

THE SHADOW OF A DOUBT:  
FASCIST AND COMMUNIST ALTERNATIVES  
IN CATALAN SEPARATISM,  
1919-1939

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WP núm. 198  
Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials

Barcelona, 2002

The Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials (ICPS) was created by the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and the Diputació de Barcelona in 1988. The ICPS is attached to the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

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Design: Toni Viaplana

Printer: A.bis

c/ Leiva, 3, baixos. 08014 Barcelona

ISSN: 1133-8962

LD: B-8.996-2002

The literature on Barcelona-based separatism that came out of the 1930s, seemed to agree that the visible demonstration of Catalan radical nationalist strength in the early 1930s was akin to "fascism". Specifically in 1933, a huge debate exploded within Catalan politics with regards to the "fascist tendencies" of a part of the separatist movement and the label stuck, fanned especially by anarchosindicalist propaganda<sup>1</sup>. This opinion came to be shared, just to cite a few English-oriented sources, resonant with their influence on later historians, by E. Allison Peers (who saw the Catalan imitation of the military-type organization of fascism), Gerald Brenan (who bluntly perceived "Catalan Fascism"), and Salvador de Madariaga (who spoke of "a colored-shirt corps which it was difficult to distinguish from a Fascist organization")<sup>2</sup>. Curiously enough, Franco régime partisans could share similar indignation at such a development: the "falangista" Maximiano García Venero referred to a "xenophobe fascism, naturally paramilitary and bourgeois"<sup>3</sup>. A youthful Dalí, quite the adolescent radical nationalist (he was tried for burning a Spanish flag), later remembered the October 1934 uprising in Barcelona as a revolutionary chaos dominated by a "shirt movement"<sup>4</sup>. Outside historiography has tended to follow this broad spread of sources, while Catalan researchers, afraid of such a delicate topic, have avoided the controversy<sup>5</sup>. Why the damning affirmation, shared by such a broad spectrum of critics and enemies? Interestingly enough, however, given the overall right-wing bias of the sources cited, there was no equivalent insistence on the importance of a specifically Catalan communism, which, as an ideological current, was in fact much more pervasive in radical nationalist politics at the time. Admittedly, the neologism "*rojoseparatista*" was extensively used by Francoist propaganda, but the implication was that the revolution of 1936 had produced a fusion, hitherto trivial, of negative impulses, an opinion even foreign observers seemed to share. Why the disproportionate interest on the alleged "fascist" trend in Catalan separatism?

### **Demonizing Militancy *versus* Exculpatory Activism**

There has been remarkably little exploration of the suppositions with which, since the end of World War II, political historiography has judged the validity of ideological options. Even the collapse of the Soviet Union has evoked more cautious moderation in concepts, within a diffuse continuity, than any significant revision of value judgments that often date back to the 1930s. A movement like Catalan separatism, well within the overall trend of Western European interwar politics, but which stood in marked contraposition to what might be termed "the standard examples", accordingly might serve as an indicator towards some rethinking, without however having to bear the cost of challenging the omnipresent ideological symbolisms that still weigh down international political categorizations. This suggestion, in any case, would be the ultimate ambition of the present article. The axiomatic premise would be that the demonization of the radical right and, in compensation, an exculpatory attitude towards the extreme left are very much a product of the interwar European scene, but that the contradictions that accompany this process are best observed in a lateral place like Barcelona that nonetheless remained politically trendy.

It is almost a cliché to stress how, after 1918, the techniques of trench warfare were promptly applied to civil strife. Both bolchevism and fascism were born together in the Great War, ideological

twins -insofar, as regards dates and hatreds- whose existence was simultaneously justified by the struggle of one against the other<sup>6</sup>. What differentiated them? Simply, how they wished to be seen.

Despite the numerous colonial antecedents in previous decades, *Schrecklichkeit*, literally "terribleness" or the capacity to carry out fearful deeds, only became a conscious objective of contemporary military science with the Germans in World War I. German Army tradition did not -perhaps even could not- contemplate the implications of irregular warfare, and acted accordingly in occupied territories on the western Front<sup>7</sup>. As a direct consequence, Allied propaganda had a natural vein to exploit, and turned what the Germans conceived as didactic harshness into an exceptional savagery, understood as perversely immoral insofar as it was carried out by the most advanced society on the continent. The debate was focused on the limits of military and, by extension, political behavior and arose from the crossed accusations surrounding German atrocities in Belgium and France in the first months of the Great War: while the Germans considered that civilian populations had duties of obedience to the occupation authorities, the Belgian and French (and eventually Allied) position, on the contrary, held that civilians had no fixed duties to observe, while occupying forces were subject to a moral obligation to uphold exceptionally good comportment with persons and properties (especially with materials of historical value, deemed irreplaceable) under their control. Formulated in these terms, the discussion was posed between a "realist" viewpoint, which argued that the supposed realities of power invoked automatically the need to submit to superior force or suffer the logical consequences, and the "humanitarian" perspective, which insisted that moral laws, commonly recognized, ruled the relation between belligerents, above any practical objective. Both sides argued that the other acted with bad faith. Mutual recriminations generated a vast literature and defined attitudes on the conflict in both belligerent and neutral countries, very particularly in Spain, where direct traces of this debate determined the initial moral positions of the contenders in the Civil War twenty years later<sup>8</sup>.

The turbulence of politico-social life in postwar Europe, which shifted in countries like Russia, Hungary or Germany (and territories like Ireland or Finland) from world struggle to internal strife with scarcely a visible transition, was quite naturally defined by the positive-negative conceptualizations of the earlier war years. The non-bolshevik left assumed humanitarian discourse as its flag: just as touted in the most idealistic slogans of the Allied cause, the recognition of citizen's rights was synonymous with Democracy. In direct opposition, the new "revolutionary" right, which boasted of having been born in the mud of the trenches, took up, for the first street battles, the inheritance of *Schrecklichkeit*: it has been remarked how in the turmoil of 1919-1922, the "death's-head" was the unofficial common emblem of proud "streetfighting men" from the Baltic to the Adriatic<sup>9</sup>. For their part, the bolsheviks took an equidistant position from such "petty bourgeois" delusions: they gloried in being on a war footing (class war) with its resulting disposition to utilize any means at its disposal, while, at the same time, when convenient, they made a show of humanitarian goals, if always in an abstract and doctrinal way. In its beginnings and almost halfway through the 1920s, bolshevism was a very contradictory amalgamation of leftist components, but eventually, thanks to the ideological rivalry with what it called "fascism", the "contradictions" were ironed out.

In other words, in the ongoing process of codification of ideological discourses which dominated the early 1920s, and until mutually discernible ideological roles stabilized in the latter half of the decade,

only those who became "fascists" voluntarily assumed their *demonization*, that is, the arrogant assumption of a negative characterization with which their enemies categorized them, asserting themselves, by way of reply, as aggressive antihumanitarians who were proud of the fact. Strict socialists, together with social-liberal mixtures, both untempted by Bolshevik successes, took on the democratic flag of civil liberties. Bolsheviks preferred to argue that the end justified the means, so that they could enjoy the blessings of forming part of the world of civilized values, when such was useful, and do whatever they saw fit politically when they could act without discretion. Allegedly free of hypocrisies, the "fascist" response, marking its distance from tremulous conservatives, appropriated externally imposed demonization as a sign of political identity, without any expression of guilt.

This "demonization effect" impacted on counterrevolutionary efforts in postwar years in many places: for example, Ireland in 1919-1921, where the "Black and Tans" and the "Auxiliaries", official anti-republican shock units enjoyed an *esprit de corps* derived from being "worse" than their terrorist opponents, an easy attitude in forces dedicated to the eradication of a "guerrilla" enemy protected by a social context<sup>10</sup>. But the significant factor was the *privatization* of willfully assumed demonization, or, more concretely, the manner in which such sentiments could be exercised by a political organization ultimately devoted to recruitment, as opposed to a threatening public force attempting to alienate support for a political enemy. In Germany, such demonization offered a straight continuity from wartime experience, being flaunted two scant months after withdrawal from the Western front (and not even that brief time in the East). The "assault sections" of the German "Free Corps", which so actively fought against the "reds" in Finland or the Baltic as much as in their now republican Fatherland, had no problems of transition, since they felt they had undergone a fluid evolution from the prewar ideological exaggerations of pangermanism, to the stance of "total war" during the European conflict, and, from there, to a struggle without quarter against the bolshevik "*Weltfiend*", by definition a repugnant outsider wherever he might be found<sup>11</sup>. But, in Italy, the move to demonization was taken from traditional left stances, socialist and syndicalist, following Mussolini, in the wake of a right-wing nationalist poet like D'Annunzio, and accordingly represented a genuine psychological break. Not surprisingly, the slogan of the early bullyboy fascism of the "*squadristi*" was quite explicit: "*Me ne frego!*". It was self-affirmation of the roughest sort, inverting the rejection of the left, with all its pretensions to moral superiority, and telling the leftists, with all the harsh reality of a cudgel, where they could stuff their norms and their much vaunted humanitarianism.

With his striking capacity to catch questions floating in the *Zeitgeist*, and give them a successful spin, Spanish essayist José Ortega y Gasset remarked, in February 1925:

On the other hand, fascism is illegitimate, one could say illegitimist, in a privative sense, truly strange and almost paradoxical. All revolutionary movements take power illegitimately; but what is curious about fascism is that not only does it seize power illegitimately, but that, once established, it also exercises power with illegitimacy. This differentiates it radically from all other revolutionary movements. [...] Fascism and its clones [sus similares] administer, with a sharp eye [certeramente], a negative force, a force which is not theirs -the weakness of the rest [of political forces]. For this reason, they are transitory movements, which does not mean that they will last only a short time<sup>12</sup>.

In a similar vein, over a decade later, towards the end of the Spanish Civil War, the Catalan conservative regionalist leader Francesc Cambó speculated in his diary on the progressive, even slow, impact that demonization had on the perception of fascism outside Italy:

As long as fascism was an Italian phenomenon, without pretension to becoming an export article, Fascist Italy only had friends throughout the world. As soon as it wanted to turn itself into an exportable product, Antifascism has sprung up everywhere. All the adventurers in the world have proclaimed themselves fascists; Mussolini has had idolaters and followers everywhere...[sic] but also everywhere enemies have arisen against him.

Before, except for the poor Italian *fuorusciti*, no-one hated fascism. The hatred of the socialists was more token than felt. Today [January 1938], it's just the opposite<sup>13</sup>.

Possibly the difference was one of tone. The emotional appeal of fascism lay precisely in its willful imposition of statist, soldierly values (obedience, duty, hierarchy) on the disorder of social interaction. The State would swallow civil society whole, and discipline its unruliness. The justification was that, simply put, market relations, and the associative life that expressed them, would never assume the dirty work of developing the outermost, most backward corners of society. In fact, the legitimation of the Soviet régime was not far different, leaving aside idiosyncracies of ideology and belief. But in fascism, for all its promise of future growth, the accent was, present-minded, undoubtedly on the imposition itself, on the taste for discipline. Communism, although it never hid its ruthlessness in this respect and, thus, its utter disgust at any associative life outside Party and State, preferred wisely to emphasize the benefits to be derived, rather than the taste for discipline as such. As a result of such varied emphasis, the ideal of the Soviet "new man", always seemed metaphorical, even when most literal<sup>14</sup>. Conversely, the "new man" similarly idealized by the fascist movements, always loomed like a sinister version of Karel Capek's contemporary image of a "robot", soulless and frighteningly literal, even as a metaphor<sup>15</sup>.

### **Nationalism based on Civil Society or on the State?**

How did all this apply in Catalonia? Certainly, from a nationalist standpoint, it was a "frustrated society", to the extent that it was marked by the structural defeat of non-Statehood and by the incapacity to realize its special "imagined community"<sup>16</sup>. Spain remained outside the international conflict of 1914-1918, virtually the only territory on the entire coastline of the Mediterranean and Black Seas to stay both neutral and (torpedoed vessels aside) free of the costs of war or the presence of armies. At the same time, however, Spain was involved in its own war in North Africa, which went from relative "low intensity" to a fullblown national crisis after a defeat by Abd el-Krim's Riffian forces in 1921. Not surprisingly, the more extreme Spanish and Catalan nationalists sought solutions by idealizing different struggles. Catalan radical nationalism forged its image in the mirror of Italian interventionism in the European conflict, so similar in its pretense of successfully mixing nationalism and socialism, but also took heart and critical distance from the example of militant Irish independentism, contrary to the Allied cause. Spanish radical nationalism looked to another "intervention", in Morocco, but eyed with very mixed feelings the alternative European belligerents. Put in other terms, the redesign of the European State-system was understood as attractive from a Catalan nationalist standpoint, for the effects such change might have on Spain, while, on the contrary, Spanish nationalists regarded favorably precisely anything that might reinforce "national unity" and State power.

Undoubtedly, in the interwar years, statism -the fullblown idealization of the State- was a dominant ideal. Seen as innovative, born of war planning and apparently confirmed by the "crash" of the early 1930s, the interventionist State, capable of marshalling resources on a vast and previously

unimaginable scale, seemed a panacea to fascists, communists, "New Deal" liberals and virtually all the ideologies which, at the time, claimed to incarnate youth and represent the future. Nevertheless, the Catalan nationalist tradition had been founded on the guiding principle of the superiority of civil society to the State, a natural perspective for a movement without any historical experience in statist terms, but with confidence in its inherent superiority, endowed with practical "know-how", as the leading industrial area (centered on a quickly growing metropolis, Barcelona, which was outstripping Madrid in size) of a predominantly backward, agrarian country<sup>17</sup>.

In direct consequence, the conservative Lliga Regionalista, which dominated the "catalanist" cause for the first thirty years of the century, never stopped insisting that the route from identity to the reform of the State was forever inseparable from an outstanding respect for civil society<sup>18</sup>. The repetition surrounding the existence of a powerful "Catalan bourgeoisie" is best understood in this light, less a class in the marxist sense than an exaltation of a winning social software. The "founding father" of modern Catalan nationalist doctrine, Enric Prat de la Riba, defined Catalonia as possessing a "differential fact", a clear personality expressed in a distinct civil society adjusted to the values and habits of industrialization, and therefore a "nation" endowed with full national rights, in the face of backward Spain. But he offered the idea of "empire" as a compromise to Spanish centralists, a solution which could be like the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy or Dominion status within the British system. The clever philosopher Eugeni D'Ors, who gave the Lliga its peculiar ideological shine with "noucentisme", took Prat's ideas further, and posed Catalonia as the incarnation of "mediterranisme", the historical mix of order, serenity and spiritual innovation, neo-classical values that allegedly characterized Mediterranean Europe and the Latin tradition<sup>19</sup>. D'Ors has been considered the importer of "French fascism" -i.e. Maurras and "philosophical nationalism"- into Spanish intellectual life by way of Catalonia, but, in fact, what counted was the wrapping<sup>20</sup>. In a Spanish context, with a working monarchical government, Maurras' ideas, which he accepted being defined as "*Un César avec des fueros*", boiled down to little more than was already being offered by historic Carlist royalism<sup>21</sup>. Even Cambó, often rather unfairly claimed as a philofascist for his political essays in the 1920s, was in fact a rather doctrinaire liberal, undoubtedly conservative, willing to be openminded about possible instrumental aspects of a fascist experience he badly underestimated, but never willing to go beyond American-style "presidentialism" in his call for greater executive power<sup>22</sup>. All these formulations might be considered conservative, even reactionary, but they did not favor the expansion of State power. On the contrary, they insisted on the importance of civil society as the defining component in any political balance. This ambiguity regarding the Spanish State was the hallmark of Catalan regionalism. Catalan republicans shared similar feelings, which, in their case, would be expressed as abstruse federalist doctrine.

In contrast, Catalan separatism was a singularly unthoughtful movement, without intellectuals or significant ideological elaborations; the speculations of "avantguardista" intellectuals, like Salvat-Papasseit, Foix or Carbonell, however prone to independentism these might have been, remained for the most part in a different category from the political working of organized radical nationalism<sup>23</sup>. Prat de la Riba's basic ideas on Catalonia, shorn of any ambitions external to Catalonia proper (even to the point of avoiding "Pancatalanist" formulations regarding other Catalan-speaking territories in Spain, France or Italy), were grafted onto an explicitly anti-imperialist discourse, elaborated by a psychologist, Dr. Domènec Martí i Julià, an early example of the overrepresentation of physicians in radical nationalism,

who established little more than some simple ideas about how small nations -as opposed to big empires- were inherently pacific and happily kept to themselves<sup>24</sup>. But the principal contribution of Catalan separatism to the overall ideological formulation of Catalan nationalism was the codification of a symbology of absolutes, based on the premise of "all or nothing". The fact was that Separatist doctrine was trapped between its roots in the idealization of civil society and its call for full self-determination, which would mean forcibly an independent Catalan State. By elaborating a package of rituals and images around the ideal of independence, separatism could resolve its dilemma between the affirmation of Statehood and its contraposition in the affirmation of society and social norms. Because of its emphasis on purist symbolism, separatism, regardless of its real political weight at any given time, became the formal opposite to the most exalted Spanish nationalism, at least in Barcelona and the Catalan areas that might gravitate towards the city. In fact, together radical Catalan and Spanish nationalisms defined the parameters of a specifically Barcelona-based political sub-system. Even if separatists consistently demonstrated their incapacity to articulate an electoral option, their representational function guaranteed the equilibrium of electoral politics in Catalonia, and especially the good health of those parties with which they shared at least some values<sup>25</sup>. Similarly, separatist defense of Catalan civil society could go as far as considering the "libertarian movement" (i.e. anarchists and anarchosindicalists) as a full member of the same, to the extent that it was precisely a defender of individualism and free associations. The relevance of separatism, therefore, should be sought outside of strict politics, and perceived through political anthropology.

The first organizational signs of ideological separatism appeared in the 1890s, in some of the youth associations within the *Unió Catalanista*, an umbrella-organization for the diverse early strands of nationalism, and a welter of groups and contradictory opinions<sup>26</sup>. The *Unió* youth showed the natural bias of Catalan society towards "grass roots" politics: small entities, which spontaneously reflected the dominant pattern of male sociability, with between one or two dozen affiliates, capable of putting out a succession of short-lived periodicals<sup>27</sup>. An almost trivial incident -the first activist celebration of the nationalist holiday, the "11th of September", in 1901- was the formal starting point of Catalan separatism and in itself made apparent various components that, from then on, would characterize the movement. Approximately thirty young male service workers in Barcelona tried to leave a wreath at the monument to Rafael de Casanova (hero of the doomed Catalan resistance to Bourbon arms in 1714), and were chased by the police, with numerous arrests and the establishment of a commemorative grouping, called *La Reixa* in memory of the prison bars shut behind those who suffered for the cause<sup>28</sup>.

As the 1901 incident showed, Catalan separatism defined itself as predominately young and masculine. With time, given its relationship with the growth of mass sports in Catalonia (hiking as a participatory form, soccer and basketball as spectacle), radical nationalist association became, for the middle layers of society with pro-Catalan sympathies, a "rite of passage" between the worlds of children and adults<sup>29</sup>. Many young males passed through extremist associations, becoming "socialized" as firm catalanists en route to other turning points in life, like marriage and a stable job, after which they also became regionalist voters and spectators of the "*Barça*", the sentimentally nationalist football team in Barcelona<sup>30</sup>. Sports played an enormous role in the invention of separatism: one of the first significant sport groupings, for example, was an association of hikers in 1876, formed as a quasi-Mazzinian secret society, although the bellicose rhetoric was of less consequence than the enjoyment of tramping around



the countryside and discovering the national heritage. More importantly, however, was the negative effect of the growth of organized sports. The exponential surge of sport-related activities in Catalan urban society slowed the progress of separatism, since sporting clubs offered an organizational alternative to party-building, as well as a cheap and easy sensation of ideological combat, both of which cut off the excitement of more strenuous paramilitary bonding. In the measure that systematic competitions between rival teams were established, and such events took a powerful hold over ever-increasing audiences, a successful sports club like the "Barça" served as a symbolic anti-Spanish "army" (against the Royal Madrid team or the rival "Español" club in Barcelona). As such, it served to let off accumulated ideological steam, instead of channeling discontent towards violent political action<sup>31</sup>. Radical nationalism, thus, was born parallel to regionalism and/or Catalan republicanism, and could not overcome its dependency on more moderate options.

Ideologically, the most extreme confrontational relationship of young ultra-catalanists was with an equally radical Spanish nationalism. Liberal nineteenth-century Spanish nationalism was based on an institutional model, in which all citizens had to participate in a representative Nation-Institution; centralism was the guaranty of equal rights. Only with the insinuation of the colonial crisis in the 1880s into metropolitan politics could there begin to be seen a new type of nationalism, based on identity rather than institutions. With roots deep in the unending Cuban civil war of 1868-1898, the kind of identity nationalism was existential, confused the individual and the collective, and consequently had a strong hysterical flavor, especially visible after the loss of the overseas empire in 1898. Both radical nationalisms -the ultra-Catalan and the ultra-Spanish- found their immediate justifications in the other<sup>32</sup>. As a result, from the beginning of the last century onwards, extreme separatism generated a counter-identity to Spanish civic reality that was both absolute in ideological terms as well as emotionally viable. On the one hand, Catalan radical nationalism relied, albeit conflictively, on the growing capacity of moderate regionalism to act as a pressure group in the Spanish political system, from 1901 on, and especially after 1907. On the other, ultra-catalanists claimed a moral superiority as regarded the regionalists, engaging them in a love-hate interaction that reeked of adolescent-adult tensions. Separatists insisted that they expressed true collective fervor against possible double-dealing by the less enthusiastic, but, at the same time, accepted tacit regionalist support. For their part, moderates used extremist threats as proof of their own inherent reasonableness when negotiating in Madrid. In response to catalanist shadow games, hyper-Spanish nationalism, according to social situation, either bid for a similar backing from young army officers in Catalan garrisons and their growing lack of discipline (marked by their burning of the regionalist press offices in 1905) or, more speculatively, looked towards the formation of a social-political left indifferent or hostile to any autonomist demands (Alejandro Lerroux's Radical Party in 1908, the "Solidaridad Obrera" -origin of the CNT- as of 1907)<sup>33</sup>.

The sociological background of this conflictiveness was the urban expansion of Barcelona, which doubled its population twice between 1900 and 1930. Socially, the growth was based on the economic jump beyond the old Catalan family structure in business and the full acceptance of an economy of urban services. But, as the initiatives of the private sector were followed by the development of a public offer which needed to be staffed, who was to profit from the promises and the possibilities of social mobility that this service economy offered? Should the Barcelona service sector be a part of the already existing Spanish market for social promotion, under State auspices, as was being promised by the

militarists, and, with the promise of an acceleration in job offers, by the "lerrouxistas"? Or should it be, as the syndicalists declared, a socially ascendant labor market on an industrial scale, that promised moral and material improvement for proletarian migrants, at the expense of any other, allegedly "vested", interests? Or, finally, should it be reserved for the children of the Catalan peasants, artisans, and workers, a protected area of public services which guaranteed the use of the Catalan language, as the regionalists, and especially the separatists, emphasized? The fight for control of social promotion through the service sector was the secret energy that moved all the key ideological players in Catalonia, which explains their Barcelona-centric viewpoint.

Logically, in the measure that the immigration increased during the years of the First World War -both that of outside Catalonia as well as the internal one, from towns and countryside to the city-, the aggressivity of the Catalan and Spanish radical nationalisms also grew. The division of ultra-Spanish nationalism between the extreme right and the extreme left, however, limited its possibilities of clear organizational evolution. Ultra-Catalan nationalism, on the other hand, even if restricted by its generational dependency on regionalism, could make a political synthesis that was completely original.

### **The alternative to Mussolini: a fascism of the left?**

The example of Garibaldi represented the conceptual basis of all truly extremist politics -democratic, republican, anarchist- in nineteenth-century Catalonia<sup>34</sup>. Thus, in the first two decades of the twentieth century, young separatists fed on the insurrectional tradition of the left, and added the dream of a combat framework to the declarations of sympathy for other oppressed nations that were being expressed by the regionalists. At the outbreak of the First World War, the great Garibaldi's grandsons formed a Legion with Italian volunteers beside the French for the "little nations" crushed by absolutism<sup>35</sup>. While the elderly Unió Catalanista shriveled in 1915-1916, the separatists entertained themselves with a campaign, of much noise and scant substance, to imitate the Garibaldini in France<sup>36</sup>. As a result, once the Great War ended, separatism had been transformed. It had acquired for the first time a characteristic form of party structure, a more or less unitary para-military pattern of style, that permitted it to fuse the different initiatives and suggestions of independentist symbols (such as the lone-star flag)<sup>37</sup>.

In January-February 1919, Francesc Macià founded the Federació Democràtica Nacionalista (FDN), literally a "federation" of "democratic nationalist" local entities in Barcelona neighborhoods and outlying towns, with the intention of channeling a variety of impulses towards armed action while at the same time establishing a party capable of electoral activity. The FDN inherited the mantle of purist nationalism from the Unió Catalanista. In 1915-1916, the Unió's president, Dr. Martí i Julià, had hoped to utilize the sympathies born the Great War to relaunch the organization, rather worse for wear, as a new kind of "nationalist and socialist party". Despite the enthusiasm he provoked among the shop and office workers which formed its activist core, the Unió was burnt-out shell, with no future, and the new impetus somewhat paradoxically brought it to a halt, breaking Martí's heart and hastening his death in 1917. There was, therefore, an opening of sorts in Barcelona politics for a party capable of representing nationalist opinion in the service sector, which was increasingly affiliated in the CADCI (Centre Autonomista del Comerç i de la Indústria), something between a syndicate, a *bourse de travail*, and a recreational center, the perfect model of a "corporation" in the European sense. The Barcelona CADCI, founded in 1903, had

spread, under regionalist protection, to other Catalan cities<sup>38</sup>. In a parallel way, the enitites and schools promoting Catalan language education -another form of social promotion- served as a support within civil society, linking radical and moderate nationalists<sup>39</sup>.

In Catalonia, as in other countries and territories (such as Italy or Ireland), the end of Great War led to a veritable explosion of enthusiasm for Wilsonian self-determination, under the mistaken conviction that the peace settlement would bring all manner of satisfaction<sup>40</sup>. In November 1918, while he headed mass demonstrations to celebrate the end of war and the breakup of the Central Powers, Macià announced the formation of a hypothetical "Partit Obrer Nacionalista", capable of mixing worker demands (seen through the eyes of the service sector) with the realization of a "Free Catalonia", all understood as a part of the triumph of the "small nations" and the defeat of empires. It was a global context, as seen optimistically from Barcelona, in which some kind of international parliament would take form in the League of Nations. With such a program in hand, the project for a "Nationalist Workers' Party" became the FDN. Starting from its narrow base among ultra-catalanist service workers, Macià's hope was to link up various political forces on the Catalan left, from the Partit Republicà Català (PRC) to the most pro-allied and legitimist sectors of the Carlist movement, so as to lead streetfighting in Barcelona against the Liga Patriótica Española, an ephemeral combat group composed of ex-carlist followers of Vázquez de Mella and similar elements favorable to a Spanish nationalist rebuttal of the "separatist threat", with strong support from police and army officers in Barcelona's military headquarters.

The idea of a campaign of streetfighting led by the FDN not only pleased the service sector youth activists anxious for organizational growth of a paramilitary sort (exemplified by Daniel Cardona), but also acted as a permanent pressure in the name of the coaligned left on the conservative Lliga, since the regionalist chief Cambó had accepted to lead the agitation for an "Integral Autonomy Statute" to widen the powers of the limited regional administration in the heady days of "Wilsonism" after November 1918. The wave of CNT-led strikes that carried the winter into the spring of 1919, however, cut off nationalist hopes for autonomy, isolating a suddenly irrelevant Macià. Expecting to recover the initiative lost in the social troubles of 1919, the FDN made a great effort in the February 1920 municipal elections, but its Barcelona candidacy failed miserably<sup>41</sup>. Given the results, the FDN went into hibernation. Macià, a stubborn man, independently wealthy through marriage (he was one of the largest landowners in Lleida), kept at his idea.

A special ultra-Catalan mixture was produced with more than a slight Italian flavor, even though it was expressed by analogy with the Irish War of Independence of 1919-1921. The "Catalan Literary Revival" took off into avant-garde experiments, which were "futurist", based on the proud claim that Marinetti had copied a Barcelona initiative<sup>42</sup>. Inspired by the spirit of the times, salesmen, clerks, students, and moderate labor activists, were all fused together as dreamers of national and social revolution for Catalonia after 1919, under the charismatic leadership of Macià. In fact, it was the same mixture that Mussolini, also in 1919 (the Fasci di Combattimento were founded in Milan in March, about a month after Macià's spate of streetfighting was over), had made with the late Garibaldism and the interventionist synthesis of nationalism and socialism, justified with the complaint that the revolutionary inheritance of the Risorgimento was being destroyed and decorated with the appeal to the Futurist avant-garde and D'Annunzio's innovations in political style<sup>43</sup>. If, as has been argued, Mussolini's fascism was a

"heresy of the left", Catalan separatism, so similar in content and so ready (at least during the years of the Great War) to admire Italian interventionism as a model, remained faithful to the same early values, but nonetheless on the left through the immediate postwar period<sup>44</sup>. Mussolini, on the contrary, was blocked by the left from whence he came and, consequently, had to expand and evolve towards the demobilized officials of the Italian army and then rightwards. But Macià's separatism found itself in the streets with the military on the other side of the fight (a special irony, as Macià had been a career army officer). Thus, the Italian strikes of 1920 made Mussolini's fortune as a "new right", original in its tactics and appeals in a conservative context. But, in Catalan circumstances, with its enemies on the right, placed on the left but without forming a part of the new revolutionary "obrerismo" ("workerism"), Macià's incipient nationalism had little choice: it could not survive the anarchosindicalist strikes of 1919 unless it actively opened up to its left in both discourse and action. An important component of the FDN's and, later, Estat Català's alignment with the republican left and with the CNT was the importance of masonic participation in part at least of its leadership and mid-level militancy<sup>45</sup>. Eventually, with the shared experience of exile and underground opposition to a military dictatorship after 1923, a situation in which everything was a mere theatre of images, and one organization's promise of revolution in theory as good as another's, could this nationalism acquire the means to become a populism on a mass scale.

#### **All civil society against the State: a nationalist-sindicalist alliance?**

The successful "nationalist-socialist" mix firmly *on the left* which was characteristic of Catalan separatism seemed to become almost unique in Europe as the 1920s progressed. Conventional wisdom, even at the time, would agree that such ideological speculation, relatively common in the twenty-five years before 1914, had become exclusively an emblematic sign of the postwar "new right", albeit with different ideological content in different countries. When, in 1923, the Catalan socialist Rafael Campalans cheerfully announced to distinguished foreign visitors like the German physicist Einstein and the French mathematician Hadamard that he was going to establish a "national-socialist party" -eventually the Unió Socialista de Catalunya (USC)-, both apparently told him that it was an incomprehensible mix (although Einstein apparently later admitted Campalans' explanations). Nevertheless, Campalans' clever dialectical solution has served very well since then in Catalan politics; rooted in Martí i Julià's distinctions, Campalans announced in the pages of a separatist weekly that there were bad (imperialist, oppressive) and good (liberating) nationalisms, and that "conscious" socialists would pick the one while opposing the other<sup>46</sup>. In the mid-1920s, French communist support for anti-imperialist nationalism in Germany and Morocco, however contradictory and self-serving, kept this distinction alive and helped justify Macià's position, when later he found himself the center of attention in Paris for his abortive invasion of Catalonia in November 1926. Catalan separatism's pro-Riffian stance was equally racist, but it assured an open line to the Komintern, which Macià used to travel to Moscow in late 1925<sup>47</sup>. But this trick was possible because the extreme left in Catalonia was represented by the anarchosindicalists and anarchists, committed to a "libertarianism" with which Macià could come to terms, to the point that for a time he financed the CNT.

The participation of the Lliga Regionalista in the Maura government of 1921, after Spanish defeat in Morocco, accentuated internal tensions and ultimately provoked the division of regionalists and nationalists, the latter forming a new party, Acció Catalana, the following year. Macià (a Lliga member

until 1912) took advantage of the circumstances to realign his former FDN followers. More clearly than before, Macià in 1922 defended a neo-federal solution for Catalonia, influenced by Irish events: in his view, Catalonia should secede from Spain and thereafter negotiate an Iberian Confederation; the spontaneous union of all Catalans, a new "Catalan Solidarity" like that of 1907, but also a "Sacred Union" like the wartime sentiment in French politics (and perhaps an explosion of nationalist feeling like that provoked by Italian interventionists) would give such a position social backing, while the formal proclamation of full sovereignty would be formally made by all elected Catalan representatives (like the Irish *Dáil*, as a sort of historical correction to the failed "Assembly of Parliamentarians" convoked by the Lliga in 1917). The result would be the "Catalan State". Macià proposed to establish an armed force, the "Army of Catalonia" to defend the newly proclaimed régime, as, by his lights, had been done in Ireland. Strictly speaking, therefore, Estat Català (EC) was not conceived of as a political party, but rather as a civic and military platform for collective defense, with Macià at its head in virtue of his experience (he had been lieutenant coronel of engineers until his opposition to officer indiscipline -the burning of the regionalist press in 1905- led to his retirement and a new political career). He presented his ideas, without success, to the Conferència Nacional Catalana in June 1922, which gave birth to Acció Catalana. A month later, Macià proclaimed his position -with all the organizational conditions that accompanied it- in a public act at the CADCI hall. Committed as he was to the idea of a unitary platform, Macià pretended that he was resurrecting the FDN: the party biweekly, *L'Estat Català*, begun in November 1922, maintained this fiction, which was finally abandoned in January 1923, when EC established links with other parties, like the nationalist split of the Spanish socialists, the USC, headed by Campalans, or with the "militarist wing" of Acció Catalana, and, eventually, following this line of relations, with Basque and Galician nationalists (in a quite fantastical "Triple Alliance" expected to function as a peninsular balance to Abd el-Krim)<sup>48</sup>.

General Primo de Rivera's coup d'état in mid-September 1923 took Estat Català immediately underground or into exile, as one of the formal excuses for the military action had been the nationalist street demonstrations in Barcelona that surrounded the proclamation of the "Triple Alliance", and the pro-Riffian shouts there expressed. Macià promptly became the self-proclaimed president of the "Catalan State" in French exile, with all the pretensions implicit in the term<sup>49</sup>. At the same time, he hoped to recruit and train volunteers for his "Army" from among Catalan economic migrants in France, as well as from disaffected youth in the "interior" (where the clandestine groups soon invented the term "escamots" -squads- for their loosely coordinated units). Initially, it seemed as if the "interior" underground would look preferably to the "militarist" sector of Acció Catalana. Even before the military coup, these partisans of armed action established a Societat d'Estudis Militars (SEM), which, however, soon lost its sense of direction in discussing such abstractions as the efficacy of Catalan cavalry or of submarines for coastal defense<sup>50</sup>. Younger, more practical activists took over and practiced some "terrorism", the occasional bomb or attacks on the shop windows of "traitors"<sup>51</sup>. The political leadership of Acció Catalana, unable to agree with Macià, proceeded to address the League of Nations with Catalonia's plight, in itself a worthless gesture, as Geneva was not empowered to intervene in "minority national" questions except where the Paris peace treaties so indicated. It would be Joan Estelrich of the Lliga, acting for Cambó, who successfully participated in the network of parallel associations to the League, largely under German patronage, that maintained the revindications of "oppressed nationalities" under international discussion during the 1920s<sup>52</sup>.

All this effort was sustained with Macià's personal fortune, and, further, with money collected by Catalan patriotic organizations in America, especially in Cuba, Argentina and Uruguay. The first contacts towards an insurreccional alliance, on one hand, were held with republicans, anarchosindicalists and with the Partido Comunista de España (PCE), and, on the other, with the "Aberri" Basque nationalist fraction (led by Eli Gallastegui) between late 1923 and early 1924. Such connections promised a hypothetical uprising for the summer, in a broader political framework, that included the liberals of Santiago Alba and various republican currents. The initiative of a simultaneous Bilbao-Barcelona revolt was soon abandoned, but the idea was retained by Spanish anarchist groups based in France, among immigrant workers<sup>53</sup>. These groups attempted the uprising on their own, but failed (what took place were little more than shootouts on the Vera de Bidasoa border in Navarre and in Barcelona, in November 1924)<sup>54</sup>. This failure, in addition to the progressive consolidation of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, led to new negotiations for an insurrection, out of which arose in January 1925, the "Free Alliance" ("free" in the sense that, upon victory, all agreements were off) between Estat Català, the CNT, the PCE and the "Aberri" Basques. In reality, however, this "understanding" was reduced to a collaboration between EC and the CNT, as both the communists and the Basque nationalists were effectively neutralized by the Spanish police. In addition, the agreement on the Riff later that same year between Paris and Madrid reduced Macià's possibilities from exile, while French and Spanish police cooperation curbed the anarchists.

Macià also had to face complications in his relations with the radical nationalist underground in Catalonia, an almost standard difficulty of Spanish exile groupings in modern times. Cardona and his friends headed the armed struggle inside Spain, while Macià was the world leader for the cause from exile. However, Cardona's insistence on an immediate uprising against the Spanish régime brought confrontation with Macià and he soon was excluded from EC. In the meanwhile, the bulk of Acció Catalana's "militarist" wing followed Miquel Ferrer and Josep Rovira into Estat Català, becoming the core on the "Interior Organization"<sup>55</sup>. In mid-1925, upon the police's discovery of a good part of the ultranationalist underground (the immediate arrests of the "Serra del Cadí" group, responsible for the abortive Garraf "bomb outrage" on king Alfonso XIII's train, and of the SEM remnants under Dr. Miquel A. Baltà), Cardona installed himself permanently in Perpignan, from where he retained the relationship with the "Aberri" Basque nationalists. Cardona used the name of Bandera Negra (a historical allusion, but not unaware of the anarchist tone), the title chosen by the "Serra del Cadí" group for itself and which, from within Catalonia, had symbolized a unity project for radical nationalism, ideally bringing "macianists" and others together with some elements of Acció Catalana, a thesis already superseded by events<sup>56</sup>. This argument became Cardona's obsession, and he continued to intrigue against Macià, especially in relation to the catalanist emigrant associations in South America<sup>57</sup>.

Compelled by French police pressure, Estat Català and the anarchists started their adventure at the end of September and early October of 1926. Any initiative by the anarchists was cut short by the well-informed Spanish authorities (the so-called "Complot del Puente de Vallecas"), while the "Army of Catalonia" was stopped and captured by French gendarmerie before crossing the border into Spain (often labeled the "Prats-de-Molló affair" after the border town where Macià was arrested), thanks to a typical indiscretion, combined with infiltration on part of the Italian Sicurezza. In fact, Macià had recruited

Italian anti-fascist immigrants to create a "Legió de la Llibertat" and some of these left a trail followed by French inspectors, trying to trap a double agent, Coronel Ricciotti Garibaldi, one of the grandsons of the nineteenth-century hero. Playing on the republican tradition of the Garibaldini, favorable to the cause of national and social self-determination, and open to Italian syndicalists and "libertarians" who did not enjoy the rigidities of socialists and communists, Ricciotti had created a postwar movement for veterans, Italia Libera, without great success on the growing left-right divide<sup>58</sup>. Transferring his base to France and the Italian economic emigration there, Ricciotti had established a neo-Garibaldi movement, called the "Legione della Libertà", which had been threatening to invade Italy since 1924. Placing unwonted confidence in masonic connections, he became involved in a complicated game with dissident Fascists, the Italian police, and Italian anarchists in Paris, Marseille and Nice, but also with French intelligence, and, not surprisingly, he was eventually caught out. There were striking similarities of style, strategy and intent between Ricciotti Garibaldi's movement and Macià's, the main difference being that the Catalan operation -whatever other limitations it might have had- was in earnest. To cover the tracks of the complicated dealings of their own security services, French authorities had Macià and Garibaldi (as well as some of Macià's lieutenants) tried together in a single trial in January 1927, on the charge of illegal possession of arms, on which judgment was a done deal<sup>59</sup>. Nevertheless, with official connivance, Macià was able to turn, first, his arrest, and, later, his trial defense into a public relations triumph, announcing that he wanted to create a " Pyrenean Belgium", an eternal friend of France.

Expelled to Brussels, as had been the rest of his "soldiers", Macià found himself without direct contact with Catalonia and he projected a long trip in 1928 through the Catalan communities in America. During this time the weight of the EC activities was in Catalonia, in the "Directori Interior", which up to that moment had been even more than secondary, almost inactive. In the measure that a "constitutionalist" dynamic had by then started up in opposition to Primo, capable of uniting liberals, republicans, syndicalists and even conservatives, the interior directory in Barcelona, under the leadership of Dr. Jaume Aiguader (also a "double militant" in the USC) tied the radical nationalists, as a party, into this process, as it established habits of collaboration with both republicans like Companys or with anarchosyndicalists. The new center of gravity of the organization became clear when Macià tried to carry out the agreement reached in 1928 with the "Catalans d'Amèrica"<sup>60</sup>. As the overseas entities were characterized by a permanently unrealistic perspective, they had drawn up a detailed constitution for Catalonia as well as imposing a reorganization of Estat Català as the "Partit Separatista Revolucionari de Catalunya", with a new intercontinental organization. The EC leader found, however, that the interior directory refused these measures, considered as absurd, an attitude shared by the émigré leadership in Belgium. As a result, Macià simply watched while Aiguader made the decisions. Soon, under the Berenguer government in 1930, Estat Català could act legally as the "Amics de Macià". But the leader could not support the dullness of exile and reappeared in Barcelona in September 1930, to be sent back to Brussels by the police, until, with the Aznar cabinet in 1931, he definitively returned home.

Estat Català now appeared without any clear definition as a party, but with the prestige of having been almost the only force (except for the anarchists and anarchosyndicalists) to have fought against the Dictatorship from the very beginning. The search for allies by the "Friends of Macià" was clearly part of a unifying trend on the Catalan left, converging since the beginning of 1930. Consequently, EC entered, together with the PRC, and many other opinion clubs and smaller groups, to form Esquerra Republicana

de Catalunya (ERC) in a convention held in March 1931. Although nobody particularly thought so at the time, the real strength of the new Esquerra came precisely from the the multiplicity of its myriad component parts, which, a month later, gave it an unexpectedly easy victory in Barcelona and throughout Catalonia in the municipal elections to initiate political normalization after the Dictatorship<sup>61</sup>. So stunning was the triumph, that, two days after the voting, on April 14, Lluís Companys, head of the old PRC and now mayor-elect of Barcelona for Esquerra, proclaimed the Republic from the town hall balcony as a revolutionary act (he had CNT backing). He was soon followed by Macià who announced a "Catalan Republic" and an "Iberian Confederation". What seemed little more than a provocation stuck, the monarchical government of admiral Aznar backed away from repression, and the Republic became fact in the late afternoon in Madrid.

The ERC was a product of the changes in Catalan society during the previous decade, as well as of the prestige garnered by Estat Català as a visible resistance to the Dictatorship<sup>62</sup>. However, the Garibaldian revolutionary model refurbished by EC and shared with the more action-prone anarchist groups remained in the minds of the latter and would guide their persistent attempts to pressure both Catalan and Spanish politics over the next few years<sup>63</sup>. Certainly, the sustained validity of Macià's experience was also perceived by the Italian exiles of "Giustizia i Libertà" who saw the appearance of the Spanish Republic with great hopes and, for a time, pinned their expectations on the continued efforts of the nationalist-syndicalist alliance of Macià and the anarchists. Macià's failure to head a broad revolutionary wave through Portugal and Italy was, for the anarchist leader Buenaventura Durruti, a major disappointment which brought on his break with the Republic<sup>64</sup>.

### **A populism, like Latin America?**

Esquerra Republicana was successful beyond all imagining, certainly incomparably so by the lights of similar Spanish-scale republican parties<sup>65</sup>. In fact, what Macià, somewhat by accident, came to produce and lead was a full-blown populism, far more intense in scale and intensity than any comparative republican (as opposed to "workerist") political equivalent<sup>66</sup>. In ideological terms, populism would be any movement with claims to be able to access the popular will better than existing representative institutions (including the entities of the private sector). The Generalitat established under Macià in April 1931 was merely *de facto*, not *de jure*, and would remain so until the end of 1932, with, first, parliamentary approval for the Autonomy Statute, and, second, the Catalan elections which established a Catalan chamber and responsible government at a regional level. As an apparently logical consequence, this meant that the new Catalan political system was tainted by a certain easy fondness for any argument that linked the generic idea of a People to the specific reality of a government, regardless of the fine points of constitutional law. Furthermore, the introduction into a narrow political space of the illusion of forever "jumping over" impediments had, in addition, a perverse effect, as it reset the conditioning limits of Catalan politics for a considerable period. A weakness for direct appeal to "the Catalan masses" in the face of any contradiction, and a penchant for returning to the magical formula of the 14 of April as an ever-renewable starting-point, were to become the core values of "macianism", inspiring a certain recklessness in Catalan political leadership which would have dire results<sup>67</sup>. Last but not least, the new republican electoral law gave the ERC an absolute majority in Catalan representation at Spanish level and, in the regional elections of November 1932, an absolute majority in the new Catalan Parliament.



The total effect, therefore, was that of a quasi-single governmental party awash in the enthusiasm of a mass movement, certainly a thrilling spectacle according to the new political taste of the 1930s. The elderly Macià generated an intense "personality cult", which an observer like the leftist German playwright-poet Ernst Toller compared to Hindenburg and Masaryk<sup>68</sup>. With hindsight, it would be facile to make the analogy with the populist party-movements of the late 1930s and the 1940s in Latin America: recently, when challenged on the similarity between Perón and Mussolini, Mario Firmenich, head of the "Montonero" guerrillas in Argentina in the 1970s, preferred to say that, insofar as "peronism" was "a movement of a popular nationalist cut", the true resemblance was between Perón and Macià<sup>69</sup>. Given the scant articulation of the early Vargas movement in Brazil, the equally rough state of the inheritance of Calles in Mexico, and the divisions patent in the 1933 Cuban revolution, the question would be to what a degree "macianism" in Barcelona was, if not a model, at least an antecedent to later developments in the Americas<sup>70</sup>. But, instead of being a direct expression of this model of populism, Catalan radical nationalism would act as its major internal contradiction.

Macià's radical nationalist movement, fused into the Esquerra, became the Joventuts d'Esquerra Republicana-Estat Català (JEREC), a clumsy name that denoted the complications involved. More than in the Sans Conference that led to the foundation of the ERC in March 1931, the origin of the JEREC derived from the "order service", under Miquel Badia, who, the 14th of April and days following, took control of the building housing the "Catalan Republic". At that time there was talk of a Catalan Republican Civic Guard, an initiative that was backed by all the nationalist leaders in favor of armed struggle, like Cardona, Josep Maria Batista i Roca or Ricard Fages. With the establishment of the Generalitat on April 17, Macià suppressed the idea of a Catalan armed force -which had been the central thesis of the historic Estat Català-, a fact that provoked the fury of the ultra-catalanists on the right and left. Taking advantage of the new situation, Badia became the most militant follower of "macianism". As a youngster, he had formed part of the "Serra del Cadí" group, and was tortured for his part in the failed Garraf attempt, a guarantee of future prestige. In the summer of 1931, Badia allied politically with Dr. Josep Dencàs (who, with other dissidents of Acció Republicana, had led a small Unió d'Esquerres Catalanes into the ERC); together they were the alliance of "action" nationalists faithful to Macià with younger and ambitious "politicians" that lacked catalanist credentials<sup>71</sup>. As unhappy nationalist militants began breaking off from the ERC and reclaiming the name of Estat Català as an image of purity, Badia and Dencàs marked off, as their political priority, youth organizing for the Catalan governmental party, an option ignored by its republican "families"<sup>72</sup>.

With the JEREC under their control, the new nationalist team created an alternative power base to that of the historical leaders of EC closer to Macià -such as Aiguader, the mayor of Barcelona, or Ventura Gassol, the culture councillor of the Generalitat- who were not interested in creating a nationalist infrastructure in the ERC itself. During 1932, Badia made the JEREC grow, multiplying centers or installing members in formations of other sectors, although neither he nor Dencàs received Macià's explicit support, so that there were groups allied with the party youth that were outside their control, such as the Barcelona center La Falç, the Joventut Republicana de Lleida, or very small associations with press resonance, like Pàtria Nova. In 1933, before the transfer of "public services" from the central government to the Generalitat, Badia established close ties with the existing police corps and backed

strong "gangbusting" action against anarchist terrorism, both in his official capacity (in December he was the general secretary of the Public Order Commissariat, and then in March of 1934 was named Head of Services within the Department of "Governació", the Interior office of the Catalan government) and using the more informal methods of his "escamots". Dencàs, councillor of Health and Social Assistance since January 1933, became known as an efficient reformer. The mutual opportunity of the two came in September, with the exclusion from the ERC of the "*L'Opinió* Group". This sealed the downfall of Josep Tarradellas, who, from December 1931 to January 1933, had been councillor of "Governació", in charge of relations with the public order forces. A part of the ERC youth, including republicans (the Joventut Esquerrista, identified by the press campaigns of its spokesmen against Dencàs and Badia), that had been demanding its own formation within the governmental party followed "*L'Opinió* Group" into a new Partit Nacionalista Republicà d'Esquerra (PNRE).

In the measure that Macià was criticized, both from outside the ERC as well as from inside, he relied on the nationalist youth, a circumstance that the JEREC squads used both to attack his critics (damage to the printers of the satirical weekly *El Be Negre*) and to make a political fashion statement of sorts and appear uniformed and "militarized" (in a parade, on Sunday October 22, in which the "escamots" marched in olive shirts and single-star flag armbands from their numerous centers in the city up to the Olympic Stadium on Montjuic hill). The political reaction to this parade was enormous, with all manner of aspersions regarding "Catalan fascism" being cast about in the Barcelona newspapers, especially since elections for the Spanish parliament were only weeks away, in mid-November. The anarchosindicalist publications logically made much of the "danger", but the Esquerra's many electoral enemies (including the new PNRE's *L'Opinió*) were equally harsh. The scandal even made it to the Madrid press, where in particular the rightist dailies gleefully howled with calculated indignation at this alleged paramilitary threat. ERC's electoral partner, the Unió Socialista de Catalunya, threatened a division if the youth groups were not dismantled. The reaction was so strong that, on December 3, an extraordinary national assembly of the JEREC formally dissolved the "shock groups" (as they were called), although in reality nothing changed<sup>73</sup>. The furor set off by the parade in uniform fixed forever more the image of a "Catalan fascism". In reality, however, "shirt corps" were the stuff of 1930s politics everywhere, regardless of ideology<sup>74</sup>. In Spain all the "worker" left -the Socialist Youth, the Communist Youth, the BOC (with its GABOC, or "Grups d'Acció del BOC")- had uniformed "shock groups", armed when possible, and also carried out shootings and similar actions, which by no means were a monopoly of the radical right. The question, therefore, was one of *demonization*: if paramilitary forces and private armies were common across the board, why did the tarbrush mark the extreme right as exceptional? A possible reply might be that while leftist parties might share a common fashion with the radicalized right, such a question of style, however relevant, was nonetheless not essential to their political identity; on the contrary, "fascist" groups could not publicly distinguish themselves from exalted conservatives without the recourse to a defining style.

Macià's death, on Christmas Day 1933, was excellently timed for the internal politics of the ERC, permitting a rearrangement: Dencàs disapproved of Macià's emblematic assistant, the poet Ventura Gassol, as nationalist candidate for the presidency, and accordingly gave his support to Companys, head of the republican wing of the governmental party, in exchange for being recognized in turn as head of a fullfledged party group, with the same organizational rank in the Catalan government as the leader of a

party. As Companys wanted to reincorporate the different parties that up to then had been in opposition to Macià's leadership, this was an easy concession, especially as the new president accepted the JEREC as an ERC presence in rural areas to balance the possible excesses of organized farmers ("rabassaires") or counteract "national-communist" influence in the urban service sector exemplified by the CADCI<sup>75</sup>. The JEREC also acted as civic protection, to guarantee minimum service, in the Barcelona transport strike of December 1933. With heavy membership among secondary school and university students in Barcelona, the JEREC's cited figures of around ten thousand affiliates. Thus, the JEREC benefited both from the presence of Badia as Public Order Commissar and that of Dencàs temporarily in "Governació", after the untimely death at the end of June 1934 of Joan Selves (come over to ERC from Acció Catalana) and Tarradellas' successor, who had kept in check ultra-nationalist ambitions over the police.

In short, the JEREC seemed ready to utilize its privileged position to impose its specific agenda on Catalan society, and, perhaps, even on a Spanish political situation quite recalcitrant with the "separatist threat". During 1934 and especially with the dismal result of the revolution on October 6, Catalan radical nationalism snatched defeat from imagined victory, wiped away in one night the reputation gained against Primo de Rivera, and won for itself a new reputation as a bluff.

### **Irish and Basque translations for an exclusivist, hardline nationalism**

Not surprisingly, Macià's alliance with the ultraleft, his espousal of a Spanish (or even Iberian) revolution and his triumphant emergence as the head of a broad-based and populist governmental party which controlled the officially-recognized Catalan sub-political system under the new Republic in April 1931, provoked bitter dissidence from the purists of separatism. There remained the hope that a policy of catalanist unity could achieve a less slanted political setup or give the anarchosyndicalists less leeway. Thus, conservative radical nationalists looked to a transversal alliance that would join the nationalist wing of ERC with the old Lliga, now the major opposition to "macianism", and pull together the dispersed ultra-catalanist groupings of the left and the right to form a powerful new alternative to the "Spanishness" of the republican situation, facilitating a renewed connection with Basque and Galician nationalists and bringing about the eventual breakup of the Spanish State or, at the very least, a confederate system<sup>76</sup>. Macià played an explicitly dualistic policy within the Republic, and implicitly ignored the possibilities of a three-way nationalist coalition<sup>77</sup>. This, however, gave his Lliga opponents the opportunity to intrigue with both Catalan nationalist groupings and with the Basques and Galicians against the ERC. The press of the Esquerra played the conservative nature of the Lliga to the hilt, hinting openly that the old regionalist party (systematically portrayed in cartoons as a worn-out whore) was the equivalent of fascism, an idea to which the socialists and nationalist communists were logically quite amenable<sup>78</sup>. In truth, Joan Estelrich, Cambó's righthand man, had led a broad ideological operation in Spanish politics, which ultimately failed for a number of reasons, but which led to a clear communication of Catalan nationalist ideas being inoculated into the future heart of Spanish fascism through the active participation of the first and most outstanding ideologue of the latter movement, Ernesto Giménez Caballero, in the Lliga initiative<sup>79</sup>. The bitter fact was, however, that Cambó's "imperial" ideas (expressed in his 1929 book *Por la concordia*) for a greater Hispano-Catalan understanding (including the "Iberianist" hope for the ultimate integration of Portugal) were effectively adopted, without a nod (quite the contrary), by the ERC-USC in 1931-1932, and the Lliga was condemned to play simultaneously with the Spanish monarchists, and, in complete

contradiction, with non-Catalan nationalists, all at the same time<sup>80</sup>. At home, the Lliga found much of its thunder stolen by the upstart *Unió Democràtica de Catalunya* (UDC), a nationalist christian-democratic party formed in late 1931 by the fusion of dissident carlists and catholics from *Acció Catalana*<sup>81</sup>. Within ultra-catalanism, a new cultural entity, *Palestra*, established in April 1930 by Josep Maria Batista i Roca, bridged the common space between the JEREC, the ultra-nationalist right, the UDC, *Acció Catalana* and the Lliga, while linking the Boy Scout movement with action groups<sup>82</sup>.

The outstanding anti-"macianist" within radical nationalism was doubtlessly Cardona. With the liberalization and the end of Dictatorship under the government of general Berenguer in 1930, Cardona returned to Catalonia and formed a initial group, called *L'Estel*, which soon gave way, in September, to the *Agrupació Nacionalista Nosaltes Sols!* (NS!), a name which purported to be the literal translation of the Irish *Sinn Féin*. Although Cardona, like other radical nationalists (Batista i Roca, Fages), joined in support of Macià's short-lived "Catalan Republic" in April 1931, hoping that the Civic Guard then purportedly being recruited would be the beginning of the long-awaited "Liberation Army", he was violently disappointed -for the last time, he decided- when once again the EC leader refused to carry out the "Irish strategy" he himself had for so long sustained. From then on, *Nosaltes Sols!* became the expression of the most irreducible anti-"macianism". Just as in the days of exile, Cardona defended apoliticism (understanding by this no ideological divisions in the cause of independence) and a unitary insurreccional position seen in a rather imaginary Irish light. Cardona himself, independent of means through the inheritance of land in Sant Just Desvern (then a village outside Barcelona), was not loath to participate in elections, and was voted mayor of his adopted town in 1931 and again in 1934. His movement, centered in the *Baix Llobregat*, had a considerable pull on young men in a broad suburban area, and, though there were no more than a few hundred militants at any given time, the number of "lads" ("nois") who passed through NS! on their way to other nationalist destinations was probably far higher. In any case, many separatists, like Cardona, were convinced of the need to battle Macià in his own terrain, while they prepared for the great push to independence.

Perhaps influenced by the Basque example (the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* [PNV] was reunited in late 1930, with a left minority split, reorganized as *Acción Nacionalista Vasca*) and perhaps perversely influenced by the fact that Macià refused to sustain an alliance with either of the Basque organizations, diverse strands of Catalan radical nationalism, unwilling to accept the marriage of separatism and republicanism put forth by the ERC, decided to create their own electoral organization. The formation of a *Partit Nacionalista Català* (PNC) was announced simultaneously with the creation of *Elements d'Estat Català* (EEC) in July 1931. This last was a platform set up by those especially irritated by the political deals of the ERC and the "sell out" of the *Autonomy Statute* presided over by Macià. As a sign of the break, the new EEC was headed by Josep Casals i Freixes, a tailor who had been the treasurer for the clandestine interior directory of EC under the Dictatorship<sup>83</sup>. A few months later, in March 1932, various dissident nationalist entities, including EEC, NS!, the husk of the old *Unió Catalanista* and a "*Secció Ferroviària d'Estat Català*" formally unveiled the PNC as an explicitly nationalist party which presumably could overcome the deficiencies, on the right, of the Lliga and *Acció Catalana*, and, on the left, of hegemonic "macianism". The new party had a strong catholic component, given that the formation of the PNC had run parallel to the creation of the christian-democratic UDC and many of the PNC's components came from catholic youth leagues, and the PNC's most outstanding intellectual, the ex-Lliga jurist

Francesc Maspons i Anglasesell, was publicly devout<sup>84</sup>. But there was something of a mix, since Casals was a leading freemason.

For whatever reasons, internal squabbling soon had a deleterious effect, and most of the founding organizations, such as NS! and the Unió Catalanista discretely distanced themselves from the PNC, which nevertheless benefited from the usual habit of multiple militancy or informality in affiliation: it remained an electoral platform in a political space characterized by projects for ambitious and ever unfinished platforms for insurrection or civic protest. In any case, the PNC formally reestablished itself in January 1933. The party line was a well-worn rebuttal of Macià's alleged "sectarianism", and a rejection of the autonomy sustained by the Catalan government (according to which Catalonia should remain as an exceptional sub-State within the Spanish republican framework).

As its name indicated, the PNC was at least in part a homage to the example of the PNV; as a direct consequence, the PNC defended Catalan solidarity with Basque and Galician revindications. Given this position, the PNC tended towards a certain approximation with the Lliga and the UDC, even with the most nationalist sector of the reorganized Acció Catalana Republicana, all of which equally criticized the lack of ERC sensitivity on religious questions and the absence of sympathy with other the hispanic nationalisms, a convergence visible in the "Galeuzca" proposal which dominated anti-"macianista" nationalist energies during 1933<sup>85</sup>. Although this was not its purpose in a Spanish context, "Galeuzca", in Catalan politics, was primarily directed against the republican sector of ERC, and to that purpose some discontented nationalists within "macianism" were prominent in the meetings that surrounded the operation. Mutual imitations between Catalan and Basque nationalists were full of contradictions<sup>86</sup>. The success of Macià was obviously stunning, as was his reluctance to offer support to other analogous movements; but, in Catalonia, radical nationalists with eccentric ambitions could look to extremist currents within Basque and Galician nationalism for inspiration and the hope of external backing for a blocked internal situation<sup>87</sup>. Only Cardona, however, systematically looked beyond Spanish borders, with the Mordrel wing of Breton nationalism<sup>88</sup>.

In part due to its political line, the PNC never had success with voters, neither in the elections to the Parliament of Catalonia in November 1932 (when it presented a candidacy for the Barcelona-city district, its only satisfaction being getting ten times the result of the left separatists), nor in the Catalan municipal elections of January 1934. The PNC's electoral difficulties derived largely from its lack of attractive leadership: Maspons, its most distinguished intellectual, was a pedant, not at all adequate to the ordeal of "pressing the flesh". The true initiator of the party, the engineer Manuel Massó i Llorens, in Acció Catalana before the Dictatorship and a pronounced enemy of Macià in exile, turned up in Barcelona in 1931, put about the idea of an anti-Macià nationalist party in a published lecture, and then returned to his career in Argentina. Massó was not the only dissident anti-"macianista" who preferred emigration among the "Catalans d'Amèrica", despite the fact that their ultra-catalanist associations, with their nostalgic purism, had been swept from the limelight they briefly enjoyed in the 1920s<sup>89</sup>.

The electoral discredit of the PNC gave the initiative within the party to younger activists, eager to collaborate with the more or less secret paramilitary sector (led by the Germanophile Fages), with Cardona's OMNS or with the OrMiCa (Organització Militar Catalana) that Batista i Roca kept hidden

under Palestra<sup>90</sup>. This same pressure meant that by 1934 Cardona's leadership within Nosaltres Sols! was being questioned. More explicitly ideological tendencies appeared. A pro-German tendency, headed by Manuel Blasi, came to have contacts with local Auslands Organisation-NSDAP officials on an informal basis (such as joint training exercises), which eventually gave way to more ambitious feelers. This was balanced by an Italianophile orientation, led by Baldomer Palazón, which had similar relations with the Italian Consulate in Barcelona, but, it would seem, not much more in the way of a political relationship. Thus, Irish and Basque analogies kept the right-wing portion of Catalan radical nationalism on the edge of democratic respectability, without making the full leap to the Italian model, always thinking of a future Catalan democracy purged of unacceptable immigrants and revolutionaries, anticipating a unity born of independence which would be in all ways superior to the confused and shabby populism of Macià, his successor Companys, and the ERC. Extremely uncomfortable with idealizations of the State, which always have abounded in Spanish political thinking, Catalan separatists, no matter how rightist, tended to re-imagine power as a utopia in the familiar forms of civil society, since dreaming the achievement of independence was more emotionally gratifying than thinking about what came later.

### **Alsatian and French analogies: a Communism of the Right?**

The reorganization of Estat Català in Belgium in 1927, in the wake of the Prats de Molló affair, and its reconversion into a very hypothetical Partit Separatista Revolucionari de Catalunya, supposed to bridge the intercontinental distances between the nationalist exile, the Catalan economic emigration to the Americas and the underground interior directory in Catalonia, set off all manner of complaints. While the infrastructure in Barcelona did as it considered best, the leadership in European exile, backed by some influential militants who managed to remain in France (notably Jaume Miravittles) or who tried their luck in Mexico (Rovira), showed their discomfort by a series of ideological critiques. Their growing irritation at the allegedly conservative influence of the "Catalans of America" on Macià made them lend an ear to the rhetoric on national self-determination that the Communist International was insisting on during the stalinist turn of 1927-1928. As the exiles returned in 1930-1931, these protest themes took the form of a discourse of disillusionment with Macià. Nevertheless, the separatist leader did achieve a hypothetical "Catalan Republic" under his presidency on April 14, soon converted into a Catalan autonomous government, called thereafter the Generalitat. The attacks from the left on "macianism" and its betrayal of the cause, during the summer and fall of 1931, hardened into an open break: the president of the new autonomy was charged for his failure to achieve independence and carry out a "revolution". Accordingly, a part of the more youthful EC militancy (exemplified by Miravittles), together with a larger group of sympathizers then gravitated towards the Catalan communist grouping the Bloc Obrer i Camperol (BOC). Another sector preferred to gather around the symbolic figure of Jaume Compte, a brave if rather inexpressive and inept travelling salesman, and a hero to radical nationalists for resisting torture after the 1925 Garraf attempt. Now, this rather simpleminded purist denounced the abandonment of the old Estat Català program, and the entry into Macià's ERC of Spanish, as opposed to Catalan, republicans<sup>91</sup>.

The BOC was by far the more serious option: in 1929, the Federació Comunista Catalano-Balear, the largest territorial base of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE), split off from party and Komintern discipline (in practice, rule through the French party delegates) and established itself as an independent organization. The move, a response to the weak, doctrinaire leadership of the PCE, was led

by a former syndicalist, Joaquim Maurín, with a certain ideological flair (he would be by the far the most original marxist analyst of Spanish affairs before the Civil War, a limited compliment)<sup>92</sup>. In marxist-leninist hermeneutics, the fledgling party was "right-wing deviationist", a "bukharinist" option and, for a time, even had relations with the Right Opposition of Jay Lovestone<sup>93</sup>. But Maurín had an intellectual solidity that paled the other homegrown marxists in Barcelona. A small Partit Comunista Català (PCC), set up in 1928, with service sector workers (the bellicose Jordi Arquer) and a syndical presence (the Sindicat Mercantil, expelled from the CNT) was accordingly absorbed, except for some dissidents<sup>94</sup>. Maurín's only serious challenge was from Andreu Nin, a former nationalist schoolteacher who became anarchosyndicalist, and then, by accident, a Soviet functionary in Russian exile with close personal ties to Trotsky. As personal advantages, Nin had his direct anointment at the hands of the "Prophet" and a good knowledge of Russian (he was an excellent translator of Russian literature), but his political arguments were stereotyped and stale; the official trotskyite Izquierda Comunista under his leadership had a tiny following of righteous devotees<sup>95</sup>. The BOC, thus, was able to keep expanding, with pretensions to intellectualism, enjoying its role as the political delegation of French surrealism in 1931 (Dalí was, briefly, the BOC's most peculiar "fellow traveller")<sup>96</sup>. But radical nationalists and nationalist-communists of all stripes shared a common conviction -however vague on specifics- in the capacity of Barcelona's service workers of acting as leading "technicians" in a revolutionary change, be that a readjustment of Catalonia's industrial base or a deeper freedom beyond autonomy.

With the conviction born of Leninist certainty, the BOC had staked out its expectation of a major presence in Catalonia in the April municipal elections which brought the downfall of the Monarchy. But, like so many other forces, it was swept aside by the populist success of "macianism" and the ERC, retaining only local points of support outside Barcelona, in Girona (Figueres, Banyoles) or the Lleida countryside<sup>97</sup>. Nevertheless, the BOC was perceived as a national-communist alternative to the vague "national-socialism" of the ERC and its electoral ally the USC<sup>98</sup>. As the "negative satellite" of the ERC implicit single-party system to the USC's "positive satellite", the BOC was therefore in a position to attract all those nationalist militants who, as they became "ideologically conscious", could be tempted by a mild leninism around a strong nationalist position: the BOC was the last to abandon the symbolic "Catalan Republic" of April 1931 (not counting the extreme ultra-catalanists on the right), and was believed by all to be most sincere in its espousal of a "Union of Socialist Iberian Republics", then the standard marxist-leninist solution to Spain's national/regional divisions, as all communists firmly sustained that the Soviet Union had forever solved the "national question" (including the trotskists; Nin wrote a book about it)<sup>99</sup>. At the same time, however, the BOC expected to become a Spanish organization and, thus, challenged the primacy of the almost non-existent PCE.

Aware of the potential for attracting anarchosyndicalists and nationalists, and incensed by the success of a non-authorized communist party, the Komintern took note of the Catalans, attuned as it was to minority questions<sup>100</sup>. Having redesigned the leadership of the Spanish flagship party (mixing Basques like Dolores Ibarruri, later "La Pasionaria", and Andalusians, like the general-secretary, José Díaz) and lessened French influence, Moscow attempted to create its own reply to the BOC on its Catalan turf and in the Basque Country. The stalinist effort in Catalonia reflected distress at the roots put forth by Maurín's party, as well as the obsession of the distant Soviet chief with any hint of Trotsky: in 1932, when a Partit Comunista de Catalunya (PC de C) was set up, its nominal similarity to the PCC of 1928 was evident.

Formally independentist (but not terribly convincing: *Catalunya roja*, its weekly mouthpiece, was only Catalan in its title, being written entirely in Spanish), this new PC de C was headed, in an effort to erase Nin's exile chic, by Ramón Casanellas, a former CNT terrorist who fled to Russia and became a Red Army pilot. The PC de C was small and paranoid (Casanellas' death in a motorcycle accident led to endless insistence on a murder plot) but it had the option -given the Komintern's "class against class" strategy- of leftism and self-determination, with which to counter the BOC's ambiguous "national-communism"<sup>101</sup>. In the meantime, the BOC, convinced in its "correct" positions, waited for the masses to abandon the ERC and join its fold, counting on a vanguard of radical nationalists, freed of their "petit bourgeois" errors.

But, in parallel to the BOC and to the stalinist imitation thereof, a significant portion of the radical nationalists evolved, on their own, towards "national-communism". During September-October 1931, the mix of disillusioned separatists around Compte gathered up the strands of anti-imperialist rhetoric of the late separatist exile, and "refounded" Estat Català, but added the trailer "Força Separatista d'Extrema Esquerra" for greater definition. This new EC(FSEE) picked up various small grouplets that did not feel the attraction of the BOC. In a first phase, during 1931-1932, EC(FSEE) seemed capable of expansion, but its progressive "marxistization" scared away more moderate nationalists, like Pàtria Lliure, a coalition of local entities in Barcelona and L'Hospitalet. As the anticommunists abandoned Compte, the effect favored Cardona, even though some of the dissidents, also with various centers in Barcelona and L'Hospitalet, defined themselves as Estat Lliure, presumably -in Irish terms, confusing from a catalanist standpoint- a far distance from his "Ourselves Alone" position. Having nowhere else to go, however, they came to some arrangement.

The EC(FSEE) relied on the weekly *L'insurgent*, starting in April of 1932 and lasting until the party's bid in the Catalan elections that autumn. The platform garnered the support of prestigious militants returned from America, like Josep Rovira, incorporations that brought with them interest in a more ambitious reorganization of the party. At the first congress, in October 1932, the group was renamed Estat Català-Partit Proletari (EC-PP) and, with this label, it presented itself to the Catalan parliamentary elections in November 1932, with Compte at the head of the list. But Compte's evident political incapacity (many of his articles were ghostwritten, even by Arquer of the BOC) and the lack of popularity of his leftist anti-"macianism", always better articulated by the BOC, led to ridiculous results for EC-PP. After the elections, leading figures -Josep Rovira, Miquel Ferrer- deserted for the BOC.

As a result, the EC-PP gravitated towards friendly relations with the newly founded PC de C. Together with the stalinist group, the EC-PP created a "Minoria d'Oposició Mercantil" that in 1933 acted against the pro-ERC leadership in the CADCI, until the alliance managed to take it over in the summer of 1934. Even before this success of the united "Shopworkers' Opposition", the pro-stalinist stance led to a redefinition of the nationalist party, when, at the beginning of 1934, it abandoned the old trademark of "Estat Català" to become the Partit Català Proletari (PCP). The PCP enthusiastically backed the "antifascist" insurrection that October. From CADCI headquarters, the PCP actively opposed army units, which resulted in the building being hit by cannonfire, with the consequent death of the party's leaders (Compte, Manuel González i Alba)<sup>102</sup>.



For some months after the October 1934 revolt, during the summer of 1935, the BOC had a warm relationship with Doriot, quickly distancing itself, with acute embarrassment, when doriotism turned right, just as the BOC turned left and merged with Nin's trotskists to form the new Partit Obrer d'Unificació marxista (POUM), in September 1935<sup>103</sup>. But the interest in such "mixed" initiatives as De Man's plan, the French neo-socialists or even doriotism remained alive in such ex-EC, ex-BOC activists like Miravittles, by then firmly in the ERC<sup>104</sup>. In any case, in marked contrast to Spain, neo-jacobinism became a theme of the French Communist Party (PCF) as the Popular Front pulled together. The PCF had enjoyed a virtual proxy holding on the Spanish Party in the 1920s and would be active in convincing a reluctant Stalin to intervene in Spain in 1936<sup>105</sup>.

There was more than a whiff of "nationalist deviationism" in the BOC and in its "nationalist-marxist" rivals, which resembled the initial evolution of Alsatian Communism, split-off in the mid-1930s with a apparently similar "Elsaßische Arbeiter- und Bauernpartei" before becoming openly pro-Nazi. But the structural difference with the notorious Alsatian case was the absence of a sympathetic foreign power with "irredentist" ambitions -such as Germany in relation to France- which might back an "oppressed nationalism"<sup>106</sup>. There was no clear outside support: Catalonia was too far away to be more than a curiosity for the Germans was too risky an option for France, which preferred a weak Spain to a Pyrenean fragmentation that might threaten its own internal unity; and the the Italians, given to Mediterranean adventures, might consider the catalanists an option (and a way of keeping tabs on Italian antifascist exiles), but that interest would be secondary to any Spanish nationalism that seemed philo-fascist<sup>107</sup>.

### **A National Front or a Popular Front?**

Comanys, as president of the Generalitat, gave a general leftward spin to "macianist" populism. This repositioning of the ERC forcibly meant a closer, even more ideological approximation to the Spanish left, which was now out of power because of its own divisions, and accordingly was groping towards some sort of reunification built on bitter mutterings about "the rise of fascism" within the Republic<sup>108</sup>. Given its leftism, the Catalan regional autonomy became increasingly an exception in European politics, parallel only to Léon Nicole's socialist administration of Geneva, after the elections of November 1933 in the Swiss canton<sup>109</sup>. Comanys' election to the regional presidency was duly noted by the French left as a positive beginning to 1934, in the face of the "February crises" in Paris and Vienna<sup>110</sup>. International repercussions, local categories, and the verities of Spanish affairs, therefore, kept Catalan nationalists on a clear left track.

During the 1934 constitutional crisis between the left government in Barcelona and the center-right cabinet in Madrid, the JEREC had an important role as armed backup for the Generalitat: for a start, they disarmed the Somatent (traditional citizen guards) during the summer, assuring, in theory, a supply of carbines. At the same time, with the excuse of the crisis, the JEREC under Dencàs and Badia wanted to impose some sort of "National Front" on all the other radical nationalist parties. Thus, for example, the last significant appearance of the PNC took place in the tense summer of 1934, as a spur to the dominant position of the ERC nationalist wing. The exalted tone of the PNC's weekly organ, *La Nació Catalana*, led to a sedition trial for its editor, and increasingly more scandalous incidents in succeeding trials were provoked by defense lawyer Josep Maria Xammar, who became the party's protagonist. In early

September, during the trial of Xammar for contempt, some JEREC members caused an "incident" in the Barcelona Palace of Justice, which led to Badia immediately losing his position as Public Order Commissioner, and, further, to a nasty personal break with president Companys. In the decisive moment of the Madrid-Barcelona crisis, with the Generalitat a "bulwark" in a wide left coalition against "fascism" (i.e., the entry of CEDA into the central government), Dencàs was playing against Companys as much as against events in Madrid, and the BOC, with its "Workers' Alliance" of leftist parties and syndicates, was at best a purely theoretical ally. The Dencàs-Badia reply to both Companys and the populist coalition that backed him, and to BOC pressure outside the Catalan government, was a stance of nationalist unity. But the JEREC attempt to put all the paramilitary nationalists -OMNS, OrMiCa, the PNC "boys"- under their control in a National Front of Youth Groups, did not work. The result in the October revolt was a confused, passive response by the "escamots" and other nationalist "militias", with a consequent loss of image, emphasized by the fact that Dencàs was the only councillor that fled arrest, to go into exile with Badia<sup>111</sup>. PNC militants, for example, played no visible role in October, and their party virtually disappeared, reduced by left-right polarization. The "escamots", on the other hand, had acquired a reputation for "terrorism", in large measure due to anarchosyndicalist counter-propaganda, which would prove surprisingly lasting<sup>112</sup>.

The many sectors within the ERC in favor of Companys, or merely jealous of the two nationalist leaders, orchestrated a campaign to accuse them of the failure of the uprising. Different publications began using the name of JEREC or of the "Front Nacional" and a delegation of an unspecified Estat Català went to the first encounter held to explore ongoing "marxist unification" during 1935. The nationalists, effectively leaderless and blamed by the jailed Companys for the defeat of the revolution, became *the* natural social base for the expansion of all the communist parties. Catalan "frontpopulisme" has been understood as a solid ideology<sup>113</sup>. Perhaps it was, but only as the continuation of Esquerra populism, with considerable ambiguity regarding the ideological frontier between nationalism and socialism.

If the "National Front" ideal had failed in 1934, the pressure towards "marxist unification" or even "working class unity" during 1935 left the Catalan radical nationalists displaced, having shot their bolt, and with little potential or visible promise for fusion. Even Palestra had a split: a younger figure, Andreu Xandri, set up a grouping of "cadres", called Club David, as a nucleus for the future<sup>114</sup>. The defeat of the October 1934 revolt forced Nosaltres Sols! underground (Cardona exiled as usual in Perpignan). Personal connections made the christian-democratic UDC offer protection by taking over at least one NS! delegation to give it legal cover. This situation, in turn, led to splits within NS! Before the end of 1934 a student section was created, the Bloc Escolar Nacionalista (BEN) soon outstanding for its extremism. Similarly, a group of friends led by an architecture student, Jacint Goday i Prats, split off from NS! in the spring and summer of 1935 to establish an ephemeral Moviment Nacionalista Totalitari (MNT), around a short-lived weekly called *Ferms!*, possibly with some funding from the Italian Consulate in Barcelona<sup>115</sup>. In the face of the Ethiopian crisis, the Italians were clearly spreading their options in Spanish politics, but concrete information on their contacts with non-Spanish nationalists is hard to come by and indicates a considerable informality in such relations<sup>116</sup>. While the MNT did not long survive, its original, even striking rhetoric would remain alive in ultra-nationalist circles through the Civil War. The discussion of the "totalitarian idea" was certainly alive in catalanism after 1934: a respected columnist like the poet J.V.

Foix, known for his maurrasian logic, could explicitly put the term in circulation in 1931<sup>117</sup>. The UDC toyed with the term before deciding it too dangerous. By 1935, the ultra-catalanist student union, the BEN, was talking of a "Catalunya totalitària" that encompassed all the areas of Catalan speakers plus Occitania<sup>118</sup>. Blasi, of the Germanophile sector of NS!, Batista i Roca, as well as some elements of the JEREC, afraid of the increasing weight of the left, intensified their contacts with the German representatives of some or other form, basically to sound out possibilities, although German interest in Iberian affairs was scant<sup>119</sup>. Catalan separatists were nonetheless well aware, even that early, of the demonizing nature of any Nazi link, and made extreme efforts to keep it quite secret; however unrealistically, they remained pro-League of Nations, rather than favoring the overthrow of Anglo-French "collective security". But, whatever the ideological excitements available in 1935-1936, radical nationalists showed themselves incapable of any reunification without a previous breakup of the nationalist wing of the ERC. There were rumors, during the general elections in February 1936, of a "Nacionalist Front" being formed by the PNC, NS! and the UDC, but it came to nothing<sup>120</sup>.

Pro-communist nationalism was not any better off in 1935. The PCP was headless, little more than a clandestine sheet, *Catalunya insurgent*, although it enjoyed the prestige of a virtual monopoly of revolutionary martyrs from the previous October. Therefore, it played an important role as a bait of the PC de C in the dynamic of unification of the marxist left in Catalonia, up to the point where its youth section was pioneer, fusing with that of the USC to create the Joventut Socialista de Catalunya in January 1936. As a consequence of this process, the PCP was one of the founding parties of the Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya (PSUC), the Catalan "unified socialists" constituted in July 1936 as a "party adhered to the Communist International", even though its members did not achieve any particularly relevant role as stalinists.

Numerous outstanding militants of the BOC, mostly of nationalist origin (like Ferrer), had been unable to accept the merger with Nin's trotskists, and had bolted to the USC or other groups that eventually ended up in the PSUC. Some initiatives tried to take advantage of the space left in "strict" radical nationalism by the openly marxist evolution of the PCP, as well as the disappearance of the BOC into the new POUM, to offer milder alternatives. In January 1936, the Bloc Català Treballista (BTC) was founded in Barcelona, of minor importance. Slightly more relevant was the Front Nacional Català Proletari (FNCP), begun in December 1935 and formally established in March 1936, based in Barcelona but with some militants in the Tarragona area. Its pro-labor and "national-revolutionary" leadership had much experience being shunted aside in the different incarnations of Estat Català or were Catalan proto-communists excluded from the BOC: all were opposed to the dynamic of socialist-stalinist-catalanist unification<sup>121</sup>. Both the BTC and the FNCP disappeared with the start of revolution.

The creation of the POUM, imbued with righteous leninism and dialectical superiority, effectively cut off the nationalist link that the BOC had prospered on for so long. On the other hand, the PSUC wisely acted as an embodiment of the "popular front" spirit (in Catalonia, with its specific political sub-system, there was a Front d'Esquerres, distinct from the Spanish Frente Popular). Accordingly, under revolutionary circumstances, the PSUC, as a "national-communism" picked up the slack left by the radicalization of dissident communism and by the comparative breakdown of ERC as a broad, populist party, deprived of its nationalist wing.

## A "national revolutionary party" adrift in social revolution

After the victory of the Left Front in the general elections of February 1936, where the "martyr president" triumphed over the doubtful and "fascist" Dencàs and Badia, the return of the two nationalist leaders signaled an aggressive break within the JEREC. In February-March 1936, nationalist partisans were pressing for a necessary "purge" of the JEREC from their weekly *Ara!!*. The JEREC desintegrated in the spring of 1936, the latent conflict accelerating beyond all discretion after the assassination of Badia and his brother by unknown assailants on April 28. It was open knowledge that CNT gunmen had carried out the killing, but "falangistas" were officially arrested and accused, while nationalists "in the know" insisted on the responsibility of agents of president Companys, implicated for complex personal and political reasons<sup>122</sup>. A few days later, Dencàs was outmaneuvered by Companys and his allies in the Catalan Parliament and suffered official blame for the October 1934 defeat. This succession of events ripped apart the nationalist wing of ERC. At the end of May, twin congresses were held by rival leaderships, one faithful to the official party line while the other opted for a split and the creation of a new, unitary, radical nationalist party, naturally called, yet again, Estat Català. A congress held on May 22-25 gave birth to the new organization, and, during the following month, NS!, the PNC and other minor groupings joined. With the bulk of radical nationalists coming together in an anti-Companys position, PNC militants had behind-the-scenes influence and a role in the press of the new EC party. Without as much show, numerous ultra-catalanist youth entities, such as Palestra or the student unions active in 1935-1936, also came aboard or at least acted as satellites, always within the traditional nationalist custom of multiple militancy.

As a reply, on May 26, diverse ERC spokesmen prompted a manifesto calling for a "Unifying Commission" to redirect the JEREC, and turn the youth organization into something useful to the whole governmental party. Two days later, loyalists to Companys within the JEREC held their own congress, as proof of fidelity. In the measure that the PNRE re-entered ERC, its youth section was to incorporate itself into the ERC Youth, as a sort of compensation, all to be confirmed by the similar congress of the ERC itself, scheduled for July 18. Nevertheless, the whole business was remarkably short-lived, with events hastened by the outbreak of war and revolution in mid-July. The new pro-Russian party, the Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya (PSUC), formed officially on July 23, "stole" leading nationalist republicans as well as part of the official JEREC, presenting itself as both catalanist and revolutionary<sup>123</sup>. The organizers of the loyal JEREC bolted to the PSUC in early August, together with some of Companys' personal assistants, previously aggressive opponents of "Catalan fascism"<sup>124</sup>.

Having broken with the ERC, unable to stand by itself, radical nationalism had to choose an ally between anarchosindicalism, which the JEREC had pressured in 1933-1934, and the new communist parties in the making. The emotional background was ironically summed up by the British journalist John Langdon-Davies, who had a working relation with Batista i Roca (and called him "Q." in his account):

Even Q. admits it: 'We catalans are such individualists that our philosophy runs to anarchism. We will never submit to communism'. So say the F.A.I. and the C.N.T., though Q. would rather that they did not.[...] They do not care, these F.A.I. and C.N.T., for the things that really matter.[...] While good Catalans devote their energy to dedicating fountains to dead poets and changing the Castilian notices in the streets into Catalan, the anarcho-sindicalists are otherwise busy<sup>125</sup>.

But the social breakdown of the nationalists -with the notorious predominance of service workers- gave them a natural tendency towards the communists of either the PSUC or the POUM, with a leadership of schoolteachers and publicists, many of them onetime nationalists themselves, as opposed to the anarchists, often teachers, but in the unrecognized rationalist schools of the "libertarian" movement<sup>126</sup>. Thus, EC was what the communists called a "national revolutionary party", a "petit bourgeois" companion down the road to revolution<sup>127</sup>.

Estat Català, whatever the social underpinings, was immediately overwhelmed by the onset of revolution on July 19, in response to the military uprising against the Popular Front government. EC's context was uncomfortable: anarchosyndicalism, hegemonic in the summer of 1936, forced payment for past police and "escamot" persecution, while the weakened Generalitat retained Companys' hostility towards a force considered "inimical". EC therefore did not enter the Committee of Antifascist Militias, unlike weaker formations such as Acció Catalana Republicana. Even having seized the newspaper *Diario de Barcelona*, which, in Catalan, became its daily, EC did not obtain visibility through propaganda, nor did it impose its presence in municipal revolutionary committees throughout the region. The two communist rival parties saw the nationalist party as a quarry for militants, and so had no need to favor it; nor did the anarchosyndicalists, who feared the nationalists, considering them, however disproportionately, a danger. Threatened with a revenge death by anarchists, the EC leader Dencàs fled, quite demonized, with the additional poor luck of leaving Barcelona on an Italian vessel (he moved to France as soon as possible)<sup>128</sup>.

The ERC and the Generalitat, led by Companys, also overwhelmed, did its best to garner support from "worker" parties while tolerating the savage repression going on throughout Catalonia. Companys gave the president of the Catalan Parliament, Joan Casanovas i Maristany, a political rival, the chance of heading a contrary policy, as new head of government: Casanovas could try to tame the revolution by force, and take advantage of the *de facto* independence of Catalonia in the chaotic summer of 1936<sup>129</sup>. For nationalists in general, and especially for separatists, the paradox was that the "opportunity" for independence went hand in hand with violent social confusion, in evident contradiction to the dream of an orderly civil society becoming a public institution and a recognized State<sup>130</sup>. The obvious difficulty of his task obliged Casanovas to favor the new EC, despite the fact that it was a two-month-old split of the JEREC, but he had to tread cautiously, and so did little. At the end of September, Companys chose open collaboration with the CNT and the PSUC, using Tarradellas as his new first councillor. The "opportunity" (if such it was) was lost in a tawdry plot unveiled by Companys in November, which forced Casanovas to flee and broke any hope that EC might play a major role<sup>131</sup>.

Nor was the internal situation of EC particularly favorable<sup>132</sup>. Rivalries were aggravated by the existence of a masonic sector against clearly catholic elements<sup>133</sup>. Worse, ex-JEREC militants, used to giving orders, clashed with the unruly pretensions of former PNC and NS! activists. Dencàs was replaced as general secretary by Joan Torres i Picart, of the sector closest to Badia. Apparently, Torres attempted to approach Casanovas, identified with a policy of public order, against Companys'advisers, like Tarradellas and Miravittles, defenders of an agreement with the CNT. But Casanovas only warmed to the approach after he lost power, and so Torres became involved in intrigue against the new Tarradellas

cabinet. Like Casanovas, Torres i Picart fled to France, where he spoke unguardedly to journalists, complicating an already bad situation. Simultaneously, Cardona was caught, by anarchists of the Aragon Council, in an operation rescuing priests (the party essentially financed its war effort by passing those threatened with revolutionary reprisal over the Pyrenees, in exchange for payment); after a complicated negotiation, he had to exile himself again to Perpignan. In the meantime, NS! militants within EC kept up the usual oppositionist habits, bringing out the MNT's old title *Ferms!*, as a "unitary" protest against erratic leadership.

The result of all of these complications was that Joan Cornudella took control of the party in a meeting on November 29, after an assembly of delegates from local delegations held two days earlier. Without any explicit political past, Cornudella was acceptable to all sectors. In favor of a paradoxical approach to the CNT, especially once the December crisis of the Catalan government made more than evident the rise of the PSUC, Cornudella had to face many internal complaints, due to the fact that, since 1933, the usual ultra-catalanist impulse was anti-CNT, a sentiment which, despite everything, led to support of the Generalitat and, by extension, naturally reached out towards the "unified socialists". As a result, despite whatever Cornudella might argue, in the notorious "May Incidents" of 1937, a short uprising against "republican counterrevolution" led by restive anarchist sectors, the position of EC was clearly contrary in Barcelona, where its militia came down from the Aragonese front, and in Reus, where the party (led by Antoni Andreu Abelló) had a solid presence<sup>134</sup>.

Once the May uprising was over, with the relative eclipse of Tarradellas and lower visibility of the anarchosindicalists, excluded from the Catalan government, together with the growing intervention of the central government, Cornudella's position, even if more coherent, led to faction fighting: Viçenç Borrell, defender of a pro-PSUC line, issued a publication, *L'insurgent*, intentionally invoking the shade of the "martyr" Compte, in answer to the anti-communist alliance in *Ferms!*, and to a new weekly, *Som!!*, expression of the party Youth organization. In the midst of the squabbling, in July 1937, the party lost control of the *Diari de Barcelona*, taken over by its workers, and, from mid-August on, brought out a *Diari de Catalunya*. Without doubt, the appearance in August 1937 of a less than short-lived Partit Nacional Català reflected the struggle between sectors within EC, probably being an attempted divorce by ultranationalists unhappy with Cornudella and nostalgic for the old PNC. Coinciding with new intrigues of Casanovas, who had returned from exile, the first ordinary EC congress was held at the beginning of October, which silenced the most ostentous internal fights and reconfirmed Cornudella, even if Borrell managed to form part of the general secretariat. In reality, with the Negrín central government in control of Catalonia since May, and in the face of the desperate position of the republican cause, EC was dying as an organization.

For their part, what remained of the official JEREC -outside EC and the PSUC- survived during the Civil War, finally reduced to their formal function as youth section of the ERC, with Miravittles, with the full trust of Companys, as its protagonist. The JEREC participated, together with the ERC student union, Federació Nacional d'Estudiants de Catalunya (FNEC) and other parallel entities, in the "Front de la Joventut" set up in 1937 by the communist-led Joventuts Socialistes Unificades de Catalunya<sup>135</sup>. Its lack of importance was countervailed by the FNEC, with significant membership, as well as in the always

imaginative initiatives of Miravittles, named head of a Propaganda Comissariat in the Generalitat, one of the few real successes of the Catalan war effort.

The depressing context for Estat Català was paradoxically changed by republican defeat in 1939: in exile, all of the political organizations lost their social base and were reduced to their most radical militancy, a harsh fact which granted the radical nationalists a relative equality of footing which they had been denied during the revolution. Furthermore, EC, with its paramilitary tradition and underground habits, could expect to be exceptionally well adapted to surviving in difficult clandestine circumstances. In practice, this was not to be. To begin with, the internal split worsened; the party was divided into two parts, either Cornudella or Borrell, a feud reaffirmed in the concentration camps by mutual exclusion. Despite the division, the most EC activists continued with Cornudella, his cousin Jaume Cornudella, Antoni Andreu i Abelló, as well as the untiring Cardona, Domènec Ramon and Domingo Montserrat, into a new Front Nacional de Catalunya (FNC), established in Paris at the end of 1939<sup>136</sup>. Formally, the FNC was a "national front" for underground struggle, open to all Catalan parties, but in fact it was never more than a joint platform for nationalists<sup>137</sup>. Once again, a major internal connection within the FNC was the shared masonic link of many of its members. The FNC was able to carry on, for a time at least, in a similar line to the Catalan National Council that superseded the Generalitat-in-exile after German occupation authorities in France seized president Companys in 1940 and turned him over to the Franco régime for trial and execution. Borrell, on the other hand, followed Casanovas in his opposition to Companys and what he had represented. Accordingly, Casanovas' death in 1942 left Borrell politically orphaned; his initiative to form "Patriotic Sections" as a rival option to the FNC failed<sup>138</sup>.

Catalan radical nationalists chose to hook up with Polish and French intelligence in 1939, contacts that, although very important for "Enigma" work, did not prosper organizationally from the catalanist viewpoint, especially when Allied intelligence in World War II in the Iberian peninsula ended up dominated by the British, with whom Cornudella did not establish a good relationship<sup>139</sup>. Thus, despite the fact that some of the outstanding spies for both the British (like the famous "Garbo") and the Russians (like Trotsky's assassin Ramón Mercader) were individual Catalans, radical nationalism was unable to take the initiative and assume protagonism of "Free Catalonia", as many militants would have desired<sup>140</sup>. The generalized use of their slogans and ideas by more moderate exile groups worked against radical nationalist relevance, rather than the other way around<sup>141</sup>. In any case, throughout the middle 1940s, the police of the Franco dictatorship broke up the ultra-catalanist underground, cutting off any direct organizational continuity (as opposed to personalities) between the pre-1939 experience and the relative renovation, almost exclusively neo-marxist, of the 1960s<sup>142</sup>.

### **The Distortion of Demonization**

Miravittles, by 1935 a key spokesman for Companys, penned a canny description of Dencàs' ideology, as a Catalan "national socialist", caught between communist or fascist options:

It's been said that Dencàs was a fascist. Close friends of his assured that he was a communist. In reality, he was neither one thing nor the other. In one of the few conversations that I had [with him] he told me things that help to situate him politically. 'I'm a communist? I'm a fascist? I myself don't know. What I do realize, however, is that any policy, to succeed, needs to move young forces, to give a mystique, a discipline and carry them over to the terrain of action. In Catalonia, that's what I want to do. I want to leave behind the old republican mold; I don't want

to get into the mold -unknown here, at home- but old in other countries, of marxist dogmatics; [I want] to form a young and ardent political movement held up by two principles: nationalism, socialism." He was a sincere "national socialist".

In meetings, he would say things similar to those said by communists in countries submitted to a national [i.e. right-wing] domination. Nationalist exaltation, socialist exaltation<sup>143</sup>

Miravittles' irony went only so far. He himself, a few months later, would show the same ambiguity in a sympathetic portrait of the new Parti Populaire Français of Doriot<sup>144</sup>.

Endowed with a certain naiveté, Catalan separatism never crossed the line to a willful assumption of demonization. Marked since 1933 with the shadow of a doubt, radical nationalism nevertheless tended towards communist solutions, their humanitarian content taken at face value, and even the most recalcitrant ultra-catalanism resisted the leap to an open "fascist" position that, tactically and ideologically, generated more contradictions than it solved. There never was any logic of "bourgeois defense" to a "Catalan fascism": any force acting in name of the State, including the army, would always do a better job in any really serious "class conflict". To the degree that one can speak of a "Catalan fascism", it was always a hint, a tone, an accusation or a promise, but never a hard fact. The truth was that in both form and content, Macià's Estat Català -and its many similarly-named successors, all variations on a theme- were extremely similar to Mussolini's incipient fascism, except that, as a *Döppelgänger*, Catalan radical nationalism was its opposite: the vague leftist dream in pre-1914 European politics of a marriage of nationalism and socialism, the ideal of a revolutionary force rather than a staid and bureaucratic party, was realized in Catalan separatism, which remained on the left, as it was the negation of the Spanish army<sup>145</sup>. The sustained dependency on Freemasonic references -and even sociability- of the majority trend in radical catalanist political culture marked its ideological location. But more significant still, when push came to shove, however conservative were its impulses in Catalan politics or rightist its intellectual debates, on a Spanish stage, its decisive enemies always were on the right. Put in marxist-leninist terms, why did the "bourgeoisie" need a "Catalan fascism", if they could participate in a project for a "fascist" counterrevolutionary "New State"? There were scant possibilities for any real understanding by Catalan radical nationalists with the Spanish right, because any rightist radicalization would necessarily intensify a separatist stance.

So Macià and his heirs remained fixed at that particular point of innocence on the ideological axis from left to right to which Mussolini, a loathed pariah to the Italian Socialists, could never return. Perhaps this was due to the lateral nature of Catalan and Spanish politics. But, in the interwar years, Barcelona was a metropolitan city, slightly larger than Madrid, not much different in size from Milan. Catalan political habits were notoriously more "French" than Spanish<sup>146</sup>. With such structural forces behind him, Macià created a liberation movement capable of becoming by happenstance a single populist-style party, a harbinger of slightly later events in Latin America. But, at heart, Catalan nationalism had a serious problem with any fascist scheme: it conceived power in terms of civil society rather than the State, and independence as physical guarantee to the full operational freedom of that same civil society. For this reason, Catalan separatists could always come to some arrangement with the anarchosindicalists and vice-versa, even if they could also fight bitterly. Similarly, communism seemed attractive because it talked about "class behavior", syndicates and factories, understood as physical, even tangible, values in civil society, rather than with the idealization of the State and its vast power, which was, in Catalan historical experience, distant and nasty. In addition, communism was much further away than fascism,



Russia being unimaginable in real terms from Barcelona, while Italy was a known value, the manifest alternative, across a short stretch of sea, to France, across the border. In Catalan separatism, the familiar forms of Western European politics combined with the unusual circumstances of Spanish politics to produce an illuminating exception.

In many ways, both political and intellectual, Catalonia in the first half of the Twentieth Century was much more a cultural suburb of France -in Catalan translation and with a special link to Italy- than a peculiar province of Spanish letters and ideology. Catalanism in particular represented the assumption of French ideas, or, more correctly, the filter through which German and Central European concepts or English and North American notions were imported, adjusted always to the centrality of Paris as a world capital and to corresponding French political and intellectual fashions, with their characteristic preoccupations. Italian intellectual currents were an exciting alternative, with their taste of the upstart challenge to Francocentrism, but also with the concession of dependancy towards Paris as a cultural hub that was common to Barcelona; but Milanese innovation was never more than a counterpoint to whatever was coming out of the "*ville lumière*". Madrid was nowhere in this perspective, except as a center of government.

Accordingly, Catalan politics -as I have argued here- represented a special circumstance in European political development up to the 1950s. Unlike strictly Spanish politics, with its self-indulgent, self-preoccupied tradition of isolationism, Catalan nationalist politics ran on an European rythm, with the same sort of ideological fascinations common to Western Europe, but with a strongly distorting perception, given the centrifugal, anti-centralist, even anti-statist, trends focused on the Catalan capital. While Catalan radical nationalists were not a significantly intellectual presence (rather the more conservative Lliga and the moderate Acció Catalana had an effective monopoly there), the ongoing experience of "separatist" militancy, and the possible models that ultracatalanists would interpret in their own way, serve with hindsight to correct some of the more gratuitous generalizations that abound concerning the relation between fascism and extremist nationalism in Twentieth-Century European politics. The anomalous nature of Catalan radical nationalism, its exceptional preference for communism instead of fascism, warns against the simplifications of interpretative theory.

## NOTES

Portions of this article, aside from other references, make extensive use of my entries "Bloc Català Treballista"; "Esquerra Catalanista"; "Estat Català [1922-1931]"; "Estat Català [1936-1939]"; "Estat Català-Partit Proletari"; "Federació Democràtica Nacionalista"; "Front Nacional Català Proletari"; "Joventuts d'Esquerra republicana-Estat Català"; "La Traza"; "Liga Patriótica Española"; "Moviment Nacionalista Totalitari"; "Nosaltres Sols!"; "Partit Nacionalista Català"; in MOLAS, I.; CULLA, J.B. (eds.): *Diccionari dels partits polítics de Catalunya, segle XX*. Barcelona, Enciclopèdia Catalana, 2000, p. 17, 68, 85-86, 86-88, 89-90, 104-105, 112-113, 142-143, 147-148, 150-151, 168-169, 177-178, 257-258. The article has been completed under the "Sabbatical" program for twenty-five years of uninterrupted teaching at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, for which I am duly appreciative. I would also like to thank Stanley G. Payne and Isidre Molas for their encouragement in writing this text. To avoid a profusion of capitalized terms, I have

preferred to present all political denominations in lower case, except where a specific point is being made, requiring emphasis.

1. For a full discussion of the debate in 1933 on the alleged "fascism" of the "Estat Català" wing of the Esquerra, see CULLA i CLARA, J.B.: *El catalanisme d'esquerra (1938-1936)*. Barcelona, Curial, 1977, p. 111-210.
2. PEERS, E.A.: *Catalonia Infelix* (1938). Westport (Ct.), Greenwood, 1970, p. 234-235; BRENNAN, G.: *The Spanish Labyrinth* (1943). Cambridge (U.K.), Cambridge University Press, 1962, p. 282; DE MADARIAGA, S.: *Spain. A Modern History*. New York, Praeger, 1958, p. 428, 430.
3. From the semi-official ARRARÁS, J.: *Historia de la Segunda República española*. Madrid, Editora Nacional, 1964, vol. II, p. 220-222, to the memors of the "jonsista" FRAGOSO DEL TORO, V.: *La España de ayer*. Madrid, Editora Nacional, 1967, vol. II, chap. II, the implication would be of a "false" fascism; GARCÍA VENERO, M.: *Historia del nacionalismo catalán* (2a ed.). Madrid, Editora Nacional, 1967, vol. II, p. 385.
4. According to Dalí, during the two hours he allegedly spent in police headquarters, everyone had a thread in his mouth, because they were all sewing separatist lone-star armbands on their sleeves: DALÍ, S.: *Vida secreta de Salvador Dalí* [1942]. Figueres, Dasa, 1981, p. 381.
5. As examples: THOMAS, H.: *The Spanish Civil War*. New York, Harper & Row, 1963, p. 76; JACKSON, G.: *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War, 1931-1939*. Princeton (N.J.), Princeton University Press, 1965, p. 150; Even when the role of Catalan radical nationalism on the left in the Spanish Civil War is acknowledged, it is presented as a sort of perverse paradox: see ARZALIER, F.: *Les perdants. La dérive fasciste des mouvements autonomistes et indépendantistes au XXe siècle*. Paris, La Découverte, 1990, especially p. 80. A more balanced treatment in PAYNE, S.G.: *Spain's First Democracy*. Madison (Wis.), University of Wisconsin Press, 1993, p. 201-202. Separatism and/or independentism is something of a paradoxical taboo in Catalan society, always present but alluded to in detail only in inward-looking circumstances, away from incomprehending outside eyes. Given my extensive writing on the subject of the Catalan separatist movement, I shall attempt to counter what could be seen as excessive self-citation by offering a balance and stressing other sources, when available, especially those written from a nationalist stance, that reply (or may be considered as a reply) to my arguments. For reasons of accessibility, I have preferred published sources, with their corresponding notes and/or bibliography, to elaborate citation here of primary sources. On the cross between historiographic and political implications in Catalonia, see the nationalist statement: BALCELLS, A.: *La Història de Catalunya a debat. Els textos d'una polèmica*. Barcelona, Curial, 1994.
6. FURET, F.: *Le passé d'une illusion. Essai sur l'idée communiste au XXe. Siècle*. Paris, Laffont/Calmann-Lévy, 1995, p. 197. Even Trotsky in the 1930s could say much the same thing: TROTSKY, L.D.: *The Revolución Betrayed*, cited in GREGOR, A.J.: "Mussolini and History" in PELAEZ, M.J. (ed.): *Public Law and Comparative Politics*. Barcelona, Càtedra de Historia del Derecho y de las Instituciones de la Universidad de Málaga et al., 1991, p. 4817-4832 (citation p. 4828).
7. BEST, G.: *Humanity in Warfare. The Modern History of the International Law of Armed Conflicts*. London, Methuen, 1983, chap. IV.
8. UCELAY-DA CAL, E.: "La Guerre civile espagnole et la propagande franco-belge de la Première Guerre Mondiale" in MARTIN, J.-C. (dir.): *La Guerre Civile entre Histoire et Mémoire*. Nantes, Ouest Éditions, 1995, p. 77-90.
9. NOLTE, E.: *El Fascismo de Mussolini a Hitler*. Barcelona, Caralt, 1970, p. 31-33, 109, 113, 146.
10. BENNET, R.: *The Black and Tans* [1959]. London, New English Library, 1970; social complexities from an Irish nationalist standpoint: GRIFFITH, K.; O'GRADY, T.: *Ireland's Unfinished Revolution. An Oral History* [1982]. Boulder (Col.), Roberts Rinehart, 1999; the disgruntled English perspective on Irish revolution: DAWSON, R.: *Red Terror and Green* [1920]. London, New English Library, 1972.
11. On the Freikorps: WAITE, R.G.L.: *Vanguard of Nazism. The Free Corps Movement in Postwar Germany 1918-1923*. New York, W.W. Norton, 1969; VENNEN, D.: *Baltikum*. Paris, Robert Laffont, 1974; JONES, N.H.: *Hitler's Heralds. The Story of the Freikorps 1918-1923*. New York, Dorset, 1987.
12. ORTEGA Y GASSET, J.: "Sobre el fascismo. II- Ilegitimidad" [1925] in ORTEGA Y GASSET, J.: *Obras Completas*, vol. 2, *El Espectador*. Madrid, Alianza, 1983, p. 501-505 (citations p. 501, 502, 503, 504).
13. CAMBÓ, F.: *Meditacions. Dietari (1936-1940)*. Barcelona, Alpha, 1982, p. 269.
14. HELLER, M.: *El hombre nuevo soviético. De la utopía a la realidad*. Barcelona, Planeta, 1985.
15. WEBER, E.: *Varieties of Fascism*. Princeton (N.J.), Van Nostrand, 1964.

16. SOLÉ TURA, J.: *Catalanismo y revolución burguesa*. Madrid, Edicusa, 1970.
17. UCELAY-DA CAL, E.: "Llegar a capital: rango urbano, rivalidades interurbanas y la imaginación nacionalista en la España del siglo XX", Congreso "Las claves de la España del siglo XX". Valencia, 24-27 octubre 2000 (book in press).
18. The term "catalanism" while a neologism in English, is logically standard in Catalan, as a generic category covering nationalism and regionalism together, without making internal ideological distinctions; therefore, the term, and its derivatives, such as "ultra-catalanism", are used throughout the text without quotation marks.
19. On PRAT DE LA RIBA: CASSASSAS, J.: "Enric Prat de la Riba: la tenacitat d'un estratega" in BALCELLS, A. (ed.): *El pensament polític català del segle XVIII a mitjan segle XX*. Barcelona, Edicions 62, 1988, p. 179-192; and on Prat's notion of empire: CASASSAS, J.: "Un problema de relación nacionalismo-burguesía. El imperialismo en la teoría y la estrategia de E. Prat de la Riba", *Estudios de Historia Social*, n. 28-29/January-June 1984, p. 169-181; for the importance of foreign models: UCELAY-DA CAL, E.: "El Mirall de Catalunya: models internacionals en el desenvolupament del nacionalisme i del separatisme català, 1875-1923", *Estudios de Historia Social*, n. 28-29/January-June 1984, p. 213-219; LLORENS i VILA, J.: *Catalanisme i moviments nacionalistes contemporanis (1885-1901)*. Barcelona, 1988; BURGAYA, J.: *La formació del catalanisme conservador i els models "nacionals" coetanis. Premsa catalanista i moviments nacionalistes contemporanis, 1861-1901*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1999.
20. CACHO VIU, V.: *Revisión de Eugenio D'Ors (1902-1930)*. Barcelona, Quaderns Crema/Residencia de Estudiantes, 1997; for the context: CACHO VIU, V.: "Francia 1870-España 1898" in CACHO VIU, V.: *Repensar el noventa y ocho*. Madrid, Biblioteca Nueva, 1997, p. 77-115.
21. MAURRAS, C.: *Enquête su la Monarchie*. Paris, Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, n.d., p. 20-21; MAURRAS, C.: *Encuesta sobre la Monarquía*. Madrid, Sociedad General Española de Librería, 1935, p. 213-214. Specific to the Spanish juridical and political tradition, "fueros" may be understood as "privileges and exemptions granted to provinces, cities and persons" (Real Academia Española, *Diccionario de la lengua española*, 1992).
22. CAMBÓ, F.: *Visions d'Orient*. Barcelona, Editorial Catalana, 1924; CAMBÓ, F.: *Entorn del feixisme italià*. Barcelona, Editorial Catalana, 1924; CAMBÓ, F.: *Les dictadures*. Barcelona, Llibreria Catalònia, 1929; all are contained in CAMBÓ, F.: *Llibres*. Barcelona, Alpha, 1984. See the use made of Cambó in MAZOWER, M.: *Dark Continent. Europe's Twentieth Century*. New York, Knopf, 1999.
23. Reasons of length do not permit me to follow strictly intellectual debates by contemporaries on the form or content of a possible "Catalan fascism". See a nationalist interpretation: PANYELLA, V.: *J.V. Foix: 1918 i la idea catalana*. Barcelona, Edicions 62, 1989; PANYELLA, V.: *Josep Carbonell i Gener (Sitges, 1897-1979). Entre les avantguardes i l'humanisme*. Barcelona, Edicions 62, 2000.
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  33. ROMERO-MAURA, J.: *The Spanish Army and Catalonia: The "Cu-Cut!" Incident and the Law of Jurisdictions*. London, Sage, 1976.
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  65. SALLÉS, A.: *Quan Catalunya era d'Esquerra*. Barcelona, Edicions 62, 1986; IVERN, M.D.: *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (1931-1936)*. Barcelona, Abadía de Montserrat, vol. I/1988, vol. II/1989.
  66. This interpretation is developed at length in: UCCELAY-DA CAL, E.: *La Catalunya populista: Imatge, cultura i política in l'etapa republicana, 1931-1939*. Barcelona, La Magrana, 1982.
  67. UCCELAY-DA CAL, E.: "Acerca del concepto del populismo", *Historia Social*, n. 2/Autumn 1988, p. 51-74.
  68. ALAVEDRA, J.: *El fet del dia*. Barcelona, Llibreria Catalònia, 1935, p. 305; see, in general, UCCELAY-DA CAL, E.: *Francesc Macià. Una vida en imatges*. Barcelona, Generalitat de Catalunya, 1984.
  69. HOMS, J.: "Entrevista a Mario Firmenich [...]", *La Vanguardia*, Barcelona, 27 August 2000, Revista p. 12.
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  71. On Badia: ROS i SERRA, J.: *Miquel Badia, un defensor oblidat de Catalunya*. Barcelona, Ed. Mediterrània, 1996.
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  73. BALCELLS, A.: "Introducció", (p. 5-24), DENCÀS, J.: *El 6 d'octubre des del Palau de Governació*. Barcelona, Curial, 1979; also UCCELAY-DA CAL, E.: *Estat Català: The Strategies of Separation and Revolution of Catalan Radical Nationalism (1919-1933)*, Ph.D. dissertation. Columbia University, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms International, 1979, part II, section VII, chapter 3.
  74. A point that was always used in defense of the "escamots": FOIX, P.: *Barcelona, 6 d'octubre*. Barcelona, Editorial Cooperativa Popular, 1935, p. 37-39.
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  76. Highly detailed but of scant interpretative use: ESTEVEZ, X.: *De la Triple Alianza al Pacto de San Sebastián (1923-1930). Antecedentes de Galeuzca*. San Sebastián, Universidad de Deusto-Mundaiz, [¿1991?]; also ESTEVEZ, X.: *Impenitencias galeuzcanas*. La Coruña, Ediciós do Castro, 1992.

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110. CHAVARDÈS, M.: *Le 6 février 1934. la République en danger*. Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1966, p. 12.
111. As an example of Dencàs' loss of reputation: PEERS, E.A.: *The Spanish Tragedy, 1930-1936* [1936]. Westport, Greenwood, 1975, p. 167.
112. For example: GOREN, R. (J. BECKER, ed.): *The Soviet Union and Terrorism*. London, George Allen & Unwin, 1984, p. 68.
113. VINYES, R.: *La Catalunya internacional. El frontpopulisme en l'exemple català*. Barcelona, Curial, 1983.
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118. See the BEN publication *Juny*, [numberless], January 1936.
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126. UCELAY-DA CAL, E.: "Socialistas y comunistas en Cataluña durante la Guerra Civil: un ensayo de interpretación", *Anales de Historia de la Fundación Pablo Iglesias*, monographic issue (Coordinador: S. JULIÀ): *Socialismo y guerra civil*, vol. 2/1987, p. 295-324.
127. HERNÁNDEZ, J.: "The development of the Democratic Revolution in Spain. Towards the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of Spain", *The Communist International*, vol. XIII, n. 8/August 1936, p. 956-969 (quote p. 965).
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