

**Theses on the Spanish Civil War and the  
revolutionary situation created on July 19,  
1936**

Agustin Guillamón

June 2001

# Contents

<b>Preface</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Thesis no. 1.</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Thesis no. 2.</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Thesis no. 3.</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Thesis no. 4.</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Thesis no. 5.</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Thesis no. 6.</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Thesis no. 7.</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Thesis no. 8.</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Thesis no. 9.</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Thesis no. 10.</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Thesis no. 11.</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Thesis no. 12.</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Thesis no. 13.</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Thesis no. 14.</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Thesis no. 15.</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Thesis no. 16.</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Thesis no. 17.</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Thesis no. 18.</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Thesis no. 19.</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Thesis no. 20.</b>	<b>32</b>

<b>Thesis no. 21.</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Thesis no. 22.</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Thesis no. 23.</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Thesis no. 24.</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Thesis no. 25.</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Thesis no. 26.</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Thesis no. 27.</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Thesis no. 28.</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Thesis no. 29.</b>	<b>47</b>

*“The working class is revolutionary or it is nothing.”*  
– Karl Marx, Letter to Schweitzer (February 13, 1865)

*“All history was a palimpsest, scraped clean and reinscribed exactly as often as was necessary. In no case would it have been possible, once the deed was done, to prove that any falsification had taken place.”*  
– George Orwell, 1984

*“The function of history would therefore be showing that the laws deceive, that the kings play a part, that power deludes and that historians lie.”*  
– Michel Foucault, *The Genealogy of Racism*

*“It is ‘no longer a question of judging the past in the name of a truth that only we can possess in the present, but of risking the destruction of the subject who seeks knowledge in ... the will to knowledge’.”*  
– Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History”

*“The spectacle, as the present social organization of the paralysis of history and memory, of the abandonment of history built on the foundation of historical time, is the false consciousness of time.”*  
– Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*

*“Historical memory is a battlefield of the class struggle.”*  
– *Combate por la historia. Manifiesto* (July 8, 1999)

# Preface

Hundreds of books have been written about the Spanish War and its historiography batters our minds with an accumulation of clone-books, which cite each other and repeat one after another the same errors or identical ideological interpretations, depending on the political tendency, without exhibiting even the least trace of critical spirit, when they do not restrict their ambitions to self-justification or castrate themselves in the Francoist moral, “that should never happen again”.

The manipulation of the facts, when they are not simply concealed, the theoretical confusionism in analyzing what took place and the errors accumulated by historiography and the compilers are on such a scale and magnitude that refuting them would require the (useless) work of an entire lifetime.

Let us take one of the most outstanding examples: the question of the existence of a situation of dual power in Catalonia, involving the Central Committee of Antifascist Militias and the government of the Generalitat. This question regarding the existence of a SITUATION OF DUAL POWER IS UNDOUBTEDLY FUNDAMENTAL for any analysis of the Spanish War. It is generally accepted so dogmatically that any doubts concerning the existence of a situation of dual power might appear to be foolishness. Nonetheless, those who participated in these great events, with ideologies as different as those of Tarradellas, Nin, Montseny, García Oliver, Azaña, etc., deny the existence of such a situation of dual power.

The theses we set forth below are the products of the study, published in various issues of *BALANCE*, of the diverse interpretations offered by the revolutionary minorities that intervened in the Spanish War concerning the historical facts and the prevailing ideologies of the period, 1936–1939. We exclude, because it is of no interest to us, the bourgeois view; nor are we interested in confronting the interpretations that issue from counterrevolutionary and/or Stalinist camp. The theses we elaborate here constitute an attempt to arrive at a theoretical synthesis concerning the Spanish War and the revolutionary situation that arose in July 1936, from the perspective of the revolutionary proletariat that was defended by the revolutionary minorities that existed at the time: Bordiguists, Bolshevik-Leninists, Josep Rebull and The Friends of Durruti.

Augustín Guillamón  
On behalf of *BALANCE*

## Thesis no. 1.

From July 17 to 19, 1936, there was a military uprising against the government of the Republic, an uprising that was supported by the Church, the majority of the Army, fascists, bourgeoisie, landlords ... whose preparation had been tolerated by the republican government, which had won the elections in February 1936 thanks to the Popular Front coalition. The military, the fascists and the parliamentary REPUBLICAN democratic and the monarchist parties, parties of the left and of the right, pursued the policy that was most advantageous for the Spanish bourgeoisie, and for its preparations for a bloody coup d'état. The military uprising was defeated in the major cities and provoked, as a reaction (in the republican zone), a revolutionary movement, which emerged victorious from its armed insurrection against the army. The Defense Cadres and Committees of the CNT-FAI, which had been prepared since 1931, played a preponderant role in this insurrectionary victory. The loss of Zaragoza was due, among other reasons, to the lack of preparation and resolve on the part of a secret leadership, which was operating from a hidden refuge, and engaged in constant negotiation with the republican authorities and the "undecided" military elements, instead of organizing and leading the workers insurrection on the basis of the Defense Cadres.

The fact that the revolutionary movement of July 19, 1936 emerged as a reaction to a military uprising does not mean that it would not have taken place without the military uprising. In fact, since October 1934, and throughout the entire electoral campaign of February 1936, both the CNT and the POUM thought that a confrontation with the fascist forces was inevitable, concerning whose plans for a coup d'état they were aware, and against which they were conscientiously preparing for an armed confrontation, although they never rejected maintaining ties and collaborating with the republican parties or the government of the Generalitat.

In any event, the defeat of the military uprising cannot be attributed to the leadership of any political or trade union organization, but to the clandestine military organization of the confederal defense cadres, to the neighborhood defense committees, and to the "federation of the barricades" in Barcelona; and to the local committees in the various Catalanian towns.

## Thesis no. 2.

This victorious armed insurrection of the proletariat, in the republican zone, neutralized the coercive apparatus and therefore the capacity for repression of the capitalist state. This insurrection also led to a series of “revolutionary conquests” of a social and economic type. The republican state broke up into a multitude of local or sectoral powers, and many of its functions were “usurped” by the working class organizations. THERE WAS A VACUUM OF STATE POWER. Having lost its capacity for coercion, the republican state witnessed the emergence of autonomous regional powers, totally independent of the central government, which in turn (such as the government of the Generalitat in Catalonia) saw how its authority collapsed; and how the various revolutionary, local, sectoral, neighborhood, factory, defense, supply, trade union and party committees and popular and rearguard militias performed those functions that the government was incapable of exercising, because of the loss of its repressive apparatus and the general arming of the working class organizations. In many places, the revolutionary committees, which Munis theorized as government-committees, exercised all power on a local level, but there was no coordination or centralization of these local committees: there was A VACUUM OF CENTRAL OR STATE POWER. NEITHER THE REPUBLICAN STATE NOR THE AUTONOMOUS REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS (Generalitat) EXERCISED CENTRAL POWER; but neither did the local committees.

## Thesis no. 3.

The revolutionary committees—defense, factory, neighborhood, workers control, local, supply, etc.—comprised the embryo of the organs of working class power. They initiated a methodical expropriation of the property of the bourgeoisie, undertaking industrial and agricultural collectivization, organizing the popular militias that stabilized the fronts during the first days of the war, and organized control patrols and rearguard militias that imposed the new revolutionary order through the violent repression of the Church, employers, fascists and yellow trade unionists and their *pistoleros*. But these committees were unable to coordinate among themselves and create a centralized working class power. The initiatives and activities of the revolutionary committees bypassed the leaders of the various traditional organizations of the workers movement, including the CNT and the FAI. There was a revolution in the streets and the factories, and some POTENTIAL organs of the power of the revolutionary proletariat: THE COMMITTEES, which no party, organization or vanguard was able or wanted to COORDINATE, REINFORCE AND TRANSFORM INTO AUTHENTIC ORGANS OF WORKING CLASS POWER.

The majority of the leadership of the CNT opted for collaboration with the bourgeois state in order to win the war against fascism. García Oliver's slogan of July 21, "go for broke", was nothing but a Leninist proposal for the CNT bureaucracy to seize power; a proposal, furthermore, that Oliver himself knew would be rendered unviable and absurd when, at the CNT plenum, he posed the false alternative of "anarchist dictatorship" or antifascist collaboration. García Oliver's spurious "extremist" proposal, Abad de Santillán's warning about isolation and foreign intervention, and Durruti's suggestion that they wait until Zaragoza was taken, led the plenum to vote for "provisional" antifascist collaboration. **The revolutionary alternative of destroying the republican state and transforming the committees into organs of working class power and the militias into a proletarian army was never proposed.**

One cannot speak of a situation of dual power, involving the Central Committee of Antifascist Militias (CCMA) and the government of the Generalitat, at any time during the existence of the former, because there was never a pole of centralized workers power at any time; we can, however, speak of an opportunity, already forfeited during the first few weeks after July 19, to establish a situation of dual power between the revolutionary committees and the CCMA. Some trade union, local and neighborhood committees expressed from the very beginning their mistrust and fear of the CCMA, because they foresaw the counterrevolutionary role that it would play.

Many of those who played their parts in the events, along with the historians, speak of a situation of dual power between the CCMA and the government of the Generalitat. It is a profound error, however, to believe that the CCMA was anything other than what it really was: a pact between the workers organizations and the bourgeois organizations and state institutions, an institution of class collaboration, a Popular Front government in which representatives of the government of the Generalitat, the bourgeois republican parties, the Stalinists, the POUM and the CNT participated.



The leaders of the CNT based their power on the “proximity” of the revolutionary committees, if only because the majority of their members were also members of the CNT, but at the same time they mistrusted the committees because they did not fit into their organizational and doctrinal plans, and also because, as a bureaucracy, they felt threatened by their activities, which they were unable to direct.

The CCMA in Catalonia was unlike the other similar institutions that arose in other regions of Spain, insofar as it was dominated by the CNT, and due to the fact that the CNT owed its power to the revolutionary committees, in which the majority of the elements were members of the CNT.

It was in Catalonia where the latter were most widespread and most enduring. In other institutions similar to the CCMA that had arisen in other parts of Spain, the impact, profundity, scope and duration of the committees was much less and/or they only lasted for a few days or weeks.

The revolutionary committees constituted the self-organization of the working class in a revolutionary situation, as was as the embryo of the organs of power of the Spanish revolutionary proletariat. But we must understand their weaknesses, and above all their inability to coordinate among themselves for the purpose of centralizing proletarian power in a workers state. There was no revolutionary party or workers vanguard capable of transforming these committees into workers councils, characterized by the democratic election of their delegates in assemblies, revocable at any time, and capable of coordinating their activities on a regional and national level, up to the formation of a State of Workers, Militia and Peasants Councils. The CNT and FAI ISSUED NO DIRECTIVES TO THEIR MILITANTS until July 28, when they threatened to shoot any “uncontrollables” who continued to expropriate the bourgeoisie and persisted in taking fascists, bourgeois, priests and former members of the yellow trade unions (the *pistoleros* of the employers) “for a ride”. In July 1936, the workers knew what to do without orders from their leaders, and proceeded to expropriate the bourgeoisie and suppress some of the institutions of rule of the capitalist state (army, Church, police), in such a manner that they went beyond not only the state structures, but also their own political and trade union organizations; but they were incapable of acting against their leaders, they respected the state apparatus and its officials, and in May 1937 they grudgingly accepted, but accepted nonetheless, capitulation to the class enemy.

Furthermore, these revolutionary committees, although they were potentially the organs of workers power, were hamstrung by the overwhelming influence of the ideology of antifascist unity and many of them were rapidly transformed into antifascist committees, composed of workers and bourgeoisie, in the service of the program of the petty bourgeoisie. The entry of the anarchist ministers in the Madrid government, and of anarchists and POUMistas in the government of the Generalitat, made it possible, in October 1936, without the least armed resistance, to dissolve the local committees and replace them with the antifascist municipal councils. The defense and factory committees, along with a few local committees, resisted, but could only postpone, their final dissolution.

## Thesis no. 4.

The overwhelming predominance of the anarchist movement in Spain cannot be explained by racial or psychological causes or reasons of character. Nor can it be explained by certain backward economic traits, such as the survival of “feudal relations” in the Andalusian countryside, or the predominance of small industry in Catalonia. And much less by the mythical evangelical influence of Fanelli in 1868, and his “indelible” legacy.

The evident difference between the Spanish and the international workers movements, with regard to the contrasting predominance of the anarchists in the Spanish workers movement and of the social democrats in the rest of Europe, is fundamentally due to the fact that it was possible to engage in the parliamentary, democratic and reformist struggle to obtain substantial reforms in the standard of living and the political representation of the working class in the rest of Europe. From 1919 to 1923, the Spanish employers created and financed a trade union of *pistoleros* (the Free Trade Union), which, with the help of the police and the government, proceeded to physically eliminate the working class leaders and militants. This unequal battle concluded with the establishment of the military dictatorship of Primo de Rivera and the outlawing of the CNT.

The parliamentary road, or the possibility of achieving social reforms, was not opened up in Spain until the proclamation of the Second Republic in 1931. During the thirties the extremely robust anarchist tradition, the recent unstable experiences of Spanish parliamentarism, and especially the extreme sluggishness and timidity that characterized social and political reform, were factors that made the anarchist movement very powerful and caused it to continue to enjoy the support of most workers. The committees that spontaneously arose everywhere in July 1936, were imperfect and incomplete organs of workers power. They were unlike the workers councils due to the fact that the delegates were not democratically elected by the workers in general assemblies in the factories, to whom they would have to be responsible for their policies. The committees were dependent on the trade union or political bureaucracies that had appointed them. This dependency hindered the coordination of the committees among themselves, the possibility of creating higher decision-making institutions, characterized by class unity, and the exercise of workers power in the economy or the militias. The committees were therefore transformed into the subordinate institutions of trade unions or parties, and the creation of powerful unified institutions of workers power was rendered impossible. Thus, instead of a revolutionary army of the working class, a centralized expression of workers power, a federation of militias arose in which each party or trade union competed to create its own army, more or less coordinated on the front with the other workers organizations. Instead of a socialized economy, directed by a Government of the Workers Councils, there was collectivization that unfolded within the framework of a kind of trade union capitalism, when it was not managed or coordinated by the bourgeois government of the Generalitat, at the service of the program of the petty bourgeoisie.

The entry of the trade unions and parties in the autonomous government of the Generalitat, and in the republican central government of Valencia, also meant the dissolution of the commit-

tees, and the end to the danger that they might be able to transform themselves into workers councils.

## Thesis no. 5.

Without the destruction of the capitalist state one cannot speak of a proletarian revolution. One may speak of a **revolutionary situation**, a revolutionary movement, a victorious insurrection, the “partial” and/or “temporary” disappearance of the functions of the bourgeois state, political chaos, the loss of real authority on the part of the republican administration, a VACUUM OF CENTRALIZED POWER or an atomization of power, but not of a proletarian revolution.

The REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION of July 1936 never led to a proposal to establish a working class power in opposition to the republican state: therefore, there was no proletarian revolution. In the absence of revolution the revolutionary situation rapidly evolved in the direction of the consolidation of the republican state, the weakening of the revolutionary forces and the definitive victory of the counterrevolution after the May Days of 1937, with the outlawing and political persecution of the POUM in June 1937, as well as with the driving underground of the Bolshevik-Leninist Section of Spain (SBLE) and The Friends of Durruti Group.

For the same reasons, one cannot speak of a situation of DUAL POWER, since there was no pole of workers power that proposed to destroy the capitalist state: it would be more proper to speak, in the Catalan case, of a duplication of powers between the Generalitat and the CCMA. The CCMA was an institution of CLASS COLLABORATION, which acted as shock absorber and mediator between the myriad of revolutionary committees and the broken down apparatus of the capitalist state. But the CCMA was above all the only instrument of the antifascist front that was CAPABLE of sterilizing, channeling, truncating and subduing the popular revolutionary initiatives that were undertaken by the revolutionary committees, BY MEANS OF their integration in ambiguous institutions (subordinated to the CCMA), which were characterized by their SUBMISSION to the antifascist program and the government of the Generalitat. This process was exemplified in institutions like the Central Committee for Supply, the Rearguard Militias, the Control Patrols, the Revolutionary Tribunals, the Committee of Investigation, the Workers Control Committees, the Councils of Workers and Soldiers, etc., which were created to REPLACE, DESTROY OR CHANGE THE CLASS NATURE of the popular and working class initiatives of a revolutionary character; after a transitional period of two or three months, during which time they functioned as institutions subordinated to the CCMA, they were integrated into the structure of the government of the Generalitat, and were later dissolved or replaced by institutions of the republican state apparatus. The anarchists, however, thought they were clever enough and powerful enough to manipulate the state as a technical instrument in their service of their plans. On August 11 the CNT and the POUM joined the Council of the Economy of the Generalitat, whose purpose was the coordination and planning of the Catalan economy.

The participation of the CNT (and also the POUM and FAI) in the bourgeois institutions, with its corresponding offer of public responsibilities, together with a massive influx of new trade union members, and the departure to the front of the best militants, the most experienced in the social struggle and the most theoretically advanced, favored a rapid process of bureaucratization in the CNT.

The revolutionary militants found themselves isolated in the assemblies and condemned to a permanent minority status they could not overcome. The fundamental principles of anarchosyndicalism collapsed and gave way to an opportunism disguised by the ideology of antifascist unity (“renounce the revolution to win the war”) and the pragmatism of loyal and faithful collaboration with the parties and the government of the republican bourgeoisie, with the exclusive goal of enforcing the program of the bourgeoisie. THE TRADE UNION BUREAUCRACY OF THE CNT DEMONSTRATED ITS COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY NATURE IN MAY 1937. The struggle against fascism was the alibi that permitted the renunciation of the destruction of the republican bourgeois state, defended by the counterrevolutionary forces of the PSUC and the ERC. The confrontation between the revolutionary proletariat and the CNT bureaucracy, which was now in the counterrevolutionary camp, was inevitable. The CNT-UGT pact of March 1938 established a de facto state capitalism similar to that which prevailed in the Soviet Union.

## Thesis no. 6.

No revolutionary organization existed that was capable of proposing the destruction of the capitalist state: therefore one cannot speak of a situation of dual power. This does not mean that there were not organized revolutionary nuclei, nor do we have to doubt the (subjective) “revolutionary will” of POUMistas or anarchists. It means that the class struggle in Spain, during the 1930s, had not generated a revolutionary movement that was capable of proposing the program of the proletarian revolution (and the social dictatorship of the proletariat) and its ANTAGONISM to the existence of the capitalist state. BECAUSE THIS ATOMIZED POWER, incapable of centralizing itself and coordinating itself in a WORKERS POWER, confronted the republican state power, usurped the functions of the capitalist state, which were taken from the republican authorities against their will, but most of all, DUE TO THE FACT THAT IT DID NOT HAVE THE NECESSARY ABILITY TO COORDINATE ITS ACTIVITIES AND TO THE FACT THAT NO WORKING CLASS ORGANIZATION TOOK THE INITIATIVE TO DO SO, a few weeks after the victorious insurrection, the situation of the VACUUM OF CENTRAL POWER caused all the working class organizations to put themselves at the service of this same republican state. The revolutionary potential of the proletarian committees was transformed into the submissiveness of the antifascist committees, or else they were replaced, at the local level, by the new popular front municipal councils beginning in October 1936.

THERE WAS NO WORKERS POWER THAT WAS ANTAGONISTIC TOWARDS THE CAPITALIST STATE. THE STRUGGLE FOR A WORKERS STATE THAT WAS INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE EXISTENCE OF THE CAPITALIST STATE NEVER TOOK PLACE. There was never a situation of dual power, because there was never a struggle for workers power, nor was there even a pole of attraction for the formation of such a workers power. In any event (in Catalonia, and only for two or three months), one must speak of a REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION polarized between two antagonistic alternatives: the revolutionary committees, WHICH WERE NEITHER COORDINATED AMONG THEMSELVES NOR CENTRALIZED, AND WERE UNAWARE OF THEIR OWN ROLE; and the CCMA, AN INSTITUTION OF CLASS COLLABORATION formed of representatives of the government of the Generalitat, the antifascist republican and workers organizations, and the extreme left of the Popular Front—the CNT-FAI and the POUM. This antagonism between the committees and the CCMA cannot be defined as a situation of dual power, insofar as there was never a workers power, not even an attempt to coordinate and centralize these committees in order to form a pole of attraction for such a workers power. The CNT and the POUM, instead of reinforcing these revolutionary committees as organs of a new workers power, felt left behind and threatened by the “incontrolados”, so much so that not only did they not issue any directives to coordinate the committees, but their very first directives and measures consisted precisely in threats and denunciations directed against the “incontrolados”. These threats, regardless of whether or not there were any acts of vandalism, were to bear fruit in the summary shooting, in obedience to these directives “against the ‘incontrolados’” issued by the superior committees of the CNT, of José Gardeñas of the Construction Trade Union and Fernández, president of the Food

Supply Trade Union. Months later, once the counterrevolution had already been underway for some time, it would be the Stalinists and republicans who would bestow this undeserved moniker of “incontrolados” upon the POUM and the CNT, for the purpose of physically and politically eliminating them.

**The predominant school of historiography not only fails to view this revolutionary situation as one posing two antagonistic alternatives, the revolutionary committees or the CCMA; it speaks of a situation of dual power between the CCMA and the government of the Generalitat!**

## Thesis no. 7.

The capitalist state was not destroyed and continued to perform (even if in a “diminished”, “nominal” or “partial” capacity) its functions. Furthermore, the state’s repressive apparatus—the Civil Guard, the Assault Guard and the carabinieri—was not dissolved, but confined to their barracks to wait for better times, which were to come a few months later. The economic internationalization of capitalism in the wake of the First World War signaled the end of the epoch of bourgeois revolutions and the beginning of the epoch of proletarian revolutions. In the absence of a revolutionary vanguard, one that would be capable of proposing the antagonism between the proletariat and the capitalist state and positing the dictatorship of the proletariat, any revolutionary movement, regardless of its proletarian composition, was destined to fail. Given the inability of the workers organizations to seize power, or, more accurately, to coordinate and centralize the local powers of the various revolutionary committees on a regional and national scale, in order to constitute a workers pseudo-state, the only way left was that of collaboration with the other bourgeois political organizations and with the CAPITALIST STATE, which could have no other goal than the restoration and reinforcement of the republican state. The bases of the counterrevolution were solid enough to facilitate a rapid recovery of the capitalist state, which soon recouped all its functions and, after the “inevitable and necessary” bloody defeat of the proletariat in May 1937, decapitated any revolutionary threat that the workers movement posed, by way of a double policy of repression of the “permanent ‘incontrolados’” (revolutionaries), and the social-democratization and integration of the working class organizations into the apparatus of the capitalist state, via the cooptation of the trade union and political bureaucracies and their incorporation into the bureaucracy of the state.



## Thesis no. 8.

The CNT and POUM were the extreme left of the Popular Front. Actually, neither of these organizations was part of the Popular Front; both, however, made a decisive contribution to its success in the elections of February 1936. After July 19, 1936, both organizations were left behind by the events. In the midst of the revolutionary euphoria they were incapable of issuing any directives until July 28—“to warn the ‘incontrolados’”! On July 20 a planned radio broadcast announcing a “progressive” labor agreement signed by the Minister of Labor of the Companys government and the Catalonian employers, which granted the 40-hour week, a 15% wage increase and a reduction of rents by 50%, was cancelled, because several of the eminent employers who had signed the agreement had received warnings not to return to their homes because patrols of armed men were waiting for them. The revolution proceeded by fits and starts, and the stage of economic demands had been surpassed. The revolutionary committees had spontaneously proceeded to carry out the expropriation of the bourgeois class. Collectivization was not undertaken because the employers, technicians and directors had fled and it was necessary to pay the weekly wages of the workers (as some of the protagonists and historians have claimed), but because the revolutionary committees were carrying out a methodical expropriation of the bourgeoisie. The leaders of the workers organizations (CNT and POUM) PROVISIONALLY replaced the state with regard to those functions that the latter had lost, and created institutions of class collaboration in cooperation with reformist and counterrevolutionary workers organizations (PSOE, PSUC, PCE) and bourgeois organizations (ERC, Estat Catalá, Izquierda Republicana) with the goal (conscious or not) of restoring all its functions to the capitalist state and thus helped to fill the VACUUM OF STATE POWER created by the victory of the workers insurrection.

The CCMA could have exercised all the functions of a provisional “revolutionary” government, because the local revolutionary committees, which were trying to coordinate and centralize their activities, turned to the CCMA for help, directives, solutions, orientations, etc.; but the CCMA never performed any other function than that of a LIAISON COMMITTEE for these local revolutionary committees in their dealings with the Generalitat. Furthermore, these local revolutionary committees, in accordance with the policy and the collaborationist nature of the CCMA, were rapidly transformed into antifascist committees, and thus lost their revolutionary and proletarian origin and potentials.

## Thesis no. 9.

The CCMA was the product of both the victory of the insurrection of July 19–20 and the political defeat of July 21. For the first time in history, a militarily victorious workers insurrection was defeated politically on the very next day after its triumph due to its political incapacity and its refusal to seize power. The CCMA was never an organization of workers power or of dual power, but an organization of class collaboration. And this is just what Munis, Nin, Molins, Taradellas, Companys, Azaña, Peiró, García Oliver, Montseny, Abad de Santillán, etc., have already said, and it was the product of its own nature as an institution of antifascist unity and class collaboration, formed by the diverse workers, reformist, Stalinist and republican organizations. And there was no revolutionary organization that was capable of opposing the CCMA, capable of creating an institution of coordination and centralization of the local committees, that is, an organ of WORKERS POWER opposed to the government of the Generalitat, to the Popular Front-style government known as the CCMA, and to the central government of the Republic.

Paradoxically, *a posteriori*, the dissolution of the CCMA was characterized, by many of those who have revealed the CCMA's nature as an institution of class collaboration, as the end of a stage of "dual power". The advance of the counterrevolution and the loss of revolutionary impulse on the part of the masses seems to be reflected in the weakness of the theoretical analyses of the revolutionaries.

The real power of the CCMA has always been greatly exaggerated. After its first month of existence this power was already reduced, with the creation of other institutions like the Council of the Economy, the Control Patrols, the Supply Committee, etc., to that of just one more CNT institution of technical collaboration with the government institutions, an institution of antifascist collaboration in the command of the militias, thus losing (if it every really possessed it) its capability of exercising "government" functions. Furthermore, the military expedition to Mallorca, staged by the Generalitat in mid-August 1936, in collaboration with the CNT Maritime Transport Trade Union, without the involvement or even the knowledge of the CCMA, constituted irrefutable proof that the CCMA did not even have full control of command over the militias.

Once the CNT decided that antifascist collaboration was necessary and inevitable, the pressure imposed by the government apparatus (both the central government and the autonomous regional governments), among which the refusal to deliver arms (or currency to buy them) to the confederal militias particularly stands out, caused the anarchosyndicalist leaders to accept the necessity of dissolving the CCMA, the revolutionary committees and the Militias, and with them all revolutionary possibilities, in order to participate in the government apparatus (central and autonomous regions) like any other "antifascist" organization.

At the beginning of September 1936 the CNT proposed the dissolution of the CCMA; this proposal was approved by the other antifascist forces, which, over the course of the last meetings of the CCMA, had approved the formation of a new government of the Generalitat with representatives from all the antifascist organizations that formed the CCMA. The only other things that were discussed were the name and the program this government would adopt. A "verbal"

concession was made to the principles of the CNT by calling the new government “the Council of the Generalitat”, and its program would be the one that had already been established by the existing “Council of the Economy”.

## Thesis no. 10.

A war in defense of a democratic state, for the victory of the latter against a fascist state, could not be a revolutionary civil war; it was a war between two fractions of the bourgeoisie—the fascist and the republican fractions—in which the proletariat had ALREADY been defeated. This was not because the July insurrection was militarily suppressed in the republican zone (as it had been in the fascist zone), but because the nature of the war AT THE SERVICE OF A DEMOCRATIC BOURGEOIS STATE had transformed the class nature of the revolutionary insurrection of July. The methods, goals and class program of the proletariat had been replaced by the methods, goals and program of the bourgeoisie. That is, when the proletariat fights with the methods and for the program of the bourgeoisie, even if it does so in favor of the democratic fraction and against the fascist fraction, HAS ALREADY BEEN DEFEATED. The proletariat is revolutionary or it is nothing. The proletariat either fights with its own class methods (strike, insurrection, international solidarity, revolutionary militias, destruction of the state, etc.) and for its own program (suppression of wage labor, dissolution of the army and police, abolition of international borders, the dictatorship of the proletariat organized in workers councils, etc.), or it collaborates with the bourgeoisie, renouncing its class methods and program, and then it has ALREADY been defeated.

## Thesis no. 11.

The collectivizations meant nothing, and were incapable of further development in the future, if the capitalist state was not destroyed. In fact, the collectivizations ended up serving the imperative needs of a war economy. The situation rapidly evolved, assuming a wide variety of forms between the expropriation of the factories from the bourgeoisie in July 1936 and the militarization of industry and labor, which largely characterized the situation in 1938. It was, and still is, impossible to separate the political revolution from the social and economic revolution. Revolutions are always TOTALITARIAN, in both meanings of the word: total and authoritarian. THERE IS NOTHING MORE AUTHORITARIAN THAN A REVOLUTION: expropriating a factory from its owners, or a rural estate from its owner, will always be an authoritarian imposition. And it can only take place when the repressive forces of the bourgeoisie, the army and the police, have been defeated by a revolutionary army that imposes the new revolutionary legal system IN AN AUTHORITARIAN MANNER. Anarchosindicalism and the POUM, due to the theoretical incapacity of the former and the numerical weakness, verbalism and lack of audacity of the latter, never posed the question of power, which they abandoned to the hands of the professional politicians of the republican bourgeoisie and the socialists: Azaña, Giral, Prieto, Largo Caballero, Companys, Tarradellas, Negrín ... or they shared it with them, when their participation was necessary to thwart the development of a revolutionary alternative.

On the economic terrain, the historiographic myth that can be encompassed by the generic concept of "COLLECTIVIZATION" underwent (in Catalonia) four stages:

1. The expropriation by the workers (July to September 1936);
2. The adaptation of the confiscated enterprises to the Collectivizations Decree (October to December 1936);
3. The attempt by the Generalitat to direct the economy and control the collectives, in confrontation with the attempt to socialize the economy spearheaded by the radical sector of the CNT militants (January to May 1937);
4. The gradual state intervention and centralization (on the part of the central government) imposed a war economy and the MILITARIZATION of labor (June 1937 to January 1939).

## Thesis no. 12.

The antifascist ideology, the sacred union of all the antifascist working class and bourgeois parties, justified the abandonment of class frontiers in favor of the practice of class collaboration. Antifascism was the extension of the electoral Popular Front policy of February 1936, in a situation of war, after a victorious working class insurrection. The need for antifascist unity in order to win the war against fascism ALREADY implied the defeat of the revolutionary alternative. Failure to recognize this, and to devote oneself to making attempts to differentiate, as Trotsky did, a rejected Popular Frontism from a “temporary” antifascism, necessary until fascism had been defeated, meant to objectively fall into the nets of antifascist unity, to the same degree and for identical reasons as the POUM and the CNT. THE POPULAR FRONT (after the purging of the most right-wing parties after July 19) AND THE ANTIFASCIST FRONT WERE NOT SO DIFFERENT, AND AS THE WAR PROGRESSED THEY TENDED TO MERGE. In fact, it was the CNT and the FAI, after May 1937 and the fall of the Largo Caballero government, which led the movement to form an ANTIFASCIST POPULAR FRONT, as a means of exerting pressure to once again obtain libertarian representation in the republican government. This actually led to an accelerated process of social-democratization of all the workers organizations that rapidly obtained a majority position in all of them, thus bringing about the absolute marginalization of the revolutionary minorities, which were totally residual, powerless and very confused, which facilitated the rise and seizure of state power by the Stalinists, with their reactionary, but very clear and resolute, program of strengthening the republican state.

## Thesis no. 13.

The so-called “revolutionary conquests” were simultaneously the culmination of the insurrectionary victory of the workers organizations and the political defeat of the proletarian revolution.

The CCMA was the product of the victory of the workers insurrection, but it was also the product of the inability of the workers organizations, especially the CNT, as it was the most powerful force, to destroy the capitalist state. These social, economic, political, cultural, and quotidian “conquests” responded perfectly to the anarchosyndicalist ideology of apoliticism “*tout court*”, which was not interested in the “seizure of power”, but with carrying out the social revolution by destroying the army, abolishing the Church and taking over management of the factories. To many anarchosyndicalist workers, the question of whether to “go for broke” or not was absurd; they already had everything they were interested in: a gun, control of the factory, control over public order, the municipal council....! Why seize power? Why replace the republican state with “another”, workers, state?

WITHOUT REVOLUTIONARY THEORY THERE IS NO REVOLUTION. Very quickly the anti-militarists became militarists, and soon thereafter staunch advocates of an efficient professional bourgeois army. It did not take long for the anti-statists to become the best support for the reconstruction of the capitalist state, and the government of the Republic had four anarchist ministers among its ranks. Anarchist ministers! Nor was this the greatest contradiction in which the Spanish anarchist movement would become enmeshed. Faced with a lack of alternatives and directives from the CNT, the expropriated enterprises were transformed into collectives, which were nothing but the establishment of a kind of trade union capitalism—powerfully centralized and coordinated by the government of the Generalitat—which degenerated within a few months into the militarization of the enterprises and labor.

## Thesis no. 14.

The revolutionary committees—of defense, labor, enterprise, locality, supply, neighborhood, rearguard militias, etc.—were the potential organs of workers power, which often exercised the only real power, on a local or sectoral level, in July 1936. But they were rapidly transformed into antifascist committees or trade union committees for enterprise management, or else underwent a prolonged period of dormancy (like the confederal defense committees) or were transformed into state institutions, like the Control Patrols, which were nothing but control exercised by the (revolutionary or radical) “incontrolados” and the defense committees, neighborhood committees and rearguard militias (although they were at the same time the new organization that supplanted government control over public order). The ambiguous and ambivalent nature of the Control Patrols, the collectives, the Militias, the defense committees, and ultimately the whole “Revolution of July 19”, was the direct consequence of the ambiguity and ambivalent nature of the organizations of the extreme left of the Popular Front themselves (the CNT and POUM), which were not only incapable of seizing power and championing the historical program of emancipation of the proletariat against the counterrevolutionary forces, but also opted for class collaboration with the bourgeois parties and the capitalist state with the goal of defeating fascism. They were ambiguous because the CCMA was the product of the insurrectionary PROLETARIAN victory of July 19, but also of the political fiasco of July 21, WHEN CLASS COLLABORATION WAS ACCEPTED.



## Thesis no. 15.

On July 21, 1936 the CNT opted for collaboration with the other antifascist forces, without issuing any political directives concerning either the seizure of power, the economic organization of the enterprises, the coordination of the revolutionary committees or that of the different economic and industrial sectors. On August 11, 1936, at the request of the CNT, the Council of the Economy of the Generalitat assumed the responsibility for coordinating and reorganizing the Catalanian economy.

The provisional character of the enterprise expropriations, which were implemented in the heat of the moment of the insurrectionary victory of July, in a situation of a power vacuum, caused them to be oriented towards the sole objective of guaranteeing the everyday functioning of the enterprises. Only in a few economic sectors (food, health and sanitation, education), to a limited extent, and in some isolated enterprises, was there an attempt to carry out a process of socialization in which the trade union acted as both initiator and organizer. The Collectivizations Decree of October 1936 legalized a *fait accompli*, that is, the confiscation of the enterprises by the workers, but only for the evident purpose of centralizing the Catalanian economy through the Council of the Economy of the Generalitat, eliminating the organs of workers power from the enterprises, and nipping in the bud the socializing experiments of certain sectors and enterprises.

Collectivization in the Catalanian economy underwent four stages:

1. The expropriation of the enterprises. The revolutionary committees, which the counter-revolutionaries called “*incontrolados*”, once the military uprising had been defeated, proceeded to expropriate the bourgeoisie, and to take priests, bourgeois, *caciques* and former members of the employers’ *pistoleros* trade union “for a ride”. Not only was there a total absence of political or economic directives from the superior committees of the CNT and the CCMA, but the latter also threatened to shoot the “*incontrolados*”. They faced a *fait accompli*, however: the factories had been confiscated. The CNT, faced with its own inability and lack of will to coordinate and manage the Catalanian economy, proposed to the Generalitat the creation of a Council of the Economy: it handed over to the petty bourgeois government of the Generalitat the management and coordination of the Catalanian economy!
2. Adaptation to the Collectivizations Decree. In October 1936, together with the dissolution of the CCMA, the entry of the POUM and the CNT into the government of the Generalitat, the Decree on the militarization of the Popular Militias, the dissolution of the local committees—which were replaced by Popular Front Municipal Councils—and a long *etcetera* of counterrevolutionary measures of lesser importance, the Collectivizations Decree was approved with the indispensable support of the CNT. What it actually did was establish a trade union capitalism in the enterprises, with major state intervention and centralization on the part of the government of the Generalitat, and this was called COLLECTIVIZATION. The former bourgeoisie, the private owners, had been replaced by man-

agement by the trade union delegates of each enterprise, organized in Workers Control Committees (which were often the result of a pact between manual, technical and administrative workers and even some of the former owners), whose activities were completely mediated by and subject to the tutelage of the inspectors appointed by the Generalitat, which nonetheless considered the enterprise to be the property of the trade union.

3. COLLECTIVIZATION versus SOCIALIZATION (December 1936-May 1937). On the one hand, the government of the Generalitat, relying on its social base that consisted of the petty bourgeois sectors—administrative, technical, former business owners, members of the liberal professions and even workers professing a right wing ideology, often members of the UGT—initiated an offensive to expand its control over the enterprises, based on the Collectivizations Decree and the implementation of a series of financial decrees, approved by Tarradellas at S'Agaró in January 1937. At the same time the radical sector of the CNT militants was attempting to SOCIALIZE production, which implied increasing the power of the Trade Union Industrial Federations in the enterprises.

SOCIALIZATION, for this radical sector of the CNT, meant the direction of the Catalonian economy by the Trade Unions (of the CNT) and a break with the dynamic of trade union capitalism, and the establishment of an equitable distribution of wealth that would put an end to the scandalous differences between workers in rich and poor collectivized industries, and between the former and the unemployed. Such a form of direction over A SOCIALIZED Catalonian ECONOMY required in turn the creation of the necessary organs within the CNT, that is, the replacement of the *Sindicatos Únicos* (which were appropriate for directing a strike, but not for managing the enterprises) by Industrial Trade Unions (better adapted for managing the various economic sectors), which was implemented in the first months of 1937. The SOCIALIZATION of the Catalonian economy meant the direction of the economy (and of the war) by the CNT, and this in turn required the abolition of the government of the Generalitat.

The counterrevolutionary offensive of the Generalitat to expand its control, extending it to every enterprise, therefore clashed head-on with the socialization program of the radical sector of the CNT. A struggle was waged, one enterprise at a time, in which the assemblies that were supposed to vote for socialization were subjected to a wide variety of forms of pressure and manipulation, from the most despicable political intrigues to the use of the police. In this bitter struggle, unfolding in one enterprise at a time, a struggle that the superior committees of the CNT never wanted to centralize, because to do so would have implied breaking with the antifascist unity pact, an increasingly more obvious and “painful” division emerged among the trade union militants, between the collaborationist sector and the radical sector of the CNT. During the course of this campaign to socialize the Catalonian economy, the radical militants of the CNT attempted to compete with the collaborationist militants in an attempt to obtain the support of the majority of the trade union members. The radical militants, however, were almost always in the minority in the factory assemblies, due to the flood of opportunists who joined the CNT in the wake of July 19 and attrition caused by the revolution itself among the ranks of the revolutionaries, many of whom joined the Militias or had been promoted to positions of responsibility.

A major role in the opposition to the militarization of the Popular Militias (decreed in October 1936) was played by the fourth company of the Gelsa unit of the Durruti Column, which, after narrowly avoiding an armed confrontation with other forces of the Column, which supported the militarization decree, decided to abandon the front (in February 1937) and return to Barcelona, taking their weapons with them.

These militiamen, together with other radical CNT militants who were involved in the on-going struggle for socialization in the enterprises, founded The Friends of Durruti Group in March 1937, which soon attracted between four and five thousand members and constituted, in Catalonia, a revolutionary alternative to the (collaborationist) superior committees of the CNT-FAI.

4. From June 1937 until the end of the war, the radical sector of the CNT, the Trotskyists and the POUM were subjected to persecution, driven into hiding, and physically annihilated.

During this same period, the CNT (its revolutionary minority having been amputated) continued to collaborate faithfully with a Stalinist state that imposed the militarization of labor and of life, the most draconian rationing and a war economy. STATE ANARCHISM consolidated its collaborationism with the republican bourgeoisie, embraced its program of victory over fascism, repressed any revolutionary threats within its ranks and assumed the tasks that are natural to any bureaucracy that aspires to integrate itself into the state apparatus.

## Thesis no. 16.

May 1937 marked the armed defeat of the most advanced sector of the revolutionary proletariat that was required by the counterrevolution so it could proceed to implement its counteroffensive. The causes of May were rooted in the rising cost of living, the scarcity of basic goods, the resistance to the dissolution of the control patrols and the militarization of the militias, and the constant struggle being waged by the workers in the collectivized enterprises to preserve their control over production in the face of the growing interventionism of the Generalitat, facilitated by the implementation of the S'Agaró Decrees. It was not by chance that the May events began at a collectivized enterprise, the Telephone company, with the armed opposition mounted by the rank and file CNT workers against its seizure by the Generalitat's forces of repression. The rapid extension of the struggle throughout the entire city of Barcelona was the work of the defense committees and the neighborhood committees, linked by telephone, which acted independently of the superior committees of the CNT.

On the one side of the barricades were the forces of public order, the Stalinists of the PSUC, and the Catalanist Pyrenees Militias under the command of the government of the Generalitat. On the other side of the barricades were the workers of the CNT. Only the anarchists of The Friends of Durruti Group and the Trotskyists of the Bolshevik-Leninist Section of Spain attempted to provide any revolutionary objectives to the struggle of the barricades.

The CNT militants as a whole, however, were incapable of, and did not know how to act in opposition to the COLLABORATIONIST directives issued by the leaders and the superior committees of the CNT. Some actually fired their guns at radios that were broadcasting the conciliatory speeches of García Oliver and Federica Montseny, but in the end they complied with their directives.

The Friends of Durruti Group referred to the activity of these leaders and superior committees as an "enormous betrayal".

After May 1937 the attempts ON THE PART OF THE SUPERIOR COMMITTEES OF THE BUREAUCRATIZED CNT to expel The Friends of Durruti Group from the CNT failed, as no trade union assembly would ratify this proposal.

A split that could have clarified the contradictory and irreconcilable positions within the CNT never took place, however.

Subsequent historiography underestimated, or ignored, the important role played by the Group, and the CNT bureaucracy even succeeded in recuperating for its own benefit "the true revolutionary prestige" of a Group that it had persecuted and attempted to expel from its ranks. Ambiguity always favors the counterrevolution. AND TODAY WE CAN SEE, WITHOUT ANYBODY BEING SCANDALIZED, HOW THE CNT AND THE FAI CLAIM THE "LEGACY" OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PRESTIGE OF THE FRIENDS OF DURRUTI GROUP. Bureaucracies and capitalism are capable of recuperating anything, even what they slandered and persecuted for constituting a revolutionary alternative, antagonistic to the bureaucracy and capitalism.

## Thesis no. 17.

The characteristics of the Stalinist counterrevolution were and are:

- a. Incessant, ubiquitous and omnipotent police terrorism;
- b. The indispensable misrepresentation of its own nature, and the nature of its enemies, especially the revolutionaries;
- c. Exploitation of the workers by a form of state capitalism, directed by the Party-State.

The Negrín-Stalin government transformed the initial class collaboration of the CCMA, and the ideology of antifascist unity, into NATIONAL UNITY and orderly government; it converted the reformist impotence against the revolution of the socialists, Catalanists and anarchosindicalist bureaucracy into a complete counterrevolutionary program, which abolished the least vestige of workers democracy, and transformed the bourgeois democracy into the police dictatorship of the GPU and the SIM.

The Stalinists have never been a reformist sector of the workers movement. No collaboration of any kind is or ever has been possible with Stalinism, only unremitting war. Stalinism, always and everywhere, leads and guides the counterrevolutionary forces, finds its power in the idea of national unity, in the practice of a policy of law and order, in its struggle to establish a strong government, in the penetration of the militants of the Stalinist party into the state apparatus, and above all by disguising their reactionary nature within the workers movement.

## Thesis no. 18.

It is necessary to set forth a chronology, because a defense committee was not the same thing in 1931 as a defense committee in July 1936, nor was the latter the same thing as a defense committee was one week later, when it might have been transformed into an antifascist committee, nor in January 1937 when the defense committees had gone into hibernation, nor in May 1937 when their existence rose to the surface with the “spontaneous” organization of the insurrection, nor in December 1937 when they could be said to have disappeared. Similarly, a self-managed enterprise in July 1936 could have come under the financial control of the government of the Generalitat in 1937, and the same enterprise might have been militarized in 1938.

The Popular Militias, voluntary, popular and of a revolutionary character, after several months (between October 1936 and May 1937) of discussions about whether or not to accept militarization, became regiments or divisions of a regular army, and the militiamen were turned into soldiers.

THIS CHRONOLOGY MAY BE CATEGORIZED (for Catalonia) in four stages:

1. The revolutionary stage (July 19, 1936 to September 26, 1936);
2. The advance of the counterrevolution (September 26, 1936 to June 16, 1937);
3. The repression of the revolutionary movement (June 16, 1937 to April 1938);
4. The disappearance of the revolutionary movement (April 1938 to the end of the war).

## Thesis no. 19.

July 19, 1936 to September 26, 1936:

The “revolutionary” stage or the stage of the victory of the insurrection and the revolutionary movement. VACUUM OF (CENTRALIZED) STATE POWER. ATOMIZATION OF POWER and confusion of powers. Local revolutionary committees and revolutionary defense committees, neighborhood committees, supply committees, workers control committees, popular militias, workers and soldiers councils, rearguard militias. The bourgeois state was “partially broken down” but preserved its legal authority, and did not fail to legalize and proclaim the revolutionary conquests that had taken place. Above all, however, it impeded and hindered the capacity for coordination and centralization of the revolutionary committees, which held all power at the local level. The CCMA acted as an institution of class collaboration, as an intermediary between the real local powers of the committees and the legal power of the Generalitat. The CCMA’s Juridical Office imposed a popular justice extraneous to the existing laws (and supported spontaneous popular justice). A very theoretical and historical-analytical error that is very widespread among both the participants in the CCMA and subsequent historians consists in positing a situation of dual power between the CCMA and the government of the Generalitat, which is in this version said to have disappeared with the dissolution of the CCMA.

We maintain that the CCMA did not create a situation of dual power with respect to the Generalitat and that at no time did the CCMA imply any more than a duplication of powers previously exercised by the Generalitat, which was necessary in order to reestablish the authority of the latter.

## Thesis no. 20.

September 26, 1936 to June 16, 1937:

The advance of the counterrevolution. Retreat of the revolutionary movement and offensive by the Generalitat to reconquer all its functions (even assuming some of the powers of the Valencia Government). Dissolution of the CCMA, entry of the POUM and the CNT into the government of the Generalitat. DECREE DISSOLVING THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEES AND FORMING POPULAR FRONT MUNICIPAL COUNCILS. Nin, the Minister of Justice, abolished the Juridical Office. The CNT and the POUM facilitated the dissolution of the revolutionary committees and their replacement by Popular Front municipal councils. Nin and Tarradellas went to Lérida to compel the local committee there, controlled by the POUM, to submit to the decree. The Decree ordering the militarization of the Popular Militias was proclaimed. In mid-December the Stalinists expelled Nin from the Government and established an alliance between the ERC and the PSUC to reduce the power of the CNT and to abolish the “revolutionary conquests” of July, which were only temporary concessions and transfers of state functions. May 1937 signified the final defeat of the revolutionary movement. The PSUC and the ERC led the counterrevolution, but the POUM and the CNT were OBJECTIVELY indispensable collaborators when the revolutionary movement was still strong enough to constitute a workers power.



## Thesis no. 21.

June 16, 1937 to April 1938:

Dissolution of the Control Patrols. Outlawing and repression of the POUM and the revolutionary movement. The CNT was divided into a critical sector that was repressed (or removed from its positions and deprived of its functions in the organization) and a governmental sector that integrated itself into the state apparatus. Stalinist repression of the revolutionary movement. In July 1937 the FAI renounced its organization by affinity groups and adopted a territorial form of organization instead. The affinity groups based on shared ideological conceptions had permitted the emergence of The Friends of Durruti Group (between four and five thousand members) as a revolutionary opposition to the collaborationism of the FAI. The FAI's new territorial form of organization, of a pyramidal and hierarchical character, granted the superior committees absolute control over the organization, and also converted the FAI into an efficient political party, capable of assuming positions in all the administrative levels of the state apparatus. The Council of Aragón was abolished in August 1937. The Aragón collectives were dissolved by the military expedition of the division under the command by the Stalinist Lister. In September Los Escolapios, the headquarters of the confederal Defense Committee, was taken by assault, without any other response on the part of the ruling bureaucracy of the CNT than the order to surrender.

## Thesis no. 22.

April 1938 to January 1939:

Disappearance of the revolutionary movement. The militants who had not been assassinated or imprisoned tried to carry on their work in strictly clandestine conditions, joined the army or went into hiding. All the revolutionary publications either disappeared or acquired a purely apologetic character. The CNT-UGT unity pact. The FAI and the CNT campaigned for the creation of an ANTIFASCIST POPULAR FRONT as a pressure tactic to obtain the readmission of libertarian representatives to the republican government. War economy, Stakhanovism and the militarization of labor and of everyday life. The Negrín government attempted to establish a dictatorial Stalinist state.

## Thesis no. 23.

### The errors of the POUM:

1. The POUM never posed the question of working class power, not in July 1936 and not at any time during the revolutionary stage of July, August and September 1936.
2. The POUM accepted the liquidation of the committees, which were the potential organs of workers power. That is, the leadership of the POUM called for the suppression of the revolutionary committees instead of working for their extension, democratization and coordination. It never proposed a struggle for the destruction of the capitalist organs of power, or for the destruction of the capitalist state. The committees, although incomplete and defective, were the potential organs of workers power. The task of a revolutionary party (the POUM was never a revolutionary party) would have been to reinforce, democratize and coordinate these committees in such a way as to transform them into workers councils, elected by general assemblies and revocable at any time, capable of constituting a government of workers councils.
3. The POUM was incapable of making the fundamental distinction between the Party and the Popular Front, and followed the latter road, which led to government collaboration.
4. The leadership of the POUM was always following behind the CNT-FAI, whose leaders it considered to be revolutionaries, instead of engaging in a powerful, consistent and objective polemic against the series of false positions assumed by the CNT-FAI.
5. The leadership of the POUM never really understood the relation between war and revolution, insofar as it made a distinction between the two. The slogan, "War or Revolution" is false in and of itself.
6. The POUM, almost as rapidly as the other groups, sacrificed the revolution to what seemed to be the interests of the "war" (government collaboration, an indecisive policy with regard to the question of the Army, etc.) instead of clearly demonstrating that the war did not merit the sacrifices of the working class except to the extent that it was an integral part of the revolutionary process, that is, insofar as it was subordinated to the decisive question of power. It did nothing to establish the foundations of the organs of a new power (revolutionary workers Front), not even in those locations where the party's influence was preponderant. The POUM leadership allowed members of the party, the commanders of the Lenin division, to sabotage all political activity oriented towards the militiamen, thus helping the plans of the counterrevolution instead of favoring agitation for workers democracy in the mass organizations.
7. The leadership of the POUM shared certain obsolete ideas concerning nationalism and regional autonomy with the Catalonian petty bourgeoisie.

8. The POUM never engaged in any critique of the collectivization of industry as a new form of “trade union capitalism”.
9. Nin dissolved the FOUS under the erroneous trade union slogan of “CNT-UGT”, instead of issuing the directive, “Neither CNT nor UGT: one central trade union”.
10. The capitulation of May:
  - a. the leadership had no independent, clear line;
  - b. it took no independent initiative of its own;
  - c. it tried to provide a cover for the treason of the anarchist leaders;
  - d. it learned nothing: it even claimed that May was a workers victory.

Many of these errors of the Executive Committee of the POUM were personally attributable to Nin, whether or not he was supported by the other members of the Executive Committee of the POUM, who sometimes opposed Nin’s personal decisions, or were not even consulted. On the other hand, we must not forget that the policy of the Executive Committee of the POUM, which was largely determined by Nin, was considered by a broad critical sector of the party as a catastrophic policy for the revolution, and moreover as an abandonment of the founding principles of the POUM:

1. Nin’s entry, as a representative of the POUM, in the Council of the Economy signified the recognition of the government of the Generalitat’s authority over and prerogatives for planning of the Catalonian economy.
2. The merger of the FOUS into the UGT instead of the CNT.
3. Nin’s acceptance of the position of Minister of Justice (which Andrade also referred to as a mistake) in the government of the Generalitat (which he held from September 26 to December 13, 1936, when he was forced out as a result of pressure from the Stalinists), because it strengthened the government of the Generalitat, laid the ground-works for the dissolution of the local committees and constituted a practical rejection of the calls for a workers government.
4. Nin’s first job as Minister of Justice was to accompany Tarradellas, the Prime Minister of the government of the Generalitat (“*conseller en cap*”), to Lérida, which was at the time governed by a Committee dominated by the CNT and the POUM, to REESTABLISH THE AUTHORITY OF THE CATALONIAN GOVERNMENT in that city.
5. Nin asserted that the dictatorship of the proletariat existed in Catalonia and also (in contradiction with this first assertion) that it was possible for the working class to take power peacefully.
6. On October 9, 1936, the government of the Generalitat—WE MUST NOT FORGET THAT this was made possible thanks to the participation of the POUM and the CNT, WITHOUT WHOSE INVOLVEMENT AND HELP THE GOVERNMENT OF THE GENERALITAT WOULD HAVE BEEN POWERLESS—was able to decree the dissolution of the local

committees, OF A REVOLUTIONARY OR POTENTIALLY REVOLUTIONARY NATURE, which were to be replaced by Popular Front Municipal Councils; on October 13 a decree drafted and signed by Nin himself nullified the revolutionary work of Barriobero (and of the cenetistas) in the justice tribunals; on October 24 the decree ordering the militarization of the Popular Militias and the decree regarding public order were approved by a Junta of Internal Security. NIN WAS THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE GENERALITAT THAT TOOK THESE COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY MEASURES.

7. In January 1937 Nin wrote to the Executive Committee of the PSOE proposing the participation of the POUM in the unification conferences being held between the PSOE and the PCE. Only a few days later the Stalinist repression of the POUMistas began in Madrid.
8. In May 1937 he issued an order by telephone to disband the column formed in Gracia by militants of the POUM and the CNT for the purpose of seizing the center of the city held by counterrevolutionaries.
9. In May 1937 he rejected the plan to seize power elaborated by Josep Rebull ... because power was not a military question, but a political one.
10. Nin thought that May 1937 was a workers victory!

## Thesis no. 24.

### **Critique of the positions of *Bilan*:**

*Bilan* was the French-language journal of the Italian Fraction of the Communist Left (Bordiguists), best known during the thirties as the Prometeo Group (*Prometeo* was the Italian-language journal of the Fraction). *Bilan* has been sanctified by various left organizations as the *nec plus ultra* of the revolutionary positions of the 1930s. *Bilan* denied, in a brilliant and flawless analysis (with which we agree), that a proletarian revolution had triumphed in Spain in 1936. *Bilan* also claimed, however, that, due to the lack of a (Bordiguist) class party, there was not even a possibility for a REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION (we think this is a serious error, with important consequences). According to *Bilan* the proletariat was immersed in an antifascist war, that is, it was enrolled in an imperialist war between a democratic bourgeoisie and a fascist bourgeoisie. In this situation, the only appropriate positions were desertion and boycott, or to wait for better times, when the (Bordiguist) party would enter the stage of history from the wings where it had been biding its time.

The analyses of *Bilan* have the virtue of decisively highlighting the weaknesses of and dangers that threatened the revolutionary situation after the triumph of the workers insurrection of July 1936, but they are incapable of formulating a revolutionary alternative. In any event the revolutionary defeatism of abandoning the Spanish proletariat into the hands of its reformist or counterrevolutionary organizations, as proposed IN PRACTICE by *Bilan*, was certainly not a revolutionary alternative. The incoherence of *Bilan* is made evident by its analysis of the May Days of 1937. It turns out that the “revolution” of July 19, which one week later ceased to be a revolution, because its class goals had been turned into war goals, now reappears like the Phoenix of history, like a ghost that had been hiding in some unknown location. And now it turns out that in May 1937 the workers were once again “revolutionary”, and defended the revolution from the barricades. Was it not the case, however, that, according to *Bilan*, a revolution had not taken place? Here, *Bilan* gets all tangled up. On July 19 (according to *Bilan*) there was a revolution, but one week later, there was no longer a revolution, because there was no (Bordiguist) party; in May 1937 there was another revolutionary week. But how do we characterize the situation between July 26, 1936 and May 3, 1937? We are not told anything about this. The revolution is considered to be an intermittent river [“Guadiana”: a river in Spain that runs on the surface, then underground, then reappears on the surface—Translator’s note] that emerges onto the historical stage when *Bilan* wants to explain certain events that it neither understands, nor is capable of explaining. The revolution is viewed as a series of week-long explosions, separated by ten months of inexplicable and unexplained limbo. And these revolutionary explosions, May 1937 as well as July 1936, are so inconsistent with the theses of *Bilan* concerning the non-existence of a revolutionary situation, that we are led to affirm its absolute lack of understanding of the characteristics and nature of a proletarian revolutionary process.

On the one hand, *Bilan* acknowledges the class character of the struggles of July and May, but on the other hand not only denies their revolutionary character, but even denies the existence of

a revolutionary situation. This viewpoint can only be explained by the distance of an absolutely isolated Parisian group, which placed a higher priority on its analyses than on the study of the Spanish reality. There is not even one word in *Bilan* about the real nature of the committees, or on the struggle of the Barcelona proletariat for socialization and against collectivization, or on the debates and confrontations within the Militia Columns concerning the militarization of the Militias, or a serious critique of the positions of The Friends of Durruti Group, for the simple reason that they are practically totally unaware of the existence and the significance of all these matters. It was easy to justify this ignorance by denying the existence of a revolutionary situation. *Bilan*'s analysis fails because in its view the absence of a revolutionary (Bordiguist) party necessarily implies the absence of a revolutionary situation.

On July 19, 1936, throughout all of Spain, but especially in Catalonia, there was a victorious workers insurrection. This insurrection, which was dominated by its libertarian element, faced the competition of other political forces, such as the POUM and the republicans, and of some units of the forces of public order, like the Assault Guards and the Civil Guards, which remained loyal to the government of the Generalitat and the Republic. But it is certainly true that the result of this insurrection, thanks to the assault on the barracks of San Andrés, meant the arming of the Barcelona proletariat, and by extension the proletariat of all of Catalonia. The indisputable hegemonic power that resulted from this revolutionary insurrection was anarchist. The rest of the working class forces, the Generalitat and the overwhelmed forces of public order were, in Catalonia, in an absolutely minority position.

The product of this revolutionary insurrection was the Central Committee of Antifascist Militias (the CCMA). The CCMA, however, was simultaneously the product of this victory and also of the refusal of the anarchists to seize power. The CCMA was not an organ of workers power to confront the power of the republican bourgeoisie, that is, the Generalitat, but an institution of collaboration of the anarchists with the other political forces, both the working class forces as well as those of the bourgeoisie: it was therefore an institution of class collaboration. In practice, the CCMA performed the functions of public order, and recruiting and training antifascist militias, which the government of the Generalitat was incapable of performing. The CCMA acted as a kind of Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of War OF THE GENERALITAT. Regardless of how much autonomy and independence it had, it was still a Ministry of the Generalitat.

Neither the CCMA, nor the CNT-FAI, nor the POUM issued any directives (except the order to end the general strike), or gave any orientation, or proclaimed any orders, until July 28, when the CNT and the CCMA issued a communiqué and decree, respectively, which coincided in threatening "incontrolados" who were acting without the authorization of the CCMA with harsh repression. The insurrection of July 19 spread the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the process of collectivization to the majority of Catalonian enterprises, WITHOUT ANY DIRECTIVE FROM THE WORKERS ORGANIZATIONS, AND WITHOUT ANY ORDER OR RULING FROM THE CCMA.

We must, however, clearly and precisely identify the characteristics of this revolutionary situation: rather than dual power (which did not exist because the CCMA was not created to oppose the Generalitat, but to serve it) we must speak of a vacuum of centralized power. The power of the autonomous government of the Generalitat had fragmented into hundreds of committees that held all power at the local and enterprise level, most of which were in the hands of the working class.

These committees, however, incomplete and deficient, were not coordinated among themselves, and were not reinforced as organs of workers power. The CNT-FAI were neither capable nor desirous of giving these committees any coordination, WHICH WAS ESSENTIAL for the triumph of the revolution. The organizational structure of the CNT, articulated in *Sindicatos Únicos*, its weakness resulting from its recent period of clandestine activity and the *treintista* split, but above all its glaring theoretical shortcomings, rendered the CNT incapable of coordinating these committees, which held all power in their hands at the local and enterprise levels. Even the organization of economic life in Catalonia, and the indispensable coordination of the various economic sectors, was left in the hands of the government of the Generalitat, for which purpose the Council of the Economy was created on August 11, 1936. An unstable and transitory revolutionary situation prevailed, which had defeated the fascist bourgeoisie and overwhelmed the republican bourgeoisie, but one that had also escaped the control of the workers organizations themselves, which were incapable of organizing and defending the “revolutionary conquests” of July and of decisively tipping the scales in favor of the final triumph of the revolution, by seizing power, installing the dictatorship of the proletariat and destroying the apparatus of the republican state, simply because anarchosindicalist theory and organization proved to be alien and foreign to the organization of the revolutionary proletariat. For the spontaneity of the masses has its limits. The inability of the CNT Trade Unions to stabilize and further motivate the revolution was acknowledged by the participants themselves. The CNT, as a trade union organization, was inadequate and incapable of performing the tasks that would have corresponded with the mission of a revolutionary vanguard or party, and the same thing was true of the other organizations of the working class. This is why the revolutionary situation, instead of moving in the direction of a full-blown revolution, was rapidly transformed into a counterrevolutionary situation that favored a rapid consolidation of the structures of the bourgeois state.

Not taking power in July meant leaving it in the hands of the bourgeoisie, and sharing it with the bourgeoisie within the CCMA meant “helping” the bourgeoisie to recover and fill the power vacuum that had been produced by the July insurrection. Furthermore, the collectivization process was not viable nor did it have any meaning at all if the capitalist state remained intact. And this is all the more true if we take into account the fact that the anarchists compensated for the shortcomings of the government of the Generalitat so that it could take over planning of the Catalanian economy, which it was itself incapable of coordinating.

The government of the Generalitat took into its hands, beginning in August 1936, nothing more or less than economic planning, financing of enterprises, the possibility of controlling every enterprise through an inspector appointed by the Generalitat, and the power to enact laws concerning the collectivizations. This was the foundation of the rapid recovery of political power by the Generalitat. If we add to the foregoing the fact that the Civil Guards and Assault Guards had not been dissolved, but only confined to their barracks in the rearguard, far from the front, we may safely conclude that the counterrevolution in Catalonia had some very solid foundations, which explain the rapid restoration of all the prerogatives of the capitalist state.

There is, however, an important difference between claiming that the insurrection of July 1936 was not a revolution, or even that it did not entail a revolutionary situation (as *Bilan*, the ICC and Robert Camoin, among others, assert) and claiming that the revolutionary situation of July came to naught due to a series of insufficiencies, incapacities and errors on the part of the existing workers organizations. In July 1936 there was a revolutionary situation that imposed the hegemony of the working class and its revolutionary threat on the republican bourgeoisie for ten



months, despite the fact that there was no CENTRALIZATION OF POWER of the workers, because that power had been fragmented into hundreds of local committees, enterprise committees, the committees of various workers organizations, and the militias of various parties, in control patrols, etc.

In July 1936 the working class masses knew how to go into action without leaders, without directives from their trade union and political organizations; in May 1937, however, these same masses were incapable of acting in opposition to their leaders, and against the directives of their trade union and political organizations.

May 1937 did not fall out of the clouds, it was the result of the rising cost of living and the shortages of staple foods and basic goods, of the resistance to the dissolution of the control patrols and the militarization of the militias, but above all it was due to the working class offensive/resistance in the enterprises, one by one, totally isolated, in an attempt to consolidate and exercise control over the process of socializing the Catalonian economy, in confrontation with the liquidation of the “conquests of July”. The “normalization” offensive of the Generalitat, which sought to implement the S’Agaró decrees, signed by Tarradellas in January 1937, implied the elimination of the “revolutionary conquests” and absolute control over the Catalonian economy by the government of the Generalitat.

The lessons that should be learned from this are evidently the need to totally destroy the capitalist state, to dissolve its forces of repression, and to establish the social dictatorship of the proletariat, which the anarchists organized in The Friends of Durruti Group identified with the formation of a Revolutionary Junta, composed of all those organizations that had participated in the revolutionary battles of July 1936.

May 1937 was the consequence of the errors committed in July 1936. There was no revolutionary party in Spain, but there was a profound and powerful REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITY of the working class which suppressed the fascist coup, outside the control of the workers organizations that existed in July 1936, and which in May 1937 confronted Stalinism, although it finally failed because it was incapable of confronting its own trade union and political organizations (the CNT and POUM), when the latter were defending both the bourgeois state and the program of the counterrevolution. The fact that the revolutionary movement that existed in Spain between July 1936 and May 1937 failed, and was turned aside from its class goals toward antifascist goals, does not obviate the existence of this revolutionary situation. No proletarian revolution has won yet, and the failure of the Commune and the success of Stalinism is no refutation of the revolutionary character of the Commune and October.

It is obvious that, without the seizure of power and establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Spanish collectivization process could not but fail, and that all the collectivizing experiences would be conditioned and distorted by this absence of the seizure of centralized power; but it is no less obvious that the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, entailed by the collectivization process, with all of its limitations, was the fruit of the proletarian revolutionary movement of July. The fundamental lesson of the “Spanish Revolution” (or more precisely of the Spanish revolutionary situation) is the ineluctable need for a vanguard that would defend the revolutionary program of the proletariat, the two first steps of which are the total destruction of the capitalist state and the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat, organized in workers councils, which would unify and centralize power. But to assert on the basis of these considerations that without a party there is no revolution, or even a revolutionary situation (as *Bilan*, the ICC and Robert Camoin claim) reflects the lack of understanding of the fact that not the party, but the

proletariat, makes the revolution, although a proletarian revolution will inevitably fail if there is no vanguard capable of defending the revolutionary program of the proletariat (as The Friends of Durruti and the Bolshevik-Leninist Section of Spain unsuccessfully attempted to do). *Bilan* put the cart in front of the horse. The analyses of those who assert their claim “to be the party” never cease to be tragicomic; they do not know how to see the revolutionary situation that is unfolding right under their noses. The analyses of *Bilan* are very valuable with regard to its denunciations of the weaknesses and errors of the Spanish revolutionary process; but they are unfortunate and pathetic when its analysis leads it to the absurdity of denying the revolutionary and proletarian nature of the historical process experienced by the Spanish working class between July 1936 and May 1937. *Bilan*’s denial of the existence of a revolutionary situation is the product of its Leninist, totalitarian and substitutionist concept of the party: if there is no party there is not even the chance for a revolutionary situation to arise, regardless of the revolutionary activity of the proletariat. The consequences of this denial of the existence of a revolutionary situation in Catalonia in 1936–1937 led *Bilan* to advocate (solely on the theoretical plane) reactionary political positions such as breaking up the military fronts, fraternization with the Francoist troops, cutting off weapons to the republican troops, etc. It is not at all surprising that *Bilan*, or more precisely the Italian Fraction of the Communist Left, underwent a split as a result of open debate over the nature and characteristics of the Spanish Revolution.

To summarize: it is true that without a revolutionary party or vanguard, a proletarian revolution will fail; and this is the lesson of the Spanish example and the magnificent analysis of *Bilan*. But it is not true that a proletarian revolutionary situation cannot arise if a revolutionary party does not exist. And this claim is the one that led *Bilan* to make a false analysis of the situation created on July 19, 1936 in Catalonia, and also explains its failure to understand the events that led the proletariat to engage in a second revolutionary insurrection in May 1937.

## Thesis no. 25.

There are a number of shared revolutionary political positions that allow us to distinguish, in 1936–1939 in Spain, revolutionary from reformist, bourgeois or counterrevolutionary groups. These positions, which are in addition class frontiers, are based on the defense, not just theoretical but above all active and political, of the following points:

- A. Advocate the necessity of the destruction of the capitalist state;
- B. Opposition to political collaboration with bourgeois organizations and parties;
- C. Advocate the establishment of a social dictatorship of the proletariat;
- D. Opposition to the militarization of the Popular Militias;
- E. Defense of the future organs of workers power, which are usually identified with the committees;
- F. Deny the validity of or any future at all for the collectivizations without the political conquest of power by the working class.

These common denominators that identified, during the Spanish War, the revolutionary as opposed to the non-revolutionary groups, are shared, with greater or lesser emphasis on one point or another, and with varying degrees of theoretical clarity, by Balus and The Friends of Durruti Group, Josep Rebull and Cell 72 of the POUM, Munis and the Bolshevik-Leninist Section of Spain, Fosco and the Bolshevik-Leninist Group “Le Soviet”, as well as the (Bordiguist) militants of the Italian Fraction of the Communist Left, which split as a result of its internal debate concerning the nature of the Spanish Revolution and War.

The theoretical and practical differences between these different revolutionary groups are important, and were the outcome of the weaknesses of the revolutionary movement of that time. A rigorous study of these groups, unimpaired by ideological prejudices, which restrict inquiry to labeling and/or embalming them as anarchist, Trotskyist, Bordiguist or Marxist, as well as a critique of their errors and the deficiencies of their positions is rendered imperative due to the lack of knowledge concerning these issues, because there is no movement with a future that has no knowledge of its past, and this is all the more true of a revolutionary movement.

## Thesis no. 26.

The Civil War was not a fratricidal war, as the propaganda of the Francoist dictatorship taught us for forty years and as we have been told by the formal democracy of the post-Franco period for the last fifty years, but a **war of extermination** of “the reds” by the fascists. In the so-called nationalist zone, from July to August 1936, the rebel military implemented, in their lightning advance from Andalusia and Estremadura, a war of extermination of the enemy, of an arbitrary and class nature and utilizing colonialist methods, for the purpose of sowing terror in a hostile rearguard and imposing political cleansing, directed against neutral elements as well as potential enemies. The goal was to destroy the social base of the workers movement and the left wing parties.

This extermination plan, carefully planned before the uprising, and justified by the need to ensure the victory of a colonial army that confronted the vast majority of the population of the country, was extended not only throughout the three years of warfare, but was legalized and institutionalized in the new Francoist state.

## Thesis no. 27.

The war did not end on April 1, 1939; it was the beginning of the Victory. A Victory whose first priority was to destroy the vanquished and quench the thirst for vengeance of the victors by assuring them total impunity. After a period of mass executions, imprisonment and torture of hundreds of thousands of persons, a regime of terror was imposed in which all of Spain became one vast prison. **The Francoist state was a genocidal state**, if we define genocide as the condition of systematic criminalization of a group, or as systematic extermination of a social group for religious, ethnic or political reasons. The essence of the Francoist state throughout its entire existence, and despite its unquestionable evolution over the course of the years, was the persecution, repression and extermination of the “reds”, a concept that was particularly applied to the organizations of the workers movement, but also to the militants of all the leftist, republican or liberal parties, as well as anyone who engaged in the mere defense of the most basic democratic rights and freedoms, and of course the national demands of the Basque and Catalanian people against whom an implacable cultural and linguistic genocide was waged.

## Thesis no. 28.

The war of extermination waged against the reds by the nationalist bloc and the Francoist genocidal state were not denounced as such during the Transition to democracy.

The post-Francoist heirs granted an amnesty to the political prisoners of Francoism for a handful of crimes that were only crimes because they had been legislated as such by the genocidal Francoist state.

The pact between Francoism and anti-Francoism also imposed another amnesty: an **amnesia** regarding the past. The first attempts to expose the notorious genocidal acts and to locate and identify the remains of those shot or disappeared in mass graves were interrupted by the attempted coup d'état of February 23, 1981. The future of the democracy, social and political stability and economic progress of the country seemed to be dependent on the forgetting of history and of the Francoist genocide as well as on the renunciation of any attempt to identify the bodies of those who were murdered and buried in mass graves, and even the mere memory of the location of these graves. The **fear** of the vanquished was prolonged in the form of the fear of the children of the vanquished, which continued to prevail in this curious "vigilant and endangered" democracy. Everything was nicely wrapped up.

## Thesis no. 29.

Genocide and crimes against humanity, however, are not subject to any statute of limitations. The Francoist genocide cannot be forgotten. It is no longer a matter of prosecuting individuals, but of the right to know the whole truth about what happened and also, of course, of the right to unhindered access to archival materials. It is a matter of vindicating the memory of those who were disappeared, assassinated, shot and thrown into mass graves, the exiles and all those fighters for liberty or for utopia who suffered imprisonment or forced labor without having committed any other crime than being reds, that is, members of the collective of the defeated in the war, whom the Francoist state sought to exterminate. A state that was based on the alliance of the military, reactionary bourgeoisie, big landowners, Falangists and the Catholic Church. It is also about destroying or transforming those places, monuments or plaques that commemorate fascist crimes and war crimes. Especially the “Wall of those who Died for God and Spain”, built by enslaved prisoners of war. And it is above all about recovering historical memory and uncovering **concepts** that have been hidden under the flood of fascist and clerical propaganda:

1. The Spanish civil war **was not a fratricidal war**, between brothers: **it was a war of extermination** against the “reds”;
2. Academic debates about whether the Franco dictatorship was a **fascist or an authoritarian** regime are of little importance; in any event **it was a genocidal state**, based on nothing but the victory of the military, the clergy and the fascists in a war against the people and the working class;
3. It is true that the Catholic Church suffered from religious persecution in the republican zone during the first ten months of the war that produced a total of seven thousand martyrs (who have now been **beatified**); but it is no less true that it was an active and terrible **accomplice**, necessary and indispensable at the beginning of the war, in its character as a war of extermination and in the subsequent genocide of the defeated by the Francoist state. It was a martyr for ten months and executioner for forty years.

The Anarchist Library  
Anti-Copyright



Agustin Guillamón

Theses on the Spanish Civil War and the revolutionary situation created on July 19, 1936  
June 2001

Retrieved on 2020-07-19 from [libcom.org](http://libcom.org)

Translated from the Spanish original in November 2013. Spanish original published in:  
*BALANCE. Cuadernos de historia del movimiento obrero*, Cuaderno No. 21, Barcelona, June 2001  
(2<sup>nd</sup> edition).

**[theanarchistlibrary.org](http://theanarchistlibrary.org)**