



REVOLUTION AND COUNTERREVOLUTION IN CATALONIA

Carlos Semprín Maura

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First published in France in 1974 (while still a 'leftist'), a "critical analysis of the bureaucratization of the CNT, with regard to both the political as well as the economic terrain", bureaucratization which the author claims was "total and complete", with discussions of certain historical turning points and watershed moments (e.g., the militarisation of the militias, the May Events and the overthrow of the Council of Aragon), and extensive passages quoted from eyewitness accounts (e.g., Marcel Ollivier's *Les journées sanglantes de Barcelone*), newspaper articles and official documents that have not previously appeared in English translation.

"I wrote this book between 1969 and 1971, when the tremors of the May-June 1968 outbreak in France had not yet subsided, and when a wide range of topics, new for many people, nourished actions, discussions, projects, journals and books. Among these topics, of course, were the libertarian revolutions and the shopworn theme of self-management. To me it seemed that the logical as well as the obvious thing to do was to participate in my own way in these discussions and in the critique of totalitarianism ("red" fascism as well as the "white" variety), by writing a book about the experiences of "self-management" in Catalonia and Aragon in 1936-1939, concerning which almost no one (if not absolutely no one) knew anything in France at that time. I was myself only then discovering the importance of these phenomena as I engaged in research and gathered documents and data for the book.

"During those same years, it had become fashionable for Parisian publishers to carry some "leftist" titles in their catalogues, in order to satisfy a new youthful customer base and to thus increase the profits of the various publishing houses.

"This book, however, was offered to a whole series of publishers without being accepted by any of them, until it was to "miraculously" find a home with a respectable, and originally Catholic, publisher (Mame), that was at the time attempting to change its image to keep pace with the times. My book did not bring it any good luck since its publisher went out of business shortly thereafter, sinking into the most total bankruptcy....

"I have changed nothing in the first French edition, except for omitting the short introduction that the French editor had requested in order to shed some light on the question of Catalonian nationalism for any possible readers on the French side of the Pyrenees. Such an introduction may very well be spared the Spanish readers of this book, who can obtain much more complete information on this topic—if they need to do so—from other books, or merely by reading their local newspapers, now that the Generalitat has been reinstated.... I will nonetheless take advantage of this opportunity to say, with regard to that brief review of Catalonian nationalism, that I utterly and completely reject all nationalism.

"I have changed nothing, solely and exclusively due to my laziness, since there is much that could have been revised and improved, and also taking into account the fact that since this book was published, several other volumes have appeared that address the question of the collectives and other themes treated here. I have also refrained from changing the—few—more recent observations contained in the book. For example, the last paragraphs in which, in a quite perfunctory manner, I refer to the situation in Spain at the time when I was writing the book, that is, the situation of Spain under Franco.

"Obviously, no one could have confidently asserted at that time that once Franco had died, Francoism would disappear so rapidly and so peacefully and that the recently unleashed democracy, with a full head of steam, would lead Spain towards Banality. A Banality that was preferable, in my view, to fascism, with or without its Francoist peculiarities. But this does not obviate the fact, and it is important to emphasize this, that revolutionary

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