meaker 1974, 15).

[58] See Chapter One.

The *Escuela Nueva* declared itself heir to the philosophy of socialist intellectual Jaime Vera.[59] Vera understood culture and intellectual work as a commitment to social progress, first, because "scientific truth itself [was] deeply revolutionary" given the fact that it "transform[ed] and revolutionize[d] social reality. . . by creating new conditions of existence which society made an effort to adopt"; second, because "social truth – that is, scientific truth – always st[ood] in opposition to the ruling economic system", and, third, because "it move[d] its creators to action" (Vera 1973, 192). Thus Vera argued that "social transformation [was] not initiated directly by culture. *It [was] initiated by the application of culture.* And the application of culture [was] *action, intelligent action,* but action nevertheless" (197; emphasis in the original).

Nuñez de Arenas picked up on Vera's ideas linking political praxis and scientific knowledge, adapting them to the specificity of the study of history and the social sciences, but under the same assumption that because "culture was the business of all men" [sic], it was deeply ingrained in the workings of all "social mechanisms" and its future was linked to that of the "rising social forces" (ibid). In effect, what the *Escuela Nueva* had inherited from the socialist philosopher and was putting into practice was the old reformist and liberal belief that the application of culture itself was the beginning of social transformation.

Since the Socialist Party had already abandoned its former interest in proletarian education and culture, the bourgeois reformists of the *Escuela Nueva* found the path open to pursue a bourgeois educational model grounded in the principles of the socialization of culture, free and open education for all, cultural expansion, and equal opportunities, all of

[59] Co-founder of the Socialist Party of Spain, together with Pablo Iglesias.

which were embodied in the model of *Escuela Unificada*, also known as *Escuela Unica*.[60] This is what the *Escuela Nueva* presented in its "Bases para un programa de Instrucción Pública" [Bases for a Program of Public Education], a proposal presented by Lorenzo Luzuriaga on behalf of the *Escuela Nueva* to the Eleventh Congress of the PSOE in 1918.[61]

A model widely accepted by Republican and bourgeois intellectuals, the *Escuela Unificada* was hardly a program of revolutionary education. Rather, it was the "basis" for a "truly equal" educational system in which all "men [sic]" – it made no reference whatsoever to the proletariat – would be given the "necessary means for education", with school "eras[ing]" all obstacles found in the path of "full development of the human personality" (Villanueva 1989, 95). The "socialization" of culture which the *Escuela Nueva* set out to establish included no new proposals for the actual content of that education, except for the fact that it would be "lay" and "free", concepts which clearly connected it with the educational model the reformist bourgeoisie had already implemented in the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*.[62]

While under the influence of bourgeois intellectuals the Socialist Party had abandoned the dream of a revolutionary education and culture and had embraced the objectives of bourgeois cultural reformism, the *Partido Comunista Español* had been founded as a reaction against bourgeois reformism itself, and young communists – many of whom worked in intellectual activities –[63] had been quick to touch on the educational

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[60] From the original German model of *Einheitsschule*.
[61] Reprinted in Villanueva (1989, 95-99).
[62] See Chapter One.
[63] Juan Andrade and Angel Pumarega were writers and journalists, Merino Gracia was a school teacher, Antonio Buendía a student and translator. Emeterio Chicharro was a carpenter and Luis Portela a printer.

and cultural implications of political reformism. The PC lamented the little interest other workers' organizations had shown in the revolutionary education of workers, which had merely been spreading "pseudopolitical propaganda" ("La biblioteca comunista" 4), a regrettable state of affairs which called for the proletariat to take action ("Cultura Proletaria" 4). According to the members of the PCE, workers needed an education which would aid them in the struggle against capitalism. Indeed only the highest level of political consciousness would help workers understand the fact that reformist tactics would never achieve any long-term useful social or political change. That awareness would then take them to the ranks of the Communist Party and to walk the revolutionary path which would eventually culminate with the dictatorship of the proletariat ("La biblioteca comunista" 4).

If socialists had operated under the belief that the greater the moral and political culture of workers the greater their drive in their movement of vindication, the PC and later the UCP operated under the assumption that the greater their degree of political culture, the greater their zeal against reformism and toward revolution. In the same way, if the education which socialists defended was lay, rationalist and wholesome – notions which, as Pablo de Luis affirms, were borrowed from republicanism and anarchism (1994, 11) – the kind of education young communists defended was "Marxist" and "revolutionary", grounded in the study of revolutionary class struggle and in the theoretical basis of revolutionary Marxism (UCP 1922, 1). As stated in the Foundational Act of the PC, the "young Communist Party assume[d] the responsibility of illuminating the proletarian masses about the real line of action they should undertake to conquer

power and the dictatorship [of the proletariat]" ("Fundación del Partido Comunista de España" 1).[64]

Young communists held socialists and anarchists responsible for the passivity of the masses, because neither one of those two political movements had been able to offer them the "solid revolutionary ideas which they would have been able to understand scientifically" (qtd. in Arranz 1980, 100). As an alternative, the PC had a very ambitious educational and cultural program: it wanted to educate its members and the working class at large by studying Marxist classics, the documents published by the Communist International, the activities of the Soviet government, the history of the Russian revolution, the evolution of the international worker's movement and the Spanish national scene proper ("La biblioteca comunista" 1). The first goal, the study of Marxist classics, would be done through a small publishing house, the *Biblioteca El Comunista.*

A small and recently-founded Communist Party like the PC was in no position to pursue its educational and cultural goals via a network of cultural organizations following the socialist model. Instead, all it could do was to demand that all the *Casas del Pueblo* be released from socialist tutelage and opened to all workers, regardless of political affiliation.[65] Once the PC disappeared and its first reincarnation in the GCE was outlawed, however, the need for the kind of anti-reformist education the original Party had called for became more urgent than ever, not only because the Socialist Party continued to educate the working class for reformism, but also because the Communist Party of Spain had embraced the very same reformist line, with what seemed to be the compliance of the

[64] The title says "de España", but it refers to the *Partido Comunista Español.*

Comintern. It was then that the *Unión Cultural Proletaria* came to life, not just like any kind of organization with any other name,[66] but as an educational and cultural organization whose main goal was to provide the working class with the tools to fight against reformism.

"Comrades", the UCP manifesto began, "it is now obvious that the working masses need an organization. . . to offer them a solid political education on an ongoing bases". "The working masses", the manifesto continued, "are disoriented and tired", unable to understand "the internal logic of this historical commotion". "At the same time", however, "[they] do hold the deep desire to understand the events better, to have a better theoretical knowledge of the problems of the labor movement and the most fundamental questions in economics and politics" (UCP 1922, 1).

The UCP's manifesto warned workers against the use by the bourgeoisie of the term "popular culture", which was but "a refined way to create in [them] political and ideological confusion" and to "prevent them from developing their class consciousness or a better understanding of their revolutionary mission" (ibid). Instead, the UCP proposed to shift the "orientation" toward the "class education" of the proletariat, in which "revolutionary Marxism" would guide the "revolutionary struggle [of the masses] against capitalism" (ibid).

The UCP made a very conscious decision to be an organization "in the margins of all other proletarian organizations", so that instead of being "dedicated to the practical and daily issues of politics", it could carry out its program of proletarian culture "as

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[65] Back in April 1921, the PC had written a manifesto protesting against the control which socialists exercised on these cultural institutions, and demanding that they be open to all workers and to all parties. See "Al proletariado madrileño".

independent[ly] and efficient[ly] as possible" (ibid). Workers from all parties and proletarian organizations were called to join. The goal was to "systematize all isolated individual efforts" in order to respond to the great need of the Spanish proletariat to improve their education and intellectual ability" (ibid).

Clearly, the founders of the UCP believed that political parties were forced to engage in activities which by then had disenchanted the masses and from which it was clear the workers felt disengaged. A working-class Party would eventually find itself caught – just like the PCE had so irremediably been – in the question of whether or not to adopt Parliamentarianism as a political strategy or tactic, regardless of how temporary either one of them was meant to be. The question, however, was a political trap. Indeed if a Communist Party were to join the reformist organizations in Parliament, those workers already converted to communism may still refuse to be co-opted into an ideology which they had just abandoned, making it more difficult for the Party to bring new workers to its cause. On the other hand, if the Party were not to join the reformists, other workers may not understand a decision which would end up further isolating them, and might accuse their leaders of dogmatism, something which would further ostracize the Party. The fact that a proletarian Party could end up facing such a dilemma was the result of one grim fact: the poor level of political education of the masses, who would not be able to understand the Party's move one way or another. This was the problem confronted by the *Grupo Comunista Español* and which the UCP set out to resolve.

An organization independent from all political parties would not need to face such a dilemma, since it could naturally work outside Parliament and all other institutions in the

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[66] See my earlier reference to Meaker's description of the founding of the UCP in the Retiro Park.

arena of national politics. Much more importantly, an organization with a cultural and educational mandate would work on educating the workers for the revolution, thus converting them to the communist cause without any unnecessary political manoeuvres, simply by convincing them that the path toward revolution would be found in revolutionary Marxism and not in bourgeois reformism. The issue of Parliamentarianism would thus be avoided altogether, since workers would join in the anti-reformist struggle guided by their political awareness. At the very least, the education of the masses in revolutionary Marxism would help them understand the reasons why the Party might either embrace or reject such a political tactic at a given time.

The former members of the *Partido Comunista Español* re-organized in the *Grupo Comunista Español* and later founded the *Unión Cultural Proletaria* in order to lead workers in that anti-reformist path. As it resolved the Parliamentarianism/isolation dilemma which the PCE was confronting, the UCP, in fact, provided a way out of the contradictions of the Communist International itself, where the issue had originated. In doing so, it managed to be the best of the two worlds for the frustrated remnants of the original PC. In the spirit of the founding congress of the Comintern and of the PC, the UCP refused to work with reformists and sought the education of workers for revolution. In line with the Third Congress of the Comintern, it aimed at bringing all workers together in a basic United Front, under the wing of communist leaders.

Bourgeois Intellectuals vs. Proletarian Intellectuals

During the 1910s and 1920s, socialist intellectuals believed that the European bourgeoisie should certainly be criticized for leading the continent to war, but as citizens

of a country still immersed in a feudalist regime, they deeply admired the stage which Europeans had reached in their economic and political evolution. Although the European bourgeoisie had not been able "to kill the poisoned virus which was sprouting within its blood", "at least" it had been able to "bring to its ranks great minds who had been capable of transforming natural wealth into products useful for humanity". Although the bourgeoisie had certainly become a "slave" of the political system, it was also moving "on a straight line" toward economic liberation (Llaneza 1914, 16).

Socialist intellectuals believed it was most unfortunate that none of that was happening in Spain. They lamented not only the fact that the Spanish bourgeoisie had not reached the degree of technical and cultural evolution which its European counterpart had, but also that it could, in fact, suffer from such great "mental narrowness" [*estrechez mental*] and "ignorance", in a country where there was as much "intellectual cowardliness" as "shamelessness" (Heráclito el joven 7).

Although socialist intellectuals wanted to unveil the hidden agenda of the bourgeois press and to protest against the abuses of the government and the regime (G. Plaza 1914; Cordero 1914), they admitted that their ultimate goal was to give a "strong push" to the bourgeoisie in order to awaken it from the dream of the *Restauración* and so that it could embrace its true revolutionary political and economic mission (Llaneza 1914, 16). Since socialists did not consider the workers' movement strong enough to lead its own revolution yet, they called on the national bourgeoisie to lead a revolutionary effort "for the salvation of all", so that "the moral and intellectual revolution which [was] beginning to take place in the ranks of the Spanish working class could be matched by another one in the bosom of the Spanish bourgeoisie", a combination which could make

Spain finally "flourish" (ibid). As a result, they appealed to the bourgeois intelligentsia to "quickly get ready to fight, get organized and demonstrate that Spain ha[d] men [sic] who [could] use their energies in something more productive than making noise in bullfights" (Heráclito el joven 7).

On the other hand, although these intellectuals argued they were still "socialists *at heart*", they also believed that only the reformist, bourgeois, and Republican intelligentsia could rescue the Spanish bourgeoisie from its intellectual abandonment ("Presentación y saludos" 1; emphasis in the original). They believed that what the Generations of 1898 and 1914 had already begun needed to be taken further (Heráclito el joven 7). Although they acknowledged their "essential [ideological] differences", they also argued that a "temporary" alliance with them was necessary for the "conquest" of a political regime which would "still be bourgeois" but from which socialists and the Spanish people at large could "benefit" ("Presentación y Saludos" 2). The intellectual regeneration of the country was indeed an "urgent problem", and socialists found the key for that regeneration, once again, in the education of the people, calling on bourgeois intellectuals to take a leadership role in making that education possible (Torrent 1917, 10).

As Antonio Elorza has pointed out, this attitude was clearly in line with the Guedist influence on the Socialist Party. If Marxism was understood as a set of laws designed to explain the inevitable course of human evolution from feudal to proletarian society, "Marxism as a political strategy [was] abandoned for the benefit of a scientific vision" in which intellectuals would "carry out the adjustments between the 'ideal evolution' and the 'social evolution', based on that semi-automatic conception of historical change" (1984, 57). Socialist intellectuals indeed believed their duty was to pave the way

for that historical evolution to take place on its own, and that included making alliances with all progressive social sectors, so that a bourgeois revolution could take place.

Unlike socialist intellectuals, communist leaders of the *Partido Comunista Español* and later the *Unión Cultural Proletaria* rejected all suggestions about the need for a national intellectual regeneration. Instead, they argued that the only thing Spain needed was a revolution which would free the country not only from an outdated feudal system but also from the reformist bourgeoisie which had risen against it. If intellectuals were needed in order to lead the country toward this kind of revolution, they would have to come from the ranks of the proletariat, since bourgeois intellectuals – regardless of how "radical" they could be – would inevitably be infected by the virus of reformism.

Right from its foundation, the *Partido Comunista Español* set out to denounce the intellectual alliance drawn between socialist and bourgeois intellectuals. An article in the PC's official publication, *El Comunista*, classified intellectuals into three categories: those who "moved deeply by social inequality. . . put their lives and their science entirely to the service of revolutionary work"; those who merely "ha[d] a literary perspective on life", since they expressed their indignation in their writing; and those who found in socialism "a shop window for the exhibition of their vanities and a springboard to get political favors". While Bolshevik intellectuals belonged to the first category and a number of European intellectuals like those grouped under *Clarté*[67] or *Die Aktion*[68] to the second, Spanish socialist intellectuals clearly belonged to the third. That was because socialist intellectuals merely "display[ed] their degrees. . . ostentatiously" but brought no ideological or

[67] French cultural group and journal founded by Henri Barbusse in 1919, which was close in ideology to the French Communist Party.
[68] German literary and political journal founded in 1911 by left-wing political journalist Franz Pfemfert.

theoretical improvement to the Party, and some of them even "[knew] less [about political theory] than manual workers themselves". Upon entering the Socialist Party, bourgeois intellectuals had not left behind their democratic and bourgeois education, nor had they "do[ne] away with the prejudices and stupidities of the middle class" (ibid). As a result, the entry of intellectuals into the Socialist Party was bound to result in "the end of the revolutionary spontaneity of the working class" ([Andrade] 1920, 3).[69]

Young communists believed that all "professional" intellectuals were more interested in their own personal ambitions and academic power struggles than in discussing Marxist theory ("El congreso extraordinario" 1). The PC accused all of them "without exception" of being "cowards" and "inconsistent" ("En el mirador" 2), of being "apologists of the bourgeois morale" and of behaving like "intellectual mercenaries" ("Socialista amarillo" 4). As far as the young communists were concerned, the working class had been "deceive[d]" by the petit-bourgeois and bourgeois intellectual elements within the PSOE, and had been "blinded" by some kind of "pernicious idolatry" into following a group of people who were far from defending their interests ("Contestando a inocentes" 2).

Yet the socialist rank-and-file who regularly attended the activities organized in the *Casa del Pueblo* were "enchanted" with the "friends of the workers" who attended cultural acts there regularly (Andrade 1935, 227-8). The language used by *El Socialista* to refer to socialist or bourgeois intellectuals – "our wise comrade Fernando de los Ríos", "our wise comrade Professor Besteiro" – reflected nothing but the "servility" of the "Pablista country bumpkin toward the person of letters", a feeling which may have been

[69] The article appeared in *El Comunista* on 10 May 1920, but in a letter Juan Andrade wrote to G. J. Geers

"apparently sincere" but which also prevented workers from working with "true revolutionary intellectuals" (ibid). While the socialist "bureaucracy" was opening up to "petit-bourgeois intellectuals", all of whom were "precious auxiliaries in the task of controlling the revolutionary spirit of workers", truly revolutionary intellectuals were considered nothing short of "dangerous professional agitator[s]" (ibid).

The quintessential bourgeois-intellectual-turned-socialist was Member of Parliament Fernando de los Ríos. Young communists believed de los Ríos was nothing but a "social climber", a "fool" and a "deserter of all fields and beliefs", who, after having flirted with every possible ideology, came to the workers' movement "when he saw the chance to become a Member of Parliament" ("Adiós al Profesor Ríos" 2; "Miserable profesor burgués"). Their critique, however, was much more than personal. What de los Ríos symbolized and the young communists so viscerally despised were the idealist concepts under which bourgeois intellectuals operated and which openly contradicted the most basic socialist principles. "Freedom" was one of the favorite terms these intellectuals used, "an abstract concept" of bourgeois liberalism, according to the young communists, "a metaphysical concept invented by philosophers who serve[d] bourgeois interests". For the young members of the PC, "[t]o call oneself a socialist and to hold on to a [bourgeois] concept of freedom" could only be the result of the "natural weakness" of "mediocre mind[s]" ("La Internacional Comunista y el Partido Socialista Español" 3).

Yet, young communists were quite aware of the need to bring intellectual and manual workers together, a move which was considered to be the only way to "consolidate. . . a communist regime" (Cardona 1921, 3). The founding documents of the

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on 30 May, he admitted he had written it. The letter is reprinted in Andrade's memoirs (1983, 156).

PC, in fact, revealed that the Party was quite open to the possibility of working with intellectuals, making "no distinction between those who pursued manual or intellectual work" as long as they "agree[d] with the ideology and tactics of the Communist International and accept[ed] its program" ("Proyecto de organización local del Partido Comunista de España" 1).[70]

The leaders of the PC believed that in a society where the "organizing brains" were "disorganized", "isolated" and "scattered", "with no contact either physical or spiritual with the manual proletariat", without any "fraternal link with [communist] sentiments and ideas", the Communist Party had to look for a new generation of intellectuals in the ranks of the proletariat (Cardona 1921, 3). The intellectuals who were to ally with the working class and fight side by side with it for the dictatorship of the proletariat could not come from that group of "privileged" people who had acquired their education by means of social position or money. Instead, they should come from the middle classes or the working class itself, and they should preferably be ordinary people who would make an effort to acquire an education and some degree of culture, and who would then lead their "brothers [sic]" on the same path ("Cultura Proletaria" 4). Those intellectuals would have no interest in becoming "socialist personalit[ies]". Instead, they would be willing to "make sacrifices" and to swear "complete obedience" to the Party (Cardona 1921, 3). The matter was very simple: intellectuals were called to "unite with their fellow oppressed in the struggle against the bourgeoisie". Those who did not follow the call should simply be considered enemies ("Sin propósito de enmienda" 1).

[70] It refers to the *Partido Comunista Español*.

Once the *Partido Comunista Español* had disappeared and its former members had gone through the experience of the *Grupo Comunista Español* – founded on the same desire to destroy the "opportunistic" and "go-getter" bourgeois elements within the unified PCE ("A los obreros comunistas" 2) – the UCP was founded with the same goal of excluding the "professional" "bourgeois" and "idealist" intelligentsia which had already corrupted the PSOE and later the Communist Party itself. Having been former witnesses and critics of the alliance between the PSOE and the reformist intelligentsia, the young communists of the UCP aimed at maintaining their organization in the purest proletarian spirit, thus categorically rejecting all possible "bourgeois or semi-bourgeois elements who under the general rubric of 'intellectuals' may want to penetrate [it] in order to spread democratic bourgeois ideology and reformism" (UCP 1922, 1). The founders of the UCP despised the fact that only a "bunch of self-appointed 'intellectuals' enjoy[ed]. . . the monopoly of proletarian culture" (2). Knowledge, they argued in their manifesto, could not be the prerogative of a few people. Instead, it had to be "spread" among all workers, since all of them longed for it and "had a great desire to know" (ibid).

In line with the promise made by the original PC, the UCP was founded on the idea that only workers could educate workers, that those with a greater disposition should be the first to acquire an education and then help those less prepared (ibid). In order to keep the organization in the hands of the workers, and prevent it from becoming a club for a selected few, the UCP was founded as a "cultural cooperative" in which all activities would be designed and administered by workers. It was believed that only as a cooperative could the organization provide the proletariat with a class education and give

all workers the theoretical tools and the historical perspective they needed in order to intervene in the daily problems of the workers' movement (ibid).

The program of the UCP was an ambitious one, which included a monthtly or bi-monthly magazine on the "theory and practice of the national and international workers' movements", a publication which, free from the influence of all political parties, could "examine all issues of class struggle, the organization of workers and the proletarian revolution. . . *from different points of view*" (ibid; emphasis added). This emphasis on difference is, in fact, proof that the organization was not as "dogmatic" as most scholars have suggested.[71] The program also included conferences, classes and workshops to reach workers not only in the capital city, but also in the provinces, as well as the publication of books by foreign and national authors which the workers could easily afford. In all, the UCP aimed at transforming the "few cents" it was going to receive from each of its members into the "spirit and culture needed to fight against capitalist exploitation and bourgeois domination" (ibid).

It was unlikely, however, that the young communists who founded the UCP could carry out such tremendous intellectual tasks by themselves. When they had founded the *Partido Comunista Español* back in 1920, they had believed they were better prepared theoretically and ideologically than their counterparts from the PCOE, an opinion which the Comintern delegates who were sent to unify them also seemed to share (Andrade 1979, 29). José Antonio Balbontín would say many years later that the young communists' theoretical preparation had not been as great as their enthusiasm (1952,143); but other PC members, like Juan Andrade, would defend their theoretical superiority for

years to come.[72] A closer look at the political background of the two original communist parties, however – both as scissions from the PSOE – does not seem to support the young communists' claim.

Luis Arranz has pointed out how the young communists had made of their "desire for the theoretical renovation of socialism" a reason for "political superiority" and how their focus on political agitation and propaganda had made them "dream of being recognized as the new revolutionary vanguard of the. . . masses". Yet, still according to Arranz, neither the PC nor the PCOE challenged the dichotomy which the PSOE had created between a minimum and a maximum program, or, what was the same, between immediate reformist change and the revolution as a long-term project. In fact, the two communist parties inherited this same contradiction, but the PC radicalized it to the extreme, to the point of completely erasing the possibility of a minimum program. As a result, all political questions which may have been connected with it – the question of which political regime was best suited for Spain, the issue of the nationalities within the Spanish state, an Agrarian Policy, etc.– were completely ignored, as if "the acuteness of the international and national post-war vision and the triumph of the Soviet revolution deprived all those issues of all historical significance", favoring instead "a scheme of pure classist confrontation between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat" for which "only the radical objectives of the maximum program in its Soviet version" were useful (1980, 89).

As a result, neither the PC nor the PCOE was able to make a coherent proposal for the transition toward socialism in the specific conditions of the Spanish political crisis. In

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[71] Tuñón de Lara argued that the UCP's publication, *Comunismo*, published works by Lenin and Bujarin, which may have been a sign, in fact, of the organization's "openness" (1973, 213).
[72] See Andrade's letters to G. J. Geers reproduced in the former's memoirs (1983).

fact, what both the PCOE and the PC inherited from the PSOE was not only this lack of national political analysis but also the "fatalist ideology" behind it, that is, the belief that a few "generic historical laws guaranteed the transition from a minimum program to the triumph of the 'ideal'". Both *Terceristas* and young communists believed in the inevitability of this historical process, "their political action being reduced to persuade the whole of the working class of the value of that formula" (ibid). They saw the crisis of the *Restauración*, the death of the system of rotating parties, the failure of bourgeois reformism, and the proletarian revolution as nothing more than signs of the crisis of the capitalist system. Thus they reduced all of the issues above to a single one: the inevitability of a final confrontation between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, whether that confrontation was going to happen, in the eyes of the PCOE, after a period of Parliamentary reform, or, in the eyes of the PC, through immediate revolutionary action.

This was no strong political background for either one of the parties. The *Partido Comunista Español* had been founded not after a process of political discussion within the Socialist Party, but as a rejection of the "sclerosis" which European and Spanish social-democracy was suffering (Pagés 1977, 12). Even when the older socialists were to leave the Party a year later, it would not be because of disagreements over the analysis of the national situation, let alone a discussion "on the issues of tactics and strategies to use within the Spanish workers' movement" (ibid). According to Juan Andrade, "the Marxist interpretation of the revolution which the Communist International represented" was for the young communists like "the vision of a new world right before their eyes" (1931b, 24). According to historian Pelai Pagès, however, that "new world" was "often assimilated by

way of intuition" and it was a mere "reflection of the passions and desires of emancipation which social-democracy had frustrated" (1977, 13).

When the UCP was founded in 1922, it was caught up between being an heir to this impoverished political analysis and wanting to provide workers with the necessary political education to break away from it. At a most basic level, the UCP sought to provide workers with the kind of political education which would drive them away from reformism. Its program, however, was abstract enough to include the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat as its ultimate goal, but unsophisticated enough to make no reference to the way in which either one of those two things was to take place within Restoration Spain.

If the political background of the UCP was poor, its cultural one was practically non-existant. The original PC may have taken a very clear stand against socialist reformism and bourgeois intellectuals, but it failed to put forward original ideas on other cultural questions. Other than those articles studied above on the need for the political education of the masses, and those criticizing socialist intellectuals, *El Comunista* published only five articles on cultural issues. All of them were obvious reprints of articles written by Soviet authors for Soviet publications, thus making no reference whatsoever to the Spanish national scene. Interestingly, they also arrived at contradictory conclusions. While in two of them it was argued that the proletariat needed to embrace all "previous human knowledge" and build on the previous "works which ha[d] honored humankind" ("Cultura Proletaria"; Polianski 1921, 4), an article on the Russian Proletkul't defended the opposite view, that the October revolution had served to destroy all remnants of bourgeois culture, and that the proletariat had to start anew to build its own ("La prolecultura en

Rusia" 4).[73] The UCP itself argued that the bourgeoisie "not only [had] the financial and industrial but also the cultural capital, the cultural instruments which humanity had been creating and which the proletariat sustained with [its] effort" and that it "used that accumulation of culture and science to spread its ideology" and thus "keep its domination" (UCP 1922, 1). The cultural organization, however, did not specify whether a proletarian culture would be built on the basis of previous bourgeois achievements or it would start anew.

It is precisely because of this lack of political and cultural maturity that the UCP can hardly be compared with the kind of proletarian cultural organizations which were being founded in Europe around the same time – *Clarté* in France; *Die Aktion* in Germany or *Ordine Novo*[74] in Italy – much less with the Soviet Proletkul't. Historian Tuñón de Lara has, in fact, suggested that a comparison between the UCP and the Proletkul't might be an interesting way to fill some of the gaps in the history of early communist initiatives in Spain (1973, 213). I, however, would find such a comparison to be unfounded and purely speculative, given the lack of historical records in order to study and interpret the extent of the UCP's influence on the lives of the Spanish working masses. Indeed, I find it would be quite unfair to compare a short-lived organization founded by young inexperienced communists breaking away from a small, practically leaderless Communist Party, working in clandestine conditions in a feudal country, with a cultural institution

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[73] Other articles on cultural issues published by *El Comunista* included Anatole France and Henri Barbusse's message to Latin American intellectuals and students ("Un mensaje de Anatole France y Henri Barbusse") and a note on the participation of Soviet workers in cultural activities ("Un diálogo sobre la relación de la literatura y la revolución"). The official publications of the unified PCE seemed to care little about cultural issues. Before the foundation of the UCP, *La Antorcha* had only published an article on the Proletkul't ("Proletkult"). Seven months later, when Juan Andrade was back in the Party, *La Antorcha* published his "Los literatos y la revolución" (1922).

[74] Ordine Novo was an early proletarian cultural organization founded in Italy by Antonio Gramsci.

operating under the tutelage of the strongest Communist Party in the world, a Party which had led millions of people toward the first-ever socialist revolution, and which had in its ranks a strong intellectually-prepared leadership. Pumarega, Andrade and their colleagues – being among the brightest of Spanish communist intellectuals – would have at least known the existence of these organizations – especially the Proletkul't – and might have, in fact, tried to emulate them or even imitate them. The UCP's ephemeral life, however, not to mention its sheer struggle to survive, can hardly compare with the lives of the European and Soviet organizations mentioned above.[75]

Although the UCP was born with the most revolutionary intentions of all, the organization lacked coherence, stability and strength. It was not backed up by a party, and it was created as the result of a political dispute and ideological differences within a party, circumstances which made it weak rather than strong. The greatest irony was that it attempted to give the most politically advanced education to the masses and suggested the most revolutionary relationship between intellectuals and the working class, while neither intellectuals nor the working class was on its side. The UCP merely represented the good wishes of a handful of young radical intellectuals who were unwilling to seek an alliance with their bourgeois reformist counterparts and who had, as of yet, no other ally. Although it was postulating the creation of a proletarian culture in Spain, and calling for the emergence of proletarian intellectuals, it was a group without a tradition coming out of a Party without a tradition, going against feudalism and bourgeois reformism at the same time, trying to break through a mass of workers who had not previously been exposed to an anti-reformist political education.

[75] That is, in fact, the reason why I deal with the political origins and the cultural goals of the

Thus, it was isolated from the Party from which it was a schism, it lacked a community of like-minded intellectuals outside the Party, and, as an offshoot of the PCE, it was terribly isolated from the masses themselves. The most revolutionary cultural offer of the time was no more than a number of good intentions on a piece of paper. It would still be a few years before some of the founders of the UCP could find intellectual allies, and could manage to transform those intentions into a new political and cultural practice.

The same year which had seen the birth – and probably the death too – of the Union of Proletarian Culture was the year in which the Comintern held its Fourth Congress (1922). By then, the international organization had to confront a four-year balance which was far from positive: among other things, the revolutions in Hungary and Bavaria had been crushed, all while the European social-democracy had regained some of its strength after the crisis of 1919-1921. The new situation forced the Third International to direct its efforts toward saving and strengthening, at any cost, the only triumph the working class had achieved so far: the October revolution. Thus the Comintern understood that Soviet patriotism and the defense of Russia would not be the duties of Soviet citizens alone, but of all workers of the world, who should feel obliged to support any international alliances into which the Soviet Union might be forced to enter in order to defend itself from its enemies.

At the end of 1922, the Comintern believed that the masses of workers in Europe were reformist, rather than revolutionary. If communist parties were to organize those masses for the revolution, they needed to strengthen themselves first, building a structure

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organization and not with its actual work, which remains unknown and was, most likely, nil.

even more centralized and rigid than before. The most important decision made by members of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern was to change its by-laws, which gave the Comintern's Executive and Central Committee full powers over the organization's national chapters. This move has come down in history as the "bolshevization" of the Communist International, and was to be of great importance in Spain in the coming months.[76]

At the Communist Party's Second Congress, held in late 1922, with all internal opposition apparently gone, Humbert-Droz helped draw a new Central Committee "*de concentración*" [of unity] with the intention of having former members of the PC and PCOE share power equally.[77] The congress' resolutions declared all "internal struggle" had come to an end, giving way to a new era of "communist building" (Padilla 1979, 140), in which the Party would continue working in line with the Fourth Congress of the Comintern, "intensify[ing]" its political work and seeking further influence within the unions (Bullejos 1972, 46; González 1923, 1).

In early 1923, the Comintern urged the PCE to take the final plunge and participate in the upcoming national elections, even though the Party was still deeply divided over the issue, many of its leaders were in prison, and its membership had been radically depleted.[78] Although the Party won no seats in Parliament, its leaders still claimed that the elections had served to "dissipate" all anti-electoral prejudices within the

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[76] For more information on the Fourth Congress of the Comintern, see *Outline History of the Communist International* (1971); Adler, ed. (1983); McDermott and Agnew (1997).

[77] The new Central Committee of the PCE had five centrist members from the former PCOE and five leftists from the original PC, including Juan Andrade.

[78] Following the call, the PCE struck an electoral team made up of former members of the PCOE.

Party and to "affirm its personality as a 'class party' rather than as an 'apolitical sect'" (qtd. in Meaker 1974, 462).[79]

The Second Congress thus seemed to give way to a new era for the Party, one marked by a much-needed ideological unity which could sustain a unified line of action and the exercise of some sort of influence on the masses and on the national political map. None of that, however, would be the case. The original *Partido Comunista Español*, the *Grupo Comunista Español* and the *Unión Cultural Proletaria* had all disappeared, and their rebel tendencies and "leftist" goals had been co-opted into the mainstream Party, but the seeds of deeper political divisions had merely been planted, and would become more obvious in the months to come.

The national situation would also bring new challenges to the Party. The death of the political system of the *Restauración* and the lack of ability on the part of the Monarchy to come up with a government of true unity to replace it, brought to Spain one political crisis after another. As the social war between patrons and workers reached its highest point, the national situation simply was on the verge of collapse.

As Pierre Malerbe has pointed out, the election of a new liberal reformist government led by García Prieto and of a new *Cortes* full of *Regeneracionistas* in April-May 1923 did not bring about any major changes to the political line of the government, although some sort of timid changes were indeed suggested: the reform of the Constitution, the reorientation of Spain's policy in Morocco, a new Agrarian Policy and

[79] See articles on the Second Congress in *La Antorcha* for June and July 1923.

even an investigation into the political and military responsibilities for the Annual massacre (1981, 31-2).[80]

None of those projects, however, would get a chance. In September of that year, a military *coup d'état* brought to an end all political investigations into the Spanish military. As the original blow against the government began to take the form of a full-fledged military dictatorship, it also became clear that a liberal political regeneration of the country had lost its chances for the time being. Under the passive and complacent look of King Alfonso XIII, a military directorate led by General Miguel Primo de Rivera and his second-in-command General Martínez Anido, took the reins of the country. The slow death of the *Ancient Régime* would still have to go through eight more restless years of agony.

[80] Malerbe is a Hispanist historian whose work is mostly published in Spanish. All citations from his work here were found in that language.

CHAPTER THREE
Years of dictatorship, 1923-1931

We should make sure that corpses are really dead.

José Ortega y Gasset[1]

In his manifesto of 13 September 1923, General Miguel Primo de Rivera promised to bring to an end the "immoral" situation Spain was experiencing by providing "peace, order, work and a good administration of the economy", to end the "social indiscipline" which was making work "inefficient" and turning agricultural and industrial production into a "ruin", and to combat "political intrigues", "homicides", "separatist propaganda"[2] and "unpunished communist propaganda".[3]

Primo de Rivera's discourse of political regeneration and renovation brought to his government, if not the support, at least the acquiescence of an exhausted ruling class willing to give the military a chance to bring about some degree of social and political order, and of part of a middle bourgeoisie disappointed in the system, eager to put an end to the political inefficacy and degeneration of the ruling classes above them while controlling the uproar of the working classes below them.[4] As soon as it took power, the Military Directorate dissolved the *Cortes*, brought to a halt all investigations into responsibility for the Annual affair, decreed the suspension of all senior bureaucrats, and

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[1] "Hay que matar bien a los muertos" (1950, 1: 279).
[2] In reference to the aspirations for national independence in Catalonia, where the manifesto was first published.
[3] This manifesto was originally published in all daily newspapers in Barcelona, on 13 September 1923. It is reprinted in Tuñón de Lara coord. (1981, 657-660).
[4] Cassasas Ymbert has pointed out that this bourgeoisie really was the entire middle social spectrum, made up of organizations of employers, professional colleges, merchants' associations, private banks, agrarian organizations, and even the Church (1983, 30).

outlawed Catalonian separatist groups (Cassasas Ymbert 1981, 31). Primo's government also set out to persecute the workers' movement adding more fuel to a "social war" which already seemed to have reached its highest note.[5]

Primo de Rivera's inflated discourse on the dangers of "communist propaganda", however, was not grounded in any greater outbreak of radical workers' activity. Communism, in fact – at least as far as the Communist Party of Spain was concerned – was far from posing any kind of serious challenge to the system. Overall, there was little in the way of a working class movement which needed to be controlled or any kind of special upheaval to suffocate. The dictatorship was not imposed as a way to counteract the growing mobilizations of the working class organizations. Instead, it took advantage of a moment in which these organizations were not at their highest point (25).

A move by communists and anarchists to create a "Committee against the War and the Dictatorship"[6] met with a lukewarm response from the PSOE, whose leadership refused to participate in any kind of pseudo-revolutionary organized workers' scheme in which workers would play the role of easy prey.[7] What began as a refusal to be victimized, however, ended up being full collaboration with the system, after the PSOE accepted a place in Primo's National Assembly[8] and settled for the chance to promote legislative changes which would improve the workers' lot. Primo's government thus had a chance to present itself as "reformist" (Malerbe 1981, 38).

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[5] For more information on Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, see Rial (1986); Andrés-Gallego (1977).
[6] The "*Comité de Acción contra la Guerra y la Dictadura*" was struck the day after the *coup d'état*, with the support of the *Federación Madrileña de los Sindicatos Unicos* [Madrilian Federation of Unions]. The manifesto has been reprinted in Comín Colomer (1967, 1: 164).
[7] *El Socialista* published a manifesto of its own on 22 September. This and other manifestos are reprinted in Andrés-Gallego (1977).
[8] This was the legislative body Primo de Rivera created in order to replace the *Cortes*.

With the PSOE's full collaboration with the system, and a Revolutionary Committee against the dictatorship made out of communists and anarchists alone, the struggle was to take place on the streets again. Given the small size of the Communist Party, however, much of the pressure fell onto anarchist forces, which were the focus of the state's most fierce oppression, especially in Barcelona.[9]

Interestingly enough, it would be in the context of such a grim political and social situation, that the first major original avant-garde generation would appear in Spain, with the presence of the poetic Generation of 1927, which included poets like Rafael Alberti, Federico García Lorca, Vicente Alexaindre and Pedro Salinas, a generation contemporary to other internationally-renowned Spanish artists such as Pablo Picasso, Luis Buñuel or Salvador Dalí.[10] Although in later years some of the members of this generation would become more politicized,[11] during the years of dictatorship they did not concern themselves with national or international politics. The intellectual opposition to the system would be found elsewhere.

Although the relationship between the bourgeois intelligentsia and Primo's regime would very soon reach moments of great tension, the truth is that many intellectuals welcomed the *coup d'état* perhaps not with open joy, but at least with some degree of expectation, since they thought it might help resolve some of the endemic problems Spain had been suffering for such a long time, and especially, the stale way in which political

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[9] For a history and analysis of the Spanish workers' movement during these years, see Meaker (1974); Heywood (1990).

[10] For a critical analysis of this generation, see Geist (1980); Díez de Revenga (1987).

[11] Alberti is often studied as the example of this "journey" of "radicalization", since he began as an avant-garde poet, later got deeply involved in Surrealism, and, by 1930, had changed both his aesthetic and political line, becoming a member of the Communist Party and dedicating the rest of his life until the end of the war to social poetry and political/cultural activism. For further analysis of the journey through

power was being exercised. Fernández Cifuentes has pointed out that when the Military Directorate suggested in its public statement that those who had led the *coup d'état* were willing to open the way to "upright, honest, wise and hard-working men [sic]", many bourgeois intellectuals candidly believed Primo de Rivera was referring to them, and were pleased that finally, their time had come (1982, 247). Soon, however, the Military Directorate revealed its true nature as an "authority grounded in force" and although some intellectuals still chose the path of unconditional support, most of those who had dreamt of becoming the "brains" of that authority ended up being its "most terrible opposition" (ibid). In turn, Primo's government would become quite belligerent toward them. The result was seven long years of misencounters and open confrontations between the bourgeois intelligentsia and the political authorities, with consequences such as the dismissal of Miguel de Unamuno from his post as Dean of the renowned University of Salamanca, the closing of the *Ateneo*, and greater government interference in university affairs. This already tense relationship became a matter of "public order" the moment discontent reached the university campuses and students took to the streets (García Queipo del Llano and Tussel 1988, 535-6).[12]

Although most histories of Spanish intellectual and cultural life under Primo's dictatorship have paid a great deal of attention to the political fight of the bourgeois intelligentsia and of university liberal students, the mid- and late 1920s were also a time in

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Surrealism and political awareness of some members of the Generation of 1927, see García Montero (1988).

[12] For further discussion on the reformist bourgeoisie under Primo's dictatorship, see López Campillo (1974); Villacorta Baños (1980); Becarud and López Campillo (1980). For a history and analysis of the student movement during Primo's dictatorship by his protagonists, see Jiménez de Asúa (1930b) and López Rey (1930).

which another generation of intellectuals emerged: the *generación de avanzada*, [13] as some of its members saw it, or the "Other Generation of 1927", as Víctor Fuentes has called it (1976a, 39). This "generation" was made up of a group of young intellectuals roughly the same age as the poets of the Generation of 1927, but with a much clearer political position both against the hegemony of bourgeois intellectuals, because of their cultural and political reformist project, and against the avant-garde because of its apoliticism. In response to the former, they were the first among their generation to claim that the only alternative to the Monarchy and the system of the *Restauración* was a proletarian revolution. In response to the latter, they sought an alliance of revolutionary intellectuals with the working class in order to make that revolution possible. The UCP had already been dead for quite a while, but it was clear its spirit had continued to live.

These novelists, poets and journalists were not only pioneers of the "*novela social*", a new literary movement which would boom around 1930.[14] They also started to bring issues of proletarian art and culture into the national intellectual debates at a time when those notions were still rejected by the mainstream press.[15] They brought to Spain the best among the post-war European novels of the time,[16] founded their own cultural journals and eventually became leaders in the creation of new publishing houses which spread Marxist theory and the work of Marxist authors. This was a generation of revolutionary intellectuals from the petite bourgeoisie, the middle class and the proletariat,

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[13] This expression was coined by José Díaz Fernández, a novelist of this generation, whose work will be later appraised. In Spanish the expression "*de avanzada*" means "leading" or "in the front". It is thus another term for "avant-garde". Díaz Fernández, however, clearly chose the term "*de avanzada*" so as to differentiate this group of artists from those of the avant-garde, who were widely seen as apolitical.
[14] For further reading on the "Social Novel" movement, see Esteban and Santonja (1987, 1988).
[15] See the editorial in *La Gaceta Literaria* 42 (15 September 1928). For a discussion on the debates on proletarian culture taking place at this time, see Cobb (1981); Aznar (1987b).
[16] Particularly, those of E. Glaeser, Arnold Zweig, and Erich Remarque.

some of whom belonged to the Communist Party. They were pioneers in bringing a Marxist analysis to the organized students' protest on campus and in making the connection between the issues at the universities and the social and political struggle of the entire nation (Fuentes 1980, 51-52). Members of this "Other Generation of 1927" were some of the intellectuals to whom Spanish cultural history is most indebted, names like José Díaz Fernández,[17] Joaquín Arderíus,[18] Rafael Giménez Siles and José Venegas,[19] who were joined by some of those "young kids" who never quite left the scene, such as José Antonio Balbontín and Juan Andrade. Among their most emblematic projects were the short-lived, but seminal journals *Postguerra* and *El estudiante*.[20]

Although the work of a number of scholars has been quite crucial in order to save these intellectuals and their cultural projects from complete oblivion, the fact remains that the relationship between this generation and the Communist Party of Spain has not been sufficiently explored. In a study of the journal *Postguerra* and of the revolutionary publishing houses which were created after its closure, Víctor Fuentes has pointed out that

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[17] A social novelist and journalist, Díaz Fernández (Salamanca 1898-Toulouse 1939) was also a member of the *Partido Republicano Radical Socialista* [Republican Radical Socialist Party]. Collaborator of *Postguerra*, he was later a founding member of the journal *Nueva España*. Díaz Fernández is best known as a literary theorist for his work *El nuevo romanticismo* (Madrid: Zeus, 1930), where he put forward his ideas on a social literature that would embrace the best of the artistic avant-garde and yet be socially committed. Díaz Fernández's best-known novels include *El Blocao* (1928) and *La venus mecánica* (1929). For a study of his artistic and theoretical work, see Boetsch (1985); Soria Olmedo (1988).

[18] Arderíus (Murcia 1885-Mexico 1969) was a well-known political activist and novelist. He was one of the editors of the journal *Nueva España* and president of the *Socorro Rojo Internacional*, the *Asociación de Amigos de la Unión Soviética* and the *Unión Internacional de Escritores y Artistas Revolucionarios*.

[19] Both Rafael Giménez Siles and José Venegas were key people in the cultural activities with which I deal in this chapter, as editors, publishers, writers and activists. Venegas' memoirs, *Andanzas y Recuerdos de España* is a valuable source of information for this period of Spanish cultural history. He also wrote *Los problemas del libro en lengua castellana* (Madrid: Imprenta de Galo Sáez, 1931). On Giménez Siles see: *Rafael Giménez Siles en la estimación de autores que editó y de amigos literatos* (Mexico: 1980).

[20] General information about the "Other Generation of 1927" and *Postguerra* can be found in Aznar (1987b); Boetsch (1985); Fuentes (1976a, 1976b, 1980, 1982); López de Abiada (1983); Jiménez Millán (1980).

the journal was "the work of a quite coherent group of young intellectuals from the middle class and the petite bourgeoisie (Balbontín, Giménez Siles and Díaz Fernández, among others) and from the working class (Juan Andrade, Julián Gorkín, J. Loredo Aparicio), who came together with a common objective: "to bring intellectuals into the social struggle" (1976b, 4). Elsewhere, Fuentes has pointed out that the latter group of "very well prepared" working-class intellectuals – and to it he added the names of José Bullejos, Gabriel León Trilla, Joaquín Maurín, Andrés Nin and Angel Pumarega – "grouped themselves together in the PCE, although they would eventually go into the Party scissions which would take place in the period immediately before the Republic, during the years of 1930 and 1931" (1976a, 38).

Manuel Aznar has also spoken about these young writers as an "intellectual vanguard" of young "organic intellectuals", and he has given a list of names similar to that of Fuentes. Although Aznar has called this group "deeply sectarian and *obrerista*" in its origins, he has also pointed out that it was they who joined a number of intellectuals from the petite bourgeoisie – Balbontín, Díaz Fernández, Giménez Siles, Graco Marsá, Wenceslao Roces and Joaquín Arderíus – in the attempt to create an intellectual bloc of opposition to Primo de Rivera's dictatorship. Aznar has also pointed out that this "vanguard" came together in the journal *Postguerra* (1978, 2:18-19).

What Fuentes and Aznar have said, however, sheds little light on the internal relationships among all the intellectuals they mentioned, even less on the relationship between the PCE and *Postguerra* or *El estudiante*, and none whatsoever on whether communist cultural policy had anything to do with the creation of those cultural projects. Again, the lack of Party documents from this period, as well as the lack of other

meaningful archival material to study the *generación de avanzada* makes the study of this relationship extremely difficult, but there is enough material at least to begin the exploration of the relationships I outlined above. [21] What cannot be known may be deduced, and what cannot be deduced may be suggested. At the very least, gaps may be pointed out and contradictions brought to the foreground. This is what I will endeavor to do in this chapter.

A good starting point may be to offer some clarification as to what both Fuentes and Aznar have said. In the first place, to say that these working-class intellectuals "first grouped themselves in the PCE" and later went into the communist scissions which would take place after 1930 begs some clarification, lest it give the impression that before they left the PCE these intellectuals were some kind of coherent group acting with the full support of the Party. Among the members of the PCE whom Fuentes has mentioned, Juan Andrade and Julián Gorkín were members of the *Agrupación Comunista de Madrid* (which was de facto, the remnants of the original PC and the UCP),[22] while Joaquín Maurín and Andrés Nin were members of the Catalonian chapter of the PCE. Both of those groups stood in opposition to the Executive Committee, of which Bullejos and Trilla were members. Angel Pumarega was in and out of the Party at this time, had repudiated communist ideals publicly in order to get out of jail, and would not rejoin the Party until after 1930. What this means is that although Fuentes is correct in pointing out that these

[21] A few issues of *Postguerra* and *El estudiante* have survived and can be found in libraries in Madrid (the National Library and the *Universidad Complutense* Arts Library respectively). Besides novels and other fictional works by the social novelists of this generation, there is little else in the way of original sources to study their lives and work, especially as it relates to the members of the Communist Party.

[22] The *Agrupación Comunista de Madrid* was a nucleus of opposition to the Party's Central Committee which was active in the late 1920s, and in which Andrade, Luis Portela and other former PC members found an outlet to continue their opposition to the Party's Executive Committee. It was very short-lived and eventually most of its members rejoined the mainstream Party or left it altogether.

young intellectuals would go into scissions of the PCE *after* 1930, it should be taken into account that during the period 1923-1930 they already belonged to different streams of the PCE which confronted each other; streams which were, in fact, the sources of the later offshoots. At no time did any of them participate with the others in any kind of cultural project, whether sponsored by the Party or not.

Further, it should be pointed out that although the Party intellectuals mentioned above participated in one way or another in the cultural or intellectual debates of the time from within and without the communist parties or organizations to which they belonged, not all of them participated in the journal *Postguerra*. Evidence suggests that only Juan Andrade and Julián Gorkín did.[23] The journal *Postguerra* came out of a very different circle, as we shall later see.

Finally, some degree of caution is needed in order to interpret the suggestions made by Fuentes and Aznar. Indeed, to call the "Other Generation of 1927" the "organic intellectuals of the working class", to mention that some of them were members of the Communist Party, and to acknowledge their collaboration in projects like *Postguerra* may give the impression that those three things were part of a whole; that is, that the Communist Party supported a group of revolutionary intellectuals, or even that the Party collaborated in cultural projects like *Postguerra*, both of which conclusions would be, in any case, false. In fact, the communist intellectuals Fuentes and Aznar have mentioned (although I find no evidence to suggest that Bullejos was one, since his professional activity before becoming the Party's Secretary-General was as a postal clerk) did not participate in the projects of the "Other Generation" *as a group*, and belonged to a party

[23] Andrade was in Madrid. Gorkín, however, sent his contributions from Paris.

which had neither a cultural policy nor a program for educational or cultural activities, and inside which they were in opposition to one another not only in reference to cultural matters, but also in terms of national politics.

In the first place, the Communist Party itself lacked both a cultural policy – insofar as policy means a blueprint for action – and a cultural practice. It appears that during the years of military dictatorship, no communist cultural project similar to the *Unión Cultural Proletaria* – that is, a project stemming directly from a communist political group, whether the mainstream Party or a possible scission from it – existed in Spain. During these years, the PCE founded and administered a small publishing house which published original Marxist works as well as essays by Spanish writers on national political issues, but the project lacked as much stability as the Party itself did and was rather small in scope.

That does not mean, however, that the Communist Party remained outside the cultural debates and discussions which were taking place at the time in socialist, anarchist and liberal newspapers, as well as in cultural publications across the country, discussing issues such as the social and political role of intellectuals or the emergence of a proletarian culture. In fact, although the Party did not have a cultural policy per se, it did put forward a few opinions on culture and the intelligentsia, and that was the closest the Party would come at this time to having a cultural discourse. Much of that discourse, however, tainted as it was by Soviet cultural policy and that nation's political critique of its intellectual class, was essentially aimless and, for the most part, remained sketchy and disjointed. This poor collection of cultural opinions was responsible for the Party's lack of activity in the cultural and educational scenes, as much as its internal division, lack of political coherence and

deficient theoretical preparation were responsible for its lack of relevance in the national political map.

Under a new generation of political leaders which would follow the Comintern's turn to the left after its Fifth Congress in 1928, the PCE abandoned its former centrist standpoint and adopted much of what the original PC and the UCP had once argued back in the early 1920s, especially as it related to the critique of bourgeois and socialist intellectuals, as well as to cultural reformism in general. As a result, the Party repeatedly called for intellectuals to emerge from within the ranks of the proletariat, and encouraged them to seek the political alliances which would make their work socially relevant. Yet, the Party paid mere lip service to its own calls, doing nothing for the creation of such alliances and failing as well to tap into the ones which were being done without its intervention. Further, although Party leaders acknowledged that the rank-and-file was poorly prepared, the PCE seemed to be divided into two schools of thought, between those who believed that the knowledge of revolutionary theory was an indispensable tool for the workers' struggle, and those who believed that the struggle could very well continue without intellectual or theoretical study. Unable to find common ground between these positions, as much as between the different revolutionary theories to which Party leaders subscribed, the PCE ended up doing very little for the political education of its members or that of the working class.

These shortcomings, however, were overcome by those members of the Party who, surmounting the Party's endemic lack of activity and contradictory discourse, participated in projects like *Postguerra* and *El Estudiante*. Less dogmatic than the PCE, these journals were willing to believe that a true alliance between the workers and

revolutionary intellectuals from the petite bourgeoisie was not only possible, but also desirable, and that such an alliance would be the only way to offer the proletariat the intellectual leadership it needed. On the other hand, convinced that only intellectual preparation, as well as the study of theory, would make the proletarian revolution possible, both *Postguerra* and *El estudiante* became tools for the intellectual advancement of the working class, a move which was completed when both journals disappeared and its founders invested their intellectual energies in the publishing industry.

Although each of the two journals had contradictions of its own, and although they both had limited influence in society and lived relatively short lives, they were the first communist cultural projects of some importance in Spain after the failed attempt of the UCP, whose goal and purpose they in many ways revived. In fact, they managed to do what the *Unión Cultural Proletaria* had also attempted to do, but for which it had been too short-lived. These journals served, once more, to overcome the deadlock in which the Communist Party found itself between 1923 and 1930, just as it had been the case in 1922.

The Communist Party of Spain under Primo de Rivera's Dictatorship

When Dolores Ibárruri and a team of Party members wrote the first official history of the PCE in 1960, they looked back at the crossroads Europe and Spain had been facing in the late 1920s and concluded that the "tasks" to be undertaken for the advancement of the Spanish working class could only be done "by a new-style Party", "inspired in Marxism-Leninism, and thus able to organize and give direction to the struggle of the masses on their path toward socialism". Such a Party would make no "errors" in finding "the right solution" for each revolutionary stage, it would "see the underlying links among

all social phenomena", "foresee political developments" and "channel the spontaneity of the masses toward the achievement of specific goals", all while teaching the proletariat the original principles of Marxist socialism without. . . opportunistic revision" (3). In hindsight, communist leaders seemed to think that the Communist Party of Spain was able to meet these grandiose goals from 1923 to 1931. The reality, however, was quite different.

The unity achieved by the PCE during its Second Congress had been as fictitious as ever, and merely a year and a half later, in November 1924, the Executive Committee resigned *in masse*. Subsequently, the new leadership team appointed by the Comintern in the summer of 1925, led by José Bullejos, Gabriel León Trilla and Manuel Adame,[24] swiftly considered all "discussion" to have come to an end and that it was time for the Party to "get to work" (Comité Central del Partido Comunista Español[25] 1925, 2).[26] Yet from 1925 to 1931 Party activity would reach levels so low that, by comparison, the previous period would seem to have been three years of frantic political activity. The lack of internal unity – caused by new ideological differences which divided the Party once again into factions – and the lack of activity simply fed each other in a vicious circle, making it almost impossible to discern – probably as much back then as today – which one of them was the cause of the other. As a result, Party activity during those years

[24] From among these three new leaders, Bullejos was, by far, the most influential. Balbontín has argued that the Secretary General was able to operate as such only because of the support of his own comrades and family (1952, 188). (Gabriel León Trilla was Bullejos' brother-in-law). That was the reason why, as Balbontín himself pointed out, the "reduced Bolshevik group" came to be known, thanks to "some ironic anarchists", as *La Sagrada Familia* [The Holy Family] (ibid).

[25] It refers to the *Partido Comunista de España.*

[26] This must have been the time at which a large number of the former members of the PCOE, including Nuñez de Arenas, as well as of the PC, left the Party. Balbontín has argued that, by 1924, most of the original group which had split from the Socialist Party in 1919 to join the Third International had

amounts to little more than an endless succession of open confrontations and disqualifications coming from Madrid, Bilbao and Barcelona toward the Central and Executive Committees in the first of those cities as well as a meaningless succession of trips from Spain to Paris, from Spain to Moscow, or from any of those two foreign capitals back to Spain, all of them in order for those who traveled to discredit those who did not, or to inform the Comintern of crises which the international organization never managed to resolve – trips and meetings, incidentally, of which there are as many different versions as travelers. The confrontations between the Comintern and the Party leadership, or between the Comintern and the opposition, were equally confusing, since they were based on a number of agreements and disagreements of little political coherence. While Comintern delegates kept coming to Spain with the growingly faint hope of finishing up the creation of a Party which never seemed to take the right shape, the Party leadership was often imprisoned, which meant that only the permanence of Bullejos and Trilla gave some kind of coherence to the Party's Executive Committee. Throughout all that, there were periods of no activity whatsoever, except for the miraculous publication of *La Antorcha* – until early 1926 under Juan Andrade's firm leadership – while the entire leadership was either in jail or in exile. Occasionally, the Party had to be run by members of the Communist Party of France. Finally, the Party had to suffer a number of forced expulsions as well as voluntary defections, all of which were quite public and which the leadership could not or did not want to hide.

All of the above is well summed up in the suggestion that the Party had "little importance in terms of numbers, as well as little political and social influence and even less

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"dissolved in the air" (1952, 188). A number of significant people, like Juan Andrade and Luis Portela,

presence in the workers' movement" (Monreal 1984, 25).[27] If during the period 1920-23 there had been two groups within the Party, between 1923 and 1930 there seemed to be a number of political leaders fighting with one another, but no real Party behind them. Something similar has been suggested by Rafael Cruz, who has argued that "the Party was hardly a community of members; it was rather a true apparatus of lonely leaders and agitators", pointing out that the number of affiliates it had previously had (several thousand) gradually dropped in such a way that by the end of this period, in 1930, it would only be a few hundred (1987, 111).[28]

Back in 1919, a pro-Comintern wing had also been founded inside the anarchist-syndicalist *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (CNT). Anarchist-syndicalists believed that the Comintern had made a serious mistake by seeking to establish the roots of communism in Spain within social-democracy, while ignoring the grassroots strength of Spanish anarchism, and, in particular, of the CNT. In December 1922, after the most purely anarchist stream within the CNT had withdrawn its support to the Comintern, as the result of what they perceived to be the growing dictatorship of the Bolshevik Party, the pro-Comintern anarchist-syndicalists organized in the *Comités Sindicalistas Revolucionarios* [Revolutionary Syndicalist Committees, CSRs], which were meant to be active within the ranks of the organization and not to split from it.[29]

When in its 1923 Congress the CNT voted to have the CSRs removed from its ranks, the pro-Comintern organizations were left without a working infrastructure, and

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were still members of the Party, though.

[27] All citations from Monreal are originally found in Spanish.

[28] For further reading on the Communist Party of Spain during Primo's dictatorship, see Alba (1979); Estruch (1978).

thus became politically inefficient. Their official voice, *La Batalla*, managed to survive for a few more months, disappearing when pressure from Catalonian authorities became just impossible to bear.[30] In August 1924, a *Federación Comunista Catalano-Balear* [Catalonian-Balearic Communist Federation, FCCB][31] was founded in Barcelona, and the CSRs gave it a great flux of energy by joining it immediately. In October of that same year, the FCCB (with the CSRs already integrated in it) became the Catalonian chapter of the national PCE,[32] under the leadership of former anarchists Joaquín Maurín and Andrés Nín.[33] The new Catalonian chapter, together with the rebel *Agrupación Comunista de Madrid* (the Party's chapter in the capital city), were soon to become sources of renewed political struggle within the Party.

The Executive Committee of the PCE argued that the origin of the "ideological struggle" between itself and the opposition was "the individualistic load" [*lastre individualista*] of some Party members who were not able "to separate political problems from individuals" (Trilla 1927, 1). Juan Andrade and Joaquín Maurín acknowledged that

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[29] These committees were based on the model of the French pro-Bolshevik Revolutionary Syndicalist Committees.

[30] *La Batalla* started publication in December 1922 and continued until the summer of 1924, when it was outlawed by the military authorities. When it was first published, the paper was presented as "neither communist nor anarchist" but "revolutionary syndicalist" (Durgan 1996, 30).

[31] The term *Catalano-Balear* made reference to two of the regions into which Spain was divided at the time. One of them was Catalonia, in Northeastern Spain, the other the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean. These two regions have historically shared a language and a culture. Today they are two separated *Comunidades Autónomas* within the new political division in the Spanish state.

[32] Further information on the founding and principles of the FCCB can be found in Pagès (1977, 1978); Monreal (1984); Meaker (1974); Estruch (1978).

[33] Maurín and Nín are among the most famous of Spanish communists outside the PCE. A school teacher and a journalist respectively, they were among the best prepared communist intellectuals in the country. After founding the FCCB, they were also the leaders of all other communist groups in opposition to the PCE, including the *Bloque Obrero y Campesino* and the *Oposición Comunista de Izquierda*, and the last of them, the *Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista*. Nín was assassinated while a prisoner during the civil war, and Maurín emigrated to the United States. Maurín's best known work of political analysis is *Revolución y contrarrevolución en España* (reprinted 1966) and Nín's is *Los problemas de la revolución*

Party leaders were not free from "personal ambitions", but they argued that the differences were deeply "political", as the discussions often were about the tactics of the Comintern in Spain (Andrade 1979, 36). Once again, internal political differences cannot be so easily dismissed, and Andrade's and Maurín's statements did point to real political confrontation within the Party.

First and foremost, the Party's Executive Committee was continuously being accused by the opposition of inactivity. The Party Secretary-General blamed the lack of activity on the reality of persecution and political oppression (Bullejos 1972, 55),[34] while Maurín blamed it on the fact that PCE leaders believed the Party was "powerless" and that it should "accept the situation as it was and wait until things could change" (1932, 12). The opposition believed that the Party should still do more to oppose the dictatorship, even if it meant being declared illegal or having to go underground, something they thought would actually strengthen the Party, rather than weaken it ("Manifiesto del Comité Regional" 1).

A second source of disagreement within the PCE was the EC's decision to follow the model of bolshevization imposed by Moscow, after the Fifth Congress of the Comintern. At this congress, the rise of fascism and the participation of social-democrat parties in bourgeois governments were seen as symptoms of the intrinsic weakness of the

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española (reprinted 1971). For further reading on their lives and work, see Víctor Alba's *Dos revolucionarios: Joaquín Maurín y Andrés Nín.* Madrid (Seminarios y Ediciones, 1975).

[34] Although the Communist Party was at first tolerated by the dictatorship and *La Antorcha* was allowed to continue publication, the Military Directorate soon made attempts to co-opt the Party. In Vizcaya, where the *Casas del Pueblo* and the unions were closed because of political repression following the uprisings of August of that year, the Civil Governor called on Pérez Solís and Bullejos and offered them to reopen those institutions in exchange for the Party's written refusal to participate in any kind of violent opposition to the dictatorship (Bullejos 1972, 54). When the Party leaders refused to comply, the Directorate responded by persecuting the Party even more viciously. Many Party members were jailed,

bourgeoisie, which had been forced to resort to them as its only possibility for salvation. The obvious recuperation of capitalism and the consolidation of bourgeois regimes was interpreted as a "democratic-pacifist phase" between two revolutions. The Comintern's official interpretation of the failure of proletarian revolutions in Europe, however, did not acknowledge that believing in the imminence of the world revolution had been mistaken. Instead, it blamed communist parties for not having assimilated the teachings of the Bolshevik revolution in the right way (Estruch 1978, 45).

Since the failure of revolution in Germany was blamed on "a right-wing deviation", the solution was found in a sharp political turn to the left and the "bolshevization" of communist parties. The Comintern put out a call for a United Front to be organized from the rank-and-file. The slogan "for a government of workers and peasants" as a slogan for unity among all working-class parties was considered "an opportunistic right-wing deviation" (46). Social-democrat leadership had to be denounced as traitors, and all cooperation or joint programs with them were to be rejected. The congress also condemned the ultra-leftist tendencies which called for the abandonment of social-democrat and reformist unions altogether and for working exclusively in revolutionary unions. Instead, it resolved that the duty of communists was to stay inside those unions in order to unmask their leaders and bring the masses over to communism.[35]

At the same time, Stalin's fear of Trotsky forced him to carry out a cleansing process inside the Comintern itself as much as within each of the national sections, as an attempt to drive away from communist parties all those suspected of non-compliance.

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many others had to go into exile, their office in Madrid was closed down by the authorities and the Party was declared illegal.

Thus the Comintern and the national parties were left in the hands of those communists who not only had proven their loyalty to the Comintern beyond any doubts, but who could also, in turn, expel from their organizations all those who were under suspicion of not having done so. This "bolshevization" eventually brought about, as Pelai Pagès has suggested, "the rise to positions of leadership of second-rank militants who had not stood out for their political abilities or intelligence", while creating some kind of Party "mystique" based on which "all militants and Party members existed exclusively for [it]" (1978, 99).

This is what happened in the Communist Party of Spain during the five-year-long leadership of the triumvirate made up of José Bullejos, Gabriel León Trilla and Vicente Arroyo, whom Maurín saw as a team of "office clerks" turned "political leaders", a team which brought to the Party all the "vices of bureaucratic degeneration" (1932, 13), a "despot" group which "used all means in their hands to force themselves onto [all those who] refused to accept their outrages" ("Manifiesto del Comité Regional" 1).

The Spanish process of "bolshevization" began with a resolution by the Executive Committee "against the right-wing attempt to destroy the Party and for the re-establishment of discipline within", with the leadership blaming the poor presence of the Communist Party in the national arena on the passivity of former members of the Central Committee, and setting out to put down an "iron discipline" as the "only guarantee for efficient action" as well as to establish "an internal dictatorship" without which no political program would be possible ("Resolución del Comité Ejecutivo" 1). The Party fought any possible internal disagreement on the grounds that division would further weaken the

[35] For further information on the Fifth Congress of the Comintern, see Degras (1956-65); *Outline History*

position of the Party and that any calls for democracy coming from the opposition (which were not truly for "democracy" but for democratic centralism) were of a petit-bourgeois nature (ibid). During the years of military dictatorship, a number of Party members were indeed expelled, while some others left voluntarily. In all, the EC was blamed for "breaking the Party apart" ("Hay que hablar claro" 1).[36]

A third source of dispute between the central Executive Committee and some of its regional federations was the Party's official stand for a government of workers and peasants. In the summer and early fall of 1928, a new congress of the Comintern, its Sixth, was held in Moscow. According to its resolutions, international capitalism had entered its "third phase" in which it would suffer yet greater internal contradictions and would lose the stability gained during its "second stage". The end of this provisional stability would bring about a new radicalization of the masses, as well as new revolutionary attempts. A new slogan of "class against class" was launched, social-democracy was re-named "social-fascism" and was held as the greatest enemy of the workers' revolution.[37]

At the PCE's Third Congress, held in Paris almost immediately after the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, central and regional leaders alike came to seek agreement on a political interpretation of the situation of Spain. They all agreed on the fact that the country was heading toward a bourgeois-democratic revolution, and that the national bourgeoisie, too scared of what that revolution would spark on the proletariat, was unable

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of the Communist International (1971); McDermott and Agnew (1997).

[36] A number of Party members were indeed expelled. When Juan Andrade, editor of *La Antorcha* at the time, refused to publish the list of those who had been, he was removed from his post, an action which gave way to a polemic between himself and Gabriel León Trilla. See Andrade (1926a); Trilla (1926).

to carry it out. As a result, they all agreed that only the proletariat would be able to take that democratic revolution to term. Yet, different interpretations arose over the issue of how the revolution would come about. The Party's central leadership believed what was in crisis was not the archaic structures of a monarchic regime, but the capitalist system, an analysis which led them to believe that the democratic revolution would immediately give way to a socialist revolution and to the democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants in the form of Soviets. The Catalonian Federation, on the other hand, argued that since the Spanish revolution still had to go through a bourgeois stage, the only political tactic at the moment was that of defending a Democratic Federal Republic. However, under pressure from the Comintern's delegate (an Italian communist by the name of Greco), the congress rejected the FCCB's proposal as a "right wing" deviation and the organization was subsequently expelled from the PCE on the grounds that its leaders were "bourgeois agents" and counterrevolutionary elements" ("Acta de la reunión extraordinaria del PCE"; "Cómo se liquida un partido"). Upon being expelled from the Party, the FCCB joined the *Partido Comunista Catalán* [Catalonian Communist Party, PCC][38] and some time later, in 1931, they founded the *Bloc Obrer i Camperol* [Workers' and Peasants' Bloc, BOC].

Yet despite the FCCB's final scission from the Party, other sources of opposition remained, mainly coming from the *Oposición Comunista de Izquierda* [Left-Wing

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[37] For more information on the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, see *Outline History of the Communist International* (1997).

[38] The *Partí Comunista Catalá* had been founded in November 1928 by members of the FCCB and of the nationalist organization *Estat Catalá*, and, at the time the whole of the FCCB joined it, it had around 200 members. The origins of the Party are in a group of young workers who, during 1926 and 1927, had organized a Marxist study group, in a similar fashion to the *Grupo de Estudiantes Socialistas* in Madrid, the *Círculo de Estudios Marxistas*, sponsored by the *Ateneu Enciclopèdic Popular*. The members of these organizations collaborated in a journal called *L'Opinió*, which was in Barcelona what *Postguerra* was in Madrid. In April 1930, the PCC founded its own official publication, *Treball*. On the union of the FCCB and the PCC, see Durgan (1996).

Communist Opposition, OCI].[39] Unlike the FCCB, the OCI focused less on national issues and more on the international situation in which the Spanish Communist Party was only one of the players. That is, their "left-wing" opposition was exercised not so much against the PCE's Executive Committee, as directly against that of the Comintern, and not so much against the international organization's policies as against its tactics and strategies for the international revolution. Indeed, the OCI believed that the Spanish revolution would not take place before the masses were freed from the influence of both anarchism and social-democracy (García Palacios 1931, 61), and that the political program of the PCE was "completely demagogic and disproportionate" (Andrade 1979, 53), given the fact that the Party was led by "charlatans" rather than "real men [sic] of action" (García Palacios 1931, 61).

Although in the internal disagreements exposed above, the Party Secretary-General and his Executive Committee were mostly on the side of the Comintern, the relationship between them during these years was far from smooth. From 1923 until 1930, and even for some time after that, the Comintern and Bullejos' Executive went through a number of political confrontations either because the Spanish Party took its own initiative to react to national events, or because the Comintern changed tactics in a way which the Spanish chapter was too slow to pick up on. The result was bizarre situations in which the PCE was accused of being "opportunistic" when it tried to have a say and even a presence in the domestic scene, and others in which the Comintern would blame the PCE for carrying

[39] The OCI was founded in February 1930 by a group of Spanish Trotskyist communists exiled in Paris, among whom were Julián Gorkín (a collaborator of *Postguerra* and *Nueva España*). In March 1932, it changed its name to *Izquierda Comunista de España*. For a history and analysis of the first years of the OCI, see Andrade (1979); Estruch (1978); Pagès (1977). For a first-hand account of the work of these communists from their exile in Paris, see Gorkín (1975).

out a political program which the international organization had previously called for, but which it no longer supported.

Although the Comintern and the Party leadership continued this love-hate relationship well into the 1930s, the international organization made no official move to dismiss the leaders of its Spanish chapter, probably afraid that by the end of the decade the leaders of the Spanish opposition were already in line with the international opposition to the Comintern, led by Trotsky, Kamenev and Zinoviev against Stalin. Most Spanish scholars have argued, however, that Trotsky did not yet have a group of supporters in Spain, that the country was not participating in the international polemic between supporters of Stalin and those of Trotsky, and that the clearest repercussions of Stalinism in the PCE were to be found in the internal mechanics of the Party (i.e. bolshevization vs. democratic centralism) and not in its ideology (Pagés 1978, 99). As Víctor Alba has suggested, the Spanish opposition was neither anti-Stalinist nor pro-Trotskyist, but *anti-Bullejista* (1979, 95; emphasis added). It is likely, however, that the Comintern preferred to keep a group of polemic, disobedient and second-rank leaders, like Bullejos and Trilla, who were, nevertheless, faithful, rather than taking the risk of having a more intellectually brilliant leadership which could very well have been breeding the Spanish version of Trotskyism. Whatever the case, the fact that the Party was indeed led by this group of bureaucrats while its best intellectuals were being chastised in the opposition, would have clear consequences for its cultural life.

The Communist Party of Spain and the *Generación de Avanzada*

As I have already pointed out, no communist cultural project would come out of the Communist Party of Spain during these years, whether from its mainstream or a dissident group, and the PCE did not seem to have a cultural policy at all, insofar as the word "policy" means a blueprint for action. On the other hand, the Party's cultural discourse was far from straight-forward or coherent, nor was it presented in a way which might be considered to be "official". The Party did not seem to have an official position on cultural or educational issues, nor were these issues dealt with at Party congresses or conferences. The lack of any official declaration on these matters meant that the Party participated in the cultural debates of the time through newspaper articles *exclusively* – all of them published in the official paper *La Antorcha* – and that these writings stood alone, unsustained by an official policy or practice. As a result, the Party did not express a unified view on these matters, but as many as reporters or Party members decided to write on these issues on the pages of the official paper. Thus it is often hard to discern whether what was written on the pages of *La Antorcha* was officially accepted by the Party's Central Committee or was simply the opinion of the writer who presented it, or whether what was being written on culture at one time or another had any relevance for the Party as a whole. There is simply no proof that this was so, while there are many indications to suggest that it was probably not.

Comments on the question of whether a future proletarian culture would be grounded in the previous achievements of the bourgeoisie or whether it would break completely away from it and start anew were often contradictory. The Party's generalized,

unrepentant and seamless critique of bourgeois intellectuals, bourgeois politics and cultural reformism, as well as the attention paid to the Soviet Proletkul't from the pages of *La Antorcha*, may be taken as signs that the Party agreed with the Soviet cultural organization on the idea that the proletariat should start the construction of its own culture from anew. On the other hand, some attention was also paid to Trotsky (in the earlier years, before his confrontation with Stalin), who argued exactly the opposite. *La Antorcha* had even less to say about the Spanish literary scene, merely making a couple of unconnected and brief comments: one on Spanish literature in which Juan Fuenclara wrote about the need for the Spanish novel to stop dealing with the lives of the bourgeoisie and to begin to show a little bit more of "social reality" (1924, 1); another in which the very same was argued about Galician poetry (Orballo 1925, 3). The fact that *La Antorcha* published only two articles on this issue, one of them covering the wide field of Spanish literature as a whole, and the other focusing on the small world of Galician poetry, only came to prove that the Party, in fact, lacked any kind of coherent ideas or policy on this issue, and that these articles appeared on the pages of *La Antorcha* because of the personal interest of the individual journalists who wrote them.

The Alliance of Revolutionary Intellectuals and the Working Class

The Communist Party of Spain inherited a great deal of the aversion toward socialist and bourgeois intellectuals which had emanated from the original *Partido Comunista Español* and the *Unión Cultural Proletaria*. In all fairness, it must be said, however, that although such opposition turned into even more vile attacks after 1923 – of which the favorite victim was still Fernando de los Ríos – it was still clearly ideologically

grounded: amidst insults and dialectical aggressions of a personal nature, there was an ideological critique of bourgeois reformism just as there had been in the PC and the UCP (Artege 1924; Torralva Beci 1924). After 1923, this critique would be to a large extent focused on the language of liberalism, that is, the use of terms such as peace, democracy, and freedom, which, as far as Spanish communists were concerned, were too Hegelian and driven by idealism (Bilbao 1926a, 3; "Retórica liberal").

As an alternative to the model envisioned by bourgeois intellectuals, the cultural writings found in *La Antorcha* unveiled a communist cultural model grounded in two main ideas: one, that the emergence of a proletarian culture would not be possible before that class had first carried out its political revolution, because culture, as a superstructure, was bound to follow the political revolution, and not the other way around; the other, that culture could not and should not be used as a tool for the preparation of the revolution, because in a bourgeois society any kind of education would only serve to spread bourgeois ideology, being thus unable to lead the proletariat toward its liberation. The PCE warned the proletariat that bourgeois and socialist intellectuals were doing no service to the working class by furthering their cultural preparation, and warned them against the dangers of believing in redemption through culture as an alternative to rebellion against the system.

Juan Andrade argued that bourgeois intellectuals held pre-Marxist conceptions of society, by which it was believed that social and economic conditions "depend[ed] on the human spirit", which also led them to believe that "pure art" was independent of the economic structure of society (1926b, 1). Throughout the pages of *La Antorcha*, Party writers defended a more materialistic view, arguing that the elements of a civilization such

as its morale, its educational system and its art should be seen as "products" and not "principles" of the activity of thought, and that such an activity was, in turn, grounded in the social relations among citizens. That is, social and economic reality was believed to create a social discourse which, in turn, created the cultural superstructure (Bilbao 1926b, 3).

If the culture and art of a society were rooted in its economic structure – or as Shanti Andía[40] put it, if "the culture of a people [was] a consequence of the degree of its material progress" (1927b, 4) – it followed that a true proletarian culture and art could only be possible after the proletarian revolution had triumphed and the economic structure had changed for the benefit of the working class, that is, one could not "expect a new art until the dominant class may have proven that it [was] capable of bringing material well-being to society" (Ransome 1924, 3).[41] This was best proven by the experience of the Soviet Union itself, where a true proletarian culture was emerging, free of the economic control of the bourgeoisie. That would be the "true art" of a communist society, under the socialized means of production and the dictatorship of the proletariat (Bilbao 1926b, 1). The slogan found in the pages of *La Antorcha* summed it up quite efficiently: "[a]ction for the revolution, and revolution for education" (Marín 1924, 2).

Since an educational system could hardly pretend to be "neutral" (Andrade 1926b, 1), and it would always aim at shaping the political and social consciousness of citizens (Pérez Solís 1924a, 3), the bourgeois intelligentsia which dominated the Spanish

[40] The name Shanti Andía is probably a pseudonym, since it resembles too closely that of a fictional character created by Pío Baroja, a member of the Generation of 1898, in his masterpiece *Las inquietudes de Shanti Andía.*

[41] Arthur Ransome's article in *La Antorcha* was a reprint of an original article in *The Manchester Guardian*, and translated into Spanish.

educational system and exercised an ideological control over the cultural means of production, could hardly be of service to the working class (Marín 1924, 2). Thus communists dismissed all bourgeois talk about "the need to have workers acquire a solid education within the bourgeois system before the revolution" as the "ridiculous and weeping charlatanism" of a number of "obnoxious and mean" bourgeois intellectuals. The proletariat would only be able to raise its cultural level after its dictatorship had been established (Pérez Solís 1924b, 3).

As a result of both these ideas on culture, repeated calls were made for proletarian intellectuals to come forward in order to serve as intellectual and cultural guides for the proletariat before, during, and after its revolution. A number of writers in *La Antorcha* called for an alliance – "intimate, fraternal, unbreakable" – between manual and intellectual workers, and called that alliance "a great necessity which all workers would celebrate" ("A propósito de los intelectuales" 4). The first condition for such an alliance was that "intellectuals be able to see themselves as workers", that "they bring to an end their immoral flirting with the bourgeoisie. . . and move toward the working people", something which would "strengthen" both of them (ibid).

Communists knew well, however, that the alliance they were calling for was rendered impossible by the persistent attitude of the bourgeois and socialist intelligentsia, "selfish" intellectuals who had not understood their "sacred duty" and for whom "nothing mattered outside their ivory towers" (ibid). Communists did not hide their surprise upon seeing that, despite the liberal vision of the world which socialist and reformist intellectuals embraced, especially despite their desire for democracy (read bourgeois dominance) and social peace (read class harmony), they called themselves "left-wing

intellectuals" while they were unwilling to admit to the existence – let alone the professional merits – of other intellectuals who were much closer to the working class ("Intelectuales a la vainilla" 1). As an anonymous article in *La Antorcha* suggested, however, some communists found no point in discussing who was an intellectual and who was not ("A propósito de los intelectuales" 4). It was much more important to discuss the implications of the co-option bourgeois intellectuals made of the term "left wing", when they simply were the left wing of the bourgeoisie (Pérez Solís 1925a, 1925b). Communists believed the use of this terminology only served to mislead the workers, who were confused when trying to discern who their true cultural leaders were.

Since "the proletariat [had] a great interest in winning intellectuals toward their side", a solution was to seek intellectuals with a proletarian "conscience". The first step was to challenge the bourgeois definition of intellectual as a "wise man [sic]",[42] that is, as a person who was supposed to have a vast knowledge of a particular subject, for such a definition excluded individuals from the working class (Pérez Solís 1925b, 1). Instead, communists suggested that an intellectual could very well be "a man [sic] with a basic culture who may [have] specially cultivate[d] a particular literary or scientific genre", a person who might not even have a university career but instead be "self-educated" (ibid). Pérez Solís was wise to point out that many members of the Communist Party at the time fit that description quite nicely. He believed it was the Party's duty to help them expand their education so that they may, in turn, help their fellow Party members (ibid). Ramón Merino Gracia actually went further to suggest that the Party should create a School of

[42] The original says "*sabio*" which is a masculine form, and thus I have translated it as "man". This issue will come up again in Chapter Five.

Marxist Studies in order to train its working youth, since it was from that group that the new generation of proletarian intellectuals was bound to come (1924, 4).

A Party member by the name of Martín warned that such a "laudable intention" would not be easy to "carry out" only with "good will" or "good wishes", but that it also needed "a rational program" to be implemented with "discipline" (1926, 3). In an article reprinted in *La Antorcha*, Karl Liebknecht argued that if a Communist Party wanted to free the working class from the influence of the bourgeoisie, it had to take action in order to encourage the work of working-class intellectuals, for "the education of the masses. . . was the best defense against the penetration and the influence of dubious elements" (1927, 3).[43]

Since the Party did not undertake the training of proletarian intellectuals, as Pérez Solís and Merino Gracia had called for, one would assume that the very least it was prepared to do was to support the cultural initiatives which working-class intellectuals or those close to the proletariat were pursuing. Six months after the publication of the above article, when the opportunity arose to put into practice this idea of cooperation with the progressive intellectual forces, the words of the German communist seemed to have already fallen on deaf ears. In the summer of 1927, when the first issue of the journal *Postguerra* came out, the Party did not react with a single voice. An anonymous note in *La Antorcha* welcomed the journal as an initiative "which [came] to fill the void which was felt in Spanish literature" and praised the intellectuals who participated in it for not having "made of their minds a merchandise available to the best bidder", and for not being

[43] Liebknecht was co-founder, with Rosa Luxembourg, of the Spartacus League. The reprint of this article does not offer any information as to the original source. This is my translation into English of an original in Spanish.

"corrupted by the flattery. . . of the bourgeoisie". The note suggested that although that group may have been "the smallest in number", it was certainly "the most valuable ideologically" ("Postguerra" 4).

Around the same time, however, another note was published, one which was at best lukewarm. Shanti Andía seemed to be offering a direct response to the question posed by the editors of *Postguerra* in their first editorial – on the participation of intellectuals in the struggle of the working class – when he wrote that although "it would be convenient to have the cooperation of sincere intellectuals", "the working class [could] reach its supreme goals whatever the attitude of intellectuals may be", making it clear that "if it [was] necessary to guide the workers in order to make of them worthy soldiers of their own cause, it [was] even more necessary to offer guidance to the intellectuals themselves. According to Andía, intellectuals were "necessary", but certainly "not essential" (1927a, 3).

This did not mean, Andía was quick to point out, that the Party could not appreciate the sincerity of this particular project, for it did value the courage of those intellectuals who decided to join the proletariat, not out of sentimentalism, but out of a desire to pursue a just political cause (ibid). Still, he warned that "all intellectuals" had a feeling of superiority which led them to believe that they were better than everybody else, even those who spoke of alliances with the working class. Intellectuals, Andía argued, were "arrogant" and "pretentious", and they all wanted their personal beliefs to become "dogmas" (ibid). The working class, however, needed intellectuals whose "intentions" were "pure", who did not see themselves as "wise", being open to learn from those normally considered "ignorant". They had to live with "[s]implicity, modesty, tolerance. . .

lack of vanity, spirit of sacrifice [and] strong judgment" and embody the "perfect synthesis of theory and practice" (ibid).

Andía knew well that his ideal description of intellectuals was one which bourgeois society could hardly live up to, but perhaps he was not realistic enough when he suggested that a communist society would (ibid). In any case, he pointed out that the "first objective" for all intellectuals should be to "proletarize" their way of life – and in that Andía included himself, speaking always in the first person plural – so that they would no longer be considered to be "foreign objects" inside the workers' movement. He called on those intellectuals to seek that "proletarization" not in books, but "through. . . social practice" (ibid).

This kind of mistrust of revolutionary intellectuals was also echoed from very official Party circles, in the words of the Party's second-in-command Gabriel León Trilla, who argued that in a society in which the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat was so strong, the intellectuals of the petite bourgeoisie and the middle classes "w[ould] be dragged by the whirlwind brought about by social struggle" and would end up playing no "decisive role" (1925, 1).

The publication of *El Estudiante* did not even receive contradictory notes: the only note which can be found in *La Antorcha* after the first issue of the student journal appeared in Madrid was both suspicious and paternalistic, presenting its editor and founder Rafael Giménez Siles as a "cultured and enthusiastic young man" who "worshipped too much the leaders of the intellectual petite bourgeoisie" ("*El Estudiante*" 3). The journal was seen as the work of "a group of enthusiastic and idealist young people" for whom it would be very difficult to do anything "beyond literary dilettantism",

since the "intellectual magnates" who were their intellectual models would end up co-opting any other alternative thought (ibid).

The PCE's overall lack of support for projects like *Postguerra* and *El Estudiante* simply came to prove that its fierce opposition to the ideas and cultural practices of bourgeois intellectuals and its repeated calls for middle-class and petit-bourgeois intellectuals to join the proletariat's struggle or for the proletariat itself to encourage intellectual work within its own ranks simply bore no fruit. The PCE was aware of its own problems as much as it was eager for results, but it was also unable to commit itself to the means other organizations had found to carry out revolutionary cultural practice (which would have meant open support for projects like *Postguerra* or *El estudiante*), and even worse, it was unable to come up with alternative means itself.

A mere critique of socialist intellectuals – regardless of how persistent, arrogant or well-founded it may have been – did not help to encourage the emergence of proletarian intellectuals. To foreground personal and collective resentment toward socialist and bourgeois intellectuals in no way could replace Party policy and activity. Mere self-indulgence in the undervalued position in which communist intellectuals perceived themselves to be, given the leading role played by socialist and bourgeois intellectuals, was of no practical use either. "I do not belong to the lineage of illustrious men who have risen up to the top", Andía wrote in 1925,

> either because of their ability or their luck or whatever, and now have made a name for themselves, and think they have the right to look down on everyone else, and get terribly angry when mortals dare criticize their work. . . If at least I could be a socialist. . . I could write – even if it were with worse syntax. . . than that of a know-it-all cook – magnificent articles, beautifully paid, in the great papers which defend democracy . . . But, oh, dear! I have

> the misfortune of being a communist, a terrible condition if one wanted to have a place in the local council, not to mention in the government cabinet. . . But who could have possibly thought of staying outside the honorable circle of such honest and good people? . . . (3).

Andía's resentment certainly touched on a real issue, namely, the lack of a communist intelligentsia with a real presence in the country. The Communist Party could hardly be considered responsible for such a fact – which was more the result, as it has already been discussed, of the poor Marxist tradition in the country and the political conditions in which the Party had been born. Yet the Party could certainly be blamed for doing nothing to seek the alliance of revolutionary and proletarian intellectuals it so actively demanded in its discourse. If proletarian intellectuals did not exist, the Party was responsible for doing nothing to train them. Yet the Party offered no discussion as to who those intellectuals might be, where they could be found, what the workers could do to seek them out, what the intellectuals themselves could do to seek out the workers, or what sort of cultural projects the Party would be willing to design, organize and support. It further lacked any kind of official policy on how to encourage the training of proletarian intellectuals, or on how to aid whatever cultural projects those intellectuals might pursue. As a result, the Party's call to middle-class and petit-bourgeois intellectuals to join the proletarian revolution was an empty statement, while the effort to bring revolutionary intellectuals and the working class together was done by the revolutionary intelligentsia working outside the PCE.

Postguerra, El estudiante and the Alliance of Revolutionary Intellectuals

In the mid- and late 1920s, a group of young intellectuals came together in a *tertulia* [literary circle] in Madrid's *Café Savoia*.[44] Unlike the bourgeois *tertulias* which were already well known at the time and which so deeply marked the literary and cultural activity of the capital city during those years, this one brought together a number of remarkable young intellectuals from a variety of professional backgrounds, social strata (from the proletariat to the petite bourgeoisie) and political ideologies. They were from the middle class and petite bourgeoisie (José Antonio Balbontín, Rafael Giménez Siles, José Díaz Fernández, Joaquín Arderíus and José Venegas), from the haute bourgeoisie (Justino Azcárate), and from the working class (Juan Andrade, Julián Gorkín and J. Loredo Aparicio). Azcárate was a Republican, Venegas and Díaz Fernández Radical-Socialists (the latter would later be an MP for the Radical-Socialist Party); Balbontín had been a member of the *Grupo de Estudiantes Socialistas* who had not joined the PC, but would later join the PCE; Arderíus was a communist, though he would not join the Party until 1930, and Giménez Siles may be considered a "fellow traveler". Andrade and Gorkín were active members of the Communist Party at the time, although first in the *Agrupación Comunista de Madrid* and later in the *Oposición Comunista de Izquierda*, that is, always in opposition to the mainstream Party. With the blood of these young revolutionary talents, the circle at the *Café Savoia* was but a hotbed of political and cultural activity. It was home, indeed, to the very best and the very brightest among those

[44] In his memoirs, José Venegas indicated this Café was located in the hallway of the Teatro Apolo, a building which still exists in Madrid. See Venegas (1943, 128).

whom Fuentes has called "the Other Generation of 1927", and the birthplace of the journal *Postguerra*.[45]

In hindsight, some of the members of the *Savoia* circle might have seen themselves as "a bunch of youths with literary and metaphysical aspirations rather than true revolutionary impetus" (Balbontín 1952, 187) or as a group of "students" with "pseudo-communist tendencies" [*tendencias comunistoides*] (Venegas 1943, 129); but, at the time, they set out to accomplish a task and to accomplish it seriously. Indeed what these "youths" and "students" aimed at was nothing less than breaking the gap between the intellectuals and the working class.

Postguerra set out to accomplish that task in two different ways: one by emphasizing the common political and economic interests of intellectuals and workers in a capitalist system which oppressed them both; the other, by embracing the very point of view of the working class and thus pursuing a critique of bourgeois society, both politically and culturally.

The *Postguerra* group was fully aware that capitalism had managed to attract to itself many intellectual elements, and that workers had learnt to feel an instinctive lack of trust toward them. Yet the group also believed that both intellectuals and workers faced similar problems in capitalist society and could even be said to play complementary roles.

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[45] *Postguerra* was published between the years of 1927 and 1928 by the group of revolutionary intellectuals and students of the *Savoia* circle. Venegas described the journal as one of "pseudocommunist tendencies" (1943, 129). In a letter to G. J. Geers, Juan Andrade acknowledged that the journal was "bad" because the group did not have people who were "well-informed about current events" and thus it was more a "promise" than a "reality". This letter is reprinted in Andrade (1983, 178-179). Similar journals in other cities were *Revista Popular* in Córdoba, which *Postguerra* advertised on its pages, and the Catalonian bi-monthly *L'Opinió*, both of which, according to Maurín were "également sympathisante communiste, mais sans aucun contact avec le Parti" (qtd. in Caudet 1993, 122). For first-hand stories on the creation of the *Savoia* circle and the difficulties (financial and otherwise) of publishing *Postguerra*, see Venegas (1943).

The journal aimed at revealing, first, that intellectuals were forced to sell their labor in capitalist society just as much as workers were, and that, as a result, intellectuals should also rebel and become leaders for change, and, second, that the proletariat needed intellectuals for the ideological and theoretical tasks required in order to carry out its historical mission ("Post-guerra" June 1927: 1).

Yet the group was quite conscious of the fact that the attitude of Spanish intellectuals toward the working class had historically been one of paternalism. As if the editors of the journal had made the attempt to answer directly the PCE's concern about the political commitment of non-proletarian intellectuals, they promised not to be "indifferent to whatever affect[ed] the working class", and told their readers that they should not believe that "[the journal's] desire to defend the proletariat [was] merely humanitarian" ("El problema de la unidad sindical" 1). "Far from this", they argued, "we are side by side with the workers because we have the same aspiration: we all wish to have an economic and social system in which we could all be producers, where there would not be exploiters and exploited" (ibid).[46]

Postguerra wanted to attract the kind of intellectual who would not only be interested in social issues, but who would also participate actively in them. The journal called for the participation of intellectuals in the social struggle, demanding they "seriously study the science of the proletariat", be fully dedicated to "defend the economic interests of all workers and, in particular, get ready to fight bourgeois and other reactionary influences in literature and art" (Fuentes 1976b, 39).

[46] As Gonzalo Santonja has suggested, the kind of alliance these young intellectuals sought may have been somewhat unrealistic, insofar as it counted on a "solid, strong and able" workers' movement which simply did not exist in Spain at the time (1986, 113).

Postguerra was, to a large extent, *about* this alliance between the revolutionary intelligentsia and the working class, that is, about the reasons why it made sense to pursue it and about the ways in which it could become a reality. The journal, however, was much more than an outlet for an apologia of such an alliance; it was, in fact, an example of it, not only because the journal's team exemplified it with its mixture of petit-bourgeois and working-class intellectuals, but because that team, as a whole, assumed the subject position of the proletariat, setting out to do what they were urging others to do. In that respect, *Postguerra*'s voice had no shadow of ambiguity.

Postguerra put forward a fierce critique of the bourgeois intelligentsia and of the language of reformism. *Postguerra* believed there were two classes of intellectuals in what they saw as the "varied fauna of Spanish socialism": one was the "pure, abstract, almost ethereal" type, of which, not surprisingly, Fernando de los Ríos was the model; the other was the "nomadic intellectuals" which had managed to move up the ladder in order to occupy prominent places in the state bureaucracy, all of whom were dedicated to the kind of "socio-historical or socio-philosophical speculation" by which notions as politically and ideologically different as Parliamentary Democracy and class struggle could actually be found to have similar meanings ("Polémica. Silueta conocida" 4).[47]

Just like *La Antorcha* was doing during the same period, *Postguerra* knew how to combine a coercive and sarcastic language with a real critique of the ideology which socialist intellectuals were actually spreading in their works. In his book *Intelectuales y acción*, bourgeois historian Alvaro de Albornoz had openly accused the "ignoble" and "reactionary" haute bourgeoisie and the intellectuals who served it of actually being a

hindrance to Spain's historical evolution toward a progressive regime. In a review of this book, *Postguerra* pointed out that what the haute bourgeoisie and its intellectuals had done was not much different from what the bourgeois reformist intelligentsia was presently doing ("Intelectuales y acción" 14). While bourgeois intellectuals argued that human justice could not be achieved without freedom and that the only road to freedom was democracy, the editors of *Postguerra* pointed out that justice "based on private property, with the means of production in the hands of the landowner, and with industry owned by big business" was not being true to its name. Indeed, as the editors of the journal argued in response to Albornoz, "it [was] not possible to think about the achievement of Justice without having first managed to merge all classes into a single productive class" (ibid).

Postguerra's critique of the intelligentsia was no isolated stand, for the journal moved from there to a critique of bourgeois politics, beginning with a merciless critique of historical republicanism and its attempt to mobilize the whole of the people with the only goal of establishing a bourgeois Republic which would not bring about any meaningful change in the social and economic structure ("La conmemoración republicana" 1). That critique was followed by an equally strong attack on both modern republicanism and socialism, whose "idyllic program" of peace and freedom had little to do with the most urgent workers' demands (ibid). *Postguerra* believed that the Spanish working class had no need for any kind of abstract political freedom, but for "economic freedom", which was nothing less than freedom from the salaries which "keep them in slavery" (ibid). A democratic system would hardly guarantee such freedom, since it could still very well be

[47] Similar argument found in "Liberalismo y Socialismo". For *Postguerra*'s attacks on Ortega y Gasset,

grounded in social injustice (ibid). In a similar vein, *Postguerra* argued that to identify the word "democracy" with a bourgeois parliamentary system was but a misnomer, since such a system hardly allowed for "the participation of people or the masses in the government" of the nation ("La crisis del régimen parlamentario" 9). The journal criticized the attempts made by the international reformist bourgeoisie to create organizations such as the League of Nations, which would merely serve to defend the economic interests of the ruling classes or to defend the imperialist greed of developed nations ("La Sociedad de Naciones" 2-3).

Taking the side of the proletariat, however, meant much more than opposing the reformist bourgeois intelligentsia and their liberal vision of the world, it also meant going right into workers' issues. *Postguerra* hardly shunned away from doing that, openly demanding a number of "temporary" improvements for workers, including salary raises, the institution of a minimum wage, social security, unemployment insurance financed both by companies and government, the right to unionize, and full amnesty for all victims of political repression, all that while protesting against international capitalism, international political repression, imperialism, and new military laws ("Editoriales"; "El primero de mayo").[48] *Postguerra*, in fact, made a bold move, taking it upon itself to be the spokesperson for labor unity, which they thought was not just feasible, but also indispensable, since workers, regardless of their different political ideas, were still a single class of producers with the same economic interests to defend. [49]

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see Venegas (1927).

[48] See the whole issue published on the occasion of 1 May 1928.

[49] See "El congreso de la UGT y la unidad sindical"; "El problema de la unidad sindical y las masas obreras"; and "Historia sobre la Semana Internacional de la Mujer".

Although this kind of political analysis spread over the pages of *Postguerra*, the journal found no better proof of the decadence of bourgeois society than bourgeois art. *Postguerra* denounced bourgeois theatre and cinema as representative in form and content of the material, political and moral decadence of bourgeois society and the capitalist system which sustained it. The film reviews published in *Postguerra* revealed the propagandistic nature of bourgeois cinema, where plots and "outcome[s]" were completely "in line" with the "established bourgeois morale" (Méndez 1927, 11). Part of that "morale" was to present a world without conflict, a society of "wonderful simplicity" where there were no "economic or political complications", where everything was reduced to the "good intentions" of the "lords of capital" (ibid). *Postguerra* praised artistic production with social content, whether it was coming from Chaplin's "irreverence" and "social satire" ("Charlie Chaplin, artista genial" 3) or from the music of artists who had taken a social stand, like Manuel de Falla or Ernesto Halfter (Perucho 1928, 19). In the same vein, the journal borrowed Henri Barbusse's words to announce a new kind of "proletarian theatre which would one day be possible also in Spain, a theatre which "[would] attack [bourgeois] vices [and] customs", not "just for fun", but in order to "destroy" them (1927, 10). Just like revolution itself, revolutionary theatre would "build upon the ruins" of bourgeois society.

Postguerra set out to demystify avant-garde art and everything else which could fall under the category of "dehumanized"[50] prose and poetry, first, by pointing out its ideological origins and identifying it with the reformist bourgeoisie, and, second, by looking at its political implications. The ideological origins of the avant-garde were found

in Ortega y Gasset's theory of "dehumanized" art. According to Balbontín, Ortega's theory might at first have looked like a mere definition of art as "dehumanized, intellectualist, ironic. . . art for the minority, unavailable to the masses" (Balbontín 1927c, 14). What that theory was really doing, however, was "metaphorically" and "hypocritically" stating that "the principle of the equality of men [sic] as much in art as in politics [was] nothing but an unbearable myth" (15). Balbontín argued that Ortega y Gasset himself, as well as his "illusory metaphysical freedom" and his theory of dehumanized art were "slaves" of the bourgeois economy, and, "under the apparently harmless cover-up of pure aestheticism", both were "enemies of the new democracy", "retrograde forces. . . as refined as terrible" (14). *Postguerra* did not hesitate to link this "dehumanized" avant-garde art with the incipient ideology of fascism, since it was an art which only served the interests of the ruling classes.[51]

The boldest suggestion the journal made about artistic issues, however, was that the critique of avant-garde art and literature did in no way mean that artistic innovation and political commitment were incompatible. In fact, before the 1930s boom of the social novel and of Social Realism,[52] and before the official proclamation of the death of the avant-garde – all of which were going to take place in 1930 – *Postguerra* was already the breeding ground for the theories on *literatura de avanzada* – first put forward by Díaz

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[50] This term was coined by Ortega y Gasset, to speak of avant-garde literature, in his classic *La deshumanización del arte* (1925).

[51] See also "Marinetti y la quiebra del futurismo"; "Vanguardistas trepadores y arte nuevo".

[52] Spanish communist writers never cared much for Socialist Realism, though they spoke of "Social Realism", of "dialectical realism" and of "materialist realism". Ramón J. Sender argued that what made "bourgeois realism" different from "materialist realism" was that the latter was analytical and critical, it conceived of reality dialectically and not idealistically, as part of an ongoing process of change. See Sender (1936).

Fernández – an attempt to bring together the artistic innovation of the avant-garde and the political commitment of social literature.[53]

Díaz Fernández thought that only the avant-garde carried within it the seeds of renovation which could very well transform it into proletarian art, since it fully erased all artistic elements which could be considered *passé*, opening the door for newer ones. In a new art *de avanzada*, "formal experimentation could be combined with a new sensibility and the spirit of the new democracy of the proletarian masses" (Fuentes 1980, 54-55). As López de Abiada has pointed out, Díaz Fernández thought the refined avant-garde style, with its "throbbing and fragmentary style" could best serve to reflect the social problems of the time (1980, 1). The novel should be an instrument to analyze society and to contribute to its transformation, revealing "the mechanisms which made possible and perpetuated oppression and injustice" (Esteban and Santonja 1988, 11). Generally, avant-garde art should manage to keep formal experimentation and still be understood by the masses.

In its attempt to break through the barriers which had historically separated intellectuals from the working class, *Postguerra* was never alone, since it was joined by a like-minded journal (edited too by members of the *Savoia* circle) which would take the same political and cultural concerns to one of the basic grounds of intellectual life: the university campuses.

In his study of the early life of *El estudiante* [54]– founded by Wenceslao Roces[55] in the University of Salamanca – Francisco de Luis has pointed out that the journal was the

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[53] In *Postguerra*, see Díaz Fernández's "Acerca del arte nuevo" and González Fernández's "Volvamos a lo humano". Díaz Fernández later expanded on these ideas in his seminal work *El nuevo romanticismo* (Madrid: Zeus, 1930).

work of a "restless and reformist youth" who analyzed issues like the incorporation of women in post-secondary education, academic freedom, or the participation of students in academic life, all of them from a clear "reformist and democratic stand" (1994, 288-9). Despite a complete turnover in the editorial team, the journal began its second epoch in Madrid still on a very clear liberal note. In fact, judging by some of the articles published in the first issues of *El Estudiante*, the PCE may have been right in being so cautious about the journal, and in criticizing its editors for paying too much tribute to or even worshipping the leaders of the intellectual bourgeoisie.

Although it started on a liberal note, *El estudiante* soon took more radical stands. If *Postguerra* had been an alliance of petit-bourgeois and working-class intellectuals who aimed at allying with the working class and rejecting bourgeois reformism, *El estudiante* played a similar role on university campuses. In Madrid, both the journal and the political movement behind it, represented the only left-wing alternative to the reformist liberal student movement, which, in turn, had been born as an alternative to the widespread apoliticism of university students and the *Asociación de Estudiantes Católicos* [Association of Catholic Students, AEC] which represented them. Blaming the AEC as much as the "old and decrepit social order" which the organization was part of, for the pitiful state of the University and for the "death of the Spanish soul" (Ben Ami 1991,

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[54] *El estudiante* was a student journal originally founded by Wenceslao Roces in the university city of Salamanca in May 1925. The journal only managed to publish three issues in that city and in the summer of that year it moved to Madrid, where Balbontín and Giménez Siles took over as editors. The journal survived in the capital city for six months, from December 1925 to May 1926. For a study of the journal, see de Luis (1994).

[55] Roces (Asturias 1897) studied in Germany in the late 1910s and in 1923 became a professor of Roman Law, a position from which he stepped down in 1929, when the *Universidad Central* was closed down by the political authorities. He was the Literary Director of the publishing house *Cenit* and a prominent editor and translator. He joined the Communist Party in 1930, and, during the years of civil war, he was General Director of Primary Studies in the Popular Front's Ministry of Public Instruction.

24),[56] new student organizations such as the *Federación Universitaria Escolar* [Federation of University Students, FUE], the *Unión Liberal de Estudiantes* [Union of Liberal Students, ULE] and the *Liga de Educación Social* [The League for Social Education, LES], proclaimed themselves to be heirs of nineteenth-century liberalism – although they still felt they had to revise it – believing the Spanish University had always been "open to generous and progressive ideals" and that students had naturally been "liberals" (González López 1931, 16). Clearly in line with the reformist bourgeoisie, these groups mixed socialism with "democratic liberalism" and openly rejected what they saw as the "phantom" of communism ("De la nueva generación" 28 June 1928, 3).[57]

Probably influenced by the bourgeois model of *Escuela Unificada*,[58] these students envisioned their University as an open place of study for all those who were "thirsty for knowledge" and wanted to "cultivate their intelligence", which was a "natural talent" and not a class prerogative. The LES lamented that little had been done in Spain in terms of popular education and culture, and they hoped that in the near future university students and intellectuals would be "in touch with the people" in order to "graciously transfer to them [their] knowledge and experience" ("De la nueva generación" 27 September 1928, 4). In order to do that, they thought it was necessary to offer a number of "non-scientific" and "non-academic" general courses which could "awaken the curiosity and the interest of the working class" (ibid).

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[56] All citations from Ben Ami originally found in Spanish.
[57] "De la nueva generación" was the name of a permanent column written by liberal students in *La Libertad*. The members of the *Liga de Educación Social* had their own column, entitled "*Aire Libre*", in *El Liberal*.
[58] See Chapter One.

In clear opposition to what these groups represented, *El Estudiante* brought to university campuses the idea that liberalism had been "definitely buried" the day Primo de Rivera had come to power, because of "its lack of orientation, its stupid mistakes and its cowardliness" ("Editorial" 10 January 1926: 1). While original revolutionary liberalism had "lived and died for freedom" with a "most honest abnegation, generous ideals [and] hopeful innocence", contemporary liberals – and among them, most notoriously, liberal intellectuals – simply showed a "disastrously great ignorance of the socio-economic bases of modern society" ("La efemérides de hoy" 1). The student journal did not want to be a "pulpit for beautiful idealist doctrines" of the kind the reformist bourgeoisie was spreading, nor did it want to be identified with that "priestly class to which Spanish intellectuals belong[ed]", a "nest of selfishness, cowardliness and pettiness, a flock of buffoons more or less philosophical", who had but "buried" the hope of the working class. To overcome the confusion in ideology, *El estudiante* also set out to reveal the counter-revolutionary nature of the language with which the bourgeois intelligentsia had taken workers into a dream of freedom and democracy. For the editors of the student journal, it was "property" and not "freedom" which should be of concern to students and workers (ibid). Further, to overcome the separation between intellectuals and the working class, the journal called on the university youth to work side by side with the proletariat, to "correct the mistake[s] made by [the] hopeless Republicans" and to search "at any cost" for close contact between students and workers in "fraternal comradeship" (ibid).

El estudiante would seek that union by rejecting liberalism and embracing socialism, but most notoriously by getting involved in actual political work on campus, in order to awaken the intellectual youth to the problems of capitalist society and of the

working class. The journal's open critique of liberalism and its gradual opening up toward Soviet socialism seemed to have driven the Catholic Student Federation to call the journal's ideas "evil" and argue that they went "against norms of morality and life normally accepted by common men [sic] of all tendencies". This statement was published by *El Estudiante* in its issue of 28 February 1926 (3), together with a note which made it clear that the journal felt "great satisfaction" upon hearing "this alarm from those who had taken it upon themselves to safeguard the eternal health of that tender and inexperienced student flock" (ibid). By April, the journal seemed to have lost some of its former self-restraint and made it clear that it believed "the dictatorship of the proletariat . . . ha[d] saved all of Russia" (Balbontín 1926, 11).

Although this was the first time that a defense of the proletariat and a call for students to join the working-class struggle were made, it is clear that while they had to be extremely careful about what they published in the pages of their journal, Balbontín's group was also working toward the same goals through direct political activism inside the university, putting forward the same political analysis which the pages of *El Estudiante* could only suggest.

It was obvious as well that the journal, just like all other journals of the time, suffered severe censorship before publication, which prevented its writers from expressing their political ideas as clearly as they would have wanted. On one occasion, Balbontín suggested that if in the nineteenth century Romantic writer Larra had said, "That which cannot be said, should not be said", *El Estudiante* thought that "[w]hatever must be said, should be said. . . even if it is by signs" ("Abogados, abogadismo y ciudadanía" 6).

Even before the above editorial was published, on 24 January the journal editors had already suggested they were not satisfied with the results their publication was achieving. Interestingly, they began this self-critique by pointing out that in the previous days and weeks other members of the University community had reproached *El estudiante* "its obvious sympathy. . . toward the proletariat" ("Comentando nuestra labor" 1). Yet the first time the word "proletariat" or "working class" had been fully spelled out in the journal would be a month later in the editorial already discussed. "We want to take this opportunity to reiterate our principles", the January editorial continued, but the journal itself had little to "reiterate" if it had not discussed these issues before. This proves that their direct political action on campus was further advanced than their work in their journal and that such action did, in fact, have a much greater effect than their written words. This suggestion is reinforced by the rest of the editorial, in which the editors suggest they were not satisfied with the result of their journal, which is "constantly cut down, reaching the public with a muffled voice, which is apparently acquiescent", something which was "contrary to [their] will" (ibid). Despite these limitations, however, *El estudiante* continued to pursue the alliance of students and the working class via its intellectual work as much as its political activism.

Questions of Theory and Practice

As we have already seen, neither the Communist Party leadership nor its rank-and-file had a solid theoretical background in Marxist theory. The communist opposition blamed this lack of background on the process of "bolshevization" the Party had undergone in the mid-1920s, which had removed the best-prepared Party members from

leadership positions. On the other hand, Party members themselves acknowledged their lack of preparation, as we shall see in a moment, although they took little action to make changes.

Scholars have often found the origins of this lack of preparation in the fact that the first communists – whether founders of the PC or of the PCOE – came originally from the PSOE, a party whose understanding of Marxist theory, as we saw in Chapter Two, was rather simplistic and whose original contribution to it was nil. It has also been suggested that this lack of theoretical preparation was the result not so much of the common origin of them all, but actually of the diverse political currents from which they came, from socialist reformism to revolutionary Marxism to anarchism (Pagès 1977, 11). If the theoretical preparation of Party members was poor, that of the unorganized working class was truly non-existant. For both groups, this lack became even more critical during the years of military dictatorship.

Party Secretary-General José Bullejos was leader among those who believed in the Leninist motto that "without revolutionary theory there would be no revolutionary movement" (1926a, 1). In fact, he was the first to admit that "even a most superficial look at the PCE made it clear that one of the Party's greatest shortcomings was the lack of leadership with a solid political education and strong theoretical training" (ibid). According to Bullejos, "thirty years of socialist action" had failed to give the masses "not only a theoretical training", but even a "knowledge of the most essential Marxist principles" (ibid), because, among other reasons, "the scientific foundations. . . of Marxism [were] completely foreign to the leadership of the Spanish workers' movement" (ibid). As Bullejos pointed out, however, the movement could hardly be kept by "enthusiasm,

abnegation and faith" (ibid). What was needed was "the right understanding of the most important problems in the class struggle, to have a thorough knowledge of the path where one [was] walking" (ibid). Bullejos immediately clarified, however, that he was not calling for "clerk theoreticians" or for "philosophers", but for "Party members who [could] acquire a solid [theoretical] preparation in order to put it into practice in [their] social struggle" (ibid). According to him, that should be done by going to the very original sources of Marxism.

The call to return to those original sources led EC member Merino Gracia to call for the creation of a School of Marxist Studies, a school whose goal would be to train a group of proletarian intellectuals who would then take it upon themselves to share their knowledge with their fellow Party members as well as with the working class in general. As a foundation to build such a school, the Party's publishing houses operating out of the capital city might be a good starting point, but Merino Gracia pointed out that they were hardly enough (1924, 4). The training of communist intellectuals needed much more than that, and his call was quite specific about it. He wanted to see bookstores, and once they had the books, they would need to look for teachers, then organize conferences, until the School of Marxist Studies could be a reality (ibid).

Bullejos' acknowledgement of the Party's theoretical shortcomings and Merino Gracia's call for books, teachers and conferences, may have been the closest thing the Party had during those years to an educational program for the political education of its members. Needless to say, none of it materialized except in a couple of publishing houses which were operated under severe political pressure from outside and no less severe financial restrictions from inside.

In May 1923, the Communist Party of Spain had established its first partisan publishing house, *Biblioteca Internacional*, under the administration of Antonio García Quejido, César R. González and Ramón Lamoneda, all members of the PCE's Executive Committee. *Biblioteca Internacional* was founded in order to spread the principles on which communism had been based "ever since the immortal Marx and his friend and partner Engels [had] launched the insuperable *Communist Manifesto* in 1848" (Comité Central del Partido Comunista de España, Secretaría de Interior 1924, 1).

During the first few months of existence, *Biblioteca Internacional* set out to compile political pamphlets which were already being distributed in the market by different publishers or institutions "without a plan or a method", a project for which they made an agreement with a "bourgeois publishing house"[59] who had already published titles by Lenin and Trotsky "with the aim of economic speculation" and which had "met that goal" by putting out a large quantity of copies (3). Through its commercial agreement with that publishing house, the PCE was able to put classic communist titles on the market, but the idea was to publish the most important historical documents in the history of communism, from Marx's *Communist Manifesto* to the resolutions of the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1920 (3-4).[60]

Primo de Rivera's fierce dictatorship, however, made it extremely difficult for the Party to maintain the publishing house, and although it barely managed to survive, it did

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[59] This is a reference to the *Compañía Iberoamericana de Publicaciones* (CIAP), a commercial publishing house which established a working relationship with left-wing publishing houses.

[60] During its first months of existence, *Biblioteca Internacional* published titles such as Lenin's *El estado y la revolución proletaria, Capitalismo de estado, La victoria proletaria y el renegado Kautsky, Comunismo de izquierda y el ideal bolchevista*; Trotsky's *El triunfo de del bolchevismo, Terrorismo y comunismo*. Among the Spanish titles were: Torralva Beci's *Las nuevas sendas del comunismo*; Isidoro Acevedo's *Impresiones de un viaje a Rusia*; and even socialist ideologist Jaime Vera's *La verdad social y la acción*.

have to face serious problems and constraints in order to publish and then distribute its works. In a report from the Party Central Committee to the Comintern, dated 15 March 1924, José Baena, Secretary of Internal Affairs, told the international organization that ever since Primo de Rivera had been in power "it ha[d] been practically impossible to put out any publication calling for a change in regime" (Comité Central 1924, 1). In his report, Baena confessed that although the political events "had not caught [the Party] off-guard", it had been impossible to "address the working class" properly (ibid). "Most workers", Baena continued, "fear[ed] becoming the next victim" and only a few "[took] the chance of buying a booklet in order to get some social instruction, for fear that [they] be condemned without a trial" (2). This fact, together with the daily persecution to which the PCE and its official publications were subjected, as well as the censorship which was applied to all publications created serious "difficulties of distribution" which "notably restricted consumption" (ibid).[61] Baena himself had to admit that the publishing house could not operate as effectively as the PCE had wished, although the Party continued to work on it with "real constancy" and the "same original hopes", and it never stopped "printing and distributing interesting pamphlets" (ibid). In fact, the Party continued to prepare more titles for the publishing house, as they "waited" for the political move which "the bourgeoisie itself would have to make" (5). By the time that "move" took place, Baena hoped, the PCE would have "an extraordinary amount of written material which [would then] be very useful" (ibid).

By the fall of 1924, *La Antorcha* no longer listed the publications of *Biblioteca Internacional*, announcing instead the *Biblioteca La Antorcha*, a "well-assorted" and

[61] Baena reported a number of police break-ins into the Party offices, in which correspondence and

"excellent" book service created as a tool for the popularizing of some of "the greatest works" in fields like sociology, the arts and science at "better prices" ("*Biblioteca La Antorcha*" 3). The *Biblioteca* was created in order to publish the work of the "great Marxist theorists" so that Party members could get a "solid theoretical education". Unfortunately, by this time the finances of the Party publications seemed to be in such a bad shape that *La Antorcha* was forced to sell pre-publication coupons for a given title in order to be able to print it (ibid). In later years, the publishing projects of the Party would be done somewhat more successfully by a new publishing house, sponsored by the Comintern itself and founded in Barcelona, *Europa-América.*[62]

As much as these financial difficulties and conditions of operation presented serious difficulties, the worst problems the Party had to face as a consequence of its poor theoretical preparation were at least two: one, that not all Party members seemed to be convinced of the need for that preparation in the first place; and, second, that the very little theoretical work which was being done within the Party was very often a matter of dispute.

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pamphlets were confiscated. Further, its directors were often imprisoned.

[62] The *Editorial Europa-América* was founded around 1928 in Spain, although it would not be better known until the early 1930s. It was created directly by the Executive Committee of the Comintern in Barcelona. See Matorras (1935). One of the first references to this publishing house can be found in the document "Resolution espagnole" by the Comintern's International Secretariat, dated 18 May 1928, which read: "Etudier et examiner à fond le caractère de la lutte ouvrière et des autres couches travailleuses et chercher à se mettre en tête de ce mouvement, tant du point de vue d'orientation idéologuique et politique, en devenir vraiment l'avant-garde consciente et courageuse. Si petit qu'il soit actuellement numériquement, le PC espagnol doit – car la posibilité objective existe –, faire voir et connaître aux larges masses ouvrières et travailleuses sa physionomie politique, ses revendications politiques du jour, il doit faire connaitre explicitemente à la masse par quelle voie elle poura réussir à réaliser ses revendications. Si les conditions politiques que la dictature de Primo de Rivera fait régner empêchent la manifestation nette et brutale des différentes positions et des différents partis, notre parti Communiste doit arriver quand même, par la voie de la presse et des éditions clandestines, à rendre accessible aux masses le contenu et le caractère de classe de la dictature et de la politique du gouvernement, ainsi que les autres partis ou organizations." This document can be found in Joaquín Maurín's personal archives, in the Hoover

Shanti Andía was among those who set out to convince Party members that, as history would prove, intellectual doctrines had not given way to the working-class movement, but that, in fact, it had been the other way around, it had been the workers' struggle which had brought to life intellectual doctrines in the first place, including those of Marx (1927a, 3). As a result, any working-class "doctrine" would have to be grounded in the practical life of the movement itself. Andía thus warned against placing too much emphasis on political theory, since it was clear that social action begot political theory and not the other way around (ibid).[63]

Common ground between Andía's emphasis on practice and the Executive's emphasis on theory seemed to be found in a foreign article reprinted in *La Antorcha*, in which it was argued that the predominance of theory without political practice would result in having too many "charlatans" who would use their rhetorical skills to "create unreal expectations in the masses", and would do very little to create "true revolutionaries" (V.A. 1927, 3).[64] In that article it was also argued, however, that the systematic use of practice without a body of theory behind it, meant to do work "without a real grip on things", something which would only create "martyrs" and "heroes", but never "conscious revolutionaries". Thus the "lack of theoretical orientation" was only "counterproductive to the cause" (ibid).

Yet, the Party was far from embracing such a reasonable balance between theory and practice, among other reasons because it was itself divided into conflicting versions of

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Institution, University of California at Berkeley (21 May 1928. A.R. no. 6039 [10]). I am thankful to Professor Francisco Caudet for bringing it to my attention and for providing me with a copy of it.

[63] The same point was argued in other articles like Rafael Marín's "La cultura y la revolución", as well as in a series of articles by Oscar Pérez Solís entitled "La conciencia nueva" (1924a, 1924b, 1924c).

[64] The author's initials are likely those of a Soviet author.

what that theory should be. Bullejos' suggestion that Party members should study Marxism from the original sources had, in fact, been a direct attack on the attempt made by Joaquín Maurín to take his own theoretical work to the pages of *La Antorcha*. Between the months of January and April of 1926, Maurín published in the Party's official publication a series of five articles under the generic title of "La formación histórica del estado español",[65] a series which he defined as a blueprint for a book on which he was planning to work, and in which he would study "the root of Spain's decadence" from a Marxist point of view, as opposed to the "idealist considerations" which bourgeois intellectuals had previously used in order to explain Spanish history (1926a, 1). Throughout the five articles, Maurín moved from the origins of the Spanish feudal state to his present day, mapping out a historical evolution of the country in which class struggle had been the main driving force.

In that light, Maurín read eight centuries of war between Arabs and Christians on Spanish soil, not as a struggle for religious conquest, but as the confrontation between the Christian feudal state (the military and the Church) and the Arab bourgeoisie (the merchants). He also read the expulsion of Arabs and Jews in 1492 as the moment in which Spain had lost its best-educated bourgeoisie and had therefore begun to decline (1926b, 3). After that, every national conflict had been led by a feudal state allied with a feudal Church (which had not participated in Martin Luther's religious bourgeois revolution) attempting to bring down the national and the Catalonian bourgeoisie.[66]

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[65] For Maurín's original series of articles, see (1926a to 1926e). For the response from the Party, see Bullejos (1926a to 1926c). For Maurín's response to Bullejos, see (1926f).

[66] Subsequently, Maurín read the War of Independence waged by the Latin American continent against imperialist Spain as another case of the feudal state dealing with a rebel bourgeoisie (1926c).

In the first of his responses to Maurín, Bullejos argued that Maurín's theses "had reached the highest limit of absurdity" and of "monstrosity", and that they revealed not only the greatest "ignorance" of basic Marxist ideas but also the most flagrant "lack of knowledge about the evolution, development and formation of the Spanish bourgeoisie" (1926a, 1). Although Bullejos did not specify what those "absurdities" or "monstrosities" were, he was adamant in his suggestion that the PCE needed to exercise "serious and rigorous control" over the political education of its "members", lest the Party as a whole lose its ideological foundation (ibid). Eventually, the Secretary-General suggested that the "ideological monstrosity" committed by Maurín had been none other than falling into the same idealist trap of bourgeois historians, for even though he had emphasized class struggle as the driving force behind historical evolution, he had still found the root of that struggle in ideological factors rather than economic interests. Bullejos argued that Maurín had given no thought to the "economic causes" which "rule[d] the formation and development of social classes", replacing that by "causes of an ideological nature", and ignoring Marx's maxim that political programs were always determined by economic interests (1926b, 1). Otherwise, Bullejos believed, it would have been difficult to reduce the historical conflict between the Church and the Spanish bourgeoisie to a "rebellion of bourgeois individualism against the control of human knowledge exercised by the Church" (ibid). This criticism was not completely unfounded, since indeed Maurín had placed an extraordinary emphasis on ideological conflicts and the war of ideas, while he had made very few comments on the economic interests of the social classes as their motives for war. Yet Maurín had also made it clear that his articles in no way attempted to present a fully-constructed analysis, but were, rather, a work in progress (1926a, 1).

Toward the end of the controversy, it became clear that what was at stake was not only the personal differences between Bullejos and Maurín, but also the different political readings coming out of the mainstream Party in Madrid and the *Federación Comunista Catalano-Balear* in Barcelona. Indeed Bullejos accused Maurín of thinking about Spain not as "a more or less developed bourgeois state" but as a "feudal" one, which meant that Maurín was "pitifully confusing the social figures of the big feudal lord with the large landowner class" (1926b, 1).

Whatever the case, this controversy at least seemed to prove Bullejos' point that the Party needed to pursue the political education of its members by returning to the sources of Marxism. Certainly, that preparation would not be done through journals or newspapers, much less the publications of the Party itself. Notwithstanding the work of a few well-prepared intellectuals, Party members wrote in *La Antorcha* without the theoretical preparation they themselves needed, and without any kind of previous agreement on the Marxist interpretation they were to offer, and none of that would be of help to the masses.

The creation of publishing houses may have served to provide workers with the original sources of Marxism, but they could do nothing for a much more serious problem. Simply to publish more titles, as some Party members were calling for, would have been beneficial, but would also have been completely useless unless workers and Party members themselves could have been initiated as well in the habit of reading, and of reading on politics, for that matter, before trying to expose them to Marxist theory. Indeed that had been precisely the problem which the *Unión Cultural Proletaria* had tried to resolve a few years earlier, and it was obvious that a solid groundwork was still needed.

From Barcelona, the communist opposition also administered an *Editorial Marxista* and a *Biblioteca Internacional*.[67] In line with the mainstream Party, Catalonian leader Joaquín Maurín argued that if workers could not have access to political books, it would not be possible to pursue the revolution, given that some of the basic Marxist works were "to the political interpretation of revolutionary phenomena what Euclid's law [was] to Geometry" (1923b, 2). The difference between what the FCCB attempted to do and what the PCE was doing, however, was that the Catalonian chapter undertook that project at the same time it began to prepare a School of Marxist Studies, an idea which the Party had already envisioned, but had never put into practice.[68]

What the communist opposition was calling for was not only more books for the working class, but an "intellectual" revolution, in which communists would acquire the intellectual preparation they needed in order to guide the workers' movement. *La Batalla* spent little time in discussing the relevance or lack of relevance of theory for revolutionary practice. As soon as Catalonian communists found some degree of political stability with the dissolution of the FCCB and the creation of the *Bloque Obrero y Campesino*, they made their educational dream come true by founding the first fully-operative *Escuela Marxista*, which was to prepare workers on Marxist theory.

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[67] The *Editorial Marxista* was founded with the goal of "spreading among the masses the revolutionary ideology of Marxism", and according to *La Batalla*, from its foundation in July 1926 until March 1927, it had sold more than 50,000 volumes ("Desde julio" 4). *Biblioteca Internacional* was dedicated to classics such as Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. In mid-1924, the name changed to *Servicio de Librería La Batalla*, which may have meant that the paper could no longer afford to print its own books, and moved to distribution, rather than publication.

[68] *La Batalla* would not publish any other original articles on questions of education and culture, only reprints of foreign articles, such as Trotsky's "La poesía de la revolución" and Bujarin's "La bancarrota de la cultura burguesa".

Postguerra and *El estudiante* on Theory and Practice

While the Communist Party had got lost in the analysis of the relationship between theory and practice, and had been unable to heed its own call for action regarding the political education of its members, *Postguerra* and *El estudiante* argued that all political and social practice needed theory, and that it was, in fact, theory itself, which gave birth to practice in the first place. In their defense of revolutionary theory as the basis for revolutionary practice, the two journals criticized both the bourgeois intelligentsia for being afraid of new political ideas, and the working-class leadership for its perennial lack of ability to use political theory in order to boost the actions of the revolutionary movement. In the process, the two journals set out in different, but complementary, ways to seek the "intellectual revolution" of which opposition communist leaders had spoken, and which the UCP had attempted, but had, ultimately, been unable to bring about.

In a country where the lack of ideas was precisely one of the greatest "misfortunes", José Antonio Balbontín argued from the pages of *Postguerra* that it was quite "disheartening" to hear "the same old story" about the supposed "danger of ideas", an attitude which continued to deprive Spain "of the scientific and technical preparation it needed in order to survive in modern life" (1927b, 11). He pointed out that for decades, Spanish social scientists had been complaining that Spain lacked a national body of thought and ideas, among other reasons because it did not have a true Renaissance period. Yet whenever new ideas appeared on the scene, those same scientists rejected them as "dangerous". Balbontín argued that Marxism, as a scientific theory in which Marx observed social reality objectively, may be refuted, but what was unacceptable was that it

should be rejected right out as a "dangerous" idea which was "punishable in and of itself". He argued that there were no "dangerous ideas", just as much as there were no "bad ideas". There were "true, wrong, appropriate or inappropriate" ideas, but none of them could be "reprehensible". The only "intolerable" thing was not to think, and what was even more intolerable was that those who had never produced any ideas believed "they had the authority to put up borders and customs posts to the infinite realm of pure thought" (ibid). For the *Postguerra* group, part of the reason why Marxism was "dead" in Spain was that Spanish socialism had lacked the most basic intellectual reflection on any political, social or cultural issue, and had not practiced self-critique (Loredo Aparicio 1928, 7-8).

As both a political and cultural journal, *Postguerra* believed that political theory and literature were tools to be used for revolutionary practice. Balbontín argued that when "literature" was understood as the "frivolous game" of a "number of decadent bourgeois literary men [sic] who [were] completely unconcerned" with any kind of "human anguish", and when the word was taken to mean artistic work without "humanistic passion, without suffering or hope, without happiness or torture", the "disdain" which many revolutionaries felt toward it would be justified. He warned, however, against launching that very same "passionate diatribe" toward the literature of "a Gorki or a Barbusse", which were not only the "purest treasure", but also the "most combative weapon" in the hands of the proletariat (1927a, 4).

Despite the fact that he was "continuously hear[ing]" that "[it was] not the time to make literature", that "[it was] the time for action", Balbontín was "convinced that without previous literature there [would] be no valid action [because] the triumph of action itself

need[ed] to be oriented and stimulated by. . . thought" (ibid). *Postguerra* believed in a model of historical evolution which was quite different from the one which Party member Shanti Andía had articulated, emphasizing that all great revolutionary movements had been preceded by a time of "literary excavation" without which political action could have neither begun nor prospered. Thus the *French Encyclopedia* had been "the preface of the bourgeois revolution" and Russian literature "the seed. . . for the 1917 social revolution" (ibid). Similarly, the coming Spanish revolution would have to find its theory and its literature in order to be successful.

In line with the concerns expressed by Balbontín, *Postguerra* was a journal dedicated to the theoretical exploration which would help the working class improve their understanding of Marxist theory. A School of Marxist Studies itself, *Postguerra* attempted to make workers understand the nature of both capitalism and reformism, providing a theoretical analysis of a variety of political and economic issues, from chain work to economic growth. The journal endeavored to demystify political and economic language, so as to reveal the intentions of the ruling class, for behind aseptic notions such as "the scientific organization of work" there was nothing but the same old exploitation of the workers and the "sharpening of class struggle" (César González 1928, 7).

El estudiante invested practically no time or energy in arguing that revolutionary practice should be informed by revolutionary theory. In that respect, the journal's goals were much more grandiose and yet tremendously down-to-earth. As a journal created by young revolutionary intellectuals operating on university campuses, *El estudiante* aimed at tackling the problem of practice vs. theory at its very roots. With students writing to students, the idea that revolutionary theory was needed in order to have efficient

revolutionary practice was accepted as a premise which needed no further discussion, the real issue being how to get to that revolutionary theory in the first place.

The writers of *El estudiante* understood in all its powerful and painful reality a very simple fact: that even before any kind of revolutionary theory could be possible, a solid intellectual groundwork had to be prepared. Thus the most important revolutionary activity to be carried out was not only the direct opposition to the dictatorship or the struggle for a Soviet Spain. In fact, the greatest revolutionary action of all was, first and foremost, to improve the state of education and culture in the country.

"We walk aimlessly, seeking a change for the better, but not knowing what to do in order to improve", the editors of *El estudiante* argued, because of a generalized "problem of culture", and thus a problem which was "the students' responsibility to solve" ("Lo que entendemos por estudiante" 1). As a student journal, *El estudiante* would begin to explore that problem by working on what was closer to students: the university itself.

The journal was born of a desire to change the Spanish university system, which was seen as moribund. The editors believed that university campuses were places of intellectual emptiness in which neither professors nor students left a mark, a "ridiculous fiction", a "bureaucracy. . . with a payroll", an institution which was little more than "just an administrative window" designed "to grant professional diplomas" (Roces 1926, 5). One of the most urgent changes the system needed was to guarantee the highest degree of academic freedom. This meant that the university, once it had assured "the basic guarantees of scientific seriousness and professional experience" could open its doors to all those "who had anything valuable to [say]". That, Wenceslao Roces admitted, was not

much of "a revolutionary measure", but reality forced him to admit that "when speaking about a corpse, just to walk would be a revolutionary act" (ibid).

Changing the spirit of a dead institution was an impossible task without creating a number of needs first, and for *El Estudiante* the first priority was precisely that, "*crear necesidades*". From the very first issue of the journal, the editors pointed out that Spanish students looked at their universities with "childish indifference and ignorance", going through their classes "with a childish and uncontrolled desire *to pass*", behaving as mere outsiders ("Al reaparecer" 1). The journal set out to search for those "exceptional wills" who were out there, perhaps unaware of themselves, certainly unorganized, but who surely had an "extraordinary desire to live" ("Los problemas de la enseñanza primaria" 3). *El estudiante* wanted to find the students with the will to pursue change, and then bring them together so that they could advance in their intellectual and political search together. For those who did not feel the need for change, the journal also had a recipe: "If the majority of students does not feel the need for any changes we will find the means to give them a finer sensibility, so that they may begin to feel their former ideas are unbearable" ("Al reaparecer" 1). As far as *El estudiante* was concerned, Spain did not need more professionals whose only goal was material gain. What the country needed was "citizens willing to offer the best of themselves for the benefit of all. . . citizens with knowledge, with a desire for justice" ("Los problemas de la enseñanza primaria" 3). *El Estudiante* was not only adamant that this kind of student existed. It was also willing to find it and to give it a voice.

Interestingly, although *El Estudiante* was published within the university and it used that institution as a reference for the institutional changes Spain needed, it also

insisted on the fact that when they said "students" they were addressing not only those registered at the university and attending classes. For *El Estudiante*, students could be found both on and off campus, and the term encompassed all those people who had a desire to learn, who felt curiosity toward science, the arts, and, more importantly, toward politics ("Lo que entendemos por estudiante" 1).

Although the journal's cultural discourse might seem at first to have a touch of *Regeneracionismo*, *El estudiante* and nineteenth-century reformism had very different points of departure and extremely different goals. While nineteenth-century reformists had believed that the pursuit of the general and political education of the people was already part of the revolutionary change to be achieved, *El estudiante* was calling on the Spanish youth to acquire the education which would allow them to understand revolutionary theory, which, in turn, would make the proletarian revolution possible. Pablo de Luis has further suggested that *El estudiante* never fell into the kind of "pedagogical utopia" which had so strongly marked the *Regeneracionista* project, for although the student journal also believed in a future of "freedom and culture" for all, it also made it clear that such a future would only be possible after achieving profound economic change (1994, 294).

For the members of the *Savoia* circle which produced both *Postguerra* and *El estudiante*, theory was so much the basis of practice, that when it became obvious to them that the potential of the journals to initiate theoretical discussion was so dramatically restrained by government censorship,[69] they were intelligent enough to change their format

[69] Worried about the penetration of "dangerous ideas" into the masses of workers through the publication of newspapers, journals, magazines, short novels or pamphlets, Primo de Rivera had established a severe and rigid system of pre-publication censorship (proofs had to be submitted to the censors for publication to be authorized) for all periodicals (Santonja 1989, 10). This kind of censorship meant that administrators and writers "either avoided dealing with certain issues" since they knew they would suffer "a rosary of

and become a publishing house. Throughout its life, *Postguerra* had established a successful relationship with two communist publishing houses: *La Antorcha* – the official publishing house of the Communist Party – and *Biblos* – founded and run by Angel Pumarega as a personal project.[70] From the very beginning, *Postguerra* had sold the publications of those two houses through its own *Biblioteca* and its *Servicio de Librería*. As Gonzalo Santonja has pointed out, the quick growth which the journal experienced in its book sales,[71] "opened the eyes" of the group as to the possibilities of the enterprise, as they became aware of "the great abyss which separated the small ideological profit they made with *Postguerra* and the very positive effects which publishing houses could have"

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cross outs", which made it very difficult to "publish a legal journal of opposition which wanted to have some dignity" (ibid). The government seemed convinced that the masses would have no interest in publications over two hundred pages, given the lack of education and low levels of literacy in the country, as well as their relatively high price (five or six pesetas, as opposed to the few cents journals cost), so it left those publications, whatever their content, free of control. *Postguerra*'s publisher José Venegas argued that to have to submit the proofs of the journal to the censor was like "publishing an anti-clerical journal with the previous authorization of the Bishop" (1943, 138-139) and he tried to convince his team that by publishing a journal like *Postguerra* they were, in fact, doing a service to the dictatorship: on the one hand, the censor was there to remove all political effectiveness from the journal so there was little they could do to be truly revolutionary; on the other, the fact that the journal continued to be published could be used by the authorities to prove either that they were very "liberal" or that there was a real "communist threat" in the country, whatever excuse they may need at a given time (Venegas 1943, 138).

[70] Like everything else done or touched by Pumarega, *Biblos*' life and history remains obscure but it is likely the publishing house (just like the UCP in previous years) had an extremely short life. *Postguerra*, in fact, began its journey into the book industry inspired by its fruitful relationship with *Biblos*. Pumarega's entreprise published two different editions of some titles, one of which was sold in bookstores at the regular price of 4.50 pts., while the other was sent to the network of newspaper stands at the special price of 90 cents. A number of copies from the cheaper edition also went to *Postguerra*, which sold them through its *Servicio de Librería* with an added discount of 10%. Some of the titles published by *Biblos* were *¿A dónde va Inglaterra, Europa y America?* by Trotsky; *Cómo tomaron el poder los bolcheviques*, by John Reed; *La caballeria Roja*, by Isaac Babel; *Los de Abajo*, by Mariano Azuela. Gonzalo Santonja has argued that *Biblos* disappeared precisely because what it wanted to do was financially non-viable, and his attempt remained "isolated and precocious" (1986, 128).

[71] Fifty-nine titles were offered in the second issue, seventy-nine in the third, and eighty-six in the tenth. Prices ranged between twenty cents and nine pesetas (Santonja 1986, 126).

(1986, 152). As a result, in late 1928, and under José Venegas' leadership, the journal became *Ediciones Oriente*.[72]

Despite the fact that most people looked at them as "*señoritos* turned disturbers" (Venegas 1943, 149),[73] *Ediciones Oriente* was an immediate business and political success. The new possibility of running a successful business and, not surprisingly, political differences among the founding members, gave way to the branching out of the original group, thus bringing to life other publishing houses, among them *Historia Nueva*, *Editorial Cenit*, *Zeus*, and *Ediciones Ulises*.

This array of publishing houses has been credited for the boom of left-wing books in Spain in the late 1920s and early 1930s, for the real introduction to the working masses of Marxist theory, for the growth in reading levels, and, in general, for contributing to the theoretical preparation of the masses, factors which contributed to the proclamation of the Second Republic.[74] The PSOE and the PCE had been publishing Marxist titles for quite some time, but the moment these publishing houses hit the streets, the publication of social literature, Marxist theory and political textbooks became a social and cultural event, surpassing whatever expectations the *Savoia* circle had, and giving way to an experience which proved to be quite different from that of the Communist Party. Indeed, if we compare these publishing houses with those of the Communist Party, we find that while

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[72] This name, which translates literally as "Eastern Editions", was probably chosen as a way to challenge the name of Ortega y Gasset's very well-known, but much more elitist journal, *Revista de Occidente*, which literally translates as "Western Journal".

[73] For an explanation of the meaning of the word "*señorito*", see Chapter One.

[74] For a history and analysis of these publishing houses, see the seminal work of Gonzalo Santonja (1986, 1989, 1994); Fuentes (1980, 1982); Esteban (1972); Bizcarrondo (1980); Esteban and Santonja, eds. (1988).

small communist and even Party publishing houses served as inspiration and model for the ones which came out of *Postguerra*, the former failed, while the latter succeeded.

Although these publishing houses defined their objectives as "ideological and political", rather than commercial, they were also quite innovative in the techniques and administration of book publishing, in ways which Party publishing houses could not be. After all, as Gonzalo Santonja has reminded us, behind every successful business initiative there is an appropriate marketing plan, and in that respect the innovations which the *Postguerra* group introduced into the publishing industry were rather meaningful at the time, although today they may seem so obvious that it is difficult even to notice them (1986, 201).[75]

On the one hand, the publishing houses burst onto the book market with original, colorful and striking book covers with exclusive designs. On the other, they advertised their books and those of others, kept files on their readers, and encouraged them to subscribe to entire collections. According to Venegas, advertising "gave great results" and the readers' files could be counted by the hundreds, mostly "people spread out in little cities and villages" which meant that "hundreds of books were mailed as soon as every new edition appeared" (1943, 151).

A good marketing plan also had to be accompanied by a good ideological project, and these publishing houses had one which was "coherent" and "not at all simplistic" (Santonja 1989, 53). This ideological plan had variety in form and content. It had variety in form, because what the publishing houses put out in the market was much more than books. With collections like *Cenit*'s *Cuadernos de Cultura Proletaria* or *Ediciones*

Oriente's *Curso de Iniciación Marxista*, all of them by installments, these publishing houses made political material more accessible to the working class. It had variety in content, because of the multiplicity of voices and interests coming out of the original group which had founded *Ediciones Oriente* and which could no longer be contained within one project. As an example, while *Cenit* paid special attention to the social sciences, and *Historia Nueva* to history, *Ediciones Hoy*, run by Andrade, researched "the links between Trotskyism and the Bolshevik tradition" (Bizcarrondo 1980, 236).

Party publishing houses, on the other hand, had neither the capital nor the political energy, let alone the freedom of movement, to get involved in special projects, and were forced to focus on standard books alone (in later years they would copy the kind of "courses" which the revolutionary publishing houses had pioneered). It is unlikely, however, that even if they had had all of the above, they could have reached the same degree of variety in form and content. Further, none of the publishing houses which came out of the *Savoia* circle carried the stigma of being a communist project.[76] That was never the case with *La Antorcha*, which had to suffer pressure and repression from the government, which could not distribute its books freely and which operated without capital. Indeed, everything the publishing houses managed to do was because of the freedom their independence gave them. On the other hand, all that the Party houses never managed to do was because of the political pressure they suffered.

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[75] These publishing houses appeared in a publishing industry which had been in crisis for a long time. See Venegas (1943); Andrade (1931a).

[76] There seemed to be a great deal of suspicion at the time that these publishing houses were being funded by communists, either directly from the Comintern or by the Spanish Communist Party. Venegas himself has pointed out, however, that he and his friends "laughed a lot" whenever they heard rumors that they had "great resources" which must have come from the Soviet Union (1943, 149).

Short of providing the working class with its own means of production, which these publishing houses could not yet do, they did manage to give that class at least a cultural tool which had previously been the prerogative of the bourgeoisie. As Victor Fuentes has suggested, the former "white" novels published for the "masses" of readers, novels of an escapist and romantic nature, had been an ideological tool in the hands of the bourgeoisie, used to keep the "masses" preoccupied with other things. These new books, however, were a tool for culture, for political awareness, created with the intention to instruct workers, and thus to empower them (1976a, 41). These publishing houses "did not make great scientific or artistic contributions, but they did much work for the creation of a new culture" (1976b, 4). They understood "popular culture" not as it had been done until then, as the mark of anything "vulgar", but as the attempt to bring to the Castilian-speaking public the best that had been printed in terms of revolutionary theory (1980, 31).

Yet, none of these publishing houses were free of contradictions or shortcomings themselves. In the first place, their sales were not always as numerous as to suggest that they were always a good business, or that their books were "swept away".[77] Secondly, although they wanted to escape from the contradiction of publishing a journal which was first approved by the censors and then read by the converted, they ended up falling into another contradiction: publishing books for the illiterate.

Whatever the case, both *Postguerra* and *El Estudiante* were much more than mere printed words. The literary circle of the *Café Savoia*, out of which both journals came, and the university campus on which both journals were distributed were two hotbeds of

[77] While in 1928 *Ediciones Oriente* seemed to be a good business, later correspondence between *Cenit* and Joaquín Maurín suggests that the publishing house's stocks were high, that books went very slowly and that *Cenit* suffered financial difficulties. This correspondence is reproduced in Caudet (1993).

political activity. Active opposition to the dictatorship was carried out in both communities, to the point that in the *Savoia* circle can be found the origins of the Jaca uprising[78] (Captain Fermín Galán was in fact a member of the group) and to some extent of the *Sanjurjada* as well. As I have already pointed out, *El estudiante* seemed to carry out a program of political activity on campus which could hardly be reflected on its pages, and for which the group needed different strategies.

Both *Postguerra* and *El Estudiante* believed that a true proletarian culture would only be possible after the triumph of the revolution, once the proletariat had established its dictatorship and achieved a good level of material progress for society. It was also clear for the leaders of these two projects, however, that the political education of the proletariat in anti-reformism was a condition *sine qua non* for that revolution to happen in the first place. If *Postguerra* was to encourage intellectuals to embrace both political activism and the cause of the working class while supporting the rise of intellectuals within the proletariat itself, *El Estudiante* set out to provide the bases needed for that ambitious goal to become possible: the university – training ground of the future intelligentsia – would have to undergo deep reforms as well as a deep internal evaluation of its intellectual and political priorities. In both cases, their work served to introduce communist thought into the petite bourgeoisie and the middle classes. That contributed, as Manuel Aznar has pointed out, to the penetration of "bourgeois communism" in wide sectors of the petit-bourgeois intelligentsia, which would pave the way both for the artistic and cultural

[78] In 1930, a premature proclamation of the Second Republic took place in the city of Jaca, led by Republican army officials. Its leader, Captain Fermín Galán, was executed by the authorities, quickly becoming a national Republican hero. Venegas has, in fact, argued that the *Savoia* group, more than a literary circle was a "conspiracy against the dictatorship" and which had strong ties with politicians from the opposition and political activists (1943, 128-9).

change which would happen around 1930-1931 and for the stronger political commitment of this petite bourgeoisie (1978, 2: 21). Finally, the publishing houses would take both the petit-bourgeois intellectuals and the working masses "directly" to the sources of Marxism, just as the Party had called for (though not following the orthodox line the Party would have wanted), but without some of the serious obstacles the Party had to confront, most notoriously without having to follow a list of appropriate or inappropriate authors, and without having to agree on a single political line. In the process, Spanish society was forced to acknowledge the presence of communist thought and anti-reformist political activism, until then stigmatized or perhaps even ignored, as it had been the domain of a reduced Party circle. The final goal was to prepare both the cultural leaders of the proletariat and the working masses themselves for the upcoming revolution. That was nothing short of the preparation for the "intellectual revolution" for which the communist opposition had been calling, and without which political change would be neither possible nor sustainable.

1930: The Beginning of the End

As editor Antonio Espina put it in the Communiqué he sent to the Madrilian press before the release of the first issue of the new journal *Nueva España*, in Spanish history the year of 1930 was an "enigmatic historical date" for the country, and a date, for that matter, to which many "attended with enthusiasm" (Espina et al. 23). Indeed, as Espina pointed out, an overview of Europe's modern age revealed that "the secular rhythm of modern ideas [had] always seem[ed] to culminate around the thirtieth year" of a given century: the Reformation had swept over Western Europe in 1530, French Neoclassicism

in 1630, Rationalism and the breeding of the French revolution in 1730, and Romanticism in 1830. Thus it was surely appropriate to suggest and hope that Europe would also go through a similar process of cathartic change in 1930, a process which would mark the beginning of a new age in the history of the continent. This time, however, Espina's hope, and that of many other intellectuals of his time, was that Spain would not remain aloof from the thirtieth-year turn, as it had been the case in previous centuries. Everything seemed to indicate, in fact, that the time was ripe in Spain for the country to go through a dramatic turn of events of its own (ibid).

Indeed, by 1930, the agony of the Bourbon Monarchy was already too long and the political and economic contradictions within Primo de Rivera's government were much more than just a political or economic crisis.[79] Thus what could have simply been the fall of yet another government put up by a mortified Monarchy, was the beginning of the end for the political system under which Spain had suffered for almost three hundred years. Before being able to accept that it was over, however, the King replaced Primo de Rivera with the more "benevolent" figure of General Dámaso Berenguer, who made timid moves toward constitutional normality, and set out to appease the reformist intelligentsia, all while making a few token liberal moves such as lessening the control of censorship and reinstalling local forms of political administration (Santonja 1986, 60).

[79] Most historians agree that Primo de Rivera's dictatorship tried to implement a new economic policy without making any changes to the national social structure it had inherited from the *Restauración*. The dictatorship eventually fell prey to its own contradictions, including the fact that it continued to be based on corruption and favoritism – the reason why large sectors of the bourgeoisie eventually withdrew their support – that it lacked political strategies in order to perpetuate itself in power and that it exacerbated social unrest. For a full discussion of the fall of the dictatorship, see Cassasas Ymbert (1983); Maurín (1966).

Yet a change in government turned out to have very little meaning in a country which was so deeply immersed in crises of all sorts. That year the value of the national currency went down dramatically, as a result of government deficits, giving way to an explosive situation which was added more fuel when the second economic crisis which had already swept across the world in 1929 also hit Spain.[80] Unemployment in the country reached numbers theretofore unknown. Agriculture exports and industrial activities were practically paralyzed. As a consequence of all that, popular unrest grew dramatically.

Still, nothing significant would happen yet, except for a new Republican pact – the *Pacto de San Sebastián* (supported by the PSOE as well) – whose signatories were de facto setting themselves up as a transition government and which led to a new attempt at revolution in the month of December and to a premature proclamation of the Second Republic, led by Captain Fermín Galán, which ended up in tragedy and bloodshed.[81]

The "end" of the Monarchy was still more than a year away. In 1930, the Monarchy did not fall, the reformist bourgeoisie did not claim power, the workers' movement did not improve in the least after a new revolutionary defeat, and the Communist Party was still non-existant as far as the rest of the country was concerned. Primo's fall from grace and the severe economic crisis the country was experiencing added a few more drops of fuel to a situation which had already been burning for a long time. 1930, however, was not be a year of change, but one of transition.

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[80] See Tuñón de Lara, ed. (1981); Guzmán (1973).

[81] This was the *Pacto de San Sebastián*. The signing of the *Pacto* led to the revolutionary attempt, but Captains García Hernández and Fermín Galán's premature rising would make the whole attempt collapse. Further analysis of the 1930 attempt at revolution can be found in Guzmán (1973).

In the interpretation of the cultural scene put forward at the time by writer Francisco Pino, we find a Spain in which the "acute political crisis" brought about by an "ancient and impossible regime" had ended with the "stale and failed formula of 'art for art's sake'". Pino's suggestion that "all writers, especially the young" began to feel the responsibility of "interven[ing]" in and actually "lead[ing]" the "political and social struggle", and that they began to "put their pens to the service of an idea", may be a somewhat romantic view of the situation, but still it was not a far cry from reality (1930, 2-8).

Indeed the weight of social reality was so great that there was a heavy sense of living through a moment of political transition and of social change. Pino was thus correct in sensing that a new epoch was beginning in which intellectuals living in a "turbulent world" could not longer "remain aloof" from it as the "passive or bored spectator[s] of an insubstantial spectacle" and would now be forced to take that social reality into account, for it was the reflection of the "psychological moment of many thousands of souls" (9). As Pino put it, it was no longer the time "to hide one's head under the wings" (10).

The year of 1930 has often been seen in Spanish cultural history as the beginning of something new, the move toward the "popular", the awakening of a whole generation of intellectuals toward a social and political reality and the "radicalization" of the youngest ones among them (Mainer 1983, 274). This was true, indeed, in many respects. 1930 marked the boom of the "social novel" movement which had emerged in the late 1920s under the leadership of the "Other Generation of 1927", aided, among other things, by the publishing houses this very same group of intellectuals had created. On the other hand, the collapsing political system and the greater presence of the organized working class

throughout the previous decade (even if it had not translated into a final victory) made the cultural and intellectual debates move toward questions of proletarian and popular culture.[82] Further, in 1930 the official death of the timid avant-garde movement which had flourished in Spain in previous decades was loudly proclaimed,[83] while there was greater openness toward what Manuel Aznar has called "a new 'neo-romantic' sensibility" (1978, 2: 20). This new "sensibility" may have not entirely fit Díaz Fernández's definition of what he wanted the new *literatura de avanzada* to be (insofar as it should combine social content with artistic experimentation), but at least it was a literary movement which had woken up to the reality of the social and political climate which the country was living.

It is partially true that the year of 1930 actually marked the "beginning" of a new social or political awareness in writers who had not previously had it, as it was the case with some of the members of the Generation of 1927. The reformist bourgeoisie, however, went through no consciousness shift at all. What happened for them in the "mythical" year of 1930 was that they actually reached the pinnacle of their political and intellectual opposition to the monarchic regime and to whatever rotten and despicable form of government that regime may have sustained at any particular time. As part of that process, the radicalization of the workers' movement forced them as well to come to terms with the social conflict they had been trying to ignore for quite some time.

In fact, what happened was less a change of consciousness and more the coming to the forefront of intellectual and cultural life of a whole generation of revolutionary intellectuals who had been working in the shadow during the previous decade. It was, as Laurent Boetsch has suggested, a "critical year which marked the transition between the

[82] For these debates, see Cobb (1981); Fuentes (1980).

domain of the intellectuals who were isolated from the masses and those other intellectuals who symphatized with the problems and the destiny of the people" (Boetsch 1985, 53). This was indeed a transition, on the one hand, between the prominent role which the bourgeois intelligentsia of the so-called Generations of 1898 and 1914 had played and the coming to maturity of that other generation of intellectuals who had done projects like the UCP, *Postguerra* and *El estudiante*; on the other, in purely artistic terms, it was the transition between a whole generation of avant-garde artists, which included the Generation of 1927, and the coming to life of a whole new generation of writers and artists "*de avanzada*", at first influenced by Díaz Fernández's theory of New Romanticism, and later by their very special kind of Social Realism. What this means is that if in political terms, 1930 was the beginning of the end, in cultural terms it was the prelude to a beginning.

The UCP had long been dead, and *Postguerra* and *El estudiante* had already disappeared, but the array of revolutionary publishing houses which had been founded in previous years were still in operation, and continued to influence the publishing industry as much as the intellectual scene, inundating both with national and international political works, and bringing communist and revolutionary intellectuals, writers, translators, and editors out of the shadow. In the years to come, there would be literally dozens of cultural revolutionary projects (mainly journals) which would be the venues for them. These intellectuals were certainly not "newcomers". As communist writer Graco Marsá argued, "[they had] been fighting the dictatorship for seven years; [they had] gone to jail repeatedly; and [they had] been the ones leading the December [1930] revolution" (1931,

[83] See the 1930 issues of *La Gaceta Literaria*. For further reading, see Soria Olmedo (1988).

12). Spain would very soon be living under a liberal, bourgeois Republic regime, in time for this generation of revolutionary intellectuals to have reached maturity and become the opposition to it.

The journey of the bourgeois reformist intelligentsia toward more radical positions and toward greater awareness of the existence of the struggle of the working masses meant that intellectual alliances were beginning to expand, and that what until then had been alliances of revolutionary intellectuals (i.e. intellectuals from the petite bourgeoisie, middle class and proletariat with a working-class agenda) became alliances of "left-wing" intellectuals (which included the left of the bourgeoisie). As a result, the revolutionary cultural discourse of communist intellectuals would be merged for the first time with that of bourgeois cultural reformism. This was a major turning point, hardly eight years after the coming and going of the *Unión Cultural Proletaria* and its radical proletarian program, a turn which would mark the movement of communist cultural politics toward new courses.

Some of these alliances of "left-wing" intellectuals were rather short-lived, and did not survive the later proclamation of the Republic, such as was the case with the intellectual organization *Grupo de Intelectuales y Artistas Revolucionarios* [Group of Revolutionary Intellectuals and Artists, GIAR] – run by José Bergamín, Alfonso García Valdecasas, Felipe Sánchez Román and Wenceslao Roces, among others – whose goal was, according to Tuñón de Lara, to study "the national problems from a Marxist methodology" (1984, 281). Even international organizations of a more proletarian nature, such as the Spanish section of the RAPP, the *Unión de Escritores Proletarios Revolucionarios*, were founded by groups which included working-class and communist

intellectuals as well as some from the bourgeoisie.[84] From among all those projects, the most successful left-wing alliances were put into practice by two journals, *Nueva España* and *Nosotros*, although each of them approached the nature of the political and intellectual alliances rather differently, as we shall see.

Nueva España[85] was founded by Antonio Espina, José Díaz Fernández, and Adolfo Salazar – the three of them close to the *Partido Republicano Radical Socialista*, [Radical Socialist Republican Party, PRRS], though Salazar was almost immediately replaced by Joaquín Arderíus (a communist). The contributions to the journal came from two main sources: one, a group of reformist intellectuals who had been active in the opposition to the regime, such as Marcelino Domingo, Alvaro de Albornoz, or Luis Jiménez de Asua; the other, a smaller group of communist intellectuals, some of whom were already members of the Communist Party, such as Isidoro Acevedo, Julián Gorkín and Juan Rejano, and some of whom would join it some time later, such as César M. Arconada, Luis Fernández Sendín (Fersen), Ramón J. Sender, and Fernández Armesto.[86]

Nueva España was a deeply political journal, quite "radical" from a reformist bourgeois point of view, and definitely boisterous. It had no patience for the bourgeoisie of the *Restauración*, the avant-garde, any other kind of bourgeois art or the dictatorship, and even less for the Monarchy, against all of which it launched angry slogans and used a language which was anything but compliant.

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[84] Joaquín Arderíus, Ricardo Baroja, Antonio Espina and Pedro de Repide were the directors of this organization.

[85] The first issue of the journal was published in January 1930. *Nueva España* was meant to be a bimonthly publication, but after the fifteenth issue it became a weekly. The journal closed down in April 1931, as soon as the Second Republic was proclaimed. Tuñón de Lara has pointed out that the name of the journal was a clear attempt to evoke the influential journal *España* published by Ortega and other members of the Generation of 1914 (1986b, 403).

[86] For biographies of some of these communist intellectuals, see Chapter Four.

As José Carlos Mainer has suggested, very few cultural enterprises were able to symbolize, as much as *Nueva España* did, the "moral hope" which the year of 1930 already meant for many, an obvious "threshold between a past of ludic avant-garde and a real, or more often imagined, future with glows of utopia and shades of revolution" (1983, 272). The exact date of the release of the journal, on 30 January 1930, may have been a "coincidence", as Tuñón de Lara has been willing to accept;[87] but the greater time frame was not. The national scene had already showed signs of being ready for a "change in hegemony", a change which "the reformism of the Socialist Party, the utopia of the CNT or the obvious voluntarism of a few communists could not carry out" and which was thus left in the hands of the reformist bourgeoisie (Tuñón de Lara 1986b, 403).

Nueva España has come down in Spanish cultural history as an alliance of progressive, "left-wing intellectuals" (408), all the way from "right-wing Republicans to international Marxists" (Fuentes 1976a, 41), the "greatest attempt made between the dictatorship and the Republic" to have such a wide range of intellectuals "involved in social issues" (Dueñas 1994, 159). Mainer has emphasized that *Nueva España* managed to keep some kind of a "balance" among all the tendencies included in that wide range (1983, 274). With Díaz Fernández among its founders, the journal had a clear inclination toward Radical-Socialism, but it could as easily defend the Socialist Party, write a benevolent biography of Pablo Iglesias, hail Republican hero Fermín Galán, or report on a

[87] The first issue of *Nueva España* saw the light on 30 January 1930. That was exactly fifteen years after Ortega's journal *España*, two days after Primo de Rivera's resignation, and on the very same day in which Berenguer's government was sworn into office. Tuñón de Lara has argued that though the day itself may have been a coincidence, the political circumstances and context in which the journal was born, were not (1986b, 403).

Bolshevik literary meeting in Leningrad,[88] all that without running away from openly criticizing reformist, liberal, bourgeois art and thought (ibid). Historian Tuñón de Lara has argued, however, that in the project "the border between the Marxist left and left republicanism was not always well drawn" (1986b, 406).

What has been said about the journal, as exemplified by the comments above, is to a large extent true. In the light of the opposition which it exercised against the status quo, *Nueva España* was indeed the symbol of an intellectual "left-wing" alliance with a class enemy in common. However, despite the fact that a number of collaborators of *Postguerra* were also part of *Nueva España* (Arderíus, Acevedo, Díaz Fernández, Julian Gorkin, Juan Rejano), and many of them communists, *Nueva España* should not be considered to be *Postguerra*'s heir.[89]

This is so, among other reasons, because the evidence of the work being published in the journal would suggest that such an alliance was far from enjoying any kind of political "balance". The fact that *Nueva España* was open to all "progressive" or "left-wing" intellectuals, from right-wing Republicans to Marxists actually meant that the journal was host to the two critiques of bourgeois culture which had emerged in the country during the previous years. On the one hand, the journal was home to the critique which a liberal, reformist, lay intelligentsia had been doing for almost half a century of the monarchic, feudal, catholic regime and of the haute bourgeoisie of the *Restauración* which sustained it, a critique which was just then reaching its angriest and most radical as well as its most impatient stage, precisely because it was felt the end of the regime was near. On

[88] This was the Kharkov Congress. See Chapter Four.
[89] In this respect, I disagree with the suggestions made both by Fuentes (1980, 56) and Tuñón de Lara (1986b, 405).

the other, *Nueva España* also had space for the critique of that critique, that is, the cultural commentary of a whole generation of revolutionary, pro-communist (and in some cases working-class) intellectuals who had been opposing bourgeois reformism for about a decade (since the founding of the UCP), a generation which was reaching then its intellectual and political maturity. These two critiques emanated from the pages of the journal in ways which were not always unequivocal.

Throughout the pages of the journal, the editors of *Nueva España* foregrounded the image of a country in which civil power was subjected to the power of the financial and Church oligarchies, in which individuals lacked any basic civil rights, and in which the proletariat was made up of "irresponsible and miserable individuals", a country in which 60% of children were illiterate, and higher education was the privilege of the moneyed classes. For them, Spain was a nation "for which the clock ha[d] stopped in the seventeenth century" and in which "everything remained to be done" (Domingo 1930, 4).

To such a state of affairs they offered an analysis and a solution verging on *Regeneracionismo*: they believed the idea of Spain did not work because the "masses" were "intellectually weak" and "low in dignity", as a result of which they could neither "understand" nor "react to" the "violence and humiliation" to which they were being subjected. Intellectuals had thus the duty to "lift" the masses, so that they would be able to "overcome the lack of permeability of the. . . Spanish character", so that people could be "soaked" with "emotion and thought", with "words, books, new conducts", with "democratic bleaches" and "serums of freedom" (Espina 1930a, 28). This included the belief, as Tuñón de Lara has pointed out, that the "civilization" Spain needed would be

done via a combination of "laicism, social legislation, Escuela Unica, a new tax system, public hygiene [and] the Europeanization of [the country]" (1986b, 409).

Neo-liberals and left-wing Republicans like Díaz Fernández himself or Luis Jiménez de Asúa, criticized the old bourgeoisie of the *Restauración* for corrupting the system and for betraying Spanish liberalism, for having been "domesticated" by "long years of patiently waiting" (Jiménez de Asúa 1930a, 3). Díaz Fernández, in fact, suggested that the new political question was not so much about political programs, but about "conducts" (1930a, 20). The new liberals made great efforts to differentiate themselves from the old liberal Party which had been part of the system of rotating parties, and had betrayed the true concept of political pluralism.

Although *Nueva España* was never the official publication of a political party, the political expectations of its editors, the Regeneracionist cultural attitudes and the political search for a new liberalism seemed to fit quite well into the program of the *Partido Radical Socialista* (Radical Socialist Party) to which Díaz Fernández belonged, a party whose program *Nueva España* hailed as "a repertoire of the most politically advanced solutions for Spain" and one which should be "fearlessly defend[ed]" ("Editorial" 15 February 1930, 2). That program included overthrowing the dictatorship and building the basis of a new Republican, democratic, and federal state as well as revising the Civil Code, abolishing the death penalty, pursuing a land reform, having the workers participate in the economic rehabilitation of the country, transforming workers' rights into constitutional rights, instituting freedom of expression, freedom of religious practice and the principle of lay education (ibid).

While this kind of liberal reformist program took over the opinion pages of *Nueva España*, communist intellectuals began their contributions in the journal in a rather timid manner. The fact that the articles written by communists were occasional during the first few issues, that they were written by Julián Gorkín from Paris and Fernández Armesto from Berlin, and that they began by dealing exclusively with literary issues, may have, in fact, placed these communist intellectuals as simple "collaborators" of the journal, rather than full participants, symbolically apart by their physical distance, and by their initial lack of participation in the political critique which the journal was carrying out. While the contribution of these communist writers may have been scarce at first, their critique of bourgeois reformism was as loud and clear as the critiques of the status quo by bourgeois reformists.

For one, in an article entitled "La evolución de las letras en España", Gorkín (at the time a member of the communist intellectual group exiled in Paris, seedbed of the *Oposición Comunista de Izquierda*) presented one of the very first Marxist critiques of Spanish literature and culture when he spoke about the three generations of writers and intellectuals who were alive in 1930-31 as "the product of a backward, semifeudal society in which the [reformist intelligentsia], humiliated by the ruling classes, and afraid of the revolutionary proletariat", had been "gesticulating and yelling in the void in the attempt to control their internal skepticism" (1931, 2).

In line with the critique of bourgeois reformism which the PCE, the UCP, *Postguerra* and *El estudiante* had already established, the communist writers in *Nueva España* opposed the reformist bourgeois discourse of freedom which spoke about improving the lot of the working classes, but did nothing to address class differences. As

Rodríguez Miguéis pointed out, communists were not interested in a new political system which would give workers "the right to vote" but in one which would give them "the right to govern" (1930, 8). They saw liberal democracy as a mere "facade of democracy and new liberalism" – a facade which the most reactionary part of society took on by adopting some socialist ideas through "a bunch of eloquent lawyers, professors of Metaphysics[90] and Christian workers" in an unsuccessful attempt to survive (ibid).

Given the fact that Spain had not yet gone through its national bourgeois revolution, the Spanish masses still had faith in the benefits of liberal, democratic reformism. Fernández Armesto, however, pointed out that in the rest of Europe, democracy had only managed to actually "feed the ranks of that part of humanity which exploit[ed] the other part", "ranks" which were actually "panicking" about the upcoming proletarian revolution so much that they were forced to include the defense of workers in their political democratic program (1930, 10). In later issues, those communist authors would end up openly defending the dictatorship of the proletariat (Baleriola 1930, 20) and even the use of proletarian violence against the bourgeoisie (de Mendoza 1930, 11). These writers accepted the idea of participation in electoral alliances with the reformist bourgeoisie only as a revolutionary tactic and as a means of revolutionary propaganda (Fersen 1930b, 10).

To some extent, *Nueva España* seemed to have accepted the dualist nature of its cultural critique quite as a matter of course, given the fact that, as a political project, the journal was quite open to the unity of all anti-monarchic forces, independently of their political program. *Nueva España* repeatedly called for the unity of the "left" as much

[90] In reference to Ortega y Gasset.

more than just a temporary tactical union for the sake of overthrowing the Monarchy or the dictatorship, but indeed as the basis to build a minimum program for government. As editor Antonio Espina put it – an argument made repeatedly throughout the life of the journal – the union of the Spanish "left wing" was not only a matter of "tactical needs", but something made possible by the similarity of "doctrine". Espina argued that "one could talk endlessly about the differences in creed" of all the parties, but that no one could deny "the fundamental similarity" which brought them together, which was their opposition to the regime, something they all shared, from the "extreme-right Republican[s], historical Republican[s]. . . left-wing socialist[s] verging on communism, and even. . . radical communist[s]" (1930b, 28). Everything else was a question of ideological "subtleties" (ibid). Indeed, for Espina – and he represented very well the spirit of the journal – nothing short of such an ideological variety was the essence of democracy itself.

Espina's political naiveté in linking "radical communists" with any desire to achieve political plurality and "democracy" became something much more cunning when writer Carlos Alonso spoke of modern republicanism as an "extensive" ideology, embracing "areas hereto unknown", an ideology "enriched" by "new followers" and "great ideological variety" which could no longer be represented by a single Party (1930, 9). Botella Asensi built on that idea, by suggesting there was a new republicanism "organically" structured into different political parties which could come together as much "for permanent action" as for temporary tactics (1930, 23). Insofar as Alonso's words applied to what *Nueva España* set out to achieve, he was effectively converting communism into a current of republicanism and co-opting it into the idea of political pluralism.

While the liberal and the radical were thus blended (albeit unconsciously), *Nueva España* also seemed to make a number of very conscious moves to suppress its most radical voices within via editorial comments. That was the case with Fersen's famous article "¿De qué pretende convencernos Marcelino Domingo?", in which the author set out to respond to the Republican leader's call for "serenity" in the midst of the "exaltation" the country was experiencing (1930a, 10). Fersen interpreted Domingo's call as a counter-revolutionary move and used it to accuse the bourgeoisie of lacking political drive (ibid).

Fersen did much more than that, however, for he also identified both socialism and bourgeois republicanism as enemies of the proletarian revolution, accusing them both of seeking "the Republican-democratic conscience of the people" as much as that of "the Monarchy" (ibid), and of seeking to achieve a democratic state in order to destroy the revolution of the working classes.

That moved the editors of *Nueva España* to add a disclaimer to Fersen's article, arguing that Domingo was not necessarily the one to blame, but that all critiques should, instead, be directed toward the "old left" (by which, presumably, they meant the old Liberals). The editors argued that Fersen was not truly criticizing the reformist bourgeoisie, but actually "interpreting" their "attitude", the attitude of what the editors called the "new left" (ibid). This timely intervention by the editors made it clear that *Nueva España*'s line was to be a liberal reformist critique of the old bourgeois regime, while more radical perspectives would be foregrounded as coming from a voice foreign to the journal.

Indeed, as Javier Tussel and Genoveva Queipo del Llano have argued, "despite [*Nueva España*'s] concomitance with the extreme left" its politics were "democratic and

Republican" (1988, 84).[91] After the proclamation of the Second Republic in 1931, *Nueva España* believed its dream of a progressive government alliance had become true. The fall of the Monarchy brought a new air of radicalization to the journal, which soon started to call for the proclamation of an "atheist, anticlerical" Republic "of producers", supported by a popular army ("Empieza la revolucion" 1). The fact remains, however, that once the Republic was proclaimed, political positions needed to be clearly defined, and *Nueva España*'s "left-wing" alliance was no longer suitable. In April 1931, the journal published its very last issue.

The journal *Nosotros*, however, followed a very different trajectory.[92] Founded in May 1930 by Peruvian/Spanish communist César Falcón,[93] *Nosotros* was, above all, a political journal, with little space dedicated to literary or art criticism,[94] and much more to news from the five continents and whatever crises and/or revolutions might have been

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[91] Communist writer Fernández Armesto, however, might have disagreed with the conclusions reached by most scholars I quote here and my own, since hardly a year after the journal had closed down, he remembered *Nueva España* as a project " in which young communist writers collaborated", and "behind [them] a confusing bunch of sympathizers" (1932, 36-37).

[92] *Nosotros* was founded in May 1930 and was published until August 1931, well after the proclamation of the Republic.

[93] A journalist and political activist, César Falcón (Perú 1892-1970) was a founding member of the Communist Party of Perú together with José Carlos Mariátegui. In 1919, he was deported to Europe, and sought residence in Madrid, where he worked as a journalist. He was a key player in the creation of the left-wing publishing houses in the late 1920s and early 1930s, founding and running *Historia Nueva* with José Venegas, after the split of the original *Ediciones Oriente*. After founding and working for *Nosotros* over the period 1930-1931, he joined the Communist Party and collaborated in *Mundo Obrero* and *Frente Rojo*. He was one of the most active Party members during the war, as leader of the agit-prop and cultural organization *Altavoz del Frente*. Among his best known political works are *Imperialismo y anti-imperialismo* (Madrid: Nosotros, 1931) and *Crítica de la revolución española* (Madrid: M. Aguilar, 1931.

[94] In this sense, I obviously disagree with the comments made by historians Queipo del Llano and Tussel, who have argued that *Nosotros*' "thesis" was not to defend the "radical militancy of intellectuals against the politics of the Monarchy, but the submission of artistic and literary creation to the social revolution" (1988, 86).

taking place in them, from China to the USSR to India, with a strong emphasis on Latin America.[95]

Needless to say, however, the political focus of the journal was the national situation in Spain itself, in a year where the fall of Primo de Rivera was filling the air with the novelty of change. As a journal dedicated to national current issues, *Nosotros* exercised a fierce opposition to the Monarchy and the dictatorship and defended a Republic grounded in social justice and equality, ideas which the journal defended passionately and adamantly from a radical revolutionary perspective. As the editors of *Nueva España* actually put it, *Nosotros* was a journal of "strong leftist tendencies, defended with genius, culture and a great combative spirit" ("*Rifi-Rafe*" 15 May 1930, 12).

Nosotros was edited and mostly written by communist intellectuals, though none of them were members of the PCE or any other communist organization at the time (most of them would join the PCE in 1931).[96] Like *Nueva España*, *Nosotros* foregrounded itself as an alliance of all progressive, left-wing intellectuals who opposed the status quo and who wished to replace the Monarchy with a Republic and the dictatorship with a democratic government. As a true representative of that wide alliance, *Nosotros* was open to an array of political voices, all of them allowed to be expressed with equal respect, to the point that the journal seemed to be making a conscious effort to let all anti-monarchic

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[95] Falcón's Latin American origin, doubtlessly, explains the journal's emphasis on the revolutionary changes going on in that continent. *Nosotros* defended the idea of "*Hispanismo*" [Hispanicism], which meant that Spain, as much as the South American continent, were fighting against Anglo-Saxon imperialism and national dictatorships, albeit in different circumstances and for different historical reasons. See the article "Hispanismo".

[96] *Nosotros* always defended itself from the accusations that it was a communist journal, arguing that it was open to all progressive voices and that neither its director, nor the collaborators, belonged to the Communist Party or any other Party.

views stand on their own. Among those voices were that of socialist Julián Zugazagoitia and his call for a socialist Republic (1930, 9), or that of liberal Alvaro de Albornoz and his warnings that a future Republic could not be left in the hands of the conservatives (1930, 5). *Nosotros* printed interviews with liberals, like Marcelino Domingo or Pérez de Ayala, and with Radical-Socialists, like Alejandro Lerroux, and gave a great deal of space to liberal students writing on the renovation of the university, calling for freedom of speech, academic tenure and lay education. A number of socialist and liberal authors collaborated in the journal and many of them were actually praised, all the way from Joaquín Costa to Ortega y Gasset.

Unlike *Nueva España*, however, *Nosotros* believed that the political alliance drawn by all pro-Republican forces was to be "circumstantial", temporarily grounded in a minimum agreement of opposition to the status quo, but unable to hold together for a common program for government once the status quo had fallen. Pursuing what it called a "politics of reality", the journal nurtured that alliance as a way to bring about the Republic and called on each and every one of the parties which supported political change to work on strengthening its own program, since each of them would have to work on its own, and probably against one another, once the Republic was proclaimed ("Política de realidades" 1).

Nosotros argued that the reformist bourgeoisie could only bring about "moderate", changes, and that the "profound political, social, and economic transformation which Spain needed could not be carried out by a group of political parties representing "the whole spectrum of modern politics" (Falcón 1931, 2). That would be especially difficult considering that the two ends of that spectrum were so far apart. While liberal

Republicans based its program for political change on freedom (of speech, religion, education, etc) and economic *laisse-faire*, communists stood against "all basic freedoms within capitalism" (Falcón 1930, 5).

While liberal and socialist voices criticized the Monarchy, the dictatorship and the society of the *Restauración* which sustained them both, Falcón and his team warned the reformist bourgeoisie that it should no longer attempt to carry out its revolution alone. *Nosotros* believed that in 1930 a revolution of the national bourgeoisie was nothing but a "dream" which could have been fulfilled back in 1812. A hundred and eighteen years later, the Spanish revolution was to be a proletarian one or not to be at all ("La revolución burguesa" 5).

Nosotros attempted to link Republican aspirations with the need to have profound political and social change in the country, and believed that any political movement should be driven by class interests and should aim at achieving the liberation of one or more social classes. While the bourgeois intelligentsia viewed the Republican system as the conquest of universal liberties, or while Catalonian nationalists viewed it as a journey toward independence, workers and peasants viewed the Republic as a political tool which would give them not only the ownership of the means of production, but also their complete "economic redemption". *Nosotros* called for a Republic "of freedom, bread. . . justice and land" ("Primeras palabras" 1). The journal was not interested in a "free" Republic which would "give the vote to the poor", but in one which would actually resolve the problem of poverty (Zugazagoitia 1930, 9). *Nosotros* was hoping for a "full jump" toward a communist society. Its writers considered the year 1930 to be not a moment for

minimum, but for maximum programs, not the time for evolution, but for revolution, not for construction, but for destruction (Manteiga 1930, 1).

While *Nueva España* had allowed its communist writers to speak out against the political and cultural reformism of the bourgeois intelligentsia and had then proceeded to co-opt them into that very same discourse, the communist writers in *Nosotros* allowed bourgeois intellectuals to inundate the pages of the journal with a humanistic and liberal critique of the Spanish feudal system, while they themselves tackled their critique of bourgeois society through an economic analysis, something which was rather unusual at the time. Ultimately, it was because of this analysis that the journal's voice was so clearly a Marxist one, as the journal made it clear the issue was not whether the government should be sustained by a monarchic or by a Republican system but who had economic power.

Although Spain was timidly embracing capitalism, the country did not have strong capitalist foundations. The journal thus called for a new economic policy which would abolish protectionism, expand credits, allow Spanish capital to stay within national borders and even repatriate Spanish capital already invested overseas, all in the attempt to break through the outdated economic structure of the feudal state. At the same time, a number of economic demands of the proletarian revolution would have to be met, beginning with the redistribution of the land and the nationalization of big capital. [97]

This unequivocal Marxist and communist analysis in the pages of Falcón's journal meant that despite being published concurrently and being both alliances of "left-wing" intellectuals, *Nueva España* and *Nosotros* were grounded in very different discourses.

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[97] See for example David Díaz (1930); "La situación económica: el caso de la peseta"; Benito (1930).

Tuñón de Lara has seen *Nueva España* as the "sentimental proposal of a group of young writers, journalists and professionals from the petite bourgeoisie" which could be nothing more than a "Jacobin option" and that, already in 1930, was "anachronistic", without a solid political analysis and a tendency to generalize (1986b, 413). In the light of future events, however, I do not think the journal was "anachronistic". Rather, I find it was simply ahead of its time, for the kind of progressive alliance on which it modeled itself was not possible at a time when revolutionary and reformist intellectuals still had different agendas. An alliance of revolutionary and reformist intellectuals would be possible some time later, when those two groups found a common enemy in fascism, just as in 1930 they had found it in the dictatorship.

Indeed *Nueva España* was the first hint of what the Popular Front would later be: an alliance of bourgeois and revolutionary intellectuals with a minimum program into which communism would be clearly co-opted. The difference between *Nueva España* and later "left-wing" journals was, in fact, the degree of awareness communist intellectuals themselves would have of that co-option. *Nueva España* failed where other journals would later succeed because it was a cultural initiative unsustained by a similar political move. In later years, as we shall see, the legacy of *Nueva España* would prove to be very significant.

Nosotros was the other end of the equation, the resistance to the co-option of communist discourse into the "pluralism" of reformism, a symbol of the determination of communist intellectuals to keep a maximum political program even as they understood the need for tactical temporary alliances. After the Republic was proclaimed, and thus the

basic goal of the tactical alliance achieved, *Nosotros* felt free to break away from its ties to other political forces, as it promised it would do.

Interestingly, while the Party alliances were getting narrower, the intellectual alliances being sought by communist intellectuals (for now either in the opposition to the mainstream Party or working independently) were getting wider. From the *Unión Cultural Proletaria* to *Postguerra* to *Nueva España*, communist intellectuals had come out of their isolation and had taken an active role in the cultural scene, all the while they had managed to hold on to a communist strategy. From a bunch of "kids" dreaming of cultural change in the Retiro Park in early 1922, through the alliance of communist intellectuals with the petit-bourgeois revolutionary intelligentsia in the late 1920s (*Postguerra* and *El estudiante*) to their tactical alliance with the reformist bourgeoisie itself in 1930 (*Nueva España* and *Nosotros*), a completely new generation of intellectuals had moved from the background to the foreground of the cultural scene. Spanish society as a whole still had to come to terms with their presence. Irremediably, the Communist Party of Spain would have to do much of the same.

I have suggested earlier that 1930 was a year of transition, both in political and cultural terms. In early 1931, however, the transitional period would suddenly come to an end. The radicalization of the social and political crises brought Berenguer's government to its final collapse in February 1931, and the Monarchy found itself again without any political means to control the situation. Municipal elections were called for 12 April, and the result of the vote was so overwhelmingly anti-monarchical that King Alfonso XIII was forced to abandon the country, a move which was, as Paul Heywood has pointed out, "the most gracious act of a wholly undistinguished reign" (1990, 109). The very next day, a

provisional Republican government (made out by the leaders of the *Pacto de San Sebastián*) took the reins of power. There was no bloodshed, no street violence, no riots, no burning of Churches, no public executions, no parricide, only the clamor of joy in the streets. The reformist bourgeoisie which had been fighting intellectually and politically against the status quo for more than eighty years was now peacefully coming to power, marking the end of an era. As José Antonio Balbontín would write many years later, that may have seemed a reason to celebrate back then, but historical perspective would later convince many that, in fact, the peaceful proclamation of the Republic could not have been more unfortunate (1952, 215).

CHAPTER FOUR
Years of Republic, 1931-1936

> Never before had all of us, together, been so happy.
> That is because we had never been happy,
> and rarely had we been together.
>
> María Zambrano[1]

Whenever a description of the Second Spanish Republic has been sought, it has been impossible to avoid that definition which every sensible scholar admits has become commonplace, and yet still finds the most accurate: that it was the Republic of the bourgeois intelligentsia, a "Republic of intellectuals" or "professors" (Miratvilles 1931, 4). Indeed the presence of university professors, teachers, philosophers, journalists and writers in the Republican cabinet, the Parliament and most other state institutions was clearly overwhelming, especially since it included a large number of high-profile intellectuals in key positions, beginning with playwright and ex-president of the *Ateneo* Manuel Azaña as president of the Republic, and with philosophers like Ortega y Gasset, Fernando de los Ríos and Miguel de Unamuno as Members of Parliament.[2] In an attempt to "make up" for the lack of "cadres" in the Republican and socialist parties (Becarud 1978, 35), these intellectuals turned the Republican government into what Antonio Ramos

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[1] "Nunca habíamos estado todos juntos tan contentos, porque nunca habíamos estado contentos, y muy pocas veces juntos" (Zambrano 1977, 44).

[2] Miguel de Unamuno himself began an intervention in Parliament by pointing out that "there [were] too many professors and teachers in [the] chamber" (qtd. in Pérez Galán 1975, 94). Indeed among the new Republican ministers there were twelve university professors and six other professionals in the field of education (Becarud 1978, 33). Among the Members of Parliament there were also forty-five university professors as well as forty-seven journalists or writers, including first-rank thinkers like Manuel Azaña, Julián Besteiro, Fernando de los Ríos, Luis Jiménez de Asúa, Miguel de Unamuno and Ortega y Gasset (Menéndez Lafuente 1977, 81). A number of well-known, first-rank intellectuals, like Salvador de Madariaga or Ramón Pérez de Ayala, were also ambassadors (Arbeloa 1981, 29).

Oliviera later called a "*magistocracia*",[3] as they swiftly moved from having been the "pariahs of society" to being its "new aristocracy", becoming the new "masonic[4] and Republican clergy" which would set out to "displace the catholic clergy in its spiritual government" once and for all (148-50).[5]

Because the Republic of 1931 was proclaimed via national elections rather than through the violent overthrow of the monarchic regime and of the feudal system which sustained it, the bourgeois intelligentsia in power was to attempt to govern a country where political change had been most radical, but where the socio-economic structure as well as the state apparata of the *Ancien Régime* remained practically untouched. Lacking any practical models to follow and unable to counteract the power of the state institutions and parties from the conservative-authoritarian tradition which remained hostile to it (Cruz 1987, 109), the new Republican reformist government would find it very difficult to carry out its program of national regeneration.[6]

At the turn of the decade, Spain was still deeply torn apart by the effects of a overextended feudal system, and deeply divided between social groups with antagonistic economic interests. Yet Republicans wanted their government to be a solution of "middle

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[3] Derived from the Latin term "*magister*" and the Spanish one "*magisterio*", linguistic root of words related to the activity and profession of teaching.

[4] It is a well-known fact in Spanish history that a large proportion of the bourgeois intelligentsia of this time belonged to the Masonry. In fact, during the Civil War and for a long time after, Gen. Franco would often argue the struggle of Nationalist Spain was not only against communism but also against the Masonry.

[5] In fact, the entire struggle for modernity in Spain may be read as a struggle between the lay bourgeoisie and the Church. A number of scholars have argued that the Spanish reformist bourgeoisie saw itself as a "new clergy" seeking to replace the power and influence of the Church. See Alvarez Junco (1993); Castro Alfín (1997).

[6] Further information on the politics, as well as the social and economic policy of the First Republican government can be found in Tuñón de Lara coord. (1981); Tamames (1977).

term" (Azaña 1939, 73),[7] pursuing a "politics of cooperation", rather than a "politics of class" (1966, 2: 40). This spirit of "reconciliation of interests, ideological freedom, tolerance and compromise" (Huertas Vázquez 1988, 18), of class collaboration, rather than class struggle,[8] was indeed a "political utopia" (Abellán 1993, 440). President Azaña later admitted that the liberal bourgeoisie (still very much a leadership without a class) was incapable of defending the new regime "against the. . . attacks coming from the extreme right and the extreme left" (1966, 2: 465).

This "conciliatory" line and the "halfway" policies which resulted from it (Cruz 1987, 109) failed, in fact, to deal in any resolute way with Spain's endemic problems such as the unfair distribution of the land, the lack of education of the masses, social unrest, or the overpowering influence of the Church and army in the state and in civil society as a whole (especially the latter's influence in education). As a response to these problems, and always in a most non-confrontational spirit, the Republican government alternated between solutions verging on conformism (in its dealings with the army, for instance) and others verging on authoritarianism (in its dealings with the workers' movement), a combination which made it accumulate enemies, rather than allies, on both sides.

Despite such a precarious position, the reformist bourgeoisie in power set out to make a reality of the alternative program it had been devising for decades. Political power was conceived as a "school of civil morality" which would build the "backbone" of a new country and which would "boost the advancement of civilization" (Aragón 1991, 339-40).

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[7] These are the words of Azaña's alter-ego in his play on the Spanish Civil War, *La velada en Benicarló*.
[8] In his memoirs, José Antonio Balbontín argued that in the early 1930s, there were "two ways to understand what the Republic meant": one, *à la* de los Ríos, as "a pleasant and gentle hallway conversation with the dominant class in order to persuade it to be 'just' and 'charitable'. . . the other as an active struggle against the oppressor" (1952, 221).

Education and culture thus became "essential attribute[s] of the State" (*Constitución de la República española* art. 48-50). For the Republican government, culture was both the "essence" of its existence as well as the tool with which it would perpetuate itself, for if the Monarchy had sustained itself "through lack of culture and bayonets", the Republic would perpetuate itself by "improving the lives of all Spaniards" (Linacero 1931, 3). Republican school would, once and for all, create the "new man [sic]" which the *Krausistas* had dreamt about, it would "regenerate" the country in the way both the Generation of 1898 and Costa had demanded, and it would do it all by giving the bourgeois intelligentsia the political leadership which the Generation of 1914 had wanted for itself. In 1931, "the old principles of Spanish liberalism, the modern pedagogy of the *Institucionistas* and the educational ideas of historical socialism" converged into a single project, giving life to a government which sought, above all things, the secularization of education and the transformation of the individual into a dignified citizen of a progressive state (Tuñón de Lara 1990b, 331). In line with the cultural reformism which the bourgeoisie had defended for decades, a "new Spain" would be the result not so much of a revolution, but of a process of education and of the acquisition of knowledge and culture. Through such a "revolution of consciousness" (Molero Pintado 1977, 51), the Republic would create a citizenship ready for democracy.

The Republican educational program, whose blueprint had already been designed as part of the *Pacto de San Sebastián*, conceived of education as a "human and social right" (qtd. in Tuñón de Lara 1990b, 334), and included the creation of general as well as technical schools for school-age children and adults, the institution of an extra-curricular educational program, financial support for low-income families, the implementation of

teacher training, and the legalization of coeducation (Llopis 1933, 23). Among the most important educational projects of the new government were the attempts to put into practice the model of the *Escuela Unificada* (free and lay education available to all Spaniards)[9] and the creation of the *Misiones Pedagógicas*, cultural brigades sent to rural areas in order to teach peasants basic literacy skills, so that they may receive a "breath of progress and the means to participate in it" (Decree 29 May 1931). Even though the *Misiones Pedagógicas* were seeking to educate people who were living in the most appalling conditions, the government saw them as tools for "social justice" (qtd. in Tuñón de Lara 1986a, 167). A number of scholars have been less benevolent, and have seen the *Misiones Pedagógicas* as a cultural project designed by "the elites" to "give" culture to the people, and as such, the "highest point" of "Spanish intellectual populism" (Mainer 1983, 289), a project of "cultural charity" which perpetuated the "*Regeneracionismo*" of the Republican government because of its "idealist conception of the people" as "depositories" of unchangeable "popular essences" (Bilbatúa 1976, 33-4).

What Republicans called the "politics of cooperation" or "liberal politics", as opposed to "class politics", was often referred to as the "politics of *pueblo*" (García Santos 1980, 25). Spain was proclaimed a "democratic Republic of workers of all classes organized in a regime of freedom and justice" in which sovereign power came from the people (*Constitución*, art. I). Unlike their nineteenth-century counterparts, modern Republicans seemed to be clearly aware of the social divisions which existed within that

[9] The project of the *Escuela Unificada* was the subject of lengthy debates in the Republican Parliament, but was not implemented during this first legislature. For the educational and cultural policy of the first Republican government, see Molero Pintado (1991); de Meer (1978); Millán (1983); Domingo (1932); Huertas Vázquez (1988).

pueblo, since they often addressed the bourgeoisie, the middle classes, and the workers as separate groups.

Santos Juliá has argued that this "double reality" of Republican discourse, which appealed to the people as a whole and yet established a difference "between patrons and workers, the bourgeoisie and proletariats" means that the discourse of the Republican government should not be defined as "populist", since it did not attempt to "replace" those otherwise well-differentiated social groups, but to "integrate" them (1988, 37). Other authors, however, have argued that Republican discourse (and practice) around 1931 was "populist" even despite this awareness of class divisions, because of the way it perceived people to be a mass of passive recipients, whether of cultural products or of political change. These authors have argued that the "*pueblo*" of the Republicans was hardly a political subject with full historical agency, but rather an amorphous mass which would benefit from, rather than lead, the revolution. The *pueblo* was mobilized to take on a greater leadership role in society, but political power was to remain in the hands of the intellectual elites (Alvarez Junco 1990b, 166).

Earlier in this work, I adopted the definition of populism given by Ernesto Laclau, according to whom a populist discourse would appear when the "popular democratic" interpellation of a class or class fraction which needs a substantial transformation in the power bloc in order to assert its hegemony is presented "*as a synthetic-antagonistic complex with respect to the dominant ideology*" (1977, 172; emphasis in the original).[10] Although in 1931 the bourgeois Republican government was interpellating people above classes, it did not immediately inscribe the *pueblo* as one of the "antagonistic poles" in the

[10] See Chapter One.

dominant contradiction which expressed the relations of domination. Instead, the bourgeoisie itself had moved to occupy the position of the status quo (even if only at the political level) and was now interpellating the people in order to have them collaborate with the government, an institution which saw itself very much as an integral part of the civil society and of the *pueblo* itself. This discourse was to last a remarkably short time, however, since toward the end of the period covered in this chapter, around late 1935 and early 1936, the political circumstances would have undergone considerable change, after a right-wing coalition had taken the reins of power in Spain and fascism had become an overwhelming threat all across Europe. By then, the terms of the equation would have radically changed, and the reformist bourgeoisie would find itself, yet again, interpellating the Spanish *pueblo* to rise against the feudal powers-that-be, putting forward a political discourse which resembled the populist discourse of nineteenth-century Republicanism much more closely, as we shall later see.

Not all of the Spanish intelligentsia, of course, was part of the group in power. To their right was another group of intellectuals (though perhaps smaller in number too) who felt rather "nostalgic" towards the *Ancien Régime*: in some cases the political system itself, in others the kind of "pure intellectual environment" which it had allowed (Becarud 1978, 98). To the left of the bourgeois intelligentsia were revolutionary intellectuals who exercised a great deal of opposition to the Republican government in all aspects. For the majority of these writers, the revolution was to be led by the people and them alone and not by intellectual elites. As far as they were concerned, what those elites were, in fact, bringing about was not the "revolution" but the "counter-revolution", as Fersen had already predicted from the pages of *Nueva España* in early 1930 (1930a, 11).

The Spanish Second Republic may have been a "Republic of intellectuals", but the cultural debates which took place within the intellectual opposition to it were indeed extraordinary. After the change in government, different cultural and artistic strategies which had been pursuing their own struggle against the feudal system and/or the reformist bourgeoisie, moved to the foreground of the cultural scene, as if all their hours of truth had arrived at once. Whatever avant-garde art Spain had in previous years had already been declared "dead", but there were new avant-garde artistic projects – by now in the pre-Surrealist mode – which aimed at becoming leaders of both the artistic and political vanguard, most notoriously the journal *Gaceta de Arte*.[11] Further, the time was also ripe for the discussion of proletarian literature and culture to come to the fore, as the revolutionary intelligentsia interpreted the end of the Monarchy to be a mere step which would lead to much deeper revolutionary changes. On the one hand, the proclamation of the Second Republic gave extraordinary momentum to the social literature of which the "Other Generation of 1927" had been pioneer throughout the 1920s.[12] On the other, questions on the social and political involvement of intellectuals, on the possibility of producing proletarian literature in Spain, and on the socialization of culture so as to include the masses of uneducated people had an extraordinary presence in public life.[13] Many of the writers and intellectuals who participated in the creation of social literature, in the political and cultural critique of the Republic and in the debates which ensued had been

[11] *Gaceta de Arte* was edited by Domingo Pérez Minik and Eduardo Westerdahl. Further information on its history and ideology can be found in Westerdahl (1981).

[12] Detailed information about the debates on proletarian culture can be found in Fuentes (1980) and Cobb (1981). For the life and development of the social novel during the Republic, see Esteban and Santonja (1987, 1988); Gil Casado (1973); Fuentes (1980).

[13] For general cultural debates around this time, see Mainer (1983); Tuñón de Lara (1973); Cano Ballesta (1972).

communists for a long time, some of them already in the ranks of the Communist Party or soon to be.

Upon the proclamation of the Second Republic, the Communist Party exercised a fierce opposition to the reformist government, in all aspects of its social, political, economic, and cultural policies. As a result, cultural historians have found no reason to be more benevolent with the Party at this stage, and have often judged the Party's cultural discourse between 1931 and 1933 to be as "dogmatic" and "sectarian" as ever before, as if nothing had changed from the mid-1920s. Very little is said about the cultural evolution of the Party between the years of 1933 and 1935 except for the fact that to some extent, it opened up to embrace like-minded revolutionary intellectuals, like José Antonio Balbontín, Joaquín Arderíus, Ramón J. Sender, Rafael Alberti, César Falcón, César M. Arconada, María Teresa León, and Josep Renau (just to mention the most prestigious), who became members of the PCE as part of the "generalized climate of radicalization" and because of their admiration for the Soviet Union (Cruz 1993, 159).

In February 1936, *Mundo Obrero*, the Party's official publication,[14] published a manifesto signed by more than three hundred intellectuals – most of whom were liberal and bourgeois, very few proletarian, and even fewer Party members – giving their support to the alliance of the Popular Front. By then, the Party was no longer attacking socialist intellectuals for their alleged betrayal of the proletarian revolution, but was trying to prove

[14] *Mundo Obrero* first appeared on 23 August 1930 as a weekly with the subtitle of "Publication for workers and peasants", because of the difficulties of publishing anything with the word "Communist" (Esteban and Santonja 1988, 319). The publication became a daily on 14 November 1931, with José Bullejos and José Silva as editors. *Mundo Obrero* had a difficult and unsteady life, and it disappeared at least four times before it achieved some kind of stability in early 1936, after the electoral victory of the Popular Front. Throughout those years it was always directed by high-profile members of the Party, from Vicente Uribe to Jesús Hernández.

how fascism was a backward political force which had historically destroyed intellectual and cultural life (including, of course, bourgeois intellectual life). By then, as most scholars point out, the Communist Party was participating in the *frentepopularista*[15] movement of the Spanish anti-fascist intelligentsia, a move in defense of the democratic revolution.

These bits and pieces of commentary on the cultural evolution of the Party and its Party intellectuals during the pre-war Republican period thus touch on the years of 1931, 1933 and 1936 and very little on what happened in between. I have stated the purpose of this thesis, however, to be one of "filling gaps" and of exploring the transition between the Communist Party's original proletarian discourse in the early 1920s to a democratic one in the mid 1930s, and, therefore, I am interested in what happened between 1931 and 1936. Thus it is in this chapter that the goal of "filling gaps" materializes in its most literal sense, for it was between 1931 and 1936 that the evolution from one political position to the other took place, gradually and yet somewhat abruptly, as we shall see.

One of the most important shifts which had already taken place, even before this period itself began, is that the Party had already let go of a whole group of intellectuals who had been in the PCE from its foundation (who had, in fact, founded it), and welcomed (though not quite literally at first) a completely new group which began to join the Party in 1930 and continued to do so until 1936. This change was not a generational one, for many of the intellectuals who left the Party and many of those who joined it were much the same age. Instead, it was a political one, since intellectuals abandoned the Party as a consequence of the final political splits which drove the communist opposition to

[15] From the Spanish "*Frente Popular*", the term "*frentepopularista*" would make reference to people or

found its own political organizations. In the process, the Party was divested of its most brilliant intellectuals (notwithstanding the brightness of those who were to come), even if they had been part of the reason as to why the PCE had had such an unsteady political life. Unlike those who left (Andrade, Gorkín, Maurín, Nín, among others), those who joined it were to be no dissidents, although very few of them would actually have an active political role to play within the Party before 1936.[16]

I think it is reasonable to suggest that the entry of new intellectuals into the Communist Party was, in the first place, "accidental", for they were really interested in being part of the Communist International, "like the rest of the European writers they so admired" and not so much a part of what they saw as a rather insignificant Communist Party in Spain, which, in any case, would not be able to offer much support to their cultural projects (Cruz 1993, 159). Precisely because of this lack of interaction between the Party and its intellectuals, it is often argued that there was no "organic relationship" between the PCE and the creative work of communist intellectuals.[17]

To some extent, this lack of "organicity" was quite real, if that simply means that the Party played no role in the creation and administration of the cultural projects these intellectuals led. I find, however, that such a statement is more a comment on administrative matters than on political issues, since it still sheds no light on the questions of whether or not the Party line affected these intellectuals or whether or not the cultural projects they undertook, in turn, affected the Party's cultural evolution. In fact, if we take a closer look at how the Party and the work produced by its intellectuals evolved between

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organizations in line with the Popular Front.

[16] Cruz makes the exception of Ramón J. Sender (1993, 159), but the names of Balbontín and Falcón should also be included.

1931 and early 1936 we should be able to find a great deal of political and cultural connections operating rather "organically", insofar as the PCE and Party intellectuals influenced one another, despite their clear "administrative" independence.

During the first few years of Republican government, the presence of these petit-bourgeois revolutionary intellectuals in the PCE did very little to raise the level of the intellectual and cultural analysis put out by the Party. In fact, the entry of these intellectuals in the Party would bear fruit in the medium and long term, first during the middle years of the decade, as fascism became more of a political and cultural threat, and later in early 1936, when the climax of the anti-fascist struggle gave way to the creation of the Spanish Popular Front. How the Party benefited from the cultural discourse and practice of its intellectuals would not become obvious until the end of the period covered in this chapter, during the first half of 1936, and it would be most significant after the outbreak of war in July of that year, as we shall see in Chapter Five. The relevance I want to point out here, however, is that the extraordinary fruit which was eventually borne after 1936 – when the Party and its intelligentsia were indeed working in a much more "organic" relationship – was the result of the evolution which started here, between the years of 1931 and 1936.

In the first section of this chapter, which covers the years of the first Republican government (April 1931-January 1933), I look at the Party's rather schematic cultural discourse. I say "schematic" not because it was "dogmatic", which is an issue of no concern to me here, but because it was scarce and poorly presented. The cultural projects which the Party was able to produce during those two years, as well as the independent

[17] At the time, Party intellectuals also agreed with this conclusion. See Montero (1977); Renau (1977).

projects of Party intellectuals, were clearly grounded in a proletarian, anti-bourgeois, anti-democratic line, although none of it was able to save the Party from the cultural poverty it had inherited from previous years.

The political context for Section Two (January 1933-July 1935) is dramatically different. In early 1933, the first Republican government was voted out of office and a right-wing coalition of parties took power, giving way to a new proletarian attempt at revolution in October 1934 and, therefore, to new political instability, all while fascism had begun to spread dangerously in the rest of Europe. Spanish cultural history has dealt to a large extent with the "radicalization" which this new "October" revolution generated in the Spanish intelligentsia as a whole, who began to find positions in the upcoming anti-fascist struggle.

Caught between the need to join wide anti-fascist alliances and its desire to keep anti-fascism as a solely proletarian cause, the Party put forward a contradictory and ambiguous political discourse at this time. This discourse would not be reflected so much in the Party's cultural discourse – which, in fact, during these two years fell to an absolute historical low – but in the work of communist intellectuals, whose work began to be informed both by their original proletarian line as well as by a new anti-fascist line which demanded greater openness toward more democratic concepts. This tension was most obvious in the journal *Octubre*. Less than two years later, the growing pressure of fascism had moved Party intellectuals to take an extraordinary leap and previous tensions were resolved by moving swiftly toward a cultural discourse of clear popular-democratic overtones in which the protagonist was no longer the proletariat, but the whole of the Spanish people, and in which class struggle was replaced by the redemption of humanity.

Such was the political and cultural discourse which the journal *Nueva Cultura* embraced right from its foundation.

By the time the Seventh Congress of the Comintern was held and international communism moved to embrace the Popular Front anti-fascist alliance, the Communist Party of Spain had been ready for quite a while to make of anti-fascism a common cause with the intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie. In Section Three (July 1935-July 1936) we witness the Party moving to adopt the democratic revolution as a new political strategy, and opening up to embrace the historical narrative which *Nueva Cultura* had already begun to produce. As a result, the PCE no longer saw itself as the representative of the proletariat in struggle against the bourgeoisie, but of the Spanish *pueblo* in its struggle against the feudal system, shifting emphasis from the production of a proletarian culture to the resurrection of a popular one.

In the early days of 1936 – as the time for national elections approached, and at the height of propaganda for the Popular Front – the proletarian cultural discourse which had been the original trademark of the PCE and the national-popular discourse it had more recently embraced were completely merged into a single discourse, one in which old revolutionary terms were given new democratic meanings. The PCE had thus completed its transition, a dramatic journey of hardly five years, without which it is impossible to understand the Party's discourse and practice in the years to come.

SECTION ONE: April 1931-April 1933
The First Biennium

The Spanish Communist Party and the Second Republic (1931-33)

The political crossroads at which Spain had found itself in 1930 were analyzed by the Third International as a political crisis which could end in two possible ways: either with Spain still a Monarchy but "with a new coalition government. . . which would restore constitutional guarantees" and which would have the support of socialists, the petite bourgeoisie and "the aristocracy of the working class"; or as a Republican government led by "traditional Republicans, radicals, socialists, and anarchist-syndicalists" (Cruz 1987, 115). Whatever the case, the Comintern did not expect the change in status quo to be deeply structural.

As a result of this analysis, the Comintern urged Spanish communists to make sure that the Republican government would find no political stability whatsoever, that it would, indeed, be as transitory as possible. In line with the resolutions of its Sixth Congress and the policy of United Front, the international organization ordered the Communist Party of Spain to refuse alliances with socialists and to try to unmask their anti-revolutionary strategies (Estruch 1978, 67). It was assumed that political events would then happen relatively quickly, and that a time would soon come when the new Republican government would fail to satisfy the social demands of the working masses. The revolution would

then enter a new stage, led by the proletariat, eventually giving way to the creation of Soviets (Bullejos 1972, 127).[18]

In line with the Comintern, the PCE continued to believe that both the reformist bourgeoisie and the landowners' class were the enemies of the working masses. It was irrelevant whether the political alliance which held these two classes together in power would take the form of a feudal Monarchy or of a reformist Republic, since the only real difference between those two systems was which class would play a hegemonic role over the other. The new government may have seen itself as "popular", but it was "essentially counter-revolutionary and demagogic" and communists wanted nothing to do with it (Cruz 1997, 128). It mattered little to them that the masses had welcomed the proclamation of the Republic with such joy, and that ordinary people on the streets were being quite hostile to communist slogans and propaganda.[19] Instead, Party leaders "felt quite proud of going against the current", arguing that "although communists. . . always [had to] be in a position to lead the masses", they did not necessarily have to "follow the crowd", especially when the masses had "chose[n] the wrong path", and were moving toward goals "which went against their class interests" (Bullejos 1972, 123-24).

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[18] Further information on the relationship between the Comintern and the PCE during the early 1930s can be found in Bullejos (1972); E. H. Carr (1982).

[19] A symbol of the lack of synchronism between the PCE and the masses who rushed to the streets to celebrate the proclamation of the Republic were the events on 14 April, when a truck full of Party members arrived at the Madrilian square of *La Puerta del Sol*, the very heart of the capital and a focal point for the demonstrations and celebrations. José Antonio Balbontín, who was in the crowd, has told how the "good masses" of people who were there believed that the "bunch of Communist youths" who started to yell slogans like "All power to the Soviets" were "provocateurs", and, as a result, reacted quite aggressively against them (1952, 216). In his own memoirs, José Bullejos has also suggested that the masses were quite "hostile" toward Communist slogans during "several days" afterwards, and stormed against whatever Communist flags, pamphlets or newspapers they found in their way. Bullejos has acknowledged that the isolation of the Party during those days was "complete", although its leaders were still convinced that there was no reason to change the Party's line or the tone of its propaganda.

Naturally, the PCE opposed all aspects of the Republican program, and the renewed political institutions which were to give life to it, because, among other reasons the new *Cortes Constituyentes* [Parliament] had been unable to bring any change to the state apparata of the previous regime (PCE 1931, 5-6), because the proposed Agrarian Reform would not be able to get rid of the remnants of feudalism (Adame 1931, 1), and because the administrative and political reorganization of the state, which included the creation of *Estatutos de Autonomía*, clearly fell short of full self-government for the historical nations of the Spanish state (Cruz 1987, 130-1). As an alternative, the PCE presented a program which included the revocation of the Law of Public Order, the closure of government prisons, the disarmament of police forces and of the Civil Guard, the distribution of weapons among the proletariat, the creation of a government of workers and peasants, self-government for Cataluña and Euskadi,[20] and the end to the occupation of Morocco (Estruch 1978, 66).

According to the communists in the opposition to the PCE, these were "abstract slogans with little relation to the political situation of the day" and thus "demagogic and out of proportion" (Andrade 1979, 53). In line with Trotsky,[21] the *Oposición Comunista de Izquierda* believed Spanish workers were still too weak to seize power by themselves and thus what was required was "a broad and bold policy of United Front" which would bring all Republican forces together (E. H. Carr 1982, 297-8). That meant that while the Party should keep its maximum program of a government of workers and peasants, it should also put forward "the most radical democratic slogans" (ibid). As far as the OCI was concerned, the objective conditions for a proletarian insurrection were not quite in

[20] Basque Country.

place in Spain yet, nor was there a strong Communist Party to create them (Andrade 1979, 46; Juan José 1931).

Like the PCE and the OCI, Maurín and the Catalonian *Bloque Obrero y Campesino* also believed that the Spanish revolution should go directly from a democratic revolution toward a socialist one. Unlike the other two communist organizations, however, the BOC believed that the democratic revolution had to be given a chance first and be allowed to fulfill its goals, eventually under the leadership of the working class ("La revolución ha entrado" 1). Clearly because of its anarchist-syndicalist origins, the BOC argued that the source of the revolutionary impetus of the working class would be found within the unions and not in Soviets, which were institutions with no tradition in Spain. The BOC hoped that a renovated CNT, led by communists, could actually play that role.[22]

Caught between these two oppositional forces, the Party was simply left to follow the political guidelines given to it by the Comintern. The relationship between the international organization and its Spanish chapter, however, still left much to be desired. In fact, during the little more than a year which went by from the proclamation of the Republic until a few months after the celebration of the Party's Fourth Congress in March 1932, the Party experienced a number of clashes with the Communist International, the result of a lack of personal agreement between the leaderships of the two organizations as much as the result of the fact that the Comintern put out contradictory analyses of the situation in Spain.[23]

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[21] See Trotsky's *La revolución española* (1977).

[22] For more information on the BOC's political analysis of the Republican government and its political activity during the early years of Republican government, see Alba (1977); Alba and Swchartz (1988).

[23] While some members of the Executive Committee of the Comintern encouraged the Party to seek an active role within the bourgeois-democratic revolution underway, others urged them to fight against the

Although the Party's Fourth Congress, in fact, has come down in the Party's official history as "*el Congreso del gran viraje*" [The Congress of the great change in direction] – on the grounds that the national leadership changed and the Party corrected "its narrow and dogmatic orientation" (Ibárruri 1960, 34) – the fact remains that the congress was not able to make essential changes in the Party's political line, and in that sense may not be considered to be a congress of "renewal" (Cruz 1987, 143).

A few months after the congress, and in a political climate marked by tensions over a possible military *coup d'état* against the Republican government, the Communist Party split over the strategy to adopt. Bullejos and part of the PCE leadership believed that fascism was the worst of enemies and that the Party would have to seek temporary alliances with the Republican bourgeoisie in order to fight against it. The rest of the Party believed that the enemy could be found in both fronts: in the fascist threat as much as in the Republican bourgeoisie (Cruz 1987, 148-9). After a failed *coup d'état* led by General Sanjurjo against the Republican government on 10 August 1932, Bullejos launched a new slogan: "For the defense of the Republic" for fear that the previous sectarian slogan of "class against class" would confuse the masses (Bullejos 1972, 190). The Party thus called for a "coalition of all democratic and popular forces on the basis of a democratic revolutionary program which would defend the Republic, and which would include the complete disarmament, military, political, economic and otherwise, of all reactionary forces", a move considered so reasonable within communist ranks that both the OCI and the BOC offered their support for it (Andrade 1979, 57). The Comintern, however,

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counter-revolutionary Republic and "destroy all expectations of democracy" (Estruch 1978, 67). As had been the case in previous years, the international organization called the Party "sectarian" and accused it

accused the Party of being "opportunistic" and Bullejos himself of being "counter-revolutionary". A few days later he and his team were expelled from the Party.

That would be Bullejos' definite fall from grace and the Comintern's opportunity to appoint a new Executive Committee with the new blood of leaders like José Díaz, Dolores Ibárruri, Jesús Hernández or Vicente Uribe,[24] who then, as well as throughout the following years, showed great disposition to follow Comintern guidelines. This change in leadership would indeed bring about the most profound political changes, but not quite yet. In fact, there were no immediate changes at all. Bullejos' suggestion to join with the Republican forces in order to close the doors on the advance of fascism did not prosper, and the Party continued faithful to the resolutions of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern and the policy of United Front throughout 1932 and into 1933.[25]

The Communist Party of Spain and the Party's Revolutionary Intelligentsia

In an article about the Communist Party of Spain and literature during the early years of the Republic, Manuel Aznar has argued that after its Fourth Congress in March 1932, the Party experienced a dramatic turn in its literary and cultural policy as well as in its relationship to intellectuals (1990, 292). This is true, but only partially. The interest of the Party in literary or cultural issues from 1931 until 1933 was still so small, that it is hard to discuss what appeared on the pages of *Mundo Obrero* as any kind of "policy" whether of a "literary" or a "cultural" nature. In fact, since Party statements on literature and

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of being unable to function democratically, although the fact was that the Party had been following previous guidelines the Comintern had given to it (67).

[24] Díaz, Ibárruri and Uribe were called to be the leadership which would take the Party through the years of civil war and exile, completely overshadowing all other leaders who had come before them.

cultural issues were in no way a program for action, to use the word "policy" for this period would still be misleading. Even more importantly, the little cultural discourse which the Party may have put forward at this time did not seem to change at all after the celebration of the Fourth Congress and would not, in fact, do so for a few years more.

Before the celebration of the Party's Fourth Congress, a few revolutionary intellectuals entered the Party quietly and without public debate, among them César M. Arconada[26] and Joaquín Arderíus, both of whom were also popular social novelists. The cultural discourse put forward by the Party, however, was not affected by the presence of these intellectuals, whose cultural activism and intellectual work took place elsewhere. In fact, the influence went quite the other way around (at least during this period), for the political message found in the fictional work of these authors followed quite literally the PCE's political line.[27]

The few articles on culture to be found in the Party's official publications (one in the newest publication *Bolchevismo*, with which I will deal later, the others in *Mundo Obrero*) touched on a variety of topics – ranging from revolutionary literature to reformist

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[25] Further reading on the political evolution of the Party between 1931 and 1933 can be found in Cruz (1987).

[26] A poet, novelist and cultural critic, César M. Arconada (Palencia 1898-Moscow 1964) started his literary career as an avant-garde novelist and his career as a critic as the sub-editor of the avant-garde journal *La Gaceta Literaria*. In 1930, he became a Communist and joined the Party in 1931, subsequently becoming one of the best-known social novelists. After 1931, he wrote much of the cultural criticism which was to appear in *Mundo Obrero*. During the Civil War, he worked as a journalist in the north of Spain, and after the conflict he continued his literary career in Moscow, where, among other things, he became the editor of *Literatura Internacional*, the Spanish-language version of the international Soviet journal. Among his best-known novels were *La Turbina* (1930), *Los pobres contra los ricos* (1933) and *Reparto de tierras* (1934). His journalistic work has been compiled by Christopher Cobb in *De Astudillo a Moscú* (Valladolid: Ambito, 1984).

[27] As Rafael Cruz has suggested, in the 1930s, Spanish social literature "served to spread the political discourse of [different] organizations which were part of the social movement, in the attempt to mobilize ordinary people toward a particular political interest" (1993, 155). Arconada and Arderíus – and later Sender – would be good examples of how this happened in relation to the Communist Party of Spain. See also Aznar Soler (1990); Castañar (1992).

intellectuals – but what those articles revealed was nothing more than a collection of slogans, rather than a body of sophisticated cultural analysis.[28]

In line with previous years, the Party continued to argue that a proletarian culture would not be possible until after the proletarian revolution had triumphed, and it continued to attack as viciously as ever socialist and bourgeois intellectuals now occupying government posts.[29] For the most part, *Mundo Obrero* published Spanish translations of well-known writings by outstanding Russian revolutionaries (including Lenin himself) and reprints from foreign publications. If "La opinión de Lenin sobre la literatura" published in December 1931, presented Lenin's well-known maxim that literature had to be Party literature, a week later "La literatura en la Unión Soviética" echoed the equally well-known slogan of the Soviet RAPP: "Writers to the factories! Workers to literature!".[30] All those slogans were in line with current Soviet literary policy, but, as Christopher Cobb has suggested, once extrapolated to the Spanish context, in which a bourgeois Republic had just been proclaimed, they turned out to be rather "simplistic" (1981, 47).[31] In December 1932, *Mundo Obrero* encouraged workers to participate in the Spanish Union of Proletariat and Revolutionary Writers even though its mother organization, the RAPP, had

[28] Christopher Cobb's suggestion that the person behind *Mundo Obrero*'s anonymous articles on cultural issues could have been Angel Pumarega is probably well-founded, since the founder of the UCP was now back in the Party, was the sub-editor of *Mundo Obrero*, and the official cultural line to follow was not too different from the one he had defended in 1922 with the UCP. See Cobb (1981, 47).
[29] See "¡A la lucha contra el poder de la Iglesia! A la lucha contra la sumisión de las Cortes!", "El partido socialfascista", "Don Fernando de los Ríos y los factores de la revolución", "Avanza la revolución".
[30] Acronym for the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers, founded in 1925 under the auspices of the Proletkul't, and after other organizations such as the Organization of Proletarian Writers and the Moscow Association of Proletarian Writers (MAPP).
[31] All citations from Cobb translated from originals in Spanish.

been closed down by the Soviet Communist Party and a new organization, the Union of Soviet Writers, created in its place ("Aviso importante" 3).[32]

Although during these early years of Republican government the intellectuals who had once been "dissidents" from the PCE – Andrade, Gorkín, Maurín, Nín – were now in the ranks of the *Oposición Comunista de Izquierda* and the *Bloque Obrero y Campesino*, the three organizations still shared some important ground regarding their analysis of culture. They all believed that since culture was a superstructure, cultural change could only come about when social conditions had also changed. The three communist parties also shared a passionate rage against the ideology of cultural reformism, and the belief that the education of the working masses within a bourgeois system could only make them more servile to it rather than educating them for the revolution. Needless to say, they all expressed an aversion to bourgeois and Socialist intellectuals.[33]

Despite these common points of departure for cultural analysis, there were important differences among the three organizations. While the PCE refused to give a revolutionary role, not just to the reformist bourgeoisie, but also to the revolutionary intelligentsia ("Cómo y cuántos" 4), the *Oposición Comunista de Izquierda* was careful to establish a clear difference between these two groups, arguing that revolutionary intellectuals were a natural ally of the proletariat (Andrade 1931b). The OCI wanted to be reconciliatory toward them, among other reasons because it believed the intellectual poverty of the PCE was, in fact, the result of the Party's historical rejection of

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[32] The RAPP was closed down in December 1932 by the Soviet Communist Party. For more information on these and other European cultural institutions, see Egbert (1970).

[33] Among the articles on cultural issues published by the BOC were "La Batalla diario por la educación marxista del proletariado"; G. García (1931); Miratvilles (1931); Martí (1933); and Xurigera (1933a,

revolutionary intellectuals (among whom had been most of the members of the OCI itself, including Juan Andrade).

Whereas the OCI embraced the Trotskyist line that a proletarian culture would have to be grounded in the former achievements of the bourgeoisie, and that it would be as short-lived and transitional as the proletarian dictatorship itself (Fersen 1932), the BOC argued that a proletarian culture could exist and, in fact existed, in the midst of a bourgeois and capitalist regime, and that it could be found in the cultural model the proletariat was building as an alternative to the status quo ("La literatura proletaria"). Moreover, the BOC argued that such proletarian culture should reject completely the bourgeois culture of the past and start anew (Monserrat 1931). While the OCI declared that the articulation of artistic and cultural policy was not to be the domain of the Party (Trotsky 1933), the BOC moved right into action in order to contribute to what they saw as an incipient Spanish proletarian culture by officially sponsoring a Mass Theatre, which carried the official name of "Artistic Section of the BOC". This project, also known as the *Teatro Proletario*, was the only artistic project of the time officially organized and administered by a communist party (Vallespinos 1931a, 1931b).

Despite the above differences, the three communist organizations agreed that only some degree of political education would prepare the working and peasant masses for their revolutionary role ahead. We have already seen how, in previous years, Party publications had repeatedly echoed the Leninist maxim that without revolutionary theory there would be no revolutionary movement. Yet the Party had failed to put that into practice because of conflicting opinions on the need for the theoretical education of the

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1933b). Among the articles published by the OCI were Bilbao (1931); Fersen (1931); and "La labor de la

working masses and because of the limited social influence its publishing houses had. In the early 1930s, the PCE could no longer afford to maintain such a degree of self-satisfaction. The kind of ideological pressure coming out from the communist groups in the opposition – whose ideological dissent could no longer be explained as personality clashes or power struggles – forced the Party to stop paying lip service to the slogans which it had mechanically repeated in previous years and to move right into action.

As a result, the Party's most important cultural initiative during the early years of the Republic was the creation of its first theoretical journal, *Bolchevismo*,[34] as a means to meet the educational needs of its members and to counteract the influence of the two journals published by the opposition groups – *Comunismo*[35] by the OCI and *La nueva era*[36] by the BOC.

The editorial published in the first issue of *Bolchevismo* confirmed once more that the "extremely low theoretical level" of the proletariat was one of the reasons for its political "weakness", and it pointed out that the "disproportion which exist[ed] between, on the one hand, the revolutionary ability and the heroic spirit of the working class, and, on the other, its political training" could only be resolved by "raising the level of theoretical analysis of the working class, and providing better training to the Party cadres" ("Nuestros objetivos" 2). The Party seemed to be more convinced than ever of the fact

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educación marxista de la oposición española".

[34] *Bolchevismo* was first published in March 1932. Only the first two issues have survived in the PCE's historical archives.

[35] *Comunismo* was published from May 1931 to September 1934, with a total of 38 issues. It was published in the city of Oviedo. For commentary on the journal and an anthology of texts, see the volume edited by Jesús Pérez (1978).

[36] *La nueva era* was published between 1930 and 1931, edited by Joaquín Maurín, as the unofficial theoretical journal of the *Bloque Obrero y Campesino*. The journal reappeared in 1936, under the direction of Andrés Nín. For more information and a selection of articles, see the volume edited by Alba (1976).

that political theory was "a powerful weapon" and an "essential tool" for the revolution (ibid).

In this first editorial, the emphasis placed on the study of theory as a practical revolutionary tool was so great that the editors introduced *Bolchevismo* as a journal which would not be "academic" but "fully active in the [political] struggle" (3). What that meant, of course, was that they were not interested in publishing a journal so highly focused on theoretical discussion that it would forget the implications of political theory as a source for revolutionary practice itself. What the editors wanted was a publication which would allow the Party to find a balance between theory and practice, something which, they admitted, had eluded the Party for so long.

Accordingly, the first issue of the journal declared the PCE's main goal to be that of "transform[ing] the Party into a Bolshevik mass party", which meant "putting into practice. . .a just policy regarding the national question", that is, having "a just national political line, a clear interpretation of the nature of the revolution, the forces in which it [was] grounded, its development and its future perspectives" (2). This apparently simple and worthy statement of purpose, however, was simply covering up a slightly more convoluted state of affairs underneath the surface, since throughout Bullejos' Editorial and all other articles in the first issue it was never made clear whether such a "just interpretation" of national events was something the Party already thought it had, or something it was eagerly looking for.

The fear of "academicism" was taken too far, to the point that the "theoretical" contribution of the journal was reduced to being an analysis of how the Party's program was informed by a particular reading of national events. This undue focus on Party

program turned out to be, in fact, the journal's greatest shortcoming right from its very first issue, for such an emphasis meant that *Bolchevismo* turned out to be less about political discussion and more about ideological indoctrination.

If the Party, in fact, believed it already had a "just interpretation" of national events, the journal was merely acting as a transmission channel, passing on information from the leadership to the rank-and-file for the benefit of the latter. If, on the other hand, Bullejos' statement meant that the Party was searching for that interpretation, the mere publication of reports in preparation for, and as a result of, the congress did not seem to be the right tools in order to undertake that search.

Nowhere in *Bolchevismo* was there any hint that the Party was looking for the "right interpretation of events". In fact, everything that was published seemed to be an indication that the Party had already achieved it. The publication of a letter by D. Manuilsky (1932), a member of the Comintern's Executive Committee who had criticized the Party's lack of action in the national political arena, could be read, at first, as a sign that the Party was acknowledging its weakness. The mere publication of congress resolutions, however, seemed to indicate that the Fourth Congress had served to solve those problems and had, in fact, given the Party that "just interpretation". There was no discussion about why the Party may have been confronting the Comintern and two other communist organizations over the interpretation of the unfolding of the Spanish revolution, nor about what the resolutions of the Fourth Congress had meant for that interpretation.

All this seemed to indicate, sadly, that what the Party had meant all along by saying it wanted to "raise. . . the level of theoretical analysis of the working class" was that it

wanted to have its interpretation of events be understood as clearly as possible ("Nuestros objetivos" 2). In this vein, *Bolchevismo* argued that what the Party needed to do in order "to achieve" its goals – that is, in order to become "a Bolshevik mass party" – was to intervene more directly in the everyday events of the workers' movement, to be involved in all acts of defiance against the ruling classes, and to mobilize all workers and peasants around a specific program. In other words, it had to "behave as a party of fighters and not as an organization of propagandists" (Bullejos 1932a, 8). All that, however, was done by launching a number of slogans calling for political action, something which could have very well been done from the pages of *Mundo Obrero* and which hardly warranted the need for a new publication, since it was not accompanied by any intellectual reflection at all. Ultimately, the "just interpretation" of events seemed to have been found between the front cover of the first issue (just before the congress) and the back cover of the second issue (right after it). The message coming out of *Bolchevismo* seemed to be, to a large extent, that the masses were to be blamed for the Party's ideological problems, because they had failed to understand the Party's program (Romero 1932, 13).

Bolchevismo published one article on cultural issues, but that article also had very little to add to what *Mundo Obrero* had already said. In "La misión de la literatura proletaria en España", Fernández Armesto (former collaborator of *Nueva España* from Berlin), put forward a number of cultural slogans much in line with the 1930 Kharkov Congress of the Soviet RAPP (just a month before the organization was to be dissolved). Armesto also reiterated the Party's position that the revolutionary potential of the working class would be found not in acquiring an education or possessing a vast culture, but in further developing their class consciousness. The workers' lack of political preparation –

the result of socialist and anarchist influence – would be resolved by having proletarian literature fulfill its role, which was to further the PCE's own mission: "to incorporate the anarchist and socialist masses to the Bolshevik revolution" (1932, 36). Literature could be considered proletarian and revolutionary insofar as it revealed the revolutionary struggle of the working class, but it also had to meet two other conditions: it had to promote the revolutionary struggle from within and it had to be subjected to it (34).

The creation of *Bolchevismo* was accompanied by a new impulse given to the Party's publishing houses, including the *Biblioteca Mundo Obrero* and *Europa-América*. During the early thirties, the Spanish-language editions of the Marx-Engels Institute (including Lenin's *Obras Completas*, Engels' *Anti-düring*, Luxembourg's *La acumulación capitalista*, and the first volume of *El Capital*) were negotiated directly between the headquarters in Moscow and *Cenit* (Bullejos 1972, 156). The Party, on the other hand, continued to distribute the books of its own publishing houses or those of the Comintern, and even ventured into the publication of new collections for the study of Marxist theory, clearly following the lead from the revolutionary publishing houses, such as the *Cursos de Iniciación Marxista*, the *Biblioteca Carlos Marx* and the *Cuadernos mensuales de doctrina política*, the three of them directed by Wenceslao Roces. *Mundo Obrero* distributed *Cenit*'s collections *Lecturas populares* and *Cuadernos de cultura proletaria*, whose first volume was *El Capital*, edited and translated by Roces. Finally, *Mundo Obrero* also published a number of pamphlets on the Spanish revolution and the role of the PCE in it.

This move to expand the size of its publication projects did not necessarily mean, however, that the Party was now able to offer a better intellectual or ideological

preparation either to its members or to the proletariat at large. The list of Marxist authors included by these publishing houses had shrunk considerably, given that people like Andrés Nin, Zinoviev and Trotsky (who had been published on a regular basis by *Biblioteca Internacional*) were now on the list of authors chastised by Stalinism (Uría González 1996, 270). This resulted, to a large extent, "in the Marxist-Leninist classics [being] replaced by. . . simplified versions of the communist program, anonymous works of political propaganda and documents outlining Party resolutions" (ibid). Marta Bizcarrondo has suggested that these publications provided political information relevant to the particular historical moment [*información coyuntural*] rather than a coherent program for political education, which means that what was published could have hardly turned around the state of "ideological poverty" of the Spanish proletariat during these years (1980, 228).

According to the *Oposición Comunista de Izquierda*, part of the reason why the working class lacked a basic theoretical preparation in Marxism was to be found in the "theoretical degeneration of the International and its sections" ("La labor de la educación marxista"). According to the OCI, the PCE's attempt to make up for the lost time by publishing *Bolchevismo* was futile, since the journal was not resolving the problem. The OCI argued that the Party would continue having the same problem for as long as it were run by "second-rank" leaders and by "Stalinists" who were afraid of having educated followers, since a thorough knowledge of revolutionary Marxism would actually drive workers against "what [was] being presented as Stalinist theory" (E. Ruiz 1932, 29).

Both the OCI and the BOC believed the role of a strong Communist Party was to provide the masses with a solid ideological and political education, a prerequisite for the

revolution to be properly organized in the first place. Both organizations referred to this theoretical preparation as an "intellectual revolution", a "revolution of consciousness" which needed to take place before the political revolution proper, in order to ensure that social change would be both meaningful and that it could be sustained (Xurigera 1933b, 4).

According to the communist opposition, workers urgently needed to acquire a Marxist political education which would "free [them] from all the prejudices which the bourgeoisie ha[d] instilled in them" ("La batalla diario" 4). The "backbone" of such a struggle against bourgeois hegemony was to be the *Escuela Marxista* [Marxist School]. Encouraging the study of subjects like Historical Materialism, Political Economy, Economic Geography or the History of the Workers' Movement, the Marxist School would be able to train "working-class journalists, speakers, technicians [and] organizers" and prepare them to take on leadership roles ("La Escuela Marxista" 4). Another tool for Marxist education was the academic journals the two organizations published, the above-mentioned *Comunismo* (OCI) and *La nueva era* (BOC). Unlike *Bolchevismo*, these two journals seemed to be rather obsessed with using Marxist theory in order to read national events. They placed a great deal of emphasis, for example, on explaining the evolution of Spanish society from the perspective of the failed bourgeois revolution and the incipient proletarian one, all of it using a popular, rather than a purely scientific, style which aimed at providing readers with an easy-to-understand historical narrative which would allow them to understand the background to current events. This style, which David Ruiz has called "historicism" (1990, 271) had already been used to some extent by *Postguerra* and

El estudiante, but would become much more widespread in communist circles in the early 1930s.

Overall, the most obvious shortcoming of the Party's cultural discourse as outlined in this section was that it made little direct reference to the cultural policy and practice of the Republican government. All of the cultural slogans put forward by international proletarian cultural organizations in Europe and the Soviet Union, and faithfully reproduced by the PCE in Spain, in one way or another reflected cultural and political ideas which were unequivocally against bourgeois cultural reformism. Yet the Party failed to turn those slogans into any kind of cultural model which might have served as an alternative to the official program. The precariousness of the slogans and the lack of analysis exposed the Party as an organization without the tools to transform its visceral opposition to cultural reformism into any kind of serious critique of the cultural changes which were taking place. The Party's superficial and erratic collection of cultural slogans amounted to little more than a blurred and insignificant cultural discourse. During these early years of Republican government, the most solid communist cultural analysis (other than in the opposition to the PCE), and, most importantly, the attempts to establish the bases of a proletarian culture, were not to be found within the Party, but elsewhere, most notoriously in the journal *Nuestro Cinema*.

Nuestro Cinema

Nuestro Cinema was the first major cultural project to be carried out by Party intellectuals after the proclamation of the Republic.[37] Founded by Juan Piqueras[38] in Paris in June 1932, the journal set out to criticize bourgeois society through the analysis of film and of the film industry, as well as to set the ground for a theory and practice of proletarian cinema in Spain. The journal believed cinema was a powerful symbol of the decadence of bourgeois and capitalist society: in form, because it needed a fairly high degree of technological development which, in turn, needed large amounts of capital; and in content, because films reflected bourgeois ideology and the bourgeois way of life, with powerful messages that were reaching large masses of people.

The basic assumption made by *Nuestro Cinema* was that the birth of the cinema at the turn of the century had given it a historical mission to fulfill: to be the artistic means of expression for the working masses in a way which no other art form could have ever done. Because of the historical period in which it had been born, cinema had a clear objective: to have a "real", "social" content, to be "combative", to be "art for the masses" (Pérez Merinero 1975, 18).[39] The crisis of the film industry was not the result of wrong "commercial decisions", but of the wrong "political orientation", because most cinema produced around the world – except in the Soviet Union – was simply ignoring its true goal (as described above). Instead, cinema outside the Soviet Union was falling into the

[37] The journal had a first run from June 1932 to July 1933, with a later issue published in October 1933. It then reappeared in January 1935 and was published until August of that year.
[38] Juan Piqueras (Valencia 1904-Burgos 1936) was a poet and film critic who, like Arconada, started his career in avant-garde circles, as a film critic in *La Gaceta Literaria*. Between 1930 and 1936, he resided in Paris, from where he edited *Nuestro Cinema*, and, in the first months of 1936, he was the film critic for *Mundo Obrero*.
[39] See Juan Plaza (1933a, 1933b, 1933c).

hands of bourgeois and fascist capital and into the trap of commercial advertising (Piqueras 1932, 71-73).

According to the collaborators in *Nuestro Cinema*, capitalist cinema was "false" not only because it did not reflect the issues of "real life", but, more importantly, because it set out to fake it quite conspicuously, seeking refuge in technical sophistication (Pérez Merinero 1975, 18). Bourgeois cinema did not seem to be aware of the fact that the world was being "shaken by all kinds of unexpected and violent revolutions", that "banks [were going] bankrupt", or that "thousands of workers and peasants [were dying] of starvation". Rather, it only seemed to be concerned with how to "get a cute couple married" (Castellón Díaz 1932, 95; "Problemas actuales"). While such cinema "masked the disgrace of society", Soviet cinema was the only kind which had not "betrayed" the "truth", the only one which had remained "authentic" to its raison d'être (de Mendoza 1932, 191).

In capitalist countries, of course, proletarian cinema could only exist in a very "indirect" and "isolated" way, since it was bound to suffer official censorship (Arconada 1932, 20). A true proletarian cinema could only exist after the triumph of a proletarian revolution. In the meantime, what cinema could do was to support the only true proletarian cinema of the time, which was Soviet cinema, to convince the proletariat of the value of cinema as a powerful tool for class struggle, and to produce cinema which would be as proletarian as possible inside capitalist society following the Soviet model (21). This kind of cinema would be a tool for both education and culture rather than a "chloroform for consciousness" (Castellón Díaz 1932, 96). Since it could not fulfill its historical goal in the kind of repressive society where it had been born, it should set out not to "reflect" it,

but to "destroy" it and, in the process, aid in the construction of a new proletarian society (Juan Plaza 1932, 195).

Spain itself was used as an example for that argument. As Pérez Merinero has pointed out, the very same year *Nuestro Cinema* was founded, the Orphea film studios of Barcelona were just releasing the first Spanish sound films (1975, 13). *Nuestro Cinema* considered that the incipient Spanish film industry was "bound to fail", because it lacked the most basic human and technical resources as well as distribution channels, it was subjected to censorship, and it depended too heavily for content either on sentimental comedies or on typical Spanish folkloric genres like *zarzuelas* or *sainetes* (14). Further, Spain could not compete in the international market, where such huge amounts of money were invested in the making and distribution of movies. As a result, Spain could only aspire to have a true national film industry after it had gone through a revolution and a socialist system were in place (Arconada 1933a, 42).

The role which revolutionary intellectuals were to play in this process was clear. Party member César M. Arconada warned all those intellectuals and artists who "hallucinated with Russian cinema" and who might be "rehears[ing]. . . proletarian gesture[s] against the bourgeoisie" that their journey would not be a "comfortable move", nor would it be done without new "baggage" (41). In their attempt to ally with the proletariat against the reformist bourgeoisie, these intellectuals would fail if they could not "break away with all the bourgeois principles on which their previous world was based and could [not] move to embrace a proletarian consciousness" as well as a "serious study" of Marxism (ibid). Even more importantly, what Arconada had to say to the revolutionary intellectuals who, like himself, had chosen the most "uncomfortable" of moves, was that

the revolution was not going to be accomplished through art, literature, or cinema. Intellectuals might first get in touch with the proletariat via their artistic or cultural work. Eventually, however, they would have to "get off" that "vehicle" and move into the question of the revolution itself, worrying less about "professional" issues and more about direct political action (42). Bourgeois cinema, as a product of bourgeois society, would survive for as long as that society itself would, and the production of a subversive proletarian cinema would hardly be enough to destroy it. Ultimately, only the proletarian revolution and its struggle against bourgeois society as a whole would be able to bring to an end the kind of coercive influence cinema had in society, because it would destroy not just the cinema, but the system which sustained it.

The editors of *Nuestro Cinema* wanted the journal to be a project in which both the critique of bourgeois cinema and the practice of a new subversive proletarian cinema would meet. On both counts, the journal made extraordinary efforts. Most attempts to provide a Marxist analysis of cinema, however, were still ill-fated, since writers like Juan Piqueras himself or Josep Renau (a renowned visual artist whose prominence in the Spanish cultural scene would be greater a few years later), barely managed to emphasize the main thesis of the journal, that the birth of cinema was the "superior stage" in the "dialectical" evolution of art, an evolution which was moving to "transform classic visual art techniques" by providing a "new and fundamental resource", a "new objective dimension" in "movement", a "resource" with which artistic activity could break away with the "narrow technical limitations" (Renau 1933, 47). In this vein, "pure cinema" could no longer exist, for society was coming out of an "idealist" period and entering a "materialist" one in which other art forms were bound to die, and be replaced by the new art form of

cinema (Juan Plaza 1933a, 51).[40] This thesis was presented by using the same popular, rather than scientific, "historicism" which had already been used by communist intellectuals from both the Party and the opposition and which would later become such a trademark of communist intellectual thought. As Pérez Merinero has pointed out, however, most of the theoretical work published in *Nuestro Cinema* was the result of an "impulse" to embrace a number of concepts in quite a "mechanical" way, without much "critical reflexion" or "self-critique" (1975, 35). Similarly, the journal's attempt to sponsor a proletarian film club which would show proletarian cinema (mainly from the Soviet Union) to the masses of workers and would encourage the production of proletarian cinema in the country was a difficult goal to meet. With the means available to it, the journal managed to be little more than a *cine-club* which exhibited Soviet films. It was clear that a project which lacked the logistical support of a strong Party would be unable to carry out a serious cultural program.

[40] See also Josep Renau (1933).

SECTION TWO: January 1933- Summer 1935
The Rise of Fascism

Before the Asturian Revolution: The National and International Context

As early as 1927, informal meetings among intellectuals from countries like France and Switzerland had already begun to give shape to what would later become a continent-wide cultural front against fascism and against the increasing possibility of a new European war. The movement was given momentum with the creation in March 1932 of the *Association de Escrivains et Artistes Revolutionnaires* (AEAR)[41] and the celebration in August of the same year of an anti-war congress in the city of Amsterdam, in which a number of European intellectuals (led by German Willi Müzenberg, and including Maximo Gorki, Henri Barbusse, and Romain Rolland) created the International League Against War and Fascism. In the manifesto of the Amsterdam Congress, participants denounced capitalism and the hypocrisy of international bourgeois organizations such as the League of Nations, while calling for the defense of the Soviet Union and for widespread mobilizations against the upcoming war (Caute 1973, 132). By the time these intellectuals held a second meeting in April 1933 in the Parisian *Salle Pleyel*, fascism was no longer an Italian domestic problem, as it had already begun to cast its powerful shadow over the rest of Europe, with Hitler's electoral triumph in Germany, and Dollfuss' *coup d'état* in Austria.[42]

Although Hitler's coming to power and the subsequent rise of fascism all over Europe had served to give a boost to the mobilization of intellectuals, it did not necessarily bring about immediate changes to the international policies of the Comintern, which

[41] The AEAR's official publication was *Commune*, which began publication in July 1933.

remained faithful to the political analyses and strategies of its Sixth Congress, most notoriously to the policy of United Front. It may be impossible to prove whether or not the Comintern looked positively on the anti-fascist intellectual alliances taking place in Europe, but the clear fact remains that the communist organization did not reject them. Instead, it accepted them "with reservations", especially as time went by and as the height of the anti-fascist intellectual front coincided with the Comintern's own internal crisis, prompted by dissident voices on the issue of the United Front and communist participation in anti-fascist alliances (Alba 1975, 44).

Still in early 1933, however, the international organization believed – or pretended to believe – that the rise of fascism was a mere symptom of the decadence of the bourgeois/capitalist system, which was undergoing its last (or "third") historical period. Thus the struggle against fascism would be no different from the previous struggle against reformism and therefore it should be considered a solely proletarian cause. Official documents from the meetings of the Plenary of the Executive Committee of the Comintern in late 1933 and through the summer of 1934 confirm that the international organization held on to that interpretation, at least officially.[43]

Meanwhile in Spain, the year of 1933 would prove to be an inauspicious one. A confusing and far from unanimous anarchist call for a revolutionary uprising launched at the end of the previous year had ended up in a number of disorganized insurrections taking place across the country, most of which had simply been either aborted by local revolutionary leaders or immediately suffocated by the authorities. Into the new year,

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[42] For further reading, see Caute (1964, 1973).
[43] Further commentary on the relationship of the Comintern and European intellectuals can be found in Alba (1975); Caute (1964, 1973).

however, the insurrection proved to be successful in the small Andalusian village of Casas Viejas, and the disproportionate attempt by the Republican authorities to put it down ended up in a massacre. These events gave way to the most serious crisis of the reformist Republican government to date, shaking to the core the Socialist-Republican alliance, and radicalizing even further the workers' movement led by communists and anarchists. As a response to the workers' growing belligerence, landowners and patrons organized themselves even more tightly, getting ready to counteract the power of peasant associations, political parties and unions, as much as to fight government policy in matters of Agrarian Reform. The "social war" which ensued was reminiscent of earlier decades and a sad reminder that a bourgeois Republican government had been so far unable to find a compromise between the economic interests of the oligarchy and those of the masses of dispossessed.

In April 1933, having already seen its worst fears come true with Hitler's electoral victory in Germany and concerned about the turn to the right in Spanish municipal elections, the *Bloque Obrero y Campesino* held its Second Congress and launched into the Spanish political arena the idea of the *Alianzas Obreras* [Workers' Alliances].[44] The underlying theme of these alliances was that the main enemy of the working class was not what the communists of the PCE liked to call "social-fascism", but, rather, pure and simple fascism. That meant it was not the time to try to discredit socialist leaders, but to seek them as allies.[45]

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[44] For more information on this Congress, see Alba and Swchartz (1988). For further reading on the origins and evolution of the *Alianzas Obreras*, see Alba (1978).

[45] The first contacts sought by the BOC brought the *Unió Socialistc de Catalunya* (small social-democrat party of nationalistic tendencies), the Catalonian UGT, the PSOE Catalonian federation, the OCI and the *Unió de rabassaires* to a meeting held in Barcelona on the 27th of July.

The Communist Party of Spain, however, continued to abide by the resolutions of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern. Although the term "fascism" was promptly incorporated within Party terminology, the content of the discourse underwent no change at all. For the PCE (in line, of course, with the Communist International), there was no difference between fascism, capitalism, and bourgeois democracy, all of them being one and the same thing: the "clashing forces of the bourgeoisie. . . against the revolutionary advance of the masses" (qtd. in Cruz 1987, 163). The rise of fascism simply meant that the crisis of the bourgeoisie was following its due course. As a result, there was to be no change whatsoever in the political tactics to pursue, much less in the overall strategy. The PCE held on to its maximum program of "government of workers and peasants" in a Soviet Spain, which the proletarian would realize despite the "fascist dictatorship" of the bourgeoisie, the Republican government and its allies, the "social-fascists" (Cruz 1987, 165).[46]

Very soon, however, Party discourse began to show some subtle fractures, an indication that the Party was experiencing some degree of tension between its natural impulse to keep a uniquely proletarian line and the external pressures which were forcing it to open up, however timidly, toward other progressive and anti-fascist forces. In response to the creation of the *Alianzas Obreras* by the Catalonian communists, the Party moved to sponsor a number of anti-fascist alliances which, unlike the *Alianzas*, were of an exclusive proletarian nature. One of these alliances – which, being made up almost exclusively of communists and a few community organizations,[47] would have little social

[46] See also "Contra la reacción y el Fascismo".

[47] The Anti-Fascist Manifesto was signed by a group of PCE leaders and intellectuals (although not officially by the Party itself), among whom were Balbontín, Sender, Roces, Ibárruri, and Francisco Galán.

incidence – was the so-called *Frente Antifascista* [Anti-Fascist Front] launched on 1 April 1933 with a call to "all unions, workers, political parties [and] cultural organizations. . . which accept[ed] the struggle against fascism" to join ("Mañana domingo" 1).[48] The "tension" I referred to above was perhaps more evident in the fact that while the PCE argued that its Anti-Fascist Front was "free of all sectarianism" because "fascism [was a] common enemy" to all ("Frente Antifascista" 4), the pages of *Mundo Obrero* continued to be filled with attacks on social-democrat leaders, and accusations that fascism was a product of the political manoeuvres of social-democracy and the Republican government.[49]

Before the end of 1933, Spain would experience the effects of rising fascism on its very own soil, with the electoral victory in the month of November of conservative (and monarchical) parties organized under the umbrella organization *Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas* [Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Right-Wing Parties, CEDA]. With the CEDA assuming power and dominating the *Cortes*, the Second Republic began a new epoch, also known as the "*bienio negro*" [black biennium], which continued under the presidency of Republican Niceto Alcalá-Zamora, but with the leader of the *Partido Radical*'s Alejandro Lerroux as Prime Minister. Defeat plunged Republican

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They were joined in this enterprise by the Communist Youth, the *Comité de Unión Sindical, the Federación de Bibliotecas Circulantes de Madrid* [Federation of Itinerant Libraries of Madrid], several workers' sport clubs and the *Asociación General de Dependientes de Comercio* [Association of Service Workers], a list which may give a fairly accurate idea of the level of social incidence the Front would have.

[48] The Manifesto of the Anti-Fascist Front was published by *Mundo Obrero* on the first of April (the first meeting of the Front was held on the third).

[49] See *Mundo Obrero* of 3 April 1933.

and reformist bourgeois parties into their own internal crises, out of which would come a great deal of restructuring.[50]

The PCE had not failed to see the fascist nature of the new government of the CEDA, but seemed unwilling to believe that full-blown fascism was actually in power (Cruz 1987, 182). On the other hand, the electoral victory of the CEDA was the cue for the BOC to launch the first *Alianza Obrera*, with the acknowledgment of all those involved that they had "diverse doctrines and aspirations", but also a "common desire to safeguard the conquests of the Spanish working class" (Alba 1976, 257). From the moment the *Alianzas* were launched, the Communist Party became their most boisterous enemy.

The PCE's stand for *Frente Unico* and against the *Alianzas Obreras* was by no means unanimous, however, for there were internal unofficial voices of dissent – reproducing to some extent what was happening inside the Comintern itself – which believed that some degree of rapprochement toward the PSOE or Republican parties had to be pursued in order to seek unity of action against fascism. The Party leadership, however, was unwilling to take such a step, refusing to "deviate from. . . what [was] the essence of [the PCE's] struggle and [its] existence": a United Front led by communists (Hernández 1934, 1). The Comintern would very soon move toward anti-fascist experiments such as the Popular Front, first sought in France in June 1934. Officially, however, neither the Party nor the Comintern had abandoned their proletarian line.[51]

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[50] See Tuñón de Lara, coord (1981).

[51] For further discussion of Comintern between the spring of 1933 and the summer of 1935, see E.H. Carr (1982); Poulantzas (1974).

The Communist Party of Spain and the Party Intelligentsia

In the early months of 1933, with the new national leadership (Díaz, Uribe, Ibárruri) already well in place and the Party on its way to the "*viraje*" which had not quite taken place after its Fourth Congress, the PCE opened up timidly to revolutionary intellectuals for the first time. The "new openness" could be seen in small details, such as the Party paying attention to the state of the university and the student organizations working within it, now considered to be an important part of the "revolutionary forces" which would bring about the "democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants" ("A todos los estudiantes" 2). The PCE attacked the FUE [Federation of University Students] for its "reformist spirit" and for having historically behaved as a servant and collaborator of bourgeois Republican and Socialist interests. The Party called on all students to transform the organization into a truly revolutionary one, so that it would join the struggle of workers and peasants, thus transforming the university into "a cultural tool for the working masses" (ibid).

Yet the clearest sign that something had changed in the Party was perceivable in the kind of open debates which *Mundo Obrero* maintained with the revolutionary intellectuals who during previous years had played an important role in the Spanish revolutionary cultural scene. These were César Falcón, José Antonio Balbontín, and Ramón J. Sender.[52]

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[52] A journalist, novelist and critic, Ramón J. Sender (Huesca 1902-Los Angeles 1982) started his career working in newspapers like *El Sol* and anarchist publications like *Solidaridad Obrera*. He edited the journal *Tensor* and was a collaborator on many others like *Octubre* and *Línea*. In 1934, the PCE asked him to edit *La lucha*, a Party publication in defense of the United Front. After the Civil War, he moved to Mexico and later to the United States, where he became a professor at UCLA. Among his best-known novels were *Imán* (1930), *Siete domingos rojos* (1932), and *Contraataque* (1938). His best-known book of cultural critique is *Teatro de masas* (1932).

Throughout 1930, in his role as editor of *Nosotros*, César Falcón had repeatedly argued that the union of the "left" should be considered a temporary tactic "for a first strike" against the government of the dictatorship, after which "everyone would go back to its place in order to fight for its own ideology". In May 1931, *Nosotros*' collaborator Luis Manteiga announced that such a time had already come (10). *Nosotros* welcomed the proclamation of the Republic, but would not grant any peace to its provisional government, making it clear it had welcomed the new regime as a first step toward a deeper revolution. It was then that *Nosotros* felt free to be the journal it had always wanted to be and to say the things it had always wanted to say, taking on quite a belligerent tone which hardly resembled that of the previous year. Gone were its liberal, socialist and bourgeois collaborators and the journal's acquiescence with them all, and communist analysis became the predominant note.

As soon as the Republic was proclaimed, *Nosotros* "went back to its place" by offering its open and most unconditional support for the Communist Party (Gaos 1931, 11). Falcón and his group, however, did not agree wholeheartedly with the reading of events put forward by the PCE, and did, in fact, believe the Party was rather "naive" in its conviction that Spain was experiencing the objective conditions for a proletarian revolution. Instead, Falcón argued that the revolution the country would have to go through first would have to be "popular" in nature, that is, for the benefit of all social groups below the bourgeoisie (including the middle classes, merchants, professionals, etc.) (Baleriola 1931, 3).

Nosotros, however, and Falcón in particular, believed in the unity of what they called all "Marxist forces" – which included the radical petite bourgeoisie and even the

anarchist-syndicalists – and this not just as a temporary tactic (as had been the case with the reformist forces between 1930 and 1931), but as a full political strategy which would eventually make possible the workers' victory over the reformist bourgeoisie. In an attempt to bring all those revolutionary forces together, Falcón himself founded his own party, the *Izquierda Revolucionaria y Anti-imperialista* [Anti-Imperialist and Revolutionary Left, IRYA], with a similar program to that of the PCE.[53] During 1931 and 1932, the IRYA remained as an independent organization and chose not to join the Communist Party. Falcón would change his mind after getting involved in an open debate on national politics with the Party and José Antonio Balbontín.

The former editor of *Postguerra* and *El estudiante* shared some basic common ground with the PCE, since he agreed that a government of workers and peasants should lead the country through the democratic revolution the bourgeoisie was unable to bring about. Balbontín was convinced, however, that such a government would have to be brought about by an alliance of all revolutionary forces, and not just by communists, much less by the Communist Party alone. In line with that thought, in 1932, Balbontín began to write for *La Tierra*, a newspaper of progressive leanings which had historically made space on its pages to accommodate a wide range of political voices, from the radical petite bourgeoisie to pure anarchists, including everything in between. It would be from the pages of *La Tierra* that the former editor of *Postguerra* would expose his political analysis and, in fact, address it directly to the Communist Party itself.

The PCE, however, had never looked positively on the kind of political variety to which *La Tierra* was playing host, and over the years had become its most vociferous

[53] The IRYA's political program was published in *Nosotros* on 30 May 1931. See Marsá (1931) and

enemy.[54] When Balbontín argued that *La Tierra* could, in fact, be a "very useful tool to organize the rebellion of the masses", the Party accused him not only of being "confused" and of having "contradictory" ideas, but of defending an "absolutely chaotic" position ("La ganzúa y Balbontín" 27 December, 1). Balbontín, however, warned the Party that if it continued to reject the radical petite bourgeoisie, that class would end up running away from the revolution and into the arms of fascism, a move which would benefit no one (1932, 4). Although he was not a member of the Party yet, Falcón got into the debate to offer some kind of reconciliation between Balbontín's line and that of the Party, suggesting that the most urgent task for Spanish communists was to make sure the democratic revolution under way was taken to full term, regardless of who would lead it (1932, 1). Falcón himself suggested that all Marxist forces would be responsible for seeing that revolution through (ibid).

From then on, the debate as such died away, because *Mundo Obrero* simply moved on to publish a series of articles in response to Balbontín which were less of a direct response to him and more of a soliloquy about the Party's official interpretation of events.[55] In January 1933, Falcón decided it would be useless to continue the discussion, since all points of view had already been made clear. In an open letter to the Party, he acknowledged that the previous debates had helped him "clarify [his] own positions" and announced that the IRYA would join the Communist Party, calling on Balbontín and his

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"Nuevo partido politico".

[54] *Mundo Obrero* called it "*la ganzúa*" [the picklock], and repeatedly accused it of being a "government newspaper" which "hid" its political allegiances underneath "vague and confusing revolutionary" slogans ("La ganzúa y Balbontín" 26 December 1932). For *Mundo Obrero*'s comments on Balbontín's ideology and his work in *La Tierra*, see the other articles in the series "La ganzúa y Balbontín" published in *Mundo Obrero* in December 1932.

[55] Between December 1932 and January 1933, *Mundo Obrero* published eight articles under the general title of "Contestando a Balbontín: Aclaremos las posiciones".

Social Revolutionary Party (PSR) to follow the lead, since only "within [Party] discipline" could the "correct line of the Spanish revolution" be found (1933, 1). Balbontín complied. On 20 February, *Mundo Obrero* reported that, at a congress of the PSR, Balbontín had proposed to its eight thousand members that they join the PCE, a motion which had been accepted ("El camarada Balbontín" 1). From that time on, both Falcón and Balbontín, experienced journalists and editors, wrote on political issues for *Mundo Obrero*.[56]

This move, however, did not bring to an end the debates with intellectuals. Just around the same time, the Party had started a new debate with social novelist Ramón J. Sender, a debate which, for a paper like *Mundo Obrero*, surprisingly turned out to be less about politics and more about literature.

The publication in *Mundo Obrero* of a review of Sender's best-known book to date, *Casas Viejas* – a report on the tragedy which had happened in the village of that name – gave way to an exchange of opinions between the communist paper and the author, first on the question of Parliamentary participation and revolutionary sources of local power, and later on literary questions. *Mundo Obrero* believed that what Sender had done in *Casas Viejas* was not only to present (as Sender himself would have it) a collection of "tableaus of the sentimental life" of people (Sender 1933a, 4), but a thorough depiction of class struggle ("Respuesta al camarada Sender" 2 February 1933, 2). The journal called on Sender to be "consistent", and to abandon "*on all grounds*", even in the literary or sentimental sphere, the anarchist line with which he had been flirting, since he had already admitted that anarchism would not bring about the liberation of the proletariat (ibid; emphasis in the original). Sender, however, kept his doubts, and although he

[56] Balbontín would leave the Party in early 1934, as we shall later see. Falcón would stay through the

recognized that, "in terms of doctrine", he was with the Party, he also said he could not accept its "tactics", and argued that a Spanish Communist Party would have to have a "certain degree of flexibility and freedom of movement", rather than follow foreign guidelines (Sender 1933b, 2). The debate was dropped at that point. Sender would join the Party shortly after.[57]

The fact that the Party, through *Mundo Obrero*, would get involved in this kind of debate with revolutionary intellectuals was significant in itself, but no less significant was the way in which the newspaper dealt with them, or the kind of language it used to speak *to* them as much as *about* them. Falcón, Balbontín and Sender were neither insulted nor criticized. Although the paper rejected *La Tierra*'s goals as "prejudiced confusionism", it was more than willing to believe that Balbontín himself was acting out of "good faith", that he was "sincerely interested" in the revolution ("La ganzúa" 27 December, 4) and that he was, in fact, "attacking" the PCE in a "sweet, affable and fraternal" way ("Contestando a Balbontín" 31 December, 4). On the other hand, *Mundo Obrero* addressed Sender as "comrade" in a manner which the publication itself considered to be "affable" ("Unas palabras cordiales" 4). This was a far cry from the style previously used to speak of "radical" intellectuals, not to mention the style that was still used to speak about bourgeois intellectuals. Remarkably enough, the Party was not only engaging in debates with these intellectuals, it was also *calling on them* to join the organization, an extraordinary move indeed, given how the PCE had treated revolutionary intellectuals in previous years. With Falcón's *Izquierda Revolucionaria y Anti-fascista* and Balbontín's Socialist Revolutionary

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war.

Party merging with the PCE, the Party received the first large flux of petit-bourgeois revolutionary intellectuals.

In April 1933, some of those intellectuals were co-signatories to the PCE's Anti-Fascist Manifesto. In fact, Manuel Aznar has interpreted the signing of this Manifesto as a move by the Party to bring together the Spanish anti-fascist intelligentsia into organizations where a communist minority would play a leading role (1990, 292). I find such a conclusion, however, to be somewhat hasty. In the first place, the Spanish "progressive" intelligentsia as a whole (that is, both reformist and revolutionary intellectuals together) had not been mobilized under a common anti-fascist banner quite yet. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the April 1933 Manifesto was not a direct call to intellectuals as a group, and those intellectuals who signed it (Balbontín and Sender, among them) did so exclusively as Party members. Instead, the *Frente Antifascista* may have just been a way "to bring *communist* intelligentsia closer to the Party" (Cruz 1987, 167; emphasis added), that is, to cater to those intellectuals who, like Falcón or Balbontín had already joined the Party.

The presence of these intellectuals in the Party, however, was to bring about no immediate changes to the Party's cultural discourse, at least in terms of what was published in *Mundo Obrero*. What is found on the pages of the official publication during these years is mostly book reviews, brief notes of support for cultural organizations, and reports on meetings, congresses and other cultural events.[58] Even this superficial

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[57] The debate between the PCE and Sender may be followed in the following articles: Sender (1933a, 1933b); "Respuesta al camarada Sender, Part I"; "Respuesta al camarada Sender, Part II"; and "Contestando al camarada Sender".

[58] See "Las mentiras y embustes de la 'filosofía' contemporánea"; "Octubre: Organo de los Escritores y Artistas Revolucionarios"; "Ateneo proletario"; "Cultura Soviética"; and "Cómo y cuántos pistoleros

reporting was done in quite a schematic way, however. As Christopher Cobb has suggested, the report on the congress of Soviet Writers, for example, revealed nothing about the discussions which took place there, and the paper's dealings with Falcón's theatre group, *Nosotros*, amounted to no more than "senseless words of praise" which did not touch on the "serious problems similar groups were facing" (1981, 48).

As had been the case during the previous period, communist cultural criticism and practice were found elsewhere, in a journal which was produced independently from the Party, but which was to reproduce some of its most obvious political tensions.

Octubre

In his introduction to a contemporary facsimile edition of *Octubre*, Enrique Montero has suggested that the work done by the journal had such "wide implications", its presence was so "overwhelming" and its energy so great that the journal has always been surrounded by "a mythical halo" (1977, xxxiii). Indeed *Octubre* has come down in Spanish cultural history as one of the most important and most mythical cultural initiatives of the 1930s, perhaps because it was, as Manuel Aznar has pointed out, the first case of a group of communist writers publicly taking an anti-fascist stand (Aznar et al. 1987b, 2: 46).[59]

The journal was founded by a group of Party intellectuals – among them, César M. Arconada, Juan Piqueras and Xavier Abril – under the leadership of Rafael Alberti and

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asaltaron la exposición proletaria del Ateneo. Sus nombres y sus señas", all of them published between the summer of 1933 and early 1934.

[59] The politics of the journal, however, have hardly received any academic attention. Most scholarship has been concerned with *Octubre* as a literary journal. Further reading on *Octubre* can be found in Sánchez Zamarreño (1986).

María Teresa León, avant-garde writers who after a long journey across Europe and the Soviet Union had completed their conversion to communism.[60]

In its May 1933 "*Adelanto*",[61] *Octubre* defined itself as a publication for "revolutionary writers and artists", although it denied being the official publication of the Spanish chapter of the AEAR.[62] Despite the fact that the journal was founded by Party members and that its political line was unequivocally communist, antifascist, and pro-Soviet, *Octubre* did not have a direct relationship with, nor did it depend ideologically, financially, or otherwise, on the Communist Party of Spain.[63] Yet the fact that such a cultural project was created, directed, and animated by militant communist intellectuals clearly established a link between the journal and national and international communist ideology of the time. Alberti, León, Arconada and the others might have escaped Party

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[60] A poet, playwright and cultural activist, Rafael Alberti (Cádiz 1902) was a leading figure of the Generation of 1927, and one of the most renowned intellectuals in Spain throughout the 1920s and 1930s. After flirting with the avant-garde for a number of years, he became a Communist and began to write poetry of deep social and political content. He joined the Communist Party in 1931, and traveled to the Soviet Union and Germany in late 1931 and early 1932 with his wife María Teresa León. Among the many literary and cultural activities he carried out in Spain, he was co-editor of *Octubre*, and during the Civil War was a founding member of the *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas* and of the journal *El mono azul*. After the Civil War, he lived in several countries, including Italy and Argentina, before he returned to Spain in 1977, under the sponsorship of the Communist Party. At the age of 97, he is the only surviving member of his generation, and is still (albeit symbolically) a member of the Communist Party. *Consignas* (1933), *Un fantasma recorre Europa* (1933), and *De un momento a otro* (1935) are among his best-known books of pre-war poetry. He has written several volumes of memoirs, under the general title of *La arboleda perdida* (1975-88). A novelist and cultural activist, María Teresa León (Logroño 1903-Madrid 1988) was co-editor of *Octubre*, as well as co-founder of the *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas* and *El mono azul*, with Alberti. Her fictional work includes *Cuentos para soñar* (1928), *La bella del mar* (1930) and *Cuentos de la España actual* (1935). *Memoria de la melancolía* (1970) is the title of her memoirs.

[61] The "Adelanto" was an introductory issue. The journal published six more, from June 1933 to April 1934. A facsimile edition of all six issues was published in 1977 by Vaduz and Topos Verlag AG.

[62] Some scholars, however, have still linked the journal with the Spanish chapter of the international organization, and even with the Communist Party. See Aznar (1987) and the entry on *Octubre* in Bonet, *Diccionario de las vanguardias en España* (1995, 449).

[63] In his preface to the facsimile edition of *Octubre*, Enrique Montero has pointed out that Ramón J. Sender once suggested the journal was being financed with "Soviet gold". Montero clarifies, however, that the journal was being financed by Alberti and León out of their own pockets. He is probably right in his suggestion that neither the editors expected the Party to provide any support nor was the PCE able to do it.

influence and/or censorship at the individual level as much as *Octubre* as a project surely did. However, being both a political, as well as a cultural communist enterprise, the journal could not escape the influence of the ideology, cultural policy or tradition of communism in Spain, nor could it be free of the influence of communist current policy, all of which were in fact embodied by the Communist Party.

Previous attempts to delve into the relationship between *Octubre* and the communist discourse under which it was produced seem to have reached opposite conclusions. On the one hand, Manuel Aznar has argued that *Octubre* was "a clear example of the new anti-sectarian politics of the PCE" and "[its] new anti-sectarian literary policy, because once it had been acknowledged that proletarian literature was not the only possible revolutionary literature,[64] the journal was open to all Spanish writers, whether they were bourgeois or working class, whether they were Party members or 'fellow travelers'" (1990, 292). On the other hand, Jean Becarud has suggested that despite its "militant aspect", *Octubre* put forward political propaganda and slogans which seemed to be more "radical" and "revolutionary" than those put out by the Party at the time. Becarud argues that the "degree of autonomy" which *Octubre* enjoyed in relation to the Party, meant that the journal would not "fall behind the general radicalization of the time", and that was precisely what explained its success (1978, 97-98).

In order to understand these comments, some of the terminology must be placed in context. In Spanish cultural history, there has been a clear tendency to reconstruct these middle years of Republican government with a narrative of the political "radicalization" experienced by the Spanish intelligentsia as a result of the rise of fascism both in Europe

[64] In reference to the change experienced by Soviet literary organizations.

and Spain. According to this narrative, to be "radical" during those years meant to take a clear anti-fascist stand and to join with all other intellectuals taking a similar one, regardless of political affiliation or class origin. Those who held on to a class analysis or to a reading of the anti-fascist struggle as a solely proletarian cause, are considered to be "sectarian". As a result, the participation of the PSOE in the *Alianzas Obreras* is seen as the result of the Party's "radicalization", under pressure from its rank-and-file (Becarud 1978, 91). Similarly, the fact that the PCE had a number of internal focii of dissent is explained on the grounds that Party members expected the same degree of "radicalization" from the PCE. According to this narrative, the Socialist Party was more "radical" than the PCE, the Second International more so than the Comintern, the Spanish bourgeois intelligentsia began a process of "radicalization" at this time, and the Communist Party remained quite "sectarian".

In their readings of *Octubre*, both Aznar and Becarud embrace this narrative of "radicalization", except for the fact that they reach different conclusions. While Aznar argues that the journal reflected a Party policy which was already anti-sectarian, Becarud argues that the Party was still sectarian and that *Octubre* was more "radical", that is, more open toward wider anti-fascist alliances than the Party itself was.

In my reading of the journal, however, none of this was the case. In May 1933, when the journal was founded, the Communist Party still refused to enter the *Alianzas Obreras* and clung to the idea of a proletarian United Front against the social-democrat leadership, a line which was hardly "anti-sectarian" or "radical" in the sense of the word already discussed. Further, even if the Party could be seen as "anti-sectarian" at this point,

it would be difficult to maintain that such a political attitude affected its cultural or literary policy, because the Party had simply nothing of the sort.

Becarud's reading of the Communist Party's politics is, I believe, somewhat more accurate, for he believes the PCE had not quite "radicalized" yet, since it had not embraced anti-fascism as a common cause with other political forces. Yet I would still challenge his suggestion that *Octubre* was more "radical" and "revolutionary" than the Party itself, because the journal was still far from opening up to anti-fascism as a common cause with other progressive political forces. Instead, the journal took an anti-fascist political stand which was still exclusively proletarian and the invitation to participate in the project was only extended to revolutionary intellectuals. That was neither more nor less "radical" than what the Party was doing at around the same time. In fact, it was very much the same position the Party had taken with its Anti-Fascist Alliance.

Octubre may have been mythical, energetic, overwhelming and much more, but it was certainly not "radical" (in the sense outlined above), insofar as it was not a journal open to a wide anti-fascist intellectual alliance. Instead, *Octubre* was a journal experiencing a growing political tension, for it was caught – as much as the Party was – between its allegiance to a national and international communist line of proletarian United Front and its desire to join the anti-fascist movement of European intellectuals which was opening up to a wider anti-fascist stand, after the RAPP had been closed down and the new *Association des Escrivains et des Artistes Revolutionnaires* had been formed. César M. Arconada could hardly have predicted later events when he called *Octubre* the "journal of the pre-revolution" (Arconada 1936b, 5). Having the benefit of historical perspective, however, I think it would not be unfair to suggest that by the time the revolutionary

intelligentsia was to participate in a revolution, it would be done in terms very different from those originally embraced by *Octubre*. In early 1933, *Octubre* was the clearest symbol of a Spanish Party intelligentsia *in transition* from a proletarian anti-fascist line to a democratic one, and a symbol as well of the tensions which such a transition was to create.

In his above-mentioned introduction, Enrique Montero has suggested that *Octubre* did not deal directly with national or international issues from an "informative" point of view, but mostly as the content of fictional work (1977, xxix). I find this affirmation almost impossible to sustain, however, for the pages of *Octubre* did, in fact, reveal a great deal of interest in national and international issues, although the analysis it offered was of uneven depth and quality. The editors of *Octubre* may have described their journal as a publication for revolutionary writers, but it was nothing close to a literary journal. Most articles dealt, in fact, with national and international political issues, so *Octubre* – like *Postguerra*, *Nosotros* and others before it – could very well be described as a political and cultural journal of the revolutionary petite bourgeoisie.

Throughout most of the social and political analysis *Octubre* provided, especially in the very first issues, there was only one protagonist, the proletariat, and only one antagonist, the bourgeoisie. In all cases, the proletariat was presented as the class which had historically suffered the vexations of the bourgeoisie and the only possible leader in the struggle toward liberation. Fascism was portrayed as the latest attempt a decadent bourgeois society was making in order to survive, and as a counter-revolutionary force which could only be confronted by the force of a proletarian revolution. Workers were called to join in a United Front – the journal used the vocabulary of international

communism – against social-democracy, the "intermediary for the criminal plans of the bourgeoisie" (Abril 1933, 1).

The journal's views on cultural matters were grounded in a similar proletarian line. *Octubre* declared itself to be in line with the resolutions of the Kharkov Congress of the Soviet RAPP: "against the imperialist war, for the defense of the Soviet Union, against Fascism [and] with the proletariat" ("Declaración de principios" 1).[65] It also presented itself as an internationalist journal, which believed in the future of proletarian literature and would provide a dialectical materialist critique of bourgeois culture ("Por una literatura proletaria" 21). *Octubre* defended the existence of a proletarian art, which in the Soviet Union existed under a proletarian regime and in the rest of the world could still appear under a capitalist one ("¿Puede existir un arte proletario?" 20). The journal also believed literature was not the prerogative of any "superior caste", but of all the people, and was convinced of the fact that a true proletarian literature would come out of the workers' ranks (ibid).

The journal was open to alliances with all revolutionary, radical and petit-bourgeois intellectuals who wished to join the proletariat in the anti-fascist struggle, given the fact that all of them were suffering the consequences of a capitalist system "in decomposition" as much as the proletariat were. Indeed, *Octubre* set out to prove that as the economic crisis deepened, the number of unemployed workers in the middle classes grew: "Thousands of poor office workers, doctors, engineers, teachers and intellectuals [were] on the streets as the surplus of the technical and professional layers of the capitalist system". Since the intellectual petite bourgeoisie was also an "exploited class", it should

create a *united front* with all the exploited" ("El teatro en España" 39; emphasis added). Its most efficient "guide and friend" in that journey would be the vanguard of the proletariat itself.

All calls to create anti-fascist intellectual alliances were directed exclusively at the proletariat and at the radical or revolutionary petit-bourgeois intelligentsia, consciously excluding the reformist bourgeoisie. While *Octubre* admitted that fascism threatened all of human culture, the journal also made it clear it was calling only on the revolutionary intelligentsia and the proletariat "to combat. . . it" ("La verdad sobre el incendio del Reichstag" 16-19).

This anti-fascist proletarian line was expressed repeatedly throughout *Octubre*'s six very packed issues, but was perhaps most obvious in the very first. A letter from Engels to Minna Kautsky,[66] which the journal published in lieu of an editorial in the June/July 1933 issue, made it clear that *Octubre* was to reject the bourgeoisie both as a collaborator and as an audience ("Engels y la literatura Socialista" 1). The first issue continued with an article on cinema by Juan Piqueras which repeated the thesis he had exposed in *Nuestro Cinema* (1933, 20-21) and later with an open attack on the bourgeois intelligentsia (*Octubre* had changed victims from Fernando de los Ríos to Ortega y Gasset), which was rejected and despised for its idealist philosophy and its "criminal selfishness and injustice" (Prados 1933, 14-15).

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[65] By this time Spain already had a chapter of the AEAR, but in its early years this organization still agreed with the postulates of the Kharkov Congress of the RAPP.

[66] This was a reprint of a letter kept in the Marx and Engels Archives, previously unpublished in Spain.

The feature article in this first issue was "Quince años de literatura española",[67] in which César M. Arconada set out to explore "the origins of Spanish decadence" from a "dialectical materialist perspective" (3). In this article, Arconada used the "popular historicism" discussed above in order to point out that the schisms between the bourgeois intelligentsia and the people had been one of the reasons behind the repeated failures of the democratic bourgeois revolution. In line with the journal's political line, Arconada suggested that such schisms had already been overcome by a group of intellectuals who were ready to work "with the working-class. . . for the creation of new forms of life", intellectuals who were ready to "merge" with the proletariat, in the conviction that the "Future" and the "new culture" were to be born "in the bosom" of that class (7; capital letters as in the original).

After having Arconada voice such a proletarian, anti-bourgeois line, and just before closing the first issue, the editors of the journal pointed out that the "international call for the struggle against fascism" which was already being heard around the world, was being led by "writers, artists and intellectuals *of all tendencies*", acknowledging a reality quite different from that which Arconada had described ("Nuestra Protesta" 19; emphasis added). Yet when returning to national soil, it was made clear that they spoke on behalf of Spanish "revolutionary writers, artists and intellectuals", and them alone (ibid).

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[67] Manuel Aznar has said of this article that it was "a piece of Marxist analysis which reflected the intellectual consciousness of the Communist intelligentsia before the crisis of the petit-bourgeois literary tradition" (1987, 50). Christopher Cobb has pointed out that the article may have been somewhat "schematic" in its treatment of some periods, however, for the author swept over the 1920s suggesting that during that period there had not been a single good poet (1984, 34). For further commentary on this article, see Montero (1977).

Octubre managed to hold on to its proletarian line for the entire next issue. In the third issue, published in August/September 1933, the editors welcomed the anti-war meeting celebrated by the European intelligentsia in Amsterdam (exactly a year after it had been held, however), and interpreted its resolutions to be a call for a "United Front of workers against fascism" (¡Uníos contra la guerra imperialista!" 1).[68] The journal was also full of references to fascism as the external cover of a conflict which was truly about class struggle (M.T. León 1933, 5). In the third issue, however, *Octubre* let Romain Rolland bring forth the issue of anti-fascism as a struggle for the liberation of humanity rather than just the political struggle of the proletariat, and it also let Lunacharskii reassert the compatibility of the many sources of anti-fascist struggle (Rolland 1933; Lunacharski 1933).[69]

By the time *Octubre* published its sixth and last issue in April 1934 – after a double issue dedicated almost exclusively to the politics and culture of the Soviet Union (October/November 1933) and five months of suspension –[70] the journal was clearly struggling to hold on to its view of the anti-fascist struggle as a proletarian cause, as it started to present political voices coming from other anti-fascist platforms.

Octubre's sixth issue began with a couple of notes by German writers Waldo Frank and Michael Gold on the issue of fascism in Europe and the world, and more specifically

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[68] When making reference to the 1932 Congress in Amsterdam, *Octubre* suggested it had been attended by "workers, oppressed from the whole world, intellectuals, ex-combatants, men and women of all workers' organizations". David Caute gives the exact breakdown of participants as 1,865 workers, 72 peasants and 249 intellectuals, although he has pointed out that the categories were by no means clear, and has suggested a number of intellectuals might, in fact, have attended under the category of workers (1973, 132).

[69] Rolland was a distinguished French intellectual, a "fellow traveler". Lunacharskii was the first Minister of Education of the Soviet State.

[70] The journal was apparently closed down by the authorities on the grounds that its fiscal records were not clear. After it reappeared, *Octubre* only published one more issue.

of German Nazism, warning that "Hitlerism [would] spread all over Europe and [would] reach America" unless a "United Front of *all working-class* parties and *all liberal* organizations" was created, a front of which "all anti-fascists", "*whatever party* they belong[ed] to" needed to be part, "even against the will of their leadership" ("Antifascismo" 1; emphases added). For the first time, *Octubre* was publishing a call for the unity of all anti-fascists, including liberals. What was most remarkable was that such a call was published in lieu of an editorial, that is, in the space assumed to represent the voice of the journal itself. Thus *Octubre* had effectively moved from praising wide anti-fascist alliances to lending them the space to make their voices heard. If Engels' letter had opened up *Octubre*'s life by rejecting the bourgeoisie, the "editorial" in the last issue acknowledged the relevance of bourgeois ideology, reaching the conclusion that if fascism were not fought against, "all traces of *liberalism* [would] be suffocated by streams of blood" (ibid; emphasis added).

Octubre was not openly embracing liberalism, however, nor was it opening up to be part of a democratic alliance against fascism. The political tension which was so obvious in its last issue was caused precisely by the fact that the journal was not quite embracing that alliance, but had already moved from acknowledging its existence to emphasizing its meaningfulness, only to move on to argue completely different points. Indeed after such an expression of concern over how liberalism was being threatened by fascism, *Octubre* moved on to criticize the language of liberalism itself, the language used by those intellectuals who had recently "appeared" using words like "nation", "race" and "pueblo" with great fluency, but who under no circumstances want[ed] anything to do with the *proletariat*" (Serrano Plaja 1934, 20; emphases in original). For the collaborators

of *Octubre*, those terms were "grandiloquent", "abstract", and, ultimately, "void of meaning" (ibid). Further, in the same issue it was argued that those intellectuals who were pursuing the anti-fascist struggle outside the proletariat were enemies of class struggle (Olivares 1934, 12). The journal continued to accuse bourgeois idealism and its "abstract" view of the world of driving the world toward "confusion" and "pessimism" (Delgado 1934, 31). In much more specific terms, the journal's permanent section on national politics and social issues presented a Spanish intelligentsia torn apart by class struggle, and interpreted the coming to power of the CEDA (coalition of right-wing parties presently in power) as the last strategy of a national bourgeoisie trying to perpetuate itself, a move against which only the union of the proletariat would be a feasible alternative ("Puertas adentro" 2).

That was also the thesis of Arconada's last article in *Octubre*, "*La doctrina intelectual del Fascismo*" (1934, 22-24), in which he presented the historical evolution of the reformist liberal bourgeoisie, a class which had first placed all its hopes in democracy and, once it had become disillusioned with capitalism, was seeking refuge in fascism. Arconada drew a historical line all the way from medieval feudalism to modern rationalism, arguing that they were merely different stages of a single cultural evolution. He was thus suggesting that the reformist liberal bourgeoisie had, in fact, not provided Spain with a new cultural model; it had merely driven the cultural model of the feudal bourgeoisie further toward its demise. This is to say that the reformist liberal bourgeoisie and the haute bourgeoisie were one and the same thing, and that the former was not only compliant with fascism, but also one of its protagonists. Between that and the Party

slogan of "social-democrats are social-fascists" there was only a difference of intensity and style.

That would not be *Octubre*'s final word, however, for the journal still had to say something else about liberalism before disappearing from the cultural scene. In the last pages of its last issue, *Octubre* hailed poet Antonio Machado as "the greatest bourgeois poet of this century", an artist whose contact with the "countryside and its men [sic]" had "filled his poetry with peasant themes" (Untitled notes. April 1934: 3). Unlike other bourgeois poets or members of the Generation of 1898, Machado was respected by the revolutionary writers of *Octubre*, because he had treated those themes with "such human understanding and respect" that his poetry was far from sharing in the "pastoral" view of classic bourgeois literature, but was filled with "social meaning" (ibid). The comments on Machado spoke of an artist who envisioned a "human community" based on "co-existence" and on good will among people, a poet who had found his "communist lyric" in the search for the "metaphysical foundation" which was the spiritual equality of all human beings (ibid). Remarkably, the article accepted the poet's humanism at face value, rather than offering a critique of it. Nowhere in the article was there a critique or even the most superficial analysis of Machado's confusion between "communism " as a political path and the creation of a "community [of] men [sic]" as a final political goal (Machado 1934, 4).

In a literary study of *Octubre*, López de Abiada has suggested that the publication of these notes on Machado proves that *Octubre* was not a "private club" [*coto cerrado*] closed to all those who did not have a Marxist interpretation of literature (1990, 198).[71] López de Abiada has argued, in fact, that the inclusion of this piece on Machado

symbolized the "wide, independent and liberal platform" on which the journal was founded, and which "was designed to combat fascism by all means possible" (ibid). Certainly, I do not think *Octubre* was founded on such a platform, as I hope I have made clear in the above discussion. That, however, was very much the political line which was starting to come through the pages of the journal starting with its sixth issue, which also happened to be its last one. Had the journal continued to be published, it would have very likely continued to evolve along these lines.

It was on that note, however, halfway between its original proletarian line and its openness toward liberalism, that *Octubre* ended abruptly in April 1934, leaving the Spanish cultural scene without a nation-wide orthodox communist cultural voice, a void which would not be filled until eight months later with the publication of the first issue of *Nueva Cultura*.

When *Octubre* disappeared in early 1934, the place of cultural critique within the PCE had hardly improved at all, especially as its official publication, *Mundo Obrero*, was outlawed as a consequence of the post-Asturias repression. A few articles on cultural and artistic issues, however, would be published in *La lucha*, a publication created by the Party with the sole purpose of defending and spreading the idea of a United Front, and which the PCE asked Ramón J. Sender to direct.[72] *La lucha* engaged in no attacks on bourgeois intellectuals nor did it maintain open debates with revolutionary ones. In fact, the paper

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[71] In his article, López de Abiada assumes that Alberti himself wrote the biographical notes previous to Machado's article. Those notes, however, are unsigned.

[72] *La lucha* was published from 9 January to 8 March 1934. It was an evening newspaper for the "Workers' United Front". Esteban and Santonja have pointed out the paper had a very "rough" life, being

hardly acknowledged the existence of intellectuals at all, except for the fact that it published a few notes about university issues, calling on students to participate in the proletarian United Front ("Ante una ofensiva").

It would be, however, in a few scattered film and theatre reviews that *La lucha* sent out its most powerful, though subtle, cultural message. In line with what other communist publications like *Nosotros* or *Nuestro Cinema* had already done, the newspaper set out to foreground the decadence of bourgeois society and culture through a critique of its cinema and theatre. In comparison with what the other two publications or even *Mundo Obrero* had done before, however, the film and theatre reviews published in *La lucha* were rather insignificant, for they were few in number and of a much poorer quality. Yet the political message in those critiques was loud and clear. Once that message is put in perspective, it is obvious that it was the very first step the Party took in its move from a proletarian to a democratic line, although that would not become obvious until some time later, as we shall see.

La lucha accused bourgeois cinema of ignoring crucial social issues and investing time and money on stories of little interest except to the most ignorant and uneducated bourgeoisie. For the communist paper, bourgeois cinema was "monotonous", "poor", predictable and uncreative, and it was high time Spain saw some good "social cinema" which would pay attention to some of the many "moral issues" which were of great relevance in society (del Amo 1934a, 3). The writers of *La lucha* would, in fact, complain that it was not even worth writing about bourgeois cinema or theatre, since they were

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continuously closed down by the authorities (1988, 318). Sender was the editor of the first forty-one issues.

hardly worthy of critical attention (1934b, 3). Instead, they hoped such "filth" would soon disappear and be replaced by some doses of "intelligent rebelliousness" (Gorki 1934b, 3).

All this would at first seem to be one more in an endless series of critiques written by Party and other communist intellectuals against the bad taste and worse social conscience of a decadent bourgeoisie. It was not. For, in fact, this was the first time that a Party official publication dedicated any space at all to criticizing the tastes and cultural practices of the haute bourgeoisie rather than to criticizing the cultural reformism or liberal humanism of the much more educated middle bourgeoisie. This was no insignificant move, for, in fact, once these critiques are seen in perspective, they make it clear that, while from the pages of *Mundo Obrero*, the Party was still accusing social-democracy and the reformist bourgeoisie of "social-fascism", its cultural critique (small as it was) had moved a step back from them and had found a new enemy in the haute bourgeoisie of the *Restauración*.

Although the shift in the object of critique had already started, the point of view had not changed. The critique of the Spanish haute bourgeoisie was carried out from a proletarian perspective which was as firm as ever, according to which the uneducated, ignorant, and frivolous bourgeoisie of the *Restauración* had been able to survive because the reformist bourgeoisie, while in power, had catered to its tastes, rather than proceeding to bring about radical change.

As far as the writers in *La lucha* were concerned, if the former Republican reformist government "had truly been revolutionary, the new social fabric would have been reflected on stage" (Gorki 1934a, 3). Since such a revolution had not taken place, the arts scene (most notoriously, the stage) was still dominated by old bourgeois taste, and

bourgeois audiences were "laughing" at a number of "characters" and "customs" which were put on stage "with the consent of the government", all of it proof that such "misery" was "admitted" as a "spectacle to entertain the ignorant bourgeoisie" (ibid). The critique was thus not only that artistic life was still dominated by the tastes of a decadent bourgeoisie, but the fact that the reformist bourgeois government had been both complacent with and responsible for it. Nevertheless, a shift had taken place, precisely because the reformist bourgeoisie was attacked as an accomplice of the feudal status quo and was no longer the sole protagonist. That shift planted the first seed of a new cultural narrative which was to reach maturity in the years to come and which would redirect communist cultural critique toward the nation's democratic struggle against feudal Spain. From then on, the Party's cultural criticism would never be the same.

Yet the Communist Party of Spain was clearly unwilling to acknowledge its own cultural poverty, even though it was obvious to Party leaders that they were losing ground in relation to the communist opposition, which was much more active culturally. The PCE claimed that it was not "by chance" that those "little counter-revolutionary groups of renegades" "showed. . . more activity", since they had been "created" and continued to be "stimulated" and "fed" by the bourgeoisie and the Spanish state as "channels through which to infiltrate" its ideology (Uribe 1934, 1). At a time in which the bourgeoisie was reaching the pinnacle of its decadence, it needed groups "covered in 'communist' clothing" in order to reach workers with their "load of false ideas, contrary both to the revolution and to the Communist Party" (ibid). The activities of those groups were but a response to the "impulse and trust which the Communist Party was [gradually] achiev[ing]" and they

were merely serving to "seed confusion" among workers, and "remove them" from the path of communism (ibid).

The Asturian Revolution and After: The National Context

Although the Party had received such an important flux of revolutionary intellectuals in early 1933, it did not manage to keep them all for a long time. In fact, some of the intellectuals who had signed the Anti-Fascist Manifesto in early 1933 were among those who by early 1934 were pressuring the Party to join the *Alianzas Obreras* or make a similar move toward reconciliation with other anti-fascist forces. Since the Party would still not change its official line, some of them – most notoriously, Balbontín himself – abandoned the Party.[73]

By September 1934, however, pressure had built up drastically both in the Comintern and the PCE, and while preparations for a Popular Front were already underway in France,[74] the Comintern ordered the Communist Party of Spain to enter the *Alianzas Obreras*. The Party, in turn, encouraged all its chapters to follow the lead at the local level.[75]

Entry into the *Alianzas*, however, did not bring immediate changes to the PCE's political discourse, which remained largely centered around the issue of the United Front. In fact, Party leaders argued that they had joined the *Alianzas Obreras* because they were "the logical consequence of the tactic of United Front" (Comité Central 1934a), and as

[73] See Balbontín (1952, 276); *La lucha* 6 March 1934.
[74] The policy of Popular Front was adopted by the Executive Committee of the French Communist Party as early as March 1934 and by its National Conference in June of that year.
[75] See Comité Central del Partido Comunista (1934b).

such they would serve "as permanent organs for the United Front, eventually becoming Soviets" (Cruz 1987, 194).

A month after the Party had joined the *Alianzas Obreras*, the workers' organization led a nation-wide revolutionary insurrection against the Republican conservative government. As had been the case so many times before, however, the uprising was either aborted at the local or regional level even before it started or was quickly put down by the authorities, leaving only a few true focii of revolutionary tension. In October 1934, the main focus was the northern mining region of Asturias, where the miners became the leaders of the most important attempt at revolution since 1917. Eventually, however, their rebellion was also put down by the authorities and a great wave of political repression ensued.[76]

For the communist opposition, the defeat in Asturias marked the beginning of the "third" or "democratic-socialist" period in the Spanish revolution, one in which the working class organized in the *Alianzas Obreras* was called on to complete the democratic revolution the bourgeoisie had left unfinished and to seek the economic and political liberation of all popular classes (Maurín 1966, 224). The PCE, however, blamed socialists and anarchists for the defeat in Asturias, and argued that it had fought with the *Alianzas Obreras* and that it would continue to do so "for the defeat of fascism. . . and for a government of workers and peasants through Soviets" (PCE, Buró Político 1934, 3).[77]

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[76] For further commentary on the October revolution in Asturias, see Bizcarrondo, ed. (1977); Ojeda (1985).

[77] Maurín blamed Socialists and Communists, for joining at the last minute. The Comintern, however, read the October defeat as confirmation that objective revolutionary conditions were present, but that the Spanish proletariat was not prepared to lead the revolution. The Comintern blamed the poor results of the October uprising on the fact that it had been led by the bourgeoisie, while the PCE had hardly been involved and peasants and soldiers had been excluded (Cruz 1987, 211).

Clearly, although the PCE had joined Republicans and socialists in the *Alianzas Obreras*, neither the Party nor the Comintern was willing to concede that it would accept a new political program. E. H. Carr has suggested that "the bloody defeat of the Asturian miners and the prospective emergence of yet another fascist regime in Europe, sent a shudder through the ranks of the Comintern" (1982, 314), so it was probably around this time that the international communist organization was finally convinced of the need for an anti-fascist front which would include not only the proletariat and peasants but also the petite bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia and social-democrats, for the sake of safeguarding basic democratic (bourgeois) liberties (Cruz 1987, 177).

Barely a few days after the insurrection in Asturias, and clearly under the influence of the events which had already taken place in France, a Party document addressed to its local anti-fascist committees argued that the PCE had been challenged by the need "to group in a single anti-fascist bloc *all those* who want[ed] to fight against reaction and fascism" (Comité Central 1934a, 1; emphasis added). Although the Party continued to call that bloc a "United Front" (ibid), the definition which it gave to that alliance had drastically changed, since it was now to be "as wide as possible" in order to include "communists, socialists, anarchists, Republicans [and] nationalists", although still under communist leadership (ibid). Rafael Cruz has pointed out that although this new "United Front" was made to look like the organic successor of former anti-fascist proletarian initiatives such as the *Frente Antifascista*, it already carried the social and political content of the future Popular Front (1987, 230-1).

The following month, the Party continued to speak of the "government of workers and peasants" in a "Soviet Spain", but somehow the struggle had been given a preliminary

stage by which "the reconquest of the democratic liberties of the people" would be pursued first ("Después de las gloriosas jornadas" 1). In subsequent correspondence between the PCE and the Communist Party of Catalonia, it was clear that the Party was getting ready to open up to "all anti-fascist elements", including "the intelligentsia and the petite bourgeoisie" (Comité Central 1934c, 1).

Needless to say, the "theoretical consistency of this new proposal" was not only "fragile", but also rather "contradictory and ambiguous" (Cruz 1987, 231-2). Yet by December 1934, the Party seemed to have reached a greater degree of "maturity" (232) when it put out a call for the creation of a *Concentración Popular Antifascista* [Anti-Fascist Popular Bloc] which sought to transform the "popular sentiment" which already existed in the country by giving it the form of an anti-fascist alliance ("Por una Concentración Popular Antifascista" 1). While this new alliance was to allow each of its members to "maintain its independence", it would also "bring [them all] together. . . against the monarchical-clerical-fascist forces" by demanding the basic social change they all wanted (ibid). Their joint "program of action" wanted to represent the aspirations of the "*hard-working people*", calling for "the defense of *popular-democratic vindications*" and the struggle for "democratic liberties", including free speech, the right of assembly, the redistribution of land, unemployment insurance and political amnesty (ibid; emphasis added).

As Rafael Cruz has pointed out, the manifesto of the *Concentración Popular Antifascista* already contained the new political terminology which the PCE was going to use from then on, terminology in which the words "proletariat" and "proletarian" would move to the background, while terms like "hard-working people" [*pueblo laborioso*] and

"popular-democratic struggle" would come to the foreground, all while class struggle and the goal of a Soviet Spain were surreptitiously replaced by that of a new "popular-democratic" Republic. As time went by and the PCE continued to open up even more toward the anti-fascist struggle, it remained unclear whether the Party was ready to accept the minimum democratic program of the *Alianzas* or whether it would settle for nothing less than its own maximum program (Comité Central 1934a; "Después de las gloriosas jornadas" 1).

From late 1934 all through the summer of 1935, Party discourse would be marked by this ambiguity between a revolutionary and a democratic program, as the PCE continued to issue calls which ranged from joining the reformist bourgeoisie to celebrating a Red May Day (Partido Comunista de Euzkadi 1935). This ambiguous discourse – which Rafael Cruz has named "a tandem *Alianzas*-revolution and Popular Front-democracy" (1987, 221) – revealed a Party torn apart by, on the one hand, the need to join the bourgeoisie and, on the other, by the fear that workers' organizations would lose control.

This was neither a tactical nor a strategical change, because officially it was no change at all. It was just a nebulous position which sought to have the best of two worlds, revealing a Party simultaneously pressured to face up to a new political reality which demanded new strategies and unwilling to give up former policies. As 1935 moved on, however, it became increasingly clear that the Party was opening up toward wide democratic anti-fascist alliances. By the time the Seventh Congress of the Comintern made the policy of Popular Front official, the term had already been incorporated to the PCE's political lexicon and the Party had been going after the Spanish reformist bourgeoisie for quite a while.

October 1934: The Bourgeois and Revolutionary Intelligentsias

No other political event before the Civil War exemplifies better what scholars have called the "radicalization" of the intelligentsia during the middle years of Republican government than the October revolution of 1934 and the long months of political repression and working-class mobilizations which ensued after it. In the first place, intellectuals themselves were very much victims (physically and otherwise) of the post-October repression, with journalists and writers being killed, tortured and/or imprisoned.[78] The response of the intellectual community to these outrageous acts was immediate. A wide range of intellectuals – members of different generations – participated in the organizing of public events, the writing of manifestos and the distribution of petitions, all of them "against government corruption and repression, the fascist threat in [the country] as well as overseas [and] for the defense of freedom" (Fuentes 1980, 60). In particular, intellectuals demanded immediate freedom for all political prisoners in Asturias and across the country, as well as the clarification of political and criminal responsibilities. They took these issues to political institutions, all the way from the National Parliament to the president's office. In December 1934, Radical-Socialist Félix Gordon Ordas called on all members of Parliament, and especially on the bourgeois intellectuals there, to exercise pressure on the government so that the truth about all crimes could be known. The Executive Committee of the *Ateneo de Madrid* wrote a letter "on behalf of Spain" to the

[78] Journalist Luis Sirval was killed in a police station in the city of Oviedo by a Russian lieutenant in charge of the Spanish Legion troops which had been sent to the region of Asturias to put down the rebellion. Another journalist, Javier Bueno, was tortured and sent to prison. Writer and activist Antonio Espina was jailed for a month for writing an article about Hitler. For commentary on the Asturian revolution and Spanish intellectuals, see Aznar (1984).

president of the Republic demanding he "clarify what [had] happened and [was] still happening in the villages and cities of Spain, in its jails and police stations" (qtd. in Aznar et al. 1987b, 2: 64).

As proof of the "radicalization" of the Spanish intelligentsia after October 1934, Manuel Aznar has argued that, at that time, most Spanish writers were no longer concerned about the Spanish "people", but had discovered the "proletariat" instead, thus undergoing a "serious crisis of identity" (1987, 16-17). Such a crisis, according to Aznar, moved "all Republican writers"– catholics, liberal-bourgeois, anti-fascists and communists – to be "collectively committed" (ibid).

Indeed they may have been committed, but I do not think it was necessarily "collectively". In 1934, the Spanish intelligentsia as a whole was hardly the kind of coherent unit it had been fifteen years earlier – before the emergence of the first revolutionary intellectuals with the *Partido Comunista Español*. Further, the fact that reformist and revolutionary intellectuals were signing manifestos together did not mean they had embraced a common cause or that they understood anti-fascism in the same terms. Just as the signing of the PCE's Anti-Fascist Manifesto by a few Party intellectuals in early 1933 had not marked the beginning of the Party's call to the anti-fascist intelligentsia, the "radicalization" of the bourgeois intelligentsia after October 1934 should not be confused with the coming together of the reformist and revolutionary intelligentsias on a common program, something which would not happen until some time later.

This enthusiastic eruption of political activity and organized protest on the part of the bourgeois intelligentsia, something which cannot and should not be denied and which was of great historical importance, certainly came to prove the political and social

"sensibility" of Spanish intellectuals and writers, who experienced the events in October 1934 as a great impact, a political shock which sped up their conviction to adopt an anti-fascist stand and a stronger social commitment.

The explanation for this outburst of political activity, however, should be searched not in a process of "radicalization", but somewhere else. First and foremost, the explanation for such outburst is found in the fact that bourgeois intellectuals were organizing in a political movement of opposition to the status quo for the first time since 1931. While the proclamation of the Republic had brought to an end their oppositional politics and had turned them into policy-makers, the coming to power of the CEDA had subsequently banished them from government and relegated them to a secondary (and once again, oppositional) role. As a consequence, when the danger of fascism arose, they organized themselves into an oppositional movement much in the same way they had done in the early 1920s in opposition to the Monarchy and Primo's dictatorship. The fact that they fell into the category of oppositional forces again, and that they had to fight the new status quo (although it very much resembled the former one) may have brought an halo of radicalization to their acts and their demands. It was, however, merely a new outbreak of oppositional activity coming from the same contender, the bourgeoisie, and toward the same enemy, those representing the feudal class, all of it the kind of political activity to which the country should have been very well accustomed.

Barely a few weeks after the revolution had broken out in Asturias, an open letter from the *Ateneo de Madrid* to the president of the Republic demanded "justice" in the Asturias events. As if the leading signature of Fernando de los Ríos had not been enough to prove that this letter represented the feelings of the reformist bourgeoisie, the *Ateneo*

presented itself as the "historical fruit of the liberal movement" in Spain, the "safekeeper" of "universal values" in intellectual life ("El Ateneo al Presidente de la República" 1). In its letter, the *Ateneo* "solicited" the "immediate judicial regularization" of Spanish life and the clarification of "all actions, whether by the government or by the revolutionary workers", lest the country lose the "patrimony of freedoms. . . which [were] the moral bases of [its] modern civil culture" (ibid).

A few months later, in another open letter to the president of the Republic, a group of "people dedicated to the intellectual professions" who "lack[ed] any political intention" which may have "belittled the[ir] noble impulse" argued that after the repression which had taken place after October, there could be "no peace in any spirit who [felt] the fraternity between men [sic]" ("Un escrito al Presidente de la República" 8). These intellectuals told the president of the Republic that a political pardon would "bring to all [the Spanish people] a more human understanding of peace and would be a sign for everyone to channel their political activity through good fellowship and understanding" (ibid).

Indeed, what kind of "radicalization" could manifestos like these possibly reveal, when it was not even admitted that the impulse behind them was of a "political" nature, when the organized proletariat was completely erased and replaced by "men", class struggle replaced by "fraternity" and violent political action against an oppressive status quo dismissed in the name of peaceful "coexistence" and "understanding"?

The demands made by these bourgeois intellectuals were as "radical" as they had always been, for they did nothing but defend the very same bourgeois, liberal, democratic Republic they had been defending since the turn of the century and which they had successfully brought to Spain in 1931. While they had previously defended this

democratic Republic against a traditional, catholic and monarchical system, in 1934, they found themselves forced to defend it against a government which was operating within the Republican legal and political framework, but which could not be trusted to maintain it. Their analysis of the situation was hardly "radical", as it included neither new points of departure nor more revolutionary aims: first, because it was grounded in a deep sense of equanimity and freedom which continued to be quite blind to the most basic notion of class struggle; and second, because their intellectual discourse was still dominated by the presence of a politically abstract entity called *pueblo*. The reformist bourgeoisie had come a long way from seeing this *pueblo* as an abstract and diffuse mass of uneducated people to acknowledging their political agency. However, this discourse failed to give political agency to the revolutionary proletariat, or to acknowledge that the events in Asturias had been the result of the ongoing class struggle in Spanish society.

Most Spanish scholars have, in fact, acknowledged that the reasons which drove the majority of Spanish intellectuals to declare their solidarity with the Asturian revolution were merely "ethical", because, as a result of the failed insurrection and the repression which ensued, their "democratic bourgeois humanism" gave way to "a sentimental feeling of sympathy for the generically-called Spanish 'pueblo'" (Aznar 1984, 87). Thus bourgeois intellectuals were responding to the political events from a collective sense of moral indignation, of disgust *vis-à-vis* the repression in Asturias, all of it mixed with horror at German Nazism and Italian Fascism and the rise of Spanish Fascism (86).[79]

[79] As Manuel Aznar has pointed out, the description which social novelist Max Aub gave in his novel *Campo de Sangre* of one of his characters, Paulino Cuartero, a catholic intellectual, exemplifies the reaction of the whole of the bourgeois intelligentsia. "He was honest and pure", Aub said about his character, "the October repression filled him with disgust and got him more directly interested in the popular cause" (qtd. in 1984, 87). See also Tuñón de Lara (1989a).

As a result, it might be more appropriate to suggest, as Víctor Fuentes has, that October 1934 "mark[ed] the moment in which there [was] a movement of [Spanish] intellectuals toward the *popular* cause" (1980, 108; emphasis added). Aznar himself has pointed out that the Spanish intelligentsia in late 1934 and early 1935 may still be divided into those who still referred to the "generic ghost" of *pueblo*, "manipulated as the new hope", and those who made reference to the proletariat (et al. 1987b, 2: 76). It would follow then, that only communist writers could be considered to be "revolutionary" writers, since they were the only ones who spoke about class struggle and could understand the meaning of the Asturian revolution as an action carried out by the proletariat (Cruz 1993, 87).[80] The conclusion would then be, as Christopher Cobb has suggested, that the October revolution "*widened the gap* between liberal reformists and the more radicalized groups" (1981, 90).

I think the key to understand the October revolution (in the light of the evolution of communist cultural politics) is that it represented neither a "collective" act of "commitment" by the whole of the intelligentsia, as Aznar would have it, nor a complete "widening" of the "gap" between the reformist and the revolutionary ones, as Cobb would have it. Rather, it is my understanding that what the October revolution meant for the Spanish intelligentsia was something in between, a stage prior to such a collective commitment, something which could perhaps be defined as an "encounter". In that sense, the revolutionary events neither brought the reformist and the revolutionary intelligentsias together, nor drove them further apart. Rather, it marked the moment in which they were about to discover a common cause, the moment in which the seeds of future "collective

[80] Cruz says "Communist Party members", but this should be extended to all communists.

commitment" were planted. On the one hand, even though the reformist bourgeoisie was not "radical" enough to embrace a proletarian cause (something it would never do), it had taken enough of a step forward to give that "*pueblo*" some political agency. On the other, although the revolutionary intelligentsia was still fighting a proletarian cause, it was also moving very rapidly toward anti-fascist alliances with reformists and it was about to make significant changes to its discourse.

In late 1934, these two intelligentsias were still two well-differentiated groups reacting to different versions of the same event and for different reasons. At the same time, however, the months between late 1934 and early 1935 would mark the time in which two journeys started to converge: on the one hand, that of a reformist bourgeoisie moving from an elitist to a popular conception of democracy; on the other, that of a revolutionary intelligentsia moving from the proletariat to the popular revolution. As a result, it would be premature to speak of the response to Asturias already as "*frentepopularista*", for bourgeois and revolutionary intellectuals would not move toward a common stand on anti-fascism until some time later, toward the middle of 1935 and, more clearly so, in early 1936, when the Spanish Popular Front came into being. The journey which the revolutionary intelligentsia was about to undertake in early 1935 was best exemplified by the communist journal *Nueva Cultura*.

Nueva Cultura

Nueva Cultura[81] was founded in January 1935 in the Eastern Spanish region of Valencia, by a group of Party intellectuals under the leadership of visual artist Josep Renau.[82] A 1977 auto-biographical introduction written by Renau himself for the facsimile edition of the journal has put an end to the controversy and confusion there seemed to be in academic circles about the founding of the journal and its relationship both to the Valencian chapter of the *Association des Escrivains et des Artistes Revolutionnaires* and to the Communist Party.

Although a number of scholars have referred to *Nueva Cultura* as the official publication of the local section of the *Unión de Escritores y Artistas Revolucionarios* (Spanish version of the French AEAR), Renau himself has denied all connections between the journal and that cultural organization, not to mention the Communist Party.[83] As was the case with *Octubre*, this independence was obvious in the way the journal was founded,

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[81] *Nueva Cultura* was published in Valencia from January 1935 to July 1936, and in a second epoch from March to August/September 1937. A facsimile edition of all its issues was published in 1977 by Liechtenstein and Topos Verlag. For a history and critique of the journal, see Aznar Soler (1985); Aznar Soler and Blasco (1985); Renau (1977).

[82] A visual artist and cultural activist, Josep Renau (Valencia 1907-East Berlin 1982) started his artistic career influenced by Modernism and *art déco*. In 1931, he joined the Communist Party, and, in 1932, he founded the *Unión de Escritores y Artistas Proletarios* in his native Valencia. During the Civil War, he was the General Director of the Fine Arts Office of the Ministry of Public Instruction. He is best known, however, for the beauty and intensity of his war-time posters. His views on the political role of the visual arts can be found in *Función social del cartel publicitario* (1937) and *La batalla per una nova cultura* (1978).

[83] See Esteban and Santonja (1988); Caudet (1993). Renau explained that the AEAR as such did not exist in Valencia, as the result of a bureaucratic problem raised when the Governor of Valencia refused to register an organization with the word "*revolucionarios*" in its title, forcing the association to change it to "*proletarios*". That change further forced them to change the word "association" to "union", so that the acronym would sound better. That is why Valencia had an UAEP rather than an AEAR. On the other hand, Renau himself has admitted that the term "proletariat" was used rather symbolically, since the organization did not have a single proletarian artist in its membership at the time of foundation. During the war, the UEAP would join the Valencian chapter of the *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas*. In any case, Renau has made it clear that *Nueva Cultura* was never the official publication of either the AEAR or of the UEAP.

and the kind of arms-length relationship it had with the Party.[84] Yet, *Nueva Cultura* was founded and produced by communists, all of whom were also leaders of the local chapter of the national PCE, and thus I would also argue – as I did in the case of *Octubre* – that despite its independence (ideological, financial and otherwise) from the Communist Party, the project was influenced by communist national politics, although, as we shall see in a moment, not exactly in the same way *Octubre* was.

In an analysis of cultural policy and practice in the Spanish region of Valencia during the 1930s, Manuel Aznar and Ricard Blasco have argued that the founders of *Nueva Cultura* believed "that intellectual activity was inseparable from political activism and that bourgeois culture had to be replaced by a *proletarian* culture of *popular* rooting and a Marxist doctrinal base" (1985, 173; emphasis added).[85] According to these authors, in Valencia, in early 1935, "to speak of popular culture meant to speak about the kind of 'popular cultural expansion' for which generations of intellectuals had been calling ever since the 1920s" (170).

The description which Aznar and Blasco have made of the journal is both concise and comprehensive. The editors of *Nueva Cultura* wanted their journal to be not an academic project, but one of political and cultural activism, seeking the roots of an

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[84] In his introduction to the facsimile edition of the journal, Renau has related how he went to Madrid to meet with the leaders of the Communist Party, who told him that "the popular character of the journal, as well as its anti-fascist tone were quite appropriate", that the publication should be "national" and "openly animated" by Communists, but also "open" to all others. The Party leaders also told Renau he should not "count on" help from the Party (1977, xvii). Renau has further argued that during the five years of life of the journal neither the central committee of the PCE nor any members of the lower leadership "censured *even one time*" the activity of the journal, which was always "free and independent" in the sense that the journal editors were "*completely responsible for what* [they] *decided* [or] *did*" (xix; emphases in the original). Further, though the editors of the journal were openly Communists, Renau argued that everyone who collaborated with the journal felt "right at home" and that the list of collaborators was indeed as long as it was politically mixed (ibid).

alternative culture which would be found right in the people, both as recipients of culture as well as active creators. The combination of the adjectives "proletarian" and "popular" which Aznar and Blasco have used in their description is neither casual nor accidental, because indeed *Nueva Cultura* was founded on a line which strongly identified proletarian and popular culture as one and the same thing, to the point that, throughout the life of the journal, the two terms came to have the very same meaning.

Nueva Cultura symbolized the transformation Party intellectuals were experiencing, as they moved from a discourse of proletarian culture toward a discourse of popular culture and from the need to pursue proletarian anti-fascist alliances to the pursuit of much wider ones. In the historical narrative *Nueva Cultura* put forward, the protagonist was no longer the proletariat, but the more generic "*pueblo*" and class struggle had already been replaced by the redemption of humanity against the dark forces of fascism. What was most remarkable about *Nueva Cultura*, however, was that it was a pioneer in the creation of this cultural discourse in communist circles, that it was not so much *influenced* by national communist politics, or the PCE, as it itself *influenced* the Party, which in the upcoming months was going to produce a cultural critique following *Nueva Cultura*'s line. The Party, in fact, was still in the process of evolving toward such a discourse, and had *Octubre* survived, it is likely the same would have happened to it. *Nueva Cultura*, however, experienced no discursive evolution of which to speak. The journal was *founded* on a discourse of "*pueblo laborioso*" and of "democratic liberties" for a "popular-democratic Republic" just as if the project had been devised with the manifesto of the PCE's *Concentración Popular Antifascista* as a base document. In this respect, an

[85] I have translated this and other citations from the 1985 article by Aznar and Blasco from the original

analogy may be drawn between the relationship *Nueva Cultura* had with the Communist Party of Spain and that which the European anti-fascist alliances had maintained for a number of years with the Comintern. Just as the European intelligentsia had always been a step ahead of the international organization, so *Nueva Cultura* was a step ahead of the Communist Party of Spain itself, since the journal was embedded in the popular-democratic line toward which the Party itself was evolving but had not quite reached yet. *Nueva Cultura*, however, would inherit none of the ambiguous or contradictory discourse the Party was producing. What *Octubre* had experienced as a tension, for *Nueva Cultura* was more a cause for liberation, and the journal exploded from the very first issue with a new cultural discourse which would become the trademark of Party intellectuals and the Party itself for years to come.

Much like *Octubre* and other projects of the time, *Nueva Cultura* was an anti-fascist journal. Renau himself pointed out how the special issue which *Nueva Cultura* published on fascism[86] – "with its weaknesses, gaps and all" – seemed to have been "the only documented and responsible warning against the imminent danger which threatened" the country (1977, xx). Indeed, anti-fascism was the "vocation of all writers and collaborators. . . from the very first issue" (ibid).

Unlike *Octubre*, *Nueva Cultura* showed no reticence about the kind of anti-fascist alliances to be sought; it felt no quiet admiration toward the wide anti-fascist intellectual alliances which were being pursued in Europe at the time, while remaining on the terrain of the proletariat and revolutionary intellectuals at home. Unlike *Octubre*, *Nueva Cultura* was openly calling for an alliance of all anti-fascist intellectuals, regardless of their original

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Valencian language into English.

political line, whether they were "liberal, Socialist, democrats [or] anarchists" ("Los intelectuales españoles en esta hora" 3). *Nueva Cultura* saw itself not only as part of such a wide anti-fascist alliance, but clearly as one of its leaders, organizers and mentors.

As a communist project, *Nueva Cultura* was still bound to provide a critique of cultural reformism. As an openly anti-fascist one, however, it was also moving toward the defense of basic democratic liberties. While that very same dichotomy had been at the root of the ideological tensions *Octubre* experienced, *Nueva Cultura* was able to merge those two options into a renewed political and cultural proposal: one which sought to overcome the shortcomings of bourgeois-democratic reformism while keeping and building on its greatest achievements.

Nueva Cultura accused the Republican intelligentsia of reproducing in the 1930s the same cultural categories of the Golden Age, from "its mysticism" to its "pseudopopular Picaresque", all of it tainted with "individualism, aestheticism and fatalism".[87] The journal also declared its opposition toward the *Krausista* conceptions "grounded in German idealism" of the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* and "its" *Misiones Pedagógicas*.[88] As far as the writers of *Nueva Cultura* were concerned, these cultural projects "may have done a great deal of good in the past", but they were obviously "insufficient" in the new political scenario, where there was no place for their "elitist paternalism", or for their vision of the popular masses as an "empty sack" which could be

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[86] April 1935.

[87] In later years, Renau would suggest that in the late 1930s he and his fellow members of *Nueva Cultura* might have been analyzing their past with the critical terms of the present. He suggested, however, that even though their interpretation may have been "methodologically incorrect" it was at least "politically fair" (1977, xix).

[88] The *Misiones Pedagógicas*, of course, had not been a project of the ILE, but of the first Republican government. *Nueva Cultura* was making a point, however, by identifying the first Republican government with the reformist bourgeoisie of the nineteenth century.

"filled" with "left-wing versions of the Spanish Golden Age". For *Nueva Cultura* , the "*conscience* of the Republican intelligentsia was well below. . . the real *existence* of [the Spanish] people", for that intelligentsia had never truly been interested in "feedback"[89] (Renau 1977, xx).

Nueva Cultura believed that the Republican intelligentsia had, in fact, been a victim of an "unsolvable contradiction", namely that while it had "instituted basic democratic freedoms", it had also been too "adamant" in its attempt to "take advantage" of those "new freedoms" in order to "reaffirm its own personality", all while "obsessively looking into the ontological raison d'être of the 'Hispanic essence' in the narrow geographic-cultural complex of Castille and Andalusia" (Renau 1977, xxi). The journal also accused the reformist bourgeoisie not only of being elitist, but also of having been too weak and ignorant and failing to take a stand against fascism ("Editorial" February 1935: 1-2).

Nueva Cultura believed fascism was both "anti-Marxist" – insofar as it was a "formula" created by bourgeois society in order to perpetuate itself – and "anti-liberal" – insofar as it sought to re-organize capitalism in ways which denied its democratic content ("Perfil y entraña del Fascismo" 3). In either case, fascism could only mean a return to the Middle Ages, thus re-enacting a struggle against which the reformist bourgeoisie had already fought (ibid).

Although *Nueva Cultura* rejected the cultural categories of the Golden Age and criticized harshly the attempt by the reformist bourgeoisie to revive them, its two-fold definition of fascism meant that the journal also wanted to "respect" the "humanist tradition" of Spanish "old culture" (Renau 1977, xix). *Nueva Cultura* did not agree with

[89] English term used in the original.

the elitist vision of democratic revolution originally put forward by the reformist bourgeoisie, but it did agree with its "humanistic" essence. The journal just gave a greater leadership role to the popular masses within that political effort.

Renau has suggested that the intention of the founding group was not to do a literary journal per se, but rather a journal which would make an effort to "understand" what was happening in the cultural field. The group also considered it more important to "disseminate" political or cultural ideas "widely" rather than keeping them in "pure form", that is, "the most important thing was to categorically underline the abyss which had historically separated intellectuals from their people". The attempt was not to do a "political" journal either, but rather, one of "intellectual guidance" (Renau 1977, xix). The ultimate goal was "total fusion with the people" (ibid), a goal as grandiose as self-consciously modest, tinged as it was with an air of reciprocity which very few (if any) previous progressive cultural projects had known.[90]

Thus the journal would replace elitism with a greater leadership role for the masses, and ignorance with knowledge and "feedback". It would also combat fascism with all its strength, attempting to uproot it from Spanish society the way the reformist bourgeoisie had failed to do. To fulfill this latest goal, *Nueva Cultura* provided a great deal of information on the history of fascism, embracing the "historicist" style of the communist intellectuals who came before it, and exploring the history of the Spanish empire, through the years of the government of *Restauración* and of military dictatorship, right to its present day.

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[90] Indeed Renau has insisted – at least in hindsight – that the word "guidance" in the subtitle was in line with the journal's official mandate, and that both should be understood to be "two dimensional", for the

As a result, *Nueva Cultura* moved toward a humanistic cultural critique still focused to some extent on bourgeois reformism, except for the fact that it would not criticize what it had attempted to do, but what it had been unable to do. The most important consequence of such a new critique was that the journal put forward a narrative of the evolution of Spanish culture in which the focus was no longer the struggle of the proletariat against bourgeois reformism, but that of the popular masses and the liberal bourgeoisie (albeit separately) against feudalism, a narrative in which the journal inscribed itself as part of "the best of the Western and Spanish cultural tradition" (¡El fascismo es la guerra! 7).

In this new popular-democratic narrative – often presented in the most grandiloquent and inflated of discourses – [91] *Nueva Cultura* brought to the fore the history of a country dominated by the influence of the army and the Church, the cultural evolution of a "negative Spain" which had plunged the country into "repression" and "darkness" ("Editorial" January 1935, 2). Against a "dark" society ruled by the morale of feudalism and imperialism, the only true "essence" of Spanish culture had been that of the people in their struggle against fascism, and the culture of those people was the only "true" Spanish culture, continuously struggling to survive.

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goal was "to guide others while guiding [them]selves", or perhaps "to guide [them]selves to be able to guide others" (1977, xxi).

[91] The journal's first editorial, for instance, read: "The sword and the cross cast nothing but deadly fatalism. . . on the history of our culture. The fresh air of the Renaissance collapsed in our borders, and the doors of Spain were closed to the restless and imperative calls of Europe. But on the leeward of this deadly quietness, Cervantes, Lope de Vega, and Quevedo vindicated a strong and healthy people, immortalizing an era of Spanish culture. Today, after four centuries of history, when Spain is but a secondary loop of Western thought already in decline, those who take it upon themselves to defend an extreme nationalism. . . go against the healthiest part of our artistic patrimony" ("Editorial" January 1935, 1).

From the "popular tradition" of Lope de Vega, Cervantes, Quevedo and Goya, they would take the best, disposing of both the "mistakes" and the "darkness" of that time. From that past of anti-feudal struggle, they wanted to rescue a history of courage, while erasing the oppression. In line with their desire to embrace the most positive "humanistic" essence of Spanish liberalism, the editors of the journal argued that "MAN[sic] [was] the true protagonist of communism, and, that ultimately, the final goal of communism [was] MAN. Accordingly, the struggle against fascism was a struggle "around MAN and his destiny" and the dichotomy was clear: "[e]ither we save him and his life and keep them as the primary basis of culture" or the triumph of fascism "will plunge the nation into a stage of fanatism, intoxicated masses, corruption, terror and spiritual death, which will lead toward. . . an anti-historical, monstrous, inhuman, absurd and impossible Empire" ("Editorial" December 1935, 3; capitalization as in the original).

Fascism would need to be counteracted by the same popular culture which had already struggled against feudalism for centuries. Despite the title of the journal, such a culture was "new" only insofar as it had to find its way to be reborn. A national anti-feudalist popular culture was not dead, it was merely dormant. To awaken it, *Nueva Cultura* had no "finished" or "magic" formula, but the editors did know that it would be found in the work of the popular collective, rather than in the elitist activities of the reformist bourgeoisie ("Sigamos trabajando" 2). *Nueva Cultura* wanted to have "all the tools" needed to carry out that work within the collective, within the "community of men [sic]" which was heir to the best of the Spanish tradition, and still had plenty of "raw material" on which to build (ibid). Such was the meaning of the "happiness" *Nueva Cultura* was after, a "collective" happiness which would include "dignified human

relations", rather than suffering ("Manifesto Electoral" 6). This was the cultural narrative which *Nueva Cultura* embraced months before the Party was to seek a leadership role in the popular-democratic revolution. It was also the popular-democratic discourse which the Party was soon to adopt.

SECTION THREE: June 1935-July 1936
From the Popular Front and into the Civil War

The National and International Political Context

After more than two years struggling to keep the proletarian United Front as a viable political alternative in the fight against fascism, by the summer of 1935, the Comintern seemed to be ready to concede. The theses presented by German communist G. Dimitrov, in preparation for the Seventh Congress of the international organization, suggested that the definition of social-democracy as "social-fascism" and the suspicion that all reformist leaders were traitors to the working class had simply been "incorrect" and "arbitrary" (Alvarez 1990, 122).[92] By the time the congress ended, fascism had been redefined as "the open, terrorist dictatorship of the *most reactionary*, most chauvinist and most imperialist component of capital" (Cruz 1987, 177; emphases added). The implications of this new definition were at least two: one, that the reformist bourgeoisie and social-democracy should no longer be considered the allies of fascism, but two of its more immediate victims; and two, that communists should no longer conceive of anti-fascism as a solely proletarian cause. The Communist International called for the creation of a broad anti-fascist Popular Front, mobilizing not only the working class, but all layers of society which were also victims of fascism – workers from both Internationals, peasants, intellectuals, and the petite bourgeoisie. As the Comintern yielded to the pressing need to combat the rise of fascism, it was also forced to defend what fascism sought to annihilate: bourgeois democratic rights and freedoms. Thus the international

[92] From a letter by Dimitrov to Stalin, dated June 1934 (qtd. in Alvarez 1990, 123).

organization had to forego the idea of the proletarian revolution which it had defended for over fifteen years.

In its move from the United Front to the Popular Front, however, the Comintern could afford neither a complete break with the past nor too irrational an allegiance to former tactics. There was thus a need for the international organization to avoid the question of whether the new resolutions meant a rejection or a revision of its previous ones (E. H. Carr 1982, 424). Because the new resolutions still spoke about a United Front, they looked like the result of a logical progression from a former tactic; since they emphasized the struggle against fascism, they also looked as though they were adapting to new political demands. Yet amidst the attempt to balance the importance of political coherence and the wisdom of adaptability, the question of proletarian revolution remained unresolved, since the congress resolutions included no discussion on whether the revolution had been temporarily abandoned or whether it had simply been added a preliminary stage in the form of anti-fascist struggle.[93] The only thing which was made clear was that the fight against fascism could no longer be maintained on the basis of the old-style United Front (418).[94]

If, as E.H. Carr has suggested, the PCE originally had some difficulty "digesting" the Comintern's turn in policy (1982, 312), it was also true that envisaging "a broad popular anti-fascist alliance gave the Party the first opportunity to enter effectively the troubled arena of Spanish politics" (1984, 1). Entering this "arena", however, was not

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[93] In his unpublished notes for the congress, Dimitrov defended the idea that "the proletarian revolution . . . may begin as a people's anti-fascist revolution led by the proletariat" (qtd. in E. H. Carr 1982, 425). For more information on the creation of the Popular Front and its impact in Europe, see the volume edited by Helen Graham and Paul Preston (1987).

something the PCE could do at a small price, for in order to become a fully-equal member of an alliance like the Popular Front, the Party had to accept a minimum program which would be implemented by a coalition government.

Immediately after the celebration of the Moscow congress, a Comintern manifesto addressed to "the Socialist, Communist, Anarchist and Syndicalist Toilers of Spain", as well as to "the Toilers of Catalonia, the Basque country and Morocco", exhorted the PCE to learn the lessons of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917; it also censored the PSOE for having previously followed the "reformist path of collaboration with the bourgeoisie", and it urged both parties to seek "unity of action", both at the national and local levels, in order to build "a comprehensive anti-fascist Popular Front" (qtd. in E. H. Carr 1982, 316). The Comintern defined that Popular Front as an alliance which would lead toward the establishment of a "provisional *revolutionary* government", although it did not quite define the nature of the revolution to be pursued (ibid; emphasis added).

Party Secretary-General José Díaz was somewhat more specific, as he tried to convince his fellow Party members that the new "dilemma" for the country was that "either democracy w[on] over fascism, or fascism [would] destroy democracy; that either the revolution w[on] over the counter-revolution, or the counter-revolution [would] turn Spain into true ruins of misery, starvation and terror" (1936b, 98). That meant "Popular Bloc now, and Popular Bloc after the [upcoming] elections. . . so that the *Spanish democratic revolution* may finally be done and the country may do what France [had] already [done] in 1789: destroy *the remnants of Feudalism*, the "material base of the reaction" (ibid; emphasis added).

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[94] For more information on the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, see E. H. Carr (1982); Claudín

This tremendous discursive leap from the government of workers and peasants to democracy and from anti-reformism to anti-feudalism was a sign that the Party was ready to create the conditions for the "development of the democratic-bourgeois revolution in Spain" (Díaz 1936a, 79). Díaz was unable to specify how long it would take for the democratic revolution to become a proletarian one – since that would have meant "to make prophecies" – but he did assure Spanish communists that such a transformation would eventually take place, as long as the working class could continue organized under the leadership of the Communist Party (ibid). Thus what had previously been a tactical change (enter the *Alianzas Obreras* with the goal of transforming them into a United Front) eventually became a full change in strategy (joining the Popular Front and embracing a bourgeois political program for government).

The PCE entered the Popular Front negotiations with a list of demands which included the confiscation of land from all large landowners, the right to self-government of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia,[95] and the improvement of working and living conditions for the proletariat (Díaz 1935, 60-1). The final electoral agreement, however, was a "mild and anodyne document, evidently designed to rally a wide coalition of divergent interests and sectors of opinion, united only in their commitment to the Republic and to some form of democratic government" (E. H. Carr 1984, 3). The "most remarkable feature" of the electoral program to which the Party finally subscribed on 15 January 1936 was, in fact, "the absence of any serious social and economic demands" (ibid). Rafael Cruz has pointed out that the final document was far from meeting all the expectations of the Communist Party, but that Party leaders admitted to being ready to

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(1975).

"sacrifice" other demands for the sake of a common anti-fascist stand, so long as the very minimum demands for general amnesty were included (1987, 252).

If the Popular Front agreement fell short of meeting the expectations of the Communist Party of Spain, it was certainly far from satisfying the opposition, now united under the banner of the *Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista* [Workers' Party of Marxist Unification, POUM].[96] Although the POUM would also join the Popular Front, forced by the need to stop the advance of fascism, the anti-Stalinist opposition envisioned the anti-fascist alliance as a mere electoral tactic which would serve to counteract the power of the right-wing parties, never as an alliance for a minimum program which would affect the overall communist strategy. Yet when on 16 February 1936, the Popular Front alliance obtained a majority vote,[97] the PCE marked the victory with a speech in the *Cortes* in which Díaz celebrated "democracy, freedom, welfare and peace" (1936c, 182). Members of the communist opposition, in fact, were outraged at how the PCE had started to see itself as "patriot" rather than "revolutionary", swiftly transforming itself from a an "ultrarrevolutionary wolf" into a completely reformed "democratic sheep" (Andrade 1979, 71).

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[95] Northwest region of Spain, north of Portugal, one of the historic nations within the Spanish state.

[96] Maurín's BOC and Nín's ICE came together in the summer of 1935 as the *Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista*, whose official publication was *La Batalla*. The POUM has often been identified with the Spanish pro-Trotskyist left. The fact is, however, that the BOC had never had a Trotskyist line, since the OCI/ICE had withdrew its support for Trotsky when the Soviet leader had asked them to join the PSOE. Estruch has argued that the POUM was neither Trotskyist nor Stalinist, but a Communist party which wanted to operate in a new style, freer from international influence (1978, 90). The Party was severely persecuted by the PCE and the Comintern during the Spanish Civil War and many of its leaders, including Andrés Nín, assassinated. For a history and politics of the POUM, see Andrade (1986); Estruch (1978); Alba (1977); Alba and Swchartz (1988).

[97] The Popular Front won in 37 of 58 electoral districts, and in all cities with more than 150,000 inhabitants, a vote which gave it 257 seats in Parliament, as opposed to the 139 of the right-wing opposition or the 57 obtained by other parties (Tuñón de Lara coord. 1981, 212). The elections of February 1936 would be not only the last ones in Spain until 1977, they were also the last ones ever to be

The Communist Party of Spain and Party Intelligentsia

The summer of 1935 was not only a hotbed of political activity, but of intellectual activity as well. In June of that year, what had been known as the Amsterdam-Pleyel movement had its most important landmark in the celebration in Paris of the First International Congress of Writers for the Defense of Culture.[98] By that time, however, the European intelligentsia had completed a long journey of its own, traveling from the critique of the "'established disorder' of bourgeois mediocrity" during the post-war years to facing the "challenge posed by its fascist successors" in the mid-1930s (Wilkinson 1981, 19). As a result, the 1935 congress was not so much a critique of bourgeois culture or of capitalism, but a move to counteract fascism led by a wide group of intellectuals from a variety of political stands whose common goal was to defend the achievements of European culture from what was perceived to be retrograde forces.

As Socialist Alvarez del Vayo made it clear in his speech to the congress, the writers who had gathered there had done so for a variety of reasons: some of them believed that fascism would bring about a spiritual degradation which was irreconcilable with culture; others wanted to produce anti-capitalist literature; others believed that only the proletariat would lead the rest of humanity toward its final liberation (Fuentes 1980, 59).[99] As a result, the congress was heavily embedded in what participant Klaus Mann called "socialist humanism", an ideology which set out to "oppose, point for point, the practice of fascism" and to "defend whatever [fascism] would destroy" (qtd. in Wilkinson

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carried out with this kind of electoral system. The renewed electoral system in modern Spain does not take into account electoral districts, but popular vote.

[98] The Spanish speaker in the Paris Congress was Socialist Alvarez del Vayo. For a detailed study of the I Congress and its influence in Spanish cultural life, see Aznar et al. (1987a). For further reading on the European intellectual movement against fascism, see Alba (1976); Caute (1964, 1973); Wilkinson (1981).

1981, 21). As Víctor Fuentes has pointed out, many arrived at this "socialist humanism" from an original "bourgeois-democratic humanism" (1980, 108). It is also true, however, that many others arrived there from a place further to the left.

The Paris Congress had a great impact in both the reformist and the revolutionary Spanish intelligentsia as a whole, who after the journey of encounter they had begun in late 1934, were now ready to join in the kind of "socialist humanism" the First International Congress inspired. This was perhaps the point where the democratic revolution of the intellectual elites and the proletarian revolution of the revolutionary intelligentsia would converge into a popular-democratic revolution. Such, I believe, was the meaning of the "socialist humanism", which would later be, to a large degree, the intellectual basis of the Popular Front of Spanish culture. As Ramón J. Sender said in response to the June Congress, the Spanish intelligentsia was ready to "defend the conquest of *freedom*. . . of *liberty* [and] of the dignity of *man*" which far from being the achievements of the bourgeoisie, had been "conquered [throughout the centuries] by the *people* [and] the *working masses*, with their blood. . . and sacrifice" (1935, 158; emphases added).

One of the most immediate and extraordinary effects of this "encounter" between the reformist and the revolutionary intelligentsias was that cultural debates began to lose much of their radical edge. In late 1935, José Bergamín – a progressive Christian – and Arturo Serrano Plaja – a member of the Communist Party – engaged in a public conversation about the nature of the intellectuals' commitment to political struggle and their relationship to the people. In their intellectual exchange, Bergamín and Serrano Plaja picked up their cues from the speech which French writer André Gide had delivered at the

[99] The original article published in *Commune* September 1935, 71-74. Reprinted in Aznar et al. (1987a).

Paris Congress. There, Gide had spoken about a progressive literature which would be rooted in the people, a literature which would not be imitation, but "information" and "creation", helping the individual human being grow and develop (Fuentes 1980, 62).

With Gide, Bergamín and Serrano Plaja believed that the creation of literature needed to be an "act of communion" between the writer and the people, and believed that such "communion" would be impossible

> tant que le peuple n'est encore que ce qu'il est aujourd'hui, tant que le peuple n'est pas ce qu'il peut être, ce qu'il doit être, ce qu'il sera, si nous l'aidons. Il ne reste possible que de s'adresser au lecteur inconnu, futur, et d'être certain de l'atteindre dès que l'on atteint en soi-même ce que l'on sent de plus profondément et irréductiblement humain (Gide 1950, 93).

If there is a "new man" [sic] in communist society – they thought – art's mission was not to *reflect* it. Rather, it was to *create* it. Serrano Plaja, however, differed from Bergamín on a key point. As much as he shared in the hope that a "new man" would exist, he disagreed with the expression "si nous l'aidons". He argued that, in fact, that expression summed up the differences between Christianity and Marxism. While the former "must accept the suffering, capitalist exploitation. . . searching for an individual and subjective faith for its own salvation", he said, the latter sought "social efficacy, in which people, workers, the masses. . . [could] conquer much more than their own solitude" (1935, 66-67).

What is important about the debate between Bergamín and Serrano Plaja, however, is not the small details of their discrepancies, but the solid strength of their agreement. As a number of scholars have suggested, both authors shared some important "common ground", namely, the "desire to discover the new man [sic]" of a more humane

society, and a "willingness" to "understand each other" in the process of building that society (Zambrano 1977, 31).[100] Whether that "new man" was being sought from a communist or from a Christian revolutionary perspective, and whether the role of the intellectual was to "help" in the transformation of that "new man" or to "make" it, the two authors were still speaking about the same political and cultural subject. In that respect, they had much more in common than would have been possible hardly a couple of years earlier, especially considering that Serrano Plaja had been a collaborator in *Octubre* and that he had so passionately attacked the intellectuals who spoke about the Spanish *pueblo* and who were no longer concerned with class struggle.[101]

The cultural journal which best symbolized this intellectual encounter on the grounds of "socialist humanism" was *Línea*.[102] *Línea* has not come down in Spanish cultural history as a particularly meaningful or relevant cultural project. Certainly, it did not have then, nor did it acquire later, the "mythical halo" *Octubre* had. It did not have the powerful presence of *Nueva Cultura*, nor did it put forward a similarly grandiloquent discourse. Yet, short-lived and low-key as it was, *Línea* was the first major Spanish journal in which the reformist and the revolutionary intelligentsia came together for the first time on equal terms.

Línea, like *Nueva España*, was a journal of the "left-wing" intelligentsia, that is, of a combination of reformist and revolutionary intellectuals. Unlike *Nueva España*, however, *Línea* did not have a reformist editorial voice which ended up co-opting its communist voices, simply because by then, communist and reformist discourses had found

[100] See also Fuentes (1980, 62).
[101] See Serrano Plaja (1934).
[102] *Línea*'s first issue was published in October 1935. Very few issues of the journal have survived.

common ground and had become something else, and because the situation was ripe for a political alliance of the same nature, which is what *Nueva España* had never had as a base. *Línea*, like *Octubre* and *Nueva Cultura*, followed an anti-fascist line. Unlike *Octubre*, that line was no longer proletarian. Like *Nueva Cultura*, *Línea* was open to the whole spectrum of the anti-fascist intelligentsia. Unlike them both, *Línea* was *produced* by both the reformist and revolutionary intelligentsia, and, from the very beginning, they both had a single, united voice.

Founded in "defense of the Republic and the popular liberties *vis-à-vis* the advance of the reaction, and the threat of fascism", and echoing the resolutions of the Paris Congress, *Línea* followed a popular-democratic line "in the service of social progress" ("Editorial" 29 October 1935). As such, the journal was the true precursor of the intellectual Popular Front which was to take shape in the following months, in a way which *Octubre* and *Nueva Cultura* could not be.

Línea presented itself not as the journal of a political Party, but as a project which wanted to "express the strength of a movement" in which there was room for "all ideologies", so that it could truly represent the "collective consciousness of the Spanish people" (ibid). The only "line" which the journal was to follow, the new "general line",[103] was one of unity among the "left" for the sake of the anti-fascist struggle and that "line" was indeed "the most advanced line of social struggle" (Díaz Fernández 1935, 1). The journal was, indeed, "open to all ideologies", proven by the fact that among its collaborators were members of the Generation of 1898, such as Antonio Machado, of the

[103] In the Editorial of the first issue, Díaz Fernández offered the background to the name of the journal. "*La línea general*" had been the title of Eisenstein's film, a term widely used in the Russian revolution,

Generation of 1927, such as Lorca, Radical-Socialists, such as Díaz Fernández, and a number of younger communists, such as Eusebio García Luengo, Sender, Serrano Plaja, and Arconada.

However, the most extraordinary cultural changes which were to take place after the celebration of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern and of the Congress for the Defense of Culture, were those to be experienced by the Communist Party of Spain itself. As a result of these congresses and the creation of the Popular Front, the Party found itself facing a number of new circumstances. Among the most important of those circumstances was the fact that socialist, social-democrat, left-wing, or otherwise progressive reformist intellectuals were no longer the enemy. As a consequence, it was necessary for the Party – just as much as it was for the Comintern – to be on the side of that wide circle of Spanish intellectuals who had already organized against fascism. Only this new set of circumstances, and the reaction of the Party to them – three and a half years after the much-mentioned 1932 congress of the "sharp turn" – would bring about a real change in the Communist Party's cultural discourse. Only from mid-1935 onward could the Party's cultural discourse be truly called "less dogmatic".[104]

Just as the Comintern could not pursue its anti-fascist goals without taking into account the anti-fascist front of European intellectuals, so the Communist Party of Spain could not avoid being influenced by the Spanish anti-fascist intelligentsia, especially given its long history of political involvement, its consistent struggle against feudalism and fascism and its overwhelming influence in Spanish society as a whole.

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which meant not only to be a Communist, but also to be "in line" with political change. See Díaz Fernández (1935).

[104] See Aznar (1990, 298).

Some time in 1934, the Party had timidly included the word "intellectuals" in its political manifestos. In August 1935, however, very shortly after the celebration of the Seventh Congress, the Party addressed intellectuals with a manifesto of their own. In "Por la cultura y el bienestar de los intelectuales", "intellectual workers" – a category under which the Party included school teachers, university professors, public employees, technicians, artists, medical doctors, lawyers and office employees – were reminded of the recent aggressions perpetrated by the right-wing Republican government and were exhorted to join the fight against fascism. They were not asked to join in the anti-fascist struggle as a demonstration of solidarity with the people, however. Rather, the Party asked intellectuals to fight for themselves, for their own rights, for the development of intellectual and cultural life, for a good educational system, and, no less importantly, for an improvement in their working conditions (PCE 1935, 1).[105]

Shortly before the signing of the Popular Front alliance in January 1936, the Communist Party of Spain resumed publication of *Mundo Obrero*,[106] and with the release of the first issue on 2 January 1936 the paper began its fourth period of publication. Just as if the spirit of the Popular Front alliance had been a magic wand, the Party's official publication reappeared with a much larger section on cultural issues and with the best team of cultural critics ever engaged by the PCE,[107] all of it a far cry from the immediate

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[105] For other manifestos which made similar references to intellectuals, see *Mundo Obrero* 31 January and 13 February 1936.

[106] As pointed out earlier, *Mundo Obrero* had been outlawed soon after the failed revolution in Asturias.

[107] Christopher Cobb has pointed out that, in 1936, *Mundo Obrero* showed signs of "obvious improvement", especially in the cultural section, led by Arconada, and with a team made out of Eusebio Cimorra as theatre critic, Carlos Palacio as music critic, Juan Piqueras, Mariano Perla and Antonio del Amo as film critics, and Jose Luis Cano, Burgos Lecea, Armando Bazan and Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez as general collaborators – all of them with "very clear ideas on the importance of creating a popular cultural identity" (1984, 38).

period before the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, when cultural critique in Party publications had reached a historical low.

From January to July 1936, and as a symbol of the truly new "epoch" which the Party was entering, what was published in the new *Mundo Obrero* made it clear that the PCE had made important changes to its schematic and scattered cultural discourse – not only in terms of size or quality, but, more importantly, in terms of content. Indeed, the Party moved – and not inconspicuously, for that matter – to embrace some of the cultural principles it had previously rejected and the very people it had previously despised.

Quite symbolically, *Mundo Obrero* began its new epoch with an article by Arconada welcoming the closing of the AEAR and the creation of the International Association of Writers for the Defense of Culture.[108] As Arconada pointed out, the change which had taken place all across Europe was not just an organization closing down and being replaced by another (1936a, 4). Such a change had taken place because the goals and methods of the former had not "given the result it [had been] expected of it" (ibid), and that was the reason why the new organization had to have a more "open" policy in order to be "efficient" for a "wider community" (ibid). After years of calling on intellectuals to join the proletarian cause, Arconada now called on all the writers who felt "the need and the responsibility to defend culture" to join the struggle against fascism, "to create an anti-fascist bloc of the intelligentsia" (ibid). After such an announcement, the cultural section of *Mundo Obrero* hardly resembled its former self.

One of the first signs that something had changed was the content of the theatre and film criticism published in *Mundo Obrero* in early 1936. A few of those articles still

[108] The association which had organized the First Congress in Paris in the summer of 1935.

used the language which Arconada and *Nuestro Cinema* had made so popular in the early 1930s, a language implacable against a cultural industry which symbolized, like no other, the decadence of bourgeois society and which sought future possibilities for the proletarian control of the cultural means of production (Puértolas 1936a, 1936b; "En el teatro español"). Most reviews, however, hardly managed to hold on to such uncorrupted language. Back in early 1934, when it had been necessary to blame the reformist bourgeoisie and its socialist allies for making the rise of fascism possible, Party cultural critique in *La lucha* had focused on the artistic productions of the haute bourgeoisie, blaming the reformist bourgeoisie (still seen as "social-fascist") for allowing Spanish feudalism/fascism not only to survive, but also to come back to power. It may not have seemed so in 1934, but by early 1936, it was clear that it had been quite wise to have brought the bourgeoisie of the *Restauración* to the foreground, because the fierce criticism which the PCE had directed toward socialist intellectuals and the reformist intelligentsia all the way from 1920 until 1935 was no longer possible and a new enemy was found in the uneducated, ignorant, and frivolous haute bourgeoisie for which the PCE had never really cared much, and who just happened to have been brought out of oblivion some months earlier. In this way, the discourse could just continue focusing on them, without having to make too sharp a turn (V. León 1936; P. Espina 1936).

Once the cultural enemy was no longer the reformist bourgeoisie, but the feudalist one, the Party had opened its doors to the cultural narrative of popular Spain, a narrative whose main dichotomy was not that of bourgeoisie vs. proletariat, but that of feudal status quo vs. popular Spain, the operative words having changed from proletariat to *pueblo* and from class struggle to the redemption of humanity. *Mundo Obrero* thus presented a

cultural and political narrative of Spanish history which was a small-scale carbon copy of that which *Nueva Cultura* had already pioneered a few months earlier (and would continue to do through the years).[109] As reflected in the pages of the new *Mundo Obrero*, the history of Spain had been a "battle between a dark, small-minded, barbarous Spain" and the "popular" Spain which "wanted to come out of the shadow [and] conquer the highest pinnacles of culture, and light", the "Spain of the workshops, of the factories, the fields [and] the universities" (Cimorra 1936a, 3). The struggle between "fascism" and "anti-fascism", between "rotten senility" and "lively youth", between "affected piety" and "culture", had been the struggle of the "revolution" against the "counter-revolution" (ibid).

In 1936, *Mundo Obrero* reconstructed the background for the current "popular" spirit of rebellion against fascism on a historical line which went all the way from the Chivalresque spirit of the Middle Ages to the liberal rebellion of the individual in the modern age, thus merging the efforts of ordinary people and those of the reformist bourgeoisie against feudalism. In the process of building such a historical line, an attempt was made to recreate the history of Spanish literature with an emphasis on those authors who had reflected the sentiments or actions of the Spanish *pueblo*, and who were now considered to have been "revolutionary": Lope de Vega, Ramón María del Valle-Inclán, Cervantes, and Gustavo Adolfo Becquer, among others (not surprisingly a list very similar to that already used by *Nueva Cultura* in previous months) (Lunacharski 1936; Vega 1936; "Cervantes, genio popular").

Eusebio García Luengo often attempted to give that "*pueblo*" the same "revolutionary" spirit which had once been the exclusive property of the proletariat. His

[109] *Nueva Cultura* published its last issue in July 1936, just before war broke out, and reappeared in 1937.

attempts were of little avail in this new discursive turn, however, for they only served to create, once again, an abstract and ambiguous discourse in which old (but recently embraced) bourgeois terminology became imbued with the meaning historically given to communist terms (1936a, 5). Eventually, the two terms, "*pueblo*" and "proletariat", were used indistinctively, as if they meant the same thing, and, more remarkably, as if this had always been the case (Cimorra 1936b, 5).

As the Party moved from addressing the proletariat to addressing the *pueblo*, it also let go of its interest in proletarian culture and started to speak about a popular one. Custodio Peñarrocha defined "popular culture" in various ways, from making a "collective effort" in order to "break free from the blind forces of Nature" to "liberating citizen[s] from prejudice" (1936, 3; capitalization as in the original). The subject in Peñarrocha's appeals was no longer the "proletariat" or the "working class". Instead, he addressed his work to "man", "men" or the more encompassing "humanity", arguing that the effort for a popular culture was the one made by that humanity to be "free, happy [and] conscious" (ibid).

Revolutionary literature was still hailed, but began to lose some of its original meaning, since it was no longer clear for whom that literature was meant. Arconada continued unfailingly to call on Spanish intellectuals to join the revolution, which he still defined in apparently proletarian terms as "the reflection of the wishes. . . of a particular class at a given moment in its historical evolution" (qtd. in Delgado 1936, 5).[110] Yet his argument began to lose its usual ground when he suggested that "revolutionary artists" would have to pay attention to the "clamor of the *people*", whose struggle they could

[110] Arconada's words in a review of one of his books by Emilio Delgado.

reflect in novels with "universal theme[s]" (ibid; emphasis added). Elsewhere, to be revolutionary was defined as being able "to intuit what [was] human", to "sense and value *man* [sic], to feel both pride and humility for being the best, for being *men*; to feel oneself and the others as *men*" (García Luengo 1936b, 5; emphases added).

In line with this new humanism which took over the analysis of culture, class struggle was replaced with the self-realization of the human being. Precisely because it was perceived as impeding individual self-realization, fascism was identified with everything which stood against culture. Fascism, indeed, meant nothing but prisons, slavery, embezzlement and illiteracy ("Votad al Bloque Popular" 1).

Since the aim was no longer to prove how the reformist bourgeois had betrayed or continued to betray the working class, but how fascism and backward forces had destroyed intellectual life, those who had historically struggled against fascism – or its former self, feudalism – were hailed as the forces of culture and progress to be honored and respected. The result was that after sixteen years criticizing the reformist bourgeoisie, the Party started to address them as "wise men [sic]" ("Cómo honra a los sabios" 6).

It would be in March 1936, already after the electoral victory of the Popular Front, that *Mundo Obrero* would make reference for the first time to the cultural work done by the first Republican government between the years of 1931 and 1933. *Mundo Obrero* was not hailing the glories of Republican reformism quite yet – that would come a little later, in the midst of war – and the official tone in which it referred to the former cultural projects of the reformist bourgeoisie, such as the *Misiones Pedagógicas*, was neither completely critical nor wholly compliant. In his article "Una biblioteca en cada pueblo", Arconada spoke about a time in which "books [had been] flying all over Spain like partridges in the

sea" or like "parrots in the snow", because people had been given books, but had continued to live in the very same "political. . . backwardness" (1936c, 5). Despite this negative comment on the Republican government's lack of vision, Arconada regretted the fact that the second government of the Republic had failed to even conceive similar cultural projects, and now urged the Ministry of Public Instruction of the Popular Front to "start again". "That's right", Arconada explained, "to start again, with the libraries, the books, the cultural projects". "Start again", but not "repeat ourselves", he clarified, for the "first impulse" must be "the limit which was achieved before". Arconada believed the government would have to start with "momentum and without any fear", to start, that is, "in a revolutionary way" (ibid).

According to Arconada, to start "in a revolutionary way" meant, first and foremost, that while the new Ministry of Public Instruction would give peasants books and cinema, other government departments would guarantee them access to land and would provide them with the financial means to exploit it. That is, people needed to have access to culture at the same time that social reforms were implemented in order to improve the quality of their lives. Although this was an important political consideration, it still left undefined the content of the cultural work itself, which remained suspiciously similar to the one promoted by the first Republican government. Indeed, to "take a library to each village", to teach villagers to read, "to communicate, to relate to others, to raise from the ground, from isolation and illiteracy and learn to live the issues of their time" (ibid) were ideas which, in principle, could very well have been "revolutionary". Arconada failed to clarify, however, how they would be so, how a cultural initiative born of a reformist, liberal, bourgeois government could be given a completely new "revolutionary spirit".

This proved, I believe, that despite such a radical change in its cultural discourse, the Communist Party of Spain was still unprepared to make a solid proposal for a cultural policy, much less for a cultural practice – whether of "revolutionary" undertones or not, and regardless of the meaning attached to that term at one time or another. Despite the repeated efforts which Party intellectuals had made since the turn of the decade – from *Nuestro Cinema* to *Octubre* to *Nueva Cultura*, in early 1936 – the Party had yet to commit itself to any kind of cultural practice, other than via its participation in *Cultura Popular*, an umbrella cultural organization which had been founded under the wing of the Popular Front.[111]

In his study of *Octubre*, Enrique Montero pointed out that by calling on workers and peasants to send contributions, the journal was leaving the initiative for the creation of a proletarian literature to the proletariat itself.[112] According to Montero, this was a "somewhat passive" attitude, taking into account the national circumstances in 1933 and 1934, when it was practically impossible to build a "disciplined network" of "working-class correspondents" across the country. The obvious limitations of the journal would make such an attempt materially impossible. Montero has argued that only a journal like *El mono azul* would be able to carry a similar program to success during the Civil War, since it was a journal supported by "a wide front" (1977, xxii).[113]

Montero is making reference here to the fact that, during 1933 and 1934, *Octubre* was the project of a few revolutionary and communist writers who received no support

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[111] See commentaries throughout *Mundo Obrero* after the victory of the Popular Front (February 1936).
[112] In its first issue, *Octubre* launched a call for workers and peasants to send literary contributions to the journal, some of which were later published.

and worked in isolation, and that *El mono azul* would later be a project which – although still carried out by many of the same people – would be supported by the political alliance of the Popular Front. Montero may also be referring to the "wider front" in the cultural field which would also exist during the war, since *El mono azul* was the official publication of the *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas*, in turn, part of a bigger network of cultural activities, projects and publications organized by independent organizations, all of them enjoying the open support of the Ministry of Public Instruction.

Although Montero's argument is well-founded, the presence and role played (or rather not played) by the Communist Party should not be forgotten here. In fact, it could also be argued that part of the reason why the call put out by *Octubre* was only partially heeded – and indeed the reason why the attempts at producing a proletarian culture made by *Nuestro Cinema* and *Nueva Cultura* also failed – was not so much that workers and peasants did not want to participate, but that they lacked both a tradition of participation in cultural projects, especially of a communist nature, and the means of production to do it.

Indeed, whatever cultural or educational work had historically been done among Spanish workers and peasants, it had been led by the Socialist Party and affiliated institutions such as the *Casas del pueblo* or the *Escuela Nueva* and had reached mainly the rank-and-file of the PSOE and its labor union, the UGT. Being last in a line of communist cultural projects – beginning with the *Unión Cultural Proletaria* – which had hardly managed to get to the workers, *Nuestro Cinema*, *Octubre* and *Nueva Cultura* were

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[113] *El mono azul* was the official publication of the *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas* during the years of war. Unlike *Octubre*, it managed to put forward some kind of cultural practice. I will deal with *El mono azul* in Chapter Five.

expecting workers to participate in the production of culture in a context in which there had been no previous organizational or structural work done by a communist organization.

In other words, the three journals were attempting to "produce" proletarian culture without the material effort behind it. Such an effort should have begun with a very basic move to teach workers and peasants to read and write and it would have ended by turning them into worthy producers of their own culture. Further, the attempt to produce a proletarian culture needed to be supported by a network of communist-oriented cultural and educational organizations working anywhere from factories to fields to community centres, all of them fully governed and run by proletarian intellectuals and workers, just like the UCP had envisioned. In such an ideal context, the production of proletarian cinema or literature would be the last step and never part of the groundwork.

It is in this sense that the failure of these journals was to a large extent the failure of the Communist Party itself, since part of the reason why *Nuestro Cinema*, *Octubre* and *Nueva Cultura* turned out not to be what they could have been was that the PCE had never done the kind of cultural and educational work it should have done. It is certainly true that *El mono azul* would be able to achieve much more during the Civil War (we will see that in Chapter Five), but the reason was not only that the new journal and the association behind it would be part of a "much wider" Popular Front, as Montero has pointed out. *El mono azul* did manage to succeed where previous communist journals had failed because during the years of war there would be both a Party cultural discourse and a cultural practice behind it; because workers and peasants would not simply be called to participate in the work of far-away urban journals, but would actually be taught to read and write, would be given books and libraries to use, would have the means of production

to create their own culture and would see themselves as full participants in that creation. In such a process, writing a poem or a song, or discussing a film, would be part of the whole and not an act in isolation; it would be a final product, and not part of the groundwork. Indeed, *El mono azul* would be successful precisely because it would be able to rely on the kind of cultural groundwork which *Nuestro Cinema*, *Octubre* and *Nueva Cultura* did not have, and in that cultural groundwork the Communist Party would play a leading role, as we shall see.

Had any of those journals enjoyed that kind of cultural groundwork, they may have very well been able to overcome the contradictions which had killed both the *Unión Cultural Proletaria* and *Postguerra*. Had the Party been strong enough to understand the value of the projects its intellectuals were developing, the above journals may have very well been the opportunity for the Party to begin a long overdue communist cultural practice. As it was, however, the only changes which were taking place in early 1936 were of a discursive nature.

In fact, the height of the new cultural discourse which the Party had embraced would come during the February election campaign. Two weeks before the February elections, the Party published a manifesto directed exclusively to intellectuals – to "honest, free and progressive" intellectuals, that is – warning them against the kind of "persecution" they had been suffering under a feudalist system and which they would continue to suffer under fascism, promising them a program of government which would meet their professional and political expectations ("A los intelectuales" 4). The Party called on intellectuals from diverse social and political backgrounds, urging them to support the Popular Front, for "an educated Spain. . . where. . . *all* intellectuals [would] serve the

people and not a minority" (5). The day before the elections, *Mundo Obrero* published what is now perhaps the best-known intellectual manifesto of pre-war Republican Spain, in which a "considerable representation of the Spanish intellectual class confirme[d] [their] adhesion to the Popular Front", in their hope that "freedom be respected, the quality of life of citizens be improved and culture be extended to the masses of people" ("Los intelectuales, con el Bloque Popular" 3).

With the publication of manifestos like these, not only in *Mundo Obrero*, but also in the pages of many cultural journals such as *Nueva Cultura* and *Línea*, the Spanish *frentepopularista* intellectual movement had truly been born.[114] From then on, the cultural discourse of the Communist Party began to lose some of the ambiguity of previous weeks, once the discourse of revolutionary proletarian culture and that of popular culture began to merge, achieving a perfect synthesis. Eventually, a time came when they no longer appeared as two separate discourses in contradiction, but as a single and coherent one. That synthesis would be achieved by one of the most authoritative intellectual voices in the Party, that of Wenceslao Roces.

In June 1936, on the occasion of the closing of the first Book Fair organized by the Popular Front government, Roces gave a long speech, printed in its entirety in *Mundo Obrero*. The overall title of the newspaper report was "Revolutionary Culture in the Europa-America Book Stall", and one of the many subtitles which followed, read: "If Culture Must Be Effective, It Must Serve Class Struggle" (1936, 2).

"Revolutionary culture" and "class struggle" were terms which the Party had used for many years and which could be considered normal in a speech by any of its members.

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[114] See manifestos in *Nueva Cultura* and *Línea* in February 1936.

Yet to the question "What is revolutionary culture?", Roces answered: "[i]t is the culture which teaches the oppressed and exploited *people of a nation* the path toward liberation; it is the culture which puts in their hand the ideological tools in order to fight for the *emancipation of humanity*" (ibid; emphases added). Bourgeois culture, on the other hand, "betrayed the *people*, giving them entertainment and making them afraid, so that they [would] not rise to fight for what belong[ed] to them". While bourgeois culture was "reserved as a privilege for a minority of parasites and their servants, keeping the *masses of people* in darkness [and] ignorance", revolutionary culture "drove the *millions of men* [sic] who live[d] in misery toward a more *colorful, gay, happy life*" (ibid; emphases added).

After Roces' speech was printed in *Mundo Obrero*, what had previously been unconnected pieces of revolutionary and humanist discourses no longer had to co-habit in more or less successful terms. They had, in fact, been brought together, to a point where they meant the same. The idea of revolutionary culture lost whatever possible meaning it may had in the past and came to mean the redemption of humanity and the liberation of the people. A question formulated still with "revolutionary" terminology was answered using language normally identified with bourgeois cultural reformism. As a result, the idea of liberation of the masses of people, as well as that of the redemption of humanity, were no longer simple terms added to the lexicon. They, in fact, came to be the new meaning of revolution itself. José Luis Cano, another cultural critic in *Mundo Obrero*, put it quite simply when he argued that communism and the ideal of the liberation of humanity were one and the same thing, because only in communism could "hope for man [sic] [and] for the whole of humanity be found" (1936, 5).

Ernesto Laclau has suggested that the turn in communist political discourse, to interpellating the *pueblo*, rather than the proletariat, and to foregrounding democratic change, rather than class struggle, should not be understood as an indication that socialism has taken on idealist or liberal undertones. According to Laclau, while class struggle is the "dominant contradiction" at the "abstract level of the mode of production", the confrontation people-power bloc is the "dominant contradiction" at the social level. The latter is, in fact, a greater "complex of interpellations" because they represent the "ideological crystallization of resistance to oppression in general, that is, *to the very form of the State*" (1977, 167). The democratic interpellation of the people of a nation is the residue of a unique and irreducible historical experience which, in fact, preceded class differentiation, and, as a result, it has a more solid and more durable structure of meanings. Those meanings "will be longer lasting than class ideologies and will constitute a structural frame of reference of greater stability". Laclau thus reads the shift in communist discourse as the possibility to "widen" the field of class struggle with the new possibility of integrating in a socialist revolutionary discourse other elements and interpellations which, until then, had seemed to be only possible as part of a bourgeois ideological discourse (1977, 170-171).

Thus if nineteenth-century Republican discourse was an example of what Laclau has called the "populist discourse of the dominant classes", communist discourse after 1935 would be an example of the "populist discourse of the dominated sectors" or "socialist populism" (174). Unlike that of the dominant classes, socialist populism does have a revolutionary goal, for it seeks not to counteract the revolutionary potential of the masses in order to reassert the hegemony of part of the power bloc, but to articulate both

the popular and the proletarian struggles together. Thus the new struggle of the working class is an effort to achieve maximum fusion between a popular-democratic ideology and socialist ideology; or, what is the same, to establish the hegemony of the proletariat in the popular struggle against the power bloc in order to pave the way for the whole of society to move toward socialism. In this sense, "socialist populism" is not the most backward form of working class ideology, but the most advanced, for it marks the moment at which the working class has succeeded in condensing the ensemble of democratic ideology in a determinate social formation within its own ideology (174).

Indeed this is where Gramsci's influence in Laclau is most obvious, for the latter is merely adding a process of ideological interpellation and constitution – now originating from the working class leadership, rather than from the dominant classes – to the former's definition of the national-popular struggle. Gramsci defined the national-popular struggle as one which would "unite a whole people against a minority of exploiters and oppressors, thereby creating a new national identity". As Anne Showstack has suggested, such a definition assumes that the "question of the nation and of specific national traditions, as well as the needs of people at large are essential to the working class rather than marginal" (Showstack 1982, 15). Revolutionary transformation is thus redefined to indicate a change in which a variety of social groups participate under the hegemony of the working class, in the process forging a new "historic bloc" which would go beyond the narrow, sectional interests of its components and would embrace a political cause which is common to all (ibid). The ultimate goal of this national-popular democratic struggle would thus be to win democratic consent for the advance of socialism.

Since the goal of the working class in joining this "historic bloc" is to establish its hegemony, the national-popular struggle should be understood, not just as a political goal, but also, and perhaps more importantly, as a political process. In Gramsci's words, this process would seek to "detach" the masses from traditional ideologies, so that "their ties to the dominant modes of thought may be ruptured".[115] As Joseph Femia has put it, in the process of a national-popular struggle "the ruling classes must be stripped of the spiritual prestige that has enabled them to rule with a large measure of popular consent", they must be "left naked, bereft of their ideological robes" (1981, 207). In this sense, what is most important about the national-popular struggle is that it is also an intellectual revolution, a pre-requisite so that the proletarian revolution may be not only possible but also sustainable. The creation of a national-popular alliance would thus be a link between an existing bourgeois society, the socialist revolutionary process, and the proletarian society which is the ultimate goal of the working class.

Following both Laclau's theory of socialist populism and Gramsci's definition of the national-popular struggle, the discursive changes which the Communist Party of Spain experienced after the summer of 1935 could be read as a move by the Party to incorporate the working class into the national-popular struggle in which Spain had been involved for centuries, a struggle which had first been conceived as anti-feudalist and was being redefined as anti-fascist. The Party would have made this move as a way to acknowledge the validity of such a struggle for the whole of the Spanish nation and to gain the support of the popular masses for the communist cause by embracing what, in effect, had been their historical fight. Presumably, the Party was hoping to establish the hegemony of the

[115] From Gramsci's *Passato e presente*. Cited in English by Joseph Femia (1981, 207).

proletariat in the new "historic bloc" to be formed, that is, that it was hoping to engage itself and others in a subtle ideological struggle against the bourgeoisie, in order to free the popular masses from their passive consent to bourgeois hegemony, in the process, transforming their political consciousness so that they may embrace the proletarian cause. Indeed all that would have been an intelligent tactical move in order to add a much-needed preliminary stage of intellectual change to the process of the proletarian revolution.

That may or may not have been what the Comintern and the Communist Party intended to do when they joined the Popular Front. What became more obvious during the years of war, however, is that if the populist discourse which the Communist Party of Spain was beginning to embrace was to produce a shift in consciousness at all, it would not be in the terms Gramsci had envisioned.

CHAPTER FIVE
Years of War, 1936-1939

> Let us get rid, once and for all, of hateful expressions such as 'low people', 'mob' and 'rabble',
> because one day those 'low people', 'mobs', and 'rabble' will liberate Spain.[116]

Despite the victory of the Popular Front – or perhaps because of it – the social and political confrontation between two opposing forces – a popular Republic supported by the reformist bourgeoisie, socialists and communists, on the one hand, and fascism and the privileged classes which supported it, on the other – [117] continued reaching levels which the government could hardly control. The rank-and-file of the workers' organizations which made up the Popular Front demanded of it more radical actions. The oligarchy and the army demanded that it maintain control. If in 1931, the first Republican government had endeavored to find some degree of appeasement, five years later the government of the Popular Front found itself struggling against sheer powerlessness, and the social war which Spain had been suffering for decades was far from coming to an end. In fact, if what had already taken place from 1900 until 1936 seemed a long war, it turned out to have been a mere prelude. The war had hardly begun.

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[116]"Desaparezcan de una vez esas odiosas expresiones de 'pueblo bajo', 'plebe' y 'canalla', porque este 'pueblo bajo', esta 'plebe', esta 'canalla', es la que libertará a España". According to a pamphlet put out by the Communist Party of Spain during the Civil War, these words were uttered upon the constitution of the *Cortes* of Cádiz in 1812 ("Nuestra España, nuestra tradicion" 15).

[117] Throughout this chapter, I will refer to Spanish Fascism or the military *coup d'état* led by the Spanish army as having the support of the ruling oligarchy and the official representatives of the Church. This is, of course, a political simplification, but one which is to some extent necessary for the sake of working with the political and cultural discourse of the Communist Party and the Popular Front, which confronted the Spanish *pueblo* with the feudal oligarchy both before and during the Civil War. A closer analysis, of course, would reveal that the Nationalist side during the war received a great deal of support from ordinary people who by no means belonged to the ruling classes, including peasants and a large section of

A military uprising which originated in Morocco on the evening of 17 July 1936 quickly spread across the peninsula, but it was by no means uniformly successful. A number of military sections across Spain remained loyal to the Republic, while others were quick to second the uprising and take control of their regions. Thus the country was randomly divided into two zones: Republican and Nationalist, loyal and rebel, bringing to life the old metaphor of *las dos Españas*. Masses of workers and peasants throughout the country found in the military *coup d'état* the long-awaited cue to break into a spontaneous revolution. Daily life in Madrid, Barcelona and other major cities, whose citizens had been able to counteract the power of the military, fell under the control of makeshift communist, socialist and anarchist militias which took control of the economic means of production in industry and commerce, and which exercised as well many of the political, civil and military functions normally associated with the government and its institutions. Much the same happened in a number of rural areas, where the collectivization of land and agricultural resources also did not wait. As military rebellion spread, so did revolution, and with it social chaos. Once again, the Republican government was placed in the awkward position of having to fight on two different fronts at once so that order might be restored.[118]

The very evening of 18 July, Prime Minister Casares Quiroga resigned, overwhelmed by the reality of war and by the powerlessness of the Republican authorities. Azaña named former Prime Minister Martínez Barrio head of a "conciliatory" transitional cabinet, and the next day a new government was formed under the leadership of Azaña's

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the middle classes, because of the prevailing Catholicism in the country and a common fear of communism as something foreign to the national character.

friend and ally, José Giral, a moderate Republican from *Acción Republicana* and *Izquierda Republicana*. To confront the rebellion, Giral armed the militias and workers' organizations, and dissolved the regular army, legalizing a situation which had been *de facto* created by the spontaneous revolution of the masses. He allowed unions to transform confiscated industries into workers' co-operatives, dismissed all public servants suspected of right-wing sympathies and created a National Republican Guard to replace the older institution of the *Guardia Civil*, parts of which had followed the army's lead.

Still unable to control the revolutionary euphoria of the masses or to stop the advances of the Nationalist army, which by August had already closed off the border with France and had placed Madrid under siege, Giral's government fell in six weeks. By the time Azaña was ready to call on a new Prime Minister, the Popular Front was already divided into two camps which supported conflicting strategies. A number of political parties, unions and mass organizations – including the most radical stream of the PSOE led by Largo Caballero, the anti-Stalinist communists of the *Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista* and the anarchist-syndicalists of the CNT – argued that the outbreak of war should serve to precipitate a proletarian revolution which had long been in the making. On the other hand, moderate Socialist leader José Prieto and the Communist Party defended the idea of putting an end to the revolution already underway, strengthening the democratic-bourgeois Republic and bringing makeshift militias into a regular Popular Army. That meant, first and foremost, that all efforts had to be diverted toward winning the conflict. The revolution would have to wait.

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[118] For further study of the Popular Front government during the Civil War, see Tuñón de Lara coord. (1981); Bolotten (1991); Graham (1987).

When in September 1936 Azaña called on Largo Caballero to form a government, however, the alliances he brought to it were quite different from those expected. Pressed by the reality of the friction within the Popular Front, the international situation and the Nationalist advance, Largo Caballero formed a government with *Izquierda Republicana*, *Unión Republicana* and the PCE (giving Communists the portfolios of Public Instruction and Agriculture), which meant he had to give up his revolutionary ideals and change his main goal to that of winning the war. As a result, the second Popular Front government set out to restore the state apparatus, quite damaged after the revolutionary chaos, and to implement state authority. Popular militias and police forces created by unions, parties and other organizations would have to be unified under government rule. The goal was "discipline at whatever cost" (Alvarez Lopera 1982, 26).

Meanwhile in Nationalist Spain, Gen. Francisco Franco soon crushed all opposition within his own ranks, got himself named head of the (rebel) army, the (Nationalist) state and the (illegal) government, and managed to secure decisive military support from Hitler and Mussolini,[119] all while loyal Spain had been abandoned by the international community at large (except the Soviet Union and Mexico),[120] and was falling to its own divisions within, unable to bridge the gap between those whose main goal was to win the war and those for whom it was to pursue the revolution, even torn by conflicting versions of just what that revolution was supposed to be.

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[119] Further study of the international support received by Franco from Germany and Italy can be found in Dzélépy (1965).

[120] This applies only, of course, at the government level. All over the world, however, there were hundreds of projects in support of the Spanish Republic carried out by non-governmental institutions of all types.

A few months into the conflict, Madrid became a city under siege, and it soon became clear that the war would last for as long as Madrid could resist. For almost three years that is exactly what the city did, the result of a combination of popular courage, decisive help from volunteer international brigades,[121] and the heroism of its local government.[122] Unable to function under the pressure of constant bombardment, street violence, and revolutionary chaos, however, the Republican government abandoned the capital and moved to Valencia in late 1936, leaving Madrid under the political and military authority of a *Junta de Defensa* led by General Miaja, whose refusal to abandon the city turned him into a national hero. The government was forced to move once more, this time to Barcelona in 1938, just a few months before the final Nationalist victory. By the time rebel forces entered Madrid in April 1939 and Franco declared the war to be over, most members of the government – including its president Azaña – had already fled the country and members of the Madrid *Junta* had been ready to surrender for quite a while, as military defeat had become imminent.[123]

As I have already suggested, Spanish communists reacted differently to the outbreak of war and the revolutionary euphoria which spread across the country. Having already abandoned its former anti-bourgeois, pro-United Front line and having embraced a

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[121] The international brigades entered Madrid in November 1936, and played a decisive role in bringing military as well as emotional support for the people and militias in that city, and winning the first major battle against Franco's troops. This is the arrival which was commemorated in November 1996, as I described in my Introduction.

[122] In his recent biography of Franco, Paul Preston has suggested that Franco himself needed to wage a long war for two main reasons: first, to destroy the Republic completely and to exterminate all its supporters, rather than achieving a quick victory which would have left the bases of the Republic intact; and, second, to take the time to establish himself as the indisputable leader of the new fascist state, eliminating all other contenders. Those were some of the reasons why Franco did not wish to take Madrid too soon and allowed the city to bleed. For more information, see Preston (1993).

[123] For further reading, see Casado (1939). On the Spanish Civil War, see Raymond Carr (1977); Jackson (1965); Preston (1986); Payne (1970).

new democratic strategy, the PCE read the military uprising as a last attempt by the feudal remnants in Spain to rise against the reformist bourgeoisie and the democratic revolution which had been interrupted in 1933. The Communist Party believed that the purpose of the Popular Front was to carry that democratic revolution through and to defend it against the menace of fascism. Thus the Party ended up embracing the political reading which the communist opposition had put forward upon the Proclamation of the Second Republic, and which communists, like César Falcón or José Antonio Balbontín, had defended before joining the Communist Party: that before a socialist revolution could be possible, Spain had to carry out a democratic revolution led by the popular masses. The outbreak of war simply meant that the crucial moment to defend such a revolution had already come.

Although Party leaders had argued that the PCE had never been, nor would ever be, interested in "holding government posts", they justified the Party's participation in Largo Caballero's government on the grounds that it was a mere "circumstantial event" to which they had agreed as a way to "support the democratic Republic", in order to "contribute" to its "defense" and to "develop its program" (Ibárruri 1938, 389), and because it was "an important step" for the proletariat on its path toward the democratic revolution (1960, 41). The PCE argued that the Republic of the Popular Front bore no resemblance to what the classic bourgeois Republic had been. In 1936, the Republic had armed the people, it had given land to the peasants and the control of industry to the workers, it had expropriated the landowners and *caciques*, and it had allowed the proletariat to come forward as a political leader.[124] The Republic was leading, in fact, a

[124] See *Mundo Obrero* 3 February 1937, also reprinted in Bolloten (1991, 320-1).

"revolution of great social content" in which "new positions" would be gained in terms of social justice, freedom and education ("Hombres de ciencia" 2).

Although Party leadership acknowledged that this "social revolution" was still not a full revolution, the PCE was willing to participate in it as much as it was ready to control it. While the Party agreed that land should be given to the peasants, it still "opposed unfair expropriations and violent collectivization"; while it wanted to "combat hateful inequalities", it also opposed the "simplistic unification of salaries" which would "kill all hopes of emulation in the workers"; and while it promised to make education available to all, it defended a "hierarchy of knowledge, of culture and technical wisdom" as the "only way to drive people toward progress" (Ibárruri 1938, 390).

Whatever the terms of the revolution could be, however, none of those changes would be possible unless the war was won first. As a result, the PCE argued that no time should be wasted in revolutionary experiments of any kind. The Party was not afraid, yet again, of "going against the current",[125] so long as the "current" meant "much revolutionary noise but no meaningful effort towards winning the war" and no "improvement[s]" in the lives of the "popular masses" (ibid). As far as the Communist Party was concerned, no action was more revolutionary than that of waging a war against international fascism (ibid).

The Party called on a wide social alliance of "workers, peasants and the middle classes" to come together "around a program . . . which [would] represent their common

[125] These words were very similar to those uttered by José Bullejos in 1931, when the Spanish masses were welcoming the Republic, but the PCE had not been willing to "follow the crowd". Interestingly, while in early 1931 the masses had welcomed the bourgeois Republic, the PCE was calling for the government of workers and peasants; on the other hand, in mid-1936, while the masses had started the revolution, the PCE was defending the democratic Republic.

aspirations" (Blanco Rodríguez 1993, 60), and communists set out to defend the Popular Front and the Republican government not only with their political rhetoric, but also with their military might, against both the military attacks from the right and the revolutionary attempts from the left. Indeed for much of the war the Communist Party represented both institutions *vis-à-vis* the people. Given as well the level of military organization and discipline the Party reached during the years of war, it is easy to explain why the PCE became the greatest hero of Republican resistance, most notoriously in the defense of Madrid.[126]

The communist opposition, on the other hand, interpreted the war not as a feudal comeback against bourgeois democracy, but as a bourgeois attack on the proletarian revolution. Confronted with the reality of war, the *Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista* – unlike its predecessors the *Bloque Obrero y Campesino* and the *Oposición Comunista de Izquierda* – no longer believed in the possibility of having the working masses carry out the democratic revolution which the bourgeoisie had been unable to do for so long. Rather, it believed that the spontaneous rebellion of the masses was nothing but the beginning of the proletarian revolution itself, and one which this time – unlike in 1917 or in 1934 – was simply bound to succeed, given the fact that the whole country was in arms. In this vein, anti-Stalinist communists (as well as anarchists)[127] accused the PCE of participating in the government of the Popular Front in order to serve the interests of Soviet foreign policy for which some kind of appeasement between European communist

[126] For further reading on the PCE and the Civil War, see Ibárruri (1966-77). Details on Party membership can be found in PCE (1938).
[127] For the participation of anarchist groups in the Popular Front government and their role in the Civil War, see Peirats (1951-53).

parties and their bourgeois governments was needed (Estruch 1978, 95).[128] The POUM thus set out not only to lead a proletarian and peasant revolution both in the city and the countryside,[129] but also to fight the PCE's and the Third International's hegemony over Spanish communism, as much as to oppose the Popular Front[130] and its calls to order, all while waging a war against fascism and the Spanish feudal bourgeoisie. This was a tremendous undertaking which a small party with little national and international support was simply not in the position to see through.[131] With Spanish communists divided over the question of war and revolution, it became painfully clear that the internal confrontation which had been such a landmark of Spanish communism ever since 1920 had not come to an end at all. It had simply abandoned the field of political rhetoric and had swiftly moved to the battlefield, where Spanish communists momentarily seemed to forget they had a common enemy (or, rather, they could not agree on who that enemy was) and began to fight against one another, creating unnecessary divisions in an anti-fascist contingent which was already quite fragile.[132]

Communist politics aside, the war was perhaps the strongest catalyst yet in twentieth-century Spanish history for the national intelligentsia to wake up to the political reality of the country. If earlier political events had already shaken the intelligentsia's

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[128] For the role of the Soviet Union in the Spanish Civil War, see Cattell (1955, 1966); Carr (1984).
[129] Mainly in its historical area of support, in Catalonia.
[130] As explained in the previous chapter, the POUM signed (however reluctantly) the alliance of the Popular Front, but once war broke out, it no longer believed in its effectiveness.
[131] Although the members and leaders of the POUM were experienced leaders and long-time communists (Maurín, Gorkín, Nín, Andrade, etc.), the Party did not have the kind of national appeal the PCE did, since it remained outside the Popular Front. As a result, much of its influence and control was reduced to the region of Catalonia. During the first months of the Civil War, the POUM militias received a great deal of support from volunteers in the International Brigades, but this support decreased when the Popular Front government and the Communist Party instituted the Popular Army, drawing all military support toward it. For further study on the POUM during the Civil War, see Andrade (1986); Alba and Swarchtz (1988).

general "lack of consciousness", giving way to "a crisis of consciousness", the war certainly brought about a "consciousness of crisis" (Osuna 1986, 125). The reactions of Spanish writers, intellectuals and artists who witnessed the military uprising in July 1936 were indeed "many and varied" (126), but some generalizations may be made. It may be safe to suggest that most members of the Generations of 1898 and 1914 (with the exception of Antonio Machado, who was openly Republican) took on a conservative position,[133] while those from the Generation of 1927 (with the exception of Rafael Alberti, a communist)[134] "embraced. . . with moderation the liberal and progressive Republican legitimacy" (ibid). A younger "generation" of poets, painters and writers whose "defining event"[135] was the war itself and whom Spanish history has classified as "the Generation of 1936", chose "openly and decisively" to join the "most radical political tendencies" (ibid).[136] These were the writers who prior to the war had been "less famous", but who during the war would be the "most active", the ones who would "carry the weight of war literature upon their shoulders" (ibid). Among the members of the Generation of 1936

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[132] Further commentary on the divisions of Spanish communism can be found in Bolloten (1991).

[133] Well-known intellectuals from the Generation of 1914, like Ortega y Gasset, Gregorio Marañón and others, overwhelmed by the reality of war against a Republican system they had actively pursued and had helped bring about, left Spain upon the outbreak of war or soon thereafter. Ortega himself would come back to Spain in the 1940s, his fierce oppositional style of politics somewhat subdued, this time going along – although not openly supporting – the new regime. An account of their ordeals and experiences during the war and after can be found in the new book by Jesús Palacios, *La España totalitaria* (Madrid: Editorial Planeta, 1999).

[134] Another exception to this "rule" is that of García Lorca. Although not a communist, and certainly not a member of the Party, Lorca openly symphatized with the Popular Front and attended many a political event in support of the Republican government or its policies, often invited to do so by his communist friends, such as Alberti or Miguel Hernández. The identification of Lorca with communism, however, was a myth.

[135] A "defining event" which marks an entire group of intellectuals or artists is normally one of the conditions which identifies a particular group as a "Generation".

[136] I interpret Osuna's use of the word "radical" to mean "anti-fascist" (as discussed in Chapter Four), in which case the "most radical political position" would have been that of the government and of the Popular Front at large.

were poets Miguel Hernández,[137] Arturo Serrano Plaja,[138] and Antonio Sánchez Barbudo, as well as painters Josep Renau and Ramón Gaya.[139]

The massive amount of scholarship which exists on the role of the Republican intellectuals who stayed in the country during the Civil War attests to the importance of their contribution to the war effort.[140] The military uprising found them tightly organized in the anti-fascist cultural associations which had been created in previous years, and also urged them to create new ones, the most notorious of which was to be the *Alianza de*

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[137] Miguel Hernández (Orihuela 1912-Alicante 1942) is one of the most important poetic voices of twentieth-century Spain. A peasant and a shepherd who received practically no schooling as a child, Hernández had a natural gift for poetry. He left his native Mediterranean village in 1931and traveled to some Spanish capitals, like Madrid and Murcia, where he met the poets who would be his mentors and friends for the rest of his life, people like Serrano Plaja and García Lorca. He settled in Madrid in 1934, and became a member of the Communist Party that same year. Upon the outbreak of war, he joined the Popular Army and participated actively in all kinds of cultural activities, whether promoted by the Ministry of Public Instruction, the PCE or the *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas*. During the years of war, he was best known for his poetry recitations at the front. After the conflict, he was imprisoned and sentenced to death, although his sentence was later commuted to life in prison. A victim of tuberculosis, he died in prison in 1940, at the age of thirty. Among his best known poetic works were *El rayo que no cesa* (Madrid: Héroe, 1936), *Viento del pueblo* (Valencia: Socorro Rojo, 1937), the play *El labrador de más aire* (Madrid-Valencia: Nuestro Pueblo, 1937) and a volume of war theatre entitled *Teatro en la guerra* (Madrid-Valencia, 1937).

[138] A poet and essayist, Arturo Serrano Plaja (Madrid 1909-Santa Bárbara, USA 1979), was a collaborator in many of the pro-communist journals of his time, including *Nuestro Cinema*, *El tiempo presente* and *Octubre*. He joined the PCE in the mid-1930s, was a founding member of the *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas* in 1936 and fought as a soldier in the all-communist *Quinto Regimiento*. As we will later see, he played a decisive role in the founding of the journal *Hora de España* and spoke on behalf of the "Generation of 1936" at the Second International Congress for the Defense of Culture celebrated in Madrid-Valencia in 1937. His best-known poetic work includes *El hombre y el trabajo* (Valencia: Hora de España, 1938) and the anthology *Los álamos oscuros*, published posthumously (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1982).

[139] Although these intellectuals were in the foreground of events, the communist intellectuals who had preceded them were also active. Andrade, Gorkín and other intellectuals from the communist opposition were active within the POUM and wrote for its publications, although I find no proof that they worked on any kind of cultural or educational projects. José Antonio Balbontín re-joined the Communist Party in mid-1936, after the outbreak of war, working for *Mundo Obrero* for a few months. In May 1937, the PCE appointed him to work as a judge in the Supreme Court. Rafael Alberti and María Teresa León were active and leading members of the *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas*, editors of *El mono azul* and, in general, very visible and outspoken during the years of war. César M. Arconada worked as a war correspondent for *Mundo Obrero* in the north of Spain. César Falcón continued in the PCE and was the visible head of some of the cultural activities carried out by the Party's Agit-Prop section, most notoriously *Altavoz del Frente*. Ramón J. Sender continued in the Party and fought as a soldier in the all-Communist *Quinto Regimiento* of the Popular Army.

[140] See Bécarud (1978); Cobb (1981); Fuentes (1980); Mainer (1983).

Intelectuales Antifascistas [Alliance of Anti-fascist Intellectuals], [141] led by Party members. In general, these intellectuals openly supported the Republic, getting down to the business of cultural work as well as to the business of war. A significant number of them put their skills to work in the front as much as in the rearguard, as need arose. Without giving up their artistic work, many of them also became soldiers.

If the Spanish Republic had already made of "culture" a "religion", the war witnessed the greatest explosion of cultural activity ever to take place on Spanish soil, not so much in terms of professional intellectual activity (which in many cases actually decreased), but in terms of the artistic and cultural work being done by Spanish people from all walks of life, peasants and workers especially, whether on the battlefield or at the rearguard. With a budget second only to that for Public Works,[142] the *Ministerio de Instrucción Pública* [Ministry of Public Instruction, MIP], led by communist Jesús Hernández,[143] designed, administered and implemented an educational and cultural

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[141] The *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas* was founded in July 1936, immediately after the outbreak of war by a group of anti-fascist intellectuals, including Party members Alberti, León, Hernández and Serrano Plaja. Its founding manifesto, "Los intelectuales españoles contra el criminal levantamiento militar" was originally published in *El Sol* on 31 July 1936, and later printed in *La voz de la inteligencia y la lucha del pueblo español. Antecedentes y documentos* (Paris: Association Hispanophile de France, 1937, 11-12), a compilation of war-time intellectual manifestos. This organization was the Spanish counterpart of the *International Association of Anti-fascist Writers*, founded by many of the same people who had established the AEAR in previous years. For the activities of the *Alianza* during the war, see "Los proyectos de la alianza de intelectuales antifascistas". On the genesis and evolution of the *Alianza*, see Monleón (1979).

[142] In 1936, the total budget for the Ministry of Public Instruction was 495 million pesetas. That meant an increase of 150 million in relation to the previous year, and more than what the Popular Front government had budgeted for the Ministry of War or of Agriculture in 1936, which was 407 and 111 million respectively (Alvarez Lopera 1982, 31-32).

[143] A journalist and political activist, Jesús Hernández had begun his political career as a member of the Socialist Youth and, subsequently, as one of the founders of the Communist Party in the region of Vizcaya (Basque Country). In 1930, he became a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and lived in Moscow for two years. Upon his return to Spain, he became the editor of *Mundo Obrero*. After the Civil War, he was exiled to Moscow with Dolores Ibárruri and the Party's top leadership. He left the Party in the mid-1940s, when Secretary-General José Díaz died and was replaced by Santiago Carrillo. He subsequently wrote two autobiographical books about the Communist Party of Spain and the Comintern, *Yo fui ministro de Stalin* (1974) and *En el pais de la gran mentira* (1974).

program unprecedented in Spain and in which the spotlight was placed on ordinary people, an undertaking for which the MIP counted on the full logistic and political support not only of the PCE, but also of all-communist battalions of the Popular Army, such as the *Quinto Regimiento* [144] and of cultural associations in which communist intellectuals played a leading role, such as the *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas*.

The Ministry of Public Instruction set out to achieve the deepest educational reform ever attempted in the country, renewing the curriculum at all levels, implementing teacher training, opening up new schools, and, most importantly, guaranteeing the access of all Spaniards to them.[145] New institutions such as the *Institutos Obreros* [Workers' Secondary Schools] were created in order to provide workers and peasants with general as well as technical education. University careers were not only opened to all, but also shortened in order to meet the needs of the war. Meanwhile, young children before school age were taken away from violent cities to be taken care of in rural camps.

Cultura Popular, a nation-wide organization founded shortly after the signing of the Popular Front alliance, became the umbrella organization for all the cultural groups working under the wing of the Ministry of Public Instruction. A number of *Milicias de la*

[144]The *Quinto Regimiento* [Fifth Regiment] was an all-communist regiment within the Republican Popular Army, led by Carlos Contreras. The "Quinto", as it was popularly known, played a decisive role in the defense of Madrid. Many of the communist intellectuals who participated in the Popular Army did so in the ranks of the "Quinto", including Miguel Hernández and Ramón J. Sender, who were also some of its best-known cultural commissars.

[145] In 1931, Spain had 37,599 teachers for 23.5 million people, and there were more than 3 million children who did not attend school. Teachers made between 2,000 and 3,000 pts per year, and the money allotted for education represented 5% of the total Republican budget (MIP 1937, 4). Between 1931 and 1933, the first Republican government created 9,820 schools (5). Between July 1936 and July 1937, the MIP created 6,091 schools, and raised the salaries of teachers to 4,000 pts (6). Whereas the education budget for the construction of schools in 1935 had been 1,000,000 pts, in 1937 it was 64 million (6).

cultura [Cultural Militia][146] organized classes at the front, combining literacy classes with political education. *Cultura Popular* also organized theatre performances, film screenings, popular libraries, discussion groups, and even army clubs at the front, while contributing to the massive creation of graphic art in the cities. A completely new cultural structure was designed from scratch, with the cultural militias working very closely with the political commissars in each of the regiments or battalions of the Popular Army. The Popular Army was thus filled with dozens of *Hogares del soldado* [Soldiers' Homes], where soldiers received their classes and through which they were able to participate in all kinds of artistic and cultural activities, from the creation of mural newspapers to acting in theatre troupes, singing in army choirs or competing in sports. The *Brigadas volantes de lucha contra el analfabetismo* [Literacy Brigades] did their part in the rearguard.

One of the most remarkable results of the education of soldiers was their participation in the creation of a *Romancero de guerra*, a body of poetry in the form of *romances* (eight-verse ballads originally from the Middle Ages) whose authorship stretched from professional poets all the way to peasants and soldiers writing anonymously, many of whom had also just learnt to write. Encouraged by the MIP[147] and the *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas* (whose official publication *El mono azul* quickly became a channel for and a symbol of the *Romancero*), poetry was produced and reproduced in everything from professional literary journals to makeshift newsletters in

[146] Organization sponsored by the Popular Front to organize cultural activities both at the front and in the rearguard. For further reading, see Cobb (1990).
[147] In September 1936, the Ministry of Public Instruction called not only on "writers or journalists", but specifically on "workers, peasants and soldiers" to send original poems about "the struggle. . . and the heroism and initiatives of the people in arms". See "El MIP y el arte y la literatura".

army battalions, and used for a variety of war purposes, from singing the glories and pains of the conflict itself to trying to indoctrinate enemy troops.

National cultural heritage also received a great deal of attention from the Ministry of Public Instruction. In Madrid, cultural institutions such as the *Biblioteca Nacional* and the *Museo del Prado* - valuable not only because of their contents, but also as architectonic pieces – became easy targets for fascist bombs. Under the leadership of the MIP and the *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas*, army brigades were given the responsibility to evacuate these buildings and transfer their contents to places where they could be properly guarded. In the Spanish capitals, hundreds of statues, fountains, and historical buildings were propped up or fortified in order to be spared damage from the bombs.[148] These tasks were organized by the Ministry and its associates, but in all cases were carried out by ordinary soldiers.

Professional intellectuals and artists participated to a very large extent (and, in fact, encouraged and led) this remarkable explosion of cultural and artistic activity all across the country, becoming teachers, reciting poetry, organizing theatre or propaganda shows, often working directly in the service of the government or political parties. Such was the case with the creation of the most extraordinary body of *carteles* [posters] which flooded the country with a myriad of political slogans and instructions, and which has undoubtedly become one of the icons of the Spanish Civil War.[149] To add to the cultural explosion which was taking place in the country, the Second International Congress for the Defense of Culture (sequel to the one held in Paris in the summer of 1935) was held in Madrid and

[148] For more information on the saving of the National Patrimony, see Renau (1938); Alvarez Lopera (1982).
[149] For further reading on the posters of the civil war, see Julián González (1993); Tisa (1979).

Valencia in late 1937, bringing a long list of renowned intellectuals and artists from the whole world.[150]

Despite the fact that the Hernández Ministry carried out such a spectacular cultural and educational campaign, one of the most common criticisms it has received has been that it "did not seem to have any cultural projects at all, but only propagandistic goals" (Alvarez Lopera 1982, 29), a comment not only on the content of the educational and cultural projects themselves, but also on the ministerial policies, where the centralization of services and the concentration of power seemed essential in order to achieve its goals.[151] Spanish cultural scholarship has often seen the communist MIP – much in line with how its own contemporaries did – as an institution which coerced bourgeois intellectuals[152] and favored communist ones,[153] and whose relationship with the PCE was hazy, to say the least. Indeed it has been argued that the MIP merely followed a Party agenda, that it confused Party and Ministry tasks, capitalizing on the "good results" of the Ministry as a "propaganda platform" for the Party (37). Much of the blame has been put

[150] A comprehensive study of this Congress can be found in Aznar et al. (1987b).
[151] This concentration of power was best exemplified by the reorganization of state-run Academies and ministerial departments and the creation of new cultural institutes, the incorporation of a political commissar in public high schools, and the creation of new government bodies such as the *Junta Central del Tesoro Artístico*, which was to oversee the saving of the National Patrimony. For a short list of these changes, see Fernández Soria and Mayordomo (1993); for a longer discussion, see Alvarez Lopera (1982).
[152] The best known case was the relationship between the MIP and the bourgeois intellectuals who lived in the *Casa de la Cultura* in Madrid. In November-December 1937, the MIP ordered their evacuation and their transportation to Valencia, alongside the move by the government and all other official institutions. The *Casa de la Cultura* was subsequently closed, and later reorganized and reopened in Valencia itself. The move, however, raised great controversy at the time and has been widely discussed by later scholars, as proof not only of the disarray in which the MIP seemed to operate, but also of its coercive style toward intellectuals. Some of the intellectuals from the *Casa de la Cultura* were allegedly forced to pledge their support for the Party and the government of the Popular Front. For original documents on the move from the Casa de la Cultura, see *Defensa de la Cultura* (1937); "Hombres de ciencia" (1936); "Los sabios y los artistas" (1936). For further reading, see Alvarez Lopera (1982) and Marrast (1974).
[153] The MIP had an ongoing working relationship with the *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas*, which was in charge of many of the ministerial activities, most notoriously, the safeguarding of the National

on Jesús Hernández himself, who has been seen as a "publicist of little and late cultural training" (29), a "doctrinaire. . . without any specific training" (Molero Pintado 1991, 92). A few scholars, however, have been somewhat more benevolent, attempting to understand and/or justify the decisions of the MIP on the grounds that it was a Ministry fighting an ideological war. [154]

Whether scholars have criticized, supported, or simply considered necessary the use of cultural and artistic activities by the war-time Ministry in order to serve political goals, the discussion still seems to be rather pointless, because any other Party leading the Ministry would have done very much the same thing – and, in fact, during the last year of war, that was precisely the case –[155] and, even more importantly, because the Communist Party itself set out quite consciously to produce such propaganda, and it always admitted that it was doing just that.[156] The study of the cultural discourse and practice coming out of the Ministry is thus deeply impoverished, because the fact that the Ministry used cultural activities as channels for political propaganda is both the point of departure and the irrevocable conclusion of that study, thus adding very little which may be new.

I find it much more worthwhile, however, to analyze the cultural context in which such political propaganda was produced, and what it meant both in terms of the cultural evolution the country had undergone so far and the evolution of communist cultural

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Patrimony. Alvarez Lopera has argued that this move made the saving of the Patrimony looked as though it had been a project of the Communist Party instead (1982, 35).

[154] See Cobb (1990); Fernández Soria (1984); Huertas Vázquez (1988).

[155] In May 1938, Jesús Hernández abandoned the Ministry, and was replaced by Segundo Blanco, an anarchist. There began the persecution of Communist members of the *Milicias de la Cultura.*

[156] Hernández argued that the MIP had to work "with the people and in the midst of the abnormal situation Spain [was] going through" (1936, 5), which meant that without "neglecting all questions related to artistic education. . . it [was also] necessary to undertake a plan of agitation and propaganda which would rely on music, theatre, and film to put forward the most important political slogans of the Popular Front" (ibid).

politics in particular. As a result, I will not focus on the fact that a political message was sent across via the production of culture, but on the political message itself; and I will not suggest that the political propaganda coming out of the Ministry was grounded in "communist dogma", but will explore how it served the cause of the democratic revolution. I should clarify that I am not setting out to prove that Party propaganda did, in fact, serve the cause of the democratic revolution.[157] That is something Party leaders themselves already did, and quite eloquently too. Instead, what I want to do in this chapter is to look at the terms in which such a cause was served via a cultural discourse and the production of culture.

There is a great deal of truth in the suggestions that the cultural work of the MIP during the years of war was much more "popular" than that of previous Ministries under Republican rule, insofar as it abandoned the "populist" attitude of "handing out" culture to people as a charitable action, and it moved to make the masses of people active participants in the cultural event. Yet, I will argue that there are other aspects in which the cultural discourse of the Communist MIP was just as "populist" as that of the reformist bourgeoisie had been more than half a century earlier. Ultimately, Communist cultural discourse during the war took such "populism" to a further degree, for while the reformist bourgeoisie had been "interpellating" (in Laclau's and Althusser's terms) the Spanish *pueblo* as a political subject to rise in the struggle against the feudal status quo, the cultural and artistic activities which took place under the leadership of the MIP during the

[157] Most scholarship would still refer to the Communist Party of Spain as spreading "Communist dogma". However, the discourse and practice of the Party during the years of war made it certainly clear that what the PCE was doing was pursuing the democratic revolution. The suggestion that the MIP was spreading "Communist dogma" is far too misleading. Instead, the content of Party propaganda should be called "Popular Front dogma".

war actually served to "constitute" the Spanish people as political subjects of that very same fight. Cultural activities were the channels for this ideological "constitution" insofar as they were tools used to create a sense of community in the Spanish people. They created this sense of community by making people aware of their state of oppression, by bringing them together and by defining them in opposition to an enemy, by giving them common aspirations, and a sense of destiny.

Although in many ways this cultural effort was "revolutionary" (insofar as it was a radical departure from what had been the status quo in feudal Spain), it failed to play an effective role against bourgeois cultural hegemony. Indeed although ordinary people had at their disposal the cultural means of production, they were kept low in the social hierarchy of knowledge, and although the war opened up access to educational institutions for them, it did nothing to change the bourgeois content of that education. Ultimately, the kind of "revolution" such cultural effort wanted to pursue was left dangerously undefined, tied as it was to the political goals of a popular democratic revolution which both the Comintern and the Popular Front had devised as a common front against fascism, but which had ended up – and in the case of Spain with the full cooperation of the Ministry of Public Instruction and the Communist Party which ran it – co-opted into bourgeois cultural and political strategies. Spanish cultural history was thus going full circle, back to the kind of cultural reformism which had been the cultural philosophy of the reformist bourgeoisie for decades and against which Spanish communists had so fiercely fought.

In the process, everything the Spanish people gained in terms of culture, they also seemed to lose. In Section Two of this chapter, I take a close look at the debates which took place among Republican intellectuals – a large number of them Party members –

from some of the best known literary and cultural journals of the time. Rather than focusing on what those debates were about, however – something which has already been done – I want to look at what the debates *were not about*. My suggestion is that although those debates dealt to a very large extent with how the war had served to bridge the historical gap between the intelligentsia and the masses, they failed to include in any meaningful way the much newer and more challenging question of the relationship between people and the production of culture, a reality which had exploded during the war and which intellectuals seemed unable to incorporate into any of their many visions for the future. Thus the debates among major Republican cultural projects such as *Hora de España*, *Nueva Cultura* and *El mono azul* (the last two fully run by members of the Communist Party), so heavily involved in the discussions of war culture in the present and revolutionary culture in the future, failed to find any new cultural role for the Spanish people. The war may have served to liberate the people from their previous role as recipients of culture and to give them a greater political role, but it was unclear how the Republic was going to see those changes through.

SECTION ONE
The Cultural Discourse and Practice of the PCE in the Ministry of Public Instruction

The historical narrative of popular culture which *Nueva Cultura* had already put forward in early 1935, and which the Party had timidly embraced after the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, was given an extraordinary impulse by the outbreak of war, for the armed conflict had all the potential to bring the struggle of popular Spain against feudalism from the terrain of an abstract and somewhat elusive past to that of a concrete, immediate and specific present. As an open and violent confrontation against fascism, the war, indeed, exemplified and epitomized the centuries-old struggle of popular Spain in ways which no previous discourse could have done. War-torn Republican Spain thus became fertile ground for the Civil War to be foregrounded a symbol of the centuries-old struggle against the Spanish oligarchy, which was now bursting out in its final and most decisive stage.

Before July 1936, a number of premises had already been established in that historical narrative: among them, that throughout the history of imperial and feudal Spain there had been a popular culture in constant struggle against the official culture of the State, a dormant culture which drew its strength from that past, but was now ready to blossom and set itself free, in an attempt to find not only its present, but also its future. It was only reasonable, then, that the outbreak of war should have been understood by the popular-democratic Republic of the Popular Front as the moment in which the final liberation of that popular culture was to take place.

The metaphor of *las dos Españas* became more meaningful than ever before, since they were presently not only *confronted* with each other, but actually *fighting* each other. They were the "two Spains" divided by the same kind of "hatred" which had always brought them apart, but also now stained by the "blood" of a conflict through which one of them would be bound to eliminate the other. While one of those Spains "looked at the future after embracing all the glorious traditions of [Spanish] history", the other "attempted to revive everything which was old and rotten" (Ibárruri 1938, 391). For both the Communist Party and the Popular Front, the "official Spain" (Hernández 1938a, 19) which "had historically imposed itself by the use of force" (Hernández 1938b, 9) was the *anti-patria* (1938a, 19). On the other hand, Republican Spain was the only "true" and "essential" Spain (1938b, 9).[158]

The outbreak of war served not only to expand the historical narrative of popular Spain, but also to change some of its terms. Moving from an underground struggle against an internal feudal enemy to an open war against a military *coup d'état* supported by international fascist powers, meant that, after July 1936, the historical narrative would be enriched with the new ingredient of a campaign for national independence. Not in vain, the Civil War was repeatedly foregrounded by the Nationalist side as a "crusade" against foreign evils (read communism) which wanted to destroy Spain's "eternal essence": the greatest glories of its imperialistic, catholic, monarchic tradition. In opposition to this vision, the Republicans argued they were defending a Spain which, far from being the

[158] In this myth of the "two Spains", the *pueblo* symbolized dignity, honor, right, democracy, and social justice; whereas the "other Spain" meant class privileges, ambition, dictatorship, corruption and treason (Ministerio de Defensa Nacional 1937, 14-15). Any kind of discourse during the years of war (political, cultural or otherwise) was impregnated with this kind of language. For further reading see Radcliff (1997); Grimau (1988).

imperialistic power it had once been, had become a victim of foreign imperialism itself. While the Nationalists indulged in their metaphor of the Christian Crusade,[159] Republicans did much of the same by adopting as their role model Spain's War of Independence waged against Napoleon in the early 1800s. Interestingly, the class nature of the civil conflict seemed to disappear, as each camp sought to gain greater support from the masses by foregrounding the war as a struggle against a foreign invader.[160]

The glorious past of a popular Spanish culture continued to be symbolized by classic artists such as Lope de Vega, Quevedo, El Greco or Velázquez. A *pueblo* fighting for its national independence, however, was to find its greatest cultural icon in the figure of Francisco de Goya, symbol *per excellence* of the struggle for independence of the Spanish people against Napoleon, resuscitated now to symbolize a courageous *pueblo* who had come together once again in order to fight against a foreign invader.[161]

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[159] This refers to the Spanish "Reconquest", fought against the Arabs across the peninsula from the late 700s until 1492.

[160] As surprising as it may have been for many, no political force reinforced the metaphor of a war of independence more strongly than the Communist Party itself. In a speech before the PCE Central Committee entitled "A los intelectuales de España", Jesús Hernández presented a version of Spanish history in which the recurring theme was a series of foreign invasions to which the Spanish people had been forced to respond with fierce struggles for national independence. In Hernández's analysis, most of those invasions had eventually had positive benefits for Spain, as they had promoted the advancement of civilization (read bourgeois society). However, the war which was currently being waged on Spanish soil was a reactionary war. The main forces behind the military uprising, as Hernández suggested, were "the most reactionary, the most obscure and oppressive forces in [the history of Spain]: the semifeudal and backward layers of financial capitalism, landlords and the Church" (1937a, 5). What they wanted was "to truncate the course of progress, to prevent Spanish people from advancing, to subject people to barbarism so that they may enjoy total impunity in order to oppress a resigned and silent mass of slaves"(ibid). References to the Spanish Civil War as a new War of Independence were numerous in all the literature produced by the Popular Front. In a study of Spanish nationalism as a myth recurrently used in political discourse, historian Alvarez Junco has established the connection between the "nationalism" of the 1808 war against Napoleon and that of the Civil War between 1936 and 1939 (1997).

[161] Goya and his symbology was a recurrent theme in war-time posters, illustrations, speeches and articles. Miguel Angel Gamonal has pointed out that it was common among "the whole political spectrum of Republican Spain" to embrace an "old leftist and liberal interpretation of Goya as a rebel and popular artist who fought against the privileges of the aristocracy and the lack of education of the people" (1987, 59). For further discussion on Goya as a symbol of Republican Spain, see Alvarez Lopera and Gamonal Torres (1984) and "Goya y nosotros" (1938).

Even more significant, however, was the war-time Republican vision of the Spanish *pueblo* and of the role it was destined to play. If before July 1936, the Popular Front/Communist cultural discourse had referred to a *pueblo* quietly enduring its lot and conducting a long, slow struggle against an oppressor, the *pueblo* of mid-1936 was one who had taken arms and was ready to defeat its enemy once and for all. If it had previously been conceived as an unorganized, invertebrate *pueblo* who had yet to rise, it was now one who had organized spontaneously in order to respond to the needs of the collective. Indeed, it was a *pueblo* who had moved from the background to the spotlight, a *pueblo* who was no longer summoned to take action, but who had already made the most important decision of its life, a *pueblo* who had moved from being *subjected*, to being *subject*, from *suffering* the commotion of history to *making* history, from being a mere part of the story to being its *absolute protagonist.*

It was perhaps in the fields of education and culture that the change in this *pueblo* was most obvious and most remarkable, for while the people had previously been subjected to the ignominy of ignorance and lack of education, they were now actively working for their intellectual advancement. If before July 1936 their culture had been underground and "illegal",[162] it had now been set free. The civil conflict ensuing from the military *coup d'état* and the kind of renovation which the Ministry of Public Instruction had undergone (to which the presence of a Communist team greatly contributed) were important factors in this extraordinary change, a change which was bound to help surpass some of the most important ideological biases of former generations of (bourgeois) intellectuals, and open up to allow for a number of important changes in the relationship

[162] This is the terminology used by Ramón J. Sender (1935).

between the Spanish people and culture. This was, perhaps, most obvious in the way in which the Ministry so scrupulously set out to guarantee every single Spaniard (in the Republican zone) the access to formal and informal education without any consideration for his/her economic position or previous training. The other was the way in which the production of culture moved to be in the hands of the people themselves, most remarkably, soldiers.

The educational policy of the Popular Front, created, administered and put into practice by the Communist leaders of the MIP, was marked by the recurrent metaphor of "opening the doors", which meant that entrance to all educational institutions – something which had previously been the prerogative of the moneyed classes – would now be possible for people from all walks of life, adults or children, without any discrimination based on class, gender, or economic means (MIP 1936, 3).

Under the all-powerful symbol of the "new doors" which were being opened for all, every measure taken by the Ministry, every new institution created, and every new policy approved, were marked by the new policy of accessibility. "Open doors" meant that the syllabus for secondary school would be shortened in order to make it possible for ordinary people to acquire their diplomas during the war. It meant that a comprehensive program of scholarships and grants would be put in place for heads of families and children who were not able to go to school because of financial burdens. It also meant that universities would be open to all, that agricultural workers would be able to receive technical training, that literacy would become a basic right.[163]

[163] The educational policy of the Ministry of Public Instruction during the years of war has received a great deal of scholarly attention. See Fernández Soria (1984, 1990, 1992); Fernández Soria and Mayordomo (1993); Pérez Galán (1975); Medina (1977); and Molero Pintado (1991).

As Jesús Hernández argued, the Ministry of Public Instruction "tackled" and "solved" the problem of access to education "as a corollary of the political and economic problems" (1938d, 541).[164] In a "semifeudal Republic on its way toward a democratic-bourgeois revolution", the war was setting out to "destroy. . . the economic possibilities of fascism and thus the educational influence which its relations of production could exercise on the masses" (Romá 1937, 17). As a result, the MIP would be able to effectively abolish all social privilege in the field of education and offer the widest possibilities of culture to the Spanish people (Hernández 1938d, 541). Education would no longer be the exclusive right of the enemies of the Republic (Hernández 1936, 5), but of those who defended it.[165]

Although the discourse coming out of the Ministry of Public Instruction was one of access, the extraordinary array of cultural activities in which ordinary Spanish people were able to participate – from the writing and recitations of poems, to the creation of mural newspapers, to the printing of books and newspapers, to the writing of articles, to the singing in new choirs, to the writing and producing of new theatre plays – meant much more than that. Through the PCE's own Agit-Prop Commission[166] and the Party's work in

[164] English-language article, published translation of a Spanish original.
[165] For further reading on the MIP's policy of "access", see Hernández (1936); Romá (1937); Ministry of Public Instruction (1936, 1937).
[166] The Agit-Prop Commission of the Communist Party of Spain was truly producing work which was on the border line between propaganda and culture. It grew considerably during the years of war, and it carried out an extraordinary array of cultural and political activities. Alvarez Lopera is right in his suggestion that the border between the work of the Party's Agit-Prop commission and that of the Ministry of Public Instruction was sometimes blurry; but Communists themselves openly acknowledged that the Party's Agit-Prop commission was producing work for the MIP or for any cultural organization on demand. The Commission ran its own art workshops (divided into sections on painting, sculpture, drawing, crafts, etc) and produced all kinds of propaganda material, from posters to leaflets. It also sponsored *Altavoz del Frente*, an agit-prop group which carried out slogans and instructions to the war front, while broadcasting educational and cultural radio programs out of makeshift studios. The Commission also undertook projects such as the Party's *Comisión Nacional de Prensa* (National Press Committee), a School of Journalism, news agencies, printing shops, the production of documentary films

the Ministry of Public Instruction, Communist input was instrumental in having ordinary people become authors, distributors, producers and consumers of culture in ways theretofore unknown in Spanish history. This meant that they had much more than "access" to culture, it meant they also had the means to produce it.

A materialist analysis of the way in which the Spanish people used these means of production, the way in which they produced meaning through them and the social impact of their final productions has received a number of expressions of interest (Nelson; Ramos-Gascon), but has yet to receive in-depth attention as a whole. The work of French scholar Serge Salaün, however, has been fundamental in trying to open up the question of access to these cultural means of production, in relation to one of the best-known cultural activities during the war: the production of poetry.

In his study of the war-time Spanish *Romancero*, Salaün has pointed out how, in the 1920s, the publication of poetry in literary journals had begun to enjoy some degree of success, but it had failed to receive formal acceptation or to be considered of quality unless it was published in a book. Thus poetry eventually followed the normal route inside the literary market: an editor would have to accept the work, produce it, introduce it in the distribution channels, seek its commercialization and wait for positive criticism. During the war, a number of novels were still published following this traditional route, but that did not respond to the needs of poetry, which was being produced at a much more massive scale and with different time constraints in order to be of use in the war effort

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as well as national and international news broadcasts, political schools for Party cadres, Party publications (such as the journal *Nuestra Bandera*) and publishing houses (*Europa-América*, *Nuestro Pueblo*, *Estrella*). The history and evolution of this Commission can be found in the Party's archival document *Informe de la Comisión Nacional de Agitación y Propaganda del Partido Comunista de España* and

(1985, 175). As a result, the role which books had previously played in the publication of poetry during peace, was taken over by the press during the war. In that process, the production of poetry ceased to be the exclusive domain of enterprises with both artistic and financial backing, and was embraced by all popular organizations, big or small, able to use their meager financial means to acquire, or share with others, a basic press.[167] As a result, poetry was no longer the privilege of those who could produce, distribute or read books, but of all those who had access to less sophisticated means of production such as a mural newspaper – for which working-class or peasant soldiers became editors and writers under the leadership of their battalion's cultural commissar –[168] or a community or battalion publication such as a newsletter or newspaper. Ordinary people and soldiers not only had access to these new means of production for the first time in their lives, but they also had the possibility of no less original and innovative means of *distribution* and *reproduction*, given the "multiple forms in which [these] particular texts were produced and in the variety of uses to which they were put" (Nelson 1996, 71), from pamphlets or broadsides meant to be distributed in the crowds, to cards and postcards issued to commemorate special occasions, to readings in community or soldiers' circles, to mass recitations (ibid).[169] In all these cases, poems (specially the short *romances*) were the "unit of [cultural] production and consumption" per excellence, because of their "density

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Suplemento al *Informe General de la Comisión Nacional de Agitación y Propaganda del Partido Comunista de España* (Comisión Nacional de Agitación y Propaganda 1937a, 1937b).

[167] Small presses were also used for small-scale production of books. One of the best known small publishing houses was "Ediciones 150 Brigada Mixta".

[168] A cultural commissar was a military officer in charge of overseeing the education and well-being of soldiers, from their political education to their learning to read and write, to their physical education activities. Members of the "cultural militias" assigned to a particular battalion or brigade would work under the supervision of this cultural commissar. He/she, in turn, answered to political commissar. For a history and discussion of these commissars and their work in the Spanish Popular Army, see Santiago Alvarez (1982).

of information" and their "economy of means" (Salaün 1985, 181).[170] In fact, one of the means of production people also accessed for the first time was language itself, given that the production of poetry opened up the possibility of individual and collective expression for the great majority of people (53). As language became a right for the community, people found themselves located on the two extremes of the communication line for the first time in Spanish history: they were transmitters and receivers, producers and consumers, writers and readers (ibid).

This new leadership role of the popular masses in cultural activity, as they accessed educational institutions and became producers of culture, has led Juan Manuel Fernández Soria and Miguel Bilbatúa to argue that the former "populist" attitude of the first Republican government – which it had, in turn, inherited from its nineteenth-century bourgeois forebears – had given way after July 1936 to the more "popular" attitude of the war-time government, specifically of the Communist-led Ministry of Public Instruction. Fernández Soria has argued that under the rule of the Popular Front and the MIP, the Spanish *pueblo* no longer seemed to be considered a "recipient" of the educational and cultural charity of the bourgeoisie (1984, 311). Instead, it found itself as the protagonist of the cultural act, in the process becoming aware of its role in the fight against fascism. Whereas the Republican government had previously sent cultural "missionaries" to the people, it was now sending cultural "militias", creating a new "revolutionary reality" which created new links between art and the people (ibid). Under the same light, Bilbatúa has argued that during the first months of war, the "abstract populist characteristics" of the

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[169] See Nelson (1996) and Ramos-Gascón (1978) for more examples.

[170] All citations from Salaün (from this and his other works) are my translations from his original work published in Spanish.

"populist/ culturalist" discourse and practice of nineteenth-century *Regeneracionismo*, which the Spanish bourgeoisie had kept alive right up until 1931, "to a large extent. . . disappear[ed]", once "cultural heritage" needed to be "adapted. . . to the needs of the moment" (1976, 33).

The arguments made by these authors do contain a great deal of truth, and the evolution which the MIP experienced from 1931 to 1936 was indeed an extraordinary one. The changes which Fernández Soria and Bilbatúa have pointed out, to some extent, were the result of the political evolution which had transformed an elitist bourgeois Republic into a popular-democratic one. None of that means, unfortunately, that the government no longer had a populist discourse or even a populist practice. Rather, a closer look at the cultural discourse and practice coming out of the Ministry of Public Instruction reveals that it had inherited much of the populist ingredients of the cultural discourse of *Regeneracionismo*.

Because the war had originated in a *coup d'état* led by the highest-rank military in alliance with the oligarchy and had given way to the spontaneous rebellion of the masses, the conflict was still very much a confrontation between the two social groups which had already been struggling against each other for centuries: on the one hand, the Spanish *pueblo*, on the other, the feudal oligarchy – army and Church included – now in its latest manifestation as fascism. What this means is that the three protagonists of the story in which the *Regeneracionistas* and earlier reformists had found themselves were still very much the same: there was an alliance of the feudal oligarchy with the counterrevolutionary bourgeoisie; there was a liberal and reformist bourgeoisie fighting against that counterrevolutionary alliance; and there was a mass of Spaniards known as the *pueblo*.

The proclamation of the Republic in 1931 had already produced some shifts in the topography of relations among these three protagonists, since it had moved the reformist bourgeoisie from its place of opposition to the status quo toward occupying the place of the ruling class (at least politically), while it had relegated the feudal class to the background of the political scene (though it had not done away with its economic power). The rise of fascism in the mid-1930s had already brought the feudal class back to the foreground as an enemy seeking to restore itself to power, thus forcing the reformist bourgeoisie to ally with other progressive forces and to interpellate the Spanish people once more to be ready to fight. The outbreak of war immediately produced further shifts, bringing the feudal oligarchy to a head with the other two forces and the Spanish people into the foreground of events.

Interestingly, after so many shifts and developments, the definition of *pueblo* had not changed, nor had the role of interpellator of the bourgeoisie in relation to it. In its vision of the Spanish people as innately hard-working [*pueblo laborioso*], honest and good, a *pueblo* who understood its duty of civil obedience and the need to respect the law (Hernández n.d. 4), the PCE/Popular Front brought back to life much of the basic discourse which nineteenth-century Republicans and *Regeneracionistas* had already used. Most importantly, the term still made reference to the "widest popular masses", including workers, the peasants, the middle classes, the merchants, the liberal bourgeoisie, and the intelligentsia, in other words, anyone outside the oligarchy (Perucho 1938, 2).

Such a conglomerate of social groups and classes was actually framed as one, sole and indivisible unity, a unity for which class struggle within should be but a regretful

memory from the past.[171] As far as the Communist Party of Spain was concerned, in 1936 there were only two "classes": the masses and the fascists ("Nuestra guerra es la guerra del mundo popular" 6). Whatever may have brought earlier divisions among all those who now raised the anti-fascist flag should be forgiven and forgotten, and whoever wanted to continue pursuing those divisions (read whoever continued to insist on the validity of class struggle, that is, the anarchists and the *poumistas*)[172] were to be ignored and dismissed. Regardless of their political ideology, they had to be considered enemies of the people (PCE, n.d. (a) 3).

This meant that while people had previously been interpellated to fight *against* the feudal status quo and alongside a bourgeoisie in the opposition, during the war they were being interpellated to fight *alongside a government*, that is, alongside the political status quo, and not against it, as had previously been the case. The notion of "*pueblo*" as a political subject thus needed to be revised in order to include elements which had previously been considered foreign to it, such as the government and the army. In fact, it was not only that the government and army fought *with* the people, but that both of them *were* the people, of whom they had been born [*carne del pueblo mismo*] (Hernández n.d. 5-7). The Spanish *pueblo* was no longer defined *in opposition* to the state. In fact, it now *encompassed* the state.

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[171] According to the president of the Republic, "internal struggle" within the people had been the result of "small-minded politics" (Negrín 1938, 11). According to the PCE, the fate of the Spanish people was not the patrimony of a political group, nor could it be "at the mercy of [political] impatience". "The fate of the people [was] the fate of *all* the people" (Hernández 1937b, 15; emphasis added). The PCE was no longer interested in "Party politics", but in "people politics" (PCE n.d./a). According to the Party, to call for a proletarian revolution would have meant "to divide the people", since it was obvious that not "all Spaniards" were willing to accept communism. The Party wanted to bring all Spaniards together "in the struggle for freedom and national independence" (José Díaz 1938, 6-7).

[172] *Poumistas*, popular term to refer to the members of the POUM.

Citizenship, army and government were three entities in complete harmony and agreement, and whose raison d'être was to feed one another's purposes. While the government looked out for the well-being of the people, people paid the government back by being faithful. While the people led spontaneous acts of rebellion as popular militias, the government channeled their energy by organizing them into a regular army. People had passion and the government gave them the means to put that passion to work (Hernández 1937c, 46). The Popular Army and the people were also one and the same thing, since the backbone of the Republican military had been the militias into which ordinary people had spontaneously organized. The army "[had been] born, [had] grown and [was being] led from the bosom of the people" (Hernández n.d. 7).[173] More importantly, the army and the people were one and the same thing because the army was not at the service of a political party or a social class, but in the service of the whole of the Spanish citizenship (Hernández 1938a, 17). People, government and army, as one unity, were the Spanish homeland itself, the three of them with a "single will" (Hernández n.d. 4). Outside this sort of trinity, in which the three components were different aspects of a single being, only one thing was found: "the enemy" (1937a, 11).[174]

Even if the political positions of the oligarchy, the bourgeoisie and the people had changed, what remained untouched was the context of the relations of domination which linked them all. Although the reformist bourgeoisie was no longer a social class seeking to restore its hegemony within the power bloc, but rather seeking to defend it, and although Communists had willingly let themselves be co-opted into that power bloc, there

[173] This was meant to include all soldiers, even the Italians and Germans themselves, all of whom were "children of the people" and were thought to be part of the Nationalist army out of fear or ignorance.
[174] See also the archival document "La unión del pueblo y su gobierno" (n.d.)

was still a popular-democratic interpellation carried out by the Popular Front to oppose the feudal/fascist minority.

Since this new definition of *pueblo* was the result of a change in structure (the shift in the topography of relations to which I referred above) and not in content (the nature and purpose of the struggle), the bourgeois interpellation of the Spanish people during the years of war was still very much "populist" under the definition of the term given by Laclau and which I am using for this work: that a populist discourse appears when the "popular democratic" interpellation of a class or class fraction which needs a substantial transformation in the power bloc in order to assert its hegemony is presented "*as a syntethic-antagonistic complex with respect to the dominant ideology*" (172-3; emphasis in the original).[175] In the midst of war, the "binomy through which all political and ideological relations of domination" were expressed was no longer that of "people/power bloc", but that of "people/fascism". This, however, was still a "populist" interpellation in Laclau's terms, because it was still based on the "popular democratic" interpellation of the Spanish people by the bourgeoisie (in its new reincarnation as the Popular Front in alliance with Communists, and this time trying to keep its "hegemony" rather than "assert" it) in opposition to the status quo.

In this new version of populist discourse, however, the Communist Party of Spain was to play a greater role than just being the political ally of the reformist bourgeoisie. Indeed, as I hope I will prove in the next pages, the Communist Party, through its cultural work in the Ministry of Public Instruction, actually helped to take that populist discourse

[175] For a lengthier discussion of Laclau's definition of populist discourse, see the Introduction to this thesis.

one step further, helping not only to "interpellate" the Spanish *pueblo* as a political subject to take action against the status quo, but actually constituting it as such for the first time.

In his formulation of a theory of populism, Laclau has been clearly influenced by the Althusserian concept of ideology, whose "basic function" is to "interpellate/ constitute individuals as subjects" (1977, 100). According to Laclau, "*[i]ndividuals*, who are simple bearers of structures, are transformed by ideology into *subjects*, that is to say, that they live the relation with their real conditions of existence as if they themselves were the *autonomous* principle of determination of that relation. The mechanism of this characteristic inversion is interpellation" (ibid; emphases in original).

Emilio de Ipola, however, has argued that it is both "possible" and "necessary" to establish a conceptual difference between the "*interpellation*" and the "*constitution*" of individuals as subjects, or what is the same, between the "*operation* of interpellation. . . as an *immediate* or *direct* process of production of meaning" and the "*action* of constitution of individuals as [ideological] subjects. . . in the *process of reception* of the discourses" (1982, 111-113; emphases in the original). That is, it is one thing to "elaborate in a more or less conscious manner a discursive strategy aimed at having an impact on the ideological and political fields" and another to make "such a strategy effectively reach its . . . objectives" (119). As a result, the "constitution" of individuals as subjects depends on much more than just being "interpellated", it actually depends as well on "the situation of the discourse", that is, on the "social and cultural characteristics of the receivers, the role played by the ideological apparata [and the] nature of the hierarchical relations" in a given society, all of which affect how discourses are "uttered, spread and received" (132). It is only by taking into account these concerns, that the analysis of ideology could explain the

"real functioning of social discourses", something which is inseparable from their "political effectiveness" (132).

Sharing de Ipola's basic argument, historian Alfonso Ortí has argued that "the mere enunciation of *populist rhetorical discourses*" does not necessarily imply that there is going to be an "emotional response of *identification* with such a discourse on the part of individuals or the masses", which means the discursive interpellation in and of itself may not have "*structural political effects* of political mobilization" (1981, 97). Instead, it is the "*sociostructural historical conditions* in which a specific populist ideology crystallizes" and not the "*symbolic effectiveness of a populist rhetorical discourse*" which determines "the *final ideological effectiveness*. . . of the populist discourse" (97; emphases in the original).

I want to draw from this difference which de Ipola and Ortí have established between the "interpellation" and the "constitution" of individuals as subjects of a populist discourse in order to suggest that while both the Spanish *Regeneracionista* and Republican discourse, all the way from the late nineteenth century until 1931 (and even the discourse of the Comintern after the summer of 1935) had "interpellated" the Spanish citizenship as members of a political agent called "*pueblo*", in order to encourage them to rise against the feudal power bloc, the Civil War created the necessary socio-political conditions for such an interpellation to have further "ideological efficacy" and lead toward the "constitution" of those people as agents and subjects of political change. Among the most important "socio-political conditions" which made this possible during the war was the fact that those who were interpellating the people as a political subject to rise against the oppressor could also offer them the necessary tools to engage in such a political fight,

most obviously, the general and political education they would first need in order to understand what was expected of them. While the "interpellation" had happened through ideological discourse, the "constitution" would happen through cultural practice. By designing and carrying out cultural activities in order to bring about a "collective consciousness" among the Spanish people and to make them feel an integral part of an indivisible community, Communist leaders and the reformist bourgeoisie "constituted" the Spanish people as ideological subjects of the centuries-old struggle against feudalism/fascism. Cultural activities were "ideologically efficient" precisely because they produced the kind of "emotional response of identification" to which Ortí has referred.

The outbreak of war was not only a catalyst for the historical narrative of popular Spain to grow in unexpected proportions, it was also the chance to bring that very vision from the realm of the discursive to the realm of ordinary everyday life, a realm ruled by feelings and actions, rather than simply by words. Thus what had been a discourse of abstract concepts was filled with a meaning which was immediate and concrete, and which was to produce an emotional response of great dimensions. Thus what had been, on the part of the PCE, a relatively timid effort to embrace a discourse which foregrounded the Spanish popular masses carrying out a centuries-long struggle against feudal Spain, became a wholehearted attempt to turn that discourse into a true human experience.

To some extent, the use of cultural activities to create emotional links began as a retroactive process. Cultural activities organized by the *Ministerio de Instrucción Pública*, such as the saving of the National Artistic Patrimony and the creation and dissemination of the popular *Romancero*, allowed Spanish citizens – soldiers and civilians alike – to reclaim a past in which they had been politically *subjected* and in which their

most important cultural role had been as objects of representation. Further, it also allowed them to re-inscribe themselves in the past as its rightful *protagonists*.

The massive action taken to save the National Artistic Patrimony – which, in fact, was one of the most powerful and immediate symbols of the country's feudal past – was often rationalized by the Ministry of Public Instruction as the saving of the national foundations in which a future Spanish culture would necessarily have to be grounded. Very often, that explanation was accompanied by the revelation that the true cultural objective of such a move was to help people reclaim a national heritage which was genuinely theirs. As far as the cultural authorities were concerned, the history represented in the artistic artifacts which were to be saved from the bombs no longer represented the bourgeois painters or sculptors who had produced them, the Monarchs who had sponsored them, the Church which had been their safekeeper, or the aristocrats who had purchased them. Saving the national heritage of imperial and feudal Spain was interpreted as saving the historical presence of the Spanish *pueblo* who had silently attended to its creation.

As painter Ramón Gaya saw it, the patrimony being saved was a "summary" of everything which had happened before, the result of "the lives of all lives" (1938, n.p). Artists like Velázquez or Murillo had painted "a piece of Spain" (ibid), and they no longer represented themselves, but the people they had depicted. When one uttered the name "Velázquez", one was naming "all men [sic] from his time", "all the coopers and the bricklayers, all the spinners and all workers" (ibid). Velázquez thus was no longer a family name, but a "rich, endless" word which stood for "the whole of Spain and all of the Spaniards of that day" (ibid).

Something very similar was done with the *Romancero* itself. It was not by chance that the war-time poetic body was designed to resemble in name and form the Spanish *romances* of the Middle Ages which had been a cultural form of the peasant masses throughout the centuries,[176] thus "admired by patriotic romantics as the authentic literature of the Spanish people" (Butt 1978, 34). By reclaiming the word *Romancero* for the poetry of the war, the new poetic production was given a sense not only of truly belonging to the people, but also of having a history, of being a link with a past in which people had also been subjects of such an artistic creation.

As José Monleón has pointed out, intellectuals did, in fact, quite consciously propose the "resurrection" of *romances* because they knew that in the past they "had had an impact among the masses of people" (1979, 55). Thus writers were part of a process by which the Spanish masses, who "had carried the weight of history", but who had otherwise been unable to be protagonists of the cultural act, had their "cultural history. . . restored" via the resurrection of the art forms of which they had truly been creators, but which had subsequently been co-opted by the academic system (ibid).[177] The "ideological immobilism" of previous bodies of romance poetry, produced by a people who had been subjected to the *caciquista* and feudal system was replaced by a new ideological tone more appropriate to the struggle of liberation they were now leading; the form itself, however, was kept intact (de Vicente 1994, 26).

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[176] The *romances* were popular stanzas which had already been created in times of war, such as during the Carlista wars of the previous century. For a history and compilation of historical romances, see Marco (1977).

[177] Monleón has pointed out that this attitude partially resolved the contradiction of which Republican intellectuals were victims: namely, praising the cultural creations of a people who otherwise needed to be educated. The war thus "justified" both "praise" and "solidarity" (1979, 56).

Reclaiming the past, however, was only part of what the production of cultural activities could do. Their greatest impact was to be as generators of the collective links which would precisely serve to transform a story about the past into a living reality in the present. Only a strong sense of sharing a common destiny being wrought in the present would encourage people, and especially soldiers, to win the war. It would serve to give encouragement and morale, to foreground a common cause which would make people know they were not alone, to make them understand that what had once brought them together needed their current struggle in order to survive into the future. Educational and cultural activities were thus bound to lose much of the discriminating and ghettoizing aspects of previous decades, since they were now designed and implemented in the search for cohesion and homogenization. More than the simple organization of "missions" which would "take" theatre and music to people who did not have the means to understand them, the very raison d'être of the whole cultural effort was to bring people together, to create a sense of community, to make them, rather than simply address them as, the active political subject they needed to become.

In late 1936 and early 1937, after about six months of war, the year 1930 may have seemed already long past. Back then, however, little-known Spanish writer Paco Pino had formulated the need for this kind of community building, which at the turn of the decade he had named "citizen consciousness". "It is time to understand", he had said, that writers and intellectuals

> have the obligation to create first a citizen consciousness, without which no progress would ever be possible. For as long as this conglomerate we call the Spanish nation does not become an organic unit, responsible and with a consciousness common to all, all our efforts will be useless. The creation of that "consciousness", as

> opposed to the "individuality" which reigns today, is a vital problem for all, but perhaps even more for intellectuals (68-9).

Pino's description resembles very closely what the Communist Party and the MIP set out to accomplish in the midst of war. Party members argued that although the fascist military uprising had revealed the "rottenness" of Spain and Europe, it had also created "something great which [could] only happen once in many centuries", something which Communists called – in remarkably similar terms to those used by Pino – "a new exemplary *collective consciousness*", consciousness which was "embod[ied]" by the Spanish people ("A los seis meses" 2; emphasis added).

In 1930, the incorporation of citizens into public life had been envisioned as a political and educational project. In many ways, that was very much what the first Republican government had set out to do, through its educational and cultural policy, and what the Popular Front government still hoped to do. In the midst of civil war, however, such a "collective consciousness" would be mainly channeled through emotion. Artistic and cultural activities were to be the tools through which to channel the sentiments and aspirations of people as individuals, and, more importantly, to create the emotional links which would bring them together as a collective. Cultural activities were thus used as communication channels which would allow people to share and thus create in themselves the awareness of belonging to such a collective, a community which was living the most important time of their lives.

Emotion itself did not need to be fabricated. Minister Jesús Hernández had already found it in what he called the "rushing stream of energy" which was overflowing Republican Spain. Hernández urged cultural workers to tap into that energy by using

"whatever means [they had] at [their] disposal" in order to "exalt popular morale" and eventually yield "a satisfactory output" (*Discurso pronunciado el 10 de noviembre* 10). Culture was much more than the acquisition of knowledge in a particular field – the ability to read or write, or to understand the war. Rather, it was a way to bring people together, to create links inside a society which was still far too invertebrate, to create in them a sense of being a community, because even though the Spanish *pueblo* had already been interpellated for quite a while, it had had very few opportunities to become aware of itself.

In order to create a sense of community, it was necessary to understand the links which brought that community together, and that meant, first and foremost, to understand the war. At the most basic level, cultural and educational activities became a collective tool for people – and even more urgently for soldiers – to be able to understand the conflict in which they were involved and the historical reasons which had brought it about. To reach that goal, the Popular Army was called to be much more than a "seedbed of warriors"; in fact, it was called to be a "university" (Contreras 1936, 1). Among the many significant changes which the new Military Code[178] devised by the Popular Front would bring about would be the creation of an army which would care for its soldiers, their health, education and general well-being, as well as those of their families (ibid). The backbone of the soldiers' well-being was indeed their education and culture.

[178] These "significant" changes were put into practice via a new Military Code, which while saving a necessary unified central command in the army, would break through the hierarchical structure which had sustained it for centuries, aiming at creating relationships of solidarity, rather than of authority among ranks. For the PCE's view of the new Popular Army and the role to be played by education and culture, see "Hacia un ejército popular".

The activities of such a university within the army would include, among other things, the fight against illiteracy; the mass publication of books and pamphlets relating to whatever military, political, economic, artistic or social themes were deemed appropriate; the production of newspapers, newsletters and journals and the organization of conferences, a "huge undertaking" which would make of the Spanish popular army "one of the strongest and the better educated in the world" (ibid). While Franco's soldiers were kept ignorant, and thus unable to "rebel" against the military authorities which oppressed them, Republican soldiers "kn[e]w very well that while fighting for [their] homeland, [their] families enjoy[ed] the land the government ha[d] given them; they kn[e]w well that there [was] no more misery or humiliating work; that schools and universities [were] open to all" (Hernández 1938b, 17). These soldiers were part of a "happy and eager people. . . building their own prosperity" (ibid).[179]

Understanding the war meant among other things that Spanish people needed to become aware of the oppression to which they had been subjected and to understand the meaning of the liberation they were seeking. Education and instruction were "the most powerful weapons" to allow "the light of truth" to "enter [people's] brains" and make them "come slowly to understand their rights" ("Culturales" 2). That understanding would give people what Rafael Cruz has called the "common definition" which they needed in order to have a "shared feeling of belonging" (Cruz 1997, 31). It would allow them to "negotiate" reality in such a way as to create the "we" which would then move toward action (ibid).

Traveling through what Hernández called the "rushing stream of energy" which the war had brought about, the journey to share feelings and hopes would eventually bring the

[179] See also the pamphlets by the Comisariado General de Guerra, *La organización cultural del III Cuerpo*

people and the popular army together, so that the new definition of *pueblo* already discussed could actually materialize. Gen. Miaja had already said it quite clearly: "culture in the Popular Army [was] not only necessary but indispensable" because the Army needed "*to be identified* with the people" (qtd. in Fernández Soria 1984, 51; emphasis added). As Dolores Ibárruri argued, the war could only be won if "the whole of the people" managed to understand that the ultimate goal was to "defend the freedom and independence of [the] homeland" (1938, 390). Only when Spaniards were convinced "deep in their hearts" of such a simple truth would the "*unity*" of all Republican forces be firm and solid, making victory possible (ibid; emphasis added).

Cultural centres in the front and the rearguard were the spaces where people came together in order to "correct [their] defects" and "exalt. . . collective virtues", so that what Christopher Cobb has called the "spirit of active participation in civic and cultural life" (1990, 371) could give way to the "conscious and responsible collective" Pino had envisioned in previous years. The state "incur[red] the obligation to develop this . . . vibration of intelligence" which would make it possible to "take to the popular soul the awareness of its being", of its existence both individually and collectively ("Coadyuvemos" 2).

All cultural and artistic activities would contribute to the creation of this feeling of unity. Speaking about the importance of music, and in particular, of the effect which popular choirs had on soldiers and civilians, cultural commissar Carlos Palacio suggested that people did not need to have any kind of formal education in order to understand and feel music, because music was "emotion and sentiment", something "quite accessible to

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del Ejército and *Camarada Soldado*.

all" (1938, 36). "A choir", he continued, "brings men [sic] *together in the energy of a common idea*; it makes them *identify* with one another and *fuses them together* in the same feeling" (ibid; emphasis added). For Palacio, the choir was "an element of *unity*, able to bring all combatants together, regardless of ideologies and parties, and to have them share the *same desires and. . . aspirations*". Nothing could "bring them closer", nothing could "raise their morale" in the same way. Music was a "spiritual weapon" which yielded "efficient and positive" results in the war (ibid; emphases added).[180]

What Palacio said about music could have easily referred as well to any other cultural activity. The creation of the war-time *Romancero* was not only helping the Spanish people reclaim their past as artistic creators, but it was also helping them to see themselves as protagonists of the history they were presently writing. Having kept the external form and the raison d'être of a poetic body whose retrograde ideology they had managed to avoid, the *Romancero* was as "unifying" during the Civil War as it had been in the Middle Ages or the Renaissance, helping people have a sense not only of being part of a greater community pursuing a common goal, but of "making history". People thus felt that "history was in their hands" (de Vicente 1994, 26). Communist combatants were aware of the fact that a "good poem" was worth "several hours of political speeches", that they were "explosives" which gave a "boost to the morale of soldiers and to their belief in victory" and which "stimulated individual and collective heroic actions" (Lister 1977, 127).

For one, the fact that most of the poems in the war-time *Romancero* written by ordinary people (civilians and soldiers alike) were anonymous meant that the way in which

[180] For further commentary on the use of music in the Popular Army, see Lister (1977).

the Spanish *pueblo* was expressing "the ideological and emotional roots of their militia activity" was through the "individualized", but not "individualistic" expression of an experience which was "collectively lived and felt" (Ramos-Gascón 1978, 32). These poems were "uttered" from a "choral mass" which did not need of any "personalized identification" because "the poet only acknowledge[d] himself [sic] in the others" (33). José Monleón has taken this idea further, suggesting that the production of poetry contributed to the creation of this sense of collectivity even when poems were signed by well-known poets, for they were not seeking so much to explore their own personality as to address "common problems" which affected the whole community. As Monleón has seen it, while "art" had previously been a tool to know history, writing war poetry meant making history itself (1979, 112). If the war had already created a "strong community of experiences and interests", the collective creation of poetry was giving to that community "a historical conscience" (56).

Cary Nelson has also pointed out some of the collective ways in which this poetry was produced and distributed, from loyalist poets conducting public readings in the trenches, to Republican planes scattering poems over enemy troops to indoctrinate enemy soldiers, to ordinary soldiers (both in national and international brigades) "tack[ing] their poems on battlefield or training area wall newspapers", activities which "were not *responding* to the war" but being part of it (1996, 71; emphasis in the original). Each of these actions, individual or collective, was, rather than "solitary creation", different expressions of a "group activity" (ibid). Poetry was no longer "the sign of an isolated and

self-contained subjectivity, but a discourse opening a space for sharing experiences" (66).[181] This collective action served to

> "buil[d] solidarity and morale, celebrate. . . new heroes, and in a very real sense [to give] combatants a sense of their historical mission. Moving all these issues so rapidly into poetry also lent the war a sense of epic scale. . . The poems gave soldiers and civilians alike a common mode of recitation, remembrance, and recognition. Like the songs sung everywhere on the loyalist side, the poems were a shared language, a communal speech, a social text strengthened in every reading and recitation" (81).

The fact that the production of the *Romancero* would start to decline at the same time the Republican side had started to lose its faith in victory serves to prove that the *Romancero* had been both a driving-force for that unity and the result of it (de Vicente 1994, 25; Salaün 1985, 87).

Cultural activities, however, were more than the links which could make a common definition possible and thus serve to create a sense of community. Culture, in fact, was part of the very definition of that community. Articles, posters, political slogans and pamphlets tirelessly portrayed fascism as the force of destruction, of irrationality, of illiteracy and of ignorance. The discourse came from everywhere, from the literature of the *Ministerio de Instrucción Pública*, from the journals published at the front and in the rearguard, from political speeches and from the writings of Republicans intellectuals – all the way from liberals, like Antonio Machado and Jacinto Benavente to communists, like Rafael Alberti.[182] Fascism hated culture, because it hated the idea of a "new man", of a "new society", in a "desperate" but "vain" attempt to go back to the past (Roces 1948,

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[181] Nelson has suggested that this "community" was actually built at the international level, with an "international poetic dialogue", as exemplified by the way a number of poetic voices across the globe reacted to events such as the Defense of Madrid and Lorca's death (1996, 85-87).
[182] See Machado (1936); "Palabras de Benavente".

15).[183] "Fascism", poet and essayist Moreno Villa said, "negates cultural values. It hates everything which is not blind force, primal instinct [and the] exaltation of destructive violence" (qtd. in Juan Plaza 1936, 3). "All one [could] expect [from feudal Spain] was to have more of the darkness to which the Monarchy had already subjected all of [the country]" because fascism, like Feudalism, was built not only "on physical terror", but also "on keeping people ignorant" (MIP 1937, 14).

On the other hand, the discourse of the Ministry of Public Instruction aimed at interpellating a subject which was a "cultivated" and "educated" one (Hernández 1938c, 24). One of the ways in which the people collectively exercised their anti-fascism and reaffirmed their cultural superiority over the enemy was, in fact, through saving those pieces of art for which Spanish fascism had lost all respect. In opposition to the forces of ignorance and illiteracy, the *pueblo* had a "healthy instinct" which prevented them from falling into "barbarism" ("El ministro de Instrucción Pública y los católicos franceses" 3). While fascists saw cultural objects as mere "military targets", the *milicianos* demonstrated their "greatest value" by saving their national artistic heritage, by becoming "*milicianos* of Humanity" defending peace, culture and freedom for all the people of the world (Juan Plaza 1936, 3).

There is no question that creating a sense of community, defining that community through the production of culture and spreading political propaganda were one and the same thing, since the ultimate goal of building such a feeling of "collective consciousness" was obviously to win the war over fascism. As a cultural activist working in the

[183] The MIP put out a collection of pamphlets under the general title of *El Fascismo destruye el tesoro artístico de España*. In those pamphlets, the Ministry argued that while history may "forgive and excuse

battlefront put it, an "educated soldier works better, much better than an uneducated one" ("Labor cultural" 10). Out of the understanding of a common past which people had just begun to feel protagonists of, out of the present feeling of belonging to a community in struggle, and out of being part of a community which cherished education, culture and advancement, could only come a people willing to die in the war. Indeed the ultimate goal of any interpellation of the Spanish *pueblo* and of the act of its final creation as a living historical subject was that they could be ready to die for the government of the Popular Front. As Jesús Hernández put it, soldiers like those "may be asked to resist", of a people like that "only unyielding resistance may be expected" (1938b, 17).[184]

Once education and the practice of culture had given people an understanding of their oppression, they would want to fight alongside the Republican government not only because it led the struggle against that oppression, but also because such a government would be the future provider of more culture. A people thus defined in terms of their ability to improve themselves and to become educated was a people who needed such a government in order to survive.

Backed up by the Popular Front government and by the Communist Party itself, the Ministry of Public Instruction presented itself as the only one in the history of Spain (and it was not so far away from the truth) which had given Spanish people the opportunity to advance, to acquire an education and to access the practice of culture and art, rather than keeping them under the yoke of the Church, slave work and political oppression. Thus the Ministry could ask people to support the government of the Popular

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slaughter, homicides [and] all kinds of violence" justified by "political or social upheaval", it would be "inexorable" in judging those who destroyed the "spiritual patrimony of [the] people" (MIP N.d.).

[184] See also Partido Comunista de España, "Nuestro trabajo político en el ejército".

Front, so that the work of the Ministry could become a lasting reality. Indeed "to win the war mean[t] assuring culture for all" (MIP 1937, 14); it meant opening the door to a "prosperous future" ("Culturales" 2). A people who could "see. . . new cultural horizons open up before them" would "fight heroically on the battlefront", would "contribute to the rearguard effort [and] stand by their government in order to win the war and assure a future of freedom, well-being and culture for the whole of the Spanish people" (MIP 1937, 15).

To say, however, that cultural practice was a vehicle for propaganda is to say very little, for it begs the question, propaganda for what? In the first place, the kind of propaganda which both the MIP and the PCE were spreading was aimed at achieving a revolution which both organizations failed to define in unequivocal terms. With the war necessarily being a temporary event as much as a temporary state of mind, all Communist talk of revolution was grounded in an uncertain "tomorrow", a term which may have offered a great deal of hope, but did very little to define the cultural change which was taking place.

Although the Communist Party had made clear political choices to put down the revolutionary upheaval of the Spanish masses and to direct all political and military efforts to the business of winning the war, it did not, by any means, abandon the kind of revolutionary rhetoric which had been a trademark of Spanish communism for almost two decades. We have already seen how after the summer of 1935, this revolutionary rhetoric had clearly shifted focus both in content (from a proletarian to a popular democratic line) and in form (from addressing the proletariat and peasantry to addressing the popular masses). Yet the Party continued to foreground itself as a carrier of revolutionary change.

In fact, while continuously discrediting any serious talk of socialist revolution and laughing off the anarchists' and poumists' talk of proletarian revolution, the Party continued to hail its own achievements and those of the Popular Front government as truly "revolutionary", foregrounding the war itself, notwithstanding its tragic consequences, as the event which had facilitated such a "revolution" (Ibárruri 1938).

In all fairness, the Communist Party was not far from the truth when it argued that in previous decades former Ministries of Public Instruction had been unable to "fulfill its true mission", and that only during the war had a renovated Ministry finally been able to carry out any kind of meaningful change (Cimorra 1937, 1). In the same vein, the *Federación Española de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza* [Spanish National Federation of Teachers, FETE] – unconditional supporter of the Popular Front – argued that only the "revolutionary power" of the MIP had made it possible to pull peasants out of "lethargy", to instill in them the desire both to learn and to better themselves ("Brigadas culturales en el campo" n.p). According to the Teachers' Federation, the decree abolishing "all economic privileges in education" was the "most revolutionary" of all laws promulgated "under all governments of the Republic" and the creation of student scholarships and the *Instituto de Obreros* some of the most "renovating measures" ever undertaken by any Spanish government ("El Decreto sobre becas de estudios y subsidios" [4]).

Whenever the Party, the Ministry of Public Instruction, or any of its ally organizations (teachers' unions, association of intellectuals, etc) spoke about their own or one another's achievements, they reiterated this kind of revolutionary message, giving one another the benefit of a past revolutionary history which presumably explained the position of leadership they had taken in the present. In the midst of a democratic

revolution, it was hardly surprising to find a Federation of University Students (FUE) boasting of having had a fine history as a "revolutionary organization", and of having always been in search of "revolutionary solutions" to the problems of education (UFEH 1938, 25). Somewhat more problematic, however, was the fact that the Communist-led Ministry of Public Instruction could participate in such a collective glorification of everyone's revolutionary past. Indeed for the Ministry/PCE to admit that the present struggle of the FUE was but a mere continuation of its "proud revolutionary past" was a clear sign that, for the Party, the word "revolution" no longer meant the same.

In fact, although the MIP and every other political organization within the Popular Front, including the Communist Party, continued to use the word "revolution" in a very general sense and without any kind of political description, the changes in educational and cultural policy they so proudly recognized were nothing more than what a democratic revolution itself would have aspired to, and had, in fact, been aspiring to for almost a century: the right of the popular masses to acquire culture (knowledge) through both formal and informal education.

As Party member and MIP-employee Eusebio Cimorra saw it, the "deep changes" which the Communist-led Ministry was able to achieve during the war were at least three: the eradication of "class culture", of "wisdom as a privilege", and of "instruction as a prebend" (1937, 1). The present task of the Ministry was to "adapt" and "recreate" culture "for the whole of the people", to create "new foundations for culture, from the bottom rung of elementary schools to the summit of the universities and institutes (Hernández 1938d, 541).[185] As far as the Communist Party was concerned, such

[185] English-language article, published translation of a Spanish original.

"essential [revolutionary] principle[s]", while allowing for the "redistribution of land" to the peasants (something which no Republican Agrarian Reform had managed to accomplish before the war) meant that already "half of the revolutionary aspirations of the Spanish people" had been met ("A un año de guerra" 5).[186]

Although both the MIP and the PCE always maintained that the democratic revolution under way would give way to a proletarian one after the menace of fascism had been eradicated, neither organization seemed to make the least effort in order to clarify what kind of further "revolutionary changes" would be needed in order for the proletarian revolution to be possible. Instead, the description of a future revolution turned not only unnecessarily romantic (exemplified by the argument that the good rapprochement between intellectuals and the people during the conflict would be at least one guarantee that intellectuals would later support the proletarian revolution), but also extremely nebulous, since it barely managed to speak about a "tomorrow" which was endlessly announced, occasionally described, but truly never defined.

Such a "tomorrow" would be a "radiant" day in which everything in Spain would be "new" (Quinto Regimiento 1936, 2). "Tomorrow", Spain would have a proud and educated population able to pursue its cultural interests in peace. "Tomorrow", the country's artistic patrimony would no longer be private property. There would be a significant group of professional intellectuals, educators and artists who would have willingly abandoned their "ivory towers" and would work much closely to the people. "Tomorrow", the country would have its schools and other educational institutions open

[186] Interestingly, it was argued that this "half" revolution had been achieved in domains which had been not only of crucial importance in previous Spanish history, but had also fallen under the control of the

to all, men and women, poor and rich, and illiteracy would be eliminated. The act of keeping the national patrimony safe, of opening new schools in the midst of war was proof that there was faith in this tomorrow, that it could indeed exist and that it was already being envisioned (Hernández 1938b, 1938d).

Yet such a vision for Spain's future was nothing but a description of the cultural and educational changes which had already been accomplished. Thus what would later be "new" was already "new", what was due to happen in the future had already begun to happen in the present. That meant that if the future was going to be the full realization of what the war was already allowing as a promise, the future would also be deeply marked by the "three accomplishments" Cimorra had pointed out.

It would seem, then, that as far as the PCE and the Ministry were concerned, in terms of culture, the revolution was taking place right then, and the achievements were already *underway*, if not already *in place*. The war was a popular-democratic cultural revolution in the making and the Ministry of Public Instruction was its leader. The fact that the description of a peaceful tomorrow so strongly resembled the war-torn present meant that what was important for the MIP was the democratic revolutionary changes achieved, changes which had happened to take place during a war and which would simply expand once the war was over. What "tomorrow" would bring was not further revolutionary changes, but the possibility of enjoying the fruits of the revolution already completed, of enjoying them in peace.

Leaving the description of tomorrow so closely resembling the achievements of the present had two immediate consequences: one, that the possibility of a proletarian cultural

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Communist Party during the war, given their leadership in the Ministry of Public Instruction and of

revolution was being de facto obliterated – or at least postponed to such a distant future that it could not even be foreseen at the time; and, second, that there was no discussion on the kind of changes needed to adjust the educational and cultural schemes which had been specifically designed for a time of war – and indeed in order *to win that war* – for a time of peace. Presumably, once fascism had been defeated on the battlefield, education would no longer need to be ideologically oriented. Without any need to encourage people to win a war, artistic activities would no longer need to be so deeply ingrained in political agitation and propaganda. Without the need to offer people a expeditious education, there would be no need to have shortened versions of otherwise lengthy educational programs. The description of a peaceful tomorrow included a great deal of cultural achievements, but it failed to suggest how these achievements would also be meaningful after the war.

Yet the fact that the cultural revolution of which the MIP so badly wanted to be the leader was left undefined was perhaps one of its smallest flaws. What was more problematic about it was that every one of its achievements seemed to be accompanied by a lack of achievement in other aspects of cultural work. Indeed while, on the one hand, the way was open for ordinary Spaniards to own the cultural means of production, a hierarchy of knowledge was always maintained, transforming people into beggars for culture, rather than full protagonists in it. Further, while the educational system underwent drastic reforms in order to guarantee access to education and culture to every Spaniard in the Republican zone, the reform did not go deep enough so as to change the content of bourgeois education as it had been known until then.

Agriculture.

As we have already seen, while Communists had defended the idea of a "social revolution" "against hateful inequalities", they had also indicated that both the Party and the government were prepared to defend some kind of social differentiation among people, including what they called a "hierarchy of culture, technical knowledge and skill", as the only way "to stimulate. . . growth" (Ibárruri 1938, 390).

Indeed, although the government of the Popular Front, and, in particular, the Ministry of Public Instruction, had helped ordinary people see themselves as the protagonists in the war and in that great "stream of energy" which was flooding the country, and although people were in practice becoming performers, singers, actors, editors, writers, and the like, government discourse failed to foreground those very same people as real *agents of cultural change*. In the "hierarchy" which the "revolution" was to respect, people were kept right at the bottom. Political authorities and petit-bourgeois or bourgeois intellectuals were portrayed as the only true recipients of knowledge. In relation to them, ordinary people seemed to be mere servants of culture.

Clearly, in relation to the saving of the National Artistic Patrimony, the official MIP/PCE discourse seemed to be unable to decide whether people were ignorant or knowledgeable, and whether or not their natural intuition and popular wisdom could in any way replace their lack of formal (artistic and otherwise) education. Occasionally, people were foregrounded (and quite paternalistically too, for that matter) as holders of a knowledge they could not possibly have. In that light, Spaniards were not an ignorant people at all. In fact, they knew all they needed to know about the value of the works of art they were saving. As Josep Renau put it, "[l]e peuple lui-même connaît et comprend, infiniment mieux que naguère, la signification et l'enseignement de ses vieux maîtres" to

the point of feeling true "respect" and "attachement" toward them (1938, 39). That was, according to the *Office international des Musées*, "la plus sûre garantie de conservation des monuments et oeuvres d'art" (ibid).

For the most part, however, government and Party literature on the saving of the National Patrimony acknowledged that the majority of the Spanish people were in "such a deep state of illiteracy and ignorance" that they were "unable to comprehend the spiritual reality" of the works of art they were saving. As a result, they could only see those works of art as symbols of the "slavery" they had been forced to undergo in the past ("La protección" 3). People were called, however, to be "humble" to the extent of "forgiving" the "wrongdoing which other classes [had done] to them in the past". The very act of saving the Patrimony was held as a proof that the effects of such "wrongdoing" could in fact be "overcome" (ibid).

Quite remarkably, no one was more adamant in the admission of ignorance than the people themselves. There are dozens of stories about the role played by ordinary Spanish workers and peasants as soldiers who took part in saving the National Patrimony. In many of those, people themselves emphasized their own ignorance and foregrounded their inferiority, as they acknowledged they were saving art pieces they could not appreciate or understand.[187]

Agnes Humbert, attaché in France's National Museums, told a story of how the Counselor for Culture of the *Generalitat de Catalunya*[188] received truckloads of the most diverse objects collected by the *milicianos* . The load was accompanied by a note which read, "[h]ere we send you everything we found; we don't know what has any value and

[187] More stories about ordinary people saving the national patrimony can be found in Marinello (1937a).

what doesn't, because nobody ever taught us that. . . We beg of you to send us art books to educate ourselves" ("La protección" 18).[189]

Assuming that the original lines written by the *milicianos* were something similar to the ones reproduced here (a counselor from the *Generalitat* told the story to M. Humbert, who in turn published it, so the original lines may not necessarily be the same), they are extraordinarily meaningful insofar as they contain the people's reaction to most of what the Popular Front government was doing for them. The fact that they acknowledge that nobody ever taught them to understand art, means they are aware of a past of oppression in which they were kept ignorant. The request for art books reflects at least three things: one, that they know how to read books of which they were previously unaware; second, that they feel the government is on their side and works for them, that it wants their well-being; and third, that they perceive that government as a provider of culture. More importantly, in this story, like in many others, people see themselves as ignorant. "We don't know what has value and what doesn't", they say, foregrounding their own ignorance and clearly apologizing for not being able to distinguish the real art objects from the rubbish. The fact that they had to send it all to the authorities of the *Generalitat* ultimately revealed that the people were not decision-makers, that they passed on the reins to political authorities to make whatever pertinent decisions had to be made.

Ordinary people could pick up a piece of art, could load it and transport it, they could even risk their lives under the bombs to save it, but ultimately they had no power to decide what to do with it, indeed whether or not it was worth doing anything with it in the first place. These people were mere servants of culture, protectors of the former artistic

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[188] Regional government of the region (historical nation) of Catalonia.

creations of the national bourgeoisie with which they were not familiar and by which they were so obviously and so sadly overwhelmed. Political authorities may have been too paternalistic and the people themselves too humble, but they all seemed willing to accept that "wisdom" was the prerogative of the intellectual elites.

Another example of how the hierarchy of knowledge was maintained was the way in which the MIP understood the relationship between the intelligentsia and the people. Certainly neither the Ministry nor the Communist Party "professed the kind of false and demagogic *obrerismo* which [had] made of the proletariat a god and of the intellectual an enemy" (Roces 1948, 22). In fact, if either one of those organizations can be accused of anything during the years of war, it would be of doing precisely the opposite.

In late 1936, *Milicia Popular*, the official publication of the Communist Fifth Regiment, published a number of articles, speeches, interviews and manifestos on the occasion of the move to Valencia of the (bourgeois) intellectuals living in the *Casa de la Cultura* in Madrid to another one in Valencia. The language used to refer to these bourgeois intellectuals could not be more eloquent.

Milicia Popular spoke of them as if they were the only ones who had access to the sources of knowledge, as if they were the very sources themselves. The journal portrayed them as the most refined and cultivated among all Spaniards, and as the absolute guardians of knowledge, the arts, letters and sciences in Spain, heirs to all the knowledge throughout history, and the only ones responsible for safeguarding that knowledge for the future.

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[189] Original in Spanish.

Indeed these intellectuals were the "*sabios españoles*" [Spanish wise men][190] the highest representation of past, present and future Spanish culture itself, and, as such, worthy of the greatest protection, for they were to lead the "build[ing]" of a "new country" ("Hombres de ciencia" 2). These "wise men", "who [gave] Spain so much glory" needed to be taken away from the "annoyance and the dangers of war" ("Sabios españoles" 3). The Communist officers of the Fifth Regiment, who were otherwise overwhelmed by "great responsibilities", took into account the "respect and attention" these intellectuals deserved, and made it a "question of honor" to take them to safety (ibid).

No article in *Milicia Popular* or in any other Communist publication of the time referred to these bourgeois intellectuals – whether referring to the move from the *Casa de la Cultura* or in any other case – without using the word "sabios".[191] It was, indeed, the cult of culture, a feeling of admiration toward the intellectuals from the upper classes in complete contradiction with the encouragement given to ordinary people in order to have them participate in everyday cultural work. The fact that the "wise men" were being admired in such a way only helped to point out how ignorant the rest of the population was, and it meant that even though, in practice, people were using their own means of production to produce culture, knowledge did not truly belong to them.

To have the Communist Party and its elite army officers show their respects to bourgeois intellectuals was something which could have hardly been envisioned a few

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[190] The original Spanish title says "*sabios*" and not "*sabias*", thus excluding the feminine, although it could be argued that the Spanish masculine, as it is the case in French, includes the feminine as well. However, the reality was that all the intellectuals evacuated by the Fifth were men.

[191] Interestingly, in a thank-you note to the Fifth Regiment, one of the intellectuals who was evacuated from the *Casa de la Cutlura de Madrid* to that of Valencia, used the term "cultural workers" to refer to him and his colleagues ("Los sabios y artistas trasladados" 3). But in the very same article the editors of *Milicia Popular* referred back to them all as "*sabios*". See also "Escritores de prestigio mundial".

years earlier. The change, however, was quite deep, since the Communist Party not only revered those very same intellectuals it had previously despised, turning them into popular heroes, but it also considered those intellectuals to be part of the artistic patrimony itself, and a patrimony of the people for that matter. The Communist soldiers of the Fifth Regiment were driven to risk their lives in order to save the "wise men", because those men were "theirs", because they "belonged" to the people.

In his farewell words to the "wise men", Commander-in-chief of the Fifth Regiment, Carlos Contreras, told them that the Spanish people "did not want to lose *their* artists and men [sic] of Science" ("Sabios españoles" 3; emphasis added). Although some intellectuals might at first have found a variety of reasons to object to their evacuation, the Fifth Regiment took it upon itself to carry out the move. "We are going to take you to Valencia", Carlos Contreras told them, "despite [your] resistance [because] your lives do not belong to you any more; they belong to the people, to the whole of humanity. No one has the right to make decisions about his [sic] life when that life is in the service of science or art" (ibid). The way Antonio Mije put it says it clearly: "Culture is the patrimony of the people; that is why, we [the people]. . . take it upon ourselves the responsibility and the honor of saving *you*" (qtd. in "Sabios españoles" 3; emphasis added). With the pronoun "you" replacing the noun "culture", intellectuals and culture were effectively identified as one and the same thing. People were the servants of culture who made sure the two of them managed to survive the war.

Those people who saved the art of the bourgeoisie, but who did not understand it, the people who helped the "wise men" go to safety, were the same people who decades earlier had looked upon socialist intellectuals like Fernando de los Ríos and had felt the

awe of looking at a master. That was hardly a people who had accomplished, or who could be said to be in the process of accomplishing, a cultural revolution. Those could most certainly not be a people who had taken it upon themselves to be full and rightful protagonists of the cultural event. The hierarchy of knowledge had, indeed, been maintained, making all talk of cultural revolution, access to education and the like, a mere rhetorical exercise, and, more importantly, contradicting the very achievements of the popular democratic revolution itself.

It was precisely to make that point that almost two decades after the original *Partido Comunista Español* had come and gone, his intellectual mentor Juan Andrade – now writing for the POUM's *La Batalla* – raised his voice, yet again, against the Communist Party of Spain. According to Andrade, it was necessary to oppose the "strange myth" according to which a man, by virtue of being "wise" was also assumed to be "good" and thus automatically placed "on the workers' side" and expected to "support the [proletarian] revolution" (1937a, 1). Andrade argued that "most [bourgeois intellectuals] had reached the official category of 'wise' thanks to [their] influence on the state and the protection they receive[d] from it" (ibid). To believe that such "children of the bourgeoisie" – regardless of how politically progressive they proclaimed themselves to be – could ever stop serving their class interests in order to join the working class was "to believe in miracles" (ibid).

Andrade argued that the way in which the authorities were treating intellectuals proved they "lacked confidence in the creative activities of the proletariat as a class" (ibid). This was so not only because there were also proletarian intellectuals – though perhaps not so "well-known" or "admired" as bourgeois intellectuals were – who should be

considered the natural allies of the working class, but also because it was "outrageous" that at a moment when the proletariat had advanced so much politically, it also continued to believe in the "old prestigious people from the bourgeoisie" (ibid). Andrade believed all that was the result of the "messianism" which Stalinist communism was "encourag[ing]" (ibid).

If keeping this "hierarchy of knowledge" was an underachievement on the part of the Ministry of Public Instruction, a much greater one was the lack of meaningful structural change which took place within the educational system. As much as it served to literally "open the doors" of primary and secondary education to all citizens, the MIP's educational policies also dealt exhaustively with what was to be found behind the doors themselves. For one, there would be some significant changes in terms of the syllabus which would be taught in the new Spanish schools of the Popular Front and in the way education was to be imparted. [192] Much more important, however, was the kind of "ideological" changes which the "new" school would have to go through, what Juan Miguel Romá, a communist teacher, called the "moral changes" which had to do with the ideology underlying education. Having admitted that the country was undergoing a democratic revolution, much of that "new" ideology to be reflected in school, needless to say, was bound to be a bourgeois one.

The new Ministry of Public Instruction set out to revise the way subjects like Spanish history or literature would be taught in war-time schools, so that the study of the past would foreground the historical importance of the very class which had previously

[192] Some attention was paid, for example, to the new subjects which would comprise the new *Bachillerato Abreviado* [Reduced High School] for workers between 15 and 35 years of age, or to the kind of literature

been oppressed. In order to do that, the "new school" could no longer hide behind false claims of political or ideological neutrality. To counteract what had been done by the feudal system, the new school would have to be openly ideological. In the midst of war, that simply meant it would have to be strongly and unapologetically anti-fascist. In order to change Spain's "moral" reality, Juan Miguel Romá argued, the school system would have to combat the effects which centuries of feudalism had had on the school system (1937, 17).

Anti-fascism in the school would have an "ideological", as well as a "technical", aspect. In the "ideological" terrain, it would "combat against fascism in all its forms. . . exhibiting and studying its criminal and inhuman acts" both in Spain and in other countries. It would "defend. . . all pacifist undertakings and the rights of all the peoples in the world to self-determination. . . ". It would "revise history under the light of truth and justice, pointing out the efforts made by the people in order to defend their rights against the dominant oligarchies and other great oppressors" (MIP n.d.). School would have to transmit to children the idea that the war being waged was just and fair, making them understand the "great possibilities for action and creation" the conflict was "opening up for the future" (Romá 1937, 18). The new school would thus be the ideological child of the Popular Front as the umbrella organization under which all anti-fascist ideologies would come to have an expression (17).

In the "technical" aspect, an anti-fascist school would follow the style of the Soviet Polytechnic school, teaching children all aspects of science as applied to all branches of technical work, and training them to actively participate during and after their school years

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which the new school would pay attention to, once it had been "disinfected of gnomos and fairies", of

in the development of their country by offering them productive work. Anti-fascist school would "emphasize the value of work. . . as a way of life as well as a means to achieve progress, prosperity and culture" (MIP n.d.).

A school system grounded in the ideology of anti-fascism and set to undo the wrongdoing of the feudal system, regardless of how belligerent its ideological content and how unapologetic its politics, resembled little the proletarian school which the Communist Party had been speaking about for years. Since the "new school" was being designed in order to counteract the ideological legacy of the feudal system, it was also left open to embrace the educational model already devised by the reformist bourgeoisie, in the process letting go of the need for further structural change. In fact, the Ministry ended up designing a "new school" which was the brainchild of the *Escuela Unificada* which was already the standard model of reformist education. Anti-fascist school, just like bourgeois school, was a system open to all classes precisely because it did not set out to challenge the existence of classes.

In a text published by the *Ministerio de Instrucción Pública* on the anti-fascist character of education, the comparison between the school of the past and what the school of the future was setting out to achieve was one which could have been carbon-copied from any text from the *Regeneracionistas* and *institucionistas* of the nineteenth century. For the Ministry, the school which was found "on the other side of the trenches", that is fascist or feudal school, was the school of "sad, sleepy children", the school which considered childhood to be "a abominable mass, already condemned to drag a life full of hardship and restrictions"; a school which was "poor", which "did not awaken the desire

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"fables and stupid morales" (Enríquez n.d., 24). See also *La escuela actual es esencialmente antifascista.*

to learn", and which "choked the inborn happiness of children". On the other hand, there was a school which was "active" and "happy", a school which would "forge the makers of a new Spain" (MIP n.d, n.p). This school would contribute to the creation of a modern citizen, optimistic, active, strong, friend of the people and able to bring ideas of peace, justice and happiness (ibid).

Jesús Hernández acknowledged that the kind of "new", "true" and "antifascist" school the Ministry so eagerly described was still far from being a "socialist school". "Some people in the field of Public Instruction have pointed out that the changes in the educational system are not tackling issues of class", Hernández admitted. "That is true", he continued, "[w]e cannot pursue those transformations until we go through a socialist revolution. . . Today our duty is to create a popular educational and cultural system to support the work of all anti-fascists" (1937d, 2). As put succinctly by the *Fracciones Comunistas de Profesionales de la Enseñanza* [Communist Union of Teaching Professionals], everybody had to understand that while living under the current political system (a capitalist and bourgeois system) it would be unrealistic to expect to be able to have a socialist school (1937, 1). As José Alvarez Lopera has pointed out, what the PCE and the MIP were doing was transferring to the educational field, the "everlasting Communist thesis: first the war, the revolution later" (1982, 32).[193]

Perhaps because the communist opposition had already decided to pursue the proletarian revolution in the midst of the conflict, the war did not stop the POUM from pursuing the kind of "Marxist School" the *Bloque Obrero y Campesino* and the *Oposición*

[193] In this light, I find that suggestions indicating that the MIP and the Popular Front were implementing an educational system which sought "classless education" unsustainable. See Fernández Soria and Mayordomo (1993, 13).

Comunista de Izquierda had already pioneered.[194] As they pursued such a project, anti-Stalinist communists accused the government and "all reformist organizations" which supported it – and this included the Communist Party as well – of dealing with the university problem in the same way the Republican governments had done between 1931 and 1936, "talk[ing] and talk[ing]" about "facilitating the access of young workers" to it and doing little else ("Por la universidad obrera Socialista" 1). According to the communist opposition, a truly new educational policy should not be concerned with the question of "access" by the working class to schools and universities, but with making sure workers occupied positions of power in the administration of the system. They did not believe that a cultural revolution was to take place simply by having teachers and students from the "old system" "allow" workers to come to their institutions. A true cultural revolution would mean that workers themselves would assume the positions of leadership, and once they had done that, they would be the ones to decide which "petit-bourgeois elements they [could] allow in *their* educational centres and which professors [should] be kept and which expelled, depending on their past political history and their technical ability" ("Viva el frente de los estudiantes revolucionarios" 3; emphasis in the original). That is, the question was not so much about "access" as it was about "control" ("Por la universidad obrera" 1).[195]

The fact that the Communist Ministry of Public Instruction was doing nothing to erase the hierarchy of knowledge and the fact that it was unwilling to challenge the class biases of the bourgeois model of *Escuela Unificada*, were obvious signs that Communists

[194] For a description of the POUM's *Escuela Marxista* during the years of war, see Andrade (1937b); Maurín (1936); Perún (1937).

had already undergone a dramatic shift in their view of Spanish cultural history and in the meaning the Civil War was to have within it. The idolatry of the bourgeois intellectual and the perpetuation of class differences within the educational system were the practical consequences of a cultural discourse in which the PCE and the MIP had embraced the cause of Republican *Regeneracionismo* itself, bringing Spanish cultural history full circle. At a most basic level, by fighting a war against feudalism/fascism and not the reformist bourgeoisie, Spanish Communists shared a great deal with nineteenth-century *Regeneracionistas*: the enemy. Once that common enemy was acknowledged, the Party could easily identify with the very goals of reformism.

Whenever the PCE or the MIP found it necessary to speak of the past of the Spanish educational and cultural system, the dividing line between present and past was only symbolically 18 July 1936. For the most part, such a dividing line was placed on 14 April 1931. That is, the past against which the Ministry of Public Instruction was fighting was not the past of a bourgeois society, but of a feudal one, and such a past had not ended with the outbreak of war in mid-1936, but with the proclamation of the Second Republic in early 1931. The "past" which needed to be overcome was a past in which the Church controlled education, a system which produced "[i]lliterate people", because its plans had been "weak, badly designed and inefficient", a system ruled by "intellectual poverty" and the lack of "pedagogical ability" (Frente Popular 1937, 6). The current Ministry of Public Instruction, which was fighting for "Progress, Freedom and Culture" was to eradicate such a past of "oppression and illiteracy" (Vázquez 1937, 1; capitalization as in the original).

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[195] Further discussion on the POUM's view on education and the educational system can be found in Maurín (1936, 1987); Perún (1937); "The New School" Part I and II (1936).

Having adopted the same enemy, the reformist bourgeoisie and the Communists of the PCE were, in fact, occupying the same subject position. Since the bourgeois Republic was not part of the past to be defeated, but of the present, very soon the Republic was no longer "they", but "we", and in that historical leap the PCE truly identified with the reformist bourgeoisie.

Being "we" meant that an effort was made to acknowledge the accomplishments and to justify the shortcomings of the first Republican government, blaming the CEDA and the second Republican government (the very precursors of fascism) for not allowing educational and cultural change to come through. As it has already been discussed, during the years of the first Republican government, *Mundo Obrero* had not said much about the cultural policy of the Republican government. Most likely this had been because the Party thought the government's cultural work was unworthy of attention, given the fact that the bourgeois government itself would only be temporary. Things had changed radically in five years, and by the period 1936-37, Hernández's Ministry of Public Instruction looked back at the first Republican government with a feeling of complacency. Foregrounding a "past" of feudalism and of fascist/religious education, the MIP argued that Spain "had had to wait for the Republic in order to change such a state of affairs" with a new educational policy "inspired in some fundamental principles which are and will continue to be a reference for future educational policy" (Frente Popular 1937, 4). In such a new light, for example, the *Misiones Pedagógicas* had been a "grande croisade entreprise pour élever le niveau spirituel du peuple" (Renau 1938, 41) whose fruits the Spanish people were now receiving, "glorious institutions" in which "students and teachers. . . happily traveled through villages and towns" in order to take "a bit of happiness and culture to those places

where the peasant youth [had been] abandoned" (Frente Popular 1937, 11). The war-time MIP justified the shortcomings of previous bourgeois Ministries on the grounds that the political opposition it had endured had not allowed them to meet their own goals, which had been to "improve and expand the values of [Spanish] culture and education" (Hernández 1938c, 22). Luckily, however, whatever political obstacles the Republican government may have faced in the past, they no longer existed. In the process, Communists not only erased themselves from the history of the opposition to the Republic, they also endowed themselves with the task of continuing what the Republic had already begun. If the first Republican government had only been able to "double" the number of schools, the MIP would now guarantee access to them (Frente Popular 1937, 13). If the first Republican government had been unable to carry out a true reform in the Spanish university and had failed to achieve "true communion between professors and students", the MIP would now do it by opening it to the masses.

This was not "to start again *in a revolutionary way*", as Arconada had called for in early 1936.[196] Instead, the educational project of the MIP stayed with the very same principles, it approved of whatever was achieved by the first Republican government (though acknowledging it had been little); it embraced its ideas, its intentions, its needs, and its practice. Hernández himself said it, even when he was no longer Minister of Public Instruction[197]: "Upon guaranteeing the physical and cultural improvement of our people",

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[196] See Chapter Three.

[197] The original Popular Front government led by Largo Caballero was replaced in May 1937, when the position of Prime Minister passed on to Socialist Juan Negrín, although the rest of the cabinet remained basically unchanged, and Communists Jesús Hernández and Vicente Uribe held on to their posts. As a result of one of many political crises, Negrín's government substantially changed in April 1938, still a year before the end of the war, and Hernández (who had been directly involved the crisis) left the cabinet. The MIP was subsequently taken by an anarchist, Segundo Blanco, whose team set out to erase all traces

the Popular Front government "confirms what is already the work of the Republic in these fields and it promises to build on them" (1938a, 17). Arconada's idea to "start *in a revolutionary way*" was simply replaced by the idea of "expanding" whatever work had already been started.

By entering the subject "we" and occupying the subject position of the reformist bourgeoisie, as well as by embracing the Republican cultural and educational project and promising to expand it, the PCE and the MIP were de facto identifying themselves with the Spanish tradition of liberalism and progressive politics. Both the Party and the Ministry foregrounded a historical narrative which completely assimilated the metaphor of *las dos Españas*: throughout history there had been, on the one hand, the tradition of the Inquisition, the Catholic Monarchs and the empire; and, on the other, the tradition of "those who fought against the darkness, for progress and freedom" that is the tradition of the bourgeois intelligentsia (Roces 1948, 26-27). The PCE and the MIP saw themselves as part of the tradition of the "men [sic] of progress" who had historically fought against feudal Spain: from the Castilian *comuneros*,[198] to the heroes of the Republic, all of them "predecessors of the revolutionary movement which the proletariat call[ed] its own" (109); all of them in the tradition of Pi y Margall,[199] Galán,[200] and García Hernández,[201] and "all those who fought to destroy the feudal, monastic and monarchic Spain and open the way to a democratic system based on the well-being of the masses" (ibid). In that tradition, they even found themselves heirs to the work of people like Joaquín Costa, and,

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of communist policy in the Ministry. For further reading on how this crisis affected the *Ministerio de Instrucción Pública* and on Blanco's new Ministry, see Alvarez Lopera (1982).

[198] Anti-monarchical movement in the early 1500s.

[199] President of the First Republic in 1873.

[200] Fermín Galán, Republican hero who had died in a premature proclamation of the Second Republic.

remarkably enough, Fernando de los Ríos (Claudín n.d, 8-11). The Popular Front was perceived as the organization which could bring all those historical dreams and aspirations under one single banner. In the process of outlining such a tradition, historical events as different as the War of Independence against Napoleon and the struggle of the "masses" for "national independence" during Barcelona's Tragic Week (note how the proletariat has now become the masses, and the struggle against a monarchic system one for national independence) were made part of a historical line which included the Constitution of Cádiz in 1812 and the proletarian revolutions of 1917 and 1934, as if they had originally had similar meanings (Díaz 1937b, 484-5).

Indeed the armed conflict was not only the *latest* in that long trajectory of historical confrontations against feudal Spain. Most importantly, it also had a great potential to be the *last*. For the Popular Front government and the MIP, the war was the *final confrontation* between liberal and feudal Spain, and one, of course, in which the former would be victorious. Indeed, as a final confrontation, the war was the final struggle and the condensation of all previous ones. The war was a "very deep crisis. . . full of *purifying* virtue" which gave "strength" and "open[ed] the way for the new Spain", a country which was "purging itself" (Marinello 1937b, 9). In a most classic humanistic approach, that final "purge" was to produce the final "new man" [sic] (ibid), and the final "structure" in which "all Spaniards who love[d] their homeland [and] who respect[ed] the Republic" (Hernández 1938a, 19). The war was the final opportunity for the Spanish *pueblo* to redeem itself from fascism.

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[201] Galán's collaborator.

From among all the things the war meant, the acquisition of knowledge and education were the most important redeeming tools. In this new humanistic discourse, culture was no longer a social superstructure, but an individual and collective essence yearning to be set free, and which would be free once the enemy had been overcome.[202] The Communist MIP, like the bourgeois reformists of whom it considered itself an heir, believed the "new" Spain "of the future" – even in the midst of war – was being "carved . . . through work and study" and that the acquisition of culture were the basis upon which to build a new democratic state ("Odiemos al Fascismo" 1). It was thus in art and culture that the Spanish people "had placed all their hopes" ("La protección" 5), for they would make "shacks" disappear and would "create" a new country (Grimau 1988, 386). The hopes placed on the redeeming qualities of culture were so great that it was argued that if previous generations "could have had the means to cultivate their intelligence" the "exploiting class" would have by then been "plunged into silence" (Rojo, 1937, 4).

Just as the Republican government had seen itself as a provider and organizer of culture in order to create citizens of a democratic state, the MIP and the government of the Popular Front declared that among its most important principles were "the cultural, physical and moral improvement of the race", so as "to reach the degree of intellectual equilibrium which [the Spanish people] need[ed] in order to create the morale of the new society" which was being created (Comisariado General de Guerra 1938). As a result, the state was to give citizens all "means possible" so that they might reach the "degree of

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[202] Overcoming fascism and feudalism as an obstacle for the final liberation of a popular Spain meant that the Spanish *pueblo* would then be able to develop their "hitherto unknown abilit[ies]" which had remained "hidden inside each and every one" (Sánchez Barbudo 1936, 3). That *pueblo*, the individuals in it, "will live to be able to be the man who could have been" and never was, and that "lies dormant [*sentimos como*

moral and intellectual development" needed to "know their rights and duties", and with that, "deserve full spiritual sovereignty" ("Valor del Ateneo" 2).

The cultural liberation of the people was going to happen with them as protagonists of both politics and culture and not as mere recipients, it was to be led by a political regime with popular roots of support which looked out for the interests of the people, and in the middle of an ongoing democratic revolution, rather than in the midst of oppression, and in all those ways it was to be very different from the kind of cultural liberation *Regeneracionistas* and *Institucionistas* had proposed. In both cases, however, the acquisition of knowledge and the practice of culture, would be the "healthy transformation" which Spain was going to experience and through which the Spanish people would find their liberation. Culture, once again, was the "axis of the nation", an axis in which "all *revolutionary aspirations interpolate[d]*" ("Editorial", *Boletín FUE* 1; emphasis added). A catalyst and channel for the revolution was, ultimately, a replacement for the revolution itself.

Propaganda for what?, I asked earlier. And the answer can only be that the "Communist dogma" and "propaganda" coming out of the MIP, with the full support of the Communist Party of Spain, and of the cultural organizations run by Party members, was a propaganda for a half-way democratic cultural revolution which was keeping much of the same cultural divisions feudal Spain had been breeding for centuries and which the reformist bourgeoisie had already set out to change and failed to do so. The goal of such political propaganda was to achieve the cultural transformation which the bourgeoisie had been trying to implement for so many decades. What has been discussed above – the

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en espera latir] inside each and every one of [them]" (ibid). See also the "Editorial" of the Boletín FUE

"constitution" of the Spanish people as subjects of a populist discourse, the implementation of revolutionary changes in the fields of education and culture, and the way in which they were counteracted by lack of change in other areas – made of education and culture the beginning, the middle and the end of a process which was hardly new. Culture was the source, the means and the objective, all in one. It was the whole as much as each of its parts. Culture was the tool to make the Spanish people a vertebrate community; effectively, it was what "constituted" them as political subjects of a populist discourse which pitted them against a power bloc – much like the reformist bourgeoisie had done – in the process, bringing them together as a community of interests. Culture was what feudal Spain had denied to the masses of people and lack of culture was what had contributed to keep them subjected. The acquisition of culture was making people aware of that oppression, and of the need to fight against the enemy. Culture itself was what defined people and what made them different from that enemy. The promise of culture was what kept them fighting. Culture was also the final objective, the main component of a new Spain which was waging the last of its battles against ignorance and darkness. What made the war-time Communist cultural discourse so closely resemble the cultural reformist discourse of previous decades was not only all that, but the fact that culture itself was the means to achieve liberation, that it was, indeed, the tool for final redemption.

Finally, what came out of that redemption through culture was a renovated concept of *pueblo* which negated and embraced all other definitions at the same time. The *pueblo* of the Civil War was not the submissive *pueblo* which the *Regeneracionistas* had

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(1937) and "Coadyuvemos".

interpellated, it was a *pueblo* in arms. Nor was it the *pueblo* whom the first Republican government had wanted to educate, mere recipients of the goodness of the bourgeoisie. It was a *pueblo* who was subject of political change, agent of its destiny, in the process of educating itself, fighting a war against a historical enemy. Yet it was *Regeneracionista*, because the people would be liberated and redeemed by culture; it was classical Republican, because the people were portrayed as uncorrupted free spirits who would win over evil; it was modern Republican, because it conceived of a people who would have access to the educational institutions of the bourgeoisie; and it was communist because it did not rule out, although it did not affirm either, the possibility of a future proletarian revolution.

This all-encompassing meanings of the terms "culture" and "*pueblo*" were indeed the proof that what the Communist Party and the Ministry of Public Instruction were pursuing via their leadership role in the cultural revolution was the historical cultural program of the reformist bourgeoisie. Ultimately, what the Communist Party was doing through its work in the Ministry of Public Instruction was to take a leadership role in the democratic revolution Spain had never had, and which, by 1936, had taken strong Jacobin overtones. By then, the country was involved in a popular-democratic struggle which had embraced the basic goals of the democratic revolution – progress, access to education, socialization of culture, freedom – while incorporating and co-opting some of the goals of the proletarian revolution itself – social justice, land reform, better working conditions and the like.

Singing the glories of a liberal revolutionary past, honoring the reformist intellectuals who had been its protagonists, and transforming cultural change into the

driving-force and essence of revolutionary change, the Communist Party was, in fact, far from counteracting the cultural hegemony of the bourgeoisie. It was reinstating it, validating it, and embracing it as the true alternative for progress. Ironically, being in a Ministry of Public Instruction, the PCE was unable or unwilling to carry out the kind of intellectual revolution which the national-popular struggle required in order to be truly a preliminary stage of the proletarian revolution. In fact, it was precisely because the Party had access to the re-organization of education and cultural practice that it would also have the means to accomplish what nineteenth-century Republicans and twentieth-century bourgeois reformists had been unable to do: the final education of the Spanish citizenship for democracy.

The final "constitution" of the Spanish people as political subjects of this popular-democratic struggle meant that Spanish Communists, were not giving people and the working class the "critical consciousness" which they would need in order to break away from their ideological ties to the bourgeoisie. Instead, the Communist Party was leading them toward consent. The Spanish people "consented" to pursue the democratic revolution, just not in the same way Gramsci argued that people had "passively" consented to the hegemony of the bourgeoisie. Instead, they "consented" as a result of their very active participation in the democratic revolutionary process for the first time in history. Most interestingly, they consented to be part of that revolution, not because they lacked the educational tools which would have given them the knowledge to disagree –which is why, it may be argued, they had "passively" consented to the feudal hegemony – but precisely because those cultural tools allowed them to feel like political subjects for the first time. The ultimate goal of education and culture was to make people understand that

a popular democratic revolution would help the whole of society move forward. At the moment in which the political subject which had been interpellated as the protagonist of that revolution was also "constituted" as such, that subject had made its own the goals of the democratic revolution. At that very moment, the subject agreed to consent.

That this kind of preparation for democracy had to be improvised in the middle of a democratic revolution was unavoidable. That it was to happen as well in the midst of war was terribly unfortunate. That it was two hundred years late would prove to be its greatest flaw. That it was led by the Communist Party is perhaps one of the greatest historical ironies in the history of early-twentieth-century Spain.

SECTION TWO
On Revolutions and Tomorrows: Communist Intellectuals and the War

Our intellectuals have now found their true path.

A milita man[203]

Throughout the life of the Republican journal *Hora de España*, poet Antonio Machado wrote a number of introductory notes and philosophical meditations in which he offered his usual thoughts about the Spanish *pueblo*. Throughout these introductory pages to *Hora de España*, what Machado had once called and continued to call "*señoritismo cultural*"[204] was still an issue of utmost importance to him, his words serving as a reminder of the fact that until very recently the Spanish people had been denied access to both education and participation in the production of culture, and that hardly five years earlier such an issue had been at the centre of intellectual debates. Machado was among the intellectuals who, in the midst of war, were genuinely interested in continuing such a reflection, and the words uttered by his fictional character, Juan de Mairena, throughout the life of *Hora de España* were among the very few documents from non-governmental or non-party sources which dealt exclusively with the relationship between people and culture.

From the pages of *Hora de España*, Machado argued that those who looked at culture "from within", that is, "from the perspective of man himself [sic]" could not agree that culture was a "deposit" of knowledge to be shared by a few. Quite the contrary, they

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[203] Quoted in García Rodríguez (1936, 2).
[204] Machado coined the term "*señoritismo cultural*" in order to describe a past in which education and culture had been the prerogative of the monied classes.

believed culture was a "treasure of sharp awareness" which needed to be shared by as many people as possible. Machado warned, however, that the "dissemination" of culture which had already begun during the years of war would still be met with a great deal of opposition from the "enemies", that is, from those who believed that "the people's yearning for culture" was a "threat", a "wave of barbarism" which would "destroy" the "sacred deposit" of knowledge (1937, 6-7). To "spread" culture and to "defend" it were thus one and the same thing. Throughout the life of the journal, Machado had Mairena repeat the words of a no less fictional "teacher", Abel Martín, about a definitely allegorical *Escuela Popular de Sabiduría Superior* [University of Popular Wisdom] open to the participation of all of those who believed culture was not an "instrument of power over things [or over] men [sic]" (9). Yet the reality which was inspiring Machado's thoughts was undeniably real, as he reminded all that the Spanish people had a right not only to be "awaken" to culture, but to remain free from oppression and injustice so that they could build that "University of Popular Wisdom" from where so many others would be bound to learn.

Thus Machado – a sixty-year-old poet considered by many to be the greatest symbol of the Generation of 1898, a man of refined taste, delicate sensibility and deep spirituality, who had refused to be labeled as a Marxist or a communist, but who had made of the Spanish people not only his subject and object of philosophical inquiry and poetic writing, but his very reason to live – was among the very few intellectuals who throughout the years of war still made of the Spanish people and their right to education and culture the very centre of his work and thoughts. His reflections, however, seemed to be somewhat out of context, not only in relation to the journal for which they were intended

to be a foreword, but also to the cultural scene as a whole, where younger intellectuals – many of them soldiers for Republican Spain, and many others also members of the Communist Party – participated in a number of cultural debates in which the relationship between people and the production of culture was no longer the focus.

To some extent, this may have appeared to be reasonable. At a time when ordinary people were enjoying access to educational institutions and were becoming producers and consumers of culture in ways theretofore unknown, a past in which education and culture had been the prerogative of a social elite may have seemed to be happily outdated. As a result, it may be reasonable to expect that while Republican journals could still deal with such an issue in a somewhat factual manner –outlining what the situation had been in the past, and the changes which had already been accomplished – the issue itself should warrant little attention *as a debate*, at a time in which there were much more controversial and urgent questions. As a result, Machado's reflections turned out to be a most incongruent preface to the kind of commentaries put forward by Republican intellectuals,[205] because, among other things, the debate was centered so much on the kind of culture *they* would be able to produce, now that the people had been *awakened* to culture, and now that intellectuals themselves had been *awakened* to the plight of the people, that the future no longer seemed to have any space for the kind of leadership role the Spanish people had already taken during the war.

[205] In this Section, the word "Republican" no longer has the same meaning it had in the Introduction or in Chapter One. Indeed, it no longer makes reference to the reformist bourgeoisie but to the government of the Popular Front and to those who supported it, including the Communist Party and Party intellectuals. They were "Republicans" because they defended the legal Republican government against the military uprising.

What the Debates Were

Raymond Williams suggested that in the early twentieth century, in countries like Russia, Italy, and Germany, "the relation between politics and art was no longer a matter of manifesto but of difficult and often dangerous practice", while in countries in which there was no radical change in state power, "the effects, though no less complex, were often less dramatic" (1988, 13). Williams' conclusions may very well apply to Spain during the years of civil war, a time in which manifestos proliferated, but in which the cultural practice to be pursued and the decisions to be made were both "dramatic" and "dangerous" in ways which simply outdid whatever drama and danger the country may have already known.

The term normally associated with Republican cultural practice during the Civil War and which conveys both the "drama" and "danger" of which Williams spoke, is that of "*urgencia*" [urgency]. Rafael Alberti was the first Spanish intellectual to use this word in relation to the art produced during the Spanish Civil War,[206] which he called *arte de urgencia* [art of urgency], and the journal he and María Teresa León founded, *El mono azul*,[207] quickly became one of the most important channels for its production and distribution. Based on the work done by Alberti himself and by all those involved in

[206] For Alberti's use of the term "urgency", see his article in the newsletter *Boletín teatral* (February 1938), reprinted in Monleón (1979, 102-103).

[207] *El mono azul* was the official publication of the *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas para la defensa de la cultura*, in which Party and non-Party intellectuals collaborated. The first issue saw the light on 27 August 1936 and the *Alianza* published fourteen issues more, until 26 November 1936. After a transitional period in which a few loose issues were published, *El mono azul* re-appeared as a cultural supplement of the daily *La Voz*, with twenty-seven issues until December 1937. In May 1938, it re-appeared again as a leaflet, publishing three issues before it finally disappeared. A facsimile edition of the journal has been published by Vaduz and Topos Verlag AG. The most important in-depth study of *El mono azul* has been that of Monleón (1979), who has looked at the journal in the context of the *Romancero de guerra*. Other studies include John Gant's doctoral dissertation (U. of North Carolina, 1993) and Michel García (1977).

similar artistic activities, cultural historian José Monleón has given a broad definition of *arte de urgencia* as the kind of art "which arises from the needs created by an immediate historical necessity, an art which presupposes a specific political and cultural process and which is given form in works. . . of very specific thematic and formal characteristics" (1979, 97). In civil-war Spain, *arte de urgencia* meant a "collective response" – though it may have been expressed by individual voices – to the needs of the Civil War, "an ideological weapon for the training of both soldiers and the rearguard" (102). The goal of *arte de urgencia* was to break away with previous "conservative tradition[s]", to raise its voice against the "populist art" which had previously "alienate[d] people" (ibid). Given the circumstances, *arte de urgencia* was done in "simple forms", not only because of the meager means available, but also because of the need to be "efficient and useful" (102). The *Romancero de guerra* was *arte de urgencia*, so was the theatre produced during the war and much of the work done by *Cultura Popular*. Their "urgency" was determined by the need to operate "in time", for once the conflict had been resolved with a victory or a defeat, the work would become anachronistic (ibid). Artists did not "choose" to do *arte de urgencia* (103). Rather, the urgency was part of a reality in which they found themselves and to which they were forced to react.

During the first months of war, the need to produce an *arte de urgencia* which would be useful in extreme circumstances went practically unchallenged, and it was clear that many artists were committed to doing that kind of work for as long as the war would last. It has already been well documented, however, that about a year into the conflict, the faith Republican intellectuals had placed in the "popular cause", the "discipline" they had tried to abide by, and the "heroism" which had been expected of them, began to wither, as

"time (and military setbacks) opened up fissures in [their] emotional and political solidarity", driving many of them to reject the immediacy of agit-prop work and to enter a deeper state of reflection" (Salaün 1996, 196). It was at this point that *arte de urgencia* became a "choice" which could be embraced or rejected, as a number of Republican intellectuals began to search for ways to produce cultural work which would go beyond political propaganda and the war and into the kind of long-lasting value normally identified with intellectual production. Such a position was represented by the journal *Hora de España*.[208]

As the editorial team made it clear in the first issue of the journal, the extraordinary historical and political circumstances through which Spain was living in the midst of war were already being reflected in newspapers, speeches, posters and flyers, all of which were readily available on the streets everyday. Those publications, however – even if they were "absolute necessities" – were written in "high-pitched tones" and with "tense gestures", hence the need for other publications which would have different "tones" and different "gestures" ("Propósito" 5-6). The members of *Hora de España* argued that once it had become clear that the war was going to be a long conflict, a "division of labor" in cultural work was in order, so that they could perform at "their best" (Zambrano 1977, 49). They refused to let the war "strip [them] of their craft". Instead, they wanted to use it in order to "tune" and "polish" their work as a weapon in the service of a common cause (ibid). As

[208] *Hora de España* was founded by a group of young intellectuals and writers among whom were Antonio Sánchez Barbudo, Rafael Dieste, Manuel Atolaguirre, Juan Gil-Abert, Ramón Gaya, Arturo Serrano Plaja, María Zambrano and Angel Gaos. The journal was published in Valencia from January 1937 until January 1938, and in Barcelona until October of the same year, publishing a total of 22 issues. A twenty-third issue was reportedly in press when Franco's troops entered Barcelona on 25 January 1939 (E. M. 1972). For further reading on *Hora de España* and the ideology of its collaborators, see Zardoya (1984); Jimenez Millán (1982); Roumette (1977).

painter Ramón Gaya put it in an article so adequately entitled "Culture as a Living Being", culture would have to be defended "in two places at the same time. . . the battlefront. . . and. . . the rearguard" (1938).

Although the contributors to *Hora de España* did not challenge the need for agit-prop nor did they deny its effectiveness, they refused to consider it "the exclusive art of the revolution" (Sánchez Barbudo 1937c, 72). While *El mono azul* remained concerned about the circumstantial needs of the present, *Hora de España* concerned itself with the work which needed to be free of constraints and become a legacy for the future, the kind of art and culture which, rather than helping resolve the problems of the present, could open the path which was leading toward the cultural "renaissance" due to take place once the war was over. Refusing to be trapped in the cultural implications of a civil struggle in which artistic activities had become carriers of specific political messages, the goals of *Hora de España* were to defend the principle of intellectual freedom and independence (Caudet 1975, 28) in the belief that "artistic integrity" did not need to be "sacrificed to the exigencies of the war-effort" (Warner 1988, 116). Indeed *Hora de España* symbolized, like no other war-time cultural project, the contradictions of intellectuals caught in a conflict in which they wanted to participate, but of which they did not want to become victims.

A number of contemporary scholars have seen *Hora de España* as "a journal of the high intelligentsia", arguing that its creation meant a significant break from the popular cultural activities which had taken place during the first year of war. "Thanks to the pages of this journal", Serge Salaün has argued, "which [was] an elevated tribune for selected souls, poets [became] privileged individuals again, almost divine, and thus marginalized

from the rest of society, which still ha[d] to live the reality of the war" (1974, 192). Other scholars, however, have made an effort to reconcile the kind of *arte de urgencia* promoted by *El mono azul* with the kind of permanent work sought by *Hora de España*, arguing that, in fact, neither one of those positions aimed at negating, but rather at complementing, each other. These scholars do not read Dieste's use of the word "high-pitched" as a derogatory comment. Instead, they believed that expression to be not an attack on those who were responding to the circumstances of the war, but a comment on the circumstances themselves. As Francisco Caudet has pointed out in his response to Salaün, many of the writers who created and participated in *Hora de España* continued to produce agit-prop art or similar artistic work in line with the immediate needs of the war. "The journals's supposed *intellectualism* or *elitism* may be deceiving today", Caudet has argued, "but it was not then.

> It should be emphasized that *Hora de España* was looking for the participation of the Spanish *intelligentsia* at a very specific 'level', fully aware of the seriousness of the historical moment, knowing that one could be up to the task. . . in different ways. . . [Those] 'levels' did not exclude one another, and were not in contradiction" (1975, 24-25; emphases in the original).

The pages of the journal remained open to intellectuals, writers, poets and artists who were Republican, left-wing, or simply sympathisers, who "had a commitment toward culture, and in whom their responsibility and commitment prevailed over any kind of political sectarianism" (25). *Hora de España* aimed at proving that high culture also had a political and revolutionary role, and that it was possible to do it, and to do it well, amidst the war.[209]

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[209] The urgency vs. permanency debate has generated a good deal of academic debate in Spain. See Caudet (1975).

Characteristic of the urgency vs. permanency debate was the exchange between visual artists Ramón Gaya (mostly collaborator of *Hora de España*) and Josep Renau (also a *cartelista*, Party member and MIP official, mostly collaborator of *El mono azul*). In a debate which seemed to bring to life again some of the issues discussed by *Gaceta de Arte* and *Nueva Cultura* in previous years,[210] Gaya and Renau revived the issue of the artist's independence from political servitude.

While Gaya endeavored to establish a difference between the "social" (as the connection between the work of an artist and the society in which he/she lived) and the "political" (the servility to a specific political line), Renau argued that in the specific circumstances of the war, to seek "social content" for the work of art and to commit it to political uses were bound to be one and the same thing; that, in fact, there was neither "social" nor "political" art, but only "circumstantial" art, since nothing could be created beyond the circumstances of the war itself (Gaya 1937a, 54-56; Renau 1937, 57-60).[211]

Soon after this kind of debate had spread over the pages of most Republican journals, a new controversy arose over the presentation of Picasso's *Guernika*[212] in the Spanish pavilion at the 1937 International Art Exhibit in Paris. The fact that the work of an internationally renowned avant-garde artist was chosen to represent Republican Spain at an international exhibit gave way to a debate which would have been considered old in the rest of the continent, but which did enjoy some degree of novelty in Spain. In a

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[210] See Chapter Three.

[211] The debate between Gaya and Renau may be followed in the following articles: Gaya (1937a, 1937b); Renau (1937).

[212] Picasso painted *Guernika* after the Germans bombarded the small Basque city of that name. *Guernika* was first exhibited in Paris in 1937, and, once the war was over, Picasso vowed his work would not go back to Spain until the country had achieved democracy. After spending a number of years in New York, *Guernika* returned to Spain in the early 1980s and is currently exhibited in the *Museo Reina Sofía* in Madrid.

country where the avant-garde had come and gone practically unnoticed, previous controversies around those artistic movements had mostly been concerned with its lack of social relevance, and only rarely with how avant-garde technical experimentation could be successfully combined with a strong interest in social content. Despite Díaz Fernández's attempt in the late 1920s and early 1930s to reconcile avant-garde technical experimentation with a preoccupation for social change,[213] and *Gaceta de Arte*'s move to provoke *Nueva Cultura* into a debate on that very same issue in the mid-1930s,[214] in Spain political commitment had for the most part remained identified with realist aesthetics.[215] As a result, when a number of avant-garde visual artists (including Picasso) took sides with the Republican government and were even endowed with its representation at an exhibit of international reputation in Paris, the kind of debate which had already swept over Europe in the late 1910s and throughout the 1920s on the relationship between avant-garde and politics hit Spain with a momentum it had simply lacked before.[216]

Not surprisingly, political organizations to the left of the Popular Front argued that *Guernika*, as well as the other avant-garde pieces exhibited in Paris, were not only "anti-social and ridiculous", but also "completely inadequate for the healthy mentality of the proletariat" (qtd. in Larrea 1947, 72). To a considerable part of the artistic and intellectual Republican community, the fact that the symbolism of the painting could be open to multiple interpretations seemed to prove that Picasso was more interested in seeking "refuge" in the "games of Cubism" than in reproducing the suffering of the

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[213] See Chapter Two.
[214] See Chapter Three.
[215] Although it was the "dialectical realism" described by Alberti and Sender.
[216] For a review of these debates taking place in the European scene, see Russell (1985); Timms and Collier, eds. (1988).

Spanish people (Cano Ballesta 1996, 140). Poet Miguel Hernández argued that while the majority of artists in Republican Spain were "urged" to produce art which was "deeply human", others had "opted out for an easy solution" which failed to "reflect" Spain's problems.[217] Hernández accused these artists of being heirs to the "frivolity" and "eccentricity" of other "flashy artists" [*artistas de relumbrón*] from the past, of selling themselves to the "outdated games of Cubism and its provocateurs" (1937, 4). As far as Hernández was concerned, those artists not only refused to see "the reality which surround[ed] them", they also made it "impenetrable" (ibid) for the people.[218]

Other Republican artists like Ramón Gaya, however, believed that in order "for an artist to be with the people and to work for the cause of the people it [was] not necessary to have people understand his [sic] work" (1937d, 27). To illustrate his point, Gaya argued that much of the realist art which had been produced in earlier centuries in Spain had actually been completely unintelligible to the people (ibid).[219] He argued that art was "enjoyment" and not "entertainment", "teaching" and not "propaganda", "difficulty" and not "easiness" (30). It was only reasonable to expect that people would have to make an effort if they wanted to "enjoy" art as the manifestation of a "higher. . .spiritual life" (ibid).[220]

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[217] Hernández did not mention Picasso directly. Cano Ballesta has pointed out, however, that in a loose sheet which he found in Hernández's personal archives, the poet had written: "Today's painters are afraid of painting, they avoid it. Picasso is an example". Cano Ballesta believes that was the original version of the article which Hernández did not publish (1996, 139).

[218] Bergamín's article was published in French in the journal *Cahiers d'Art*.

[219] This is, of course, one of the greatest ironies in the cultural discourse of Republican intellectuals. While, on the one hand, they reclaimed what they saw as the Spanish tradition of popular culture by including in it classic artists such as Velázquez, they also acknowledged that the people had not necessarily been able to relate to their art.

[220] See Cano Ballesta (1996) for further reading on this debate and the reactions to the presence of *Guernika* in Paris.

In his speech to the Second International Congress for the Defense of Culture, where he spoke on behalf of the youngest among Republican intellectuals,[221] poet Arturo Serrano Plaja presented what was perhaps the best synthesis of the two main issues which were being debated across the country, although in slightly different terms. Indeed, rather than speaking about art in terms of urgency or permanency, or in terms of form and content, he spoke about a kind of art which would not be for the *war*, but for the *revolution*. In a way which seemed to resolve all previous controversies, he defined "revolutionary art" as a creation which would be committed not to a specific political message, but to a political process of change, an art which would be revolutionary in its form and profound in its content. Thus he envisioned an art with a sense of evolution and a projection into the future, as opposed to just a sense of urgent usefulness, a kind of art which would be part of a revolutionary *process* of which the war was just a stage. Serrano Plaja rejected both a realist art which offered a "mechanical interpretation" of the Spanish *pueblo* in which workers or peasants could be but a "mere decoration", as much as a kind of abstract or technically sophisticated art which would seek to "adorn" [*emperifollar*] something which did not need any "make-up" (1937b, 89). Thus revolutionary art would be measured neither by its form nor by its content – both of which could look revolutionary on the surface – but by its "essence". The issue, indeed, was not a question of "*forma*" nor of "*contenido*", but of "*fondo*".[222] Otherwise, Serrano Plaja

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[221] The speech was written by Serrano Plaja and signed by Sánchez Barbudo, Angel Gaos, Antonio Aparicio, Arturo Souto, Emilio Prados, Eduardo Vicente, Juan Gil-Abert, J. Herrera Petere, Lorenzo Varela, Miguel Hernández, Miguel Prieto and Ramón Gaya, some of the most representative intellectuals at the time, as well as a good combination of collaborators in *El mono azul* and in *Hora de España*. It was reprinted in *Hora de España* August 1937: 83-95, and has later been reprinted in Aznar et al. (1987b, 3: 185-195).

[222] I think it is important to emphasize the difference between these terms. "*Fondo*" and "*contenido*", it seems to me, are not the same thing. Serrano Plaja argued that a painter could portray a worker with a

argued, "the revolution would be. . . confusing [and would] lack an essence. . . We are not concerned with revolutionary symbology, but with a revolutionary reality" (1937b, 88). Although Serrano Plaja was able to explain quite well what that "revolutionary reality" was not, he was still at pains to describe what it was.

What the Debates Were Not

As we have already seen, the outbreak of war had given ordinary people the chance to become producers of culture, and had made them protagonists of a deep cultural change. Yet the war itself had also caught people and the cultural activities they were producing in the trap of political agit-prop. While the war was allowing people to have access to the means of production – something which, if the conflict was to be meaningful at all, needed to be a permanent change – it was also marking those cultural productions with a content which was necessarily temporary. What was most unfortunate about the intellectual debates which were taking place across Republican Spain was that they focused on that content – that is, on rejecting or embracing agit-prop – and very little on the very question of access to the cultural means of production. Thus there was hardly any discussion on how Republican Spain could guarantee that access in the years to come.

Lost in the debate of urgency versus permanency was the question of how having one or several "levels" of creation would eventually affect the participation of people in the production of culture, whether at an individual level or at a collective one, represented in unions or community organizations. The cultural work being produced during the war

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raised fist, and yet that piece would not necessarily be "revolutionary", since it would have no "*fondo*", that is no revolutionary essence; that representation of the worker would only be a symbol, and not a "reality".

by ordinary people and by revolutionary intellectuals working with them may have taken the form of "agit-prop" and "urgency" at that particular time, but what would become of it once the war was over? Was there a relationship between the "permanent" work *Hora de España* sought and the participation of the popular masses in the production of culture which the war was bringing about? Could people continue to have access to the production of culture in terms other than agit-prop, after a Republican victory? Who would be the protagonist, the producer of culture, in the kind of "permanent" art and intellectual work which *Hora de España* was hoping to create for the long term? The problem was not so much that these questions were not answered, but that they were not posed. As a result, there was hardly any discussion on how the participation of people in the production of culture, which had been the result of war, could also adjust to peace, that is, how people could still have the cultural means of production at their disposal without being forced to use them in order to produce political propaganda.

Those intellectuals who were working on *arte de urgencia* could not think of this question; it would have been a contradiction for them to think of the nature of art outside urgency itself, just as it would have been equally difficult for them to think about the ownership of the means of production in a context other than the war. *Hora de España* was so obsessed with how "professional" intellectuals would produce long-lasting work, that they forgot to take into account what other producers of culture had already achieved in the present. As a result, the debates included no discussion on how a victorious Republic could still support a culture which would be not only politically or artistic "revolutionary", but also "popular" in the same way the work of *Cultura Popular* or of the Ministry of Public Instruction was. Caught between an obsession with the present and an

obsession with the future, the debate could not address how the art of the future would surpass the restrictions of the present while keeping its greatest achievements.

The mere fact that the question of urgency versus permanency was so often framed as a question of culture produced by the people vs. culture produced by professional intellectuals came to prove that most Republican intellectuals thought of the participation of the masses in the production of culture as an event as intrinsic and circumstantial to the war as the use of agitation and propaganda itself, rather than as an accomplishment of the democratic revolution (so long in the making), an achievement which had to be maintained at any cost, especially if any hopes for a proletarian revolution wanted to be maintained. What that meant is that people's participation in the production of culture was conceived as a phenomenon which was both *static* and *temporary*, that is, unable to adapt to new circumstances.

On the other hand, the debate over artistic form versus content portrayed a people who had "ascended", as Miguel Hernández would put it, that is, that they had taken their political future in their own hands, but who in relation to art, were only included in the discussion as objects of representation. Hernández was concerned with producing an art which would be "humanist" in the most basic sense of the word, that is, centered around the human being (Cano Ballesta 1996, 138). The main question for him, as it was for other Republican intellectuals, was how his art could both reflect the people's struggle and be understood by them. In his speech at the Second Congress, Serrano Plaja included people in his discussion either as consumers of culture (it was for their sake that art had to be intelligible and not abstract, and it was in solidarity with them that art had to have a social content, in the first place) and as objects of representation (the mere reproduction of

"a worker with a raised fist" would not be necessarily revolutionary, but still the struggle of the Spanish people had to be an important part of the "essence" of art). Neither one of those discussions included people as producers of culture. Further, there was nothing to suggest that the means of production of the "revolutionary" art which these intellectuals were seeking for the future would be in the hands of anybody but professional intellectuals and artists.

In the pages of Republican journals, there were some indications that Republican (especially Communist) intellectuals were ready to discuss the future of Spanish culture within a materialist framework, that is, in terms of access to the means of production. Unfortunately, the widespread tendency to use poetic metaphors in a rather grandiloquent style in order to speak of the Spanish people and of the future they were building for themselves by the act of waging a war against fascism, makes it very difficult to elucidate if that future included not only a greater political role in the popular-democratic revolution, but also a greater one in the production of culture.

Republican intellectuals believed that what they had been "waiting for" was already "close to [them]" (Sánchez Barbudo 1937b, 69), that a "new world" was being born "amidst the horror" (Serrano Plaja 1937a, 75), that the "popular Spain" which was finding its "*vital reserves*" in the war itself and being "listened to for the first time" would "flourish" once the war was over, the "poorest of all turning into a princess" (Sánchez Barbudo 1937a, 51; emphasis added). Who and what was behind the "dark forces" which were threatening the life of "popular Spain" may have been more or less clear, but it was less obvious what kind of a "new order" was supposed to exist once those "forces" had been conquered. Equally unclear were the references made to the "*harmonious plenitude*

which art would be able to express with renovated freshness" after the war (Gil-Abert 1937, 29; emphasis added), or the "Spanish genius" which people "were unleashing as they unleashed themselves" amidst the conflict (Sánchez Barbudo 1937b, 67).

Such poetic metaphors added very little to the discussion of what for many was one of the most urgent cultural problems during the war: how to end with the "hermetic, leaden and stiff concept of culture" ("Fin de semana" 2). From the pages of *Hora de España*, Rosa Chacel was perhaps alone in her clarity when she pointed out that what was really being "settled" in the "revolution" underway, and what was "truly original and decisive" about the war was the "position of the people in relation to culture and of culture in relation to people" (1937, 13). Expressed in those simple and direct terms, far removed from the poetic prose which was otherwise so common, Chacel simply provided the clearest framing of the issue. According to her, "a people who trust[ed] its reserves, who [did] not feel its creative promise [*vena creadora*] already exhausted, [had to] demand, and do it incontinently, to be able to continue its journey toward the impossible" (15). As Antonio Jiménez Millán has pointed out, Chacel believed that the way in which the phenomena of "revolution" and "culture" were already verging in the actions of the Spanish people would greatly contribute to the "transformation of reality" (1982, 347). With similar clarity, José Bergamín (president of the *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas*) announced at the Second International Congress that "to be or not to be popular continue[d] to be the most burning question of Spanish culture" (1937, 32).

The issue of the "position of people in relation to culture" – to use Chacel's terms – was often discussed in the pages of *Nueva Cultura*, perhaps the only journal in which the issue was framed in more or less materialist terms, despite the fact that it was also in

Nueva Cultura as well that the poetic, metaphorical language described above found its most fruitful niche. *Nueva Cultura* was wise in suggesting that whatever kind of culture the future might bring would have to be grounded in "the current situation" and in the "foundations of [Spain's] revolutionary will" ("Notas críticas" 22). According to the editors of the journal, the "new culture" which would be built in Spain after the war would be "realistic", that is, it would be grounded in "*material conditions*", including the "permanent living source" of "working-class culture grounded in work" (ibid; emphases added). As far as *Nueva Cultura* was concerned, although the war might have brought "death" and "catastrophes" it had also made possible the "spontaneous eruption" of the "seeds" for that new culture (Gaos 1937a, 11).

The soft polemic in which *Hora de España* and *Nueva Cultura* engaged about their respective statements of purpose may serve to indicate the latter's desire to encourage and help grow the kind of popular culture which was being produced during the war. If *Hora de España* had been founded as a journal of "literary creation", *Nueva Cultura* wanted to be one of "cultural critique" (Aznar 1985, 13). If *Hora de España* wanted to "reflect" the "hour" Spain was living, *Nueva Cultura* wanted to "influence" it (ibid). If *Hora de España* had been founded "in the service of the popular cause", *Nueva Cultura* was interested in the "dialectical construction, side by side with the people in arms, *of the new national-popular culture of the Spanish revolution*" (ibid; emphasis added). *Hora de España* may have seen the acts of "reflection" and of "influence" as "two [different] moments of the same dialectical process" (Gaos 1937b, 23), but the fact remains that while that journal clearly emphasized the former, *Nueva Cultura* made a clear choice to emphasize the latter.

Nueva Cultura's interest in the culture of the popular-democratic revolution seemed to be a promise that what the war had already done for people, would be maintained under new circumstances. Unlike the kind of cultural practice proposed by *Hora de España*, a popular-democratic culture would not be created despite the war, and, unlike the one sought by *El mono azul*, it would not be solely grounded in urgency and propaganda. In relation to the culture for the revolution under way, *Nueva Cultura* was mostly interested in "lay[ing] the foundations for a new cultural policy" which would not necessarily be "communist", but would certainly be "of the Spanish revolution" (Gaos 1937b, 22). The journal did very little, however, to search for or encourage the creation of that policy, and it seemed to be satisfied with singing the glories of the cultural policies the Ministry of Public Instruction was already implementing, an effort to which the journal paid some attention from its section "Ministerios".[223] The journal even complemented the work of the Ministry by providing the background which would help put government efforts in historical perspective.[224]

One of the reasons as to why these comments on the question of people and culture were "hints" and not a full-fledged discussion was that very often what started as the analysis of future cultural possibilities almost irremediably became a conversation about the past. Antonio Machado had already warned Spanish intellectuals not to believe that "the Spanish essence" would be revealed by exploring the past, and had urged them to think of the Spanish people always as "a future history, an arch stretched forth toward tomorrow" (1983, 87). The consciousness of living a revolutionary change, however, may have been so great that the questions on the nature of the new culture which was going to

[223] See, for instance, "El Ministerio de la cultura" and "La cartilla escolar antifascista".

exist in the future automatically and inevitably shifted toward the kind of change which had already been achieved. As a result, the historical narrative of a popular Spain resuscitating from its ashes and coming back to life dominated the war-time cultural discourse just as it had been the case in the years previous to the war.

Needless to say, no journal dwelled on the past glories of the Spanish people more than *Nueva Cultura* did. Although the Valencian journal had stated its goal to be that of looking for the national-popular culture of the Spanish revolution, its attempts to deal with the role of people in the production of culture most often got lost inside its typical obsession with the past of popular Spain, all of it done in its no less typical grandiloquent and abstract prose. As a result, whatever cultural changes had been accomplished during the war were perceived more as the result of a past trajectory than as a springboard for what could be achieved. *Nueva Cultura* 's vision of the past of Spanish popular culture, in any case, remained as confusing as it had been during the journal's first epoch. The journal still made a clear effort to represent ordinary people as the protagonists of that past, although it was also occasionally forced to admit that this had not been the case (Juan Renau 1937).

A second and perhaps more important reason as to why the question of people and culture failed to be sufficiently explored was that most attempts to address the question of popular participation in the war-time cultural activities irremediably ended up being a discussion about the relationship between people and intellectuals themselves. As a result, the discussion would very often withdraw from a promising materialist analysis of culture and of the ownership of the means of production and would move to sing the glories of

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[224] See Juan Renau's "El instituto obrero".

the much more abstract "communion" which was said to have taken place between intellectuals and people.

Most intellectuals participating in projects as different as *El mono azul* or *Hora de España* shared in the idea and the feeling that the most important single achievement the war had produced at the social and cultural level was the "communion" which was taking place between intellectuals from different social backgrounds and the Spanish people in arms. Rather than debating this question, what the majority of Republican intellectuals did (and there were very few exceptions)[225] was to hail very poetically the fact that such a "communion" had been reached, thus doing away with decades of immobilism on the part of intellectuals and of deep schisms between them and the Spanish people.

El mono azul reminded all that, only a few years earlier, intellectuals had been perceived as being detached from real life, "locked up in a world of problems. . . of relevance to a small minority. . . [and] far from the spiritual needs of the people", a state of affairs which had only served to perpetuate the tremendous social gap between an educated minority and an illiterate mass ("Ante el II Congreso" 1). During the war, however, and in particular, as a result of the work which Republican intellectuals were doing with and for the people, "the solitude of the writer and the solitude of the people [were being] fused in struggling fraternity" (ibid). Some of these intellectuals seemed to believe that their work with the people in the production of everyday cultural activities (even if temporarily serving the purposes of political propaganda) would be much more

[225] Dissident voices on the issue of "communion" were few, but strong. From the pages of *Hora de España*, Rosa Chacel made it clear that to support the Republic at no time meant to misunderstand the social role intellectuals had to play. She argued that a "motorized brigade reciting its heroic deeds in verse" was a "monster" of "anachronism" and that those "young intellectuals" who were part of it were, in

than a temporary war-time strategy; indeed, they seemed to believe that it would have some kind of permanence and the possibility to grow even further once a new political system had been established. Ramón Gaya, writing for *El mono azul*,[226] foresaw a time in which "true thinkers would no longer work for ostentation, for adornment, but in order to serve, in order that their thought may be useful" (1936, 7). For other writers in *El mono azul*, it was "clear" that the culture of the future would be defined by such "communion", although they also emphasized the fact that people had a great deal to teach to intellectuals, including the "victorious language" of political struggle (Bergamín 1936, 3; Varela 1936b, 7). The war itself was hailed as the single event which had managed to create a generalized "sense of collectivity" which had finally driven Spanish intellectuals to abandon their "attempts at a formalist aesthetics" and come to work with the people. *El mono azul* embraced the medieval *romances* as the greatest symbol of that union precisely because they symbolized a time when all classes had also been united in the making of poetry, a "rare occasion" which was being reproduced again as a result of the special circumstances of the war itself ("Los romances de la guerra española" 1).

Nueva Cultura also believed that the key question in order to "save culture" was that of the intellectuals' position "vis-à-vis the popular masses", since Spanish culture would only survive as long as intellectuals "were able" and "willing" to "end the shameless divorce" between themselves and the people which had been the norm in previous decades ("Editorial" March 1937 [1]). The editors of the journal made it clear that *Nueva Cultura*

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fact, "adulterating" their very own art, all of which was nothing but the "mirage" of "pseudoculture" (1937, 19).

[226] This is a clear instance of the case argued earlier by Francisco Caudet, that the division between the collaborators of *El mono azul* and *Hora de España* was not always a clear one. Ramón Gaya collaborated on both journals.

had come back to life with the main goal of "incorporating intellectuals who shared this belief, as active and conscious elements in this great task", walking toward their "encounter" in "human communion" with the people (ibid). It seems, then, that all poetic references to a "new order" and a "new world" which were to come, the "shared dream" which had already taken place, or the "Spanish genius" which was exploding, had been making reference to this.

Even when this "communion" was described as a two-way relationship in which intellectuals could learn from people as much as the people from them, it still implied a division of labor: the people had a political task to fulfill, winning the war, and intellectuals had a cultural one, interpreting the world for them. In the words of Waldo Frank published in *Hora de España*, the "dialectical conjunction" between intellectuals and people meant that the working class would bring about freedom for the whole of humanity, while intellectuals and artists would "articulate the particular struggle of the working class" with the "universal", in order to "reveal the universal in the unconscious of the masses" and "incorporate it to its conscious actions". According to Frank, such had been Marx's original "organic vision", which "*demanded*" the cooperation of artists (1937, 77; emphasis in the original).

Something similar was defended by Serrano Plaja in his speech at the Second Congress, when he argued that the intellectuals who were living those "dramatic moments" had the "right" and the "duty" to "*interpret*, with [their] thoughts and [their] feelings, the thoughts and feelings of that youth who [was fighting] in the trenches". As he put it, the goal of Republican intellectuals should be to use their artistic and literary

creations in order to give back to that youth the very same "human values" they were receiving from it (1937b, 85; emphasis added).

All these shifts from the material to the abstract, from the ownership of the means of production to the communion of souls might have indicated that for Republican intellectuals it was impossible to talk about people and culture without reducing the discussion to their participation in that phenomenon, as if the cooperation between intellectuals and the people were the whole content, rather than just a part, of the new cultural scene. Whether intellectuals believed their role was to "accompany" the people or believed they had to "become one" with them (Gaos 1937b), they saw themselves as interpreters of the people's feelings, and perceived their own "communion" with the people to be the very goal of cultural evolution itself.

The "revolutionary" future which intellectuals foresaw was one in which they would not go back to their ivory towers (though many of those who participated in the debates – Miguel Hernández was perhaps the clearest example – had never been in one), a future in which they would be in touch with the people, producing a work of rich social content. The "communion" between intellectuals and people which was to be saved for and perpetuated into the future was grounded in two facts: one, the belief that the Spanish people were now and would continue to be the protagonists of political life, and had thus assumed a new political agency, which was supposed to continue after winning the war; and two, that intellectuals were to produce work with a greater social content (without necessarily serving a particular political idea). The "communion" between people and intellectuals would thus be the result of the renewed political agency of one group and the growing social consciousness of the other, but the debate may be searched in vain for any

kind of coherent prediction, let alone a full study, of the cultural agency of the people themselves.

This confusion was naive. To assume that the "revolutionary" change which the war was bringing about and for which it was opening new doors was only this "communion", and that, in turn, that would be the basis of the "new culture", was a problem of self-deception. Surprisingly enough, it was argued from the pages of *El mono azul* that the question of "who would control art" after the war, "whether the People or the Artist" was too "simple" a question and also "alien to revolutionary thinking", for it was "clear" that the culture of the future would be defined by such "communion". It was simply assumed that because artists felt "identified with the people", they would become its "representatives" and that the people would also feel the same identification (Varela 1936a, 7; capitalization as in original).

As Serge Salaün has pointed out, this was a great "contradiction", not only because "[d]espite their great respect and admiration for the people (both as fighters and as artistic creators) intellectuals were still claiming for themselves the role of demiurges", but also because their dealings with the people were based, on the one hand, on "human understanding favored by the living conditions, the suffering, and the hopes they shared with them", and, on the other, on "distance", because "talent [could] not be equally shared and because the activities to be carried out in the literary world and those of the political world [could] never be the same" (1974, 188).

The reasons as to why Republican and Communist intellectuals would end up paying more attention to their relationship to the masses, rather than to how those masses

could continue participating in the production of culture, may be a matter of speculation more than academic interpretation, but I think a few suggestions can still be made.

Perhaps the most obvious reason (although also the least common) was that in the case of intellectuals like Rosa Chacel (writing in *Hora de España*), to have people as producers of culture was clearly perceived as an anomaly. Chacel argued that to pretend to have people seeking culture was too much of a "romantic" enactment. According to her, intellectuals could look at the origins of a particular culture with the purpose of studying its evolution or even just to "long" for the "purity" of its origins, all of which might be an aid in their journey of self-renovation (1937, 18). It would be "madness" or simply "unforgivable ignorance", however, to suppose that people could see themselves as protagonists of either one of those two journeys, given the fact that people could neither "study" nor "long for" themselves (19). Chacel found it too unfair that after "corrupt[ing] people with the most dull and swine theatre shows", the intelligentsia would want to "redeem" people "at the last minute" by "exciting" them with "a taste for the exotic" or with the "lower genre of ballad music", all of it "out of an excessive desire for old garments and simple motifs" (21).

Other intellectuals were not as harsh as Chacel herself was, but they were still unable to discuss cultural change without seeing themselves as protagonists and mentors of that change. In previous decades, reformist intellectuals had thought of themselves as "priestly mediators" which would "awaken" and "strengthen" the hero "with the elixir of instruction", as "goldsmiths which would carve and polish a rough stone" (the *pueblo*). As Alvarez Junco has pointed out, the protagonist in that story was never the "redeeming hero", but the "magician-goldsmith intellectual" (1993, 120). In that vein, the wish of the

reformist intellectual to educate people for democracy had always been a self-serving goal: to be able to have worthy followers in a democratic revolution. It could even be argued that revolutionary intellectuals had also had an equally selfish interest in their wish to prepare the working class intellectually for the proletarian revolution.

In this respect, the outbreak of war had brought about a great deal of change indeed. While intellectuals had previously suffered from the "neurosis", as Francisco Villacorta Baños would put it, of finding themselves "marginalized", "uprooted" and "isolated" in society, without a real class behind them (1980, 109), in the midst of war, they found themselves as leaders of a democratic revolution. In that sense, they had become the "organic intellectuals" of the only social "class" which mattered during the war, the people, and, as a result, the leaders of that new historic bloc which the war against fascism had brought about.

A final reason for paying little attention to people as producers of culture was that Republican and Communist intellectuals alike seemed to assume, to a large extent, that much of what they had always wanted had already been accomplished during the war, including the socialization of culture which had been the goal of the Spanish intelligentsia for almost a century. Most intellectuals seemed to assume that whatever kind of leadership role people would have to play in the production of culture in the future, it would simply be in the same terms as it was happening in the present, and thus questioned no further. *El mono azul*, for instance, defended people's "right to sing, to express themselves [and] to communicate", simply assuming "it would also be like that after the triumph" (Varela 1936b, 7), and ignoring the question of how it would be so outside *arte de urgencia*.

This was perhaps most obvious in the trajectory of *Nueva Cultura*. What needs to be understood in order to see *Nueva Cultura* 's raison d'être during the war years is that the kind of cultural activity which was taking place right then responded very closely to the kind of popular culture the journal had envisioned years earlier, with exactly the two ingredients the journal had included in its definition of a "new culture" as early as 1935: one, the participation of the popular classes as the subjects of cultural action; and two, the cooperation between professional intellectuals and ordinary people. That meant that much of what *Nueva Cultura* had hoped and worked for was indeed taking place during the war, and so the conflict was, in a way, a symbol of the journal's cultural dreams come true. Hence, *Nueva Cultura*'s insistence on the fact that the war could not be forgotten, that it could not be simply dropped from the equation, since what was happening right then and there was the "tangible and real practice" of something which had previously been but a dream (Juan Renau 1937, 7). The war had been "necessary" in order for the Spanish people to "retake their historical tradition with the possibility of going beyond it and improving it" (ibid).

Although what had only been a hope had already become a material reality (imperfections and all), the war itself could obviously give little more than a temporary content to such a new cultural structure. Thus the challenge for *Nueva Cultura* was to build further from there. Indeed, when moving away from the present at all, the journal should have looked toward the future, to start setting the ground for that very same kind of popular culture it had always hoped for, looking at how it could survive the conflict, and agit-prop in particular. In this respect, the journal's refusal to give any future leadership role to unions and workers' organizations in the future organization of culture

(afraid, perhaps, of leaving the education of workers again in the hands of socialists and anarchists) meant that the discussion was ultimately moving further and further away from tackling the question of what kind of post-war infrastructure could help people maintain their access to the cultural means of production.[227]

Ultimately, the lack of interest Republican and Communist intellectuals showed in discussing the material conditions of the production of culture was a consequence of the fact that their "revolutionary" ideals had evolved much too quickly toward embracing humanist principles, and thus they felt inclined to focus on the abstract "essence" of the revolution, rather than on its material aspects. Whether the kind of artistic and cultural practice intellectuals spoke about was to be *for the war* or *for the revolution* – to use Serrano Plaja's dichotomy – their discourse was always tainted by the hope that a "new man" [sic] would lead Spain toward progress. In this vein, the already abstract idea that art had to have a "social content" was further reduced to the mere expectation that it would deal with "human issues" (Gaya 1937c, 24).

This humanist discourse, of course, was hardly new in Spain. It was heir to the democratic, liberal discourse of the reformist intelligentsia and, as it has already been discussed, it had begun to permeate the discourse of the Communist Party in late 1935, and more obviously, in early 1936. During the war, this humanism was most obvious in the speeches given at the Second Congress for the Defense of Culture.

Despite the leadership role played by Party intellectuals in the organizing of the Congress (sponsored by the *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas*) and their overwhelming presence as speakers in the event, the "platform" which brought congress

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[227] See Gaos (1937a).

participants together was not what Manuel Aznar has called a "proletarian-revolutionary" literary line which would "displace" bourgeois-democratic literature (Aznar et al. 1987b, 2: 52). Rather, I find that the "platform" on which their anti-fascism was built was a much milder humanist conception of art and literature (indeed, of culture in general) which all Republican intellectuals – including Party members – accepted openly and without discussion. Had the congress adopted a "proletarian-revolutionary" artistic or literary line, it would have diverted too much from what was already the norm in Europe and Spain. Instead, its humanistic vision of the anti-fascist struggle was in complete line with the ideology which had permeated the First Congress in Paris, and with the cultural discourse the Communist Party had already embraced.

If in the "collective speech", Serrano Plaja spoke about the "*fondo*" of revolutionary art, it was because neither its form nor its content would make it truly revolutionary. Serrano Plaja was not looking for the kind of artistic productions which Díaz Fernández or the journal *Gaceta de Arte* had already envisioned in the early 1930s and which would be a combination of avant-garde aesthetics and firm social and political content.[228] Instead, Serrano Plaja was concerned with the "content" and "essence" of revolutionary art, both of which "would have to respond ideologically to the *human content of that revolution*, in the same way, with the same intensity and with the same passion which ha[d] characterized all great spiritual movements" (1937b, 87-88; emphasis added). Thus "revolutionary" art was not simply "for the masses" but for "men [sic]" (95).

Caught between the communist line of Socialist Realism which they accepted as the form of the new revolutionary art so long as it was more than a mere symbol, and a

[228] This is argued by Valeriano Bozal (1986, 251)

humanist cultural discourse inherited from the bourgeois intelligentsia with whom they had allied under the Republican banner, these intellectuals interpreted their search for "human content" to be a new kind of "revolutionary humanism", not very different from the "socialist humanism" which had prevailed after the First Congress in Paris in 1935. This "revolutionary humanism" would seek a "new culture" rooted in "the dignity of man [sic] and the freedom of the people", a "new culture" in a "classless society" where culture would not be the patrimony of the bourgeoisie (Aznar et al. 1987b, 3: 273). These intellectuals spoke about the "freedom" which would be achieved after the end of capitalist culture, and the agent of that political action was a "new man" which would build a "new value system" (Aznar 1996, 154). Such freedom would not be the "treacherous and hypocritical bourgeois freedom", but "real human freedom" (Zambrano 1936, 3).[229]

Serrano Plaja spoke of "goals" and not of "paths", focusing heavily on what the revolution wanted to achieve and little on how it was going to achieve it. He spoke much about "essences" and very little about "means". The signatories to the speech declared to be more interested in the "goal" of winning the war than in agit-prop art as one of the "paths" which would achieve victory. In a similar vein, they were interested in the "goal" of achieving a society grounded in the dignity and freedom of "man", but had already given up on one of the paths which would lead to it: that of class struggle.

Was this "revolutionary humanism" the "communist dogma" which the PCE and Party intellectuals were repeatedly accused of imposing on a large section of the Republican intelligentsia? Communist authorities may have exhorted non-communist intellectuals to sign manifestos or to make political statements, as it has been repeatedly

[229] I use here a translation by Robin Warner (115).

claimed.[230] That, however, does not mean that there was some kind of "Communist-led ideological consensus" created for the "dissemination of the Communist viewpoint" (Warner 1988, 117). I think it was most likely the other way around, that the PCE and Party intelligentsia had come a long way in order to meet the reformist intelligentsia at a point which was half way between a democratic revolution and a proletarian one, on the border line of the popular-democratic revolution which so many had predicted would be a necessary stage, and which now seemed to be the one and only stage.

Indeed there seemed to be hardly any "Communist" point of view to "disseminate" at all, except that point of view held by Communists which also happened to be the point of view of the whole of the Popular Front and of a considerable section of the Spanish intelligentsia. The PCE and its intellectuals could have been accused of using obscure political manoeuvres which were ill-suited in a democratic context. However harsh their tactics may have been – and that is a matter of pure speculation – the content of their discourse should not be misread. The Communist Party and Party intellectuals were following the lead, and the Popular Front and the reformist intelligentsia were leading.

The Second International Congress was hardly an outlet for Communist propaganda. Instead, it was the final destination of that journey of encounter which had begun around October 1934. Once again, it may be appropriate to point out here that many Party intellectuals – especially the youngest ones, like Serrano Plaja or Miguel Hernández – who took part in these debates and in the production of culture during the Civil War were part of the many "conscientious Spaniards" who had arrived at

[230] Robin Warner has argued that there were some attempts to build a "Communist-led ideological consensus" via placing "reliable agents in sensitive positions" for the "dissemination" of the Communist viewpoint (117). See also Bolloten (1991) and Alba (1979).

communism "via the heart", rather than "via Marxist theory" (Aznar 1996, 148). They wanted to be in the Party of the "poor, the peasants and the workers" (ibid). For them, communism was an "ethical affirmation", a "path toward personal and collective dignity", the "hope in a society where it would be possible to simply have. . . a future of bread. . . and justice. . . ", a political platform of "a morale of simplicity and manliness", a "morale which defended man [and] and his [sic] dignity. . . justice, fraternity, internationalism and solidarity" (ibid).[231]

As a result, many of those intellectuals had already arrived at communism with a humanist approach, and later were further influenced by the humanist tradition in Spanish culture. Thus their "revolutionary humanism" ended up being both new and old, insofar as it embraced many other humanist visions, in the process redefining all of them. In line with the "humanist socialism" of the reformist bourgeoisie – best represented by Fernando de los Ríos – it was a humanism whose "driving force" was an "ideal", a "utopia of justice, of human plenitude and freedom" (Elías Díaz 1981, 394). In line with Antonio Machado's humanism, it aimed at denying the existence of the "masses" and believed in a "*pueblo*" made up of worthy and unique individuals. In line with that of Miguel Hernández, it was committed to the well-being of workers and peasants.[232]

It has been argued that although the urgency felt during the war "gave a certain impetus to the role of culture. . . it was precisely that sense of urgency, together with the fact that the conflict was three years long, which made it impossible to bring about any cultural change" (Bozal 1976, xiii). I think, however, that the deepest irony of the war

[231] For a discussion of this idea as it applies to Miguel Hernández, see Aznar (1996).
[232] For further reading on Hernández's humanist vision, see the contributions in Salaün and Pérez Bazo (1996).

was quite the opposite. By allowing people to be involved in the production of culture, the war brought about, indeed, a great deal of cultural change. Yet the war itself constrained those cultural productions immensely by giving them a temporary nature which eventually became necessary to surpass. It then became very difficult to think of overcoming that nature without leaving behind the very concept of the participation of people in culture. In the process, the talk of revolutionary art became too nebulous in a country which dreamed of a multitude of revolutions, but was losing a war.

Perhaps one can only conclude with the very same words published in *Hora de España* in January 1938, still fifteen long months away from the military defeat of the Republic, and yet a time in which Republican Spain was so clearly preparing for the end. When both military and intellectual resistance had begun to wither, the editors of the journal unveiled their deepest wish: the "simple will to continue". "Nothing else", they said, "Spain needs nothing else, either from us or from herself, only to continue, to move forward, whatever happens, through all the bitterness, all the pain, and all the glory" ("Un año" 6).

Indeed Spain could hardly ask for anything more from those who had given it everything. In April 1939, exactly eight years after the Proclamation of the Republic, and almost three years after the military *coup d'état*, Madrid could not resist any more and its fall brought about the end of the war. By then, Spain was a devastated country in which the courage of its most brilliant minds, as much as that of its ordinary people, had been simply exhausted. As writers, poets, painters, musicians, teachers, farmers, leaders of the workers' movement, workers and peasants spread all over the world, were killed or imprisoned, all dreams of a popular culture vanished with them.

A Long Journey at the Crossroads

> May the day never come
> when your enslaved children should ask you
> why you lost the war.
>
> María Teresa León[233]

In his 1998 autobiography, *El niño republicano*, Spanish writer Eduardo Haro Teclgen sums up with very simple words what he sees as the greatest tragedy in Spanish social, political and cultural life throughout the twentieth century. "In Spain", he writes, "it has always been very difficult to embrace modernity; whenever we did, there was already another one" (79). Three decades earlier, historian Tuñón de Lara had already put it in similar terms, when he suggested that Spain's political and social evolution during this century may be explained as a succession of "new themes and problems" emerging before old ones had either disappeared or been resolved. The result was that all of those problems ended up, quite literally, "stumbling" against one another. Thus Spain has been a society always trying to open up toward the future, but ultimately unable to get rid of outdated structures which managed to survive within. According to Tuñón de Lara, that has been the cause of the country's ongoing and often insurmountable, fractures [*desgarraduras*] (1966, 15).

To some extent, this metaphor of old and new structures "stumbling" against one another is most appropriate as well to illustrate the cultural evolution of the country from 1920 until 1939, and in particular the role which communist cultural politics played within

[233] "No llegue un día en que vuestros hijos esclavizados os pregunten: ¿Por qué no ganastéis la guerra?" (1938, 5).

that evolution. Clearly, the history of cultural politics in Spain during this century is one in which a number of strategies "stumbled" against one another quite fiercely, and also in most remarkable ways. When communism first appeared in Spain around 1920, its alternative cultural critique literally "stumbled" upon the reformist critique of the feudal status quo, and there began the not-so-peaceful co-existence of two conflicting cultural strategies which set out to fight a common enemy as much as each other. Sixteen years later, those strategies had already crossed paths and they had become a single one, when a compromise was found between the democratic revolution which the country was no less than two centuries late in pursuing and the popular revolution which the Spanish people certainly deserved, after having suffered the predicaments of history for so long.

From Joaquín Costa's dictum that Spain had to lock herself up in the school as in a new "maternal womb" and not leave until it had managed to secure a "new head" (1914, 101) to the war-time calls by PCE communists urging citizens and soldiers to build the Spain "of the future. . . through work and study" ("Odiemos al Fascismo" 1) only thirty-six years had passed. The journey from the reformist hope that a "new education" would "transform and purify the individual, the society and the people" (Costa 1981, 24) to the Popular Front cultural effort designed for the "moral improvement of the race" (Comisariado General de Guerra, 1938), was one in which Spanish history came full circle. By the end of that journey, however, the elitist democratic revolution of the *Krausistas* and the *Institucionistas* had given way to a popular-democratic revolution which was to be not only led *by* the people, but also *for* the people – the changes in prepositions here being most dramatic and relevant.[234] By 1936-38, that revolution was

[234] See p. 50.

going to be accomplished by the use of force only insofar as a defensive war had to be waged. For the most part, however, it was a revolution to be achieved – just as it had been predicted all along – via the education of the people for democracy.

The "socialization of culture" or "popularizing [*divulgación*] of knowledge" which had been the goal of the reformist bourgeoisie was finally going to be accomplished. It would not take place, however, through the peaceful arrival of middle-class children in a kindergarten, as the *Krausistas* and *Institucionistas* had once envisioned, nor by sending the bourgeois elites to the university, as the philosophers of 1914 had hoped for. Instead, it would finally be achieved much less peacefully and in the most unceremonious of styles anyone could have ever imagined, with the roughness and the abruptness of the masses of the dispossesed exploding into the schools, the universities and the libraries.

Once this full historical circle is understood and the role which the Communist Party of Spain played in it is also clarified, it may be possible to understand the arguments made by scholars like Serge Salaün and Manuel Tuñón de Lara about the Ministry of Public Instruction during the war, arguments which are at the root of the paradoxes I outlined in the introduction to this work. According to Salaün, war-time Republican authorities believed that people could find "plenitude" and "happiness" in a new society which would allow them to develop their potential, both individually as well as collectively, a belief which followed in the tradition of the Spanish progressive intellectual doctrines of the nineteenth century (1985, 270).

In a similar vein, Tuñón de Lara argued that the activity of the war-time Ministry was but a continuation of the Republican cultural project of 1931, simply "under new circumstances" (1990b, 335). According to Tuñón de Lara, the multiple visions of culture

which co-existed within the Popular Front may have had different origins, but none of them "contradict[ed] the Republican project" (ibid), for they all shared an "immanent conception of man [sic]" which linked them back to the ideas of the Enlightenment (336).

What these cultural historians have left unexplored in their statements is what I hope to have clarified in this dissertation: first, how the Communist Party (which neither Salaün nor Tuñón de Lara mentioned) was able not just to share in, but actually become the leader, of a cultural strategy so reminiscent of nineteenth-century bourgeois ideology; and second, to explore what kind of a journey the Party had to undertake in order to get there, what kind of tactical and strategical changes were needed in between. This was a journey less than straight-forward, since at some point, as we have seen, it also crossed over and merged with that of the bourgeois intelligentsia which was coming from a different direction. On occasion, it was also quite convoluted, given the trials and tribulations which the Communist Party had to experience for most of its life. It did, however, bring about a sense of closure, not only because the paths of reformism and revolution had merged into a single path, but because social reform had become the content of the revolution itself, and a democratic revolution of strong popular overtones was finally starting to move the country forward.

As much as this was the journey of a political Party struggling to find its place in the cultural revolution which Spain needed to undertake, it was also the journey of Spanish communism as a whole and of an entire generation of revolutionary intellectuals behind it. Unfortunately, the journey was not just one, but two, and as a result, these intellectuals were ultimately unable to provide a single revolutionary cultural alternative for Spain.

The first of those journeys was the one undertaken by people like Juan Andrade, Angel Pumarega, Joaquín Maurín or Andrés Nín as early as 1920, with the foundation of the *Partido Comunista Español* and the later conversion of a number of anarchist-syndicalists to communism. From their eager response to Lenin's call to abandon socialist (or anarchist) parties in 1920 to their odious relationship with Stalin's Comintern in the mid- and late 1930s, those who began as the Spanish chapter of the Third International and later moved to be in the "opposition" to it, had always understood the need for tactical alliances with the reformist bourgeoisie in order to fight against the Monarchy or against fascism. Unlike orthodox communists, however, the communist opposition always remained faithful to the proletarian revolution as an overall strategy. Throughout those sixteen years the communist opposition conceived of political alliances with the bourgeoisie as tactical manoeuvres designed to fight a common enemy, and hardly as the sharing of political programs which were otherwise clearly incompatible.

Similarly, the cultural journey which these intellectuals followed from the early 1920s to the late 1930s may be searched in vain for lack of coherence. The goals of the *Unión Cultural Proletaria* – to provide the proletariat with a political education in order to drive it away from reformism – found continuity in the kind of "intellectual change" which *Postguerra* and *El estudiante* set out to bring about both on and off campus, and, in later years, via the "intellectual revolution" the several communist groups in opposition to the PCE wanted to lead. All of these hopes were kept alive and almost intact right through the years of war.

These communists, however, failed to seek a political (and military) alliance with the reformist bourgeoisie at a time when it was perhaps most badly needed. Indeed the

communist opposition may be accused of showing little political wisdom in its refusal to adapt to a powerful reality: that the working class on its own would be unable to fight the war against fascism, let alone against both fascism and bourgeois reformism, all while pursuing a proletarian revolution for which the country just never seemed to be completely ready. Interestingly, the goals of the *Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista* during the years of war were not very different from those of the original *Partido Comunista Español* in 1920 (fascism was just called feudalism then). In 1936, however, the "civil war" which young communists had called for, following Lenin's lead, was indeed taking place, though it no longer had revolutionary overtones. The fact that sixteen years later, these communists had the same goals means that ultimately the UCP, *Postguerra*, *El estudiante*, the *Escuela Marxista* and all similar projects coming from the communist opposition had simply failed to bring about any meaningful change. That, however, was not so much the result of their own flaws, but of the political circumstances: namely, the fact that after sixteen years the democratic revolution had not been completed and that the PCE had embraced "reformism" in the same way the "young kids" always suspected the newly-founded PCE in 1921 had. Once the Communist Party of Spain had abandoned the dream of the proletarian cultural revolution and had replaced it for a popular-democratic one, it was in the discourse and practice of the communist opposition that the proletarian cultural revolution lived on, even if in the overall social and cultural scene there was no longer a place for it.

The other journey taking place within Spanish communism was that of the second group of revolutionary intellectuals who were to join the Party after 1930, just when the earlier members were leaving it. In a way, these intellectuals had a shorter journey than it

would at first appear. At the turn of the decade both the Party and its intellectuals defended a strong proletarian line, as exemplified by the journal *Nuestro Cinema*. From that line to the political and cultural tensions a journal like *Octubre* was experiencing in 1933, to the open popular-democratic discourse of *Nueva Cultura* in early 1935, the journey from a proletarian to a democratic line had indeed taken place at a extraordinary pace. It could all be explained by the pressures exerted on them by the rise of fascism, but it was also, to some extent, the result of their greater disposition to be influenced by a democratic, humanist discourse.

I do not want to suggest that the journey of this second group of intellectuals was less coherent than that of their fellow communist intellectuals in the opposition, because very often to be "coherent" was simply a matter of being able to adapt to changing circumstances. Yet there was something utterly hypocritical in the PCE's cultural discourse after the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, something about its content that hardly rang true. The ability to change strategies at the right time and for the right reasons may indeed be a sign of great political wisdom, and, certainly, both the PCE and the Comintern had spent their entire lives trying to do just that. Yet the radical (though gradual) change in the Party's political and cultural line, although perhaps a necessary move, also seemed to be quite a false one. Indeed the Party replaced a low-key, unsophisticated, often contradictory cultural discourse with a much more sophisticated, pretentious, high-pitched and grandiloquent one, in the process undergoing a transformation which was hardly plausible. This lack of plausibility was not so much the result of having cultural activities serve a political goal, but of putting forward a discourse and organizing a practice as mere useful add-ons for a political strategy which the Party

was forced to adopt. Ultimately, what this means is simply that the change in the Party's cultural discourse and practice happened as quickly and was as inconsistent as the change in its political line was, regardless of how "wise" the move may have been.

What the war itself and the participation of the Communist Party in the Ministry of Public Instruction came to prove is that the reformist bourgeoisie had always been right in one thing: if the Spanish people were to become rightful protagonists of a democratic revolution, they would have to be educated for it. At the outbreak of war in 1936, the Spanish people as a whole were still practically illiterate, and no revolution was going to take place until they received some kind of education. More importantly, no war was going to be won until they were taken out of the miserable ignominy in which they had been living for centuries. As a result, the democratic revolution could not be embraced as a mere tactical alliance with the bourgeoisie, because if that revolution was going to take place at all, people needed to receive the adequate preparation in all spheres of life, political, social, civic and cultural.

After all, culture knows no difference between tactics and strategy. Culture only knows the difference between policy and practice. Cultural change is not something that may be pursued temporarily, and cultural practice is not something which can be later undone, once it is no longer needed. Even if the Party had set out to embrace the democratic revolution only as a tactic, the kind of cultural change such a revolution demanded as a prerequisite had to be pursued as a full goal, with implications of its own.

A military alliance with the bourgeoisie thus excluded the possibility of a proletarian intellectual revolution, while the pursuit of a proletarian intellectual revolution seemed to exclude the possibility of winning the war. A national-popular struggle in the

terms Gramsci had envisioned or the kind of socialist populism described by Laclau were not to be in Spain, and the country would witness, almost two hundred years late, a democratic revolution of strong Jacobin overtones.

In the midst of those political and cultural processes, the best-prepared revolutionary intellectuals from the communist opposition were chastised (sometimes even assassinated),[235] and were thus ultimately unable to have an impact on the cultural scene as a whole; the Party's most brilliant minds and courageous activists were co-opted into the pursuit of a humanist cultural cause; and a Party which had always struggled with cultural issues ended up not only leading a Ministry of Public Instruction, but also the greatest cultural revolution in Spanish history. These are but a few of the many ironies created by this convoluted history.

Ultimately, the only true sense of closure which was achieved in 1939 was brought about neither by a political decision nor by a cultural action, but by sheer military might. The military victory of the Nationalist side meant that none of the revolutions which had been envisioned during the previous decades would ever take place. As the country set on another long journey, some kind of social and political peace would be artificially, but efficiently, achieved by the powerful presence of a military dictatorship. To some extent, this "peace" would be sustained by the emergence of a strong middle class, the protagonist which had always been missing in Spanish history, and the one who would finally lead the country toward modernity through no revolution at all.

In April 1939, a journey into much more darkness was still ahead, for the country did somehow manage to get rid of feudalism, but it would be a few more decades before it

[235] Andrés Nín was assassinated while in jail.

could erase permanently the shadow of fascism or of its aftermath. The "stumbling" of old and new schemes was to continue for quite some time. The presence of a military dictatorship in power, which eventually aimed at perpetuating itself via the return of the Bourbon Monarchy, did away forever with the talk of revolution, and the struggle both inside and outside Spain was no longer dominated by the dichotomies of the earlier part of the century: revolution vs. counter-revolution, proletariat vs. bourgeoisie or Monarchy vs. Republic. They had all been reduced to a single one: dictatorship vs. democracy. The cultural goals of Spanish communism changed accordingly, but much of the aspirations of the democratic revolution which truly "never was" were embraced once more in order to fight against the new status quo. That, however, is part of the long journey which began, and not of the one which ended.

These may or may not be the words expected of a scholar, but, as regrettable as it may be, I think it is true that regardless of what the cultural or intellectual goals of an entire generation of bourgeois or revolutionary intellectuals may have been, it was military might which ultimately decided Spain's fate. The uprising which had shaken the country on the evening of 17 July 1936 had been the third major *coup d'état* which the Republic had to endure in just over five years. Liberal leader Salvador de Madariaga put it quite plainly a number of years later: the Spanish Republic finally succumbed to all those "violent shocks" (1974, 390). Everything else, unfortunately, was mere "rhetoric" (ibid).

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