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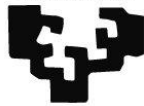
BUILDING THE STATELESS NATION

Basque and Catalan nationalism from a compared perspective
(1930 - 1939)

Directed by Professor Ludger Mees



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Abstract

This thesis is a compared analysis of Basque and Catalan nationalism between 1930 and 1939. It is mostly centred around the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (PNV) and *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (ERC) as the two leading political agents within their respective national movements. This work uses the methodological resources provided by the mechanism-process approach and discourse analysis to argue that both ERC and the PNV carried out essentially similar processes towards political hegemony that resulted in qualitative advances in Basque and Catalan nation-building. It also maps the many differences in format and timing that shaped the actual materialisation of these processes, explaining them in terms of the many structural contrasts between the Basque and the Catalan contexts. Finally, this thesis proposes a diplomatic approach, i.e. the use of reasonings and concepts usually applied to the study of the relations between sovereign states, to explain the shifting relationship between Basque and Catalan nationalism.

Laburpena

Tesi hau 1930 eta 1939 urte arteko euskal eta katalan nazionalismoen ikerketa konparatu bat da. Batez ere Eusko Alderdi Jeltzalea (EAJ) eta Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC) ditu ardatz, euren mugimendu nazionalen barruan bi eragile politiko nagusiak diren aldetik. Lan honek *mechanism-process* ikuspegiak eta analisi diskurtsiboak emandako baliabide metodologikoak erabiltzen ditu, argudiatzeko ERCK eta EAJk hegemonia politikoranzko antzeko prozesuak egin zituztela funtsean, eta horiek euskal eta Kataluniako nazio-eraikuntzan aurrerapen kualitatiboak eragin zituztela. Prozesu horien gauzatze zehatzari forma eman zioten formatu- eta tempo-desberdintasun ugariak ere identifikatzen ditu, eta horiek Euskadiko eta Kataluniako testuinguruen arteko egiturazko kontraste ugarietan oinarrituta azaltzen ditu. Azkenik, tesi honek ikuspegi diplomatiko bat proposatzen du, hau da, estatu subiranoen arteko harremanen azterketari aplikatu ohi zaizkion the arrazonamenduak eta kontzeptuak erabiltzea, euskal eta katalan nazionalismoen arteko interakzioaren bilakaera azaltzeko.

Resum

Aquesta tesi és un estudi comparat dels nacionalismes basc i català entre 1930 i 1939. Es centra principalment en el Partit Nacionalista Basc (PNB) i Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC), com els dos agents polítics principals al si dels seus respectius moviments nacionals. Aquest treball utilitza els recursos metodològics proporcionants per l'enfocament *mechanism-process* i l'anàlisi discursiva per a argumentar que tant ERC com el PNB portaren a termini processos fonamentalment similars cap a la hegemonia política que resultaren en avenços qualitatius en la construcció nacional basca i catalana. També identifica les moltes diferències de format i de temps que donaren forma a la materialització concreta d'aquests processos, explicant-los en base als molts contrastos estructurals entre els contextos basc i català. Finalment, aquesta tesi proposa un enfocament diplomàtic, és a dir, la utilització de raonaments i conceptes aplicats habitualment a l'estudi de les relacions entre estats sobirans, per a explicar la relació canviant entre els nacionalismes basc i català.

Resumen

Esta tesis es un estudio comparado de los nacionalismos vasco y catalán entre 1930 y 1939. Se centra principalmente en el Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV) y Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC), como los dos agentes políticos principales dentro de sus respectivos movimientos nacionales. Este trabajo utiliza los recursos metodológicos proporcionados por el enfoque *mechanism-process* y el análisis discursivo para argumentar que tanto ERC como el PNV llevaron a cabo procesos fundamentalmente similares hacia la hegemonía política que resultaron en avances cualitativos en la construcción nacional vasca y catalana. También identifica las muchas diferencias de formato y tempo que dieron forma a la materialización concreta de estos procesos, explicándolos en base a los muchos contrastes estructurales entre los contextos vasco y catalán. Finalmente, esta tesis propone un enfoque diplomático, es decir, la utilización de los razonamientos y conceptos aplicados habitualmente al estudio de las relaciones entre estados soberanos, para explicar la relación cambiante entre los nacionalismos vasco y catalán.

Introduction

Hateful comparisons? A research justification

Western Europe is certainly an interesting region for the study of nationalism and national identity. What once were considered to be clear examples of strong nation-states are now manifesting themselves as stubbornly multinational realities. As this PhD thesis was being developed, more than two million Catalans voted in a referendum that had been banned by the Spanish authorities amidst scenes of police brutality. Yearly demonstrations in Bilbao were still gathering tens of thousands of the Basque ETA prisoners' supporters, almost a decade after the end of the group's armed campaign. Corsican nationalists won an unprecedented absolute majority in France's regional elections. As these lines were being written, the ruling Scottish National Party responded to the final materialisation of Brexit with the announcement of a second independence referendum. Stateless nationalism in Western Europe, even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, is a force to be reckoned with. Finding the historical roots of this current political relevancy has probably been the greatest single stimulus for this investigation. History as an academic discipline often grows out of a sense of responsibility to provide with a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of current events by tracing their pasts.

Basque and Catalan national movements have already become 'usual suspects' in nations-and-nationalism related research, as they are often seen as classic examples of the stateless European nation. Whereas the armed conflict in the Basque Country used to motivate significant amounts of research, interest seems to have shifted towards Catalonia as a result of its *procés sobiranista*. Surely in terms of the numbers of people being mobilised and the political issues at stake, Catalan nationalism is one of the most powerful social movements in current Western Europe. The fact that it has seemingly grown so much, so fast, has naturally risen many questions both in political and academic circles.

Las comparaciones son odiosas, goes a popular Castilian saying, which has been traced back to the late medieval dialogue *La Celestina*. It reflects upon the

conflicting feelings that often arise from comparisons. Comparing oneself to another can be dangerous to the ego. Different contexts, value scales and perspectives can complicate comparison to the point of pointlessness. Nations and nationalisms, with all of their passion—and some would say national *uniqueness*—seem to qualify for particularly hateful comparisons.

And yet comparing Catalan and Basque nationalism is simply too tempting. They both see themselves as representing peoples who live at both sides of the France-Spain border. They were both born as political movements a similar time period. They both played key roles in critical, defining moments in Spanish history, such as the Second Spanish Republic and the post-Francoist *transición*. Both were, indeed, mortal enemies of Franco's regime. From a Spanish nationalist point of view, they have probably remained the two single worst historical threats to what the Spanish Constitution of 1978 terms *la indisoluble unidad de la Nación*. The sheer number of shared aspects seems to make comparison almost an obvious choice.

Historiography—a great portion of it coming from Basque and Catalan universities—has for decades devoted many works to the study Catalan and Basque nationalism. This has produced quite a clear picture of their origins, social base, changing political agendas and practices, symbols, organizational patterns, attitudes towards gender and race, etc. Strikingly enough, few works have been devoted to the single issue of Catalan-Basque comparison. That is not to say that comparisons have not been made by historians at all. There have been, as other sections of this introduction will show, very insightful reflections on the topic by some researchers. This thesis, however, attempts to specifically target the issue of Catalan and Basque nationalism from a compared perspective. This is not a thesis about two political movements with comparison as a bonus track, but rather as its *leitmotiv*.

Comparing cannot mean the simple gathering of similarities and differences. This research is also an attempt to push further by looking closely at Basque and Catalan nationalist political cultures and particularly to how they see each other. As a matter of fact, Basque and Catalan patriots have always compared themselves, and they have often done in fairly judgemental ways too. From the founder of Basque nationalism Sabino Arana's early rejection of Catalan nationhood, to *basquitis*, the admiration for anything related to Basque culture and politics among

young Catalan nationalist militants in the 1990s and 2000s, these comparisons have been going on for over a century. Looking into this peculiar—and again, relatively under-researched—dialogue is another clear motivation behind this thesis.

Having clarified something about method and theme, surely—this is historical research—something must be said about the timeframe choice. The Second Spanish Republic and the subsequent Civil War form the chronological space in which this thesis is set. The point of departure is the San Sebastian pact, by which Catalan nationalists and Spanish republicans—the Basque nationalists being notoriously absent—agreed to topple King Alfonso XIII. The closure comes with a moment of particular unity between Basque and Catalan nationalists, as their leaders Lluís Companys and José Antonio Aguirre crossed the French border together, leaving for exile in the face of Franco's advancing armies. Together, these two moments may add up to just under a decade, but combined, their impact has shaped Spanish politics, society and culture for the rest of the century, and even beyond. The same can be said for Catalan and Basque national identities. These are years of extremes. Years which include some of the nationalists' greatest political achievements, as well as some of their most desperate moments. Their parallel development during this period forms an arc from an already strong, mass movements to the long awaited goal of political autonomy, and then back to the underground after a traumatic defeat in the Spanish Civil War. This time period also saw the forging of powerful national symbols for both movements: from national heroes such as the Catalan and Basque presidents Lluís Companys and José Antonio Aguirre to symbolic displays of statehood such as the twice proclaimed Catalan Republic and the Basque Army, the *Eusko Gudarostea*. It also includes some of the harshest memories of Spanish repression in Catalan and Basque imaginaries: from the *habla la lengua del Imperio* ('speak the language of the Empire') posters put up by the Franco regime in Barcelona to the destruction of Gernika. All in all, the chosen timeframe provides crucial ingredients for comparison both in the political and cultural arenas.

This section has made the case for the relevancy and potentiality of applying the compared historical method to the study of Basque and Catalan nationalism. That said, and however particular its focus may look, this thesis has been born out of a

desire to contribute to the wider field of scholarly research nations and nationalism. By providing a *concrete analysis of concrete conditions*, it attempts to produce small answers that can enrich further moves to go after the big questions.

Aims and hypotheses

This thesis is, in broad terms, a comparative study of Basque and Catalan nationalist movements during the time period 1930-1939. It encompasses three different, parallel axes of research, each built upon its own hypothesis, and with its own guiding questions to answer. These hypotheses can be summarised by the following statements:

Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC) and the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (PNV) both led essentially similar processes towards political hegemony during de Second Spanish Republic.

These processes faced different challenges and circumstances, specific to each case's particular context, and as a result materialised in different formulas and rhythms.

Catalan and Basque nationalists did not arrive at significant strategic agreements, although they did engage in what can be described as protodiplomatic relations.

The focus is placed on ERC and the PNV as a result of these two parties' specific political, electoral and symbolic weight within Catalan and Basque nationalism during the 1930s. This investigation will also look at the wider scope of Basque and Catalan nationalist political agents, which includes many other parties and groups.

The first hypothesis asserts that both ERC and the PNV made the most of the historical window of opportunity presented by the Spanish Second Republic, a regime much more open to the recognition of Basque and Catalan nationalist claims than its predecessors. Both parties managed to play a defining role within their political contexts by maintaining complex social networks, rearranging loyalties and exporting elements of their collective worldview to other political cultures. In both cases this went hand in hand with entering a new phase in their nation-building process, marked by the achievement of autonomous institutions. This first axis of research will attempt to prove that, in this sense of hegemony and nation-building, Basque and Catalan nationalism shared *essentially similar* paths during this time period.

The second hypothesis alludes to the particular—different in terms of intensities and rhythms—way in which these hegemony building processes were carried out in both contexts. This second axis of research aims to show the marked differences between the political cultures of ERC and the PNV, as well as the different political arenas they had to deal with. Doing so involves comparing a variety of aspects of both worlds, including issues related to class, ethnicity and gender.

The third and final hypothesis affirms that although it would be somewhat inaccurate to portray Basque and Catalan nationalists as unconditional political allies, they did not turn their backs completely to one another either. This axis of research aims to prove that both movements kept ties based on symbolical gestures (delegation exchanges, solidarity statements, folklore exhibitions, etc.) and developed a common code of protodiplomatic relations based on a mutual recognition of the legitimacy of one another's struggle, even if this did not mean longstanding and close collaboration.

These three axes do not, however, determine the thesis' structure, which is mainly organised along chronological lines. The last section of this introduction is a 'state of the art', a critical balance of past research, which compiles existing comparisons between Catalan and Basque nationalism made from different fields of the social sciences. The first chapter of the thesis then proceeds to propose a theoretical and methodological framework to deal with the problems exposed in this section. The next seven chapters then cover successive political cycles that marked the existence of the Second Spanish Republic. The second chapter looks at the downfall of the preceding regime, Primo de Rivera's dictatorship (1923-1930). The third concentrates on the actual transition towards the new republican Spanish state in 1931. The rest of the chapters then proceed to cover the 1931 'constituent period', the 'progressive' (1931-1933) and 'conservative' (1933-1935) biennia, the brief peacetime government of the Popular Front in the first half of 1936, and finally, the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). The thesis ends with a final conclusion where the investigation's results are summarised and a final assessment on the strength of the initial hypotheses is made.

A brief note on language and nomenclature

This thesis has been written in English, but it is the product of research focused on events, people and places outside the English-speaking world. Most of the sources used were originally written in Catalan or Spanish. Catalan nationalists produced almost all of their political discourse—including newspapers, manifestos, press releases, posters, etc.—in Catalan language. Basque nationalists, on the other hand, despite producing a significant quantity of materials in Basque, used Spanish for the vast majority of their official communications. All translations, unless the contrary is specified, have been made by the thesis' author. Direct quotations which extend for more than three lines of text include transcripts of the original texts in corresponding footnotes.

For the names of places—regions, provinces, municipalities, etc.—English exonyms have been used whenever possible. Places with no English exonym within the Basque Country and Catalonia are referred to by their Basque and Catalan names respectively. For example, the word 'Biscay' is used for the westernmost Basque province, not its Basque version *Bizkaia*. Exceptionally, this province's capital is referred to as 'Bilbao', and not the Basque *Bilbo*, the use of which is rare outside texts written in Basque.

For the names of people, this thesis takes into account the predominant contemporary usage. Catalan forms and spellings have been used for all Catalan individuals, which was quite widespread at the time, even among people who were not strictly Catalan nationalists. Most Basque people at the time used Spanish—or French—names and spellings. Within the Basque nationalist community, however, Basque names and naming customs—these in a particular form designed by Sabino Arana—were also used, although often with a symbolic purpose. Most Basque people will be therefore referred to by their names in Spanish and with Spanish spelling, taking into account the most predominant form in each particular case. For example, the first Basque President will be referred to as José Antonio Aguirre Lekube, and not as *Agirre ta Lekube'tar' Joseba Andoni*, which was also used at the time.

Words which carry particular meaning in Basque or Catalan, such as *senyera* or *batzoki* will be shown in their original form. Words in Basque will be written according to 1930s writing conventions which predate and often differ from current orthography as established by *Euskaltzandia*, the institutional authority presiding over Basque language. Examples of these are *mendigoxale* and *ikurriña*.

Compared research on Basque and Catalan nationalism: a state of the art

To assert that historiography on Basque and Catalan nationalism has been prolific would not be an exaggeration. However, there is a marked contrast between the vast amount of research on both national movements and the limited impact of compared approaches. This is particularly surprising given the comparative method's success in past decades, with key contributions to the study of nationalism¹.

A 1993 issue of the journal *Historia Contemporánea*, edited by the University of the Basque Country, included several reviews of past historiography of nationalist movements, including Basque and Catalan nationalism. Historians José Luis de la Granja, Borja de Riquer and Justo Beramendi produced papers which are still very relevant when it comes to tracing past comparative research on Basque and Catalan nationalism.²

All three reviews showed how historiography had evolved from “nationalist pragmatism”³ and “historical literature”⁴ to incorporate new methodological approaches under the influence of French Marxism and the *École des Annales*. This involved a fundamental shift from historians as vindicators of the nation, to the conceptualisation of nationalism as a historical phenomenon that had to be explained. This new trend began in earnest during the 1960s, which brought together a new generation of historians and saw an increase in academic output, even if some tended to mechanically adopt “Paris' latest ideological trends”⁵.

¹ German historiography has been particularly engaged in comparative research. For an overview of its main contributions and development see Jürgen Kocka, “Comparative Historical Research: German Examples,” *International Review of Social History*, 38, no. 3, 1993, pp. 369–79.

² José Luis de la Granja Sainz, “El Nacionalismo Vasco: De La Literatura Histórica a La Historiografía,” *Historia Contemporánea*, 7, 1992, pp. 209–36; Borja de Riquer i Permanyer, “Apogeo y Estancamiento de La Historiografía Contemporánea Catalana,” *Historia Contemporánea*, 7, 1992, pp. 117–34; Justo G. Beramendi, “La Historiografía de Los Nacionalismos En España,” *Historia Contemporánea*, 7, 1992, pp. 135–54.

³ *Ibid.*, p.137.

⁴ de la Granja, “El Nacionalismo...”, p. 210.

⁵ de Riquer, “Apogeo y Estancamiento...”, p. 124.

If research during the next decade brought new themes and time periods to the study of Basque and Catalan nationalism⁶, it failed to produce compared perspectives on both movements. Some isolated attempts had been made during Franco's regime, none of them yielding significant results.⁷ This changed after the *I Coloquio Vasco-Catalán de Historia*, a symposium held in Sitges towards the end of 1982.⁸ Some of the first serious comparative research on Basque and Catalan nationalism was presented here, with some contributions having lasting influences on the field.

Antonio Elorza was the first to base his comparison of Basque and Catalan nationalism in terms of what can be described as the 'difference hypothesis', which was to re-emerge in later studies. This author considered Aranism⁹ a "historical singularity", emphasizing its archaic, *Ancien Régime* tendencies as opposed to the more bourgeois nature of Catalan nationalism¹⁰.

Anna Sallés and Enric Ucelay-Da Cal produced two articles which would assert two other ideas which have retained a considerable influence over later works. The first, that the attempt by Basque nationalists to achieve the same political autonomy as their Catalan counterparts during the Second Spanish Republic was the result of a 'false analogy': their judgment of their strategic position in 1931 being fundamentally wrong, as they lacked ideological and political synchronisation with the new republican regime.¹¹ The second idea was that the relationship between Catalan and Basque nationalist movements during the same time period could be defined as casual, based on mutual unawareness and only

⁶ de la Granja, "El Nacionalismo...", p. 233.

⁷ These include works by Stanley Payne or the falangista Maximiano García briefly commented in Anna Sallés and Enric Ucelay Da Cal, "La Correspondencia Aguirre-Cambó, 1931-1936: Unes Reflexions," in Manuel González Portilla, Jordi Maluquer de Motes, and Borja de Riquer i Permanyer (eds), *Industrialización y Nacionalismo: Análisis Comparativo*, Sitges: I Coloquio Vasco-Catalán de Historia, 1982, p. 473.

⁸ Manuel González Portilla, Jordi Maluquer de Motes, and Borja de Riquer i Permanyer (eds), *Industrialización y Nacionalismo: Análisis Comparativo*, Sitges: I Coloquio Vasco-Catalán de Historia, 1982.

⁹ 'Aranism' (Spanish aranismo) is a term used to describe the ideology of Sabino Arana (1865-1903), founder of Basque nationalism. Arana based the new movement on integrist Catholicism and organic nationalism as key ideological elements.

¹⁰ Antonio Elorza, "Ideología Nacionalista y Antiguo Régimen: Elementos Para Una Compración," in *Industrialización y Nacionalismo...*, pp. 401-413.

¹¹ Anna Sallés and Enric Ucelay Da Cal, "L'analogia Falsa: El Nacionalisme Basc Davant de La República Catalana i La Generalitat Provisional, Abril-Juliol Del 1931," *Industrialización y Nacionalismo...*, pp. 443-70.

occasional interest, far from any 'natural' solidarity ties.¹² Margarita Otaegui expanded on this thesis with a paper on the 'Triple Alliance' of 1923, the first of several political agreements reached by Basque, Catalan and Galician nationalists during the 20th Century. Otaegui characterized it as a "circumstantial and tactical pact, more testimonial than political", although she did acknowledge its importance as a precedent to the Galeuzca pact of 1933.¹³

The same decade would see yet another key milestone for the compared study of Basque and Catalan nationalism. Manuel Tuñón de Lara directed the publication of a book—intended as a commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Gernika—which included notable contributions to the field. German researcher Klaus-Jürgen Nagel examined the developments of both national movements up to the beginning of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship in 1923¹⁴. Enric Ucelay-Da Cal followed, looking into the relationship between both movements until 1936¹⁵.

Nagel understood Basque and Catalan nationalism as two different manifestations of the same problem: the failure of the Spanish nation-state. However, this author identified fundamental ideological differences between both movements stemming from their different visions of the role of language in defining their respective nations. For Catalan nationalists, according to Nagel, national language was at the very centre of national identity. This was not true for the Basque nationalists, for whom language was peripheral, and race held the central position. Again, this idea was to be influential in later studies. On a more strategic plane, Nagel pointed out the lack of understanding between both national movements, at least until 1923. He documented some approaches made by the conservative *Lliga Regionalista*, but showed that only the pro-independence *Estat Català* began to think of the Basques as permanent allies. Interestingly, Nagel also

¹² Sallés and Ucelay Da Cal, "La Correspondencia...", pp. 471–483.

¹³ Margarita Otaegui Arizmendi, "La Triple Alianza de 1923," in *Industrialización y Nacionalismo...*, pp. 431–42. The term 'Galeuzca' is a confection of Galicia, Euzkadi and Catalonia. Alternative spellings include 'Galeusca' and 'GalEuzCa'.

¹⁴ Klaus-Jürgen Nagel, "Vasquismo y Catalanismo Hasta 1923. El Catalanismo de Izquierda y Euskadi.," in *Gernika: 50 Años Después (1937-1987)*. Nacionalismo, República, Guerra Civil, ed. Manuel Tuñón de Lara (dir.), VI Cursos de Verano en San Sebastián - VI. Udako Ikastaroak Donostian, 1987, pp. 51–70.

¹⁵ Enric Ucelay Da Cal, "Política de Fuera, Política Casera: Una Valoración de La Relación Entre Los Nacionalistas Catalanes y Vascos. 1923-1936.," in *Gernika: 50 Años...*, pp. 71–97.

explores a more *Historie croisée* perspective, looking into the different attitudes towards Basque nationalism across the Catalan nationalist political spectrum.

Enric Ucelay-Da Cal questioned the ‘difference hypothesis’ discussed above, asserting that Basque and Catalan nationalism were relatively close ideologically. This author criticized what he perceived as the established dichotomy between an autonomy-seeking, language-based Catalan nationalism *versus* an independence-seeking, race-based Basque nationalism. He rejected the usual comparison between the founders of both movements, Sabino Arana and Enric Prat de la Riba: “Arana and Prat would perhaps not seem so different if, instead of putting the hardliner, doctrinaire Arana of 1892-1898 against the Prat of 1905-1907 [...] he was confronted [...] with the Prat of 1894-1899, with his more radical texts”. Ucelay-Da Cal pointed out the danger of reductionism when engaging in comparisons lacking solid criteria.¹⁶

On the other hand, Ucelay-Da Cal continued to develop some of his previous theses about Catalan and Basque nationalist relations, aiming at dismantling the idea “that the Catalan and Basque peoples shared a fine mutual sensibility to understand each other's national characters.” He engaged in some controversy with the Galician historian Xosé Estévez, whom he accused of reproducing this discourse “with fundamentalist faith”.¹⁷ Shallowness and mutual unawareness, he insisted, were the main factors at play in Catalan and Basque nationalist relations, presenting this thesis as follows:

“Despite nationalist politics being naturally [...] concerned with itself, the search for identity often involves looking for models and even allies in foreign experience, which is understood as analogous. But this special prism only shows the observer what he wants to see, and so the other, the observed, is understood as a projection, as a function of the observer. [...] There is no real convergence between Basque and Catalan nationalism, because of structural reasons, and [...] there is only a sequence of occasional encounters, where both imagine each other according to their own needs.”¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 78–79.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 73, 77–78.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 73.

Ucelay-Da Cal maintained that this relations framework defined by “protocol rethoric”, and not real solidarity, was defined between the end of the 1880s and the beginning of the 1890s, and would remain in place at least until the 1930s.¹⁹ This author pointed out that personal networks and particular ideological affinities were the true driving force behind the more intense contacts. Ucelay-Da Cal was quite sceptical about the possibility that national movements within the same state could develop true alliances as “they would cease being nationalist—pure nationalist, at least—becoming federalist or confederalist revolutionaries.”²⁰

Xosé Estévez would respond a few years later, publishing in 1991 an extensive work on Galeuzca, which traced contacts between Basque and Catalan nationalists beginning in the 19th Century, but concentrated on the 1920s. In his view, historiography should not magnify nor minimise the scale and nature of the historical relations between Basque, Catalan and Galician nationalism. He defined

“relations between Basque, Galician and Catalan regionalists and nationalists [as] generally occasional and not amounting to a lasting strategy, dancing on a tightrope which balanced between the handy utopian-solidarity verbalism and the necessary concurrence of the pragmatic-possible.”²¹

The comparative perspective was resumed by historian Ludger Mees as part of his research on the interaction between nation and class in the context of Basque nationalism in the early 20th Century.²² Mees introduced two novelties: the first was an effort to introduce the particular cases of Basque and Catalan nationalism into wider, existing theoretical frameworks, such as that of the Czech historian Miroslav Hroch. The second was the use of thorough empirical studies to make calculated judgements about nationalist social bases. The result was a rather balanced outlook on Basque and Catalan national movements, as both sharing

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 76–77.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 96.

²¹ Xosé Estévez, *De La Triple Alianza Al Pacto de San Sebastián (1923-1930)*, San Sebastián: Mundaiz, 1991, p. 646.

²² Ludger Mees, *Entre Nación y Clase. El Nacionalismo Vasco y Su Base Social En Perspectiva Comparada*, Fundación Sabino Arana, 1991.

similarities derived from having developed in societies already transformed by capitalist modernity, and simultaneously showing significant differences in their class composition. Catalan nationalism being more prone to incorporate elements of the upper *bourgeoisie*, whilst Basque nationalism being more successful among the working class.

Despite these contributions and the current validity of many of their arguments, at the beginning of the 1990s historians still worried about the lack of compared perspective. Justo Beramendi lamented that many research avoided true dialogue and comparison, opting instead for “juxtaposing self-absorbed historiographies”.²³

A few years later, sociology took the initiative, producing two different compared case-studies of Basque and Catalan Nationalism. The first was the book *Divided nations. Class, politics and nationalism in the Basque Country and Catalonia*, published by Juan Díez Medrano in 1995.²⁴ This work covers a wide timeframe, beginning with an analysis of Spanish state-building, from the Middle Ages to the post-Franco *transición*. This author's starting point is again, the ‘difference hypothesis’:

“Major differences in the programmatic character of Basque nationalism and Catalan nationalism, differences that have endured for a century, have long intrigued social scientists and historians, but remain to be explained.”²⁵

Diez Medrano quickly rules out any linguistic considerations, arguing that

“since the two regions are alike in being linguistically distinct from the rest of Spain, language cannot be a significant factor in an explanation of the historical differences in the character of Basque and Catalan nationalism.”²⁶

²³ Beramendi, “La historiografía...”, p. 152.

²⁴ Juan Díez Medrano, *Divided Nations: Class, Politics and Nationalism in the Basque Country and Catalonia*, Íthaca: Cornell University Press, 1995.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Following a similar approach to Antonio Elorza, Díez Medrano concentrates on social and economic factors to explain the differences between Catalan and Basque nationalisms. His central thesis states that, because of uneven development in the two regions,

“class conflict between preindustrial elites and capitalist elites was more intense in the Basque Country than in Catalonia. [This was] because Basque development was combined and centred around capital-goods production while Catalan development was endogenous and centred around consumer-goods production.”²⁷

Furthermore, the close relationship between the Basque bourgeoisie and the central powers of the Spanish state would make impossible any occurrence of a bourgeois Basque nationalism. The result being that

“Basque nationalism remained a predominantly traditionalist movement aimed at establishing a society of small-scale industrial and agrarian producers in which religious principles would inform most aspects of life. It was therefore the program of a conservative middle class [...]”²⁸

Only two years later, in 1997, Daniele Conversi published *The Basques, the Catalans, and Spain. Alternative routes to nationalist mobilisation*.²⁹ Again, this work comes from a sociological perspective and covers the whole history of both nationalist movements, from their emergence to the end of the 20th Century. Its approach moves away from socioeconomic perspective of Díez Medrano, making almost the exact opposite argument: “[Catalan and Basque nationalism are] two

²⁷ Ibid., p. 195.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 89.

²⁹ Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans, and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation*, London: Hurst & Co, 1997.

cases which offer similar economic, structural and social variables, while differing sharply in the cultural variables.”³⁰

Consequently, Conversi's hypothesis is very different, focusing on language and culture in a way that echoes Klaus-Jürgen Nagel:

“The choice of a special symbol of national identity, such as language or race, can have direct political consequences, as reflected in each movement's ideological formulations. This choice is based on the availability of pre-existing cultural ‘material’ and human resources. In broader terms, historical and anthropological conditions have the power to influence, indirectly but consistently, patterns of political mobilisation.”³¹

Conversi shares with Díez Medrano the idea that rapid modernisation in the Basque Country—as opposed to a more gradual process in Catalonia—had a major impact on the development of nationalism. However, Conversi provides a cultural interpretation of this premise. He brings in sociolinguistics, arguing that the weakness of Basque language—in contrast with Catalan's relative strength—as well as the perceived difficulty of assimilating Spanish-speaking immigration resulted in race becoming a defining factor for Basque nationalism.³²

Both works share similar problems regarding historical inaccuracies and generalisations. Conversi, for example, affirms that the Basque PNV maintained a separatist, anti-capitalist and messianic political platform until the Spanish Civil War.³³ Historical research shows that this is not consistent with reality, as the PNV was basically an autonomist—at least in terms of political strategy—party nominally assuming Catholic social teaching as its economic policy. Díez Medrano goes further, asserting Basque nationalism has been consistently more anti-capitalist than Catalan nationalism.³⁴ Again, this is a highly problematic affirmation which seems to disregard that during many decades, the leading force within Catalan nationalism was a left-wing party, ERC, and that both movements include

³⁰ Ibid., p. 4.

³¹ Ibid., p. 162.

³² Ibid., p. 77–78.

³³ Ibid., p. 2.

³⁴ Díez Medrano, *Divided Nations...*, p. 190.

political agents from various ranges of the political spectrum. *Conversi* includes political violence as one of the conforming elements of Basque nationalism, which as a political movement only exercised very limited levels of violence until the creation of ETA.³⁵ Both works' approach involves grouping together different objects of study from different time periods under the same category, which is probably the key factor behind these reductionisms.

In any case, *Conversi* and Díez Medrano are still the only authors who have published complete case studies on Catalan and Basque nationalism in a compared perspective. Their contributions are still some of the most ambitious yet published and remain important references to this day. The 1990s also saw the publication of *Nationalism and the nation in the Iberian Peninsula*, a multidisciplinary collection of articles which included some comparative perspectives on Catalan and Basque Nationalism. Clare Mar-Molinero and Angel Smith—the volume's editors—seem to adopt a class-based model for the comparison of Basque and Catalan national movements. They are both interpreted as considerably middle class in nature, “who favoured ideologies which though attacking the abuses of central government did not call into question the essentials of the social order.”³⁶ Although most of the following chapters that focus on Catalan or Basque nationalism tend to so on just one of the two movements, the book does include a direct comparison of Catalan and Basque nationalists' linguistic policies by Mar-Molinero.³⁷

More recently, historiography has produced some compared research on Basque and Catalan nationalism, both involving academics who have been active since the 1980s, as well as a younger generation. The running of a Basque, Catalan and Galician coalition named *Galeusca* for the 2004 European election somewhat stimulated a renewed interest for the topic.

José Luís de la Granja published a general overview of the alliance policies of Basque, Catalan and Galician nationalism in 2000. Building from Otaegui's work on the *Triple Alianza* and Sallés and Ucelay-Da Cal's ‘false analogy’ concept, de la

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 5–6.

³⁶ Angel Smith and Clare Mar-Molinero, “The Myths and Realities of Nation-Building in the Iberian Peninsula,” in *Nationalism and the Nation in the Iberian Peninsula*, Angel Smith and Clare Mar-Molinero (eds.), Oxford-Washington, D. C.: Berg, 1996, pp. 12–14.

³⁷ Clare Mar-Molinero, “The Role of Language in Spanish Nation-Building,” in *Nationalism and the Nation...*, pp. 69–88.

Granja argues that the impact of such alliances has been “more symbolic than real”.³⁸ From a Basque perspective, this author points out the role of Aranism as a historical obstacle for relations between Catalan and Basque nationalism at least until the 1930s.³⁹ He also documents the Basque origin of the name *Galeuzca*, as proposed by the left-of-centre party *Acción Nacionalista Vasca*, and not by the PNV as all other previous work had stated.⁴⁰

In 2008, Ludger Mees shed new light on a time period which had not seen yet any research on Catalan and Basque nationalist relations: the exile of the 1940s and 1950s.⁴¹ Mees argued that “the pretended, and sometimes achieved, political and strategic proximity between Basque and Catalan nationalism competed with the remoteness resulting from structural differences between two different national realities with differing historical contexts.”⁴² This author pointed out the contrast between the strategic alignment shown by both movements during the Civil War, in what the Spanish President Manuel Azaña called the “Bilbao-Barcelona axis”, and the post-war conflict during Josep Tarradellas' presidency of the Catalan government-in-exile. At this point, Mees considered his research to be in line Enric Ucelay-Da Cal's thesis about Catalan and Basque nationalist relations.

A year later, Xosé Estévez was back with a book on *Galeuzca* in which he summarizes, clarifies and expands on some of his main theses.⁴³ Josep Lluís Carod-Rovira, then leader of ERC, writes in the prologue about the existence of a “natural *Galeuzca*”, in what would be an example of the type of discourse many authors discussed here have dismissed as myth. In any case, Estévez makes good use of the book to directly address his critics in a very qualified tone:

³⁸ José Luis de la Granja Sainz, “Las Alianzas Políticas Entre Los Nacionalismos Periféricos En La España Del Siglo XX,” *Studia Historica. Historia Contemporánea* 18, 2000, pp. 149–75.

³⁹ Sabino Arana's was reluctant to consider the Catalan claim to nationhood in equal terms, as he did not believe the Catalans to be part of a separate 'race' from the Spanish. See *Ibid.*, p. 153.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 156–157.

⁴¹ This ‘exile’ period actually begins in 1937, as after the military defeat of the Basque Government and the loss of the Basque Country to Franco's armies, thousands of Basque exiles, led by their President José Antonio Aguirre, settled in Catalonia. For another, earlier paper on this Basque exile in Catalonia from a more anthropological perspective see F. Xavier Media and Jordi Bou, “¡Cada Día, Catalanes, Acordaos de Euzkadi! La Semana Pro-Euzkadi,” *Sancho El Sabio: Revista de Cultura e Investigación Vasca*, no. 13, 2000, pp. 137–52.

⁴² Ludger Mees, “Tan Lejos, Tan Cerca. El Gobierno Vasco En Barcelona y Las Complejas Relaciones Entre El Nacionalismo Vasco y El Catalán,” *Historia Contemporánea*, 37, 2008, pp. 557–591.

⁴³ Xosé Estévez, *Galeuzca: La Rebelión de La Periferia (1923-1998)*, Madrid: Entinema, 2009.

“Enric Ucelay-da Cal, from a very critical and demystifying stance, and José Luis de la Granja, from a more moderate one, have studied peripheral alliances, including the 1998 Declaration of Barcelona, under a prism of profound scepticism and qualifying them as outright failures. My appreciation differs, although I am not as optimistic as to believe in chemically pure solidarity. The *Galeuzca* accords between the stateless nations [meaning Galicia, Catalonia and the Basque Country] have been as operative as the international conventions subscribed by nation-states, which have ignored them as soon as their political, economic or strategic interests have been called into question.”⁴⁴

This author points at the reoccurring nature of the *Galeuzca* phenomenon—meaning the repeated efforts to reach political agreements between Galician, Basque and Catalan nationalists—as well as to the reactions it has often caused in political opponents—i.e. Spanish nationalists—as proof of its importance beyond the strictly symbolical.

Not all present developments have had the same influence on the pace and themes of historical research. The 2010s brought dramatic changes to Catalan and Basque nationalism. The relatively fixed picture of the previous decades—marked by violent conflict in the Basque Country and Catalan nationalist accommodation to the Spanish constitutional frame—was changed almost beyond recognition. ETA announced the end of its armed campaign in 2011. Catalan independence moved from the margins to the centre of the political in the cycle of political mobilisation and confrontation that has been dubbed *el Procés* (‘the Process’). These paradigm-altering events have fuelled a renewed interest in Catalan and Basque nationalist comparison. Such an interest, however, has tended to materialise more often in newspaper columns than in academic research. An exception has been *Emoción e identidad nacional: Cataluña y el País Vasco en perspectiva comparada*, a volume which addresses the topic from the recently popular ‘history of emotions’ perspective.⁴⁵ Published almost 20 years after Mar-Molinero and Smith’s compilation, the articles included in this book show how the themes of interest have shifted in two decades. Again, however, there is very little direct comparison,

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 13–14.

⁴⁵ Géraldine Galeote, Maria Llombart, and Maitane Ostolaza (eds.), *Emoción e Identidad Nacional: Cataluña y El País Vasco En Perspectiva Comparada*, Paris: Éditions Hispaniques, 2015.

and the actual compared analysis is left to the reader, who is to judge whether “the perspective of a possible convergence of emotional records that intervene in the identity processes linked to both case studies” is valid or not.

Finally, and probably the most recent contribution to the compared study of Basque and Catalan nationalism is a paper by Ludger Mees and Anwen Elias comparing the changing territorial policies of the PNV and the now dissolved centre-of-right Catalan nationalist party *Convergència i Unió*. It includes the following statement:

“This formal cooperation between CDC and PNV continued a tradition of collaboration between Basque and Catalan nationalism against a common adversary, the Spanish state, that can be traced back to the 1920s. However, this solidarity had always been, and would continue to be, little more than a symbolic gesture”.⁴⁶

From Mees and Elias' point of view, there seems to be tension between continuity and shallowness in these historical bilateral relations: a long trajectory of collaboration that is unable to transcend the symbolic sphere. After arriving at this point, perhaps the whole Estévez-Ucelay-Da Cal debate could be narrowed down to the meaning of ‘solidarity’, ‘symbolic’ and ‘moving beyond the strictly symbolic’, in this context. After all, both sides of the debate seem to agree on both the short-term nature of Basque-Catalan strategic collaboration and the recurring, time-persistent nature of these relations, almost to the point of tradition.

This state of the art has shown a general overview of existing compared research on Basque and Catalan nationalism. Three conclusions may be drawn:

Historiography—unlike sociology—has yet to produce a detailed monographic study comparing Basque and Catalan nationalism. This topic still represents a clear research gap, which can only be filled by new studies with the aim of providing answers for the questions it poses.

⁴⁶ Anwen Elias and Ludger Mees, “Between Accommodation and Secession: Explaining the Shifting Territorial Goals of Nationalist Parties in the Basque Country and Catalonia,” *REAF. Revista d’Estudis Autònoms i Federals*, 25, 2017, p. 138.

Comparing Basque and Catalan nationalism, however, can hardly be considered 'untrodden ground'. Compared perspectives, even if they have been limited to very specific issues, or have remained peripheral to other research methods and interests, have been a part of many studies in the past 40 years. These studies have not been limited to descriptive assessments of the problem: they have sparked debate and produced ideas and concepts which have developed through different generations of academics. Any continued research should engage with this rich background.

Major themes in past research on this topic include political strategies (with a particular attention towards alliance-building), political programmes, ideological influences, national identities and social bases. Issues more related to culture have remained quite absent, such as nation-building, sociability, symbolic imageries and cultural policies. A more cultural approach can therefore be a suitable way of bringing new insight to compared perspectives on Basque and Catalan nationalism.

The examination of existing comparative research on Basque and Catalan nationalism has been crucial in developing many of the ideas contained in the following chapters. These conclusions, together with the aims and hypotheses stated in the previous section, make up much of the driving force behind this thesis. It is within—and in close dialogue with—this current state of the art, that this thesis should be understood. Having dealt with the *why*, i. e. the scientific motivations behind the thesis, the next section which, concerned with theory and methodology, will move on to tackle the next phase of any research: the *how*.

Chapter 1.

Methodological and theoretical framework

1. 1. Nation-building as contention for hegemony: a theoretical approach to the analysis of nationalist mass movements

This thesis attempts to compare the historical evolution of two nationalist mass movements—Basque and Catalan nationalism—within a series of particular political cycles between 1930 and 1939. A prerequisite for the development of this comparative perspective is the definition of a theoretical framework that provides adequate tools for the analysis at hand. These should deliver a deep understanding of both case studies, integrating them into wider, overall perspectives on the study of nations and nationalism.

The fundamental idea that guides this research is *the interpretation of nation-building processes as contentions for hegemony*. This approach has been synthesized from different contributions made by several leading researchers, including historians, sociologists, political scientists and social psychologists. These have been applied to the particular questions posed by cases of Basque and Catalan nationalism. For the sake of clarity, this approach has been broken down into two components that will be explained separately: the first is a particular definition of the concept of *nation-building*. The second is about *hegemony and contention* in the national context. Both arguments will be preceded by an overview of past research that has applied varying notions of hegemony to Basque and/or Catalan nationalism.

1. 1. 1. Historiographical notions of hegemony applied to the study of Catalan and Basque nationalism: a background

The concept of hegemony lies at the very centre of the present thesis's theoretical framework. Essentially flowing from the political thought of Antonio Gramsci, its widespread use in different academic and political contexts has sometimes caused it to become obscure. Section 1. 1. 3. deals with the particular notion of hegemony adopted by this research's approach, but what follows is a critical review of its use in existing research. The concept of hegemony applied to the study of Basque and Catalan nationalism is not a complete novelty, particularly when it comes to the timeframe comprising the Second Spanish Republic. This section covers works by different scholars who have applied different meanings to the term 'hegemony'. Some have omitted the term altogether, and yet their arguments and reasoning remain highly relevant to the point. Together they provide a background to the theoretical and methodological proposals that will be explained in the following sections of this chapter.

In the case of Catalan historiography, 'hegemony' has often been used as a concept only indirectly in relation to national issues. Most of this research has revolved around the political party *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (ERC) and its meteoric rise to power during the Second Spanish Republic. As Primo de Rivera's dictatorship (1923-1930) gave way to the *dictablanda* under General Berenguer, and then to the short mandate of Admiral Juan Bautista Aznar-Cabañas, the crumbling regime held free, local elections the 12th of April 1931. ERC was born as a hastily assembled coalition of three previously separate Catalan nationalist groups.⁴⁷ It performed unexpectedly and exceptionally well in the election, particularly in Barcelona where it earned a clear majority. This prompted its leaders to take action: a Catalan Republic was proclaimed the 14th of April by Francesc Macià, who formed a provisional Catalan Government.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ The coalition included the pro-independence party *Estat Català* ('Catalan State'), whose leader Francesc Macià had just returned from exile, the federalist *Partit Republicà Català*, led by Lluís Companys, and a loose collection of republican and moderate socialists that had gathered around the newspaper *l'Opinió*.

⁴⁸ The details and complexities of this episode will be closely analysed in Chapter 3.

Three days later, after negotiations with the new Spanish republican regime, Macià agreed to scale down the implications of his original proclamation. The new Catalan Government would conform the *Generalitat*⁴⁹, a new institution—taking its name from a medieval governing body suppressed in 1714—from which Catalan home rule would be exercised.

In this context, ‘hegemony’ has been employed not as a concept related to Catalan nation-building, but rather as a means to describe the relative supremacy of ERC within the Catalan political arena. This notion of hegemony—which is rarely explicitly defined at all—has often been based on sociological or even electoral performance criteria, with cultural and ideological aspects commonly playing a secondary role.

Enric Ucelay-Da Cal's approach probably remains one of the most culture-based, after publishing *La Catalunya Populista* in the 1980s. This study looked into the sociological roots and development of Catalan republican culture, including many ideas that would be repeated and reinforced by later scholars. Ucelay-Da Cal used his main theme, the idea of “populist Catalonia”, to describe how the social and cultural context of the 1930s enabled the rise of cross-class political alliances. This author presented ERC as one of such alliances, which obtained hegemony by relying on three fundamental features: the popular identification between the party and the *Generalitat*, the existence of a local-based, ERC-affiliated grassroots network—including the republican *Ateneu*⁵⁰ as a cross-class cultural dialogue centre—and the popularity of its leader Francesc Macià. Ucelay-Da Cal explained how Macià—popularly nicknamed *l'Avi* (grandfather)—came to personify ERC's wide sociological spectrum: he could be seen as a sensible reformer by some sections of the bourgeoisie, as a patriotic fighter by Catalan nationalists and even as a dignified political exile by the anarchists. Precisely, this last group was to become the first crack in ERC's hegemony, as it would soon turn against the Republic under the influence of the hard-line *Federación Anarquista Ibérica*. Ucelay-Da Cal considers that the rise to power of the Spanish political right in Madrid enabled ERC to maintain its hegemony through 1934 and 1935, only to finally

⁴⁹ The terms *Generalitat* and ‘Catalan Government’ will be used indistinctively throughout the present thesis.

⁵⁰ *Ateneu* is a general term used to describe the Enlightenment-inspired social and cultural clubs that began to appear in Spain during the mid-18th Century. By the mid-19th Century they were mainly concerned with the cultivation of high culture and education among the working class. They were soon adopted by a variety of progressive political movements, who often used them as local headquarters. See Chapter 7 for further detail.

collapse in 1936 after being substituted by another cross-class alliance: the Popular Front. In this context, the communist *Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya* (‘Socialist Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia’) or PSUC would emerge as the new power broker.

Some years after, Anna Sallés devoted a single work focused on the issue of ERC and hegemony with the suggestive title *Quan Catalunya era d'Esquerra*⁵¹ (‘When Catalonia belonged to *Esquerra*’). This author looked closely at the party's first 18 months of existence, reinforcing some of the ideas already singled out by Ucelay-Da Cal. Her approach was mainly sociological, arguing that the key motive behind ERC's success was its ability to incorporate sections of the *petty bourgeoisie*—who were tired of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship and disappointed with the right-wing Catalan nationalist *Lliga Regionalista*—as well as some sections of the working class—attracted by some of the socialist features of the party's political platform—to form a “national-popular bloc”⁵². To Sallés, the repeated electoral triumphs guaranteed ERC's hegemony-building, which can be seen reflected in political discourse, with affirmations such as *el partit de Macià és tot Catalunya* (‘Macià's party is the whole of Catalonia’). She also pointed out how mass mobilisation—demonstrations in support of home rule brought around 200,000 people to the streets—also helped to embody this sense of ERC hegemony. The Catalan election of November 1932, is, in Anna Sallés' view, the high-water mark of ERC's dominion over Catalan politics. She concurs with Ucelay-Da Cal's assessment, signaling 1936 as the end of this cycle of hegemony, as ERC lost support on both ends of the sociological spectrum, only retaining sections of the urban middle class.

More recently, Borja de Riquer has downplayed the importance of ERC's electoral performance, insisting that it was the Catalan Republic proclamation and subsequent securing of home rule what really set up ERC for hegemony. He argues that, after proclaiming the *República Catalana* and finally negotiating home rule with Madrid's representatives,

⁵¹ Anna Sallés, *Quan Catalunya Era d'Esquerra*, Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1981.

⁵² The ‘national-popular’ concept is part of Antonio Gramsci's hegemony theory, usually appearing in the form of “national-popular collective will”, meaning “a hegemonic alliance between the proletariat and other social strata” under the leadership of the revolutionary party. See David Forgacs (ed.), *The Gramsci Reader. Selected Writings 1916-1935.*, New York University Press, 2000, pp. 224–225.

“[...] Macià had imposed the existence of a Catalan Government as an irreversible fact directly linked to the change in regime. [...] in April 1931, this young party named *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* became the entity that held an exclusive control of the new Catalan institutions. This made Macià and his party inherent to the new political situation.”⁵³

Joan B. Culla has followed a similar interpretation, going further to define *Esquerra* as a catch-all party, without any strict political definitions and able to absorb *cadre* from many other political formations.⁵⁴

If approaches within Catalan historiography have sidelined nation-building, the same cannot be said of their Basque counterparts. These have often focused on the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (PNV), linking its development to the expansion of Basque national identity. Basque nationalists were caught off-balance by the rise of the Second Spanish Republic. In the months leading to fall of Alfonso XIII's Monarchy, the PNV was busy working to rebuild itself as a unified party after years of competition between two separate factions. It spent most of the new regime struggling for home rule, which the Catalan nationalists' had obtained thanks to their strong alignment with the new Republic. This was only achieved by Autumn 1936, when the Civil War had already begun.

Two *idées-forces* have resonated in some of the key research of recent decades. First, the characterisation of the PNV as a “community-party” and this concept's implications. Second, the acceleration of the Basque nation-building process during the Second Spanish Republic and the Spanish Civil War.

The “community-party” concept was proposed by José Luis de la Granja as part of his thesis about the nature of the PNV and its design as a hegemony and nation-building agent. This author argues that the party cannot be classified as “totalitarian” in Maurice Duverger's terms because of its democratic organisation and action. However, it does incorporate an array of social and cultural networks which—together with the party's fundamental doctrine—bind its sympathisers

⁵³ Borja de Riquer i Permanyer, “El Catalanisme d'esquerres i de dretes,” in *Visca La República!*, Barcelona: Proa, 2007, p. 80. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are by the author.

⁵⁴ Joan B. Culla, *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya 1931-2012: Una Història Política*, Barcelona: La Campana, 2013.

together almost like a secular religion. De la Granja describes these networks—previously identified by Antonio Elorza as a "micro-society"—as the "Basque nationalist community", defining it as

"[...] a self-conscious, cross-class social group, manifesting itself in ideological features, cultural patterns and common social practices, and whose central axis has historically been the PNV. [...] [It can be divided into] three areas or movements: the political movement, the trade unionist movement and the cultural movement."⁵⁵

According to this author, this community is born out of a hegemony-building desire, as it looks towards a horizon where "the Party is identified with the nation, [...] the PNV's 'micro-society' with the Basque society as a whole, the nationalist community of which it acts as a nucleus with the Basque people as a whole." De la Granja also points out to how the PNV structures its internal governing bodies to imitate the structure of a "future Basque state".⁵⁶

Santiago de Pablo and Ludger Mees have adopted this "Basque nationalist community" idea to their research, with a particular emphasis on how it articulated a key historical "contribution to the development of national consciousness", creating "nationalisation channels for broad sections of Basque society who were not linked to direct PNV membership".⁵⁷

The whole nationalist, hegemony-seeking "community-party" concept as proposed by De la Granja stands in line with a key feature of Michael Billig's idea of hegemony in the national context, which involves how a part of the imagined national totality tends to present itself as the universal voice of that totality.⁵⁸ It should be noted that in Gramsci's view, it was typical for "national" parties in

⁵⁵ José Luis de la Granja Sainz, "The Basque Nationalist Community during the Second Spanish Republic (1931-1936)," en *Basque Politics: A Case Study in Ethnic Nationalism*, W. A. Douglass (ed.), Reno: University of Nevada, 1985, pp. 155–73, en José Luis de la Granja Sainz, *El Nacionalismo Vasco: Un Siglo de Historia*, Segunda ed., Madrid: Tecnos, 2002, p.159.

⁵⁶ José Luis de la Granja Sainz, *El Nacionalismo Vasco: Un Siglo de Historia*, Segunda ed., Madrid: Tecnos, 2002, pp. 157, 162–165.

⁵⁷ Santiago de Pablo, Ludger Mees, y José A. Rodríguez Ranz, *El Péndulo Patriótico*, Vol. 1, Barcelona: Crítica, 1999, pp. 231–236.

⁵⁸ Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, London: SAGE, 1995, p. 87.

contexts of foreign occupation—which is fundamentally how the PNV saw itself—to avoid specialisation and adopt broad programs and platforms:

“The monarchist party in a republican regime, like the republican party in a monarchic regime or the *national party in a regime of the country's subjugation by a foreign State*, cannot be a *sui generis* party; it must, if it wishes to obtain success relatively fast, be a federation of parties, rather than a party characterised by all of its political programme's positions: a party of a general government system and not of a particular government.”⁵⁹

The second *idée-force* that must also be stressed is that the journey of the PNV towards political supremacy between 1931 and 1937 run parallel to unprecedented milestones in the Basque nation-building process. If Gramsci defined hegemony in terms of the achievement of a class or party's *direzione intellettuale e morale*⁶⁰, Santiago de Pablo and Luger Mees have described the PNV's evolution during the Second Spanish Republic as its progressive assumption of “political leadership” within the Basque party system. These authors have explain this both in sociological terms—emphasising the party's second nature as a social movement and its attraction of “neutral catholics”—and political terms—mainly the PNV's role in the complex but ultimately successful bid for Basque home rule. De la Granja has linked the actual materialisation of Basque self-governing institutions to a qualitative leap in the Basque nation-building process. In this author's view, the Basque Country began the Second Spanish Republic as a region divided between three strong political traditions: the Basque nationalists, the social democrat Partido Socialista Obrero Español and the traditionalist and legitimist Carlist movement. Each had its own geographic and sociological niche, with nationalists often prevailing in partially industrialised, rural and Catholic areas; socialists stronger in urban, secularised and industrial zones; the rest, rural,

⁵⁹ Original fragment: “Il partito monarchico in regime repubblicano, como il partito repubblicano in regime monarchico o *il partito nazionale in regime di soggezione del paese a uno Stato straniero*, non possono non essere partiti *sui generis*; devono essere, cioè (per lo tant), se vogliono ottenere successi relativamente rapidi, le centrali di federazioni di partiti, piú che partiti caratterizzati in tutti i punti particolari dei loro programmi di governo: partiti di un sistema generale di governo e non di governi particolari.” See Antonio Gramsci, *Note Sul Machiavelli*, Editori Riuniti, 1971, p. 137.

⁶⁰ Joseph V. Femia, *Gramsci's Political Thought: Hegemony, Conciousness, and the Revolutionary Process*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987, p. 24.

Catholic and with little or no industry often supporting the Carlists. De la Granja asserts this “three country” reality was bridged over by the enactment of home rule. This articulated the nationalist and socialist political cultures into a new legal, political and symbolic entity which materialised what until then had only been Basque nationalist aspirations. It represented, according to this author, the true “birth of Euzkadi.”⁶¹

In balance, this review of past hegemony or hegemony-based approaches to Catalan and Basque nationalism by historiography reveals two main points. First, that the use of ‘hegemony’ or related concepts and ideas has been vague and rather inconsistent. This suggests that future research along similar lines should begin with clear, practical definitions. Second, that hegemony-based approaches have nevertheless provided with useful insight into issues such as ERC's popularity during the first years of the Second Spanish Republic or how Basque home rule favoured Basque national identity. This shows the potential for hegemony-based approaches and their viability.

1. 1. 2. A case of David versus Goliath? Miroslav Hroch, nation-building and stateless nations.

Catalan and Basque nationalism have been defined above as mass movements. The term's implications are that they involved significant numbers of people, or *masses*, as opposed to limited movements of *elites*. However, when viewed in the context of nationalism as a global phenomenon, Basque and Catalan nationalism have often been perceived as making claims on behalf of rather *small* nations, especially compared to the *large* nations they face in making such claims. This underdog, ‘David and Goliath’ style perception should have understandably attracted social scientists with an interest in comparatively ‘weak’ historical actors and critical (re)examinations of past and present *status quos*. Marxists, a powerful force in the academia during the second half of the past century, surely fall into this

⁶¹ José Luis de la Granja Sainz, *El Oasis Vasco: El Nacimiento de Euskadi En La República y La Guerra Civil*, Madrid: Tecnos, 2007.

category. Should not they be expected as enthusiast candidates for the study of stateless nationalism?

It would be unfair to say that Marxist research has ‘ignored’ nationalism, but quite true to point out that it has struggled with it. Historian Tom Nairn was particularly eloquent in asserting that “the theory of nationalism represents Marxism's great historical failure”—although he was quick to add “that other traditions of western thought have not done better”.⁶² His position can be summarised as follows:

“The great names from Marx himself to Gramsci did not pay sufficient attention to the subject, dealing with it incidentally or tangentially rather than head-on. Those who did tackle it more directly, the Social-Democrats of Tsardom and the Hapsburg Empire, disagreed wildly among themselves. After the trauma of 1914 Marxists never had the stomach to return to this debate on anything like the same level. Had they desired to after 1925, the complete fetishization of Lenin's supposed positions on the question made it both politically and psychologically very difficult!”⁶³

But the fact is that many Marxist social scientists—historians in particular—have tackled many of the great questions surrounding nations and nationalism, and have done so by building on ideas originally proposed by Marx and Engels themselves. In this sense, Marxist ‘failure’ with respects to the national phenomenon can be better characterised as a lack of systematic theorisation.⁶⁴

In any case, it is also worth noting that many Marxist scholars have not been particularly attracted to stateless nationalist movements as such. Eric Hobsbawm, in his widely read *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, famously wrote that

⁶² Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain*, 2nd ed., London: NLB, 1981, p. 329.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 330

⁶⁴ John Glenn, ‘Nations and Nationalism: Marxist Approaches to the Topic’, *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 3:2, 1997, 79–100.

“[the nation] is a social entity insofar as it relates to a certain kind of modern territorial state, the ‘nation-state’ and it is pointless to discuss nation and nationality insofar as both relate to it.”⁶⁵

By this, Hobsbawm did not mean to disregard the study of stateless nations, but the topic never stood as one of his main interests. Hobsbawm actually clashed with Nairn on the issue of Scottish independence, although his personal position on the historical meaning of nationalism varied.⁶⁶ For Nairn, the key feature about nationalism was that, by its very nature as a *modern Janus*, it is two-faced force which could be both progressive and reactionary. A Marxist theory of nationalism would need to be flexible enough to understand it in its complexity, not a simple guide to deal with its contradictory nature. One such approach came from the Czech historian Miroslav Hroch, one of whose initial motivations to study stateless national movements was “to demonstrate that it was possible to use Marxist methodology to explain nation-formation in a more sophisticated and convincing way than official Soviet Marxism-Leninism did”.⁶⁷ He has more recently asserted the importance of studying small nations as follows:

“Just as social historians are equally interested in the poor and the rich, in large landowners as well as in small peasants, for historians who study ‘nationalism’, the development of each nation is equally interesting and relevant, regardless of how many members the nation had”.⁶⁸

Hroch's key contribution to compared nationalism studies was published between 1969 and 1971 in Prague—then capital of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic—in German and Czech. It was only more than ten years later that his work could be published in English, in the form of a single book named *Social*

⁶⁵ Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge University Press, 1992 (2nd ed.).

⁶⁶ Wade Matthews, ‘Class, Nation, and Capitalist Globalization: Eric Hobsbawm and the National Question’, *International Review of Social History*, 53, 2008, 63–99.

⁶⁷ Miroslav Hroch, “Learning from Small Nations,” *New Left Review*, 58, 2009, p. 44.

⁶⁸ Miroslav Hroch, *European Nations. Explaining Their Formation*, New York: Verso, 2015, p. 27.

preconditions of national revival in Europe. After this publication, Hroch has achieved major recognition for his contribution to nationalism studies. He continued to develop his ideas in the following decades, including the recent book *European nations. Explaining their formation*, in which he synthesises some of his main perspectives on the national question.

Hroch's position on the origin and nature of nations could be described as a qualified modernist approach.⁶⁹ Although he speaks in terms of nation-*building*, and so fundamentally rejects essentialist claims of the nation as a primordial phenomenon, he also holds that:

“it is of no use getting involved in a dispute over whether a nation should be seen as a product of nationalism or the other way around. The question as to why modern nations emerged in Europe cannot be fully explained merely by pointing out that they were a cultural construct [...]. The basis of my work is that a modern nation [...] is not an age-old phenomenon, and that the precondition for its existence was an increasing number of individuals who saw themselves as its members and self-identified with it. Identification with a nation was thus a result of more or less spontaneous decisions [...]. However, given that the same decision was made [...] by hundreds, thousands, and even tens of thousands of people, we must assume that it was an outcome not of coincidence but of decision-making influenced by recurrent circumstances or similar experiences among large numbers of people.”⁷⁰

To Hroch, the nation is the result of a historical process which involves both the subjective action of those who carry it out—the nationalist activists—and the previous *objective preconditions*—circumstances and experiences—under which the process takes place:

“Modern nations were not simply ‘products of nationalism’, nor a result of unlucky chance. They were a consequence of a combination of efforts at national mobilisation and

⁶⁹ Some have considered Hroch to be outside the modernist paradigm altogether, pointing out that some of his views are closer to essentialist primordialism, or are more in line with the ethnosymbolist paradigm. See Umut Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism*, London: Macmillan Press, 2000, pp. 163–165.

⁷⁰ Hroch, *European Nations...*, pp. 265–266.

objective circumstances—i.e. circumstances independent of the wishes of ‘nationalists’, which included ethnic relationships, relics from the past, and modernisation processes.”⁷¹

The Czech author has identified two different paths which have historically led to the formation, or building of nations. On one hand, there are those processes led by consolidated states, which are primarily top-down, and consisted in adding a national dimension to existing ties with the state. France and Spain would be examples of such cases.⁷² On the other hand, there are those processes led by a non-state entity: social and political movements Hroch describes as *national movements*. At the base of such movements lies what this author identifies as a non-dominant ethnic community⁷³:

“In typologically simplified terms, these ethnic communities differed from modern nations in that they lacked complete social structures, cultures in their national language (or these cultures had been weakened), and, of course, political autonomy. [...] nation-building within these ethnic groups assumed the form of national movements seeking to attain all the essential attributes of a distinct nation—i.e. to develop a complete social structure with its own business and academic elites, create a national culture in its national language, and gain a political voice, although not necessarily as a state. ‘A nation’ was initially a programme, a vision for the future, and the ensuing of national movements was neither a matter of course nor a necessity.”⁷⁴

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 275.

⁷² There has been an ongoing historiographical debate revolving around the idea of *débil nacionalización española*, or weak Spanish nation-building. Supporters of this view have often weighted the Spanish case against the French case. For an updated vision on the current state of the affair see Xavier Andreu Miralles, “La Nacionalización Española En El Siglo XIX. Un Nuevo Balance,” *Spagna Contemporanea*, n° 49, 2016, pp. 169–84 and Ludger Mees, ‘Rückständiges Zentrum, Moderne Peripherie. Probleme Des Spanischen Nation Building Im 19. Und 20. Jahrhundert’, in *Ränder Der Moderne. Neue Perspektiven Auf Die Europäische Geschichte (1800-1930)* (Köln: Böhlau, 2016), pp. 221–45.

⁷³ Hroch adopts much of the terminology on ethnicity from Anthony D. Smith, who defines an ethnic community as a human group with six main attributes: a demonym, a myth of common ancestry, some shared historical memories, one or several differentiating cultural traits —e. g. a particular language—, the association with a specific homeland, and a sentiment of solidarity shared by significant portions of the population. The “non-dominant” epithet is used against “dominant”, applied only to those ethnic communities that constitute the “core” of a nation-state. For further detail see Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, London: Penguin, 1991.

⁷⁴ Hroch, *European Nations...*, p. 31

It is from this conceptual framework⁷⁵—although his case studies were centered on central and eastern Europe—that Hroch understands Basques and Catalans: as two ethnic communities within the Spanish and French states. From this perspective, Catalan and Basque national movements develop as alternatives to the top-down nation-building processes taking place in Spain and France. The present thesis adopts this paradigm when defining Basque and Catalan nationalism as historical phenomena.

As a result of his compared studies of nation-building processes in the small, state-less nations of central and eastern Europe, Hroch produced what has been his most influent and known theoretical contribution: his A-B-C phase scheme for the development of national movements.⁷⁶ In a starting phase A, the nation-building process begins under the leadership of small groups of intellectuals, concerned with the study of the non-dominant ethnic community's culture and history, and so beginning the definition of a national culture and history. Following this, during phase B, takes place what Hroch names the “fermentation” of the national culture, as groups of nationalist activists appear. These groups undertake patriotic agitation explicitly aimed at promoting national consciousness. Finally, if this political activity is successful, a third phase C begins, as the networks of activists grow into a mass movement.

Hroch sees the arrival of phase C as the moment in which the nation-building process becomes “irreversible”, and the national identity is assumed by significant portions of the population. This turns it into a “material force”—i.e. a human community which can be described as a nation. Only then, and once independence or political autonomy is secured, does this author speak of a “final success”, or “the end of the national movement”.⁷⁷ Here, the present thesis differs from Hroch's view. This jump from the achievement of a mass movement status to obtaining self-governing institutions—being these independent or only relatively autonomous within a sovereign state—seems too much of a leap for it not to

⁷⁵ Hroch, *European Nations...*, pp. 69–73, 174

⁷⁶ For Hroch's original explanation, see *Social Preconditions...*, pp. 22–24. For a study of the impact of Hroch schema on other works, see Alexander Maxwell, “Typologies and Phases in Nationalism Studies: Hroch's A-B-C Schema as a Basis for Comparative Terminology,” *Nationalities Papers* 38, no. 6, 2010, pp. 865–80.

⁷⁷ Hroch, *European Nations...*, p. 36. For an alternative version of the schema, based on “transformations” between phases, see pp. 110–112.

deserve further explanation. Some authors have sought for a solution by enlarging the A-B-C schema: Terry Martin and Tomasz Kamusella have incorporated a phase D, in which the national movement obtains state power and is able to carry out nation-building measures from its own institutions.⁷⁸ John Coakley has developed this idea further, proposing the term “national consolidation” for this phase D, and considering it decisive when evaluating the success or failure of a particular national movement. This, in turn, would depend on three factors: the capacities of the national movement, those of its opponents, and the international context.⁷⁹

The phase D concept is directly relevant to the present thesis. Between 1930 and 1939 Basque and Catalan nationalism, already mass movements, make the journey to the obtainment of self-governing institutions, only to abruptly lose them. This transition can be understood as an extension of the nation-building process, in which the national movement's ability to contend for power *versus* the dominant nation-state is key. But how does this contention work and what are its implications in the nature of the nation-building process? Answering these questions involves moving to the second fundamental component that makes up the present thesis' theoretical framework.

1. 1. 3. Nations, power and conflict. Nationalist hegemony and politics of contention.

To analyse the nation-building process of Basque and Catalan nationalism as both moved closer to obtaining autonomous⁸⁰ political institutions, two different perspectives will be brought into play. The first revolves around the ideological aspects of nationalism, drawing from social psychologist Michael Billig's work to characterise nation-building as a form of *hegemony*. The second comes from a

⁷⁸ Maxwell, “Typologies and Phases...”, p. 871.

⁷⁹ John Coakley, *Nationalism, Ethnicity and the State: Making and Breaking Nations*, London: SAGE, 2012, pp. 194, 214.

⁸⁰ It must be noted that, in this context, ‘autonomous’ may be equated to ‘self-governing’, but not to ‘sovereign’. The real political autonomy of Basque and Catalan institutions varied, ranging from the suspended *Generalitat* in 1935 to the almost state-like condition of the Basque Government in 1937. These issues will be discussed in further chapters.

nationalism as a social movement perspective, drawing from political scientist Sidney Tarrow and sociologist Charles Tilly's conceptual toolbox to present nation-building by stateless nationalist movements as a form of contention politics.

Michael Billig, a self-described outsider in the field of nationalism studies, is known for having coined the term 'banal nationalism' in a book with the same title published in 1995.⁸¹ His motivation, deconstructing the nationalism of nation-states, has taken him to the close study of how these promote and reproduce national identity:

"The term 'nationalism' invites us to look elsewhere for exemplars. In both popular and academic writing, nationalism is associated with those who struggle to create new states or with extreme right-wing politics. [...] those in established nations—at the centre of things—are led to see nationalism as the property of others, not of 'us'. [...] [this view] overlooks the nationalism of the West's nation-states."⁸²

A central element to Billig's analysis of nation-state nationalism is the Marxist concept of hegemony. Although the term can be traced back to Ancient Greece, its use in academic literature, as already mentioned, mostly derives from the works of the Italian communist and intellectual Antonio Gramsci. The fact that Gramsci—imprisoned by Mussolini's fascist regime until shortly before his death in 1937—was unable to fully systematise his political thought, has opened the path for a great variety of interpretations and uses of his main themes.⁸³ In simplified terms, Gramscian hegemony can be defined as a form of power-wielding by a ruling class that "[...] is not limited to matters of direct political control but seeks to describe a

⁸¹ Umut Özkirimli places Billig in the "new wave" of nationalism theories of the 1990s. See Umut Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2nd ed., 2010, pp. 170–174.

⁸² Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, London: SAGE, 1995, p. 5.

⁸³ Gramsci became popular in intellectual and academic circles during the 1970s, after his works stirred great interest amongst British leftist academics. For a critical review of this "from Rome to London" transit, see Ihab Shalbak, "Hegemony Thinking: A Detour through Gramsci," *Thesis Eleven*, 147, n° 1 (2018), pp. 45–61. For a more complete compilation of the impact of Gramscian hegemony in different academic schools of thought, see John Chalcraft and Yaseen Noorani (eds.), *Counterhegemony in the Colony and Postcolony*, Palgrave, 2007, pp. 3–15.

more general predominance which includes, as one of its key features, a particular way of seeing the world and human nature and relationships.”⁸⁴

Billig brings a similar idea of hegemony to the study of national identities. In his historical assessment of how nation-states are formed, he describes nation-building as the result of conflict and contention for hegemony:

“Seldom has the creation of nation-states been a harmonious process, in which a traditional ‘ethnie’ grows from small shoot into the full flower of nationality, as if following a process of ‘natural’ maturation. The process typically is attended by conflict and violence. A particular form of identity has to be imposed. [...] If only a minority of those living in France at the time of the Revolution thought of themselves as French, then it was this minority’s outlook, which was to prevail. Paris was to speak metonymically and literally for the whole of France. [...]

The battle for nationhood is a battle for hegemony, by which a part claims to speak for the whole nation and to represent the national essence.”⁸⁵

Although this author does focus on nation-states, his idea of nationhood as a ‘battle for hegemony’ is clearly applicable to stateless nations, whose sole existence is almost embedded with this conflict *versus* dominant national identities. Billig’s approach is particularly relevant in those cases where stateless nations are powerful enough to contend for institutional power. This author describes the process of consolidation of a determined national *status quo* as being accompanied with a fundamental change in how national identity is (re)produced:

“One might predict that, as a nation-state becomes established in its sovereignty, and if it faces little internal challenge, then the symbols of nationhood, which might once have been consciously displayed, do not disappear from sight, but instead become absorbed into the environment of the established homeland. There is, then, a movement from symbolic mindfulness to mindlessness.”⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Raymond Williams, *Keywords. A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2015 pp. 99–100.

⁸⁵ Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, p. 27.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

Billig uses 'banal nationalism' to describe this reproduction of national identity by the constant presence of national symbols in spaces of everyday life. This 'flagging the nation' is found particularly in language—in the form of leaders' speeches, mass media, both common and scientific literature, even in mundane conversation—as well as in public spaces. The inconspicuous national flag waving on public buildings is, in Billig's view, the perfect example of this. It is this 'banalisation' that makes the nation hegemonic, by framing it as common sense:

"It embraces a complex set of themes about 'us', 'our homeland', 'nations' ('ours' and 'theirs'), the 'world' as well as the morality of national duty and honour. Moreover, these themes are widely diffused as common sense. It is not the common sense of a particular nation, but this common sense is international, [...]"⁸⁷

The concept of hegemony captured in *Banal Nationalism* provides with useful insight on how nationalism, as it approaches and wields power, continues the nation-building process by constantly reproducing national identity. Ultimately, obtaining such power is what should enable stateless nationalists to situate their national identities in a hegemonic position. A link still needs to be found, however, between how this national hegemony-building is carried out on a discursive level, and how stateless nationalist movements struggle for political power.

One such link may be found in the concept of *framing*, as developed from the Marxist and post-Marxist influenced tradition of Social Movement Theory. Framing—which can be considered somewhat parallel to the idea of hegemony-building—grew as a concept from the works of Social Movement Theorists under the influence of the *cultural turn*, such as Erving Goffman and particularly David Snow.⁸⁸ It can be defined in several ways, one of the simplest being Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow's: "adopting and broadcasting a shared definition of an issue or

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 15.

⁸⁸ Different thought schools within Social Movement Theory have developed under the influence of classical Marxism—the works of Marx, Lenin and Gramsci in particular—as well as of post-Marxists such as Charles Tilly. The origins of the *cultural turn* applied to the study of social movements can be traced back to E. P. Thompson. For more detail see See Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 3rd edition, Cambridge University Press, 2011 pp. 16–22.

performance”.⁸⁹ These authors incorporate framing to their general understanding what they define as “contentious politics”:

“interactions in which actors make claims that bear on someone else's interests, leading to coordinating efforts on behalf of shared interests or programs, in which governments are as targets, the objects of claims, or third parties.”⁹⁰

Framing can be expanded to include all constructions of reality by political actors, through which they interpret all forms of contention. It is what gives meaning—often in a dignifying/vilifying sense—to any claim or performance, and can be carried out not only by social movements but by the state, the media, etc:

“Indeed, framing goes well beyond how a movement's goals are strategically formed to a much broader set of interpretative processes, which build on inherited understandings and engage in ‘framing contests’ between challengers and their opponents.”⁹¹

The ‘contentious politics’ approach is flexible enough to contain widely different forms of political disputes—ranging from small-scale neighbourhood protests to civil wars and revolutions—under the same paradigm. This makes it very appropriate for the task at hand, as comparing Catalan and Basque nationalism from 1930 to 1939 implies looking into their interaction with a rapidly changing political context, their participation in varying political alliances with other actors and their dealings in times of both war and peace.

Basque and Catalan nationalism can be interpreted as particularly complex manifestations of what Tilly and Tarrow define as *political actors*. Their complexity arises from the fact that at times they can qualify for being what can be classified as a social movement: “[...] a sustained campaign of claim making, using repeated

⁸⁹ Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2007 (1st ed.), p. 216. All further quotations from this book will refer to the second, revised edition (see next footnote), unless specified.

⁹⁰ Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, Oxford University Press, 2015 (2nd revised ed.), p. 236.

⁹¹ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, p. 144.

performances that advertise that claim, based on organizations, networks, traditions, and solidarities that sustain these activities.”⁹² However, it is also true that, during the period studied in the present thesis, Catalan and Basque nationalist entities also partake in other, very different forms of political contention, such as forming governments, military units, or engaging in clandestine operations. The Catalan and Basque national identities promoted by both movements conform to what Tilly and Tarrow describe as *political identities*, shared ideas about human groups that affect government interests, activate boundaries with other groups, and that often form the basis of political claims.

Apart from the concept of framing and its application to the study of nation-building by stateless nationalist movements, Tarrow's work also provides insight into a question that deeply concerns any compared research of Catalan and Basque nationalism: “how such movements take different political forms in different political environments?” Building from Tilly's concept of *political opportunity structure*—defined as “features of regimes and institutions that facilitate or inhibit a political actor's collective action”⁹³—he has synthesised an explanatory model which can be summarised as:

“[...] people engage in contentious politics when patterns of political opportunities and constraints change, and then by strategically employing a repertoire of collective action, creating new opportunities, which are used by others in widening cycles of contention. When their struggles revolve around broad cleavages in society; when they bring people together around inherited cultural symbols; and when they can build on—or construct—dense social networks and connective structures, these episodes of contention result in sustained interactions with opponents in social movements.”⁹⁴

It is worth noting that the ‘contentious politics’ approach has been successfully applied to a recent study on Basque nationalism. In *The Basque Contention*, Ludger Mees revisits the Basque conflict from a deeper, *longue-durée* perspective. In this

⁹² Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, (2nd ed.), p. 237.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

⁹⁴ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, pp. 28–29.

work, Tilly and Tarrow's concepts are employed to widen the scope in a field often over-focused on ETA's armed activity. Mees brings particular attention to the complex combination of activism and institutional politics that characterises Basque nationalism.⁹⁵ An idea that the present thesis seeks to confirm.

This theoretical framework combines all of the reviewed academic contributions to form an interpretative model for the task of comparing Basque and Catalan nationalism. Its premise is that stateless nationalist movements, when approaching the stage of national consolidation—or phase D in the extended version of Hroch's schema—, engage in forms of nation-building where the non-dominant nation is able to approach an unprecedented hegemonic status. The materialisation of this process can be traced in its deeper reflections by discourse analysis proposed by Billig, and in its more practical manifestations by looking into the “framing contests” described by Tarrow. The next sections will explain how this will be done in relation to the present thesis' case studies.

⁹⁵ Ludger Mees, *The Basque Contention*, New York: Routledge, 2020.

1. 2. Comparing contention and discourse: a methodological framework approach to the analysis of nationalist mass movements

The methodological procedure that follows has been developed in coherence with the key theoretical premises explained in previous sections. The reasoning behind this has been an effort not to isolate theory from practice. In fact, some of the scholars included in the theoretical framework have given methodological indications to further test their proposals. These have formed the basis from which the present thesis' method has been derived. The following approach can be broken down into three different components, which will be explained in the following sections: *compared perspective*, *mechanism-process approach* and *discourse analysis*.

1. 2. 1. Comparing for comprehension: comparative methodology and *histoire croisée* as strategies for a deeper understanding of historical phenomena

Adopting the compared perspective is the umbrella under which the two other stated methodological approaches develop. In effect, the present thesis' methodological framework could be alternatively organised into only two spheres: *compared* mechanism-process approach and *compared* discourse analysis. Using the comparative method, however, involves its own specifications and implications which must also be discussed in some detail.

Compared history has its own tradition which can be traced back to Ancient Greece, although the systematic use of the comparative method by historians is relatively recent. In the days when history itself was only beginning to secure its

place as a scientific discipline, those who wanted it to stay away from the natural sciences—including one of the ‘founding fathers’, Leopold von Ranke—mistrusted comparison. The nation-state or the national culture was often seen as unique and therefore incomparable. This was questioned by those scholars who saw historical research as just another expression of the scientific method. The pioneers of sociology, Alexis de Tocqueville, John Stuart Mill, Émile Durkheim and Karl Marx, would begin to establish comparisons between their case studies, looking for general laws that could explain their developments. Max Weber was the first to systematise the comparative method: by selecting the more relevant characteristics of particular cases, he generated ‘ideal types’, which could then be compared to arrive at general theorisations of historical phenomena. As the 20th Century progressed, compared history began to establish itself as a prestigious method with the rise of historians such as Otto Hintze and Marc Bloch. By the 1950s, it had become very popular.⁹⁶

Miroslav Hroch began his research in that context, particularly influenced by the works of Eric Hobsbawm but also willing to develop his own, particular method:

“[...] his [Hobsbawm's] approach could be used for the purposes of historical synthesis, but not analysis—it was generalising and transnational, but not comparative. At that time I did not know Weber's work, but tried, step by step, to develop a workable set of analytical procedures of my own.”⁹⁷

Hroch's comparative method is based on four fundamental requirements which are common to any investigation that wishes to apply it. First, a definition which *a priori* clarifies that the compared case-studies all belong to the same category. Second, an aims statement detailing what is expected to be achieved from application of the comparative method. Third, an establishment of how the

⁹⁶ For a more detailed overview of the origins and evolution of compared history, see Charles Maier, ‘La Historia Comparada’, *Studia Historica. Historia Contemporánea*, 10, 1992, pp. 11–32.

⁹⁷ Hroch, “Learning from...”, p. 45.

comparison will relate to the time axis. Finally, an assertion that the comparison criteria are applicable to all of the case studies.⁹⁸

Section 1. 1. 2. has already provided with a common definition—adopted from the works of Hroch himself—for the two historical objects that are compared in the present thesis. Basque and Catalan nationalism are both defined as *national movements*, i.e. stateless nation-building entities that take the form of social and political movements. This is the meaning common to the different expressions used in this text, which vary to avoid excessive repetition: [Basque or Catalan] ‘nationalism’, ‘national movement’, and ‘nationalists’. When [Basque or Catalan] ‘nationalism’ refers specifically to the movements’ *ideology*, necessary specification will be made.

The particular aims of the present thesis’ use of the comparative method are two: first, the achievement of a deeper understanding of each case by using the other as a perspective widener. Second, the production of results and conclusions that are able to escape the specific peculiarities of each case and can effectively enrich general knowledge of nations and nationalism. Establishing a typology or typological differences and similarities between both national movements is not an aim of this investigation.

The relation of the comparison to the time axis will be fundamentally synchronic. Both national movements will be compared in the chronological context of the Spanish state from 1930 to 1939. Although Basque and Catalan nationalist movements do follow uneven developments, comparison will take place against historical timeframes which are basically the same for both: e.g. the *dictablanda* of 1930-1931, the right-wing Republican Government of 1933-1936, the Civil War of 1936-1939, etc. Any asynchronic comparison will be specified.

The applicability of comparison criteria to both cases is guaranteed by their similarities—i.e. the fact that they both fall comfortably under the historical category of national movements—and by the fact that such criteria are considerably generalist. This will be expanded on in the following sections.

⁹⁸ Miroslav Hroch, *Comparative Studies in Modern European History: Nation, Nationalism, Social Change*, Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2007, pp. xi–xii.

A further note must be made here about the use of the *histoire croisée* approach as a complement to the comparative method. This is particularly relevant to the third objective of the present research as detailed above: the issue of Basque and Catalan nationalist relations and their implications. Here, the methodological approach must move beyond comparison, looking into the interactions between both movements and watching for reflexivity—how they are mutually affected by these interactions.⁹⁹ This investigation will resort to sources which show not only how Catalan and Basque nationalists interacted, but also how they saw each other and how they used these interactions to shape their own self-images.

1. 2. 2. Process generalisation: the mechanism-process approach applied to Basque and Catalan nationalism

This investigation follows a modified version of the mechanism-process approach to the explanation of contention proposed by Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow.¹⁰⁰ This method has been adapted to focus on the Basque and Catalan national movements and how they build national identity through framing processes.

The general timeframe (1930-1939) has been divided into five main cycles of contention: the end of Primo de Rivera's Dictatorship, the Republican constituent period, the 'progressive' biennium, the 'conservative' biennium, the peacetime rule of the Popular Front and the Spanish Civil War. Apart from historical convention, the main criterion that has determined this choice is the fact that each cycle represents a particular balance of power with particular conditions for political contention. The Republican constituent cycle is the result of a process of

⁹⁹ For a detailed overview of the *Histoire Croisée* method, see Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, 'Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity', *History and Theory*, 45, 2006, pp. 30–50.

¹⁰⁰ The general outline of the Mechanism-Process Approach, as well as definitions for all of its constituent concepts—such as conditions, stream of contention, episode, mechanism, process, etc.— have all been extracted from Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, pp. 235–244. These authors' original concepts will be shown in italics for their first mention, and footnotes referring to their specific definitions made when appropriate.

democratisation which allows for different forms of political contention that had been impossible during Primo de Rivera's Dictatorship, such as social movement campaigns. The rest of the republican cycles are quite volatile, as different political actors take control of different institutions at different times, and several alliances are forged and broken. The large number of sources available during this period make it a good context to study the social movement bases of Basque and Catalan nationalism. The Civil War—which is even more volatile, as military conflict becomes the primary form of contention—has been considered a single political cycle for the sake of simplicity, although it also saw a great variance in conditions for political contention.

In this particular adaptation of the mechanism-process approach, there are two main areas of concern, which are considered for every sub-cycle. First, Basque and Catalan nationalist movements are treated as the main *political actors*,¹⁰¹ and they are analysed accordingly. This includes looking into what forms of contentious politics they carry out, including social movement campaigns and government action—when they hold institutional power. Second, it also means examining aspects of their social movement bases: their social and cultural backgrounds as well as their internal resources.

The different chapters will concentrate on two particular *streams of contention*—protracted sequences of collective claim making—the protracted struggles by Basque and Catalan nationalism to achieve and maintain home rule. These streams of contention stretch through the different chapters, lasting longer than a single cycle. To facilitate the analysis of these streams, they will be broken into smaller *episodes*—e.g. the campaign for the Estella *Estatuto*, a Basque home rule charter, would be a particular episode within the broader Basque campaign for home rule. These episodes will be examined in search for the underlying *mechanisms* that make them work. These mechanisms are general concepts, and they can be found in different episodes—e.g. the mechanism of *repression*, which can be defined as state action to increase the cost of claim making by a given

¹⁰¹ It would be problematic to consider Basque or Catalan nationalism as single, homogenous political units. This chapter is concerned with explaining the general theoretical and methodological approaches and will not dwell into further complexities for the sake of clarity. Further chapters, which develop the actual investigation, will tackle the more diverse realities that lie before the simplified terms used here.

political actor, can be observed in the republican regime's imprisonment of Basque activists for minor offences, the Basque Government's imprisonment of Francoist sympathisers during the Civil War, or the execution of leftists and Basque nationalists by Franco's forces. Tilly and Tarrow define *processes* as the result of combining several mechanisms, usually resulting in deeper and wider effects. This particular adaptation of the mechanism-process approach can be considered form of what Tilly and Tarrow have described as a *process generalisation* account. This research will regularly return to a particular process: framing—in the context of national hegemony-building.

As it has been implied in section 1. 2. 1., the comparative approach is applied in a cross-sectional manner to the present thesis methodological approach as a whole. This means that comparisons will take place at all levels of the mechanism-process approach—e.g. Basque nationalist framing will be compared to Catalan nationalist framing.

1. 2. 3. Looking for national hegemony in language: Michael Billig's method of discourse analysis

Contemporary written press makes up the vast majority of the source material employed in this research. This is, essentially, a collection of texts from which historical development can be 'reconstructed', but also more elaborate ideas about how past political actors mapped their own reality, justified their claims, asserted their identities, etc. The above explained process of framing must be found and analysed primarily from texts. Michael Billig provides with a method for this close-up examination of the nation contained in texts: "it has been customary for cultural analysts to treat objects, such as flags, as if they were texts. The process can be reversed, so that the text appears as a flag." This 'text as flag' approach to written sources involves looking for particular features that will be now discussed.

The main concept Billig uses to establish a link between hegemony, nation and language is the *syntax of hegemony*:

“Right from its earliest times, nationalism used a 'syntax of hegemony', by which the part claimed to represent the whole. One form of speaking might claim to be the language of the whole nation, or one district claim to represent the national culture. [...] The particular nation can claim to talk for the whole world: 'our' particular interests can appear as the interests of universal reason. The very syntax of the first person plural seems to invite such claims.”¹⁰²

Billig stresses the importance of looking closely at the use of ‘we’ as a true vehicle of hegemony. In texts, it is often ambiguous enough to represent party, government and nation and even imply some universality. This author sees a similar dynamic when it comes to those identified as the nation's enemies:

“‘Our’ enemies do not merely oppose ‘us’, in ‘our’ particularity, but they can be said to oppose the very moral order which ‘we’ claim to represent. [...] This rhetoric suggests that those nations that oppose ‘us’ are more than parochial competitors: they can be transformed into enemies of international morality.”¹⁰³

Another key concept in Billig's method of identifying “flaggings” of the nation in language and text is *deixis*:

“[...] it is necessary to examine familiar habits of language. This means paying attention to words such as ‘people’ (or ‘society’), drawing out the nationalists' assumptions within their conventional usage. It also means becoming linguistically microscopic. The crucial words of banal nationalism are often the smallest: ‘we’, ‘this’ and ‘here’, which are the words of linguistic ‘deixis’. [...] the definite article is continually playing its quiet part in a routine ‘deixis’, which banally points out ‘the’ homeland.”¹⁰⁴

In this approach, a nation become's hegemonic within a particular context when it becomes embedded to these words that subtly restate the national frame. For

¹⁰² Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, p. 88.

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp. 91–92.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 94.

Billig, it is important to look for this tendency not only in political leaders' speeches, but in newspapers and everyday language.

In debates, Billig argues, the nation becomes the *topos* of rhetoric: it is the place where arguments are developed, but itself is not an object of contention as it is taken for granted, it “constitutes the grounding for political discourse.” In this context, political speakers engage in a double form of representation. On one hand, it involves “speaking for the nation”, which means adopting its voice, as if a single leader or group could speak on behalf of the whole nation. On the other hand, it also involves describing the nation to itself:

“In order to claim to speak *for* the nation/people, the politician must also speak *to* that nation/people. [...] the politician, who claims or campaigns to speak for the interests of the nation, will evoke the nation. The speaker who explicitly addresses ‘us’, claiming to know ‘our’ interests, simultaneously depicts ‘us’, whether or not elaborate, laudatory descriptions are used. In this context, the two meanings of ‘represent’ are not haphazard, as if a confusing accident of the language had united two distinctly different activities. The rhetoric of hegemony, which elides the general and particular interest, elides the two types of representation. The particular party, or political figure, representing (speaking for) the general (national) interest, must represent (depict) in speech what is to be represented (spoken for).”¹⁰⁵

The discourse analysis employed in the present thesis will therefore pay particular attention to these three phenomena identified by Billig: the syntax of hegemony, deixis and the rhetoric of hegemony. Again, this will be carried out from a compared perspective between Catalan and Basque nationalist texts.

The three methodological components which have been described in the past sections can be understood as operating separately at times, but as part of a common approach to the tasks at hand. As it has been already stated, comparison is cross-sectional to the investigation as a whole. As for the relationship between the mechanism-process approach and discourse analysis, a military analogy may

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 98.

be applied, where the former constitutes strategy—determining the thesis' structure and providing a general framework for discussion—and the latter is a particularly useful tactic—applied in detail to particular contexts where a deeper perspective is needed.

Chapter 2.

A new Republic, a new hope.

**The Second Spanish Republic as a
new political opportunity structure
for Basque and Catalan nationalism.**

The end of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship and the beginning of the Second Spanish Republic represented a radical change in the political scenario. The transit from one regime to another greatly altered the material conditions under which Basque and Catalan nationalists were able to engage in politics. This new political opportunity structure was to have deep effects in how both movements would pursue their struggles over the next five years.

These new conditions were the result of a democratisation¹⁰⁶ process, beginning the 28th January 1930 with Miguel Primo de Rivera's resignation, and eventually leading to the 14th of April 1931 republican proclamations. The new regime would take slightly longer to consolidate as a political and legal framework, enacting its constitution the 9th of December of the same year. During this process, new channels for political participation were opened, particularly male universal suffrage, exercised from the 12th of April 1931—female universal suffrage would have to wait until the 19th of November 1933. There was a notable increase in the protection of civil rights, enabling freedom of association and assembly, as well as freedom of the press.

This had major repercussions on Basque and Catalan nationalists, who had been shoved to the margins of political life by the 18th of September 1923 *Real Decreto*. Under this legal act, any initiative which questioned “the Fatherland's unity [...] be it by spoken or written word, by the press or any graphic or mechanical means of publicity or diffusion, or by whatever forms of acts or demonstrations” was deemed illegal.¹⁰⁷ This activated state repression, the mechanism Tilly and Tarrow define as “action by authorities that increases the cost—actual or potential—of an actor's claim making.”¹⁰⁸ Indeed, repression created conditions which greatly disrupted Catalan and Basque nationalist organisations' internal cohesion and constrained their capacity to communicate their political claims to the rest of the population. This mechanism worked from three main spheres: public space, the press and individuals.

¹⁰⁶ The term ‘democratisation’ used here is indebted to Charles Tilly and his four dimensional model for the measurement of the degree of democratisation of a particular regime (breadth, equality, protection and reciprocity). See Charles Tilly, *Democracy*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007. For a concrete definition of ‘democratisation’, see pp. 14–15. For its use concerning the particular case of the Second Spanish Republic see pp. 153–155.

¹⁰⁷ “Contra el separatismo,” *La Correspondencia de España*, 19/09/1923, p. 1.

¹⁰⁸ Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, (2nd ed.), p. 215.

Basque and Catalan nationalists' local party headquarters and cultural community centres, being focal points for political action and organisation, were a key objective of repression. The 22nd of September of 1923, 28 premises related in some way to Catalan nationalism—including the headquarters of the political party *Acció Catalana*¹⁰⁹—were closed in Barcelona. The same happened to other less politically charged entities such as the Catholic youth association *Pomells the Joventut*, *Ateneu Barcelonés*, *Ateneu Enciclopèdic Popular* and the Association for the Protection of Catalan Language Teaching.¹¹⁰ In the Basque Country, the 28th of October, a coordinated operation by the *Guardia Civil*, closed down 34 premises related to the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (PNV). This was one of the two organisations in which the historical Basque Nationalist Party had split into in 1921. The other was *Comuni3n Nacionalista Vasca* (CNV), whose more moderate stance enabled it to keep most of its local headquarters and social centres open. They were, however, limited to strictly cultural activities and under government surveillance.¹¹¹ The state also took action against Basque and Catalan nationalist symbols, banning the display of the two most widely used flags by both communities: the Basque *ikurriña* and the Catalan *senyera*. The Catalan nationalist anthem, *els Segadors* and the sardana *La Santa Espina* were also banned. This was not the case of the Basque popular song *Gernikako Arbola*, whose connotations were not so evidently nationalist. It could be therefore integrated in what was sometimes termed *sano regionalismo* ('healthy regionalism'): strictly 'non-political' expressions of regional cultural diversity. The Basque nationalist equivalent to *els Segadors* was *Euzko Abendaren Eserkija* (Anthem of the Basque Race/Fatherland), and by the 1920s still lacked popularity, although its lyrics were definitely unacceptable to the regime.¹¹²

As in all contemporary social and political movements, the press played a key role in the diffusion of programs and ideas for Catalan and Basque nationalists. The

¹⁰⁹ *Acció Catalana* ('Catalan Action') was a liberal, left-of-centre Catalan nationalist political party founded in 1922 by a collection of previous youth groups, ex-*Lliga Catalanista* members and federalist Catalan nationalists. See Montserrat Baras G3mez, *Acció Catalana (1922-1936)*, Barcelona: Curial, 1984.

¹¹⁰ Eduardo Gonz3lez Calleja, *La Espa3a de Primo de Rivera: la modernizaci3n autoritaria, 1923-1930*, Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2005, p. 101.

¹¹¹ de Pablo, Mees, & Rodr3guez Ranz, *El P3ndulo...*, Vol. 1, pp. 153-154, 173.

¹¹² Gonz3lez Calleja, *La Espa3a...*, pp. 101, 107, 203. See also Leyre Arrieta Alberdi, "Himno Eusko Abendaren Ereserkia", in *Diccionario Ilustrado de S3mbolos Del Nacionalismo Vasco*, Madrid: Tecnos, 2012, pp. 482-492.

22nd of September, only four days after the *Real Decreto*, the PNV's newspaper, *Aberri*, was closed down. Two months later the same happened to its attempted successor, *Diario Vasco*. The CNV's *Euzkadi* and *La Voz de Navarra* were left to continue, but their pages were almost completely emptied of political commentary by government prior restraint.¹¹³ Newspapers representing different tendencies within Catalan nationalism all received fines and temporary suspensions, including conservative *La Veu de Catalunya*, liberal *La Publicitat*, republican *La Nau* and liberal Catholic *El Matí*.¹¹⁴

Repression also targeted particular people. Leading Basque nationalists Elías Gallastegi—who was facing a possible 12 year sentence—Francisco Gaztañaga, Telesforo Uribe-Echevarría, Luis Areitioaurtena and Manuel Robles Aránguiz all exiled themselves to avoid going to prison. Others served brief prison sentences, often in Bilbao's Larrinaga prison, but sometimes in Madrid. The importance of these experiences of arrest and imprisonment for relatively brief periods cannot be dismissed, as they often had a profound impact on those affected.¹¹⁵ The Basque nationalist newspaper *Bizkatarra* estimated that by 1925 more than 50 Basques had been imprisoned accused of “rebellion”. As long as the dictatorship lasted, repressive action against Basque nationalists also took place in the form of fines and deportations, sometimes for simple exhibitions of patriotic symbols. One of such deportees was the Basque nationalist leader Manuel Egileor. Towards 1928, Basque nationalists claimed around a hundred activists had been affected by these legal procedures.¹¹⁶ The leaders of *Acció Catalana* Jaume Bofill i Mates and Lluís Nicolau d'Olwer also exiled themselves, although in their case this was voluntary.¹¹⁷ The Catalan pro-independence leader Francesc Macià also crossed the border, convinced that a direct insurrection was necessary in order to take down

¹¹³ de Pablo, Mees, & Rodríguez Ranz, *El Péndulo...*, Vol. 1, pp. 171–172, 150–151.

¹¹⁴ González Calleja, *La España...*, p. 108.

¹¹⁵ For an example of such an experience, see Otarka, “La justicia de la Dictadura”, *Bizkatarra*, 8/11/1930, p. 7; 15/11/1930, p. 4.

¹¹⁶ de Pablo, Mees, & Rodríguez Ranz. *El Péndulo...*, Vol.1, pp. 173–175.

¹¹⁷ Both leaders adopted very different attitudes during their exiles. Puig i Cadafach remained politically inactive beyond a few symbolic gestures, taking refuge in cultural activity; see Baras, *Acció Catalana*, pp. 43–44. Nicolau d'Olwer, on the contrary, would continue leading the party from exile; See Raquel Navarro García, “Lluís Nicolau d'Olwer. Biografía política i d'exili d'un intel·lectual català, 1917-1961. Cultura republicanisme i democràcia”, Universitat de Barcelona, 2017, pp. 81–96.

Primo de Rivera's regime.¹¹⁸ The next section will also cover how Catalan nationalists engaged in resistance activities were also imprisoned.

Repression began to relax during the period popularly known as *dictablanda*, during which general Dámaso Berenguer led a government that followed Primo de Rivera's resignation. Previously outlawed organisations began to hold meetings, some political prisoners were pardoned, closed party headquarters and social centres slowly opened and some opposition newspapers began to be published again. All of this happened gradually and rather irregularly, with some important milestones such as the lifting of prior restraint the 19th of September 1930.¹¹⁹

As the dictatorial regime's hold on power became weaker, nationalist activists took notice and already began to anticipate the changing conditions. Already by February 1930, CNV member José Ignacio de Arana commented that “in light of the new path things are taking, different political groups seem to be coming to life, making use of the improved freedoms of thought and press.”¹²⁰ A few months later, not without irony, the PNV member Manuel de la Sota said: “we suddenly find ourselves again graciously permitted to join the category of thinking men [...] and we are authorised to proclaim the Basqueness of our blood and the motherhood of the land that gave us birth.”¹²¹ The Basque nationalist leader Enrique de Ortueta urged to reorganise the patriotic movement, affirming that “after these seven years of forced silence we now need to speak to agitate our spirits, rebuild our organisations, form our *cadre*, [...]”¹²²

Macià, only a month after Primo de Rivera's resignation, was already proclaiming “our time has come”, calling for the need to go beyond claims against state repression—such as demanding freedom for political prisoners and the free return of political exiles—to move back to the struggle for Catalan independence.¹²³ By May 1930, the weekly paper *l'Opinió*, home to a heterogeneous mix of leftist and federalist Catalan nationalists, was already sensing that new opportunities were at hand: “Everywhere there are signs of such

¹¹⁸ González Calleja, *La España...*, p. 351.

¹¹⁹ Sallés, *Quan Catalunya era d'Esquerra*, p. 17.

¹²⁰ José Ignacio de Arana, *Euzkadi*, 7-2-1930, p. 1.

¹²¹ Manuel de la Sota, “Bajo las boinas de la nueva juventud”, *Bizkaitarra*, 4-10-1930, p. 1.

¹²² “Conferencia de Enrique de Ortueta”, *Bizkaitarra*, 4-10-1930, p. 3.

¹²³ Víctor Castells, *Francesc Macià parla*, Barcelona: Duxelm, 2007, pp. 79-80.

enthusiasm and vigorousness that, if effectively coordinated, could really bring radical change to the current situation".¹²⁴ Another Catalan nationalist leader, Antoni Rovira i Virgili (1882–1949), was even anticipating “wide perspectives for a home rule solution to the Catalan problem.”¹²⁵ Years later, in his book *Resum d'història del catalanisme* ('A summary of the history of Catalan nationalism'), Rovira described the situation of the Catalan national movement after Primo de Rivera's fall as “stronger than ever”, pointing at how it had managed to return to full activity under the “relative freedom” of the Berenguer government.¹²⁶

If the *dictablanda* was already changing the rules of contention, the new regime that was to be born the 14th of April 1931 would shortly prove even more game-changing. Reflecting upon those events some years after, Catalan communist Andreu Nin wrote:

“The fact that the 14th of April cannot be considered a revolution, does not mean, that there have been no changes in Spain [...]. The working class, that during the dictatorship saw its organisations banned, its activists prosecuted, its press gagged, its salaries lowered, its 8-hour working day breached, now hoped the Republic would bring freedom for its organisations to develop.”¹²⁷

The same could be said for Catalan and Basque nationalists as their political activity gradually became legal again. Civil rights opened a door to a renewed wave of contention: claims could be made through the press, large performances such as mass demonstrations could be organised and elections could be contested. A new political opportunity structure was emerging and Catalan and Basque nationalism were ready to make the most of it.

¹²⁴ “Editorial”, *l'Opinió*, 9-5-1930.

¹²⁵ Antoni Rovira i Virgili, *Catalunya i Espanya*, ed. Jaume Sobrequés i Callicó, Barcelona: La Magrana, 1988, pp. 458-460.

¹²⁶ Antoni Rovira i Virgili, *Resum d'història del catalanisme*, ed. Anna Sallés, Barcelona: La Magrana, 1983 (1st ed. 1936), p. 131.

¹²⁷ Andreu Nin, *Los problemas de la revolución española (1931-1937)* Barcelona: Ruedo Ibérico, 1978 pp. 56

2. 1. Seizing the opportunity. Basque and Catalan nationalist strategic shifts at the dawn of the Second Spanish Republic

2. 1. 1. Failed insurrections: Catalan and Basque nationalist resistance to Primo de Rivera's dictatorship (1923-1928)

The beginning of a new political cycle with the arrival of the Spanish Second Republic prompted Basque and Catalan nationalism to undergo a major strategic shift. To properly judge the implications of that shift in terms of how it affected the major streams of contention, it is useful to briefly look at how both movements carried out their contentious politics during the preceding political cycle: Primo de Rivera's dictatorship.

The beginning of this chapter has already explained that the political opportunity structure during Rivera's regime severely narrowed forms of contention. In such circumstances, contentious politics in the form of social movement campaigns were not an option to Basque and Catalan nationalists, as the state simply did not recognise them as political actors. The resort to armed struggle as an alternative form of contention emerged in this context. Large-scale violence, however, involves particular mechanisms and processes—Tilly and Tarrow particularly stress mobilisation, brokerage, diffusion, certification, and boundary activation¹²⁸—which can be difficult to materialise when facing a strong, centralised state. This is exactly what happened to Basque and Catalan nationalist efforts to oppose Rivera's regime by force.

¹²⁸ For more details on contention involving large scale use of political violence, see Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, pp. 169—189.

This stream of contention can be crudely broken down into three different episodes: first, the initial effort to organise a front of peripheral nationalist opposition to the regime (1924), second, the search for wider alliances which included other, politically different opposition groups (1925-1926), and finally, the Catalan nationalist insurrection attempt of Prats de Molló and its aftermath (1926-1927). Before looking into each episode, however, the following question should be answered: what resources did Catalan and Basque nationalist movements have at their disposal to pursue violent political contention?

Militaristic or pseudo-militaristic themes have made regular appearances in Catalan nationalism and can be traced back to the actual origins of the movement during the last quarter of the 19th Century.¹²⁹ *Estat Català*, Francesc Macià's pro-independence political party, had a self-styled *Exèrcit de Catalunya* ('Army of Catalonia') as its paramilitary wing. *Acció Catalana* had its own *Societat d'Estudis Militars* ('Society for Military Studies'), organised with a similar function.¹³⁰ The reality of these groups was that their coercive capacity was extremely limited and despite their somewhat regular—and crude—training and target practice sessions, they were short on discipline, numbers and weapons. Their Basque counterparts were even more rudimentary. There were no real Basque nationalist paramilitary groups as such, although youth clubs of *mendigoixales* ('mountaineers') did involve a degree of militaristic spirit. There is, however, little evidence that they had any access to significant weapons or training during the 1920s.

The first episode of the three identified above, already saw serious setbacks for any chances of any effective use of political violence by Catalan and Basque nationalists against Primo de Rivera's Dictatorship. Macià acted as the main agent of brokerage between both national movements, but mostly failed to produce concrete results. In 1924 he proposed the creation of a "League of Oppressed Nations"—the original idea came from the Basque nationalist Telesforo Uribe-Echevarría—which never materialised. There are reasons to interpret that

¹²⁹ On the militaristic traditions of Catalan nationalism see Enric Ucelay Da Cal, "Violència Simbòlica y Temática Militarista En El Nacionalismo Catalán", *Ayer*, 13, 1994, 237–64; "Com Es Fixà La Imatge Dels 'dolents': Les Joventuts d'Esquerra Republicana-Estat Català i La Problemàtica d'un 'feixisme Català'", in *El Catalanisme Davant Del Feixisme (1919-2018)*, ed. by Enric Ucelay Da Cal, Andreu González i Vilalta, and Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas, Barcelona: Gregal, 2018, pp. 217–58.

¹³⁰ Raquel Navarro García, "Lluís Nicolau d'Olwer...", pp. 77–79.

relations between Macià and the PNV representatives were not entirely smooth.¹³¹ The League concept can be read as a failed attempt to broker a new alliance but also to obtain *certification*.¹³² In any case, the prospect of a Basque-Catalan alliance to militarily oppose Rivera's regime received a serious blow when, in November 1924, the Basque nationalist leader Elías Gallaestegui and eleven other activists were arrested in the town of Ordizia. They were having a meeting with Ambrose Martin O'Daily, a veteran of the IRA who had toured the Basque Country two years before giving several talks on Irish republicanism. Gallaestegui eventually fled to Mexico, and O'Daily—probably helped by Basque activists—made it to Paris.¹³³ There, he was also in contact with *Estat Català* members, including Macià, to whom he provided with some documents on procedures for guerrilla operations.¹³⁴

1925 and 1926 saw further failed attempts by Macià—still based in Paris—to forge an anti-regime alliance which would include Basque nationalists, represented by Francisco de Gaztañaga. This time Macià sought to include ‘Spanish’ actors such as members of the military disaffected with de Rivera's dictatorship, as well as the anarchist group *Los Solidarios*, led by Buenaventura Durruti.¹³⁵ Meanwhile, unrest was building among young Catalan activists who were anxious for action and were growing impatient with Macià's failed efforts. A group of members of both Macià's *Exèrcit de Catalunya* and the *Societat d'Estudis Militars* created their own organisation, *Bandera Negra* (‘Black Flag’). In May 1925 they prepared the assassination of the Spanish King Alfonso XIII during his visit to Barcelona, but the plot failed after the police was tipped off. Several of the participants in what was to be known as the *Complot del Garraf* were given long prison sentences, including members of *Estat Català* Jaume Compte, Marcel·lí Perelló and Miquel Badia.¹³⁶

¹³¹ de Pablo, Mees, & Rodríguez Ranz. *El Péndulo...*, Vol. 1, pp. 175–178.

¹³² In this context, certification means “an external authority's signal of its readiness to recognize and support the existence and claims of a political actor.” See Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, (1st ed.), p. 215. It must be noted that the *Lliga de Nacions Oprimides* was to include Galician, Philippine, Rif and Irish nationalists as well as the Basques and Catalans. For further detail on Macià's particular contacts with the Irish for this matter, see Pere Soler Paríció, “Irlanda y La Guerra Civil Española Nuevas Perspectivas de Estudio”, 2013, pp. 50–54.

¹³³ Xosé M. Núñez-Seixas, *Ecos de Pascua, Mitos Rebeldes: El Nacionalismo Vasco e Irlanda (1890-1939)*, *Historia Contemporanea*, 2017, pp. 466–467, 469.

¹³⁴ Soler Paríció, “Irlanda y La Guerra...” , pp. 54–55.

¹³⁵ González Calleja, *La España...*, pp. 351–355.

¹³⁶ Joan Crexell, *El complot del garraf*, Barcelona: Abadia de Montserrat, 1988.

After giving up on any further attempts to involve other political actors in his plan, Macià decided to go ahead with a military operation to take power in Catalonia, organised from across the French border, in the Catalan-speaking *Catalunya Nord*. Around a hundred members of the *escamots*—units of the paramilitary *Exèrcit de Catalunya*—gathered in the small town of Prats de Molló. They were joined by Italian antifascists forming a *Legione Garibaldina della Libertà*, whose leader Riciotti Garibaldi—nephew of the historical leader of the *resorgimento*—was in fact a double agent serving Mussolini. The 30th of October 1926 Macià prepared to lead his men in crossing the border, only to fall into the hands of the French police. The operation had failed even before its start. Macià, however, managed to turn the defeat into a propaganda victory. After being seized in his Prats de Molló “General HQ”, *Estat Català*'s leader was briefly imprisoned and tried in Paris in January 1928. Macià's trial received a large press coverage, which he used to promote his cause and greatly enhanced his image as a leader of the resistance against Primo de Rivera's dictatorship.¹³⁷ In contrast to this relatively powerful performance, Basque nationalist activism remained low-key. Gallastegui, from exile, had founded a Basque Independence Committee and a propaganda magazine with the name *Lenago Il* ([I/we would] rather die'), which styled itself as the “Official Press Agency of the Army of Basque Volunteers”. Such an army was a work of fiction, and the only contentious performances carried out by the *mendigoxales* were the displaying of Ikurriñas in mountains and yearly clandestine floral tributes at Sabino Arana's grave.¹³⁸

This overview of the particular episodes of Catalan and Basque nationalist attempts to pursue armed action against Primo de Rivera's dictatorship reveals some of the key processes at work within this stream of contention. Indeed, the regime stimulated a process of escalation, as activists became more prone to the use of violent forms of contention, including assassination attempts and armed insurrection. This, however, must be balanced against a general process of

¹³⁷ González Calleja, *La España...*, pp. 355–357.

¹³⁸ de Pablo, Mees, & Rodríguez Ranz. *El Péndulo...*, Vol. 1, pp. 181–182. Sabino Arana (1865-1903), widely considered the ‘founding father’ of Basque nationalism, was born to a legitimist Carlist family in Biscay. He led the creation of the Basque Nationalist Party—as well as its ideology and symbols—together with his brother Luis in 1895. For some of the most recent research on Arana, as well as an analysis of the controversial aspects of his legacy, see José Luis de la Granja Sáinz, *Ángel o Demonio, Sabino Arana, El Patriarca Del Nacionalismo Vasco*, Madrid: Tecnos, 2015.

demobilisation, resulting from the repeated use of the mechanism of repression by the state, which greatly limited the resources available to Basque and Catalan nationalists. Furthermore, repression produced a parallel process of disillusionment, as many activists actually decided not to commit to resistance. Compared to the number of nationalists who decided to support a confrontational strategy against Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, many more opted for political inactivity. Often, this meant seeking “refuge in culture”, promoting national folklore and language. This was the case particularly for the Basque CNV¹³⁹ and the Catalan *Lliga Regionalista*.¹⁴⁰ Although the mechanism of brokerage could be seen at work in Macià's efforts, they failed to produce processes of real *coordinated action* or *coalition formation*.¹⁴¹

If we evaluate the outcomes of Basque and Catalan strategies of direct confrontation against the Spanish state in the 1920s, the conclusion must be that they resulted in utter failure. Tilly and Tarrow have defined the four components of a successful revolutionary outcome as: “defections of regime members, acquisition of armed force by revolutionary coalitions, neutralization or defection of the regime's armed force and control of the state apparatus by members of the revolutionary coalition.”¹⁴² Catalan and Basque national movements came very far of mobilising enough resources to mount a successful violent campaign against the Spanish state. Their efforts, particularly in the Basque case, can hardly even be qualified of “small-scale violence” in Tilly and Tarrow's typology of conflicts.¹⁴³ Only one exception should be mentioned here: how Macià was successfully framed as a hero in the struggle against Primo de Rivera's dictatorship. This framing would turn Macià into a very popular figure in Catalonia, giving him a specific political weight beyond the size and support of his party, *Estat Català*. Macià's popularity would eventually prove crucial in later political developments, as it

¹³⁹ de Pablo, Mees, & Rodríguez Ranz. *El Péndulo...*, Vol. 1, pp. 150–152. See also pp. 184–190.

¹⁴⁰ Francesc Cambó, *Memorias (1876-1936)*, Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1987, pp. 365–369.

¹⁴¹ Coordinated action is defined in this context as “two or more actors' mutual signaling and parallel making of claims on the same object”. Coalition formation as “[the] creation of new, visible, and direct coordination of claims between two or more previously distinct actors.” Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, (1st ed.), p. 216.

¹⁴² Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, pp. 186–187.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

became one of the key ingredients behind the rise of the future party *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*.

2. 1. 2. Looking for new paths: Catalan and Basque nationalism at the twilight of Alfonso XIII's reign (January 1930-July 1930)

Two years after Macià's trial, Primo de Rivera resigned. His popularity was already collapsing, and even Alfonso XIII was showing clear signs that he would no longer support his rule. The political opportunity structure was changing—as described at the beginning of the present chapter—and soon opposition political actors would seize the opportunity to bring about a regime change. Eduardo González Calleja has described the transition from Primo de Rivera's regime to the Second Spanish Republic as a “revolution”:

“The phase that takes place from February 1930 to April 1931 shows in its assemblage most of the characteristics assigned to a revolution definable in strict terms of struggle for power: the discredit of the state's political leadership, caused by an insuperable legitimacy deficit; the decline in the capacity of the state administration to adapt to new social and political requirements; the decrease in government capacity to make energetic use of the means of coercion at its disposal; the fractioning and desertion of certain elites (such as intellectuals), and their transfer of loyalty to the opposition; the formulation of a more or less coherent alternative change program, brought about by the alliance of dissidents, and the occurrence of a revolutionary event, consisting in the abrupt and forced change of the established government, which is achieved through a wide, subversive mobilisation that uses violence or threatens to do so.”¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ Eduardo González Calleja, *La Segunda República Española*, Barcelona: Pasado & Presente, 2015, pp. 33–34.

This description can safely be related to Tilly and Tarrow's definition of the four components of a revolutionary outcome mentioned above, and is consistent with what they describe as a “great revolution”: a complete transfer of power resulting from a complete split in the previous regime. In effect, the political actors which led the process had constituted themselves as a “Revolutionary Committee”, and so had explicitly made themselves autonomous from the existing institutions. After the republican victory in the 12th of April 1931 local election and the republican proclamations of the 14th of April, power was effectively transferred to this Committee, becoming the Provisional Government of the Second Spanish Republic. This ‘republican revolution’ can be modelled as a stream of contention that can be divided into two main phases. This section deals with the first phase—the above mentioned *dictablanda*—which begins with Dámaso Berenguer's appointment as President by Alfonso XIII in January 1930, and ends in February 1931 with his dismissal by the king. The second phase, which will be covered in the following chapter, begins with Admiral's Juan Bautista Aznar's appointment as Berenguer's successor and ends with the republican proclamations of the 14th of April.

This first phase in this stream of contention can be in turn divided into two different sub-phases, separated by a key event: the San Sebastian pact. During the initial sub-phase, which covers roughly the first half of 1930, there is an initial change in the political opportunity structure but yet no clear coordinated action to bring down the regime. This changes during the second sub-phase, as a new coalition resulting from the San Sebastian pact brings together different opposition forces into a strategy for a political takeover. Catalan and Basque nationalists played different roles in both sub-phases, as they both emerged from their failed strategies and relative political inactivity of de Rivera's era.

Primo de Rivera's resignation and the beginning of the *dictablanda* was widely read as a sign of changing political structure. Almost as a reflex manoeuvre, Catalan and Basque nationalists were by February again organising public gatherings and reopening their social centres. This was a gradual process: *Acció Catalana* opened a new party headquarters in Barcelona in April 1930, and the Basque nationalist youth organisation *Juventud Vasca* did not reopen its Bilbao headquarters until

May.¹⁴⁵ Both movements soon engaged in political contention, leading to a particular episode that will be analysed—identifying the key mechanisms and processes which lay within it—in the following pages: the amnesty campaign.

Catalan nationalists were the first to mobilise around the issue of political prisoners. The 6th of February 1930 the Spanish government had issued a pardon which had left aside those convicted of taking part in the Prats de Molló and Garraf affairs.¹⁴⁶ The answer was a short but intense campaign for a full amnesty. The development, scale and main features of this campaign can be extracted from contemporary sources such as *El Dia*, a local newspaper based in Manresa close to left-wing Catalan nationalism.

The 19th of February, *Esquerra Republicana*¹⁴⁷ called for its sympathisers and member organisations to demand an extended amnesty. The 1st of March a “Manifesto of Catalan Women” calling for a full amnesty became a major platform for the movement, as women sympathisers began to sign it *en masse*, reaching 50,000 signatures by the 11th of March and 100,000 by the 20th.¹⁴⁸ By the end of the month the movement had managed to secure the support of the four Catalan *diputacions*—provincial authorities—Lleida, Girona, Barcelona and Tarragona.¹⁴⁹

The campaign included different forms of protest, including the sending of postcards directly to the President of the Spanish cabinet: 200,000 were sent by the 28th of March.¹⁵⁰ The 2nd of April the Government issued a partial pardon for those convicted of the Garraf affair, which was expanded by the 14th to include

¹⁴⁵ Baras, *Acció Catalana*, pp. 54–55; de Pablo, Mees & Rodríguez Ranz, *El Péndulo...*, Vol. 1, p. 195.

¹⁴⁶ The pardon effectively excluded those convicted of any ‘serious’ political crimes, such as those breaking the antiseparatist *Decreto* of 1923. See Sallés, *Quan Catalunya Era d’Esquerra*, pp. 13–17.

¹⁴⁷ Not to be confused—although it did serve as a precedent—with the later political party, *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*; this *Esquerra Republicana* was an alliance between Lluís Companys’ *Partit Republicà Català*, Antoni Rovira i Virgili’s *Acció Republicana Catalana* and various federalist nationalists. See Jordi Pomés i Vives, “Sindicalisme Pagès i Republicanisme Popular a Catalunya (1918-1930). La Unió de Rabassaires: Entre El Radicalisme Obrerista i La via Cooperativista”, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1998, p. 405.

¹⁴⁸ “Les dones catalanes i l’ampliació de l’amnistia”, *El Dia*, 06/3/1930, p. 1; “Parla el President de la Diputació”, *El Dia*, 11/3/1930, p. 1; “Per l’ampliació de l’amnistia”, *El Dia*, 20/3/1930, p. 4.

¹⁴⁹ Joan Maluquer i Viladot, President of Barcelona’s *diputació*, was particularly involved in the campaign, regularly meeting with Madrid authorities and effectively pressuring them to grant an extended amnesty. See “Parla el President de la Diputació”, *El Dia*, 11/3/1930, p. 1.

¹⁵⁰ “L’èxit de les targes demanant l’amnistia”, *El Dia*, 28/03/1930, p. 3. The original idea for the postcards campaign came from the sports newspaper *La Rambla*, see “Amnistia - Llibertat”, *La Rambla*, 17/3/1930, p. 12.

other prisoners and exiles.¹⁵¹ This was the high-water mark of the campaign, although full amnesty had not been achieved—this was only issued after the Spanish Republic was proclaimed a year later—and those convicted for trying to murder Alfonso XIII had in fact been pardoned, when campaigners had actually demanded a full revision on the sentence based on the mistreatment of the defendants.¹⁵² The fact that the campaign largely faded away soon after is a good indicator that its main motivation had been bringing the Catalan nationalist prisoners and exiles home, rather than reaching a general settlement.¹⁵³

Clearly, this episode of contention shows that, as the political opportunity structure varied and the regime was more tolerant of opposition, Catalan nationalists quickly adapted and produced what Tilly and Tarrow term a *social movement campaign*.¹⁵⁴ Different mechanisms can be seen at work: 1) emulation can be observed in how a wide range of groups expressed their support of the campaign, typically by sending a telegram demanding an extended amnesty. These included the socialist party *Unió Socialista de Catalunya*¹⁵⁵, women, workers of particular factories and businesses, students, and also in the particular case of the town of Manresa the hiking, cycling, and chess groups, a choir, the local Union of Merchants, the musicians' union, and a traditional dance group.¹⁵⁶ Women gathering signatures for their manifesto was perhaps the main powerhouse for the campaign during the first month, although this was also imitated by locally based

¹⁵¹ “Els condemnats per la causa del Garraf, indultats”, *El Dia*, 02/4/1930, p. 1; “L'ampliació de l'amnistia”, *El Dia*, 15/4/1930, p.1.

¹⁵² “Després de l'indult”, *El Dia*, 03/4/1930, p. 1; J. B. Claret, “Les coses a mig fer”, *El Dia*, 05/4/1930, p. 1.

¹⁵³ Some activists did see the need to insist until a full amnesty was achieved, for an example of this position see J. Ane i Torras, “La veritable amnistia”, *Llibertat*, 20/4/1930, p. 1.

¹⁵⁴ Social movement campaigns are defined as “sustained challenges to power holders in the name of a population living under the jurisdiction of those power holders by means of public displays of that population's worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment”, see Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, p. 237.

¹⁵⁵ The *Unió Socialista de Catalunya* (‘Socialist Union of Catalonia’) had been founded in 1923 as the practical realisation of what the poet Gabriel Alomar i Villalonga had defined as “the constitution of a really socialist socialism, but one which spoke Catalan”. It was a small party of socialist intellectuals ideologically similar to the Spanish PSOE, but also a firm supporter of Catalan self-determination. See Xavier Milian Nebot, “Layret: més enllà de «l'advocat dels obrers»”, *Catàrsi*, 2020 <<https://catarsimagazin.cat/layret-mes-enlla-de-ladvocat-dels-obrers/>> [accessed 3 December 2020]. See also Ricard Alcaraz et al, *75 Aniversari. Unió Socialista de Catalunya*, Barcelona: Fundació Rafael Campalans, 1999.

¹⁵⁶ “La reorganització de la Unió Socialista de Catalunya”, *El Dia*, 05/3/1930, p. 4; “Les dones catalanes i l'ampliació de l'amnistia”, *El Dia*, 06/3/1930, p. 1; “Per l'ampliació de l'amnistia i la revisió de la causa del Garraf”, *El Dia*, 10/3/1930, p. 1; “Per l'ampliació de l'amnistia”, *El Dia*, 18/3/1930, p. 1; 20/3/1930, p.1; 12/3/1930, p. 4; 24/3/1930, p. 3.

groups such as Republican *Ateneus*.¹⁵⁷ 2) diffusion is present in how organisers encouraged different social groups to participate in the postcard campaign. One article specifically addressed the different targets:

“Citizen: you will fulfil a dignified act by sending the postcard. Worker: by sending the postcard you work for your persecuted friends. Businessman: by signing you contribute to social peace. Politician: with a signature you will be asserting your ideals. Believer: send the postcard and you will be fulfilling an act of charity. Women: you will reaffirm the validity of your signature by sending the postcard. *Manresà* [inhabitant of Manresa]: our city must lead the way in the pro-amnesty campaign.”¹⁵⁸

3) Certification operated as a key mechanism, as representatives of the provincial authorities took an active role in taking the campaign's demands to Madrid. This boosted the campaign's ability to push its claims forward, and also showed the regime's weakness. Other sources show local institutions such as Town Councils also stated their support for an extended amnesty.¹⁵⁹ 4) Repression, however, still played its part, although its effectiveness seems to have been very limited. Some demonstrations were dispersed by the police, some rallies were banned, and as the freed prisoners returned to Catalonia, crowds waiting for them at train stations were attacked by police, particularly in the case of Jaume Compte.¹⁶⁰

All of these mechanisms combined to produce a process of mobilisation which was probably the most powerful—in terms of numbers and success—that Catalan

¹⁵⁷ “Diuen de Sallent”, *El Dia*, 15/3/1930, p. 2.

¹⁵⁸ Original fragment: “Ciudadà: Faràs un acte digne enviant la tarja. Obrer: Enviant la tarja treballes pels teus companys perseguits. Patró: En signar labores per la pau social. Polític: Amb una signatura faràs afirmació dels teus ideals. Creient: Envia la tarja i acompliràs un acte de caritat. Dones: reafirmeu la validesa de la vostra signatura enviant la tarja. Manresà: Cal que la nostra ciutat vagi al davant en la campanya pro amnistia.” See “Amnistia! Llibertat!”, *El Dia*, 28/3/1930, p. 1.

¹⁵⁹ “La primera reunió del ple municipal de Girona”, *La Veu de Catalunya*, 28/2/1931 (evening ed.), p. 1.

¹⁶⁰ Four people were arrested after the police dissolved a demonstration that was marching through Barcelona's rambla, see “Per l'ampliació de l'amnistia”, *El Dia*, 10/3/1930, p. 4. A pro-amnesty rally that was going to be held at the *Palau de Belles Arts* was banned, see “Per l'ampliació de l'amnistia”, *El Dia*, 20/03/1930. A student was arrested after police broke up the crowd that was waiting for the first freed Garraf prisoners, see “Un estudiant detingut”, *El Dia*, 15/4/1930, p. 1. A police charge at the crowd waiting for Jaume Compte left “many wounded”, see “L'arribada de Jaume Compte”, *El Dia*, 28/4/1930, p. 4.

nationalists had been able to sustain since the beginning of Primo de Rivera's regime. Framing was also taking place in the way the campaign was portrayed in manifestos and articles. A particularly interesting example is the *manifest de les dones catalanes* of the 1st of March:

“A much too thin amnesty has kept many of our fellow countrymen, who deserve freedom and return to their motherland, in prison or in far away exile. There is a particular exception in one of the articles of the Amnesty Act that cannot be explained by any reason of law or sentiment of justice and that directly affects a considerable part of Catalan political prisoners and exiles.

In the face of this arbitrary exception, a great number of entities and corporations have demanded that this amnesty should be expanded. And Catalan women must join their voice to this outcry. We, women, know more than anyone else about the desolate sadness of the home with a missing father, husband, brother, son, who are behind bars or living away from the Fatherland. We, women, understand more than anyone the anguishing torment of those who are separated from family, from friends, from living free in one's own land. We, women, know more than anyone the burning and bitterness of longing tears; double longing for those who are on both sides of prison bars, on both sides of the official border.

For human love, for country sentiment, for solidarity in pain, for imperative equity, Catalan women demand the amnesty be expanded, the return to their homes of all those exiles and prisoners for political and social causes.”¹⁶¹

The manifesto shows a particularly powerful form of framing. Of course, the cause of nationalist prisoners and exiles is framed in national terms: in both cases their freedom is portrayed as a “return to their motherland”. However, it is from the gender-related aspects that this text achieves its power. *Angel del hogar* notions of femininity¹⁶² are used to fuel the national discourse: the motherland is

¹⁶¹ “Les dones catalanes i l'ampliació de l'amnistia”, *El Dia. Diari d'Esquerra Republicana*, 6/3/1930, p. 1. See Text 1 of Annex III for the full text.

¹⁶² The *Angel del hogar* (‘Angel of the home’) is an archetype of femininity identified by Bridget Aldaraca that has been influential in historical gender-studies of 19th and 20th Century Spain. It can be defined by the association of women with the private sphere, the home and the family. See Bridget Aldaraca, *El Ángel Del Hogar: Galdós and the Ideology of Domesticity in Spain*, Chapel Hill: Department of Romance Languages, University of North Carolina, 1991.

equated with the home, the women's sphere. The struggle of the prisoners and exiles is enhanced by the women's self-abnegation: they “know more than anyone”, “understand more than anyone”, about “desolate sadness”, “anguishing torment” and “longing”. Women personify the nation, and the nation without its imprisoned or exiled men is portrayed as a broken family. The use of the first person plural, “we, women”, is also a form of syntax of hegemony: it means nationalist women—or women campaigning for full amnesty—but the manifesto speaks for *all* Catalan women, and the values of domesticity shown have universal undertones.

Catalan nationalists' ability to sustain such a campaign implies the existence of quite a robust *social movement base*.¹⁶³ From *El Dia*'s perspective, it seems that much of the infrastructure required to carry out the campaign came from the Catalan nationalist and republican movement, the *Ateneus* and newspaper offices being good places for the distribution of postcards, signing sheets, etc. However, the Catalan conservative nationalists of the *Lliga Regionalista* party—who had also been early critics of the February partial amnesty¹⁶⁴—also played their role. In Manresa for instance, their local social centre was used to hold a Catalan traditional dance *sardana* exhibition to raise funds for the amnesty campaign.¹⁶⁵ All in all, it would be a mistake to consider the campaign as a product of mainly leftist and republican Catalan nationalist mobilisation. Some conservative entities, such as the *Federació Catalana d'Estudiants Catòlics* (‘Catalan Federation of Catholic Students’) were among the earliest to publicly state their position for an extended amnesty.¹⁶⁶

In fact, it was from the articles of a Catholic Catalan nationalist, Lluís Jordà,¹⁶⁷ that many Basque nationalists learnt about the political situation in Catalonia, and

¹⁶³ Social movement bases are defined as: “the social background, organisational resources, and cultural framework of contention and collective action”. See Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, p. 237.

¹⁶⁴ “L'abast del decret d'amnistia”, *La Veu de Catalunya*, 08/2/1931, p. 1.

¹⁶⁵ “Pro presos”, *El Dia*, 04/4/1931, p. 3.

¹⁶⁶ “Per la revisió de la causa del Garraf i ampliació del decret d'amnistia”, *La Veu de Catalunya*, 28/2/1931 (evening ed.), p. 2.

¹⁶⁷ Xosé Estévez has described Lluís Jordà as being politically close to the *Lliga Regionalista*, see Estévez, *Galeuzca*, p. 24. He can also be seen writing for the right-of-centre Catholic Catalan nationalist newspaper *El Matí*, e.g. see 29/3/1931, p. 13. This paper showed a particular interest for Basque topics, including sports (“Nacionalisme i pacifisme”, 4/1/1931, p. 16), politics (“Societat d'Estudis Bascos”, 8/1/1931, p. 1; “Motius d'unió i fruits que n'esperem”, 9/1/1931, p. 8; “L'actitud dels nacionalistes bascos”, 11/2/1931, p. 1.) and Catalan-Basque relations (“La nostra actitud”, 15/1/1931, p. 9; “Bascos i Catalans”, 17/1/1931, p. 7.), featuring articles by leading Basque nationalists such as Federico Zabala and Engracio Aranzadi.

particularly about the amnesty campaign. His column *Carta de Catalunya* in the Basque nationalist newspaper *Euzkadi*—controlled by the CNV—commented on different aspects of Catalan political life, which, combined with the regular Catalan references in the general news sections, indicate a considerable interest in Catalan affairs by the editors of *Euzkadi*. New developments in the Catalan amnesty campaign would often make headlines in the Basque nationalist newspaper.¹⁶⁸ Jordà gave extra details, such as on the Garraf affair itself, women's participation in the campaign, institutional support, etc.¹⁶⁹ The reaction to one particular piece of news from the Catalan amnesty campaign is very indicative of the Basque nationalists' attitude towards the whole issue. After Football Club Barcelona made an official statement supporting an extended amnesty, *Euzkadi*'s reaction was to exclaim: “If you only knew with such joy we receive the news! And with such admiration! And especially, we, Basques, with such envy!”¹⁷⁰ From where did all this interest—and indeed, envy—come from? A comparative analysis of the Basque and Catalan amnesty campaigns shows that the former achieved less mobilisation and even partially developed as a result of diffusion—and possibly emulation—from the latter.

The Basque campaign for an extended amnesty took longer to develop. By February 1930, Spanish republicans in the Basque country were already demanding the amnesty decree be extended to those convicted for “crimes against the fatherland”. Although *Euzkadi* had already commented on the limited nature of the decree, there is little evidence for Basque nationalist campaigning for a general amnesty until the beginning of March.¹⁷¹ The campaign began as an effort to collect signatures demanding the freeing of Plácido de Etxebarria Azpiri, a 68 year old Basque nationalist from Durango, imprisoned for a press offence. Soon, demands were also made for the freedom of other prisoners and exiles: Jacinto de

¹⁶⁸ “Pro amnistía de los reos políticos”, *Euzkadi*, 11/3/1930, p. 3.

¹⁶⁹ Lluís Jordà, “Carta de Catalunya”, *Euzkadi*, 13/2/1930, p. 1; “Lo que queda por hacer”, *Euzkadi*, 06/3/1930, p. 1; “Las mujeres y la amnistía”, 13/3/1930, p. 1; “En estos momentos”, *Euzkadi*, 13/2/1930, p. 1; “Carta de Cataluña”, *Euzkadi*, 19/4/1930, p. 1.

¹⁷⁰ “Entre goal y goal”, *Euzkadi*, 21/3/1930, p. 4.

¹⁷¹ “Los republicanos de Bizkaya adoptan acuerdos”, *Euzkadi*, 19/2/1930, p. 1; “La situación política española”, *Euzkadi*, 07/2/1930, p. 2; “La cuestión presos”, 25/2/1930, *Euzkadi*, p. 1; “Pro amnistía”, *Euzkadi*, 01/3/1930, p. 1.

Amorrortu, Félix de Tirapu, Elías de Gallastegi, Antonio de Otza and a woman, Vicenta de Arroategi.¹⁷²

From Bilbao, a traditional epicentre for Basque nationalist activity, the Basque amnesty campaign spread to towns such as Erandio, Getxo and Eibar, and there is evidence to show that in some instances other, non-Basque nationalist, political prisoners were included in the petitions.¹⁷³ The pages of *Euzkadi*, however, do not show much campaign activity in other Basque capitals or indeed in towns outside Biscay—apart from Eibar. In terms of numbers, figures of 2000 signed postcards are given for Getxo and Eibar.¹⁷⁴ Although mechanisms of diffusion and emulation can be clearly seen at work, just as with the Catalan campaign, their extent seems to have been more limited and consequently, they produced less mobilisation. Certification, which has already been identified as a key factor behind the success of the Catalan campaign, was absent in the Basque case.

As it has been introduced above, the Basque amnesty campaign was very much influenced by its Catalan counterpart. Early on, the campaign was seen as a joint Catalan-Basque effort, product of a “unanimous aspiration of all democratic parties in Catalonia and the Basque Country.”¹⁷⁵ This was further reinforced after a visit of *Euzkadi*'s offices in Bilbao by Josep Sunyol i Garriga¹⁷⁶ and Josep Plantada—probably after attending the Athletic Club vs. Football Club Barcelona match.¹⁷⁷ The former was then President of the Catalan Football Federation and the latter member of Football Club Barcelona's governing board. Both had ties to left-of-centre Catalan nationalism and brought news of the intense Catalan amnesty campaign. They met with *Euzkadi*'s director, Pantaleón Ramírez de Olano, and with the CNV's leader Ignacio Rotaache Velasco. *Euzkadi* proclaimed that, from then on, it would include Catalan political prisoners in its amnesty petitions, and that Catalan nationalist press would do the same with the Basques. Although there is no

¹⁷² “Pro amnistía”, *Euzkadi*, 02/3/1930, p. 1; “Durango”, *Euzkadi*, 05/3/1930, p. 7; K. E., “Azpiri Espetxian”, *Euzkadi*, 14/03/1930, p. 5.

¹⁷³ “Erandio”, *Euzkadi*, 04/3/1930, p. 8; “Amnistia - Libertad”, *Euzkadi*, 28/3/1930, p. 1; *Euzkadi*, 29/3/1930, p. 1.

¹⁷⁴ “Amnistia - Libertad”, *Euzkadi*, 28/3/1930, p.1; 29/3/1930, p. 1.

¹⁷⁵ “Pro amnistía”, *Euzkadi*, 08/3/1930, p. 1.

¹⁷⁶ Sunyol i Garriga would later become President of Football Club Barcelona and also a member of the Spanish Parliament for ERC. He was shot in 1936 by pro-Franco troops near Madrid, becoming a symbol both for Catalan nationalism and FCB.

¹⁷⁷ The match settled Athletic Club as the champion of the top professional football division for that season, see *La Rambla*, 17/3/1930. See p. 12 for the Catalan account of the meeting.

evidence for any formal agreement taking place during the visit, *Euzkadi* framed the gesture as: “[...] the first labour carried out together by Catalans and Basques in this second stage of their ‘entente’. And it may be followed by no less transcendent others between these two peoples coupled by their unity in ideals.”¹⁷⁸

The mention of the ‘entente’ was a clear reference to the Triple Alliance of 1923. The editors of *Euzkadi* were inserting the Basque amnesty campaign into an effort for Basque and Catalan nationalist strategic understanding. A few days later, the Catalan nationalist sports newspaper *la Rambla* called for the mass sending of postcards demanding an extended amnesty to the Spanish Government. *Euzkadi* enthusiastically joined the campaign: “seconding the initiative proposed by Catalonia achieves the double objective of reinforcing the Catalans' position, and at the same time their thousands of signatures reinforce ours.” The newspaper adopted an almost competitive tone, by saying that “in this work of vindication, *Euzkadi* must not fall below Catalonia, its friend.” This idea was repeated in the days that followed.¹⁷⁹ By the end of the campaign, *El Dia* claimed that a 11 metre tall pile of postcards had formed in Madrid, and that most came from Catalonia and the Basque Country. Writing in *Euzkadi*, Lluís Jordà raised the figure to 14 metres—a day later another headline claimed the pile had reached 21 metres—and assured that the support for Catalan nationalist prisoners shown by the Basque Country was stirring ideas of bringing back the Triple Alliance in Catalonia.¹⁸⁰ As the extended amnesty was finally granted, Jacinto de Amorrortu was freed from Bilbao's Larrinaga prison the 16th of April. *Euzkadi* signalled this as the victorious end to the campaign and thanked those who had taken part in it. Telegrams were exchanged with Josep Sunyol i Garriga with both sides giving thanks for the mutual effort.¹⁸¹

The asymmetric nature of both campaigns had a lot to do with the different realities of Basque and Catalan nationalist political prisoners. The activists linked to the Garraf affair were all serving long prison sentences—including life sentences

¹⁷⁸ “Dos personalidades catalanistas visitan Bilbao”, *Euzkadi*, 18/3/1930, p. 1.

¹⁷⁹ “Pro-Amnistía”, *Euzkadi*, 22/3/1930, p. 1; 25/3/1930, p. 1; “Amnistía - Libertad”, *Euzkadi*, 26/3/1930, p. 1; “Mañana, 28 de marzo”, *Euzkadi*, 27/3/1930, p. 1.

¹⁸⁰ “Les targes demanant l'amnistia”, *El Dia*, 31/3/1930, p. 4; Lluís Jordà, “El movimiento pro-amnistía”, *Euzkadi*, 03/4/1930, p. 1; “El movimiento popular a favor de la amnistía”, *Euzkadi*, 04/4/1930, p. 3; Lluís Jordà, “El inesperado indulto”, *Euzkadi*, 11/4/1930, p. 1.

¹⁸¹ “La ampliación de la amnistía”, *Euzkadi*, 17/4/1930, p. 1.

for those deemed to be the leaders of the group—and had reported serious mistreatment by authorities in prisons such as el Dueso and Alcalá de Henares.¹⁸² Plácido de Etxebarria, who had been a key focus of the Basque amnesty campaign, left the Bilbao prison of Larrinaga the 27th of March, almost two weeks before the pardon was finally issued, as he had already served his sentence by then.¹⁸³ Comparatively speaking, Catalan nationalists must have probably felt a stronger urge to mobilise.

The Basque amnesty campaign, however, was not just framed in terms of Catalan solidarity. It also carried powerful Basque nationalist meaning. This can be seen in texts such as this fragment from a local call to support the amnesty campaign in the town of San Salvador del Valle:

“The insensitivity of some that call themselves indifferent (?), their lack of 'political' education, their apathy, their passiveness, cannot motivate the abandonment of our brothers, some expatriated, others imprisoned.

During the Dictatorship, prison doors frequently opened to allow inside paladins of a cause a thousand times sacred. The official isolation, the confinement to which the dictatorial power has condemned our brothers in the struggle must not be coupled by our spiritual forsakenness.

Spiritually, the Basque working class, especially if heart beats with the Sabinian ideal¹⁸⁴, must not silence the expatriation and imprisonment of fighters; our moral solidarity must surpass prison walls and enter courts of justice, where the hate of a ruthless dictatorship has secluded them; around them there must remain a trail of love, of oneness. Their struggles, their quests, their teachings, embodied in us and must have permanence; the dictatorial persecution must not motivate the breaking-up of the moral ties that bind us to them.

This spiritual identification, this moral oneness with the persecuted, must not show itself in a purely platonic manner; we must move to their aid, solidarity must be exercised in a practical way. Made into a badge for our cause, they must preside all of our events. [...]

¹⁸² Josep M. Massip, “Al senyor Director General de presons”, *La Rambla*, 17/3/1930, p. 12.

¹⁸³ “Amnistia - Libertad”, *Euzkadi*, 30/3/1930, p. 1.

¹⁸⁴ This is a reference to the ideology of Sabino Arana, founder of the Basque nationalist movement.

Petitions for a general amnesty must be put into the agenda and constitute our most burning concern.”¹⁸⁵

This text shows marked contrasts with the Catalan women's manifesto. Although the frame is still national, the communal and religious symbols used to uphold it are so strong that the nation almost becomes blurred. Nationalist prisoners are not described as “fellow countrymen” such as in the Catalan manifesto, but as “brothers”. Basque nationalism is portrayed as “a cause a thousand times sacred”. The text appeals to the “Basque working class”, but as part of a moral and spiritual community which includes those imprisoned or exiled, and calls for mobilisation based on those “moral ties”. Although the amnesty campaign is stressed as a priority, prisoners and exiles are also seen as potential assets—in the form of symbolic “badges”—for the general Basque nationalist political struggle. This text cannot be considered as fully representative of the attitudes of those leading the Basque amnesty campaign, as it was directed at a particular, local audience, much smaller than the national scale for which the Catalan women's manifesto was intended. However, it does suggest that a more inward-looking and community strengthening attitude, as opposed to an outward-looking, hegemony-building stance, was present among some Basque nationalists.

This inward-looking attitude could be a result of the actual situation within the Basque nationalist movement. After years of split into the two competing currents, PNV and CNV, achieving political unity was becoming a priority for Basque nationalists in the Spring of 1930. By April 1930, both factions had appointed unity commissions and negotiations began immediately,¹⁸⁶ which suggests that during the previous month—when the campaign for an extended amnesty was at its height—already significant energies were being diverted towards the unity issue. This could have weakened the social movement base available to organise and promote the amnesty campaign, reducing mobilisation and contributing to the mentioned asymmetry between the Basque and Catalan campaigns.

¹⁸⁵ “Por nuestros presos”, *Euzkadi*, 08/3/1930, p. 6. For the original text, see Text 2 of Annex III.

¹⁸⁶ de Pablo, Mees, & Rodríguez Ranz. *El Péndulo...*, Vol. 1, p. 197.

In the face of a changing political opportunity structure, both Catalan and Basque nationalism had shown that they could make use of the new conditions to implement new forms of contention in the form of social movement campaigns. The regime, however, was still standing, and an effective political alliance to bring it down was still not in sight in the Spring of 1930. Its final materialisation a few months later, in August, was a key turning point for this stream of contention. The following pages will analyse the San Sebastian pact as a clear example of a *coalition formation*¹⁸⁷ process at work. This new coalition became the driving motor behind further contention against the regime, its political actors leading the way towards the new Spanish republic. Building from the fact that Catalan and Basque nationalists made opposite decisions about joining the new alliance, the following pages will pay close attention to how these choices were framed within both moments.

¹⁸⁷ Coalition formation is defined as “creation of new, visible, and direct coordination of claims between two or more previously distinct actors.” See Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious politics*, p. 216.

2. 2. A new alliance and an empty chair: the San Sebastián Pact (August 1930-February 1931)

The soon to become members of the new alliance met in the Basque coastal town of Donostia—*San Sebastián* in Spanish—the 17th of August 1930. This time, the initiative to form an anti-regime front did not come from Macià, but from Spanish republican parties gathered under the platform *Alianza Republicana*.¹⁸⁸ The three main families of the Catalan nationalist left made it to the meeting: the liberal, left-of-centre *Acció Catalana*, the more leftist *Acció Republicana de Catalunya*¹⁸⁹ and the pro-independence *Estat Català*. The Basque nationalists were not invited.¹⁹⁰ The signing—in a figurative sense, as no documents were actually signed¹⁹¹—can be seen as a classic example of coalition formation as defined above. Catalan nationalists effectively accepted joining a political bloc with a Spanish agenda, although some of their key political demands were integrated as part of the Revolutionary Committee's program:

“The Catalan problem, which could have posed greater difficulties for the reaching of a unanimous agreement, was resolved in the sense that all of those gathered accepted the presentation before a Constituent Assembly of a charter freely redacted by Catalonia for the regulation of its regional life and its relations with the Spanish State.

¹⁸⁸ For a more detailed review of the different parties signing the San Sebastian pact, see Conrado García Alix, “El Grupo de ‘El Pacto de San Sebastian’ En La Transición de La Monarquía a La República”, *Revista de Historia Moderna*, 24, 1998, pp. 479–94.

¹⁸⁹ *Acció Republicana de Catalunya* (‘Republican Action of Catalonia’) was created in 1928 as a leftist split from *Acció Catalana* led by Antoni Rovira i Virgili.

¹⁹⁰ de Pablo, Mees, & Rodríguez Ranz. *El Péndulo...*, Vol. 1, p. 196.

¹⁹¹ In fact, the actual content of the pact can only be inferred from the testimony of those present—some of which is contradictory—and from a brief note sent to the press. For further detail on the different interpretations of the pact, see José Luis de la Granja Sainz, *Nacionalismo y II República En El País Vasco* (2nd ed.), Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 2008, p. 2.

This agreement was made extensive to all those other regions that may feel the need for autonomous life.”¹⁹²

Catalan left-wing nationalists joined the new alliance as a means to secure political autonomy within the new regime. Framing this decision was quite straightforward for *Acció Catalana* and *Acció Republicana de Catalunya*, as both parties came from a political tradition that had always seen home rule as the primary political objective of Catalan nationalism. A key thinker within this tradition was the above mentioned Antoni Rovira i Virgili. Since the second decade of the 20th Century, Rovira i Virgili had argued for a deep decentralisation of Spain—renamed as Iberia—that would effectively transform it into a confederacy, with Catalonia being one of its constituent—and ultimately sovereign—parts. This territorial program and scheme was then assumed by the party *Acció Catalana*, which Rovira i Virgili joined in 1922. He would later leave to form his own organisation, *Acció Republicana de Catalunya*, but his ideas remained very influential.¹⁹³ The notion of joining forces with the Spanish left to achieve Catalan self-government, even if the political limits of such an autonomy were ill defined, was therefore not too far from what many Catalan nationalists had already envisioned as a desirable horizon.

This idea, however, would be more problematic for some *Estat Català* members who were unwilling to postpone the struggle for a fully independent Catalonia. An example of such a position was Daniel Cardona, who decided to leave *Estat Català* altogether and founded his own group, *Nosaltres Sols!*¹⁹⁴ Looking back to the signing of the San Sebastian pact, he wrote:

¹⁹² “Otros pormenores”, *El Sol*, 19/8/1930, p. 5. See Text 3 of Annex III for the full original text.

¹⁹³ Xavier Ferré i Trill, ‘Antoni Rovira i Virgili: Un Referent’, *Podall: Publicació de Cultura, Patrimoni i Ciències*, 4, 2015, pp. 248–58.

¹⁹⁴ *Nosaltres Sols!* (‘We Alone!’) was a free translation from *Sinn Féin*, a testimony to the group’s admiration for Irish republicanism.

“It has never been seen, in any national movement, that the men representing such a movement would collaborate with the oppressor State and would take the national struggle away from the oppressed nation [...].”¹⁹⁵

Others however, were quick to justify the San Sebastian pact in perfectly national terms. Roc Boronat, who had taken part in the Prats de Molló insurrection attempt alongside Macià, pointed out that:

“We must be demanding of ourselves, but we cannot push our demands further away than our possibilities. [...]

Hermetic intransigence, beneficial during an ideology's infancy, becomes counterproductive in its plenitude.

The adversary's position, who cannot make us forget who he is and what he stands for, will force us to modify or maintain our own position, without losing sight for a single moment of the landmark that has brought us to the struggle.”

Boronat was implying that *Estat Català's* previous failures demanded a pragmatic turn, away from dogmatic attitudes. Such a turn should be made by strategic assessment of the political situation and only that should dictate political action, always remembering the nationalists' final “landmark”—i.e. independence. Boronat preferred to stress that the San Sebastian pact had brought together different traditions within the Catalan nationalist left, and that such unity was symptomatic of Catalan nationalism's maturity. He even went further, quoting Ernest Renan's *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* to affirm that:

“Today Catalonia's problem is able to disregard ethnopsychology's more or less real arguments and neither does it have the need to look for geographic or historical reasons.

¹⁹⁵ Original fragment: “No s'ha vist, en cap moviment nacional, que homes representatius d'aquest moviment col·laboressin amb l'Estat opressor i portessin fora de la nació sotmesa la lluita nacional [...].” See Daniel Cardona, “Catalunya, els tres partits catalans i les vinents eleccions”, *Nosaltres Sols*, 28/3/1931, p. 1.

Today we possess a collective mindset, that does not need to rest itself upon any theory. It is the will of a whole people that will see the ideals of freedom that we pursue triumph.”¹⁹⁶

This rather hyperbolic reading into what the San Sebastian pact meant for the Catalan nationalist left shows how the strategic shift of 1930 could be framed in national terms. Boronat equated the level of political unity the Catalan nationalist left had shown by signing the pact to the birth of a Catalan “collective mindset”, a qualitative leap in the process of nation-building. The syntax of hegemony can be seen at work here. “We”, at the beginning of the article, is rather ambiguous and could be understood to represent *Estat Català* or the different parties of the Catalan nationalist left. By the end of the article, however, “we” has become the nation as a whole.

Left-wing Catalan nationalists, with the exception of a small minority, had made the San Sebastian pact into their central strategic project, framing it as another step in their nation-building process. This was no tactical gesture. Following chapters will show the far-reaching consequences of the alliance and how they continued to affect Catalan nationalist politics for the rest of the republican period.

As for Basque nationalists, not only were they not invited to San Sebastian, but they did not attempt to join the anti-regime alliance afterwards either. This was quite in line with the PNV's traditional hostility towards the Spanish left in general, and its bitter rivalry with the PSOE¹⁹⁷ in particular. Indalecio Prieto, leader of the PSOE in the Basque Country and one of the San Sebastian pact's promoters, has often been described as the *bestia negra* of Basque nationalism during this period.

Strategically and ideologically, the Basque national movement was undergoing a complex cycle of political and organisational rebuilding precisely as the pact was

¹⁹⁶ Roc Boronat, “Optimisme”, *l'Opinió*, 12/9/1930, p. 7. See Text 4 of Annex III for the full original version.

¹⁹⁷ The *Partido Obrero Socialista Español* (‘Spanish Socialist Workers' Party’) was founded in 1879 in Madrid as the first Spanish marxist-inspired party. While its presence in Catalonia was weak, it counted the Basque Country as one of its strongest support bases together with Madrid and Asturias. Its strength lay in the more industrialised areas of Biscay and Gipuzkoa. For a general overview of the PSOE's early history, see Francisco De Luis Martín, “La cultura socialista en España de los orígenes a la Guerra Civil”, *Ayer*, 54, 2004, pp. 199–247. For a detailed study of the party in the Basque Country during the Second Spanish Republic, see Ricardo Miralles Palencia, *El Socialismo Vasco Durante La II República. Organización, Ideología, Política y Elecciones, 1931-1936*, Bilbao: Servicio Editorial, Universidad del País Vasco = Argitarapen Zerbitzua, Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea, 1988.

being signed. During the Summer and Autumn of 1930, the priorities of Basque nationalism had to do with its redefinition as a political actor: this involved 1) the issue of unity—i.e. putting an end to the division between the PNV and CNV factions; and 2) a profound debate around some of the core tenets of Basque nationalist ideology. Both elements saw the workings of a key mechanism: *boundary (de)activation*.¹⁹⁸

Unification was achieved after months of debate and negotiation that began in May 1930 and resulted in the 16th of November Bergara assembly, under which both previous factions were fused into a new *Partido Nacionalista Vasco*, or *Euzko-Alderdi Jeltzalia*, in Basque.¹⁹⁹ This is a good example of boundary deactivation taking place. Members of both the pre-unification PNV and CNV actively downplayed previous differences and moved on after years of division. This also implied a parallel process—which will be discussed later—of boundary activation, as those left outside the new consensus were isolated as dissidents. Ceferino de Jemein, which had been a leading member of the PNV faction, proclaimed:

“[...] this hour of fraternity—in which, after silencing any past doctrinaire discrepancy and rejecting even the memory of the smallest personal bitterness, the unity in thought and cordial fusion of all patriots will be sealed—must in itself hold enough virtue to satisfy all those who, during the times of disunity, saw moral suffering, bitter disappointments and painful ingratitude [...].”²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Boundary activation/deactivation is defined as an “increase ([or] decrease) in the salience of the us-them distinction separating two political actors”, see Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious politics*, p. 215.

¹⁹⁹ *Euzko-Alderdi Jeltzalia* is not the Basque equivalent for ‘Basque Nationalist Party’. It translates as ‘Basque JEL Party’, where ‘JEL’ is short for *Jaungoikua eta Lagi-zarra* (‘God and the Ancient Law’). This motto combined two of the main aspects of Sabino Arana's ideology: Catholic integrism, represented by God, and a particular interpretation of historical Basque sovereignty, represented by the ‘ancient law’ concept. See José Luis de la Granja Sainz, “Lema Jel”, in *Diccionario Ilustrado de Símbolos Del Nacionalismo Vasco*, Madrid: Tecnos, 2012, pp. 593–608.

²⁰⁰ Original fragment: “[...] esta hora de fraternidad—en la que, silenciándose toda pasada discrepancia doctrinaria y rechazando hasta el recuerdo del más pequeño encono personal, va a quedar sellada la unión de pensamiento y la fusión cordial de todos los patriotas—debe tener por si misma virtud suficiente para dar satisfacción cumplida a todos aquellos sobre quienes hubieran recaído, durante las horas de desunión, los sufrimientos morales, amargas decepciones y y dolorosas ingratitude [...].” See Ceferino de Jemein, “A la Asamblea de la unión nacionalista”, *Euzkadi*, 18/11/1930, p. 1.

However, in the months that preceded the Bergara assembly, new debates were brewing within Basque nationalism, debates that stemmed from the notion that the movement was living in deep crisis. Months before the San Sebastian pact, some Basque nationalists were already sensing that whilst Catalan nationalist demands were making their way into the Spanish political agenda, they were falling behind. This was seen as a frustrating paradox:

“The Catalan problem is on its feet, and from Madrid newspapers to popular politicians all recognise its existence and agree that its solution is a pressing affair. [...] There is no other ethnic group problem, there is no Peninsular peoples problem other than the Catalan problem.

[...]

Meanwhile we, more distinctly outlined as a people, as a race—that meaning no offence to our Catalan brothers—, will continue as usual, without achieving nothing, if anything, but minimal concessions that may arrive as a result to those granted to Catalonia.

Let us not blame anyone for this, if not ourselves. Catalonia has managed to deserve it and has struggled gallantly to achieve it. Beginning from below us it has arrived at such height that today causes us envy [...]. If we, with a much more solid foundation, have not been able to rise a building comparable to the Catalan one, who but ourselves should we blame? [...]²⁰¹

If Basque nationalism had a *more solid foundation* compared to Catalan nationalism, which had began from *below*, *less distinctly outlined as a people, as a race*, then why was it failing to produce a more robust political movement? Indeed, the very terms in which the question was formulated were indicative on how some Basque reformist nationalists viewed Catalan claims of nationhood, as well as on their own assumptions about how national mobilisation worked. The former is a testimony to the persistence of some Aranist ideas about the Catalan people, even within these more reformist Basque nationalist discourses. The latter shows an ethnic determinist drive—consisting in the belief that ‘strong’ ethnic cultures result in powerful national mobilisations—in how Basque nationalists understood

²⁰¹ H. de E., “El problema catalán y el problema vasco”, *Euzkadi*, 21/5/1930, p. 1. See Text 1 of Annex I for the full original version.

national movements.²⁰² The puzzling success of Catalan nationalists was forcing some of their Basque counterparts to ask new questions.

José Luis de la Granja has identified two main groups of Basque nationalists that were struggling to produce new answers to such questions: one within the CNV, led by Jose Ignacio de Arana and Luis Urrengoechea, and another, with links to the pre unification PNV and self-styled *Comité pro-Resurgimiento Vasco* ('Basque Revival Committee'), led by Telesforo Uribe-Echevarría, Tomas Echabe and Luis Areitioaurtena. Together, both groups had in common a revisionist perspective on Basque nationalist ideology—including discarding Sabino Arana's traditionalist and integrist legacy—and a gradualist perspective on Basque nationalist strategy—ready to work with Spanish republicans and leftists to achieve home rule.²⁰³

José Ignacio Arana, the director of *Euzkadi's* governing board, was strongly influenced by the ideas of Antoni Rovira i Virgili.²⁰⁴ By the Spring of 1930, he had adopted the Catalan nationalist thinker's idea that a Spanish federal republic could be an effective way to grant home rule to Catalans and Basques. After writing about his new federalist stance in *Euzkadi*, Arana was quick to assert: "My attachment, every day growing in intensity, to the Basque nationality, has driven me to expose these particular appreciations, truly believing that in doing so I serve its cause. This shall shelter me from any suspicion." Arana knew that his ideological turn was effectively a departure from the *Aranista* orthodoxy, so he made sure it was framed in unequivocal Basque nationalist rhetoric.²⁰⁵

The San Sebastian pact came at a moment when those Basque nationalists who could be more interested in it were busy in an ideological struggle within their national movement. The Basque Revival Committee published its manifesto the same month. J. I. Arana's group spent the whole Summer using its influence in *Euzkadi* to stir up a debate around the fundamental principles of Basque

²⁰² José Ignacio de Arana, mentioned below, would continue to develop this idea and its applications to Basque national mobilisation in his articles on federalism. He stressed the importance of Basque cultural development as a prerequisite to make political demands beyond home rule.

²⁰³ de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 11–15, 22–35.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁰⁵ José Ignacio de Arana, "Nacionalismo y federalismo", *Euzkadi*, 17/04/1930, p. 1.

nationalism.²⁰⁶ The newspaper's own account of the pact specifically mentioned the Basque Country and federalism:

“The unanimous criterion kept by all of those gathered was that Catalonia would freely draft the Catalan Autonomy Charter, which would in time be voted by a Constituent Assembly. And with this federalist spirit of the assembly it was said that the same criterion would have to be followed in respect to the Basque Country, Galicia, etc., in recognition of their defined personalities.”²⁰⁷

Although this could be a reflection of *Euzkadi's* editors' keenness to explore the possibility of a Basque nationalist contribution to the new alliance, this did not materialise. During the summer and autumn months of 1930 the reformists would be increasingly displaced as the PNV and CNV factions became unified. Boundary activation was at work. The future *Lehendakari* (Basque President) José Antonio Aguirre, who had recently joined the CNV, challenged the reformist attempt to abandon Aranaist ideological guidelines.²⁰⁸ Within the PNV faction, prevailing attitudes were openly hostile to such reforms. A good example is the explicitly titled article *Ortodoxia, Si* (Orthodoxy, Yes), where the PNV member Manuel Egileor attacked another leading reformist, Luis de Urrengoetxea. After dismissing any liberal influences as a watering down of Basque nationalism, Egileor concluded:

“Euzkadi, the Basque People, received its Nationalism, its saviour idea, from Arana-Goiri'tar Sabin. In that mind it rose, it became real; from those heartbeats it came to life. [...]

In this manner it was accepted too by those that now advocate for another new nationalism.

²⁰⁶ For a detailed account of this debate, see de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 22–26.

²⁰⁷ Original fragment: “Unánimemente se mantuvo entre los reunidos el criterio de que Cataluña redacte libremente el Estatuto catalán, sometiéndolo en su día al refrendo de las Cortes constituyentes. Y en ese espíritu federalista de la asamblea se dijo que que el mismo criterio habría de seguirse por lo que respecta al País Vasco, Galicia, etc., reconociéndose su definida personalidad.” See “Una importante reunión de los elementos republicanos”, *Euzkadi*, 19/8/1930, p. 1.

²⁰⁸ de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 30–31.

But they proceed wrongly if, being once sincere in accepting it, they don't, now that they have changed their opinion, the gallantry and loyalty that should move them to simply abandon the nationalist ranks; and, once having abandoned them, freely and fully rise any new flag that they wish."²⁰⁹

After praising—and using particularly religious imagery in doing so— the role of Sabino Arana in the development of Basque nationalism, Egileor was inviting the reformists to leave and form their own movement. He was clearly monopolising “nationalism” as synonymous with the Basque Nationalist Party—then in the last stage of its process towards unification. The mechanism of boundary activation was being applied to reinforce the new PNV as a political actor. The boundary that separated the reformists from the more orthodox nationalists was being strengthened to effectively become a new ‘us’ and ‘them’.

The unified PNV was ideologically built around the motto *Jaungoikua eta Lagizarra* (God and Ancient Law, shortened to JEL), although the CNV faction was able to negotiate some margin for flexibility in terms of party policy. The reformists, defeated, would soon form their own political party, *Acción Nacionalista Vasca* (‘Basque Nationalist Action’), the 30th of November.²¹⁰ In José Luis de la Granja's—backed by contemporary sources—judgement, had ANV existed the Summer of 1930, it would have undoubtedly attended the San Sebastian meeting.²¹¹

Another type of boundary activation is also relevant, perhaps even more so, to explain the Basque nationalists' absence from the San Sebastian pact: the Catholic/secular cleavage. Indeed, the political actors that had joined forces against the regime all came from a secular political tradition, some even in a militant,

²⁰⁹ Original fragment: “Euzkadi, el Pueblo Vasco, recibió su Nacionalismo, su Idea salvadora, de Arana-Goiri'tar Sabin. En aquella mente surgió, allí se hizo ente real; por los latidos de aquel corazón fué vivificada. [...] Así lo aceptaron también los que ahora propugnan por otro nuevo nacionalismo. Pero éstos obran mal si, habiendo sido antes sinceros al aceptarlo, no muestran, al haber ahora cambiado de opinión, la nobleza y la lealtad que deberían llevarles simplemente a abandonar las filas nacionanlistas; y, una vez abandonadas, podían libremente levantar a toda luz cualquier nueva bandera que quisieran.” See Manuel Egileor, “Ortodoxia, Sí”, *Bizkatarra*, 25/10/1930, pp. 10–11. These displays of proud orthodoxy however, ignored the fact that the reformists were actually imitating Catalan nationalists, and these were still not the object of criticism. In another article, a similar reassertion of Basque nationalist principles was followed by a definition of bravery as “something like a conscious will at the service of a noble cause, that chooses death before retreat. Catalonia is a good mirror.” See Jimeno de Belate y Urtubi, “Nuestro deber y las ajenas ideas”, *Bizkatarra*, 08/11/1930, p. 11.

²¹⁰ de Pablo, Mees, & Rodríguez Ranz. *El Péndulo...*, Vol. 1, pp. 196, 200.

²¹¹ de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 7.

anticlerical capacity. This was very problematic in terms of political cooperation with Basque nationalists, who often saw more of a connection with other Catholic political cultures, such as Carlism.²¹² José Luis de la Granja points out to how the Basque nationalist leader Manuel de Irujo remembered how Basque nationalists perceived the pact as having a “sectarian spirit”.²¹³ Catholicism and opposition to state secularism were yet to remain a powerful element of Basque nationalist politics. This would have further consequences, which will be examined in following chapters.

The Basque nationalist chair of the San Sebastian pact was not just empty, but rather altogether absent. Catalan nationalists' commitment to the alliance, on the contrary, took them to assume an important role in the episodes of contention that followed. In a sense, the Revolutionary Committee's strategy was not very different to Macià's previous efforts: an insurrection led by republican elements within the armed forces was to be combined with a general strike by the workers—something which was made feasible by the *Unión General de Trabajadores'* commitment to the alliance. The plan was staged for the 15th of December 1930, but it played out rather clumsily. Two captains of the Jaca military garrison, Fermín Galán and Ángel García Hernández prematurely led an uprising against the regime the 12th of December, which failed and resulted in both being shot. The general strike went forward regardless three days later, and failed to produce a revolutionary outcome. The PNV distanced itself from the conflict, arguing that a Republican regime was no guarantee for its demands.²¹⁴ Berenguer's popularity, however, had been damaged beyond repair. In February 1931, Alfonso XIII appointed Admiral Juan Bautista Aznar as the new President, who would dramatically alter the political opportunity structure for Basque and Catalan nationalists—and indeed, for all opposition groups—by calling a local election for the 12th of April 1931.

²¹² “La unión de los católicos”, *Euzkadi*, 05/6/1930, p. 1.

²¹³ de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 6.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

Chapter 3.

The shadow of the tricolour.

**Basque and Catalan nationalists in
the proclamation of the Second
Spanish Republic**

The final collapse of the Spanish monarchy was the product of a last, lethal crisis that was too much for it to digest. A local election turned plebiscite put the regime in an impossible position, which the republican opposition used to carry out its long awaited takeover. This chapter covers what has been identified above as the second phase of the Spanish republican 'revolution'. It begins with Admiral Aznar's appointment as Alfonso XIII's last President in February 1931 and stops after the pact between the Spanish and Catalan Provisional Republican Governments, the 17th of April of the same year. This short period shaped many key features of the following months and even years, proving decisive for the development of the Catalan and Basque nationalist movements.

The collapse of old regimes and the subsequent birth of new ones tends to involve complex political settings. This chapter represents a moment of transition, traversed by three very relevant streams of contention: the Spanish republican 'revolution' and Catalan and Basque nationalist campaigns for home rule. The first had already begun in the previous cycle, and so some of its aspects have already been analysed in the previous chapter up to the fall of General Berenguer's *dictablanda*. Now, this stream of contention saw a complete regime shift and the transfer of political power to the political actors that had formed the republican revolutionary coalition. It produced a *revolutionary outcome*, as defined by Tilly & Tarrow and referenced above. This was characterised by "defections of regime members, acquisition of armed force by revolutionary coalitions, neutralization or defection of the regime's armed force, [and] control of the state apparatus by members of [the] revolutionary coalition." The Basque and Catalan campaigns for home rule—two parallel but self-contained streams of contention—also began during this cycle but stretch further on and will continue to appear in following chapters.

For the purpose of effective analysis, this complex reality of overlapping streams of contention will be broken down into three episodes, each of which forms the basis for a different section of this chapter. The first is the campaign for the local election of the 12th of April 1931, a new battleground for Basque and Catalan nationalists, who were forced to quickly adapt and update their strategies and discourses to the new political opportunity structure. The second is the actual political rupture caused by the election results, materialised two days later by the

republican proclamations, the formation of the Provisional Government and King Alfonso XIII's exile. The remaining episode is the parallel proclamation of Basque and Catalan republics in an attempt by Basque and Catalan nationalists to secure a decentralised political framework for the new Spanish republic.

All three episodes will be closely analysed to see what mechanisms and processes—framing in particular—were activated at each stage and how these contributed to build the new political scenario that was opening with the new republican regime.

3. 1. Back to the ballot: Basque and Catalan nationalists and the local election campaign (February-April 1931)

The new Spanish government under Admiral Aznar—who was seen by many as a purely nominal President with very little political weight—had called for a local election as part of a more elaborate plan. The idea was to begin a constituent process with additional elections at different administrative levels that would redraw the Spanish political landscape without questioning the Monarchy. The reality, however, was that the Crown was becoming unsustainably unpopular and the political balance of the Dictatorship had not been yet tested. The election was effectively seen as a plebiscite on the continuity of the regime.²¹⁵

Catalan and Basque nationalists had an opportunity to openly make their political cases in a free election. The previous chapter has shown how both movements were adopting essentially different attitudes in terms of positioning themselves with respect to the Spanish political context. Catalan nationalists were already working closely together with Spanish republicans, hoping that a new Spanish republic would take a more decentralised form, guaranteeing home rule. Basque nationalists, on the contrary, were for the most part sceptical of what such a regime would bring. This section will focus on how the mainstream Basque nationalist party, the PNV, and the new Catalan nationalist and republican party, *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*, campaigned for the 12th of April 1931 local election. Looking into both campaigns and the mechanisms at work within their development shows that two fundamental processes were taking place: coalition formation and mobilisation.

Coalition formation played a crucial role in the case of ERC—the party itself was hastily founded less than a month before the election, during the *Conferència*

²¹⁵ Eduardo González Calleja et al, *La Segunda República Española*, Barcelona: Pasado y Presente, 2015, pp. 54–56.

d'Esquerres Catalanes ('Conference of the Catalan Left'), held between the 17th and the 19th of March in Barcelona. The operation can be considered the product of the mechanisms of brokerage, *attribution of similarity*²¹⁶ and boundary formation.

The conference was, in fact, the last of several attempts to bring some unity to the fragmented reality of left-wing Catalan nationalism. Antoni Rovira i Virgili had promoted the platform *Esquerra Republicana* in the first months of 1930, although he soon prioritised the consolidation of his own political party, *Acció Republicana*. The initiative was then seized by a young clique of social democratic intellectuals formed around the weekly newspaper *l'Opinió*. Joan Lluhí i Vallescà was the paper's director and effectively the leader of the group. They were to become the real power broker behind the creation of ERC. For some time, they had been arguing for a unified front that would have federalist republicanism as a common denominator. Back in May 1930, they had published a *Manifest de la Intel·ligència Republicana* ('Manifesto of the Republican Intelligentsia') signed by dozens of intellectuals from different political backgrounds. The manifesto failed to have any practical political consequences because of fundamental disagreements between its signers, which included a wide section of the political spectrum, from the progressive liberal *Acció Catalana* to the anarcho-sindicalist *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (CNT).²¹⁷

L'Opinió soon began to appeal to several political groups, openly calling for the creation of a new party. These groups came from different political traditions, so a fair amount of brokerage was needed to get them working together in such a project. On one hand, there was *Estat Català*, a pro-independence group with a particular ideological combination combining nationalism and workerism, as well as Irish republican and Garibaldian influences. Its leader, Francesc Macià, had only been able to return permanently from exile after the formation of the Aznar cabinet.²¹⁸ On the other hand, the republican federalist tradition was represented by the *Partit Republicà Català* ('Catalan Republican Party'), led by Marcel·lí

²¹⁶ 'Attribution of similarity' can be defined as the "identification of another political actor as falling within the same category of your own." Boundary formation can be defined as the "creation of an us-them distinction between two political actors." Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, (1st. ed.), p. 215.

²¹⁷ Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, pp. 30–33.

²¹⁸ Enric Ucelay Da Cal, "The Shadow of a Doubt: Fascist and Communist Alternatives in Catalan Separatism: 1919-1939", *Working Papers*, Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials, 198, 2002, pp. 12, 15.

Domingo and Lluís Companys. *L'Opinió* had less interest in Rovira i Virgili's *Acció Republicana* or in the other left-of-centre Catalan nationalist party *Acció Catalana*. They were seen as too *bourgeois* and to the right of Lluhí and his colleagues' vision for the new party, which included a “socialist” component that would integrate the working classes.²¹⁹

The conference that was to give birth to the new party was named *Conferència d'Esquerres*. By December 1930 *l'Opinió* had already secured the participation of the *Partit Republicà Català*, the *Unió Socialista de Catalunya*—as an observer—and several local-based groups. It then began to appeal to *Estat Català* and Rovira i Virgili's *Acció Republicana*.²²⁰ The former, however, was already leading his own alternative attempt to form a Catalan nationalist and republican party.²²¹ Macià's group had initially declined the invitation to the conference, but this was reversed after the leader's return and a general assembly held the 14th and 15th of March.²²² The great challenge was to get people and organisations from different—although undoubtedly interconnected—political traditions working together in a new, common project. This was made possible by mechanisms of attribution of similarity and boundary formation. The more federalist Catalan republicans were at the limits of what could be considered Catalan nationalism. Their recognition of Catalonia's nationhood was secondary to what they understood as republican policies and values, which they often imagined within a Spanish frame of thought.²²³ *Estat Català*, however, had a more ‘classic’ nationalist position and saw “Catalonia's freedom” as the most “imperious and urgent” issue.²²⁴

An analysis of the content of *l'Opinió* in the month before the *Conferència d'Esquerres* shows how these two different *leitmotifs* were fused into what could be termed as ‘national republicanism’. The objectives of the conference were

²¹⁹ Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, pp. 27–28.

²²⁰ “Republicans Unim-nos!” *l'Opinió*, 5/12/1930, p. 1.

²²¹ This would eventually result in the fusion of *Acció Catalana* and *Acció Republicana* to form the *Partit Catalanista Republicà* (‘Catalan Nationalist Republican Party’). For a more detailed account see Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, pp. 54–58.

²²² *Ibid.*, pp. 61–63.

²²³ Catalan nationalist rhetoric was absent from the *Manifest de la Intel·ligència Republicana*, which called for a Federal Republic, without any explicit references to the Catalan nation and including phrases such as “Catalonia and Spain as a whole”. See “Intel·ligència Republicana,” *l'Opinió*, 2/5/1930, p. 2.

²²⁴ Francesc Macià, “El Manifest d'Estat Català”, *l'Opinió*, 13/3/1931, pp. 4–5.

described as producing “a programme of a purely leftist and Catalan tendency.”²²⁵ This wording avoided the term ‘Catalan nationalist’, which could be seen as too associated with *Estat Català*, replacing it with just ‘Catalan’, which is in effect a form of syntax of hegemony. It was fundamentally an attribution of similarity, as the pro-independence and the republican activists could be both described in the same ideological terms. This laid down the foundations for the formation of new boundaries. If the republican *versus* monarchist divide was the main political cleavage in the Spanish context, *L'Opinió* gave it a particular Catalan expression:

“In all towns and cities where triumph requires an anti-dynastic front [...], such a unified front must be formed obeying the present time's imperatives only, before any party or personal interests. [...] The ideal solution in Barcelona, [...] would be to constitute two large blocs. One conformed by all Catalan and republican political parties from *Acció Catalana* to the *Unió Socialista de Catalunya*. The other formed by all of those republican parties that have a Spanish background, from the *Derecha Liberal Republicana* to the Socialist Spanish Party.”²²⁶

By excluding—wherever possible—the Spanish republicans, a ‘Catalan and republican’ bloc could be formed as a new coalition: the republican/monarchist boundary was being combined with a Spanish/Catalan boundary. This also involved excluding the conservative Catalan nationalists of the *Lliga Regionalista*, which were perceived as being too close to the Monarchy.²²⁷ This whole coalition formation process was framed accordingly to this new drawing of political boundaries. Two texts, the first from before the conference and the second immediately following its closure, show this framing in action:

²²⁵ Pujol i Font, “La conferència d'esquerres”, *l'Opinió*, 06/3/1931, p. 11.

²²⁶ Original fragment: “En tots els pobles i ciutats on sigui necessari un front únic antidinàstic [...], aquest front únic s'ha de fer obeint als imperatius de l'hora present superiors a les conveniències de partit i de personalismes. [...] La solució ideal a Barcelona, [...] seria constituir dos grans blocs. Un constituït per tots els partits polítics catalans i republicans des d'Acció Catalana fins a la Unió Socialista de Catalunya. L'altre format per tots els partits republicans que obeeixen a una disciplina espanyola, des de la Derecha Liberal Republicana fins el Partit Socialista espanyol.” See “Editorial”, *l'Opinió*, 13/3/1931, p. 1.

²²⁷ J. V., “Unió Sagrada”, *l'Opinió*, 20/3/1931, p. 12.

“The initial success [of the conference] shows the need Catalonia was feeling to gather its efforts [...]. It is a rising of Catalonia, in the solemn hour of great renovations. The political values that have best penetrated the soul of our people make their assistance. The organism [i.e. the party that will result from the conference] that is now being born has before itself a glorious task in the political future of our land. [...] Catalonia's flag, purely republican in nature, has strong hands that hold it.”²²⁸

Even before the actual conference had taken place, this text shows how already it was being framed with a powerful syntax and rhetoric of hegemony. The conference is portrayed as “a rising of Catalonia”—i.e. not just the ‘rising’ of a particular group of nationalist and republican parties, but of the whole nation. The motives behind the conference are again, attributed to the nation as a whole, which becomes anthropomorphised: it was “the need Catalonia was feeling.” Republican political values are framed as national, “our people's”—which is also an expression of *deixis*, just like “our land”— values. The nation is in turn framed in republican terms, the flag being described as “purely republican in nature.” The ‘national republican’ frame can be clearly seen at work here. The issue remained, however, of the coherence between this Catalan nationalist perspective, and the fact that the republican/monarchist contention was being played out for the whole of the Spanish state. A second text shows how this contradiction was framed:

“The first duty of those peoples capable of grasping their own responsibility before history, is to place themselves in the forefront of the conquest of noble human and national ideals. [...] Barcelona alone is enough, if it devotes all of its enthusiasm, to uphold the Republic in Catalonia and in the whole of Spain, even with just a little help from the rest of the country. [...] From the *Conferència d'Esquerres* a struggling party must be born,

²²⁸ Original fragment: “L'èxit inicial palesa la necessitat que Catalunya sentia d'agrupar llurs esforços [...]. És un aixecament de Catalunya, en l'hora solemne de les grans renovacions. Els valors polítics que millor s'han endinsat en l'ànima del nostre poble hi presten el seu concurs. L'organisme que ara neix té reservada una tasca gloriosa en l'esdevenidor polític de la nostra terra. [...] La bandera de Catalunya, netament republicana, té mans poderoses que l'aguanten.” See “El gran èxit de la Conferència d'esquerres”, *l'Opinió*, 13/3/1931, p. 3.

one that is able to make Catalonia, rekindled with itself by the purifying fire of enthusiasm, take the first place in the following struggles for the uplifting of all Hispanic peoples.”²²⁹

Again, the conference is framed in hegemonic and national terms, as it is placed within an idea of Catalonia's “responsibility before history.” The conference is portrayed as the right thing to do not only for Catalan nationalists and republicans, but for the whole nation: it is “the duty of Catalonia.” The text, however, also speaks in terms of “the Republic *in* Catalonia and in the *whole* of Spain”, which implies that the future Republic will be Spanish, not Catalan, and in that context the meaning of “the rest of the country” is ambiguous. The final sentence frames the Catalan ‘struggle’, as part of “the uplifting of all Hispanic peoples.” The use of the term ‘Hispanic’ both acknowledges and qualifies the Spanish dimension of the struggle: it places the Catalans as a people—albeit one “capable of grasping” its own historical purpose—among other peoples within Spain. These peoples, however, are collectively named ‘Hispanic’, not ‘Spanish’, therefore avoiding the Spanish nationalist frame of the latter term. The text shows a very careful choice of words in order to produce an ‘acceptable’ national frame, balanced enough to cope with the political contradictions faced by the different Catalan nationalist traditions. This included not antagonising *Estat Català*, which a few days earlier had announced it would join the new party resulting from the *Conferència d'Esquerres* only if it drew “from a declaration of principles of true Catalanness.” It had also readjusted its demands to “a wide, free and voluntary confederation of Iberian peoples.”²³⁰ ‘Iberian’ being in this context similar to ‘Hispanic’, although it moves further away from ‘Spanish’, as it includes Portugal. In any case, *Estat Català*'s positions remained quite ‘interventionist’ with respects to the general Spanish political context. This stood in contrast with the attitude of the PNV—and that of its more pro-independence activists—as described below.

²²⁹ “El Deure de Catalunya”, *l'Opinió*, 20/3/1931, p. 1. See Text 5 of Annex III for the full original version.

²³⁰ Francesc Macià, “El Manifest d'Estat Català”, *l'Opinió*, 13/3/1931, pp. 4–5.

The conference marked the birth of a new political party: *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*.²³¹ Lluís Companys, who was unable to physically attend the conference, as he was wanted by the police, later remarked:

“The Dictatorship had produced two necessary outcomes. First, those traditionally strictly republican elements felt closer to Catalan nationalism. Second, Catalan nationalist elements reinforced their republican and revolutionary sense. That enabled the *Conferència d'Esquerres* to produce a common political programme.”²³²

Although its constituent parts remained as political players, with their particular traditions and agendas, ERC's quick—and surprising—electoral success would soon provide it enormous political weight. Its ascent also marked the decline of what had been the dominant Catalan nationalist political force for decades, the *Lliga Regionalista*. This fact, combined with its protracted historical continuity as a party, may be better captured by describing its birth as beginning as a process of coalition formation, but quickly evolving into *actor constitution*.²³³ This idea will be revisited in following sections and chapters.

Coalition formation or actor constitution were not as important in the Basque nationalists' run-up towards the local election of April 1931. The Basque Nationalist Party had already—as it has been shown in the previous chapter—configured itself as the main political actor within Basque nationalism. It stood for the election alone, refusing to join both the republican and monarchist coalitions, although some of its members in Gipuzkoa were more inclined towards the latter. ANV, on the other hand, did incorporate fully into the republican bloc.²³⁴

²³¹ For a more detailed account of the conference, covering its organisation, daily progress and main speakers and debates, see Maria Dolors Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (1931-1936)*, Vol. 1, Publicacions Abadia de Montserrat, 1988, pp. 35–73. For a detailed overview of the political programme approved by the conference, see Maria Dolors Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (1931-1936)*, Vol. 2, Publicacions Abadia de Montserrat, 1988, pp. 381–385, 393–400, 410, 421–422, 424–425, 433–437, 449–450, 454–457.

²³² Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, p. 69.

²³³ Actor constitution can be defined as the “emergence of a new or transformed political actor—a recognizable set of people who carry on collective action, making and/or receiving contentious claims.” Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, (1st. ed.), p. 216.

²³⁴ José Luis de la Granja has studied the Basque nationalists' campaigns for the 12th of April 1931 local election in detail. See de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 94–99.

The PNV engaged heavily in the mechanism of boundary formation. As a primary objective, it was eager to emphasise its central position, distancing itself from both the political left and right. It did so in both ideological and strategic terms: an article from *Euzkadi*'s front cover, questioned if one could call “oneself simply a leftist or rightist in the 20th Century”, claiming the PNV's political programme carried both left and right political issues. It described the Spanish monarchist right as “our greatest and most vicious enemy”, but it also refused “going hand in hand with the left, no less Spanish.”²³⁵ Not only did the PNV devote the production of discourse to draw lines between itself and the other main political actors, but it also worked to discredit the other Basque nationalist party: ANV. In fact, the liberal alternative to the PNV had come under attack almost since its creation.²³⁶ José Luis de la Granja has documented how, particularly in the first months of 1931, ANV was repeatedly accused of “atheism” and “godlessness” by PNV commentators. The objective behind these attacks to distance ANV from its potential social base, which was mainly Catholic²³⁷, in a mechanism of disruption which can be seen as the complete opposite to brokerage. The PNV continued to dispute ANV's use of the term ‘nationalist’ as a self-defining tag, emphasising the liberals' departure from the nationalist party and labelling them as “dissidents.” Their alliance with the PSOE was also used to portray the liberal party as under the tutelage of Spanish nationalism, and references were made to Basque nationalists killed in clashes with the socialists in prior decades.²³⁸

The above mentioned Gipuzkoa-based faction of the PNV attempted to approach the monarchist right by employing the mechanism of attribution of similarity. This was built around religion as the key shared feature between the different political traditions. These Basque nationalists stressed the common Catholic identity, “[...] that is, the Church's interests and religious principles, logically superior to earthly institutions and interests for those who belong to it.” Basque nationalism as such was toned down from the discourse, speaking in terms of “a *foral* and believer

²³⁵ “El Partido Nacionalista Vasco y las elecciones municipales,” *Euzkadi*, 22/3/1931, p. 1.

²³⁶ For a detailed account of the initial PNV-ANV relations, see de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 62–91.

²³⁷ de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 67–68.

²³⁸ “Alerta, nacionalistas”, *Euzkadi*, 29/3/1931, p. 1.

Guipúzcoa.”²³⁹ The reference to the *fueros*, was not casual. The ancient laws of the Basque provinces were an important symbolic element shared by the Basque nationalists with the political actors it was trying to attract: carlist and alphonine monarchists. The alliance was also proposed as a response to the common threat posed by the anticlerical left, framed as both “anticatholic” and “antibasque”.²⁴⁰

The official party position of standing alone for the election prevailed, with the exception of Pamplona, the capital of Navarre, where the PNV was able to form a coalition with Catholic independents and Carlist dissidents. Despite the limited impact of this alliance policy, a precedent was in place for future alignments between Basque nationalists and political actors on the right.

One of the key moments of the campaign came with the rally held by the PNV in Bilbao, the 5th of April 1931.²⁴¹ Several of the party's leaders gave speeches whose content provides a good source from which to analyse how the PNV's electoral stance was being framed at the time. Manuel de Egileor, the first to speak,

“manifested that the event that was being held was to be more about national affirmation than electoral propaganda, because [Basque] Nationalism was much more interested in conquering the Fatherland than council seats. We prefer—he asserted—conquering a young heart rather than dominating, without a firm base, all of Euzkadi's councils.

This [the rally] is an event in which we bear witness to the insuperable vitality and potential of the ideal that some wanted to expel from the Basque land, a task which saw the combined effort of the Dictatorship and Euzkadi's “*moros leales*”. They wanted to bury our ideal and they certainly did, [...] but even if our ideal was buried at the greatest depth it would be sure to blossom, as our land is amassed from the bones of our ancestors dead at Mungia and Gordexola.

This is an act of affirmation because the Basque Nationalist Party comes to bear witness that it runs alone, in perfect isolation, for the first election to be held eight years after this Party was dissolved by decree.

²³⁹ “Ante las elecciones”, *El Dia*, 11/3/1931, p. 1.

²⁴⁰ “Un bloque a otro bloque”, *El Dia*, 26/3/1931, p. 1.

²⁴¹ “El grandioso mitin del Euskalduna”, *Euzkadi*, 7/4/1931, pp. 1–2. See Text 6 of Annex III for the original full version of Manuel de Egileor's speech.

See, now, how those that seemed complacent to extend death certificates to others, in fact only managed to dig their own graves.”

Egileor's speech is a true effort to move away from how the election was being framed by most political actors. Rather than as a conflict between Republic and Monarchy—with the Spanish nation being the rhetorical *topos*—Egileor is framing the election in terms of national conflict: the Basque nation *versus* the Spanish dictatorship. He gives this conflict a colonial connotation, by using the term *moros leales* ('loyal moors') to describe those Basques who had supported the dictatorship. This is a reference to the locally recruited units used by the Spanish army in its colonial wars in Morocco. Egileor also gives the conflict other historical connotations, drawing a link to the medieval battles of Mungia and Gordexola, interpreted by Sabino Arana as manifestations of Basque patriotic resistance.

All in all, comparing Basque and Catalan nationalists' framing of the 12th of April election seems to point towards a fundamental difference. In a general sense, both consider the election as a 'national event', with a particular national relevance. The Basques, however, frame their participation as a form of national affirmation, distancing themselves from the Spanish political debate—which they perceive as revolving between two different forms of Spanish nationalism. On the contrary, Catalan nationalists seem to present their alliance with Spanish republicans as about embracing the Spanish political debate to their advantage. Such a schema would be an oversimplification.

ERC's internal factions must be taken into account. Looking closer at *Estat Català's* political discourse in particular shows that they were reluctant to fully accept the Spanish frame—Francesc Macià's reference to "Iberia" has already been discussed. Another way of blurring the Spanish frame was to emphasise the European context instead. Francesc Macià, when speaking about what his party stood for besides strict Catalan nationalism, mentioned "full democracy, freedom of press, of worship and conscience, the separation of Church and State, free and compulsory education," not as ideas shared with Spanish republicans, but rather

with “the advanced peoples of Europe and America.”²⁴² Another *Estat Català* leader, Jaume Aiguader i Miró, even pitted these ideas about ‘modern’ Europe against Spain, saying that: “we must prepare to govern in a modern sense, not as a continuation of the Spanish state's rules. [...] We must be the civilised world that enters Catalonia to struggle for Catalonia.”²⁴³

As for the Basques, their deliberate isolationist attitude towards both Spanish left and right political actors cannot be separated from the issue of the latter's attitude towards religion. The Spanish republicans' secular tradition—when not militant anticlericalism—was rejected by the PNV not only on ideological terms²⁴⁴, but as a direct attack on Basque ethnicity. Running for Mayor of Getxo, a rising star in Basque nationalism, José Antonio Aguirre, made this very clear during the above mentioned 5th of April rally:

“We do not stand [for the election] alone; we stand with JEL [*Jaungoikua eta Lagizarra*], which represents the purest essence of our race. The Cross that can be found at the summit of our mountains and at our *caseríos* (Basque traditional farmhouses), none shall dare to tear away, because the Cross is at our fathers' graves too.”²⁴⁵

The April local election had, therefore, a variety of meanings for Basque and Catalan nationalists, and its complexity cannot be underestimated. The isolationist approach of the Basque nationalists was not simply the result of a general aversion to Spanish politics. Had the issue of religion been out of the equation, perhaps the Basque nationalists' attitude towards the election and the general political context would have been different. The Catalan nationalist alliance with Spanish republicanism and the creation of *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* meant

²⁴² Francesc Macià, “El Manifest d'Estat Català”, *l'Opinió*, 13/3/1931, pp. 4–5.

²⁴³ Jaume Aiguader i Miró, “El Rejuveniment de la Política Catalana”, *l'Opinió*, 20/3/1931, p. 15.

²⁴⁴ The previous chapter showed how, after the Bergara assembly, the unified PNV reasserted its commitment to the traditional Basque nationalist JEL ideology. This included the party's—and the nation's— commitment to “the Catholic Religion as the only true [faith]” and “the doctrine and jurisdiction of the Holy Roman Apostolic Catholic Church.” See de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 39.

²⁴⁵ Original fragment: “No vamos a las elecciones solos; vamos con Jel, que representa la esencia más pura de nuestra raza. La cruz que se halla en las cimas de nuestros montes y en nuestros caseríos, nadie se atreverá a arrancarla de ahí, porque la Cruz está también en las sepulturas de nuestros padres.” See “El grandioso mitin del Euskalduna”, *Euzkadi*, 7/4/1931, pp. 1–2

different things for different Catalan nationalists according to their particular tradition.

The other, perhaps more obvious process at play during the election was mobilisation. Actually getting people to vote can be seen as the result of two mechanisms, brokerage and diffusion, employed by activists and campaigners to maximise the votes for their candidates. Comparing election results is a simple way of contrasting to what different extents were different political actors able to mobilise their support bases. The 12th of April 1931 Spanish local election, however, poses particular problems to researchers. First, the fact that the actual election took place in three different phases: the 5th of April, those councils where only one candidacy was standing for the election were constituted automatically, without any voting taking place. The rest were voted by male universal suffrage—the minimum voting age was 25—the 12th of April. The 31st of the same month a final vote was held in those town councils where the election results had been disputed. Second, there are issues with the availability and reliability of voting data, which prompts researchers to use representation data for analysis instead. The paragraphs that follow use works by José Luis de la Granja and Raimon Soler to compare ERC and PNV electoral performance in the local election.²⁴⁶ Both studies have had to manage problems with data inconsistencies and have resorted to samples whenever comprehensive sets of information were not available. Therefore, the following comparison must be understood as a strictly qualitative approach.

Compared to the PNV, ERC shows a more constant pattern of mobilisation. Even its worst results, 12.3% of councillors for the province of Lleida, and 11.7% for the province of Tarragona, cannot compare to the performance of the PNV in the provinces of Araba and Navarre. In these two, the PNV only did well in some of the former's northernmost towns, whilst in the latter its support was reduced to a handful of councillors. This contrast can be explained by Basque nationalism's traditional difficulty to expand beyond Biscay and Gipuzkoa. The latter showed a stronger support for the PNV, which obtained 22.5% of the elected councillors, not

²⁴⁶ de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 94–118; Raimon Soler, “Les Eleccions Municipals Del 12 d’abril de 1931 a Catalunya”, *Working Papers*, 342, 2016.

too far away from ERC's results in Girona, where it obtained 18.9% of the local seats.

If the focus is shifted towards the two largest cities, Barcelona and Bilbao, a more complex picture emerges. ERC obtained 32.7% of the Catalan capital's councillors, whilst the PNV managed to secure 27.6% of Bilbao's local seats. In absolute terms, this cannot be considered a large difference. Putting both results into their local context, however, gives these results their true significance: ERC had won the election in Barcelona, well ahead of the *Lliga Regionalista* conservative Catalan nationalists, which had secured 21.6% of the seats. The *Lliga* had championed for a controlled political transition in Spain, which would have brought back a constitutional regime without questioning the Monarchy's status.²⁴⁷ Many—particularly in the urban middle classes—had come to see ERC as a new alternative, boosted by the personal popularity of Macià.²⁴⁸ The PNV, on the other hand, was also the party with the most councillors, but had to face an overwhelming 49.3% of the seats in the hands of the anti-monarchist coalition. This included ANV, the PSOE and Spanish republican parties.

The fact that ERC was a brand new political party standing for its first election—the PNV by 1931 had already existed for almost 40 years—magnified the scale of its victory. A district-based analysis of these results shows that ERC was very successful in Barcelona's working class districts, such as Sant Andreu-Horta, Hostafrancs-Sants, and Poble Sec-Montjuïc, with the only exception of Sant Martí. The PNV, on the other hand, only secured a majority in the middle class district of Hospital, being surpassed by the anti-monarchist coalition even in its traditional strongholds of Atxuri and Santiago. From the data provided by de la Granja and Soler, it seems clear that ERC was more appealing for Barcelona's working class vote than the PNV was for its Bilbao equivalent.

However, a question remains as to whether the ethnic composition of working class districts can account for some of this electoral behaviour. Mees' empirical

²⁴⁷ Raimon Soler, 'La Construcció de l'hegemonia Política: Esquerra, 1931-1933', *Eines*, 2011, p. 104.

²⁴⁸ This popularity transcended the limits of *Estat Català* and ERC, reaching anarchist circles on the left, and Catholic Catalan nationalists on the right. An example of the latter case, where Macià is portrayed as a 'man of order' can be found in "Manifestacions del Sr. Macià", *El Matí*, 14/4/1931, p. 1. For an example of the former case, see Juan García Oliver, *El Eco de Los Pasos*, Barcelona: BackList, 2008.

study of the voting patterns in Bilbao neighbourhoods found that non-ethnic Basque workers seldom voted for Basque nationalist options, whilst areas with an important native working class component—such as Atxuri—did.²⁴⁹ The fact that ERC actually obtained its *worst* result in the Sant Martí district—and its *best* results in other working class districts—perhaps could be explained by the important presence of Spanish speaking immigrants there.²⁵⁰ This would also explain the fact that the Spanish *Coalición Republicana Socialista* won the highest proportion of councillors in Sant Martí. In any case, there is plenty of room for further work on the relationship between ethnicity, national identity and voting patterns which lies beyond what the present thesis aims to achieve.

²⁴⁹ Mees, *Entre nación y clase...*, pp. 102–111.

²⁵⁰ Antonio López-Gay and Joaquín Recaño Valverde, “Barris i Immigració Espanyola a La Ciutat de Barcelona Durant El Segle XX”, in *Recerca i Immigració VII. Migracions Dels Segles XX i XXI: Una Mirada Candeliana*, Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 2015, pp. 65–93.

3. 2. Flag raising and frame building. Basque and Catalan nationalist republican proclamations (14th of April 1931)

The local election's results—a triumph for republican candidates in the main cities across the Spanish state—was widely read as a sign of imminent regime change. Admiral Aznar famously remarked to the press that the country had “gone to bed monarchist and woken up republican.” He soon resigned, and as King Alfonso XII left for exile the 14th of April, the Revolutionary Committee became the Provisional Government of the Second Spanish Republic. From the early hours of the same day, republican proclamations were spreading through Spanish cities.

This wave of proclamations as a final episode within a general stream of contention to overthrow Alfonso XIII and create Second Spanish Republic. The proclamations followed a general pattern. Mass demonstrations, often with a spontaneous and festive component, filled the streets with republican sympathisers. Newly elected republican councillors often acted as leaders, spearheading the crowds towards public buildings, such as the local Town Hall, where the proclamations of the new republic were read. Symbols, particularly the Spanish tricolour flag or the *Marselleise* also played a key role in the demonstrations. Often, symbols of the previous regime—royal statues and portraits, street signs, etc.—were attacked or replaced by republican alternatives. The proclamations were a state-wide phenomenon, inscribed in the Spanish ‘monarchy *versus* republic’ frame, a result of the polarisation that had been building up for months. This section will analyse the role of Catalan and Basque nationalists in this episode of contention, assessing the impact of their participation in the general pattern of mobilisation and their ability to generate their own alternative frames.

Thousands of Catalan and Basque nationalists were enthusiastic participants in the demonstrations that accompanied the republican proclamations. This was not

unexpected in the case of Catalan left-wing nationalists, who had been very open about their alliance with Spanish republicans. In the case of the PNV, however, this was somewhat surprising. The same 14th of April, the newspaper *Euzkadi*—it was a morning edition—was still commenting on the Basque Nationalist Party's results in Bilbao. An eloquent cartoon showed a towering figure—clad in Basque traditional clothing—representing the PNV's share of local councillors, only surpassed by the combined results of ANV—depicted as a frail figure with a Basque *txapela* cap and long hands—and Spanish republicans—with a Phrygian cap— and socialists. The latter—depicted with a working class cap and 'foreign' facial traits are shown supported by two figures in suits and top hats representing corruption and fraud.²⁵¹ The Basque nationalist newspaper was clearly prioritising framing its electoral results as a win over making any strong judgements on a possible regime change. The Catalan nationalist *El Dia*, on the other hand, was already asking “what is the King waiting for?”, by the 13th of April. Its editorial proclaimed that “yesterday's victory was not the victory of a single party. It was the victory of a people.” The paper included a more local scope of the election results in Manresa —also accusing its monarchist rivals of vote buying and unlawful behaviour—but its main focus was on the new perspectives of regime change those results meant. *El Dia* cheerfully commented on how newly elected monarchist councillors in the town of Berga were already switching sides and declaring themselves to be republican.²⁵²

Catalan and Basque nationalist presence in the demonstrations had an effect on the symbols displayed by these. *Euzkadi* moved from its previous sceptical attitude to open enthusiasm in describing how Basque nationalists joined socialists and republicans in the large crowds that filled Bilbao's streets. The PNV's newspaper pointed out how Basque nationalist slogans and flags were as prominent as republican chants and tricolour flags in the celebrations that followed. The Basque nationalist flag, the *ikurriña*, was displayed alongside others at Bilbao's Town Hall. Teams of both nationalist and republican activists—each group wearing distinctive armbands—worked to avoid any incidents.²⁵³ In Getxo, Alfonso XIII Square had its

²⁵¹ *Euzkadi*, 14/4/1931, p. 1.

²⁵² *El Dia*, 13/4/1931, pp. 1, 3.

²⁵³ “¡Gora Euzkadi Azkatuta!”, *Euzkadi*, 15/4/1931, p. 1.

name replaced for Sabino Arana Square.²⁵⁴ In Catalan towns and cities, the *senyera* flag was also present, achieving an even higher profile as it was raised alongside the Spanish republican tricolour at the Provincial Government house in Barcelona.²⁵⁵

Catalan and Basque nationalist leaders also played their part in the proclamations. In Barcelona, Lluís Companys and other newly elected councilors led crowds of republican sympathizers to the Town Hall. The outgoing Mayor resisted and the town staff had to be forcibly taken from him. Companys then proclaimed the new republic from the balcony.²⁵⁶ Macià, who had met with other *Estat Català* leaders and was himself preparing for the proclamation, was informed of these events by telephone. He reacted quickly, performing the day's real *tour de force*: after taking control of the Provincial Government building—only meters away from the Town Hall, across Barcelona's Sant Jaume Square—he proclaimed the Catalan Republic to the gathered crowds below.²⁵⁷ The Biscay leadership of the PNV was quick to acknowledge the “spontaneous manifestation of the nationalist people, the Basque people” in the proclamations. In a short note, it committed to “presenting and maintaining with all steadfastness our total aspiration, the government of the Basque people by itself, before the nascent Spanish Republic.” Elias Gallastegi, one of the founders of the Basque nationalist youth, brought an *ikurriña* to Bilbao's Town Hall.²⁵⁸ Other Basque nationalist leaders, gathered at *Euzkadi*'s office in the Biscayan capital, received news that a Catalan republic had been proclaimed in Barcelona by Macià. They reacted accordingly: another note—also validated by the Biscay leadership of the PNV—was produced, which “salutes [...] the Spanish Republic and hails our Basque Republic.” The text was read by Juan Abando, in representation of the PNV councillors in Bilbao, to the new Local Council gathered inside the Town Hall. A young José Antonio Aguirre did the same

²⁵⁴ Ludger Mees et al, *La política como pasión. El Lehendakari José Antonio Aguirre (1904-1960)*, Madrid: Tecnos, 2014, pp. 94.

²⁵⁵ *El Dia*, 14/4/1931, p. 1.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ Jaume Creus, 3/12/1967 and 22/12/1967, letters to Manuel Viusà, Associació Memòria i Història de Manresa, <http://www.memoria.cat/creus/content/reproducci%C3%B3-de-lepistolari-manuel-vius%C3%A0-jaume-creus-sobre-la-proclamaci%C3%B3-de-la-rep%C3%BAblica>, retrieved 12/12/2019.

²⁵⁸ “¡Gora Euzkadi Azkatuta!”; Bizkai-Buru-Batzar, “Nuestras autoridades hablan al pueblo nacionalista”, *Euzkadi*, 15/4/1931, p. 1.

in Getxo as the new Mayor, and the gesture was repeated by Basque nationalist councillors across the country.²⁵⁹

At this stage, it is safe to convene that Basque and Catalan nationalists were not mere spectators, but active participants in the republican proclamations of 1931. The key point that remains to be addressed, however, is to what extent were they able to present alternatives to the *Spanish* 'monarchy versus republic' frame. Within that frame, the Spanish nation functioned as a national *topos*, as described by Billig:

"Different factions may argue about how 'we' should think of 'ourselves' and what is to be 'our' national destiny. In doing so they will take for granted the reality of 'us', the people in its national place. [...] In the rhetoric of established nationalism, there is a *topos* beyond argument. The argument is generally placed within a place—a homeland—and the process of argumentation itself rhetorically reaffirms the national *topos*."²⁶⁰

The 14th of April 1931, Basque and Catalan nationalists were the main political actors challenging that *topos*. Without much margin for doubt, the strongest challenge lay in what happened in Barcelona. Contemporary sources suggest Companys' proclamation was not particularly epic and quite in line with what could have been signed by any Spanish republican. His friend, the lawyer Ángel Ossorio y Gallardo, quotes his words as: "People of Barcelona! The men that have triumphed in the election have just taken control of the Town Hall, and, in doing so, we proclaim the Republic as the regime we had promised the people."²⁶¹ *La Vanguardia*, one of the most widely read Catalan newspapers, reported Companys saying "Be calm, for this Republic shall represent the people's majority. Long live Catalonia, long live the Republic!"²⁶²

Companys had seized the initiative, but his proclamation fell well within the mainstream Spanish republican frame. In contemporary news reports, it was

²⁵⁹ Mees et al, *La Política...*, pp. 93–94.

²⁶⁰ Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, p. 96.

²⁶¹ Ángel Ossorio y Gallardo, *Vida y Sacrificio de Companys*, Memorial Democràtic de la Generalitat de Catalunya, 2010, p. 110.

²⁶² "Proclamación de la República en Barcelona", *La Vanguardia*, 15/4/1931, p. 6.

overshadowed by Macià's proclamation, which directly challenged the national *topos* of the political contention. Other leaders of the nascent regime—including Companys—were proclaiming ‘the Republic’. This was a form of *deixis* where ‘the Republic’ was in fact the *Spanish* Republic. The Spanish national *topos* remained dominant even if—or precisely because—the nation, Spain, was not mentioned by name. Macià proclaimed the *Catalan* Republic, thereby openly altering the national and political implications of the gesture. *La Vanguardia* reported *l'Avi's* first speech from the Provincial Government's balcony as:

“Citizens: In the name of the people of Catalonia I herein proclaim the Catalan State and I proclaim the Catalan Republic. Furthermore, solemnly I tell you that with all affection we shall move toward the Confederation with the rest of Spain's Republics.

Let us now compose the Government of the Catalan Republic and here we will stand ready to defend it to the death.”²⁶³

This time the action of representation was made even more epic and explicit by the use of the phrase *in the name of the people*. The formulae ‘state’ and ‘republic’ are both used for Catalonia, both having strong implications of sovereignty. These are reinforced when, although the Spanish frame is acknowledged and a future confederation is announced, it is also made clear that this is yet to happen and that it will be the result of a sovereign decision. The final sentence adds an extra tone of severity to the situation and reminds the crowd that this is in fact a revolutionary situation.

A note released later that same day read:

“In the name of the people of Catalonia I proclaim the Catalan State, under the regime of a Catalan Republic, that freely and with all cordiality longs for and asks the other peoples

²⁶³ Original fragment: “Ciudadanos: en nombre del pueblo de Cataluña yo proclamo desde aquí el Estado Catalán y proclamo la República catalana. Además, solemnemente os digo que con todo cariño vayamos a la Confederación con las demás Repúblicas de España. Ahora formemos el Gobierno de la República catalana y aquí estaremos dispuestos a defenderlo hasta morir.” See “Proclamación de la República en Barcelona”, *La Vanguardia*, 15/4/1931, p. 6. The full account of Macià's proclamation by *La Vanguardia* can be found in Text 7 of Annex III.

of Spain their collaboration in the creation of a Confederation of the Iberian peoples and stands ready to do what shall be necessary to free them from the Bourbon Monarchy. In this moment we send our voice to all of the free States of the world, in the name of Freedom, Justice and international Peace.”²⁶⁴

This note goes even further in diluting the Spanish national frame, bringing in the “Confederation of the Iberian peoples” concept. The sovereign status of Catalonia is again stressed, and projected towards the international context “of the free States of the world” amidst freedom, justice and peace as universal themes. This is consistent with what Billig describes as “the imagined universal code of nationhood.”²⁶⁵ Macià's proclamation created a distinct, Catalan dimension for the regime change that was taking place. While it did not imply a complete break with Spain, it did assert Catalonia's position in sovereign, national terms. Not only did it nullify the legitimacy of the previous monarchic regime—as did all other proclamations—it also presented an alternative sovereignty based in Barcelona, not Madrid. As such, it asked for the population's loyalty, as *l'Opinió's* version of the proclamation specifies: “[...] I ask you for your collaboration to sustain [the Catalan Republic] beginning with proclaiming it in your town and preparing yourselves to defend it when I call you to.”²⁶⁶

Macià's proclamation was not a “rattled improvisation,” as described by Ossorio y Gallardo.²⁶⁷ It was very much in line with what ERC had debated and approved as initial political programme during the *Conferència d'Esquerres*. This included a document on “the general constitution of the state and the Catalan problem” which defined Catalonia as a sovereign nation that should form a state, which in turn was to join a “Iberian Federal State or Hispanic Federal State.” The party used the terms ‘Iberian’ and ‘Hispanic’ indistinctly to describe the federation.²⁶⁸ It is, therefore,

²⁶⁴ Ibid.; the same note is also reproduced in Ossorio y Gallardo, *Vida y sacrificio...*, p. 111.

²⁶⁵ This author points out that “the consciousness of national identity normally assumes an international context, which itself needs to be imagined every bit as much as does the national community: or at least the imagination has to become frozen in a habit of thought. Thus, foreigners are not simply ‘others’, symbolizing the obverse of ‘us’: ‘they’ are also like ‘us’, part of the imagined universal code of nationhood. See Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, p. 83.”

²⁶⁶ “Al·locució de Macià”, *l'Opinió*, 14/4/1931, p. 1.

²⁶⁷ Ossorio y Gallardo, *Vida y sacrificio...*, p. 112.

²⁶⁸ Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 2, p. 393.

hardly surprising that newspapers close to ERC were enthusiast supporters of the proclamation. *L'Opinió* framed the episode on three different levels: first, as a consequence of the local election, and so a manifestation of “the will of the people of Catalonia [...] freely and spontaneously exercising its sovereignty, [...] opening its fraternal and liberating arms to the other Hispanic peoples.” Second, it focused on the figure of Francesc Macià, as “the man that represents the maximum integrity and purest Catalan nationalism, [...] interpreter of this sovereign will.” Third, the text gives the proclamation a more universal meaning, affirming that “our people shows the will to live fully under the motto that the men of the French revolution made glorious: freedom, equality, fraternity.”²⁶⁹ *El Dia*'s editorial of the 16th of April was quite similar in its content, taking a slightly more federalist stance, without any references to Macià and describing the new regime as “the Catalan Republic, *within* the Federal Republic of the Iberian peoples.”²⁷⁰ In any case, Catalan nationalists were quite successful in generating an alternative frame for their 14th of April. The new Catalan Republic worked as a concept—it was Macià's proclamation, not Companys', that received all of the attention. The dominating imagery included symbols such as the Spanish tricolour and references to the other ‘Iberian peoples’, but its core was fundamentally Catalan nationalist: it was the idea of a sovereign Catalan people.

Basque nationalists were not as successful as their Catalan counterparts. Their alternative to the Spanish republican frame was contained in the ‘Basque Republic’ concept, reproduced in the above mentioned document issued by the Biscay leadership of the PNV:

“The local councillors elected by the nationalist Basque people declare:

That for them the manifestation of popular will for a republic in Spain is a fact [...]; that as substantial democrats, which they are because of their Basque nationalist ideology, such will count with their full respect.

In turn, to the representatives of the nascent Spanish Republic, and especially to its representatives in the Basque Country, demand:

²⁶⁹ “L'hora de la llibertat”, *l'Opinió*, 14/4/1931, p. 1.

²⁷⁰ “El deure de tots”, *El Dia*, 16/04/1931, p. 1.

Recognition of the Basque integral [national] personality [...]. Recognition of the right of the Basque people to its own organisation; in particular that of Biscay, with the gathering of its historical *Juntas Generales* with all of their genuine powers, through the immediate gathering of delegates from all of the recently formed Local Councils.

Thereby, we salute the Spanish Republic and hail the Basque Republic.”²⁷¹

Rather than a ‘Macià-style’ proclamation of a Basque Republic, the text begins with an acknowledgement of the *Spanish Republic*’s legitimacy. It displays a rather ‘cold spectator’ attitude to its creation, without making any positive or negative comments. The text was not read to the public gathered in Bilbao, and it was written in a neutral third person, deprived of the epic content of other proclamations. Basque sovereignty is mentioned, but not as a self-evident right. It is an appeal to the new authorities for their “recognition of the Basque personality and [...] the right of the Basque people to its own organisation”. No clear indication is given of how the hailed “Basque Republic” is to become a reality beyond the reference to the *Juntas Generales*—the traditional assemblies abolished in 1876 after the Third Carlist War. Rather than a sovereign, Basque republican proclamation, the document read by the PNV councillors merely pointed at a process—the gathering of Basque councillors in *Juntas Generales*—by which such sovereignty could be asserted.

From a different perspective, José Domingo Arana, in representation of the ANV councillors, made the following declaration:

“*Acción Nacionalista Vasca*’s representation declares in this solemn session, as the Republic is proclaimed, that it has contributed loyally and enthusiastically to its advent

²⁷¹ Original fragment: “Los concejales elegidos por el pueblo nacionalista: Que para ellos la manifestación de la voluntad popular en España por la República es un hecho [...]; que como sustancialmente demócratas que son por razón de su ideología nacionalista vasca, esa voluntad cuenta con todos sus respetos. Y en cambio a los representantes de esa naciente República española y especialmente a sus representantes en el País Vasco exigen: Reconocimiento de la personalidad vasca integral [...]. Reconocimiento del derecho del pueblo vasco en la propia organización; y en particular de Vizcaya, reuniendo sus Juntas Generales históricas con todas sus genuinas facultades, mediante la reunión inmediata de los delegados de todos los Ayuntamientos recientemente constituidos. Saludamos, pues, a la República española y aclamamos a la República vasca.” See “Una sesión histórica”, *El Liberal*, 15/4/1931, p. 2. See Text 8 of Annex III for *Euzkadi*’s chronicle of the same event.

and will collaborate with its consolidation, because this regime represents the recognition of the national personality of the Basque Country and its right to self-determination.”²⁷²

ANV's declaration was 'more Companys than Macià', in the sense that the only republic mentioned is the *Spanish* Republic—which through the use of *deixis* becomes *the* Republic—thus falling within the mainstream frame. There is no mention of a Basque Republic. ANV's declaration, however, shares with the PNV's text a common recognition-seeking attitude—rather than a sovereignty-affirming one—towards the new regime.

Comparing Catalan and Basque nationalists' performance during the 14th of April of 1931 reveals acute contrasts. The key issue here is not the magnitude of their participation—quantitatively, both movements played their part. Catalan and Basque nationalism were present in the crowds, in the flags, in the chants and in the songs. Qualitatively, however, their role was very different. The Catalan left-wing nationalism represented by ERC exercised as a leading political actor. This stood in coherence with what its different factions had assumed in signing the San Sebastian pact, but also with its previous resistance to Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, personified by Macià. A long-lasting tradition of interaction between Catalan nationalism, federalism and republicanism in Catalonia, with its roots in the mid-19th Century²⁷³, had also paved the way. In the short-term, ERC's results in the local election—especially compared to the results of Spanish republican candidates—had shifted the power ratio in Companys and Macià's favour. Their leadership during the final takeover would have seemed almost natural for the mass of republican sympathisers.

In the Basque Country, there was a very different picture. Despite the active participation of Basque nationalist sympathisers and newly elected councillors in the proclamations, their role was in fact complementary to the two leading

²⁷² Original fragment: “La representación de Acción Nacionalista Vasca declara en esta hora solemne, y al proclamarse la República, que ha contribuido leal y entusiastamente a su advenimiento y que colaborará a su consolidación, porque ese régimen representa el reconocimiento de la personalidad nacional del País Vasco y su derecho de autodeterminación.” See “Una sesión histórica”, *El Liberal*, 15/4/1931, p. 2.

²⁷³ On this interaction, see Àngel Duarte, *Història Del Republicanisme a Catalunya*, Lleida: Eumo Editorial & Pagès Editors, 2004; Pere Anguera and others, *El Catalanisme d'esquerres*, Girona: Cercle d'Estudis Històrics i Socials de Girona, 1997.

political actors of the day: Spanish republicans and socialists. The PNV had no 'Basque Macià' at the ready and was in no position to do in Bilbao what *l'Avi* had done in Barcelona. Its election results were not enough to justify an equivalent show of strength—i.e. taking control of the Biscay Provincial Government building—nor it had made any plans to proclaim a 'Basque Republic'. Such a concept was a novelty in Basque nationalist terminology, and the movement's integrist roots under its founder Sabino Arana had left little margin for interaction with republicanism. All in all, Catalan nationalists were quite successful in developing their own, national frame for the events of the 14 of April. Their Basque counterparts fell short of such a frame shift, and in the Basque Country the Republic was proclaimed mainly within a general Spanish frame.

3. 3. The Catalan and Basque ‘republics’ in the aftermath of the 14th of April

After the events of the 14th of April, a new regime formed out of the magma of new political actors and institutions that had replaced the Spanish monarchy. The new Republic, had to face an immediate challenge: two alternatives to its sovereignty seemed to be forming in Catalonia and in the Basque Country. The previous section, however, has already shown how the situation was very different in the two contexts. In Catalonia, the particular form in which the revolutionary outcome had taken place had seen Catalan nationalists assume leading roles. As core members of the revolutionary coalition, they had seized the state apparatus in Catalonia, and created a state-like structure of their own, the Catalan Republic. In the Basque Country none of this had happened. Although Basque nationalists were putting forward the idea of a Basque Republic, power was effectively in the hands of Madrid-led socialists and republicans. This section will first look into the mechanisms and processes at work behind the development of these two ‘alternative republics’ from a compared perspective. It will then move on to analyse how both episodes were framed by Catalan and Basque nationalists, as well as a brief overview of contacts between representatives of both movements at the time.

The situation in Catalonia implied a power duality, as the Catalan Republic was essentially a regime of its own. The “Confederation” of which it was to become part—according to Macià's proclamations—had not materialised. The republic that had been proclaimed in Madrid and elsewhere was *the* Spanish Republic, independently of its potential degree of decentralisation. From its Provisional Government's point of view, the existence of a plurality of ‘republics’ was not part of the plan. Although Madrid certainly had the advantage in terms of capacity to mobilise resources and exercise its power, the Catalan Republic could not be simply dismissed. ERC had taken over key institutions such as the provincial Government and the Town Hall of Barcelona. Macià also named his friend Eduardo

López de Ochoa Captain General of Barcelona—i.e. the military authority of the province's garrison. A militia, named *Guàrdia Cívica Republicana*, was also created by the new authorities. By the 15th of April, a Provisional Government of the Catalan Republic was formed, with Macià as its President, and a collection of socialist, republican and Catalan nationalist *Consellers*. In what was a clear move towards achieving greater hegemony, even the CNT leader Ángel Pestaña was offered the labour post, which he rejected.²⁷⁴ Oriol Anguera de Sojo was named president of Barcelona's Territorial Court.²⁷⁵ Macià disposed—at least nominally—of political, legal and military structures of power.

Despite the Catalan situation's potential for some degree of conflict, this was avoided by a brief negotiation which took place the 17th of April. Here two particular mechanisms were to prove decisive: brokerage and co-optation. The first was carried out by three ministers of the Spanish Provisional Government, who flew in from Madrid to meet with their Catalan counterparts. They were the socialist Fernando de los Ríos and also the Catalans Marcel·lí Domingo and Lluís Nicolau i d'Olwer. The last two were no strangers to Catalan nationalism: Domingo was a member of the Spanish *Partido Republicano Radical Socialista* (Republican Radical Socialist Party) but had taken part in the founding of ERC. D'Olwer was a Catalan nationalist himself and a member of *Acció Catalana Republicana*. The result of the meeting was an example of the mechanism of *co-optation*, the “incorporation of a previously excluded political actor into some centre of power.”²⁷⁶ After some negotiations, Macià agreed to give up the use of the term ‘Republic’: Catalan self-government would not have such connotations of sovereignty, and a Spanish Constituent Assembly would eventually decide the degree of decentralisation that was to be adopted by the new regime. A future *Estatuto de Autonomía* (‘Statute of Autonomy’) would define the limits of Catalan home rule. The Catalan Republic was renamed *Generalitat de Catalunya*, a concept drawn from a medieval institution abolished by the Bourbons in 1714.²⁷⁷ Besides the symbolic

²⁷⁴ Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, p. 75.

²⁷⁵ Ibid. For a detailed composition of the Provisional Government of the Catalan Republic, see Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 1, p. 99.

²⁷⁶ Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, (1st ed.), p. 215.

²⁷⁷ Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 1, pp. 99–100.

connotations of the name alteration, the pact essentially integrated the new institution into the political framework of the Spanish Republic.

In the Basque Country, on the other hand, there was no power duality situation. The revolutionary coalition that had taken power had been led by Spanish nationalist political actors, so the main centres of power were firmly under the sovereignty of the Madrid government. The efforts by Basque nationalists to create a Basque Republic can be characterised more appropriately as a social movement campaign. Its promoters—chiefly local councillors for the Basque Nationalist Party—lacked any institutional power beyond the local level. The newly elected Mayors of Mundaka, Getxo, Bermeo and Elorrio called for an assembly of local councillors to be held in Gernika the 17th of April. Lacking the control of the superior institutions that their Catalan counterparts had achieved, Basque nationalists were attempting to create their own ‘from below’. The main mechanisms which can be seen operating here are brokerage—carried out by the four mayors as the main face of the movement—and diffusion. Both resulted in a process of *collective action*—a coordinated effort on behalf of a shared program. A fundamental difference between the Catalan and Basque ‘republics’ of 1931 was that the former operated as a proto-state with a top-down logic, the latter followed a bottom-up pattern more typical of a social movement. Another key contrast between both cases was the unilateral nature of the pro-Basque Republic movement, very much limited to the Basque Nationalist Party, far from the broad coalition behind the Catalan Republic.²⁷⁸

The new Spanish authorities opted for a non-negotiated solution to the challenge posed by the Basque Republic movement. They were deeply mistrustful of the PNV, whose republican loyalty they questioned. This was hardly surprising, given the Basque nationalists' traditionalist ideology, their bitter rivalry with the PSOE—particularly in Biscay—and their decisive absence from the San Sebastian pact and the coalition that resulted from it. From the new authorities' perspective, the Basque Republic movement was too much of a threat to let it thrive, yet weak enough to quash without an excessive political cost. The mechanism of repression was put into action, as the army was mobilised to prevent the Gernika assembly.

²⁷⁸ de Pablo, Mees & Rodríguez Ranz, *El Péndulo...*, Vol. 1, p. 211.

Hundreds of soldiers and members of the Guardia Civil were deployed from nearby garrisons, establishing machine gun positions and preventing any of the incoming Basque nationalist local councillors from entering the town.²⁷⁹ This, combined with the news of the Catalan Republic becoming the Generalitat as a first step towards a home rule settlement, prompted Basque nationalists to abandon the creation of their own republic.²⁸⁰

Standing in the roads outside Gernika, closed down by the Spanish armed forces, Basque nationalist councillors agreed to sign a *Manifiesto de los apoderados bizkainos*. This document went a little further to what had been said the 14th of April, and demanded—but again, did not proclaim—a Basque Republic in the name of the citizens of Biscay, and as part of a Spanish Federal Republic. The promoters of the Manifesto—Mayors of Getxo, Mundaka, Bermeo and Elorrio—also reacted to the ban on the Gernika meeting:

“A vigorous protest of a people as a whole, that will never relent in the path towards its rightful freedom!

Because of this you, Biscayan people, to whom we speak, Basque people, to whom we belong, receive the Towns' salute and remember that the flag around which you can gather, regardless of your feelings, without fear.

We are not a political party; we are the representatives of the people, and we believe we are the most legitimate organs of expression in these moments of grave transcendence.

We are those who can unite different tendencies and attitudes in a single dream: the freedom of our people, [...]. And we are ready to commit fully; we only expect the enthusiastic support of the Basque people, our noble people, that today cannot ignore the call of the blood, because it is the call of the fatherland.”²⁸¹

This particular fragment of the text begins with a clear example of the ‘double representation’ that Billig describes as part of the rhetoric of hegemony. The Basque people is being represented in both meanings of the term: represented as in *spoken for* by “the representatives of the people”, and represented as in *depicted*,

²⁷⁹ “Lo ocurrido en Gernika”, *Euzkadi*, 18/4/1931, p. 1.

²⁸⁰ de Pablo, Mees & Rodríguez Ranz, *El Péndulo...*, Vol. 1, p. 211.

²⁸¹ “A todos los vascos”, *Euzkadi*, 18/4/1931, p. 1. See Text 9 of Annex III for the full original version.

as a brave people “that will never relent in the path towards its rightful freedom.” An effort is made to present the gathering of the councillors not as a particular manoeuvre by the PNV, but as a “protest of a people as a whole”, “regardless of [particular] feelings”. The Basque nationalist leaders were probably aware that this language of hegemony was necessary to avoid political isolation—something which they had ultimately failed to achieve in practice. Although there is a clear emphasis on ethnicity, “the call of the blood”, already the PNV is beginning to shift its perspective to look for broader alliances.

This framing of a unilateral political action as a broader event by the Basque nationalist press contrasted with the challenge faced by the Catalan nationalists. The end of the Catalan Republic after the meeting with Madrid's representatives was not a light move, and as a contradiction, many found it difficult to process. Macià himself was not happy. He privately described the pact as “the saddest day”, or “the hardest sacrifice” of his life.²⁸² The uncompromisingly pro-independence activists of *Nosaltres Sols!*, who had enthusiastically joined the *Guàrdia Cívica Republicana*—which was soon disbanded—saw the pact as open treason. Ucelay Da Cal has spoken of a “crisis of radical Catalan nationalists” during this period, as the small pro-independence groups struggled to find a strategic alternative to Macià's settlement for home rule.²⁸³ Manresa's *El Dia* framed the pact in the following terms:

“The text of the mentioned note [announcing the pact] is clear enough to dispel any fear or mistrust on both sides of the Ebro. Catalonia has nothing to fear from the new Spain, from the Democratic and Federal Republic. The Madrid Government has nothing to fear from the men that in the first act of the new historical stage have remembered and asserted the Catalans' right to self-determination and freedom. All keeping their word, given at the Pact of San Sebastian, as it is fitting for men who fight for their ideals and justice, nothing can disturb the harmony so essential for the creation of a new Fatherland.

Catalonia has in fact secured recognition of its legal status. A Catalan government with the name *Generalitat de Catalunya*, a glorious name which remembers the time in which

²⁸² Ismael E. Pitarch, *El President Macià i El Parlament de Catalunya*, Parlament de Catalunya, 2009.

²⁸³ Enric Ucelay Da Cal, “La Crisi Dels Nacionalistes Radicals Catalans (1931-1932)”, *Recerques: Història, Economia i Cultura*, 8, 1978, pp. 159–206.

Catalonia was not a slave to the Bourbons, will draw up a project for a Statute [of Autonomy] [...].

It goes without saying that for both sides the pact involves fundamental concessions. But it is precisely because of these concessions, the sacrifice of ideals and hopes for the benefit of the Republic's health, that the harmony and cordiality [...] between [...] the Government of Catalonia and the Government of Spain is definitely proven.”²⁸⁴

The article shows how the previous ‘national republican’ frame is altered to introduce new ambiguities in order to better digest the pact. This fragment begins and ends reassuring the bilateral nature of the relation between Spain and Catalonia. The river Ebro is portrayed as a ‘border’, and the two ‘Governments’ are shown on equal terms. The *topos*, however seems to have shifted slightly towards banal Spanish nationalism. If there can be doubts about which exactly is the “new Fatherland”, it is clear that *the* Republic is now in fact the *Spanish* Republic. This can also be observed in the political significance that is attributed to the term *Generalitat*, which is hailed as a name from when “Catalonia was not a slave to the Bourbons”. The ancient institution is therefore presented as a symbol not of Catalan sovereignty, but of the struggle against a particular Spanish dynasty.

The parallel nature of the Catalan and Basque republics was not the product of coordinated action. This was not the mechanism at play, as there was no common plan to proclaim alternative republics in Catalonia and the Basque Country. Sallés and Ucelay Da Cal have shown that Macià had contacted Basque nationalists as early as January 1931.²⁸⁵ The only tangible result from such communication, however, was Macià's symbolic membership of the Basque Nationalist Party, conveniently published by *Euzkadi* the 16th of April 1931 (see Fig. 3. 1).²⁸⁶ That same day, the party sent a delegation to Barcelona, where apparently Macià told the Basques that he would “resist by all means” any intervention by the Madrid government—although he did acknowledge some uncertainty about how strong

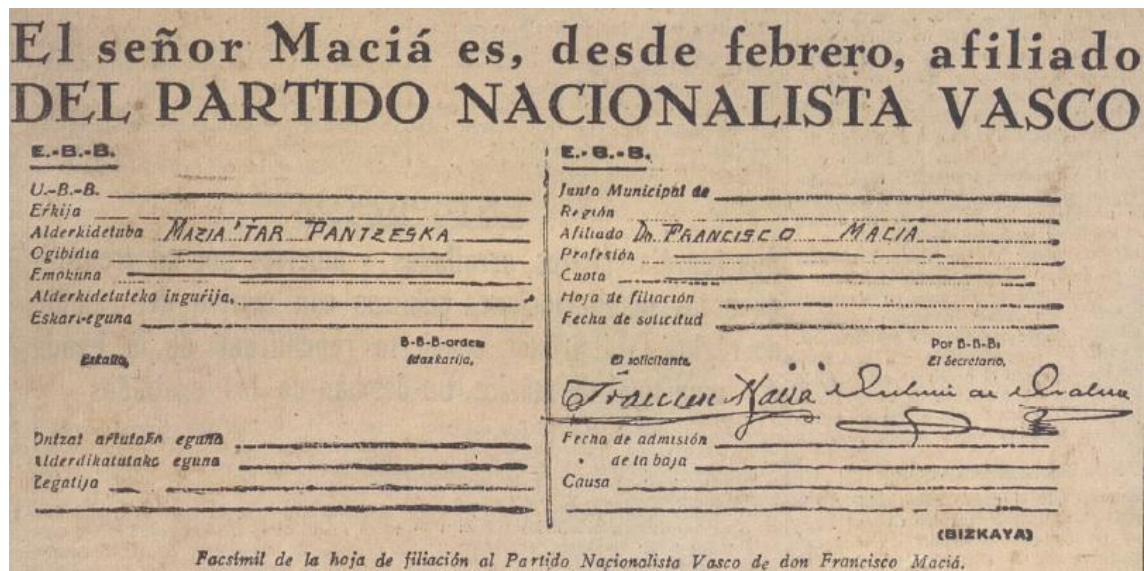
²⁸⁴ “Catalunya i el Govern Federal”, *El Dia*, 18/4/1931, p. 1. See Text 10 of Annex III for the full original version.

²⁸⁵ The exact purpose and content of those contacts, besides the sharing of information, remains unclear; see Sallés & Ucelay Da Cal, “L’analogia Falsa...”, pp. 459–460.

²⁸⁶ “El señor Macià es, desde febrero, afiliado del Partido Nacionalista Vasco”, *Euzkadi*, 16/4/1931, p. 1.

his own position was.²⁸⁷ This assurance probably contributed to the Basque nationalists decision to carry on with the Gernika gathering and their own plan for a Basque Republic.²⁸⁸ ANV had also been in contact with Macià and other representatives of the Generalitat, and was convinced that an equivalent Basque Provisional Government was needed to secure self-government.²⁸⁹ It is also worth noting that the Basque republican proclamation received little interest by the Catalan left-wing nationalist press, and was only covered enthusiastically by the Catholic Catalan nationalist *El Matí*.²⁹⁰

Fig. 3. 1 | A copy of Francesc Macià's PNV membership form



The pact that gave birth to the Generalitat put an end to this short episode of contention marked by the Catalan and Basque nationalists' attempts to secure self-government in the form of republics. These abortive Basque and Catalan Republics of 1931 were the high-water mark of how far could both nationalist movements go

²⁸⁷ de Pablo, Mees & Rodríguez Ranz, *El Péndulo...*, Vol. 1, pp. 210–211.

²⁸⁸ A similar plan for the republican proclamation in Catalonia—a mass gathering of republican councillors—seems to have been on the table in the hours prior to the 14th of April. Companys' unilateral move, however, prompted Macià to take more direct action. See Ossorio y Gallardo, *Vida y sacrificio...*, pp. 109–110.

²⁸⁹ de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 127–128.

²⁹⁰ “Proclamació de la República Basca”, *El Matí*, 16/4/1931, p. 7.

in the unstable context of the nascent Spanish republic. As the new regime in Madrid consolidated, the window of opportunity for such initiatives closed. Macià was able to secure a degree of institutionalisation for Catalan home rule, but the PNV was unsuccessful in its endeavour to do the same. ERC had proven to be the decisive political actor, able to lead popular protest, to take over and even create institutions of power, and to bring Madrid authorities to a bilateral negotiating table. The role of Catalan nationalists during Primo de Rivera's dictatorship and their alliance with the Spanish left at the San Sebastian pact vindicated their position before the new regime. Almost the opposite can be said of the PNV. It was unable to muster enough power to force the new authorities to accept some form of Basque home rule. This was not the priority for the new authorities—they understood the republican-socialist bloc as the only legitimate actor for the definition of Basque self-government—which continued to view the clerical and traditionalist PNV as a threat to the new Republic. The next chapter will see these perceptions reinforced as the Basque Nationalist Party joined forces with the Carlists and other Catholic monarchists.

In terms of nation-building, however, ERC's broad base of support showed contradictions between the two traditions of republicanism and Catalan nationalism. This was hardly an issue for the Basque Nationalist Party, whose discourse began to adopt a hegemony-seeking tone, in acute contrast to the political isolation it faced from the other strong players in the Basque political arena. Such isolation had much to do with its previous inability to build a friendlier relationship with Spanish republicans and socialists. In any case, this brief episode of contention served as an introduction for another, more protracted one: the initial Basque and Catalan campaigns for a home rule charter, centred around the *Estatutos* of Núria and Estella.

Chapter 4.

Núria and Estella.

**Basque and Catalan alternative
paths towards national hegemony
during the constituent period of the
Second Spanish Republic**

The ‘constituent period’ of the Second Spanish Republic begins with the formation of the Provisional Government, the 14th of April 1931, and ends with the enactment of the new Constitution, the 9th of December. In terms of the present thesis’ general timeframe—as explained in Chapter 1—this marks the beginning of a new political cycle.

This was still a moment of definition and consolidation for the new regime, with different political actors engaged in open competition for power and influence over key issues. Every political party and pressure group struggled to position its claims within the new legal and political framework. Basque and Catalan national identities became very relevant in the midst of the open—and often heated—debate about how (de)centralised should the new Republic be. This chapter will look into how Basque and Catalan nationalism—and particularly the PNV and ERC, as the main political actors—developed their claims for home rule in this context.

With respect to the initial *conditions*²⁹¹ in Catalonia and the Basque Country at this stage, there are several important points to be made. The political opportunity structure was still relatively open: on paper, the question of a Spanish federal state was still in the air. Basque and Catalan nationalists interpreted that there was a relatively wide margin for their claims. However, the lack of a strong federalist tradition in Spanish politics and the position of most of the Spanish political actors were good indicators that the new regime’s decentralisation would not go that far.

Consequences of past developments must also be weighed in. The previous chapter has shown how Basque and Catalan nationalists had taken part in the struggle to remove the Spanish monarchy. As proclamations of the new Spanish Republic spread, both movements tried to set up their own republics—although the Basques, who followed the Catalan example, never got beyond verbal declarations—in an attempt to institutionalise their claims. This was partly possible due to the open opportunity structure characteristic of a regime shift. Once the new Provisional Government was firmly established in Madrid, it moved swiftly to stop the development of the Basque and Catalan Republics. It achieved so by applying repression to the former case, and co-optation to the latter.

²⁹¹ ‘Conditions’ can be defined as “characteristics of sites and relations among sites that shape the contention that occurs in and across them”, see Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 2nd ed., p. 239.

In Catalonia, the direct negotiations that had taken place between the Catalan and Spanish provisional governments secured an initial implementation of Catalan home rule. The 21st of April the Spanish Provisional Government issued a decree by which the *Generalitat* was declared to be “restored”, thus eliminating the previous Madrid-dependent provincial governments and legally co-opting the new Catalan authorities into the Spanish Republican political framework. The Catalan Government consisted of a Presidency—held by the leader of *Estat Català*, Francesc Macià—and seven minister-like *Consellers*. ERC was therefore in power and already exercising an important—if yet ill-defined—degree of self-government.

Conditions were very different in the Basque Country, which was under direct Madrid rule in the aftermath of the forcefully aborted Gernika gathering of elected councillors. The new Republic's leaders' approach to the question of Basque home rule was marked by their deep mistrust of the PNV. The Republican-Socialist Bloc maintained that it was not opposed to Basque self-government in principle, but that it could only be conceded once a new Spanish constitution was drafted. It refused to grant the Mayors' movement—which in the wake of Gernika continued to campaign for home rule—any political legitimacy. The same day the *Generalitat* was created, the 21st of April, a Government decree created *Comisiones Gestoras* (‘Management Commissions’) to rule all non-Catalan provinces. These new bodies were to be made up of politically reliable members—mainly republicans, radicals and socialists—designated by the Madrid-appointed Civil Governors. This avoided provincial elections in the Basque Country, which the PSOE and other republican parties feared could be won by the PNV and the Carlists. ANV, on the other hand, was included in the Gipuzkoa and Biscay commissions, but it lacked the political weight to achieve its objective: the fusion of the four Basque provinces' *Comisiones Gestoras* into a Basque “Provisional government”.²⁹²

Religion was another key element affecting Basque contentious politics. Opposition to the secularisation policies of the Spanish Republic was strong in the Basque Country, increasing the relevancy of Catholic *versus* secular political

²⁹² de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 133–136.

identities. The new regime was perceived from the start by many Catholics²⁹³ as a potential danger to their faith. This was particularly felt in May 1931: between the 10th and the 13th, a wave of violence against Church buildings hit many cities, including Madrid and Valencia. Although the Basque Country was largely spared—as was Catalonia—*Euzkadi* announced that the PNV was ready to protect religious buildings, should the state authorities need help. Those same authorities expelled the Bishop of Vitoria—who was openly opposed to the new regime—to France shortly after, further alienating Basque Catholic opinion.²⁹⁴ On the other hand, Catholic political identities in Catalonia were much weaker, thus having a lesser impact on political contention.

In terms of the relationship to the republican regime during this cycle, ERC can be characterised as a regime *member*, with a rather “secure standing in day-to-day politics”. In fact, two of the Spanish Republic's ministers—Domingo and d'Olwer—were Catalans and quite close to ERC. The PNV's position, on the other hand, is best understood as a regime *challenger*, with a strong presence in politics but without the “secure standing” enjoyed by ERC.²⁹⁵ This contrast would have a decisive influence on the degree of success achieved by both movements in terms of securing home rule.

Despite such different conditions, Basque and Catalan nationalist politics continued to move within two parallel streams of contention for home rule. ERC and the PNV essentially shared the same aim: an *Estatuto*, or home rule charter, that would take them to a new phase of the nation-building process. During this particular sub-cycle, their efforts produced very different outcomes. The Basque proposal, known as the *Estatuto de Estella*, after the town where it was voted by an assembly of Basque Mayors, was finally blocked by the new Spanish Constitution. Basque nationalists were in fact still years away from achieving self-government. The Catalan proposal, on the other hand, was considered for debate by the Spanish Parliament. Known as the *Estatut de Núria* after the valley in the Pyrenees where

²⁹³ In this context, having a ‘Catholic’ political identity is understood not as practicing the Catholic faith—which included the vast majority of the Basque population at the time—but rather as opposing secularisation and supporting a major role for the Catholic Church in both the private and public sphere.

²⁹⁴ de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 151–153. For the editorial about the May violence see “Ante los pasados sucesos”, *Euzkadi*, 14/5/1931, p. 1.

²⁹⁵ Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 2nd ed., p. 240.

its drafting commission worked, it would be eventually enacted the following year, 1932. This was only after a protracted debate and considerable 'trimming': the removal or modification of some of its more ambitious content. Although both projects were of similar nature—they both anticipated a very decentralised Spanish state structure which did not materialise—they also differed in particular aspects of their content.

This chapter will concentrate on these two *Estatutos* and the developments surrounding their creation and defence before Madrid. The following pages will aim to 1) argue why both *Estatutos* shared essentially similar ideas about the nation and nation-building and 2) explain their different contents, as well as the different outcomes mentioned above. Once again, the relations and interactions between Basque and Catalan nationalists during the period will also remain in focus.

The chapter's content is organised into two sections: the first will deal with the processes surrounding the *Estatutos'* creation during the first two months of the Second Spanish Republic. The second section will cover Basque and Catalan nationalist efforts to materialise their *Estatutos* in the context of the Spanish constitutional debate through the summer and autumn of 1931.

4. 1. Sketching out home rule: the creation of the Catalan and Basque Estatutos (April-June 1931)

4. 1. 1. Shared claims, different challenges, alternative paths

The introduction to this chapter has already mentioned how state repression and co-optation had shaped the initial conditions operating in the Basque Country and Catalonia at the start of the Spanish republican ‘constituent period’. The result manifested itself throughout the second half of April 1931, and can be termed as ‘de-escalation’.²⁹⁶ Both ERC and the PNV made the same strategic shift: they abandoned the goal of creating Catalan and Basque republics for a less ambitious horizon of home rule within a single Spanish Republic. In practice, the two different sets of conditions faced by the two parties resulted in them opting for two different paths.

ERC, from its position of institutional power and as a regime member, implemented a top-down model. The Catalan Government issued decrees to create an assembly of representatives named *Diputació provisional*. This new body would then draft an *Estatuto* to be voted by the people of Catalonia and presented before the Spanish Constituent Assembly. With this plan, ERC was responding to its particular needs as the leading political actor in Catalonia: not only was it opening a path to make home rule a defined and legally bound reality, it was also reinforcing its institutional position. The new *Diputació provisional* could function

²⁹⁶ ‘Escalation’ can be defined as the “displacement of moderate goals and tactics to more extreme goals and tactics”, see Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 1st ed., p. 215. Here ‘moderate’ and ‘extreme’ can be considered to mean ‘closer to’ and ‘further away’ from the status quo respectively.

as a 'legislative' branch of the *Generalitat*, creating a precedent for a 'Catalan parliament'. It would incorporate representatives from other political parties besides ERC, therefore enhancing the political legitimacy of the new Catalan institutional frame.

Conversely, the PNV put its efforts into a bottom-up path towards home rule, coherent with its position as a regime challenger. After initial failed talks with Madrid to achieve the creation of a Basque "interim government"²⁹⁷ the party decided to reorient the Mayors' movement from a 'pro-Basque Republic' to a 'pro-Basque *Estatuto*' stance.²⁹⁸ With the Basque *Comisiones Gestoras* in the hands of Madrid-appointed socialists and republicans, for whom Basque home rule was not an immediate priority, the PNV opted for a non-institutional alternative. It set out to turn the Mayors' movement into a powerful mobilising platform—essentially a social movement campaign. José Antonio Aguirre became one of the most well-known faces, as well as a key leader, of the movement. The plan was to involve a majority of the Basque Mayors in a process to draft and ratify an *Estatuto* project that could then be carried before Madrid. It was a challenge to those holding institutional power—the Spanish government and the *Gestoras*—making claims—Basque home rule in the form of an *Estatuto*—on behalf of the Basque population. It was not limited, however, to public displays of strength, but aspired to embody an alternative political legitimacy. After all, its members were elected representatives and its objective was to produce a new institutional framework.

Neither ERC nor the PNV were planning to achieve home rule on their own. ERC wanted to attract a wide section of the political spectrum—including its rivals of the Catalan conservative nationalist *Lliga Regionalista*—to the *Diputació provisional*. The PNV, on the other hand, turned to the Spanish Republic's enemies: the Carlist monarchists—still a major political actor in the Basque Country. The

²⁹⁷ Ramón Bikuña, Francisco Basterrecha and Manuel Robles were sent to Madrid to negotiate Basque self-government on the PNV's behalf. Their proposal included the mentioned Basque "interim government" modelled on the *Generalitat* to provisionally assume home rule. This would precede the drawing up of an *Estatuto*, to be then ratified by the future Spanish parliament. Nothing concrete came from this meeting, and towards the end of April the PNV began to fully prioritise mobilisation. See de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 137–138.

²⁹⁸ The previous chapter has shown how the Basque Mayors' movement was born out of the attempted gathering in Gernika. Its initial *leitmotiv* was the creation of a "Basque Republic" within a "[Spanish] federal republic". The PNV was the main force behind the movement, and by the 22nd of April it was still officially standing by its demands for a "Basque Republican Government attached to the Spanish Federal Republic". See *Euzkadi*, 21/4/1931, p. 1 and *Euzkadi*, 22/4/1931.

issue of religion had acted as a form of boundary activation for the Catholic *versus* secular identity cleavage, bringing the Basque nationalists closer to these groups. Now, the PNV was able to assert its position as the leading political actor of the new alliance: the recent proclamation of the Spanish Republic had all monarchists disoriented. The Carlists in particular were divided into three different factions that would not merge until 1932.²⁹⁹ Carlist support for Basque home rule, however, was very much opportunistic, and undermining the new Spanish Republic remain these groups' primary objective.

Given the different initial conditions, main political actors' relationships with the regime, political identities and coalitions, it is no surprise that the two scenarios led to different developments. In Catalonia, the election for the new *Diputació Provisional* was scheduled for the 25th of May. Its potential as a new channel for political participation, incorporating previously passive or isolated political actors, was effectively a form of co-optation. The whole concept, however, was flawed by its indirect format: only those elected as Town Councillors in the previous local election would have voting rights. This clearly benefited ERC: it had done very well in the 12th of April election, and its leap to power had attracted many Councillors that had been elected as independent candidates to the ranks of the party.³⁰⁰ Lluís Companys—the veteran republican who had joined *Esquerra* and became one of its leaders—had been made Civil Governor of Barcelona. He defended the democratic nature of the indirect format, considering it “an alliance of democracy with efficiency”, but this view was not popular outside ERC. The opposition parties almost unanimously refused to take part in the election. This included the *Lliga* and the Catalan sections of the main Spanish ruling parties: the President Niceto Alcalá-Zamora's republican right and the Catalan federation of the PSOE. ERC responded by engaging in the mechanism of brokerage, opening talks with several

²⁹⁹ Carlism emerged as a political force in 1833, and since it had evolved into a traditionalist and legitimist political movement with the aim of establishing a monarchy under an alternative branch of the Bourbon dynasty. It remained a key agent in Spanish politics for more than a century, often resorting to political violence in various forms including all-out war between 1833-1840, 1846-1869 and 1872-1876. By 1931 it was still a powerful force in the Basque Country—with its stronghold in Navarre—and, to a lesser extent Catalonia and Valencia. See Jordi Canal, *Banderas Blancas, Boinas Rojas: Una Historia Política Del Carlismo, 1876-1939*, Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2006.

³⁰⁰ These newcomers were frowned upon by some within ERC, particularly by those closest to *Estat Català*, who saw them as opportunists with ties to Primo de Rivera's Dictatorship. See Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, pp. 82–83.

parties. These were only successful with Antoni Rovira i Virgili's *Partit Catalanista Republicà*, and with the Radical Party in Barcelona, where it agreed to stand a candidate.³⁰¹ The *Lliga* had been ready to take part in the election with six candidates, but wanted to guarantee its seats by ensuring *Esquerra* would not stand alternative candidates for those particular districts. ERC refused and the conservative Catalan nationalists finally withdrew.³⁰²

The *Generalitat* issued a note the day before the election, appealing to “the historical importance of the *Lliga* within Catalan nationalist movements”, and insisting on the necessary participation of all political parties.³⁰³ Macià was clearly somewhat concerned that the conservative nationalists' withdrawal would weaken the ‘national consensus’ needed for a solid path towards an *Estatuto*. The election's results—a second round had to take place the 7th of June—gave ERC 25 out of 44 deputies, a comfortable majority in the new assembly. Its socialist allies of the *Unió Socialista de Catalunya* obtained another four deputies, and a list of intellectual sympathisers, *Entesa Republicana*, an extra two.³⁰⁴ In balance, the previously described mechanisms of co-optation and brokerage can be seen to contribute to two processes of contention: *institutionalisation*³⁰⁵ and (partial) democratisation. The creation of the *Diputació provisional* gave the struggle for Catalan home rule a firm institutional base from which to develop. It had failed, however, to incorporate key political actors, so the *Diputació* fell short of (full) democratisation.

The new institution selected a drafting commission, which included Antoni Xirau from ERC, Rafael Campalans from the *Unió Socialista de Catalunya*, Martí Esteve from the *Partit Catalanista Republicà* and two other independent members: Jaume Carner and Pere Coromines. The five commissioners retired to the Núria valley in the Pyrenees to work, giving the Catalan *Estatuto* its name. The text was

³⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 218, 80.

³⁰² “La posició de la Lliga davant l'Estatut”, *La Veu de Catalunya*, 24/5/1931, p. 1.

³⁰³ “Una nota de la Generalitat de Catalunya sobre l'abstenció de la Lliga”, *El Dia*, 23/05/1931, pp. 1–2.

³⁰⁴ Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, p. 83.

³⁰⁵ ‘Institutionalisation’ can be defined as the “incorporation of performances and political actors into the routines of organized politics”, see Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 1st ed., p. 216.

completed by the 20th of June and was ratified by the *Diputació provisional* the 14th of July.³⁰⁶

In the Basque Country, the Mayors' movement was strengthened by the combined effect of three identifiable mechanisms. Brokerage—in the form of the new alliance weaved by the PNV—meant more political actors lent their resources to the movement. Diffusion—as more Mayors joined the movement—involved an increasing number of agents were assuming the demand for a Basque *Estatuto* as their own. Coordinated action—as the movement began to adopt accords and an internal structure³⁰⁷—consolidated growth and defined a concrete path for a text to be produced and ratified. The 8th of May, the Mayors' movement requested a first draft for a Basque *Estatuto* from the Society of Basque Studies³⁰⁸, and in the meantime it continued to muster support.

In contrast to the relative quietness in Catalonia, the combination of the three above described mechanisms—brokerage, diffusion and coordinated action—produced a vibrant mobilisation process with visible social movement campaign traits. New endorsements to the Mayors' movement were published in the front page of *Euzkadi*, publicly displaying the continued growth.³⁰⁹ The campaign also incorporated small rallies on the local level, which often included speeches about the virtues of home rule as well as traditional dance and music.³¹⁰ Once the Society of Basque Studies completed its draft for a Basque *Estatuto*, however, the campaign's main show of strength was the mass gathering of Mayors in Estella to discuss the text. The “grand assembly of Estella” took place the 14th of June, and according to *Euzkadi* it mobilised 30.000 supporters from across the Basque

³⁰⁶ Teresa Abelló Güell, *El Debat Estatutari de 1932*, Barcelona: Parlament de Catalunya, 2007, pp. 37–38.

³⁰⁷ The movement was led by an 18 member Committee and a permanent Commission formed by the Mayors of Getxo, Azpeitia, Laudio and Sangüesa. José Antonio Aguirre, Mayor of Getxo, soon stood out as a young leader for the movement. See de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 157.

³⁰⁸ *Euzko Ikaskuntza* in Basque, or *Sociedad de Estudios Vascos* in Spanish; this entity—still in existence today—was founded in 1918 to promote Basque culture and research. It included experts from different fields and political backgrounds, and enjoyed institutional support from the four Basque provincial *Diputaciones*. See Eusko-Ikaskuntza, ‘Historia’, 2020 <<http://www.eusko-ikaskuntza.eus/es/historia/e-4/>> [accessed 9 March 2020].

³⁰⁹ *Euzkadi* was particularly enthusiastic about the endorsements coming from Navarre, reading them as proof that a Basque *Estatuto* including this province was possible. See for example “Los Ayuntamientos Navarros”, *Euzkadi*, 20/5/1931, p. 1; “La adhesión de Gares”, *Euzkadi*, 23/5/1931, p. 1 and “Nabarra, en pie en defensa del Estatuto Vasco”, *Euzkadi*, 26/05/1931, p. 1.

³¹⁰ For an example, see “La campaña en pro del Estatuto Vasco en Araba”, *Euzkadi*, 26/05/1931, p. 1.

Country. A colourful display of flags, parades, speeches, folk recitals, the collective singing of the *Gernikako Arbola* anthem and even hired airplanes to announce the event turned Estella into one great political performance.³¹¹ The assembly was attended by 427 representatives of Basque municipalities, a 78% of the total figure. In terms of population, this amounted to roughly half of the Basque Country's inhabitants.³¹²

From the start, both ERC and the PNV faced opposition to their claims. The nature of such opposition, and how it was managed, however, was again largely affected by the parties' relationship with the regime—member *versus* challenger.

The fact that the limits of Catalan regional power were still unclear caused issues of political contention between Barcelona and Madrid. Such limits could only be properly defined by an *Estatuto*, which was hardly a priority for a central government bent on developing the legal and political framework for the new Republic. The Catalan Government's plan to create the *Diputació provisional* as an assembly of representatives from which to produce a draft for an *Estatuto* was initially opposed by Madrid. Many in ruling circles did not fully trust ERC, some believing its members were “more conspirators than politicians”—an opinion that was shared by many in the ranks of the conservative Catalan nationalism. Negotiations had to take place again to ensure that this and other decisions that were being made in Barcelona were, at least nominally, first issued as decrees by the Spanish Government.³¹³ Particular tensions remained between Macià and the Spanish Labour and Interior Ministers, Largo Caballero and Miguel Maura, but relations between ERC and Madrid were kept stable. The first draft produced by the Núria commission was privately presented to the Spanish Government, and some amends made by Alcalá-Zamora were accepted.³¹⁴

In the Basque Country, not only was there a significantly stronger opposition to the PNV-led home rule movement from Madrid, but a true process of

³¹¹ For a detailed chronicle of the event, see “La Asamblea Magna de Estella”, *Euzkadi*, 16/06/1931, pp. 1–2.

³¹² de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 165–166.

³¹³ Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, pp. 77–79.

³¹⁴ Abelló Güell, *El Debat...*, pp. 33–38.

competition³¹⁵ for political legitimacy. On one hand, the Basque Nationalist Party received the creation of the provincial *Comisiones Gestoras* with head-on opposition, to the point of refusing the two symbolic seats it was offered in the Biscay commission. Instead, its paper *Euzkadi* rejected the *Gestoras* as “an attack on democracy” and that “only the Municipalities, and no one other than the Municipalities, [...] should, in representation of the Basque people, draft the *Estatuto*.”³¹⁶

On the other hand, the Basque republican and left-wing parties backing the *Comisiones Gestoras* opposed the Mayors' movement from the beginning, claiming that only the *Gestoras* were entitled to lead the implementation of home rule. The PSOE and the other republican parties ensured that none of the Basque capitals—where they dominated the Local Councils—joined the Mayors' assemblies, even though they were offered a position of leadership in the movement by Aguirre. A last attempt to reach some sort of agreement between the *Gestoras* and the Mayors' Permanent Commission failed the 29th of May. The result was that “the Basque Country became divided in two opposing blocs”, and the “historical opportunity” to present a single, consensual *Estatuto* was lost.³¹⁷ This competition led to the build-up of tension, including some—even if still quite isolated—cases of violence.³¹⁸

³¹⁵ ‘Competition’ can be defined as the “pursuit of rewards or outcomes in mutually exclusive ways”, see Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 1st ed., p. 216.

³¹⁶ “Únicamente los Municipios”, *Euzkadi*, 10/5/1931, p. 1.

³¹⁷ de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 156–157.

³¹⁸ These include a shooting in which a young Basque nationalist was left blind, see “¡Ciego Por La Patria”, *Euzkadi*, 2/6/1931, p. 1; and also several attacks in the aftermath of the Estella assembly, see “Las agresiones de Olazagusía”, *Euzkadi*, 16/6/1931, p. 3. In both instances, the aggressors allegedly came from the ranks of Spanish left-wing parties.

4. 1. 2. Nations of “well-meaning citizens”. The Estella and Núria Estatutos as frames for national hegemony

The different processes of political contention behind drafting the two *Estatutos* had an impact on their actual content.³¹⁹ The Núria *Estatuto* clearly contemplated a closer relationship with the Spanish Republic than its Basque counterpart—although both were proposals for decentralisation, defining Catalonia and the Basque Country as “autonomous states”. Both texts' preliminary statements had different points of departure: the Estella *Estatuto* began with historical references to Basque sovereignty, whilst the Núria *Estatuto* directly linked Catalan autonomy with the creation of the Spanish Republic. Consequently, the Estella *Estatuto* gave the Basque Country a greater degree of self-government, which can be described as fitting a confederate rather than federal pattern for the Spanish Republic.³²⁰

Many of the more evident differences between the two texts were in fact the product of several amendments made by the PNV and the Carlists which were ratified at the Estella assembly. These included a ten-year residency requirement for migrants to obtain Basque citizenship, the regulation of Church-state relations by the Basque state and the possibility of indirect suffrage for the election of provincial assemblies. The joint Basque nationalist-Carlist project for home rule included reaching a separate concordat with the Holy See. By comparison, the Núria *Estatuto* followed a much more liberal political approach to citizenship, it left Church-state relations in the hands of the Spanish Republic and only contemplated direct universal suffrage.³²¹ Both *Estatutos* did have similar provisions for the incorporation of the Basque and Catalan languages into the primary school system. The Núria *Estatuto* considered Catalan as the only official language of Catalonia—Spanish would be reserved to communications with the

³¹⁹ This is not a comprehensive, legal comparison of both *Estatutos*, but a compared outlook of their most prominent political aspects. For the full texts, see “El Proyecto de Estatuto Vasco”, *Euzkadi*, 17/6/1931, pp. 2–3; and Generalitat De Catalunya, *El Traspàs de Serveis de l'Estat a La Generalitat: De l'Estatut de 1932 a l'Estatut de 2006*, Xavier Bernadí Gil, Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 2010, pp. 45–52.

³²⁰ de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 160.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 158–159.

Spanish Republic—whilst the Estella text included both Spanish and Basque as co-official languages.

These observed differences between the two texts clearly show the ideological and strategic distance between Catalan and Basque nationalism at this point. They can be, however, somewhat misleading. A close analysis of how the *Estatutos* were framed by Catalan and Basque nationalists reveals major similarities, including two shared major themes.

The first, and perhaps the most central idea was the concept of ‘national unity’. The *Estatutos* and their realisations were framed as transcending any previous differing political traditions, including the left-right political divide. Achieving home rule was the concern of “all well-meaning” Catalans and Basques. An article published in *La Rambla*—a sports newspaper very close to ERC—proclaimed that:

“The people must realise, in all of their greatness, of the present moments and the transcendence they mean for the future; and it is also necessary, now more than ever, the spiritual union, the moral contact, of all well-meaning Catalans.”³²²

The Basque *Euzkadi* used the same expression in one of its leading articles: “to conclude this crusade [...], our Municipalities want to begin today an intense campaign [...], which means a calling to all well-meaning Basques.”³²³ In the Catalan case, this was a shift from the more ambiguous tone of some of the texts analysed in the previous chapter of this thesis. Now Catalan national *deixis* is back: “the people” stands here for the Catalan people, pushing back the Spanish nationalist frame. As for the Basque version of the ‘national unity’ discourse, another example can be found in a note released by several Navarrese Mayors, asserting that

³²² Original fragment: “Cal que el poble s'adoni, en tota la seva grandesa, dels moments que passen i de la transcendència [sic] que guarden per a l'esdevenidor; i cal també, ara més que mai, la unió espiritual, el contacte moral, de tots els catalans de bona voluntat.” See “La nostra fe”, *la Rambla*, 18/5/1931, p. 1. A full text version of the original article can be found in Text 12 of Annex III.

³²³ Original fragment: “Y para concluir esta cruzada [...], nuestros Municipios quieren comenzar desde hoy mismo una intensa campaña [...], que significa llamamiento para todos los vascos de buena voluntad [...].” See “Ha respondido el país”, *Euzkadi*, 21/5/1931, p. 1. ANV will also appeal to “all well meaning Basques” during the June election campaign. See *Nacionalista*, 24/6/1931, p. 1.

“In this work [the *Estatuto*] which is common of all Navarrese and Basques, there must not be neither left nor right, monarchists or republicans, but only sons of this people, the most ancient in Europe, [...].”³²⁴

The Basque nationalist Mayor of Getxo José Antonio Aguirre, speaking at the Estella assembly, similarly proclaimed that “all Basques are brothers, even if we sustain different political ideas.”³²⁵ Again—this has already been mentioned in Chapter 2—using family imagery to portray the Basque nation.

The ‘national unity’ frame went, in both cases, hand in hand with the notion of a grand national consensus around each *Estatuto*. The above quoted article in *La Rambla* also included this idea:

“[...] Everyone with their gaze upon Catalonia; everyone with emotion in their hearts and a word of courage in their lips. [...] their voices [those of the *Diputació*'s new deputies] must carry the endorsement of the whole of Catalonia [...].”³²⁶

Displayed here is an element of the rhetoric of hegemony, *representation*, at work with its characteristic double meaning. The previous fragment described the nation's interests, i.e. realising the historical importance of the moment; this second fragment then hails the new deputies as those to *represent* the nation as a whole. The patriotic card³²⁷ is put into play, with appeals to “emotion” and “courage”.

This plays into the second shared theme: the idea that both *Estatutos* were the result of the unanimous will of the Basque and Catalan peoples. Sustaining this

³²⁴ Original fragment: “En esta obra que es común de todos los nabarros y los vascos, no debe haber izquierdas ni derechas, monárquicos o republicanos, sino hijos de este pueblo, el más antiguo de Europa, [...]” See “A los Ayuntamientos de Nabarra”, *Euzkadi*, 14/5/1931, p. 1. For a similar text downplaying left-right political cleavages in favour of a united front for Basque home rule, see “¡A la Opinión Gipuzkoarra!”, *Euzkadi*, 15/5/1931, p. 1.

³²⁵ “La Asamblea Magna de Estella”, *Euzkadi*, 16/06/1931, p. 2. For Aguirre's full speech, see Text 11 of Annex III.

³²⁶ Original fragment: “Tots amb la mirada posada en Catalunya; tots amb una emoció en els cors i una paraula de coratge en els llavis. [...] les seves veus han de portar l'aval de tot Catalunya [...]” See “La nostra fe”, *la Rambla*, 18/5/1931, p. 1.

³²⁷ For more details on this concept, see Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, pp. 99–103.

'national consensus' frame also meant hiding or downplaying dissent: the Spanish left that was opposing the Estella *Estatuto* in the Basque Country and the Catalan conservative right that was isolating itself from the home rule process in Catalonia. *Euzkadi* countered this uncomfortable reality by using the language and rhetoric of hegemony to frame the Mayors' movement as an expression of the nation:

"The Municipalities' campaign that begun with the indifference, [...] of many, now has invaded the Country. [...] And we know that elements from all political tendencies work with enthusiasm following the orientation of our Municipalities [...].

[...] [the Mayors] travel through the Fatherland waking the Municipalities that were waiting for the moment of this call to answer. [...]

The joy is today reality, because the Country has answered."³²⁸

In another clear form of double representation, this fragment shows the Mayors' Movement as both 'speaking for' and 'speaking to' the nation. It both "travel[s] through the Fatherland", awakening support for the *Estatuto* and embodies "the Country", that was waiting to be awakened. The capitals' absence for the movement is ignored, although political diversity is still claimed in the form of "elements from all political tendencies"—a reference to the Society of Basque Studies.

La Rambla's reaction to the fact that, besides ERC, most Catalan political parties did not field candidates for the *Diputació provisional* election was to acknowledge that the election had been "prepared quickly" and that "the passion of the streets had not reached the ballot boxes." The paper remained consistent with the discourse it had produced before the election:

³²⁸ Original fragment: "La campaña de los Municipios que comenzó ante la indiferencia, [...] de muchos, hoy ha invadido el País. [...] Y nos consta que elementos de todas las significaciones políticas laboran con entusiasmo siguiendo la orientación de nuestros Municipios [...].

[...] [Los alcaldes] recorren el suelo de la Patria despertando a los Municipios que esperaban el momento de esta llamada para responder. [...]

El gozo es hoy realidad, porque el País ha respondido." See "Ha Respondido el País", *Euzkadi*, 21/05/1931, p. 1.

“On the part of the people [the election] is an act of faith in the delegates that it sends to the *Diputació de la Generalitat*. On the part of the deputies, [...] from this moment to the moment of leaving the assembly of the *Generalitat*, they must not and cannot be [...], men of [a particular] party. They are, solely, deputies of Catalonia. [...] Catalan citizens.

[...] Catalonia demands it. And Catalonia is well worth the sacrifice of a party [point of view] and of political interests.”³²⁹

The frame remained one of cross-party national unity. The patriotic card was back in full strength, praising Catalonia as “well worth the sacrifice” of any particular interests. The members of the *Diputació provisional* are framed as “deputies of Catalonia”—even if a significant fraction of Catalonia's political parties had declined to take part in the election.³³⁰ The fragment not only has the newly elected politicians renouncing their particular party allegiances, but also blending with “the people”, as simply “Catalan citizens.”

Why were two different *Estatutos*, created as a result of different processes in different political contexts, framed so similarly by their promoters? In line with the main hypothesis defined in the introduction of the present thesis, this chapter argues that the answer lies within the role played by home rule in the Basque and Catalan nation-building processes.

Both *Estatutos* were essentially projects for the creation of Basque and Catalan institutions with a degree of state power. Going back to Martin and Kamusella's enlarged version of Hroch's schema for nation-building³³¹, the *Estatutos* can be understood as a phase CD transition: from a national mass movement to national institutions. Such institutions would then continue the nation-building process—

³²⁹ Original fragment: “Per part del poble, en un acte de fe en els delegats que envia a la Diputació de la Generalitat. Per part dels diputats, [...] des d'aquest moment fins al moment d'abandonar l'assemblea de la Generalitat, no han d'ésser ni poden ésser [...], homes de partit. Són, només, diputats de Catalunya. [...] ciutadans catalans. [...]

Catalunya ho exigeix així. I Catalunya bé val el sacrifici d'un punt de partit i d'uns interessos de política.” See “Amb Catalunya i per Catalunya”, *La Rambla*, 25/05/1931, p. 1.

³³⁰ Raimon Soler's work with the results of the 12th of April local election shows that the *Lliga Regionalista* alone had obtained 21.4% of the vote in Barcelona and 17.7% of the Town Councillors throughout Catalonia. See “Les Eleccions Municipals...”, pp. 14, 17.

³³¹ Maxwell, “Typologies and Phases...” , p. 871.

what Coakley has termed “national consolidation”³³²—now with some or all of the tools available to nation-states.

The Estella and Núria projects shared similar visions for the creation of nation-building tools. They both foresaw the devolution of the health and education systems and the creation of Catalan and Basque police forces. Education in the ‘national’ language was a particular concern in both texts. Both also included provisions affecting conscription into the Spanish Army, limiting military service to Catalonia and the Basque Country. Essentially, this meant blocking or limiting the influence key Spanish nation-building efforts and replacing them with Basque or Catalan alternatives.

As well as these new institutions, the *Estatutos* of Núria and Estella both included explicit affirmations of nationhood. In its preliminary statement, the Estella *Estatuto* defined the Basque Country as a “natural and legal entity” with “the right to constitute and rule itself”. The Catalan charter stated that the base for the *Estatuto* was “the right that belongs to Catalonia, as a people, to self-determination of the restoration of Catalan unity [...]”. Both texts were essentially adopting the central element of Basque and Catalan nationalists’ worldview—as well as some of their main demands—as the new legal and political framework. This was to be founded on a new consensus, accepted by political agents that did not define themselves as nationalist, such as the Carlists in the Basque Country. The *Estatutos* were, in effect, proposals for a new national *topos*.

Engracio de Aranzadi—he often used the pseudonym *Kizkitza*—was a first generation Basque nationalist. Despite being a firm believer in Sabino Arana’s ideological core, he had always believed Basque nationalism should seek wider political alliances.³³³ Now, Aranzadi was very conscious of the *Estatuto*’s potential, and also that achieving a national consensus meant the PNV would have to adopt a lower profile, and that:

³³² Coakley, *Nationalism, Ethnicity...*, pp. 194, 214.

³³³ De Pablo, Mees & Rodríguez Ranz, *El Péndulo...*, Vol. 1, p. 66.

“this attitude, certainly difficult for those of us who have been lifelong affiliates to nationalism, [...] must now be maintained with utmost firmness, in order to impose [...] with the exemplarity of selflessness, Basque unity, in which all of our strength lies.

Facing the possibility of achieving with this [a Basque *Estatuto*] a great advance in the path of Basque social and political reintegration, [Basque] nationalism must forget its partisan interests.”³³⁴

This strategic thinking was consistent with the framing of the *Estatuto* as about ‘national unity’—Aranzadi spoke in terms of “racial solidarity”. It also meant postponing more ambitious political goals, such as independence. *Euzkadi* pointed out that this was not a contradiction, and that the Basque Country “will speak through its Town Councils and will condense its opinion which, crystallised in an *Estatuto*, will constitute for the moment the aspiration of the Country as a whole.”³³⁵ *For the moment* meant that full independence could still be brought forward in an unspecified future. Luis Arana—brother of the PNV founder Sabino Arana—encouraged Basque nationalists to seize the opportunity:

“Basques: if the treacherous monarchy violated all of its pacts and made you bow your neck as slaves, now the Spanish Republic invites us to break our chains. Are you going to waste this opportunity we had not dreamed of? [...]

Behold, [...] the distance that you must walk so that Euzkadi will be its own master. Today, [...] you must achieve a closer position to that goal that you sought to reach when you heard the voice of my brother, Sabino, who one day called you for your Fatherland.

³³⁴ Original fragment: “Esta actitud, difícil ciertamente para los que somos afiliados del nacionalismo de toda la vida, [...] tiene que ser mantenida ahora con la maxime [sic] firmeza, a fin de imponer así, [...] con la ejemplaridad del propio desinterés, la unidad vasca, en la que está toda nuestra fuerza. [...]

Ante la posibilidad de dar con esto un gran avance en el camino de la reintegración política y social vasca, olvídate el nacionalismo de sus intereses partidistas.” See Kizkitza, “Solidaridad Racial”, *Euzkadi*, 24/5/1931, p. 1.

³³⁵ “La Campaña Municipal”, *Euzkadi*, 30/4/1931, p. 1.

Today you will not be able to achieve the independence of Euzkadi, which you long for, because you are not ready for so much patriotic happiness.”³³⁶

Luis Arana's article was the ultimate validation for the Basque Nationalist Party's new home rule strategy. The veteran nationalist's seal of approval was a powerful gesture that could dispel any doubts from the more staunchly pro-independence activists. In his text, Arana framed the struggle for an *Estatuto* as a stepping stone towards the final goal, an independent Basque state. Mentioning his brother Sabino, who was celebrated as a hero by many of his followers, worked as a link between the new strategy and the PNV's history.

In Catalonia, some voices saw the the first developments of Catalan home rule as proof of a new, bilateral relationship with Spain. Political independence was now out of the question, as “nobody in Catalonia—not even the separatists of other times—speaks of separation”. These were the words of Joan Baptista Claret, the local leader of the *Unió Socialista de Catalunya*, the socialist party that despite not joining ERC, remained a close ally up until 1936.³³⁷ He portrayed the party President Francesc Macià's leadership as a “venerable presidency”, and an expression of *seny*.³³⁸ This term, which can be translated as “feet on the ground common sense”, had powerful implications. Its use can be traced back to the middle ages, but from the 19th Century it was promoted as one of the “cardinal virtues” of Catalan national character.³³⁹ Macià himself was not so quick in declaring Catalan independence obsolete, but he conceded that a comprehensive, bilateral agreement between Catalonia and Spain would.³⁴⁰

But not all “separatists of other times” were comfortable with the unfolding of events. Macià's party, *Estat Català*, remained as a pro-independence current within

³³⁶ Original fragment: “Vascos: si pérfida la monarquía vulneró cuanto pudo sus pactos y os hizo doblar la cerviz como a esclavos, hoy la República española nos invita a romper nuestras cadenas. [...] Mira, [...] el terreno que debes andar para que Euzkadi sea dueña de sí misma. Hoy, [...] debes ganar una posición más próxima a ese fin que te propusiste al escuchar la voz de mi hermano, Sabino [...]. Hoy no podras conseguir la independencia de Euzkadi que [...] ansías, porque todavía no te hallas preparado para tanta felicidad patria.” See Luis Arana, “Euzkadi, dueña de sí misma”, *Euzkadi*, 30/4/1931, p. 1.

³³⁷ See Ricard Alcaraz i González, *La Unió Socialista de Catalunya (1923-1936)*, Barcelona: La Magrana, 1987.

³³⁸ “Els separatistes de l'altra banda”, *Nosaltres Sols!*, 25/4/1931, p. 1.

³³⁹ Susan M. Digiacomo, “‘La Caseta i l’Hortet’: Rural Imagery in Catalan Urban Politics”, *Anthropological Quarterly*, 60.4 (1987), pp. 160–66.

³⁴⁰ “El ‘separatismo’ catalán”, *Euzkadi*, 30/5/1931, p. 1.

ERC, although firmly committed to its leader. On the other hand, the pro-independence group *Nosaltres Sols!* was strongly opposed to any form of de-escalation short of a Catalan republic. Other small groups opposed to ERC's home rule strategy would emerge in the next two years, and will be discussed later.

4. 2. Núria-Estella-Madrid: the *Estatutos* and the Spanish republican constitutional process (June-December 1931)

4. 2. 1. The test of the ballot box

By June the Catalan and Basque *Estatutos* had already been drafted. They now stood as concrete, well defined platforms for Catalan and Basque nationalist claims for home rule. The two documents had already received some form of political legitimisation—the Núria *Estatuto* by a Catalan institution, the *Diputació provisional*, and the Estella *Estatuto* by the Basque Mayor's movement assembly. This, however, was not enough for their materialisation under the new regime. The *Estatutos* could only be made part of the legal framework by the *Cortes*, the new republican parliament. Political contention for Catalan and Basque home rule would now enter the realm of Spanish institutional politics.

The *Estatutos'* drafting process came to an end as the Spanish constituent election approached. From it, a legislative body—the unicameral *Cortes*—was to be formed. Its first priority: to discuss, amend and enact a constitution for the Spanish Republic. In terms of contention for home rule, the election had a double meaning for Basque and Catalan nationalists. First, it was an opportunity to put the new *Estatutos* to the test—a good result for the candidates upholding the documents of Núria and Estella would boost the political legitimacy of their claims. Second, if the *Cortes* were to be the political arena where home rule would be decided upon, achieving a solid representation would help the position of Basque and Catalan nationalists in the upcoming debates.

The new electoral system created large provincial constituencies—cities with a population over 100.000 also got their own constituency—with one *Diputado* (Member of Parliament) for every 50.000 people. The minimum voting age was

reduced to 23, although women could still not vote—the Constitution that would grant that right was still not in place—even though they could stand as candidates. The new system stimulated the creation of large coalitions, as around 75% of the total seats—the proportion varied in particular constituencies—were automatically allocated to the lists with the top number of votes.³⁴¹ In both Catalonia and the Basque Country, the forming of coalitions reflected and reinforced the particular alliances that had formed during the *Estatutos'* drafting processes.

ERC and the PNV both had to go through tough negotiations to form electoral lists. The Basque Nationalist Party joined its Carlist allies to form the *Candidaturas Vascas Defensoras del Estatuto* ('Basque Candidacies in Defence of the *Estatuto*'). Only in the province of Araba—where historically Carlist support was much stronger—was the coalition not possible, with the PNV and the Carlists fielding separate candidates.³⁴² ERC joined wider republican coalitions except for the constituencies of Barcelona-province and Barcelona-city, where it formed its own party lists, incorporating a few independent or USC candidates.³⁴³ Both ERC and the PNV tried to politically widen their coalitions as much as possible, but followed different criteria and faced different challenges in doing so.

The Mayors' Movement's permanent commission was the main broker behind the Basque nationalist-Carlist coalition, working the chinks between the two political traditions.³⁴⁴ The Estella *Estatuto* had to work as the lowest common denominator. The PNV's approach to the election was consistent with its strategic position as described by Engracio de Aranzadi. The party was to maintain “utter partisan selflessness” in the name of a Basque ‘national consensus’ that would make the Estella *Estatuto* a political reality. However, many leading Carlist figures, particularly in Navarre, were only standing behind the Estella text out of a will to

³⁴¹ For a more detailed description of the system and its application to the Basque provinces, see de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 184–188; see also Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 1, pp. 145–148.

³⁴² For a more detailed composition of the *Candidaturas Vascas del Estatuto*, see de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 197–199.

³⁴³ For a more detailed composition of the lists with candidates belonging to ERC, see Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, pp. 85–86.

³⁴⁴ The Arana brothers, the founders of Basque nationalism, were born into a Carlist family and remained ideologically close to Carlism until their evolution towards Basque nationalism during their coming of age. Since then, Basque nationalists rejected Carlism as pro-Spanish. See de Pablo, Mees & Rodríguez Ranz, *El Péndulo...*, Vol. 1, pp. 24–25, 30–31, 42.

combat Spanish republican secularisation. An example was the Count of Rodezno, a member of the high nobility and who would later be Minister of Justice for the first Francoist Government. The coalition was possible in Navarre only after the PNV accepted to reduce its representation to a single candidate: José Antonio Aguirre. In consonance with the previous discourse about home rule transcending left-right political divides, an attempt was also made to bring ANV into the alliance, but to no avail.³⁴⁵

ERC, on the other hand, was under some pressure to engage in a similar electoral strategy: a ‘national unity’ list focused on the *Núria Estatuto* including all Catalan nationalist parties. This idea came from elements within the decaying *Partit Catalanista Republicà*, and smaller groups such as *Nosaltres Sols!*³⁴⁶ Instead, ERC went to the election with a brief, but nevertheless defined program aimed at shaping Spanish politics.³⁴⁷ Central to this was the defence of a federal constitutional model compatible with the *Núria Estatuto*. This ‘Spanish’ approach to the election enabled ERC to tap into its prestige as one of the political actors responsible for the revolution that had brought the new regime. As it had done the 12th of April, it formed coalitions with Spanish republicans and federalists, many of which were complete outsiders to Catalan nationalism. No attempt was made to join forces with the *Lliga Regionalista*, which actually included Carlists—whose strength in Catalonia was very modest compared to that in the Basque Country—in its lists.

In any case, both ERC's and the PNV-Carlists' lists included characters who had little ties to the struggle for home rule, but could boost the coalitions' votes. In the Basque case, this included Antonio Pildain, a canon from the Vitoria Cathedral which could stimulate support from many little-politicised Catholics. In the Catalan case, a clear example was the inclusion of Ramon Franco Bahamonde—a famous

³⁴⁵ Some within ANV's leadership, disillusioned with the Spanish left, had considered approaching the PNV. The brief contacts that followed failed after ANV's representatives refused to adopt the *Estella Estatuto*. See de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 190–191.

³⁴⁶ Despite the limited political influence of its promoters, the ‘national unity list’ concept must have had a considerable impact, as *l'Opinió* dedicated some pieces to directly argue against it. See J. Ventalló, “Catalanisme ploramiques”, *l'Opinió*, 20/6/1931, p. 1; and *l'Opinió*, 14/6/1931, p. 1.

³⁴⁷ ERC's program included a federal structure for the new Republic, political accountability for Primo de Rivera's Dictatorship, a French Revolution-modelled recognition of civil rights, trade-union freedom, basic welfare measures, secular, free and compulsory schooling, a reform of the penal system, a progressive land reform, policies in support of worker cooperatives, monetary reforms and the reduction of the colonial garrison in Morocco. See Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, pp. 84–85.

air pilot and the future dictator's youngest brother—in ERC's list for Barcelona city. Macià himself justified the choice as a way to attract the support of “non-Catalan republicans”.³⁴⁸ The decision to include the Spanish military officer—a complete outsider to Catalan politics—was controversial, and had to be explicitly defended by *l'Opinió*.³⁴⁹

The *Candidaturas Vascas Defensoras del Estatuto* conducted a rather decentralised campaign, with the Carlists and Basque nationalists organising their own events and few large rallies.³⁵⁰ The PNV was in fact developing what can be described as its own social movement base: reorganising its female wing, *Emakume Abertzale Batza* (‘Patriotic Women Association’), opening new local headquarters, known as *Batzokiak*, and founding new *Juventud Vasca* (‘Basque Youth’) groups in particular.³⁵¹ Within this tight schedule, the Basque Nationalist Party also managed to cram dozens of local-level rallies. These were announced as pro-*Estatuto* events in *Euzkadi*³⁵², which framed the whole campaign as a plebiscite on the Estella document. Looking into the reports of some of the largest rallies, however, shows that they had quite an inward-looking, strictly PNV tone, with little references to the other members of the coalition. This was somewhat understandable in the case of Araba³⁵³, where the PNV stood for the election alone, but not elsewhere. In Barakaldo, Biscay, a rally was held with Elías Gallastegi, Manuel Egileor and Manuel Robles as the main speakers. All three were long time activists that had belonged to the PNV's *Aberrri* faction, with Egileor and Robles standing for the Pro-*Estatuto* coalition's second and fourth positions in the Bilbao constituency list. Egileor went as far as to downplay “elections and their results” as “secondary matters”:

³⁴⁸ Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, p. 89.

³⁴⁹ See *L'Opinió*, 14/6/1931 and 23/6/1931, p. 1.

³⁵⁰ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 209.

³⁵¹ See “Inauguración de Juventud Vasca”, *Euzkadi*, 23/6/1931, p. 1 and “Se ha constituido la Directiva de Emakume Abertzale Batza”, *Euzkadi*, 24/6/1931, p. 5.

³⁵² See for example, “Actos en Defensa del Estatuto”, *Euzkadi*, 25/6/1931, p. 5.

³⁵³ “Importante mitin en el frontón gazteiztarra”, *Euzkadi*, 27/6/1931, p. 4.

“[...] we are not interested in false power. Elections are nothing more than a pretext; the power that is raised by a few thousand votes, but without ideals, falls, and for that the Basque Nationalist Party does not raise its flag.

We defend the Pro-*Estatuto* candidacy, but we are Basque Nationalist Party candidates; [...] we will expose our ideals clearly [...].”³⁵⁴

Clearly, not all Basque nationalists were comfortable with Kizkitza's “utter partisan selflessness”, or with the predominance of electoral politics.

Euzkadi's leading articles, on the other hand, were much more in line with the PNV's general strategy. The election was framed as an extension of the Mayors' Movement home rule campaign, with the Basque nationalist-Carlist coalition presented as “the Union of Municipalities” candidacy. The electoral alliance was openly acknowledged as the result of the effort to join together different political sensibilities, and that the candidates had been able to put “above partisan interests and affiliations [...] in this decisive hour the supreme interests of the Basque people.” To further strengthen its point, *Euzkadi* included excerpts from conservative Catholic newspapers such as *La Gaceta del Norte* and *El Pueblo Vasco* supporting the pro-*Estatuto* coalition. In a true example of hegemony-building discourse, the Basque nationalist-Carlist candidacy was declared to be *the* Basque candidacy, indirectly rendering the republican and socialist alternatives as *foreign*.³⁵⁵ Similarly, the *Estella* *Estatuto* was hailed as *the* Basque *Estatuto*, discarding any possible alternatives. A landslide victory for the pro-*Estatuto* coalition was needed to reinforce this frame, hence the emphasis on the plebiscite-like nature of the election. These articles also included many more references to religion, often with an ethnic component to it, which shows the importance of the issue as identity ‘glue’ for the coalition.³⁵⁶

ERC and its republican coalitions did include large rallies as a key element of the campaign. The 22nd of June, thousands gathered at Barcelona's bullfighting ring, *la*

³⁵⁴ Original fragment: “[...] a nosotros el poder ficticio no nos interesa. Las elecciones no son más que un pretexto; el poder que se levanta por unos miles de votos, pero sin ideario, cae a tierra, y para eso no levanta su bandera el Partido Nacionalista Vasco. Defendemos la candidatura Pro Estatuto, pero somos candidatos del Partido Nacionalista Vasco; [...] expondremos [sic] claramente nuestro ideario [...]” See “El Mitin del Gran Teatro de Barakaldo”, *Euzkadi*, 25/6/1931, p. 5.

³⁵⁵ “La candidatura que debe triunfar en Bizkaya”, *Euzkadi*, 24/6/1931, p. 1.

³⁵⁶ “Hay que lograr el triunfo de nuestras candidaturas”, *Euzkadi*, 26/6/1931, p. 1.

Monumental, to hear speeches by Angel Samblancat, Joan Lluí, Rafel Capalans, Puig i Ferrater, Ventura Gassol, Ramon Franco, Jaume Aiguader, Lluís Companys and Francesc Macià.³⁵⁷ The collection of speakers was a true display of ERC's ideological spectrum—perhaps only lacking someone belonging to the pro-independence faction.³⁵⁸ A close look at how the expression ‘the Republic’ was used reveals different forms of *deixis* among the speakers. In the case of the *Estat Català* leaders Gassol and Aiguader, ‘the Republic’ is in fact the Catalan Republic, that by then had already been replaced by *Generalitat*. When Lluís Companys spoke, however, ‘the Republic’ meant the actual existing regime, the Spanish Republic. In many ways, the speeches show a return to the idea of a bilateral Spain-Catalonia relationship (see Chapter 3). Gassol spoke of the “two Presidents”, Macià and Alcalá-Zamora, and Aiguader proclaimed that ERC would “strike an agreement with the Spanish revolutionaries”. Macià himself spoke to the “people of Catalonia and citizens of the Spanish people”. It is within this bilateral frame that the *Estatuto* was inserted, “with this brotherly spirit”, in Gassol's words, with Aiguader adding that “Catalonia today is not separatist, because it has seen that beyond the Ebro there is a fighting people.” Franco and Samblancat are portrayed as representatives of the Spanish people within ERC's candidacy—the latter began his speech by apologising for not speaking Catalan.

Macià was referenced by all of the others in a highly reverential tone. *L'Avi* is hailed as “father [and] [...] mother of the Fatherland”, “the exile, the man that stood up against the Monarchy and rebelled against the dictatorship, suffering so many vexations.” The rhetoric of hegemony was present both in how *l'Opinió* recounted the story of the rally, and in the actual words used by the speakers. The thousands of attendants were described as “the people”, and the event's success was hailed as proof that “the people stands with *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*.” Puig i Ferrater expressed that he had “the feeling of speaking, not to the thousands of

³⁵⁷ For all quotes and references extracted from this meeting, see “El míting imponent d'abans d'ahir”, *l'Opinió*, 24/6/1931, pp. 1–2.

³⁵⁸ Apart from *Nosaltres Sols!* and other small groups outside ERC, Catalan independence—at the time often described as *separatisme*—was still defended as a strategic objective by a faction within the party. This included Miquel Badia, who had been imprisoned for the Garraf affair (see chapter 2) and Josep Dencàs, who left Rovira i Virgili's *Acció Republicana Catalana* to join ERC. See Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, pp. 108–109.

citizens of this ring [the *Monumental*], but to the whole of Catalonia.” Similar references were made by Campalans, Gassol, Franco and Aiguader.

Looking at how both ERC and the PNV framed their electoral rivals also gives a good sense of the different dynamics of political contention. *Euzkadi* portrayed the Spanish republican and socialist rivals to the Basque nationalist-Carlist coalition in harsh tones. The latter's challenger status with respect to the regime was clear in how the former was framed as standing for “impostor” and “oppressive” democracy—a reference to the *Gestoras*. The religious cleavage, however, was even more visceral: “the field is defined. Here there are no more than followers of Christ or Belial, of light or darkness.”³⁵⁹ In Catalonia, on the other hand, ERC framed its *Lliga Regionalista* opponents as having “dirty hands” because of their support for the Monarchy “until the last moment”. The *Lliga* was portrayed as part of the legacy of the previous decades' state repression in Catalonia, and even subtly as not Catalan enough, even when compared to Spanish left-wing revolutionaries, “who, although not being Catalan themselves, were indeed more so than those who should be by nature”.³⁶⁰

All in all, and despite the many differences in how the PNV and ERC framed the campaign for the Spanish constituent election of 1931, they did share a powerful common theme. Both actors saw the election as an event with a deep national relevance, despite it being part of the wider Spanish political sphere. In their attempts to attract voters, they both played the patriotic card so typical of national hegemony-building. Voting was essentially a national plebiscite: “with Macià and with Catalonia, or against Macià and against Catalonia”, in Ventura Gassol's words. This was the same concept that can be found—if perhaps not so eloquently—in *Euzkadi*. Not only because it framed the election as an actual plebiscite on the *Estella Estatuto*, but because other alternatives to the Basque nationalist-Carlist coalition were portrayed as “antibasque”.³⁶¹

Continuing with the idea—already stated in Chapter 3 of the present thesis—that elections can be seen as processes of mobilisation, the results in Catalonia and the Basque country can be compared to show different patterns of such

³⁵⁹ “¡Electores: votad por el Estatuto Vasco!”, *Euzkadi*, 28/6/1931, p. 1.

³⁶⁰ “El míting imponent d'abans d'ahir”, *L'Opinió*, 24/6/1931, p. 2.

³⁶¹ *L'Opinió*, 24/6/1931, p. 1; *Euzkadi*, 25/6/1931, p. 1.

mobilisation. Again, the above stated complexities of the Spanish Republic's electoral system motivate a qualitative approach to the comparison (see Table 4.1).³⁶² In terms of results, ERC was clearly more successful than the PNV: the lists it endorsed obtained 42 out of 53 seats (79%) representing Catalan constituencies. 24 of these elected deputies (45% of the total) were actual ERC members. The pro-Estella *Estatuto* lists endorsed by the PNV, on the other hand, managed to secure 15 out of 24 seats (63%) representing Basque constituencies. Of these, 6 (25% of the total) were occupied by actual PNV members. It must also be noted that ERC-endorsed lists won a majority in all of the Catalan constituencies. This was something the PNV pro-*Estatuto* candidates failed to do in the Bilbao constituency, where the republican-socialist, communist and ANV lists—all opposed to the Estella *Estatuto*—together held a comfortable majority. The pattern was consistent with the fact that large towns and industrial areas had not joined the Mayors' Movement in the previous months.

³⁶² All of the electoral data included below has been extracted from Mercedes Vilanova, *Atlas Electoral de La Segona República a Catalunya*, Vol. 1, Sabadell: Enciclopèdia Catalana, 2005, pp. 35–37 and De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 211–219. See also Javier Tusell Gómez, *Las Constituyentes de 1931: Unas Elecciones de Transición* (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1982).

Table 4. 1 | 1931 general election results in Catalonia and the Basque Country³⁶³

Constituency	Results (seats)
Basque Country	
Araba	Carlists: 1 Leftist bloc: 1
Gipuzkoa	Estella <i>Estatuto</i> coalition: 4 Leftist bloc: 2
Biscay (capital)	Leftist bloc: 4 Estella <i>Estatuto</i> coalition: 2
Biscay (province)	Estella <i>Estatuto</i> coalition: 3
Navarre	Estella <i>Estatuto</i> coalition: 5 Leftist bloc: 2
Catalonia	
Lleida	Republican coalition: 6
Girona	Catalan republican coalition: 5 <i>Lliga Regionalista</i> : 2
Barcelona (capital)	<i>Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya</i> : 14 <i>Lliga Regionalista</i> : 2 <i>Partit Catalanista Republicà</i> : 2 <i>Extrema Esquerra Federal</i> : 2
Barcelona (province)	<i>Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya</i> : 15
Tarragona	Republican coalition: 5 Leftist bloc: 2

Both ERC's and the PNV's results show the advantages of forming broad coalitions under the Spanish Republic's electoral system, as well as in what ways such coalitions helped both parties to politically make the most of the results. The

³⁶³ In Araba the PNV and the Carlists failed to reach an agreement to form a coalition, and stood for the election separately, obtaining 21.8 and 37.9% of the vote respectively. See De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 196, 201–202, 215. In the Barcelona (province) constituency, the winning *Esquerra* list incorporated candidates from federalist parties and *Acció Catalana*, groups that formed the *Extrema Esquerra Federal* and *Partit Catalanista Republicà* lists in Barcelona (capital). The republican coalitions endorsed by ERC in Girona, Tarragona and Lleida included candidates from ERC, the PCR and Spanish republican parties such as the Radical and Radical-Socialist parties.

PNV managed, despite its relatively modest electoral weight, to lead its pro-Estella *Estatuto* coalition into an overall victory in the Basque Country. This effectively allowed the framing of the election as a plebiscite on home rule to continue in the face of a very clear rural-urban divide. A closer look at the Basque results shows that the leftist coalitions dominated all of the province capitals, as well as the more industrialised areas of Biscay and Gipuzkoa. The PNV drew its main strength from rural Biscay and Gipuzkoa, whilst their Carlist partners remained strongest in most of Araba and Navarre.³⁶⁴

ERC, on the other hand, was able to achieve another spectacular victory. By standing on its own in those constituencies where the party was strongest, and by making the right alliances when this was not the case—i.e. in Tarragona, where only a single ERC deputy was elected—Macià's party was able to present itself as victorious in all constituencies. Unlike the PNV, with the above mentioned areas in the Basque Country, ERC did not have to deal with particular spots of entrenched opposition to its political project in Catalonia. The *Lliga Regionalista*, which came second in the polls, was defeated in every province—obtaining 21.95% of the vote in Girona, its best result—and even in every *comarca*—Catalonia's traditional supramunicipal regions—and every single one of Barcelona's districts.

If Sallés has described the results in Catalonia as “consolidating ERC's hegemony”³⁶⁵, de la Granja has interpreted those in the Basque Country as a clear symptom of “bipolarisation, especially motivated by the hot issue of religion.”³⁶⁶ Despite this, framing of the election's results by ERC and the PNV was notably similar. In both contexts, the results were hailed as signalling popular support for home rule: “the People, in voting for us, has voted for the *Estatut* and for Social Justice”; “Euzkadi, for the Estella *Estatuto*.”³⁶⁷ Furthermore, this support was portrayed as unanimous—in a ‘the nation has spoken’ tone—by putting the rhetoric of hegemony into action. In *Euzkadi*'s words:

³⁶⁴ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 229–232.

³⁶⁵ Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, p. 91.

³⁶⁶ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 232.

³⁶⁷ These quotes correspond to the headlines of *l'Opinió* and *Euzkadi*, respectively, for the 30th of June 1931.

“We said that the Country, after the great Assembly of Lizarra [Basque for Estella], knew already what it wanted; [...] and who were at the present hour its true representatives, the loyal interpreters of the prevailing mood and, therefore, its legitimate representatives.”³⁶⁸

This is another good example of Billig's concept of ‘double representation’. *Euzkadi* adopts the voice of the Basque Country—the *topos* is so clear that ‘Basque’ is omitted—in saying that it has unequivocally accepted the Estella *Estatuto*. In the same move, the text states who will speak for the nation: the newly elected Basque nationalist and Carlist deputies.

ERC's newspapers broadcasted the same theme, but adopted an even more triumphalist tone, concentrating on the idea that now the party could speak for Catalonia as a whole. *L'Opinió* proclaimed “the whole of Catalonia stands with Macià” in its headlines. In an article significantly titled “Catalonia, unanimous”, Joaquim Ventalló proudly said that the political right—basically referring to the *Lliga Regionalista*—should have not bothered to go to the ballot, and that “*Esquerra Republicana* accepts this responsibility [of representing the Catalan people] and will not let down the people that has unanimously risen and voted for it.”³⁶⁹ Macià himself told *La Rambla* reporters that “Now it cannot be said that we represent a party, when we go to Madrid to present the *Estatut*. Now, we represent a whole people.”³⁷⁰ *El Poble*, a weekly paper officially affiliated with ERC, assured that “[Macià] can now well say that he speaks and acts in the name of the whole of Catalonia”, and that ERC had achieved “political hegemony.” Many articles glorified the image and character of Macià, with one even comparing the Catalan nationalist leader to a “modern Christ”.³⁷¹ It was within this climate of euphoria, that the journalist Domenec Guanse wrote:

³⁶⁸ Original fragment: “Decíamos que el País, después de la magna Asamblea de Lizarra, sabía ya lo que quería; [...] y quienes eran en la hora presente sus verdaderos valedores, los intérpretes fieles del sentir general y, por lo tanto, sus representantes legítimos.” See *Euzkadi*, 30/6/1931, p. 1.

³⁶⁹ Joaquim Ventalló, “Catalunya, unànime”, *l'Opinió*, 1/7/1931, p. 1.

³⁷⁰ “Després de la victòria”, *La Rambla*, 29/6/1931, p. 12.

³⁷¹ “Editorial” and “Al peu del canó”, *El Poble*, 4/7/1931, p. 1; Josep de Riquer i Palau, “Marxa triomfal”, *El Poble*, 4/7/1931, p. 2.

“When before the election there was an attempt to conform a Catalan unity list, Macià refused. He said that he owed himself to his party. Now, however, despite everything, there is no party: Macià's party is the whole of Catalonia.”³⁷²

This is a statement of euphoria, made by a particular journalist during a particular high moment for ERC, but it is difficult to capture a better example of the sense of political hegemony that was felt by many at the time. Nation and nationalist party becoming one is perhaps the clearest representation of the rhetoric of hegemony that can be found in this context. The PNV may have not shared this triumphalism to the same degree—it did not have the electoral numbers to do so either—but both parties framed the election results as politically legitimising their claims for home rule.

When it came to connect this achieved legitimacy to the future of the Basque and Catalan *Estatutos*, ERC and the PNV showed varying attitudes. The Basque nationalists were optimistic, maintaining the idea that the “Basque hour”, had arrived, but their stance was still relatively cautious when compared to ERC. *L'Opinió* openly proclaimed that the election results implied “the approval of Catalonia's *Estatut* and the complete social and political transformation of the country”.³⁷³ These high hopes were soon to meet disturbing signs. The 6th of July a Commission appointed by the Spanish Ministry of Justice produced an initial draft for the Spanish Republican Constitution which favoured a “unitary”, not federal, state.³⁷⁴ Home rule, even in Catalonia, was to remain a contentious issue—its materialisation still had a rough road ahead. Political contention for home rule would therefore continue, both in Catalonia and the Basque Country, adopting more varied forms.

³⁷² Original fragment: “Quan abans de les eleccions va ésser intentat de confeccionar una candidatura d'unió catalana, Macià va negar-s'hi. Deia que ell es devia al seu partit. Ara, però, a desgrat de tot, ja no hi ha partit: el partit de Macià és tot Catalunya.” See Domenec Guanse, “Significació de la victòria”, *La Rambla*, 29/6/1931, p. 9. Anna Sallés quoted the last phrase in *Quan Catalunya...*, p. 93.

³⁷³ *Euzkadi*, 30/6/1931, p. 1; “El triomf dels ideals”, *l'Opinió*, 30/6/1931, p. 1.

³⁷⁴ Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, p. 94–5.

4. 3. 2. Constitutional endgame

Section 4. 2. has shown that the Núria and Estella *Estatutos* were a mixture of common and sharply differing elements. In essence, they were both plans for a CD transition³⁷⁵ in the Basque and Catalan nation-building processes. In practice, however, they were the product of the different dynamics of political contention at work in Catalonia and the Basque Country. These dynamics—including conditions, political actors and political identities—would remain uneven after the drafting of the *Estatutos*. Political contention was therefore bound to adopt different forms in both contexts, ultimately leading to the different outcomes faced by the two projects.

By December 1931, the new Spanish Constitution rendered the Estella *Estatuto* wholly unacceptable within the new legal framework. The Núria *Estatut*, on the other hand, would still have a fighting chance, after its debate was postponed to the following year. The political opportunity structure had definitely narrowed in this second half of 1931. This section will explain why Basque and Catalan aspirations for home rule were affected differently.

The constituent election's results clearly benefited the left of the Spanish political spectrum. The PSOE stood as the largest party in the *Cortes*, with 115 seats, almost a quarter of the total 470. The republican and socialist elements of the Provisional Government had been strengthened, whilst the right-of-centre republicans of Alcalá-Zamora's *Derecha Liberal Republicana* ('Liberal Republican Right'), or DLR had only obtained 25 seats. This reinforced the PNV's challenger status regarding its relationship with the regime. Its longtime rival, the PSOE, was becoming even more influential in Madrid. The DLR, which could have watered down some of the Spanish republican government secularist policies, was being pushed to the margins of power. From ERC's perspective, the election's results seemed to confirm its status as a regime member: the DLR had been the most vocal critic of the *Generalitat*, and Marcel·lí Domingo's Radical Socialist Party had obtained 59 seats.

³⁷⁵ Again, this refers to Kamusella's adapted version of Hroch's phases in the development of stateless nationalist movements.

By July 1931, two different scenarios had developed in Catalonia and in the Basque Country. Catalan nationalists had still open, legal channels through which to push forward their claims for home rule. The 9th of May decree that regulated the relationship between the Spanish and Catalan governments had established that the route for the ratification of the Catalan *Estatut* was 1) its approval by the *Diputació provisional*, 2) its approval by the municipalities and 3) a referendum that had to be passed by a two-thirds majority of the total census. All of this, prior to a debate and vote by the Spanish *Cortes*. Political contention for Catalan home rule had a very clear roadmap to follow: first, Catalan nationalist political agents would have to engage in a process of mobilisation in order to organise and win a referendum on the Núria *Estatut*. Then, home rule would be achieved by institutional politics, after a debate in the *Cortes*. Catalan nation-building would then complete its CD transition.

Conversely, in the Basque Country there were no such legal channels. There was no Basque *Diputació provisional*, and the existing provincial institutions, the *gestoras*, remained directly opposed to the Estella *Estatuto*. The Mayors' movement lacked recognition from Madrid. The Basque pro-*Estatuto* coalition, claimed that the Estella assembly had effectively completed the above mentioned steps 1) and 2), and that their victory in the constituent election made step 3) unnecessary. A Basque referendum on the Estella *Estatuto* was not on the table. There was no clear alternative either. Political contention for Basque home rule became more erratic, facing isolation in the Spanish *Cortes* and a process of polarisation that would lead to street violence and repression.

The Catalan home rule campaign picked up during the second half of July 1931, centred on the 'yes' vote in the referendum which was set for the 2nd of August.³⁷⁶ It developed many elements typical of a powerful social movement, even though it had been initiated 'from above' by the Catalan Government. ERC coordinated the campaign efforts through its general secretariat, putting the party's network of local-based groups and *Ateneus* at work. The campaign, however, was not limited

³⁷⁶ *L'Opinió* makes a good source from which to analyse the development and framing for the home rule referendum campaign. The newspaper published a full text version of the Núria *Estatut* proposal in its 14th of July issue, and during the following days a good portion of its contents would revolve around the campaign.

to the republican party: most of the other Catalan political actors joined, including the *Lliga Regionalista*—ERC's main political rival—as well as *Acció Catalana Republicana* and *Acció Catalana*.³⁷⁷ Only the more staunchly pro-independence groups such as *Nosaltres Sols!* and *Unió Catalanista* refused to support the *Estatut*.³⁷⁸ Even a group of Catalan Carlist leaders left their party in protest for its decision not to campaign for a 'yes' vote.³⁷⁹ Decisive support also came from a vast array of influential, non-partisan entities, ranging from the Catalan doctors' union to the management of Football Club Barcelona.³⁸⁰ The campaign was conceived on a 'national' scale, but much of its strength lay in efforts made on the local level by committees made up of the different political parties' local branches. Many local, non-partisan associations also voiced their support for the *Estatut*.³⁸¹

Different items of the campaign targeted different social groups. Slogans were included to attract specific population segments such as workers—with the promise that home rule would bring “social justice, order and jobs”—or farmers—who would see new policies to stimulate production and public services in rural areas.³⁸² A massive campaign was directed towards women, led by the female wings of ERC and the *Lliga*, and with the *Generalitat*'s official support. Women still could not vote but they were urged to convince men, and to take part in what was termed the 'female plebiscite'. This was in effect a mass gathering of signatures for or against the *Estatut*, and it was a success: by the end of the campaign more than 400.000 had signed.³⁸³ The women's signature drive exemplified how political contention for Catalan home rule could successfully combine elements typical of a

³⁷⁷ *L'Opinió*, 17/7/1931, p. 3; “Acció Catalana Republicana i l'Estatut de Catalunya”, *L'Opinió*, 18/7/1931, p. 3; “La Lliga Regionalista i el referendun” and “A l'Ateneu Gracienc d'Acció Catalana”, *L'Opinió*, 23/7/1931, p. 2.

³⁷⁸ Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, p. 159. The *Unió Catalanista* ('Catalan Nationalist Union') was a Catalan nationalist platform founded back in 1891 that had become largely symbolic by the 1930s. It was politically close to Daniel Cardona and *Nosaltres Sols!*

³⁷⁹ The official Catalan Carlist leadership had instead given its sympathisers a free choice on whether to support or not the *Estatut* in the upcoming referendum. See “Els tradicionalistes i l'Estatut”, *L'Opinió*, 30/7/1931, p. 2.

³⁸⁰ “El sindicat de metges”, *L'Opinió*, 19/7/1931, p. 3; “Als socis del F. C. Barcelona”, *L'Opinió*, 1/8/1931, p. 2.

³⁸¹ This is the case of, for example, Manresa: see “Per l'Estatut de Catalunya”, *El Dia*, 29/7/1931, p. 4 and “Una crida a les entitats manresanes”, *El Dia*, 31/7/1931, p. 1.

³⁸² “L'Estatut de Catalunya és una garantia de justícia social i, per tant, d'ordre i de treball. Obrers, voteu-lo!”, *L'Opinió*, 25/7/1931, p. 1; M. Rossell i Vilar, “Els agricultors i ramaders votaran l'Estatut”, *L'Opinió*, 29/7/1931, p. 1.

³⁸³ Josep Lluís Martín i Berbois, *Ignoradas Pero Deseadas. La Mujer Política Catalana En La Segunda República En Cataluña*, Barcelona: Icària, 2015.

social movement campaign—press articles, talks, posters, radio messages, etc.—with ‘state’ support. Macià publicly praised the signature gathering and it was the *Generalitat* that granted the use of public buildings as signing booths.

The 2nd of August, 74.99% of the potential voters rushed to the ballot boxes, which produced a 99% of ‘yes’ vote. The turnout seemed to point out that the anarcho-syndicalist CNT's abstentionist stance had been purely nominal. Macià addressed gathered crowds in Barcelona with euphoria, famously proclaiming “*ja som lliures*” (“we are now free”).³⁸⁴ The day after the referendum, *l'Opinió* followed suit, asserting that “Catalonia's will is to rule itself, and [...], the Spanish Parliament has no other path but to comply.”³⁸⁵

The mass mobilisation taking place in Catalonia stood in contrast to what de la Granja has described as a “civil war climate” in the Basque Country. The same day thousands of Catalans voted for the *Estatut*, in Bilbao a young Basque nationalist, José Etxebarria, was mortally wounded during the shooting of a *Batzkoki*. The preceding month had seen a build-up of tension—a clear example of polarisation at work—in which the press played a key role. This particularly involved *El Liberal*, *La Lucha de Clases*, and *La Gaceta del Norte*, with the two former having connections with the PSOE, and the latter representing conservative Catholics. Several politically motivated violent incidents, including deadly shootings, took place during the summer and autumn months of 1931.³⁸⁶

Was the above mentioned lack of legal channels for the Estella home rule charter ‘pushing’ Basque nationalists to illegal or violent forms of political contention? An article in the weekly *Bizkaitarra*, explicitly pointed in this direction, warning that

“when convinced that through legal channels we will not achieve what belongs to us by right, when once the legal procedures are exhausted new dictatorships are imposed on us

³⁸⁴ Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, pp. 158–160.

³⁸⁵ “Catalunya, lliure”, *l'Opinió*, 4/8/1931, p. 1.

³⁸⁶ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 263–270.

[...], then will come the rule of direct action, expeditive and energetic of violence. Euzkadi will arm and organise its armies [...].”³⁸⁷

However compelling this piece of text may seem, it must be made clear that it was not representative of the mainstream Basque nationalist discourse. *Bizkaitarra* was the mouthpiece for the PNV's youth wing in Bilbao, which tended to concentrate some of the more pro-independence activists.³⁸⁸ Similarly, the Catalan small group *Nosaltres Sols!* was making perhaps even more explicit ‘calls to arms’ at the time.³⁸⁹ Most within the PNV were not considering any form of violent rebellion against the republican regime. This included José Antonio Aguirre, who rejected several offers to join right-wing conspiracies that would eventually lead to the failed coup by General José Sanjurjo.³⁹⁰

An analysis of the actual violence further shows that there was no real ‘violent strategy’ in the PNV's agenda. Incidents involving Basque nationalists during the summer and autumn of 1931 must be viewed in the light of existing research on political violence during the Second Spanish Republic. Eduardo González Calleja³⁹¹ has compiled 14 politically-motivated violent incidents resulting in deaths for 1931 in the Basque Country. Only four of these episodes involved Basque nationalists. In three of them, as victims: the above mentioned shooting of a *Batzoki* in Bilbao in August, an assault of the PNV's youth wing's office in Bilbao in October, and a shooting in a bar in November. These incidents left three dead and one severely wounded. On the other hand, Basque nationalists were the alleged

³⁸⁷Original fragment: “[...] cuando convencidos de que por los cauces legales no conseguiremos lo que de derecho nos corresponde, cuando ya agotados los procedimientos jurídicos [...] se pretenda sujetarnos a nuevas dictaduras, llámense ahora republicanas, como antes fueron monárquicas [...], vendrá el imperio de la acción directa, expeditiva y enérgica de la violencia. Euzkadi armará y organizará sus ejércitos [...]” See “Pinceladas de actualidad”, *Euzkadi*, 27/6/1931, p. 8, in de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 263.

³⁸⁸ It must be noted that the idea of using political violence to further the objectives of Basque nationalism was not a novelty in 1931. It can be found in Basque nationalist youth discourse as far back as 1918; see de Pablo, Mees & Rodríguez Ranz, *El Péndulo...*, Vol. 1, p. 127.

³⁸⁹ See *Nosaltres Sols!*, 8/8/1931, p. 2.

³⁹⁰ In his memoirs, Aguirre referred to these approaches by right-wing—including both Alphonine and Carlist monarchists—conspirators as an attempt to “drag our [Basque] people to a third [Carlist] civil war”, see Mees et al, *La política...*, pp. 123–125.

³⁹¹ Eduardo González Calleja, *Cifras Cruentas. Las Víctimas Mortales de La Violencia Sociopolítica En La Segunda República Española (1931-1936)*, Granada: Editorial Comares, 2015.

perpetrators of a shooting in Bilbao³⁹², which resulted in the death of a young republican and left another seriously wounded. By comparison, violent incidents in the Basque Country involving communists—a very modest political force at the time—were significantly more serious. These included three separate labour-related incidents in which up to ten workers were shot dead by police forces. Violence between socialists and communists even saw the killing of two PSOE town councillors in a Bilbao restaurant in August. González Calleja's work therefore shows that 1) Basque nationalist involvement in violent events was relatively low and that 2) Basque nationalists tended to be at the receiving end of political violence during 1931. There were repeated calls for self-defence in *Euzkadi* and *Bizkaitarra*, but these fell very short of “arming and organising” any kind of fighting force beyond the already existing *mendigoxale* hiking clubs.³⁹³

The PNV adapted its contentious politics to the situation, campaigning in response to the attacks and using framing to apply political meaning to the violence that was taking place. A week after the murder of José Etxebarria, the Basque nationalist *Solidaridad de Obreros Vascos* (SOV)³⁹⁴ and the anarcho-syndicalist (CNT) called for a 24-hour general strike. The protest was meant to raise the issue of the wave of alleged PSOE-sponsored violence in Biscay.³⁹⁵ The funeral of José Acero, a Basque nationalist killed in November, was accompanied by a demonstration which ended in clashes with the police. *Euzkadi* framed the

³⁹² A Basque nationalist account of the events, claiming that the death was a case of ‘friendly fire’, can be found in *Euzkadi*, 26/9/1931, p. 1.

³⁹³ De la Granja notes that both the Basque nationalist *mendigoxaleak* and the Carlist paramilitary units, the *Requetés*, had access to some weapons, but lacked the strength to openly challenge the Republic's authority. See *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 268.

³⁹⁴ *Solidaridad de Obreros Vascos* (‘Basque Workers’ Solidarity’) is a Basque nationalist trade union originally intended as an alternative to Spanish, politically left-leaning trade unions. Created in 1911 with the open support of the Basque Nationalist Party, it changed its name in 1933 to *Euzko Langileen Alkartasuna - Solidaridad de Trabajadores Vascos* (ELA-STV). For a recent study of its evolution during the Second Spanish Republic, see Dario Ansel, *ELA En La Segunda República: ‘Evolución Sindicalista’ de Una Organización Obrera*, Tafalla: Txalaparta, 2011. See also Ludger Mees, “Social Solidarity and National Identity in the Basque Country: The Case of the Nationalist Trade Union ELA/STV”, in *Working-Class Internationalism and the Appeal of National Identity: Historical Debates and Current Perspectives*, ed. by Patrick Pasture and Johan Verberckmoes, New York: Berg, 1998, pp. 43–82.

³⁹⁵ de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 265. See also “El pistolerismo y ‘El Liberal’”, *Euzkadi*, 8/8/1931, p. 1.

attacks on Basque nationalists as a form of “*pistolerismo*”³⁹⁶. The Basque nationalist newspaper pointed at the *Guardia Cívica*—a paramilitary force made up of supporters of the republican regime—as the perpetrators of the violence. It also accused the state authorities of collusion with the aggressors.³⁹⁷ In November, the Basque nationalist MPs carried the protest to Parliament.³⁹⁸

These rather erratic forms of violent political contention would periodically reappear in the Basque Country during the Second Spanish Republic. At this stage, however, repression had a comparatively larger impact. After an article by *La Gaceta del Norte* in August calling for an armed resistance against the Government, the authorities issued a ban on all Catholic conservative and Basque nationalist press. This reduced the PNV's ability to communicate its political positions until the end of September, when the lift was banned. In September, several members of the PNV's youth wing—including its well-known leader, Gallastegi—were imprisoned in the wake of a deadly shooting in Bilbao. Basque nationalist rallies were banned and the PNV's offices in Biscay were closed by the authorities. The newly imprisoned activists expanded the Basque nationalist *contentious repertoire*³⁹⁹ by carrying out the first hunger strike in the history of this national movement.⁴⁰⁰

The contrasting forms political contention for home rule was taking in Catalonia and the Basque Country did not counter the fact that Catalan and Basque nationalists were sharing a crucial political arena: the Spanish parliament. The new *Cortes* opened for their first session the 14th of July, and both movements used their newly elected MPs to voice their claims within the constitutional debates.

³⁹⁶ *Pistolerismo* can be used as a general term to describe political violence. It is often associated with the violent labour disputes in Barcelona during the early 1920s, during which political authorities colluded with employer-backed “free unions” in violent clashes with the anarcho-syndicalist CNT, resulting in tens of killings. See Albert Balcells, *El Pistolerismo: Barcelona (1917-1923)*, Barcelona: Pòrtic, 2009.

³⁹⁷ “Otra víctima más”, *Euzkadi*, 4/7/1931, pp. 1–2; “El pistolerismo y ‘El Liberal’”, *Euzkadi*, 8/7/1931, p. 1.

³⁹⁸ The report presented before the Spanish Parliament incorporated a list of attacks, both lethal and non-lethal—including the shooting of *Euzkadi*'s offices the 11th of September. See “La protesta de nuestros diputados”, *Euzkadi*, 10/11/1931, p. 1.

³⁹⁹ ‘Contentious repertoires’ can be defined as “arrays of contentious performances that are currently known and available within some set of political actors”, see Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 2nd ed., p. 236.

⁴⁰⁰ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 269–270.

The Basque nationalist and Carlist pro-*Estatuto* coalition that had triumphed in the Basque provinces took the name *minoría vasco-navarra* ('Basque-Navarrese minority'). At their farewell rally in Gernika, its MPs made several harsh speeches, directly attacking the Spanish republic's secularisation policies. José Antonio Aguirre proclaimed "we are willing to die for God and for Euzkadi's freedom," suggesting that if home rule demands were not met, Basque nationalists would implement them unilaterally.⁴⁰¹ The 'unilateral card' was also being waved by Catalan left-wing nationalists. Although their attitude towards the republican regime was naturally very different—*l'Opinió* regarded "attacks on the Republic" as "intolerable"—the initial constitutional draft defining Spain as a "unitary" state was making them increasingly worried. Reactions included slogans such as "they [the Spanish] have only one path: to accept the *Estatut*", and articles suggesting a "national uprising and sacrifice" if the *Estatut* was rejected or distorted by the Spanish parliament.⁴⁰²

As soon as the Cortes' sessions began, however, it became clear that the Basque nationalists were facing a much more difficult position than their Catalan counterparts. The PNV, the Estella home rule project, and the *minoría vasco-navarra* were collectively marked as enemies of the Spanish Republic by MPs from both sides of the Spanish political spectrum. The Estella *Estatuto* was first mentioned during a debate about the government crackdown on Basque conservative and nationalist newspapers. Miguel Maura, speaking as Minister of the Interior, linked home rule claims with the ongoing violence in the Basque Country, saying that "only a campaign of violent agitation" could prop up the Estella *Estatuto*.⁴⁰³ Prieto, speaking in the name of the Basque socialist and republican MPs, went on to label the Estella *Estatuto* as a plan to create a "reactionary Gibraltar"—an expression with clear Spanish nationalist

⁴⁰¹ "Despedida del pueblo vasco a sus diputados", *Euzkadi*, 14/7/1931, pp. 1–3. See also de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 260–261.

⁴⁰² "En defensa de la República", *l'Opinió*, 14/7/1931, p. 1; *l'Opinió*, 12/7/1931; Nicolau Battestini, "L'ofensiva contra Catalunya", *l'Opinió*, p. 1.

⁴⁰³ Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados, Serie Histórica. Legislatura 1931-1933. Cortes Constituyentes, 27/08/1931, no. 28, p. 570, from https://app.congreso.es/est_sesiones/.

connotations.⁴⁰⁴ José Antonio Aguirre vividly remembered the political isolation felt during the first sessions of the Spanish republican parliament.⁴⁰⁵

Conversely, Macià was met with a “great and prolonged applause” as he became sworn in as MP the 14th of August.⁴⁰⁶ There were, however, reasons not to expect such a warm welcome. The political climate in Madrid had shown signs that despite the Catalan referendum's results, there would be no swift ratification of the *Estatut*. Two of the same Government ministers that lashed against the *minoría vasco-navarra*, Indalecio Prieto and Miguel Maura, had also expressed their differences with the text that had just been approved by Catalan voters.

The PSOE's leading newspaper, *El Socialista*, reacted harshly to the referendum, rejecting its result on political and procedural grounds, describing the *Generalitat* as a “anachronistic and patriarchal entity”. The paper went on to describe Catalan nationalists as “unfocused from any logic and conscious position, with a narrow-mindedness that clearly demonstrates their racial political inability.” Should the *Estatut* not be declared “null and void”, *El Socialista* urged the *Cortes* to “correct” its contents, “without any blurring of the hispanic spirit, free from parochial prejudice. Catalonia cannot ask for more”.⁴⁰⁷ This rejection of the original version of the Catalan *Estatut* by the PSOE must be placed in the context of its evolving position on the ‘national question’. Historically, the socialist party had combined internationalist rhetoric with Spanish nationalist ideology, i.e. the idea of the Spanish nation, its sovereignty and the rejection of ‘separatism’. This also included favouring a federalist ‘solution’ to the territorial issue, a legacy of the 19th century Spanish republican tradition. In the wake of the Russian revolution, the PSOE had even proposed a “republican confederation of Iberian nationalities”. By 1931, however, influential party leaders such as Fernando de los Ríos and Largo had become critical of federalism, emphasising Spanish national unity and the need for a strong state to implement social reform. The federal model was dropped as

⁴⁰⁴ See Borja de Riquer i Permanyer, “Aproximación Al Nacionalismo Español Contemporáneo”, *Studia Historica-Historia Contemporánea*, XII (1994), 11–29; Isidro Sepúlveda Muñoz, “Instrumentalización Nacionalista Del Irredentismo”, *Spagna Contemporanea*, 9, 1996, 79–100.

⁴⁰⁵ Mees et al, *La política...*, pp. 118–119, 122.

⁴⁰⁶ Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados, Serie Histórica. Legislatura 1931-1933. Cortes Constituyentes, 14/08/1931, no. 21, p. 410, from https://app.congreso.es/est_sesiones/.

⁴⁰⁷ “Acerca de la apoteósica votación del Estatuto de Cataluña”, *El Socialista*, 4/8/1931, p. 1. A direct response in ‘socialist terms’ was published by *l'Opinió* soon after, written by Nicolau Battestini, of the *Unió Socialista de Catalunya*, see “Socialistes de pega”, 7/8/1931, p. 1.

official policy during a party congress in July, although the PSOE still accepted 'moderate' home rule.⁴⁰⁸

Those in ERC closer to the Spanish Government, such as Marcel·lí Domingo—the Minister of Education—and Gabriel Alomar—who had founded the *Unió Socialista de Catalunya* and was a member of the *Cortes*—felt the pressure. The 10th of August they sent a letter to Macià, urging him to postpone the official presentation of the *Estatut* in Madrid. The Catalan President ignored the request and criticised Domingo and Alomar for making their concerns public.⁴⁰⁹

The atmosphere was toned down not only by Macià's welcome, but by the way in which the Catalan *Estatut* was officially presented to the *Cortes* four days later. This was done not by the Catalan delegation, but by the Spanish Provisional President, Alcalá-Zamora. The gesture—although it was also acknowledged that some aspects of the *Estatut* would be modified and that the constitutional debate would come first—confirmed ERC's status as a regime member and that Catalan home rule would materialise in some form.⁴¹⁰ Alcalá-Zamora had a very different reaction when the Estella *Estatuto* was officially presented to him the 22nd of September. The *minoría vasco-navarra* mobilised 420 Basque Mayors, who travelled to Madrid as a display of strength—another example of how Basque home rule efforts combined institutional with social movement-type campaigning. The Spanish President coldly reminded the Basque MPs that approval by a referendum was a prerequisite for any home rule charter to be passed on to the *Cortes*.⁴¹¹

The intense debate during the final sessions of September produced a clear milestone when the *Cortes* rejected a federal revision of the constitutional project. After a long and agitated session on the 25th of September, the newly approved first article of the Constitution defined the Second Spanish Republic as an 'integral' state. To the Basque and Catalan home rule projects in the form of the Estella and Núria charters, this came as a hard blow. Both projects had relied on some sort of

⁴⁰⁸ Daniel Molina Jiménez, "La Cuestión Territorial En El PSOE Durante La II República", *Estudios Humanísticos*, 12, 2013, 259–287.

⁴⁰⁹ Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, pp. 160–161.

⁴¹⁰ Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados, Serie Histórica. Legislatura 1931-1933. Cortes Constituyentes, 18/08/1931, no. 22, pp. 448–449, from https://app.congreso.es/est_sesiones/.

⁴¹¹ Mees et al, *La política...*, pp. 125–126.

federal constitutional framework. The Estella *Estatuto* in particular was defeated quite explicitly as the *Cortes* rejected several amendments by Basque MPs, neutralising the possibility of a ‘Basque Concordat’ with the Holy See. Aguirre himself recognised the hopelessness of the situation.⁴¹² But the prospects for the Núria *Estatuto*, with its proposal for extended autonomy headed by a statement of the Catalan people's right to self-determination, looked just as bleak. ERC's MPs had repeatedly insisted that only a Spanish federal constitution could accommodate their demands for home rule.⁴¹³

Both the *minoría vasco-navarra* and the Catalan nationalist MPs responded to the federalist defeat with *realpolitik*. Aguirre and his colleagues agreed to settle for any “autonomic charter which the circumstances allow”.⁴¹⁴ *L'Opinió* subtly switched from publishing ‘no-compromise’ slogans to introducing the idea that despite what the *Cortes* had approved, the road to home rule was still open. ERC even organised a quick rally in Barcelona during which its MPs—with the convenient presence of Macià—reassured a crowd of supporters that despite the “moments of anguish”, the *Estatut* had not been blocked by the constitutional debate.⁴¹⁵ The speakers—Lluhí, Ventura Gassol and Companys—made no reference to the federal question, avoiding the fact that the Núria charter was going to face severe limitations in any further debate. But the fact was that the Catalan *Estatut* had secured a place within the *Cortes'* agenda, even if its content was to be significantly altered. The Basque nationalists, on the other hand, had no feasible alternative at the ready to their defeated *Estella* charter.

The PNV's position in the *Cortes* became even more difficult as the constitutional debates progressed through October. The tense approval of the secularist articles 3 and 26—the Basque nationalist MP Leizaola was physically assaulted at one point—caused tremendous uproar. The new articles established that Roman Catholicism would cease to be the official state religion, and that the Society of Jesus was to be expelled or dissolved. Even moderate elements of the Spanish Government felt deeply alienated by this, and a true crisis developed after

⁴¹² De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 275; Mees et al, *La política...*, p. 126.

⁴¹³ Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 1, pp. 167–174.

⁴¹⁴ Mees et al, *La política...*, p. 127.

⁴¹⁵ “Una altra diada memorable”, *l'Opinió*, 29/9/1931, p. 1.

President Alcalá-Zamora and Minister Gabriel Maura resigned. A total of 42 MPs left their seats in protest, including the *minoría vasco-navarra*, and the Basque Nationalist Party officially stated that it would not support the new Constitution. Manuel Azaña, a left-of-centre liberal, temporarily assumed the presidency, and the new Spanish *Magna Carta* was finally ratified the 9th of December with the votes of ERC MPs and the absence of their PNV counterparts. It would seem that the Basque Nationalist Party was now firmly entrenched in a regime challenger position, and that Basque demands for home rule had run out of clear paths. This, however, was not the case: a last minute approach by the PNV to Alcalá-Zamora resulted in the Azaña Government publishing a Decree establishing legal channels for a Basque *Estatuto*. The 10th of December, Alcalá-Zamora was invested again as Spanish President with the favourable votes of the Basque nationalist MPs, a gesture presented as proof of loyalty towards the republican regime.⁴¹⁶ The PNV was initiating a strategic turn which would bring it closer to ERC and will be further analysed in the following chapter.

December 1931 marked the end of the ‘constituent period’ of the Second Spanish Republic. For Basque and Catalan nationalists, it was an intense political cycle which saw the rise and—to a varying extent—fall of the Núria and Estella *Estatutos*. This chapter has looked into both projects for home rule, and as a result two sets of conclusions have been reached.

The first is about the nature of both *Estatutos*. They were indeed essentially similar, containing necessary elements that would allow decisive steps in the nation-building process. Furthermore, a compared perspective on their creation and development has shown that, by December 1931, nation-building was moving faster in Catalonia than in the Basque Country, although it was advancing in both sites.

In Catalonia, home rule was virtually a political consensus. Central to this was the fact that there was a wide assumption of the Catalan national *topos* among the different political actors, even among those politically opposed to ERC, such as *Lliga Regionalista*. In the Basque Country most political actors supported some form of home rule, but the Estella *Estatuto* could only channel a fragile majority.

⁴¹⁶ Mees et al, *La política...*, pp. 127–131.

Attitudes towards the Basque national *topos* were complex and mixed, being only assumed in full by the PNV and ANV. Catholic religious identity played a decisive role in the shaping of Basque contentious politics, distorting their national dimension. An example of this was the temporary assumption of home rule demands by some Carlists who were in fact staunch Spanish nationalists.

Most of the opposition to Catalan home rule came from the ‘outside’, and can be separated into two categories. The first included Spanish political parties with a small or moderate strength in Catalonia—e.g. the PSOE—which had reservations about some of the more ambitious aspects of the Núria *Estatuto*. These were regime members, who most of the time recognised ERC as a fellow member and ally. The second comprised right-wing and monarchist Spanish political actors, who were in fact regime challengers, and whose influence in Catalonia was very limited.⁴¹⁷

In contrast, Basque home rule—in the terms proposed by the Estella *Estatuto*—faced very significant opposition from the ‘inside’, in the form of the PSOE-led republican coalition that was particularly strong in key urban areas. The strength of this opposition became clear as the increasingly polarised atmosphere produced more frequent violent incidents. The socialist-republican coalition even led an attempt by some areas of western Biscay to ‘secede’ from the Basque Country, launching their own *Estatuto de las Encartaciones* in response to the Estella Charter.⁴¹⁸ Opposition from the ‘outside’, on the other hand, took the form of state repression.

The second set of conclusions is about explaining the different outcomes produced by the Núria and Estella *Estatutos*. This chapter has shown that, to a certain extent, the outcomes of both *Estatutos* were not so apart. From a contentious politics perspective, both home rule projects were seriously affected by the narrowing of the political opportunity structure—i.e. the defeat of the federal constitutional model—that marked the end of the constituent period. ERC

⁴¹⁷ A key figure was Antonio Royo Villanova (1869-1958), director of *El Norte de Castilla*, a Valladolid-based conservative daily newspaper. He led a campaign of anti-*Estatut* propaganda, press articles and telegrams addressed to the Catalan Government. Catalans were branded as *fenicios* (‘Phoenicians’), and the boycott of Catalan products and businesses—an idea which was to return the following year. Left-wing intellectuals such as the Basque Miguel de Unamuno also contributed to the anti-*Estatut* campaign. See Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, pp. 158–159.

⁴¹⁸ See De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 270–272.

and the PNV produced very similar responses to the new situation. Both adjusted their home rule demands to the new limitations. The difference was that the Catalan party had the 'pole position': a much better relationship with the regime that ensured the Núria text would at least be the starting point for any debate on Catalan home rule. The Basque nationalists, on the other hand, faced a more prolonged challenge. Their last-minute approach to the Spanish Government would have to be a first step in a full strategic turn, if they wanted to change their status as regime challengers. A new Basque *Estatuto* would be needed, as the Estella document's more controversial articles had been proven completely unattainable given the balance of power in the Spanish *Cortes*.

This chapter has seen Basque and Catalan nationalists setting out on alternative paths towards national hegemony. These 'paths' were embodied by their respective home rule charters. But more crucial than the *Estatutos'* actual content were the political alliances propping them up. ERC and the PNV had looked to opposite sides of the political spectrum, capitalising on their ideological backgrounds, republicanism and political Catholicism, in their respective attempts to extend their national *topoi*. Achieving home rule, however, also involved open and effective dialogue with the state. Having strong allies in Madrid was a necessary condition for an *Estatuto* to go forward, and ERC proved much more effective than the PNV in this field. Another, perhaps even obvious, option for an alliance would have been a 'Basque-Catalan *entente*', but such a partnership did not materialise. Explaining the reasons behind this involves a detailed analysis of the relationship between Basque and Catalan nationalists during the period, something which will be done in the next chapter of the present thesis.

4. 3. Basque-Catalan nationalist visions and relations (June-December 1931)

4. 3. 1. Sectarians, troglodytes or brothers? A game of mirrors

Lluís Nicolau d'Olwer makes a good starting point from which to look into the complex relations between Basque and Catalan nationalists during the constituent period of the Second Spanish Republic. Back in 1923, d'Olwer was giving a speech at the *Juventud Vasca's* headquarters in Bilbao. He was a young leader of *Acció Catalana*, the party which had been founded only the previous year as a younger, more progressive and assertive alternative to Francesc Cambó's *Lliga Regionalista*. D'Olwer boldly urged his Basque audience to join Catalan nationalism in a joint move from a defensive towards an “aggressive” political strategy: “we must make it [the Spanish state] retreat.” Shortly after, this materialised in the form of a ‘Triple Alliance’ signed by Catalan, Basque and Galician nationalists in September of that same year.⁴¹⁹ The agreement was very much symbolic, and Chapter 2 has already shown that it had a very limited impact on Basque and Catalan resistance to Primo de Rivera's Dictatorship, which followed soon after.

8 years later, in 1931, d'Olwer found himself in a very different position. He was now Minister of Economy in the new Spanish republican government. As part of a wider appeal to Catalan nationalist politicians by their Basque counterparts, d'Olwer received a telegram from the Mayor of Bermeo, a coastal town in Biscay and a Basque nationalist stronghold. He was asked to “enable” the creation of a “Basque Republic”. As Chapter 3 has shown, not only was d'Olwer in no position—in terms of both authority and strategy—to grant such a request, but he had

⁴¹⁹ de la Granja Sainz, ‘Las Alianzas...’, pp. 154–155.

actually been part of the negotiating team that had rectified the Catalan Republic towards the creation of the *Generalitat*. His answer was therefore not about political action, but a vague ideological commitment: “My political nature puts me unconditionally beside your aspirations.”⁴²⁰

The birth of the Second Spanish Republic had taken Catalan left-wing nationalists from being regime challengers to the position of regime members. This new status created a strategic barrier between the main Catalan and Basque nationalist political actors. The former were not prepared to risk their newly obtained position—which they saw as a means to secure home rule—by lending too much support to the latter.⁴²¹ This section will analyse how this strategic barrier conditioned the relationship between Basque and Catalan nationalists. The following pages will explore their respective visions of each other, looking into the channels that produced these visions and their dominant themes.

Basque nationalists could read about their Catalan counterparts—and vice versa—in their press. However, there were significant quantitative and qualitative differences in the coverage both movements received in each others' newspapers. *Euzkadi's* marked interest for Catalan nationalism has already been mentioned in previous chapters. Lluís Jordà's column (see Chapter 2) about Catalan issues, *Carta de Catalunya*, was joined by a wide range of content: chronicles, in-depth reports, specific articles, etc. The fact that a *batzkoki*, a PNV social centre, had opened in Barcelona enabled a more direct contact with events in Catalonia.

Catalan nationalist press displayed a different dynamic. *L'Opinió* was still the most readily available daily to left-wing Catalan nationalists during most of 1931. *La Humanitat*, which would become ERC's official newspaper, was only created in November. Both papers showed very limited interest for Basque matters: events in the Basque Country seldom made any headlines. The activities of Basque nationalist representatives—mostly members of the Spanish Parliament—were chronicled in a rather informative tone alongside those of other politicians.⁴²² On the other hand, *La Rambla*, which was mainly a sports newspaper but also included

⁴²⁰ *Euzkadi*, 21/4/1931, p. 1.

⁴²¹ This can be also observed in Francesc Macià's increasingly vague responses to Basque requests for political support during the spring and summer of 1931, see Sallés & Ucelay Da Cal, “L’analogia Falsa...”, pp. 462–465.

⁴²² For an example of this see *l'Opinió*, 27/8/1931, p. 5.

pro-ERC political content, occasionally provided some deeper perspectives on Basque matters. Journalist Josep Maria Massip—later to become an ERC MP and a PNV sympathiser—was behind much of the coverage of Basque nationalism-related content, often from a critical perspective.

The main pro-Basque nationalist Catalan newspaper was *El Matí*.⁴²³ The paper had some links to what would become *Unió Democràtica de Catalunya*, a small Christian democratic political party founded in November 1931. In contrast to the leftist Catalan nationalist newspapers, *El Matí* showed a great interest for events in the Basque Country, often including them on its front page. It even featured a section titled *Els Bascos* ('the Basques') to specifically cover Basque issues, and Catalan translations of articles written by Basque nationalist authors. *El Matí* therefore provides a window into alternative attitudes towards Basque nationalism coming from different Catalan nationalist political families. The same can be said of the pro-independence weekly—belonging to the group with the same name—*Nosaltres Sols!*

All in all, these differences in coverage point out to contrasting degrees of interest by the Catalan and Basque nationalist press in providing awareness to their readers about each other's reality. At this stage, it is safe to say that Basque nationalists were, in general, much more in touch with the political events in Catalonia. Conversely, Catalan nationalists, those close to ERC in particular, received fewer inputs as to what was going on in Basque nationalist politics. This asymmetry was the direct result of the fact that, during the spring and summer of 1931, "Catalan nationalist politics were a model for Basque nationalists", including both the PNV and ANV.⁴²⁴ Early Catalan success in obtaining some degree of home rule logically aroused Basque interest, but it also motivated Catalan nationalists to concentrate on their own affairs. Now, beyond this asymmetry, this section will look into what particular visions of the other were portrayed in both environments.

The lack of practical collaboration and the strategic contradictions between ERC and the PNV were bound to have a unfavourable impact on how both actors saw

⁴²³ See Maurici Serrahima, 'Notes Sobre "El Matí"', *Els Marges: Revista de Llengua i Literatura*, 6, 1976, 111–19.

⁴²⁴ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 126.

each other. Most of these negative visions were directly related to the political situation developing in the Spanish parliament during the summer and autumn of 1931. The PNV, facing isolation in the *Cortes*, was increasingly baffled by ERC's lack of support. The left-wing Catalan nationalists, on the other hand, were disgusted by the PNV's position alongside other right-wing, openly anti-republican political agents.⁴²⁵ The highly divisive issue of religion provided the frame from which to build negative visions of the 'other'. *Euzkadi* portrayed ERC as being "sectarian" and having fallen to "antireligious fanaticism", as well as being selfishly unsupportive, even an "enemy" of the PNV.⁴²⁶ *La Rambla* also employed religious imagery in its negative depictions of Basque nationalism, using terms such as "Basque-roman minority" and "troglodytes"—very popular among Spanish republicans at the time⁴²⁷—to describe the Basque nationalist-Carlist coalition. It even included a cartoon depicting Basque people as violent 'cavemen' (see fig. 4.1).

⁴²⁵ *L'Opinió* referred to both the *minoría vasco-navarra* and the right-wing *minoría agraria* collectively as "obstructionist" and "reactionary", see "La República te el seu President", 11/12/1931, p. 1.

⁴²⁶ Lluís Jordà, "Carta de Catalunya", 30/9/1931, p. 1; "Catalunya. Un resumen de la semana", *Euzkadi*, 18/10/1931, p. 3.

⁴²⁷ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 261.

Fig. 4. 1 | “The northern troglodytes are ready to reestablish all of their more or less antediluvian traditions by all means”⁴²⁸



But even these negative visions had their cracks. *Euzkadi*'s critics of ERC's politics almost always spared Francesc Macià, specifically targeting Lluís Companys instead.⁴²⁹ Josep Maria Massip, when criticising the Basque nationalist-Carlist parliamentary group, still found the Basque people “admirable” and slightly downplayed the “cavemen” label that had been applied to the MPs. In another of his critics, Massip also said that “it is a pity that Aguirre, charming and European, gets mixed in [with the rest of the *minoría vasco-navarra*].”⁴³⁰

Basque and Catalan nationalists also projected very positive images of each other during this period. These, however, were less motivated by the political

⁴²⁸ *La Rambla*, 31/8/1931, p. 12.

⁴²⁹ In fact, Aguirre had stated that it had been Companys, not Macià, who had blocked the possibility of a ERC-PNV alliance in the *Cortes*; see De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 262. *Euzkadi* often pitted an “illustrious” Macià against a “sectarian” Companys; see “Catalunya. Un resumen de la semana”, *Euzkadi*, 18/10/1931, p. 5; Lluís Jordà, “La ‘Unió Democràtica de Catalunya’”, *Euzkadi*, 17/11/1931, p. 1.

⁴³⁰ Josep Maria Massip, “A la defensa de trenta-set mil capellans navarresos”, *La Rambla*, 31/8/1931, p. 12; “Setze hores en una tribuna de la Cambra de diputats”, *La Rambla*, 28/9/1931, p. 12.

context, and more a result of a 'mirror effect'. This involved producing visions of the Basque or Catalan other which were partly shaped by their own self-perception.⁴³¹ For instance, the pro-independence Catalan group *Nosaltres Sols!* was enthusiastic in its support for Basque nationalism. From the summer of 1931, its weekly announced it would begin to regularly publish more content on "our beloved brothers of Euskadi. Within the Iberian Peninsula, the only fully nationalist movement", and portrayed the Basques as "truthful, loyal and brave". A 'fully nationalist movement' had probably much to do with what *Nosaltres Sols!* wanted for Catalan nationalism. The group considered ERC to be too concerned with Spanish affairs and involved in a left-wing Spanish national renewal, opposing this to the (Basque) national-centered attitude of Aguirre. *Nosaltres Sols!* openly rejected the Catalan *Estatut* as "shameful when compared to the Basque" *Estatuto*⁴³², in a reference to the Estella project that would eventually fail. Its weekly often included articles with proposals to expand the Catalan national frame to other Catalan-speaking regions, such as Valencia and the Balearic Islands, mirroring the Basque nationalist proposal for a 7 province *Euzkadi*.⁴³³

El Matí was much more subtle in its positive portrayal of Basque nationalism. Being a Catholic newspaper, its detailed chronicles—with a particular interest in the elections and the violent incidents between Spanish leftists and Basque nationalists of the summer and early autumn⁴³⁴—often emphasized religious issues. Again, this interest was probably the result of the 'mirror effect' at work, as the lack of a strong Catholic nationalist movement in Catalonia made the PNV an interesting example for *El Matí*.

Many of the more positive portrayals of Catalan nationalism still reached Basque readers through Lluís Jordà's articles in *Euzkadi*. These, however, were mostly a direct reflection of this journalist's own particular agenda, although there

⁴³¹ Ucelay Da Cal, "Política de Fuera..." p. 75.

⁴³² "Gora Euzkadi", *Nosaltres Sols!*, 13/6/1931, p. 3; *Nosaltres Sols!*, 4/7/1931, p. 2; *Nosaltres Sols!*, 1/8/1931, p. 3.

⁴³³ See Ciutadà Jordi, "Autonomisme? Federalisme? No! Nacionalisme integral!", *Nosaltres Sols!*, 6/6/1931, p. 2; Mace, "Catalunya irredempta", 20/6/1931, p.2 and M. Carreres, "L'expansió de Catalunya", *Nosaltres Sols!*, 11/7/1931, p. 2. For a more general history of the project to unite Catalan-speaking regions see Arnau González i Vilalta, *La Nació Imaginada, Els Fonaments Dels Països Catalans (1931-1939)* Barcelona: Afers, 2006.

⁴³⁴ This included an extensive coverage of the September shooting in Bilbao and the Basque nationalists' version of the events. See "Els fets ocorreguts a Bilbao", *El Matí*, 13/9/1931, p. 1 and "La veritat sobre els fets de Bilbao", *El Matí*, 18/9/1931, p. 11.

is nothing to suggest that he was an active member of any political party. The fact that he often wrote for *El Matí* could mean that he was close to *Unió Democràtica de Catalunya*. Jordà had been critical of ERC almost since its formation, claiming that *Estat Català* had “evolved towards socialism”. This resulted in Jordà promoting different alternatives to ERC within Catalan nationalism throughout 1931. At times, this meant portraying the small group *Nosaltres Sols!* as a real threat to Macià's hegemony. It later involved exaggerating the importance of political Catholicism within Catalan nationalism. In general, Jordà downplayed the importance of left-wing politics in Catalonia. Although initially somewhat critical of Macià, he then praised ERC's leader as a *caudillo* whose electoral success was “a triumph, not of a left-wing party [...], but of the party that represents, through the figure of its leader, full-fledged Catalan nationalism.”⁴³⁵

But beyond these complex and sometimes conflicting visions of each other, there was still enough margin for common narratives. Even the ideologically distant PNV and ERC shared the vision that home rule for both Catalonia and the Basque Country could be secured via a decentralised Spanish state. Back in May 1931, Engracio de Aranzadi wrote:

“Euzkadi, Catalonia, Galicia, Valencia and the Balearic Islands will want it [a federal republic]. Catalonia will impose it with the irresistible force of its patriotism. And we Basques stand with the Catalans, as we begin to appreciate that there is no other form of dignified coexistence than the free union within a confederate organisation [of the Spanish state].”⁴³⁶

Less than a month later, one of *l'Opinió*'s editorial articles stated that in order to

⁴³⁵ Lluís Jordà, “Carta de Catalunya”, *Euzkadi*, 21/3/1931, p. 1; “Carta de Catalunya”, *Euzkadi*, 10/4/1931, p. 1; “El triunfo de Macià”, *Euzkadi*, 5/7/1931, p. 1; “La lucha por el estatuto”, *Euzkadi*, 24/7/1931, p. 1.

⁴³⁶ Original fragment: “Euzkadi, Catalunya, Galicia, Valencia y Baleares la querrán [la república federal]. Catalunya [...] la impone con la fuerza irresistible [...] de su patriotismo. Y con los catalanes estamos los vascos, que vamos palpando [...] que no hay otra forma de convivencia digna que la de unión libre en una organización confederada”. See Engracio de Aranzadi, “Unitarios y federales”, *Euzkadi*, 13/5/1931, p.1.

“[...] coordinate, within the new State, the *Estatuts* of Catalonia, the Basque Country, Galicia and those of other countries which wish to obtain home rule [...] a good solution would be to arrive, by the most practical and simplest procedure, to a real federal structuring [of the Republic].”⁴³⁷

Even though Aranzadi's flattering portrayal of the Catalan nationalist movement contrasts with the more sober tone of *l'Opinió*, both texts contain two key factors which would serve as a basis for Catalan-Basque nationalist relations. The first is a clear recognition of each other as 'national' actors. The second is the statement that some degree of collaboration between both movements could be mutually beneficial. Developing some sort of working relationship would seem a logical step from this common assessment of the political situation. So, in practice, what was the nature of the interaction that emerged between Catalan and Basque nationalists in the summer and autumn of 1931?

4. 4. 2. A 'diplomatic' perspective

The present thesis' introduction has shown how scholars have sought to explain the historical meaning of Basque-Catalan nationalist relations. Despite the persistence of some debates and disagreements, there is a general consensus around two main axes of contradiction. On one hand, there is the framing of the relationship between both nationalist movements as a form of solidarity standing against the actual self-interest driven motives on both sides. On the other hand, lays the shallowness and lack of strategic cooperation going hand in hand with its protracted and often ritualised nature.

⁴³⁷ Original fragment: “[...] coordinar, dintre del nou Estat, els Estatuts de Catalunya, de Bascònia, de Galícia i els d'altres països que vulguin viure autòmicament. La bona solució seria arribar, pel procediment més pràctic i més senzill possible, a una veritable estructuració federal.”. See “Per la Federació”, *l'Opinió*, 9/6/1931, p. 1. For the full original version, see Text 2 of Annex I.

A way to incorporate these ideas into a wider perspective is to use diplomacy as a model.⁴³⁸ International relations scholars use the term *paradiplomacy* to describe the involvement in foreign affairs by sub-state entities; and *protodiplomacy* when such involvement leans strongly towards promoting a secessionist agenda.⁴³⁹ These categories apply to the international—as in ‘beyond the borders of any particular state’—politics of nationalist movements. As such, they have been used by Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas when researching the foreign policy of Basque nationalism.⁴⁴⁰ The relationship between Basque and Catalan nationalists, even if it happens within the borders of a single state, can be seen to mimic the dynamics of protodiplomacy. After all, from these actors' perspective, at least three stateless nations coexist within the Spanish state, therefore constituting an ‘international frame’ of sorts.

Núñez Seixas gathers three items as the main objectives of protodiplomacy: 1) the promotion of positive public opinion in foreign countries, 2) the search for a foreign supportive state, and 3) the collaboration with other nationalist movements. According to Seixas, these goals—which are clearly orientated in terms of national self-interest—also coexist with a shared “ideal construction of international relations which obeys the 19th century Mazzinian vision of a world of free peoples”.⁴⁴¹ This is part of the nationalist discourse, but from a ‘diplomatic’ perspective, it also serves as an ideological common ground, which combined with symbolical gestures of respect and trust, helps to maintain a suitable climate for interaction.

Before the strategic barrier between Catalan and Basque nationalists had become fully apparent, some signs seemed to anticipate an alliance between the PNV and ERC. Soon after the new Spanish *Cortes* began to meet in July, an effort was made towards the creation of an “autonomist bloc” that would include Basque, Galician and Catalan MPs. *Euzkadi* was optimistic, considering the alliance “a sure

⁴³⁸ The comparison between international relations and the interaction of Basque and Catalan nationalists was first made by Xosé Estévez, see Introduction.

⁴³⁹ Noe Cornago, “Paradiplomacy and Protodiplomacy”, *The Encyclopedia of Diplomacy*, John Wiley & Sons, 2018.

⁴⁴⁰ Xosé M. Núñez-Seixas, ‘¿Protodiplomacia Exterior o Ilusiones Ópticas? El Nacionalismo Vasco, El Contexto Internacional y El Congreso de Nacionalidades Europeas (1914-1937)’, *Cuadernos de Sección. Historia-Geografía. Eusko Ikaskuntza*, 23, 1995, 243–75.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 247–248.

thing”.⁴⁴² *L'Opinió* was more cautious, publishing a very short piece on how the Basque and Catalan groups would “probably form a parliamentary bloc”, and that talks were underway. Two days later the same paper lowered expectations: “a Catalan MP told us that such a union would be carefully studied, but that they [ERC's parliamentary group] wished to collaborate with all of those who stand beside home rule.”⁴⁴³ ERC was discreetly refusing the offer to form an alliance with the Basque pro-home rule parliamentary group. An article by Josep de Calassanç Serra i Ràfols, a Catalan nationalist historian, briefly summarised the strategic situation from ERC's point of view: he identified the Spanish republican government, bound by the San Sebastian pact, as the main ally and supporter of Catalan home rule. He also analysed the role of those “other hispanic communities which with equal right aspire to similar demands [i.e. home rule]”, meaning Basque and Catalan nationalists. They would support Catalan self-government out of a “spiritual solidarity caused by a community of interest”. However, Josep de Calassanç's judgement on Basque nationalism was clear:

“Of the two national movements parallel to ours, the Basque is the oldest; but, [...] at the moment we find it to be the weakest. Its largest obstacle is the reactionary, Catholic, far-rightist character of its original core. [...] in Catalonia we have gone through something similar. For some years the *Lliga Regionalista* self-awarded itself [...] with our full [national] representation [...]. Now, in the Basque Country, a new leftist nationalist power begins to form, from which we must figure the future of Basque rebirth.”⁴⁴⁴

Clearly, a retrospective version of the ‘mirror effect’ is at work here. Calassanç compares the PNV's dominant place in Basque nationalism with the *Lliga*'s previous hegemony within Catalan nationalism. From his perspective, Basque

⁴⁴² “Hacia un bloque autonomista de gallegos, catalanes y vascos”, *Euzkadi*, 16/7/1931, p. 1.

⁴⁴³ “Bloc de minories catalana i vasca”, *l'Opinió*, 16/7/1931, p. 4; “Del bloc de diputats autonomistes”, *l'Opinió*, 18/7/1931, p. 5.

⁴⁴⁴ Original fragment: “Dels dos moviments nacionals paral·lels al nostre, el basc és el més antic; però, [...]de moment ens sembla el més feble. El seu obstacle més gros és el caràcter reaccionari, catòlic, ultradretista del seu nucli orginiari. [...] a Catalunya hem passat per quelcom semblant. Durant uns quants anys la Lliga Regionalista va adjudicar-se [...] la nostra representació integral [...]. Ara, a Bascònia, comença a formar-se una nova força nacionalista d'esquerra en què cal xifrar l'esdevenidor del renaixement basc.” See Josep C. Serra-Rafols, “Els aliats de Catalunya”, *l'Opinió*, 22/7/1931, p. 2. For the full original version, see Text 3 of Annex I.

nationalism would only be 'strong' if ANV is able to rise as a solid, leftist alternative to the PNV, in a Basque version of what had happened in Catalonia with ERC. In any case, such a shift was yet to be seen, and ERC would not officially support ANV until 1933 (see Chapter 5). The PNV would remain the main Basque nationalist player and its strategy lay simply too far to the right to make a suitable alliance partner.

Of the three objectives of protodiplomacy as described by Núñez Seixas, ERC had effectively secured the second, i.e. the protection or assistance of a state power. In this particular case, state power meant *the* state, as it was the political agents holding the Spanish Government that were ready to back Catalan home-rule. ERC had therefore very little motivation to pursue the first and third objectives—working towards improving public opinion and cooperation with other countries—particularly with respects to Basque nationalism. With its interests covered by other means, Catalan left-wing nationalism would keep its relations with Basque nationalists to a bare minimum hint of 'spiritual solidarity'.

An example of this almost exclusively symbolic approach to Basque-Catalan nationalist relations came during the celebrations following the *Estatut* referendum in Barcelona. Macià and other leading members of the Catalan Government presided over large crowds that had gathered after the results were made public. A "Basque delegation"—made up of Basque nationalist residents—briefly met the Catalan leaders, then addressed an euphoric multitude. The event contained many symbolic elements: the carrying of an *ikurriña* flag—which was cheered by the public—by the Basque 'delegates', the beginning of their speech in Basque language and the promises made by the Catalan authorities. Macià himself gave the *Generalitat's* support for the creation of Basque language schools in Catalonia.⁴⁴⁵ The whole gesture probably had much to do with the fact that the *Estatut* referendum campaign had specifically targeted non-Catalan residents, including Basques.⁴⁴⁶ But there was little margin for anything beyond the symbolic display of 'spiritual solidarity'. During the post-referendum context, the Basque

⁴⁴⁵ For a more detailed account of the events, see Lluís Jordà, "El triunfo del estatuto catalán", *Euzkadi*, 7/8/1931, p. 1; and "La salutació dels bascos", *l'Opinió*, 4/8/1931, p. 2. In *l'Opinió's* account, Macià promises help for the creation of a Basque nationalist social centre.

⁴⁴⁶ *L'Opinió*, 31/7/1931, p. 1.

nationalist-Carlist parliamentary group officially endorsed the Catalan *Estatut*,⁴⁴⁷ a move which was not returned by the Catalan nationalist MPs.

August 1931 turned out to be a bad month for Basque-Catalan nationalist relations. As the political climate in the Basque Country became increasingly confrontational, the distance between ERC and Basque nationalism became more evident. *L'Opinió* led the way, openly criticising the PNV and the Estella *Estatuto*:

“If the *Lliga* had made Catalonia's *Estatut*, these liberal and friendly voices from Spain would have not emerged, because it would have been a reactionary *Estatut* [...]. Likewise, the Basque *Estatut* will face difficulties, and it is possible that it will not be approved, firstly because it does not represent the will of the Basque people, and secondly because it is about turning the Basque Country into a *republicueta* of priests [...].”⁴⁴⁸

ERC's main newspaper had moved beyond its previous distancing from the PNV's political positions—again, inserting a comparison with the *Lliga Regionalista*—to a direct attack on its home rule project and its political legitimacy. This was the Estella *Estatuto*, which had been born out of the Basque with the Carlists and proposed a traditionalist governance of the Basque Country which was antithetical to ERC's republican ideology. This came only a day before the Spanish Government issued a ban on the Basque nationalist press. During the rest of August, *L'Opinió* made a few references to the situation in the Basque Country, describing the violence as a “rising of the basque-navarrese reaction”⁴⁴⁹, effectively supporting the action of the Spanish authorities.

Soon after the lifting of the press ban in September, *Euzkadi* had the chance to catch up. The Basque nationalist paper publically thanked several Catalan newspapers which had showed their support during the ban. *L'Opinió* was notably absent from the list, which included the *Lliga*'s daily, *La Veu de Catalunya*, as well

⁴⁴⁷ *Euzkadi*, 6/8/1931, p. 3.

⁴⁴⁸ Original fragment: “Si la *Lliga* hagués elaborat l'Estatut de Catalunya, aquestes veus liberals i amigues d'Espanya no haurien sorgit, perquè hauria estat un Estatut reaccionari [...]. De la mateixa manera que l'Estatut basc toparà amb dificultats, i és possible que no s'aprovi, en primer lloc perquè no representa la voluntat del poble basc, i en segon lloc perquè es tracta de convertir Bascònia en una republicueta de capellans [...]” See “Veus liberals d'Espanya”, *L'Opinió*, 21/8/1931, p. 1. For a later, similar article, see “Tasca immediata a fer”, *L'Opinió*, 30/10/1931, p. 1.

⁴⁴⁹ “Contra el sometent”, *L'Opinió*, 28/8/1931, p. 2.

as *El Matí* and the Carlist *El Correo Catalán*. *Nosaltres Sols!* was particularly vocal in its defence of “sister *Euzkadi*”, and had also actively protested against the “persecution of Basque nationalists” by sending a telegram to the Minister of the Interior.⁴⁵⁰ Towards the end of the month, *Euzkadi* published a piece by Valentín Manterola which sounds almost as a direct response to *l’Opinió*’s August critics. His three-pronged attack targeted ERC, the Catalan *Estatut* and its political legitimacy. Of the Catalan republican party, Manterola said that its performance had “been one of complete abandonment of the support offered to the other peninsular peoples, when not of hostility towards them.” Of the *Núria Estatut*, he—correctly—predicted that its content would be altered and that it would fall short of the “Catalan Republic” and “Catalan State” that Macià, amongst others, had pretended in the past. Finally, Manterola implied that there had been fraud in the Catalan *Estatut* referendum.⁴⁵¹

By the end of September, the unfolding of political events and the mutual exchange of accusations had left the relationship between ERC and the PNV in very much hostile terms. If the beginning of the summer had already shown the strategic distance between the two agents, the end of the season was even eroding the very limits of ‘spiritual solidarity’. From a diplomatic perspective, what had happened was serious enough: both sides had in fact ‘meddled’ with each other’s ‘domestic affairs’. An article in *Euzkadi* put it in another way:

“[...] we believe that because of our well proven love for Catalonia we deserved if not an attitude of defence of our aspirations, a pious silence as observed by others [...], who if because of their ideology could not stand beside us, have refused to confront us either, understanding that it is not licit nor in the spirit of solidarity between peoples of common aspirations to hinder the realisation of alien longings which [...] do not undermine us.”⁴⁵²

⁴⁵⁰ *Nosaltres Sols!*, 29/8/1931, p. 1, 2.

⁴⁵¹ Valentín Manterola, “Cuestión de táctica”, *Euzkadi*, 29/9/1931, p. 1.

⁴⁵² Original fragment: “[...] creemos que por nuestro bien probado amor a Catalunya merecíamos si no una actitud de defensa a nuestras aspiraciones, un piadoso silencio como el observado por otros [...], quienes si por su ideología no podían ponerse a nuestro lado, no han querido enfrentárenos tampoco, por entender que no es lícito ni arguye espíritu de solidaridad entre pueblos de aspiraciones comunes el dificultar la consecución de ajenos anhelos que [...] en nada nos han de perjudicar.” See Ibaialdekoa, “La ‘Ezquerria Republicana’ y *Euzkadi*”, *Euzkadi*, 1/10/1931, p. 5. For the full original version, see Text 4 of Annex I. For a more moderate critic of ERC’s position, see Engracio de Aranzadi, “Galicia, Cataluña y *Euzkadi*”, *Euzkadi*, 25/9/1931, p. 1.

In such a difficult climate, the celebration of the Catalan national day, the 11th of September⁴⁵³, did not see a repetition of the symbolic meeting between the Catalan authorities and Basque ‘delegates’. The presence of a group of Basques carrying an *ikurriña* flag, however, was again cheered by the crowds according to both *l'Opinió* and *Euzkadi*.⁴⁵⁴ Such enthusiasm was not entirely surprising, considering that three different political families within Catalan nationalism were still supportive of the PNV: the conservatives of the *Lliga Regionalista*, the Christian democrats of *El Matí*, and the pro-independence activists of *Nosaltres Sols!*

Basque nationalists continued to play the ‘Catalan card’. At the end of September, the *Minoría Vasco-navarra* parliamentary group reassured its support for the Catalan *Estatut*.⁴⁵⁵ ERC, on the other hand, remained unsympathetic to the *Estella Estatuto*, and *l'Opinió* issued only a limited chronicle of the Basque mayors' trip to Madrid.⁴⁵⁶ The PNV now looked for alternatives to the right of the Catalan nationalist political spectrum. In October, José Antonio Aguirre and Manuel Egileor visited Barcelona to take part in a series of talks organised by the *Federació Catalana d'Estudiants Catòlics* (‘Catalan Federation of Catholic Students’). The young Basque nationalist leader was joined by José María Gil Robles—a rising figure of the Spanish conservative right—as well as representatives of the *Lliga Regionalista*, *Acció Catalana* and the Catalan Carlists.⁴⁵⁷ *l'Opinió* took note of the event, which was almost a gathering of ERC's political opponents, describing Aguirre and Egileor as “Basque reactionary MPs”.⁴⁵⁸

The creation of a *batzoki* in Barcelona—which Aguirre visited during his stay—established a more permanent Basque nationalist presence in Catalonia. The social centre became “a kind of embassy”, and a gathering place for Basque residents and travellers—often seamen from the *Sota y Aznar* and *Ibarra* shipping companies. It

⁴⁵³ The *Diada Nacional de Catalunya* remembers the fall of Barcelona to the Bourbon army during the War of Spanish Succession in 1714. Its celebration as a nationalist symbol consolidated during the first years of the 20th Century. By the 1930s it had become a mass event, revolving around a parade before the statue of Rafael Casanova, one of the main Catalan leaders during the siege.

⁴⁵⁴ “L'Onze de Setembre d'enguany”, *l'Opinió*, 12/9/1931, p. 1; Lluís Jordà, “Carta de Catalunya”, *Euzkadi*, 30/9/1931, p. 1.

⁴⁵⁵ *Euzkadi*, 25/9/1931, p. 3.

⁴⁵⁶ “Els alcaldes bacs retornen al seu país”, *l'Opinió*, 24/9/1931, p. 5.

⁴⁵⁷ “El alcalde de Getxo hablará en Barcelona”, *Euzkadi*, 29/10/1931, p. 7.

⁴⁵⁸ “Més diputats reaccionaris bascos a Barcelona”, *l'Opinió*, 30/10/1931, p. 2.

also attracted Catalan politicians such as Manuel Carrasco i Formiguera⁴⁵⁹ and members of *Nosaltres Sols!*,⁴⁶⁰ becoming a small hub for ‘pro-Basque’ Catalan nationalists. After September 1931, its activities were also publicised in *Euzkadi*.

As autumn went on, the relations between ERC and the PNV showed no signs of improving. The Basque nationalist MPs’ decision to leave their seats after the approval of the new Spanish Constitution’s secularist articles further increased the distance between both parties. Josep Maria Massip lashed against the decision, saying that “these Basques [...] that have not been able to [...] face a defeat with loyalty, are not [true] deputies of the República.”⁴⁶¹ ERC, however, was more concerned by the implications the religious crisis could have on the Spanish government, than by the absence of the PNV MPs.⁴⁶²

1931 ended not only with an almost complete lack of strategic cooperation between the two respective big players of Basque and Catalan nationalism, but with a damaged relationship marked by the exchange of direct criticism and even verbal attacks. The regime challenger *versus* regime member dynamic that had formed between the PNV and ERC had made the idea of a ‘Basque-Catalan *entente*’ impossible. The diplomatic perspective employed in this section has shown that *Esquerra*’s relationship with the Spanish Government as its ‘protector state’ inhibited any strategic approach to the PNV. Furthermore, the confrontational situation—including both the events in the Basque Country and the constitutional debates—that developed during the second half of the year even threatened the existence of a cordial relationship based upon ‘spiritual solidarity’. By the end of 1931 the PNV was already looking for an alternative Catalan partner, and José Antonio Aguirre had started to exchange letters with Francesc Cambó, the leader of

⁴⁵⁹ F. Xavier Medina, *Vascos En Barcelona. Etnicidad y Migración Vasca Hacia Cataluña En El Siglo XX*, Vitoria-Gasteiz: Eusko Jaurlaritzaren Argitalpen Zerbitzu Nagusia, 2002) pp. 50–52. Carrasco i Formiguera was a member of Acció Catalana, Health *Conseller* in Macià’s government and MP for Girona. His Catholic faith and political convictions led him to join *Unió Democràtica de Catalunya* in 1932. See Lluís Duran, ‘El Pensament Nacionalista de Manuel Carrasco i Formiguera. Un Cristià Demòcrata per La República Catalana.’, *Butlletí de La Societat Catalana d’Estudis Històrics*, XXV, 2014, 351–88.

⁴⁶⁰ Filo, “Un batzoqui = Una llar”, *Nosaltres Sols!*, 28/11/1931, p. 1.

⁴⁶¹ Josep Maria Massip, “Les hores de la crisi”, *La Rambla*, 19/10/1931, p. 12. In a more moderate tone, Antoni Rovira i Virgili also criticised the Basque MPs decision to leave the *Cortes*. He was answered in “La votació perduda”, *Euzkadi*, 3/12/1931, p. 5.

⁴⁶² *L’Opinió*, 15/10/1931, p. 1, 4.

the *Lliga Regionalista*.⁴⁶³ The new political cycle that had begun with the approval of the new Spanish constitution would bring the consolidation of the republican regime and opened new possibilities for Basque-Catalan nationalist relations.

⁴⁶³ Sallés & Ucelay Da Cal, “La Correspondencia...”.

Chapter 5.

Stabilisation and desynchronisation.

Basque and Catalan nationalists

during the 'progressive' biennium

The approval of the new constitution, the 9th of December 1931, opened up a phase which could potentially stabilise the Spanish republican regime, allowing its novel institutions to develop. Historiography has often divided the time period that followed into two: the 'progressive' or 'reformist' biennium, and the 'conservative' biennium. The progressive biennium basically comprised Manuel Azaña's tenure as Prime Minister, as well as a short-lived government under Diego Martínez Barrio. The conservative biennium saw a political power shift to the right after the 19th of November 1933 general election. It came to an end with the Popular Front's victory in February 1936. For Catalan and Basque nationalists, these were times of struggle to advance and consolidate their claims in the midst of changing conditions.

The new constitutional frame significantly narrowed the political opportunity structure. The 'integral' model adopted by the Spanish Republic—a non-federalist alternative to full centralisation—fixed the limits of home rule and established the institutional mechanisms required for its activation. Basque and Catalan nationalists had to adapt to this framework or alternatively adopt a more regime-challenging position. Most, including ERC and the PNV, chose the former.

The initial conditions for political contention in Catalonia and the Basque Country at the beginning of 1932 were basically echoes of the political developments explained in Chapter 4. ERC further enhanced its position as a regime member with the formation of a new Spanish cabinet the 13th of December 1931. Alejandro Lerroux's Radical Party, a long-time rival of Catalan nationalism, withdrew from Azaña's government. Nicolau d'Oliver—*who was politically close to Esquerra but actually came from Acció Catalana*—was substituted by Jaume Carner, an ERC MP.⁴⁶⁴ The PNV came from a rather failed experience as a regime challenger, and it was reconsidering its strategy and options. As a gesture, its MPs had given their last minute support to President Alcalá-Zamora. As in the previous chapter, the other main difference between *Esquerra* and the Basque Nationalist Party, as well as their relationship to the regime, was that the former was a powerful institutional political actor, controlling the *Generalitat* and key cities such as Barcelona. The PNV, on the other hand, only held institutions at a local level,

⁴⁶⁴ Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, pp. 165–166.

organised under the platform of the Mayors' Movement. The *Comisiones Gestoras*, indirectly controlled by Madrid through the Civil Governors, were still the dominating institutions in the Basque Country.

In terms of the general dynamics of political contention, the progressive biennium saw a growing distance between Basque and Catalan nationalism. The final enactment of the *Estatut* in September 1932 was a decisive milestone. It essentially marked the end of what the present thesis has identified as the Catalan home rule stream of contention. From that point onwards, and until the aftermath of the October 1934 crisis (see Chapter 6) Catalan political contention would revolve around *maintaining*, rather than *achieving*, home rule. Meanwhile, Basque nationalists would continue along their own protracted stream of contention to obtain self-government, facing several setbacks. This situation, in which the two national movements find themselves in two clearly different phases of the nation-building process, is described by the present thesis as *desynchronisation*.

This chapter is broken down into two main sections. The first will compare Basque and Catalan nationalist political contention up to the approval of the *Estatut*. It will also look at the Catalan and Basque home rule charters, comparing their nation-building potential. The second section will cover the consequences of the above mentioned desynchronisation. This involves looking at the growing differences between Basque and Catalan nation-building efforts during the rest of the progressive biennium. Another item to be analysed in this second section is GALEUZCA, an attempt to bring together Galician, Basque and Catalan nationalists under a permanent alliance during the summer of 1933.

5. 1. Ahead of the game. The final drive towards Catalan home rule (January-September 1932)

5. 1. 1. Success and failure

The December 1931 Constitution finally fixed the legal and political framework of the Spanish Republic. Catalan and Basque nationalists now faced defined limits to how far could they go in terms of home rule. Both movements had hoped for a greater degree of decentralisation, and now had to reassess the political situation. The Catalan *Núria Estatut*, which was to be debated in the Spanish *Cortes* during the first months of 1932, contained some articles which were bound to clash with the ‘integral state’ model established by the new constitution. The Basque *Estella Estatuto*, on the other hand, had been essentially defeated, with most of its key articles being clearly unconstitutional. As 1932 began, Catalan nationalists were facing the perspective of a new series of intense debates in the Spanish Parliament, whilst Basque nationalists were virtually back to ‘square one’.

The original version of the Catalan *Estatut*, which had been approved by Catalan voters in August, was not debated directly by the Spanish Parliament. Instead, a special commission was created, tasked with creating a second version of the text, one which abided by the new constitution. ERC was only granted two out of twenty-one representatives in the commission, which included both potential allies as well as open opponents of Catalan home rule. Once a new, revised text was completed—which happened the 9th of April 1932—the parliamentary debate could begin.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶⁵ Abelló Güell, *El Debat...*, pp. 86, 88.

Meanwhile, a new decree by the Spanish Government opened another path towards Basque home rule, creating an official procedure for the approval of a legally viable *Estatuto*—one that would fit the new constitutional framework. The decree, written by the Basque PSOE leader Prieto, established the *Comisiones Gestoras* as the leading institution in such a process, which would have to then follow three stages. First, the *Gestoras* would have to present a proposal to provincial assemblies of local councils with the capacity to reject, amend or approve the text. Second, the *Estatuto* would be voted in a referendum, which required the favourable vote of two thirds of all registered voters. Finally, the *Estatuto* would be taken to the Spanish *Cortes*—where it would be subject to further debate and modifications— for its final ratification. The *Gestoras* moved quickly, and appointed a drafting commission the 15th of December 1931. The PNV was given a single representative out of a total of ten: Bermeo Town Councillor Francisco Basterreceha.⁴⁶⁶

By January 1932, the futures of Basque and Catalan home rule were in the hands of institutional teams which were both dominated by Spanish political actors, with ERC and the PNV standing in a clear minority. The parliamentary commission dealing with the Núria *Estatut*, on one hand, was ready to cut back many of the text's articles. The drafting commission for the Basque *Estatuto*, on the other hand, was led by representatives of Spanish socialist and republican parties which did not share the PNV's enthusiasm for home rule. Catalan nationalists had pressed for an integral approval of the Núria *Estatut* and were now worried that excessive 'trimming' would undermine the project. Basque nationalists feared that a new, more liberal version of the Basque *Estatuto* would be rejected by the Carlist-dominated province of Navarre. In the face of these risks, both movements resorted to contentious political action.

From a mechanism-process analysis perspective, mobilisation was a key driving process in Basque and Catalan contentious politics during the first two thirds of 1932. Timing, however, differed slightly in the two contexts. In Catalonia, the trigger for mobilisation was the publication of the parliamentary commission's amended version of the *Estatut*, the 9th of April 1932. In the Basque Country, the

⁴⁶⁶ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 284–287.

new *Estatuto* was published the 21st of March, but the PNV was focused in another episode of mobilisation: the first *Aberrri Eguna*, or Basque national day, celebrated on the 29th (see Chapter 7). The campaign for the Basque *Estatuto* began in May. Mobilisation in Catalonia was affected by the lengthening of the parliamentary debates—which also began in May—and came to an end with the celebrations following the approval of a modified version of the *Estatut*, the 9th of September. In the Basque Country, mobilisation stopped the 19th of June, after Navarre officially withdrew from the Basque *Estatuto*.

The contentious politics of Basque and Catalan nationalists during the first nine months of 1932 therefore produced two different outcomes. In Catalonia, mobilisation had led to another process: institutionalisation. Catalan nationalist demands for home rule had been partially incorporated into ‘the routines of organised politics’. In the Basque Country, mobilisation had failed to produce the same result. The Basque process to achieve home rule had stalled again. The following pages will address these two different outcomes from a compared perspective, including how Basque and Catalan nationalist political actors framed the events as these developed.

In both sites of contention, brokerage played a key role as the main mechanism which made mobilisation possible. Both ERC and the PNV needed to make connections—or activate existing ones—with other political actors in order to broaden mobilisation. This happened differently in the Basque and Catalan contexts.

In Catalonia, brokerage had much to do with how ERC continued to build its hegemony within Catalan politics. *Esquerra* used its central role as the ruling political party—in direct control of the *Generalitat* and Barcelona's Town Hall—to attract other political actors to its periphery. It had done so with a cabinet remodelling in December 1931, by which Macià kept Casimir Giralt i Bullich, from the Radical Party, as Finance *Conseller*, and appointed the PSOE-UGT⁴⁶⁷ leader

⁴⁶⁷ The *Unión General de Trabajadores* trade union was founded in 1888 in Barcelona with close ties to the PSOE. Its strength in Catalonia remained limited in the face of the much stronger CNT, at least until the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. On the other hand, the UGT was strong in the Basque Country, particularly in the more industrial areas of Biscay and Gipuzkoa. For a comprehensive study of the history of this union, see the full 6 volumes of the collective work *Historia de la UGT*, Madrid: Siglo XXI de España, 2008.

Josep Jové i Surroca as Health *Conseller*. ERC also worked to maintain a good relationship with the Spanish state's representatives in Catalonia, the Civil Governors.⁴⁶⁸ This however, could not avoid losing influence over the CNT, which dropped its previous non-belligerent attitude towards the Catalan Government. In January 1932, the anarchists attempted an insurrection in the Alt Llobregat area.

That same month, ERC put forward the idea of a “single front” in defence of the *Estatut*.⁴⁶⁹ It was to prove another opportunity to reaffirm the party's position as the leading force in Catalan politics and to extend its influence to other Catalan political actors outside the *Generalitat*. The 18th of April, all of the Catalan MPs joined Macià in a public declaration to conform the single front. In a repetition of the alliance that had campaigned for the ‘yes’ vote in the August 1931 referendum, the *Lliga Regionalista* and the *Partit Catalanista Republicà* vowed to side with *Esquerra*. Catalan brokerage was effective because it was accompanied by another mechanism: boundary deactivation, as observed in this report on the 18th of April declaration:

“At the meeting of the Catalan Members of Parliament held yesterday at the Generalitat, under the high presidency of Francesc Macià, all political sectors of our homeland expressed their agreement. The name of Catalonia unites all thoughts and puts all forces in the line of combat. For the defence of Catalonia's freedoms, all Catalans are a single man.”⁴⁷⁰

As in 1931, the event was framed in the familiar notions of national unity—“all Catalans are a single man”—and consensus—“all political sectors”—which are expressions of the rhetoric of hegemony. Nevertheless, this discourse reflects a real, albeit temporary, proximity between the different political actors sharing the *Estatut* as their common claim.

⁴⁶⁸ Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, pp. 167–168, 173.

⁴⁶⁹ “Pensem en Catalunya”, *La Humanitat*, 8/1/1931, p. 1.

⁴⁷⁰ Original fragment: “A la reunió dels parlamentaris catalans celebrada ahir a la Generalitat, sota l'alta presidència de Francesc Macià, tots els sectors polítics de la nostra terra van manifestar-se d'acord. El nom de Catalunya ajunta tots els pensaments i posa en línia de combat totes les forces. Per la defensa de les llibertats de Catalunya, tots els catalans són un sol home.” See “La unitat de Catalunya”, *La Humanitat*, 19/4/1932, p. 3.

In the Basque Country, brokerage was a much more problematic affair. The defeat of the Estella *Estatuto* had shattered the foundations over which the alliance between the Carlists and the PNV had been built.⁴⁷¹ The alliance itself basically crumbled after December 1931, when the Basque Nationalist Party decided to take part in the *Gestoras*-led home rule process, facing harsh critics from their Carlist ex-allies. These were not interested in supporting an *Estatuto* if it could not be used as a weapon against the whole republican constitutional framework. The PNV's strategic shift, however, was not followed by an automatic rapprochement with the Spanish left. This is hardly surprising after the political violence and repression of 1931, and was partly a product of the continued perception by Spanish republicans and socialists that the creation of Basque institutions could be used by the PNV to 'subvert' the republican order. Nevertheless, these different political actors managed to work together in the *Estatuto*'s drafting commission, which completed and published a text proposal the 21st of March. The PSOE and the Spanish republican parties, however, were not too enthusiastic in their promotion of the new *Estatuto*. In Navarre, some socialists and republicans even opposed the project (see below). It was not until the 16th of May that a central Propaganda Commission was set up, led by Ramón Madariaga, José Antonio Aguirre and Miguel Armentia—a republican, a Basque nationalist and a socialist—tasked with the public promotion of the *Estatuto*.⁴⁷²

Moreover, the Basque Nationalist Party had another priority involving mobilisation—but not much brokerage *per se*—during the first months of 1932: the celebration of the first *Aberrri Eguna*. From January, the PNV began to prepare what would become the first edition of the Basque National Day, which was to take place on Resurrection Sunday: the 27th of March. The mobilising apparatus of the party—including many of its leaders, the press, its local groups and its women and youth branches—was bent on this event, which gathered 65.000 people in a large

⁴⁷¹ José Luis de la Granja has shown that by November 1931, some Basque nationalist leaders were already considering that an alternative *Estatuto*—one which had the support of the republican and socialist controlled *Gestoras*—was needed if home rule was to be achieved. See *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 278–279.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 288–289.

demonstration in Bilbao.⁴⁷³ This was a very significant long-term contribution to Basque nation-building, but in its first edition it focused on a reaffirmation of the PNV's ideology and its founders, the Arana brothers, as well as showcasing the growth of the party's 'social movement base'. As such, the *Aberri Eguna* happened in relative isolation from the *Estatuto* issue, which was barely mentioned during the celebrations.⁴⁷⁴

The mobilisation resulting from brokerage and boundary deactivation in Catalonia was powerful but short-lived. It mainly focused on a single, large demonstration meant to pressure the Spanish Parliament not to alter the *Núria Estatut*, that took place in Barcelona the 24th of April 1932. The event was not called for by ERC or the 'single front', but by the CADCI (*Centre Autonomista de Dependents del Comerç i de la Industria*) an association of Catalan nationalist clerks which had around 20,000 members at the time.⁴⁷⁵ This helped to frame the demonstration as being non-partisan, enabling an easier participation for different political actors. ERC's press promoted the event, and so did the party's women's section, but the *Lliga Regionalista* did not take part.⁴⁷⁶ The conservative Catalan nationalists did not openly criticise or distance themselves from the demonstration, but they organised a separate rally at the Bosc Theatre in Barcelona. This was probably an attempt to maintain the *Lliga*'s separate profile and to avoid being pulled too close to *Esquerra*'s centre of gravity.⁴⁷⁷

The march was inserted into the same national unity-consensus frame that has been explained above and had been applied to the 'single front': "It is not a party, that calls upon us [to take part in the demonstration]. Nor some men. Nor some entity. It is Catalonia, only Catalonia, who wants us by its side."⁴⁷⁸ Here the use of

⁴⁷³ José Luis de la Granja Sainz, "El Culto a Sabino Arana: La Doble Resurrección y El Origen Histórico Del Aberri Eguna En La II República", *Historia y Política: Ideas, Procesos y Movimientos Sociales*, 15, 2006, pp. 65–116.

⁴⁷⁴ The *Aberri Eguna* and both the PNV and ERC's 'social movement bases' will be analysed in detail at the end of Chapter 7.

⁴⁷⁵ Agustí Barrera i Puigví, "El CADCI, Dins El Moviment Obrer Català. Els Orígens, Objectius", *Revista Del Centre de Lectura de Reus*, 4, 2002, pp. 26–28.

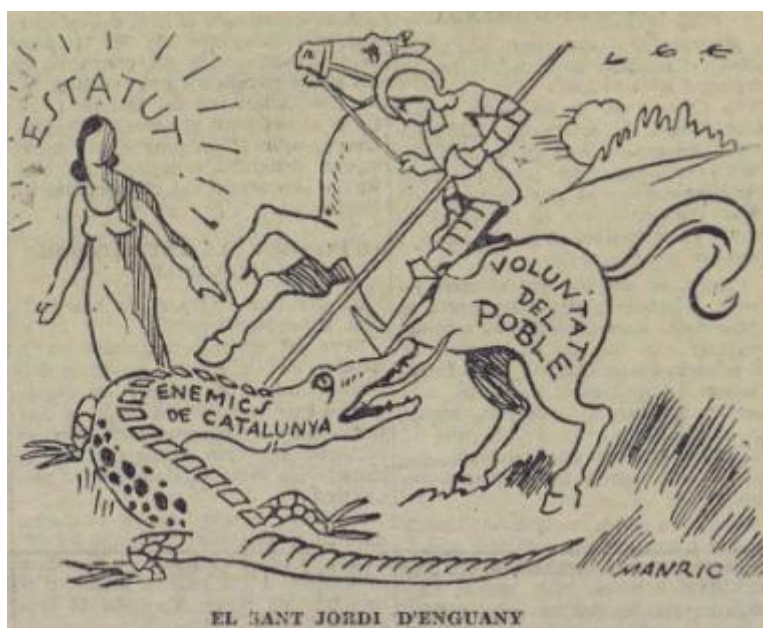
⁴⁷⁶ Núria Montserrat, "Les dones i l'estatut", *La Humanitat*, 21/4/1932, p. 10; *La Humanitat*, 22/4/1932, p. 10; "La manifestació de demà per l'estatut", *l'Opinió*, 23/4/1932, p. 3.

⁴⁷⁷ *La Veu de Catalunya*, 25/4/1932, p. 1. Another article published before the demonstration asserted that "the *Lliga* and its men continue composed in their own path, in constant activity, while their critics [...] pass and disappear without a trace". See "L'actuació de la *Lliga*", *La Veu de Catalunya*, 24/4/1932, p. 1.

⁴⁷⁸ "Catalunya ens crida", *La Humanitat*, 23/4/1932, p. 3.

'us' is also an example of the syntax of hegemony, as it refers to both Catalan nationalists and Catalan citizens as a whole. The fact that the demonstration took place only a day after the feast of *Sant Jordi* (Saint George), allowed *La Humanitat* to tap into the traditional Catalan nationalist symbolism associated with the Saint (see fig. 5. 1).

Fig. 5. 1 | "This year's Saint George"⁴⁷⁹



The demonstration finally gathered 200,000 people in Barcelona.⁴⁸⁰ As a show of strength, it was a clear success. *La Humanitat* triumphantly described it as "Catalonia's second plebiscite".⁴⁸¹ The beginning of the debates on the *Estatut* in the *Cortes*, the 6th of May, switched the focus to the institutional politics of the Spanish legislative chamber. Catalan nationalist mobilisation stopped, only to return with another large demonstration held in August in response to an attempted coup by General Sanjurjo (see below).

⁴⁷⁹ *La Humanitat*, 22/4/1932, p. 1. Saint George was declared Catalonia's patron saint during the 14th Century, and adapted as a symbol of Catalan nationalism during the 19th Century. For a more detailed work on the process, see Pere Anguera, "Sant Jordi, Patro de Catalunya", *Estudis d'Història Agrària*, 17, 2004, pp. 67–76.

⁴⁸⁰ Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, pp. 173–174.

⁴⁸¹ *La Humanitat*, 25/4/1931, p. 1.

In Catalonia, mobilisation had been about making a strong display of strength and numbers which would put some pressure on the Spanish *Cortes*. In the Basque Country, on the other hand, it had a much more concrete goal: convincing a majority of Local Councils to vote for the *Estatuto* in the assembly that was to take place the 19th of June in Pamplona. The campaign lasted roughly a month, beginning with the creation of the central Propaganda Commission, which then established delegations for the four Basque provinces. The *Estatuto* was promoted through local rallies, talks, posters, pamphlets, and more advanced technical means such as cinemas and aerial advertising. 200.000 copies of the text were distributed, as well as shorter, simplified versions. The campaign received support from workers' unions and Catholic associations, and also appealed to Basques living in Madrid and Barcelona. Two *ad hoc* newspapers were created to promote the Basque *Estatuto*: *Autonomía* and *Por Navarra*.⁴⁸²

The lack of effective brokerage explained above showed in the fact that the Basque campaign did not include any central rallies or large demonstrations, which could have served as displays of strength and unity between leftists and Basque nationalists. The national unity-consensus frame, that had been so present in the discourse surrounding the Estella *Estatuto* in 1931—even when the whole political left was opposed to the project—was now conspicuously absent. Clearly, the PNV was not comfortable with working with the PSOE and the Spanish republican parties, and it did not try to frame the new *Estatuto* as the product of a new national consensus. Instead, *Euzkadi* took a more ‘pedagogical’ approach, countering Carlist critics of the *Estatuto* and putting forward arguments for the inclusion of Navarre.⁴⁸³ The *Estatuto* was framed as a ‘rational’ choice. Articles highlighted particular aspects of the text's content, framing them as “beneficial”, “practical” or “useful”, often emphasising that the PNV's ultimate political

⁴⁸² *Euzkadi* consistently documented these activities as part of a section titled “El Estauto Vasco”, published almost on a daily basis on its front cover throughout the duration of the campaign.

⁴⁸³ The veteran Basque nationalist ideologue Engracio de Aranzadi contributed with many articles, such as for example “¡Antivasco!”, *Euzkadi*, 15/5/1932, p. 1; “El organismo constitucional vasco”, *Euzkadi*, 28/5/1932, p. 1; “¿Mezquino?”, *Euzkadi*, 1/6/1932, p. 1.

objectives went much further than the degree of self-government offered by the *Estatuto*.⁴⁸⁴

The issue of home rule also motivated political contention in the opposite direction: other political actors engaged in contentious politics *against* the claims of Basque and Catalan nationalists. As in previous occasions (see Chapter 4) this dynamic took different forms in Catalonia and the Basque Country, and its impact was again uneven.

The weakness of Spanish nationalist political actors in Catalonia meant that claims against home rule were mostly articulated from the outside. The 16th of January 1932, an assembly of Spanish Local Councils gathered in Burgos, endorsed by several conservative MPs. This began a process of anti-*Estatut* mobilisation which included press campaigns by *ABC*, *El Imparcial* and *El Norte de Castilla*⁴⁸⁵, as well as rallies and demonstrations. The high-water mark of the campaign came with a rally held at the main bullfighting ring in Madrid the 27th of July, where the conservative MP Antonio Royo Villanova called for the boycott of Catalan products.⁴⁸⁶ Despite its relative strength, the success of this ‘counter-mobilisation’ was very limited, as it 1) lacked institutional projection, failing to broker any form of alliance in the left-dominated Spanish Parliament and 2) its influence in Catalonia was almost negligible, failing to cause any disruption of Catalan mobilisation for home rule.

The epitome of these ‘exterior’ efforts of political contention against Catalan home rule claims—or against any form of decentralisation—came with the *Sanjurjada*, a failed coup by General José Sanjurjo the 10th of August. Sanjurjo had originally supported the April republican proclamations as General Director of the *Guardia Civil*, but soon became a bitter opponent of the Government reform plan and the Catalan *Estatut*. The attempt was poorly organised and only partially

⁴⁸⁴ See for example Aritxulueta, “El contenido social del Estatuto”, *Euzkadi*, 25/5/1932, p. 1; F. Javier de Landaburu, “Nueva fisonomía”, *Euzkadi*, 27/5/1932, p. 1; Kizkitza [Engracio de Aranzadi], “Por el idioma vasco”, *Euzkadi*, 29/5/1932, p. 1; Donosti, “La hacienda de Euzkadi y el Estatuto”, *Euzkadi*, 2/6/1931.

⁴⁸⁵ The anti-*Estatut* press campaign included the promotion of political violence, with the use of slogans such as “war on the *Estatuto*” and “before the *Estatuto*, civil war”, see Abelló Güell, *El Debat...*, p. 143–145.

⁴⁸⁶ Josep Pich Mitjana, José Contreras Ruiz, and Juan Pastrana Piñero, “A Sangre y Fuego. Antonio Royo Villanova, Maestro de Administrativistas y de Anticatalanistas”, *Historia Contemporánea*, 51, 2015, pp. 630–631.

successful in Seville, being defeated in Madrid and having no practical consequences throughout most of the Spanish state. In Barcelona, a large anti-coup demonstration the 11th of August, featuring speeches by Macià and other ERC leaders, was followed by several rallies organised by the party the 12th of August. The *Sanjurjada* had failed in its military objectives, and caused even more Catalan nationalist mobilisation. In fact, it also sped up the approval of the *Estatut* by the Spanish Parliament, the 9th of September.⁴⁸⁷

In the Basque Country, political contention against the *Gestoras'* home rule proposal took a different route. Here, opposition to home rule was more focused on the mechanisms of boundary activation and *boundary shift*.⁴⁸⁸ Chapter 4 has already shown how the Catholic *versus* secular identity barrier had increased in relevance during the first months of the second Spanish republic, and how it had impacted Basque contention for home rule. The PNV and the Carlists had both tapped into Catholic political identity in their campaign for the Estella *Estatuto*. Now, with the alliance breaking apart and the PNV lending its support to the *Gestoras'* project for home rule, the Carlists attempted to carry out a boundary shift by 'pushing' the Basque nationalists to the other side of the Catholic/secular boundary. The *Gestoras' Estatuto* was rejected as "atheist" by the Carlists from the beginning. During the summer of 1932, they even distributed the libellous *Nacionalismo-Comunismo-Judaísmo*, a pamphlet accusing the PNV of connections with freemasonry, the "elders of Zion", and international communism. The Basque Nationalist Party recognised the potential danger of this boundary shift, and worked to get Church authorities to confirm its 'beyond-doubt' status as a Catholic political actor.⁴⁸⁹

The real hard blow for the Basque home rule campaign, however, came from boundary activation. Specifically, the increased relevance of a Navarrese *versus* Basque identity barrier, promoted by both elements within the Carlist movement and the Spanish left in Navarre. This barrier fed into the argument that the

⁴⁸⁷ Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, p. 176.

⁴⁸⁸ If boundary activation/deactivation is defined as an "increase ([or] decrease) in the salience of the us-them distinction separating two political actors", boundary shift is defined as a "change in the persons or identities on one side or the other of an existing boundary", see Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious politics*, p. 215.

⁴⁸⁹ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 285, 291, 293, 304.

province of Navarre was not part of the Basque Country, or had little to benefit from the association with Biscay, Alaba and Gipuzkoa; therefore Navarre had no place in a Basque *Estatuto*. Many Navarrese Carlists now openly showed that their previous upholding of the Basque national frame had been conditioned to the Estella *Estatuto*'s Catholic and traditionalist political content. In terms of how citizenship and the relationship with the Church was defined, the new *Estatuto* was simply too liberal for the Carlists to use as a weapon against the Spanish republic. The Spanish left in Navarre—which also included a small pro-Basque *Estatuto* faction led by Manuel Azaña's party, *Acción Republicana*—was also predominantly against the province's integration in a Basque self-governing region. This happened partly because much of its strength lay in an area known as the Ribera, described by the Navarrese Basque nationalist leader Manuel Irujo as “our Ulster”, as it had been culturally Castilian for centuries.⁴⁹⁰

The combined rejection of the Basque *Estatuto* by influential elements within both the Navarrese left and right caused the province's withdrawal from the home rule project. In a final assembly held in Pamplona the 19th of June 1932, a majority of Navarrese Local Councils voted against their integration in a Basque self-governing region. This came as a hard blow for Basque nationalists and caused the official—but not public—dissolution of their parliamentary alliance with the Carlists, which was decided in a meeting held the 1st of August.⁴⁹¹ The defection of Navarre effectively paralysed the Basque home rule process until October 1932, when a new drafting commission began to work on another proposal, this time only including Biscay, Gipuzkoa and Araba.

The first nine months of 1932 had therefore seen contrasting dynamics of contention at work in Catalonia and the Basque Country. Mobilisation played a central role in both sites, but different mechanisms, operating under the surface, shaped the final outcomes. In Catalonia, effective brokerage and boundary deactivation produced a ‘single front’ which enabled broad mobilisation. Eventually institutionalisation took place, in the form of the passing of the Catalan

⁴⁹⁰ de Pablo, Mees, & Rodríguez Ranz. *El Péndulo...*, pp. 221–225; de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 295–296.

⁴⁹¹ For a more detailed account of the Pamplona assembly, including claims of foul play that affected the results of the Navarrese vote, see de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 298–304.

Estatut by the Spanish *Cortes*. In the Basque Country, incomplete brokerage and boundary activation significantly weakened mobilisation and led to conditions which made the institutionalisation impossible—i.e. without Navarre, the home rule project had to be reassessed.

Successful mobilisation alone, however, was no guarantee of successful institutionalisation. After all, Catalan mobilisation in April had the explicit goal of achieving a complete approval of the Catalan *Estatut*, and could not stop it from receiving significant modifications. Yet another mechanism must be put into the picture to explain the successful institutionalisation of Catalan home rule claims. This was certification, in the form of political support for Catalan home rule by the Azaña executive, allowing the *Estatut* to get past the Spanish legislature.⁴⁹² Once again, ERC's status as a regime member was crucial to its success—relative to the PNV—in advancing its claims.

5. 1. 2. From sovereignty to autonomy? Nation-building and the new Estatutos

September 1932 was different for Basque and Catalan nationalists in several ways. The former had finally achieved their *Estatut*. The latter were still recovering from “the painful and bloody wound”⁴⁹³ that had been the loss of Navarre. The situation, however, was more complex than a simple contrast between victory and defeat. Both movements had been through a process of compromise and recalculation of their original claims. ERC had accepted a modified version of the *Estatut* that had been voted for by the Catalan people. The PNV had first assumed that the Estella *Estatuto* was a dead end, and then accepted a liberal, secular and less ambitious alternative. This section will analyse how these compromises were framed by both movements, and what were their implications in terms of nation-building.

⁴⁹² Azaña himself proved decisive in the months-long debate that led to the modification and final approval of the Catalan *Estatut*. For a more detailed account of the parliamentary debates and interventions, see Abelló Güell, *El Debat...*, pp. 90–101.

⁴⁹³ de Pablo, Mees, & Rodríguez Ranz. *El Péndulo...*, p. 221.

The journey from the Estella and Núria *Estatutos* of 1931 to the Basque *Gestoras' Estatuto* and the Catalan revised *Estatut* of 1932⁴⁹⁴ was marked by the readjustment of political claims to the changing political opportunity structure. This was no minor issue: on the contrary, it affected the cores of Basque and Catalan nationalism as political projects. Perhaps the most crucial difference between the 1931 and the 1932 texts was the loss of the self-attribution of sovereignty present in the Núria and Estella *Estatutos*. The Republican Constitution had established the Spanish nation, represented by its *Cortes*, as the only source of sovereignty. The new “integral State” allowed the “autonomy of Local Councils and Regions”. The *Estatutos* of 1932 adopted this terminology, discarding the term ‘state’—which would have been consistent with a federal constitutional model—and adopting “autonomous political and administrative nucleus” and “autonomous region”. This was accompanied by a general reduction in the degree of home rule given to Catalonia and the Basque Country. In the former, this affected language and education policies⁴⁹⁵—particularly sensitive issues for Catalan nationalism. In the latter, it also involved a liberal redrawing of Basque home rule, discarding the previous traditionalist model, enabling an easier access to citizenship and universal suffrage.

Chapter 4 discussed how, in nation-building terms, the Basque and Catalan *Estatutos* of 1931 represented a transition from a ‘national mass movement’ phase C to a ‘national consolidation’ phase D.⁴⁹⁶ Can the same be said of the *Estatutos* of 1932? For one thing, both texts provided a legal framework for the existence of various Basque and Catalan institutions. These could, in turn, provide a frame for the naturalisation of Basque and Catalan nations, even if they were not recognised as such by the Spanish State. The creation of Basque and Catalan education systems, even if they were subject to some form of interference by Madrid, also

⁴⁹⁴ For the full text versions of the Basque and Catalan *Estatutos* of 1932, see *Proyecto de Estatuto del País Vasco-Navarro*, Bilbao: Imprenta Provincial de Vizcaya, 1932; Generalitat De Catalunya, *El Traspàs de Serveis de l'Estat a La Generalitat: De l'Estatut de 1932 a l'Estatut de 2006*, Xavier Bernadí Gil, Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 2010, pp. 53–58. For the full version of the Spanish 1931 Constitution used in the present thesis, see *Gaceta de Madrid*, 9/12/1931.

⁴⁹⁵ Spanish was established alongside Catalan as a co-official language, the State and the *Generalitat* would maintain parallel school systems, and Madrid would have a say in the management of the new Catalan University. See Abelló Güell, *El Debat...*, pp. 175, 180–181.

⁴⁹⁶ This sequence and terminology is, once again, a reference to the Hroch-Martin-Kamsuella-Coakley theoretical model for nation-building described in the introduction of the present thesis.

had a large potential for nation-building. The 1932 *Estatutos* were less successful in limiting conscription into the Spanish armed forces.⁴⁹⁷

All in all, perhaps the Basque and Catalan *Estatutos* of 1932 can be more accurately characterised in nation-building terms as incomplete or partial CD transitions. They embodied the legal recognition of Catalan and Basque, if not nations, self-governing entities. This was particularly meaningful in the Basque case, as it included the four peninsular Basque provinces under the name *Euzkadi*, a term created by Basque nationalism only some 35 years prior to its inclusion in the *Estatuto*.⁴⁹⁸

Basque and Catalan nationalist political discourse concurringly framed the *Estatutos* of 1932 in two directions. First, as historical achievements, beyond their actual contents and the real degree of home rule they could guarantee. Jaume Aiguader, the *Estat Català* leader, argued that

“[...] although it [the first article of the *Estatut*] does not strictly meet the thinking of Catalonia, in fact, it recognises the autonomy of Catalonia. It must be remembered that, besides the autonomy granted to Cuba when Spain had already virtually lost the island, this is the first autonomy that is given by the Spanish state.”⁴⁹⁹

Similarly, Engracio de Aranzadi wrote:

⁴⁹⁷ Article 36 of the Núria *Estatut*, which limited military service of Catalan young men to Catalonia, was dropped from the 1932 version. The Basque *Gestoras' Estatuto* contained a similar provision—the Estella *Estatuto* had included the creation of a separate “Basque militia” within the Spanish army—that would have been predictably rejected in the Spanish *Cortes*.

⁴⁹⁸ de Pablo, Mees, & Rodríguez Ranz. *El Péndulo...*, Vol. 1, p. 36. The importance of the use of the term *Euzkadi* for the Basque Country will be revisited in Chapter 8.

⁴⁹⁹Original fragment: “[...] si bé [l'article primer de l'Estatut] no respon estrictament al pensament de Catalunya, de fet, reconeix l'autonomia de Catalunya. Deu tenir-se present que, fora l'autonomia concedida a Cuba en moments en què Espanya ja tenia perduda l'illa, aquesta és la primera autonomia que dona l'Estat espanyol”. See “Unes paraules amb Jaume Aiguader”, *La Humanitat*, 13/6/1932, p. 3.

“[...] even if it [the Basque *Estatuto*] should fall, its failure would mark the greatest advance by the Basque man in the path of its racial rebirth: the great advance of the proclamation of the Basque political personality.”⁵⁰⁰

Both nationalist leaders framed their respective *Estatutos* as historical ‘firsts’. Aiguader compared Catalonia with Cuba, a traditional reference of Catalan pro-independence nationalists.⁵⁰¹ Aranzadi pointed out that even if the Basque *Estatuto* project failed—which it did—it would still be a milestone in terms of the achievement of Basque nationalism's historical goals.

The second tendency was to frame compromise as *realpolitik*. Nicolau d'Olwer, speaking as a member of ERC's parliamentary group, said about adopting a more hard-line stance and refusing any modifications to the Núria *Estatut*:

“Obviously the Catalan MPs could have adopted this attitude, but it is also obvious that the result [...] would have been that the *Estatut* was completely rejected by the chamber. Presenting the *Estatut* as an ultimatum meant [...] assuming the consequences which all peoples face when they are refused an ultimatum. I do not believe that there is today a single politically sound Catalan that believes that Catalonia could take up arms in a war for the *Estatut* or something more radical.”⁵⁰²

The Basque nationalist leader Manuel Irujo had already framed the whole home rule issue in similar terms back in 1931:

⁵⁰⁰ Original fragment: “[...] aunque cayera [el Estatuto], su fracaso marcaría el avance mayor del vasco en el camino de su renacimiento racial: el gran avance de la proclamación de la personalidad política vasca.” See Kizkitza [Engracio de Aranzadi], “Unidad, masa, espíritu”, *Euzkadi*, 17/5/1932, p. 1.

⁵⁰¹ See Fermí Rubiralta i Casas, *Els Orígens de l'independentisme Català a Cuba*, Barcelona: Edicions de 1979, 2017.

⁵⁰² Original fragment: “Evidentment que els diputats catalans haurien pogut prendre aquesta actitud, però també és evident que el resultat [...] hauria estat que l'Estatut fos rebutjat en bloc per la cambra. Presentar l'Estatut com un ultimatum volia dir [...] estar a les conseqüències que es presenten en tots els pobles quan els és rebutjat un ultimatum. Jo crec que no hi ha avui cap català políticament solvent que cregui que Catalunya pugui prendre les armes per a fer una guerra en nom de l'Estatut o en nom d'alguna cosa més radical.” See *La Humanitat*, 14/5/1932, p. 1.

“The *Estatuto* is the realisation of our immediate possibilities. It is the recognition of Euzkadi. [...] We must avoid making the existence of the *Estatuto* dependent on which capacities are conceded with it. [...] let us not put its achievement in danger for pretending to encompass too much in a single go.”⁵⁰³

Both visions acknowledged that the *Estatutos* fell short of their respective movements' demands, framing them instead as realistic objectives in the face of worse or impossible alternatives. D'Olwer was particularly explicit in portraying the 1932 Catalan *Estatut* as the only attainable goal within a peaceful political strategy, rejecting the possibility of armed struggle, to which he was not a complete stranger (see Chapter 2).

Not all Catalan nationalists were ready to assume d'Olwer's dichotomy between a 'feasible' *Estatut* and 'unfeasible' confrontation. The previous chapter of the present thesis has already introduced the pro-independence group *Nosaltres Sols!*, an early opponent of Macià, which described the *Estatut* as a “selling out of Catalonia's sovereignty”.⁵⁰⁴ Between 1931 and 1932 Macià's original party, *Estat Català*, had split into three different factions. The largest of these remained part of ERC under the leadership of Jaume Aiguader and Ventura Gassol, creating a dynamic youth wing, *Juventuts d'Esquerra Republicana-Estat Català* (JEREC). The other two took alternative paths: one led by Jaume Compte adopted Marxism and tried to gain influence within the working class. Another created the *Partit Nacionalista Català* ('Catalan Nationalist Party') in the spring of 1932, appealing to Catalan nationalist frustration with the *Estatut*'s trimming by the Spanish Parliament. The influence of these two political actors remained limited and their electoral performance weak, but they continued to promote alternative framings of ERC's home rule strategy throughout 1932.⁵⁰⁵ The leninist *Bloc Obrer i Camperol*

⁵⁰³ Original fragment: “El Estatuto es la concreción de nuestras posibilidades inmediatas. Es el reconocimiento de Euzkadi [...] Nada [...] de hacer depender la existencia del Estatuto de que de concedan con él tales o cuales facultades. [...] no pongamos en peligro su obtención por pretender abarcar demasiado a la vez.” See de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 278.

⁵⁰⁴ D. Girona Llagostera, “Catalunya per la seva sobirania nacional”, *Nosaltres Sols!*, 11/9/1931, p. 1–2.

⁵⁰⁵ Ucelay Da Cal, “La Crisi...”, pp. 183–200. For a more detailed study on the *Partit Nacionalista Català*, see Fermí Rubiralta i Casas, *El Partit Nacionalista Català (1932-1936). Joc Polític i Separatisme*, Barcelona: Rafael Dalmau, 2010.

was another alternative taken by many young Catalan nationalists disappointed with Macià's *Esquerra*.⁵⁰⁶ The PNV, on the other hand, was comparatively more successful in keeping elements critical of its *realpolitik*-based strategy within its ranks. The pro-independence weekly *Jagi-Jagi* did not appear until September 1932, and it was only much later when it began to openly criticise PNV policy.

Despite their compromises, most Catalan and Basque nationalists came to see the *Estatutos* of 1932 as reasonable political goals. In Catalonia, after a long summer of parliamentary debates and the failure of Sanjurjo's coup, ERC was able to celebrate the approval of Catalan home rule by the *Cortes*. *La Humanitat* presented the final achievement of the *Estatut* in a triumphalist tone as a victory of perseverance and reason:

“Catalonia has lived hours of intense emotion. Catalonia has withstood in a stoic and admirable manner the attacks of those who did not comprehend her [...]. [...] Catalonia has been mocked [...]. [...] But Catalonia, which is conscious and dignified, which has the experience and a great heart, has resisted the onslaught, the attacks and the insults with the certainty that after all *seny* and reason would triumph.”⁵⁰⁷

These lines show the more epic version of the framing which has been described above. The rhetoric of hegemony is put to work, as the text is both describing the nation, Catalonia—and giving it anthropomorphic qualities such as the ability to feel emotion or to behave stoically—and speaking for the nation. The final objective, the *Estatuto*, is portrayed as a product of Catalonia's positive attitude, of reason, and *seny*—a powerful attribution of Catalan ‘national character’ (see Chapter 4).

On the other hand, the PNV's efforts had stopped in their tracks after Navarre's withdrawal in June. Despite his support for home rule at all costs, Irujo had warned that “the worst that could happen is a Basque *Estatuto* without Navarre.” His fears

⁵⁰⁶ Ucelay Da Cal, *La Catalunya Populista...*, pp. 141–142.

⁵⁰⁷ Original fragment: “Catalunya ha viscut hores d'intensa emoció. Catalunya ha suportat d'una manera estoica i admirable l'atac constant dels qui no la comprenien [...]. [...] Catalunya s'ha vist befada [...]. Però Catalunya, que és conscient i digna; que te una experiència i un gran cor, ha resistit les investides, els atacs i els insults en la certesa que al cap i a la fi s'imposarien el seny i la raó.” See A. C., “El perdó de Catalunya”, *La Humanitat*, 9/9/1932, pp. 1–2.

became real once both ANV and the PNV announced they would support an *Estatuto* limited to Biscay, Araba and Gipuzkoa, provided Navarre was given a legal mechanism for its future incorporation. Irujo argued that Basque home rule without his home province would hinder, rather than aid, nation-building; that such an *Estatuto* “will be the cornerstone which will guarantee the perpetual separation of Euzkadi”.⁵⁰⁸

Before the PNV officially stated it would pursue an *Estatuto* limited to three provinces, *Euzkadi* published a long article on Navarre's withdrawal. The text shows how Basque nationalists framed the situation immediately after the Pamplona assembly:

“With truth we will conquer Navarre for Navarre itself, which is to conquer it for Euzkadi. And let us put into the work all the love that comes with our fraternity with all of the Navarrese, those that voted for the *Estatuto* and those that rejected it, leftist and rightist in good faith [...]. Love for Navarre and for al Navarrese, with a single exception: that of treacherous leaders, of the two-faced men, of those who schemed in the shadows. There cannot and shall not be any forgiveness for those.”⁵⁰⁹

The future reintegration of Navarre into the project for Basque home rule was framed as a ‘self-conquest’. *Euzkadi* was careful not to portray the province's withdrawal as a loss that would have to be reversed by an exterior force—i.e coming from Biscay, Araba and Gipuzkoa—but by “Navarre itself”. Basque nationalist territoriality was reinforced by using the ‘fraternity’ frame, which describes the relationship between the Navarrese and the rest of Basques as brotherly, and Navarre's withdrawal from the *Estatuto* as a “war between brothers”. Both the leftist and Carlist opponents of Navarre's integration into Basque home rule is framed as a product of the actions of a few “treacherous

⁵⁰⁸ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 291; 301–302.

⁵⁰⁹ Original fragment: “Con la verdad conquistaremos a Nabarra para Nabarra misma, que es conquistarla para Euzkadi. Y pongamos en la obra todo el amor a que nos obliga la fraternidad para con los nabarros todos, votantes del Estatuto o que contra él se pronunciaron, izquierdas o derechas de buena fe [...]. Amor para Nabarra y para todos los nabarros, con una sola exclusión: la de los dirigentes traidores, la de los hombres de dos caras, la de los que maniobraron en la sombra. No hay ni puede haber perdón para esos.” See *Euzkadi*, 21/6/1932, p. 1.

leaders” and not of a genuine popular sentiment. All in all, *Euzkadi* framed Navarre's withdrawal as a painful, yet temporary setback that had nevertheless shown that a strong, cross-party support for the Basque *Estatuto* existed in Navarre. The Basque nationalist daily portrayed the PNV as the only political force capable of channelling Navarrese interests into Basque home rule, framing what had been an objective failure as a potential opportunity for the party.

5. 2. Desynchronisation (September 1932-September 1933)

Indalecio Prieto, leader of the PSOE in the Basque Country and Spanish Minister of Public Works, created a new chance for a Basque-Catalan connection in September 1932. He proposed that the official signing of the Catalan *Estatut* by President Alcalá-Zamora should take place in San Sebastian, a tribute to the pact that had brought down the Spanish monarchy in 1930 (see Chapter 2). A group of Catalan MPs, led by Lluís Companys and Bonaventura Gassol, visited the capital of Gipuzkoa to solemnly sign the Catalan home rule charter. Basque nationalists saw an opportunity to promote their own home rule claims in what seemed to be an increasingly favourable climate after the frustration caused by the Navarrese withdrawal.⁵¹⁰

The event was a good indicator of the status of Basque-Catalan nationalist perceptions and relations at this point, especially when analysed using the contemporary chronicles of *Euzkadi* and *La Humanitat*.⁵¹¹ The tone employed by both papers showed that it was not 1931 anymore: the PNV's definite break with the Carlists and support for the *Gestoras' Estatuto* had brought it closer to ERC. Basque nationalism was again ready to play the 'Catalan card', and there was a willingness on both sides to rebuild a positive atmosphere of cordiality and solidarity. Despite the event being about the Catalan *Estatut*, it received more attention from *Euzkadi*—where it was the most important piece of news for two consecutive days—than from *La Humanitat*. Both papers' narratives also contained some minor but significant differences.

Basque nationalism clearly wanted to ensure its presence was felt by the Catalan representatives, organising welcoming parties to meet the visiting MPs as

⁵¹⁰ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 308–309.

⁵¹¹ “Aquest matí, a San Sebastián, el president de la República ha signat l'Estatut de Catalunya”, *La Humanitat*, 15/9/1932, p. 1; “En Donostia se tributó un clamoroso recibimiento a los parlamentarios catalanes”, *Euzkadi*, 15/9/1932, p. 1–2; “La promulgació de l'Estatut de Catalunya a San Sebastián”, *La Humanitat*, 16/9/1932, p. 6; “La firma del Estatuto de Cataluña”, *Euzkadi*, 16/9/1932, p. 1–2.

they travelled through the Navarrese towns of Caparroso, Tafalla and Pamplona, as well as Tolosa in Gipuzkoa. A crowd of several thousand waited for the Catalan delegation in San Sebastian. Members of the PNV's hiking clubs, *mendigoxales*, aided the police in maintaining order. There were also displays of Basque folk music and dance. The whole event was filled with symbolic displays of 'spiritual solidarity'. One of which was the use of each other's language by the two interacting parties.⁵¹² *La Humanitat* describes how the Catalan delegation was met by chants of *visca Catalunya lliure!*, to which it responded *Gora Euzkadi Eskatuta* [sic]. Companys and Gassol gave a first, unofficial speech after arriving at the María Cristina hotel, where the former "promised the help of the Catalans in the achievement of Basque [home rule] aspirations", and the latter "remembered Macià, whom he called the Sabino Arana of Catalonia".⁵¹³ Gassol also said that he carried Macià's word that the future Basque *Estatuto* would be signed in Barcelona.⁵¹⁴

The tone of both Catalan leaders was more weighted during the official event with the Spanish President, but still sympathetic to "our sister Euzkadi" and Basque home rule. After the ceremonial signing at the *Diputación* palace, the Basque nationalist MP Jesús María Leizaola brought a Basque flag to the balcony. The socialist Minister Prieto responded with a remarkable gesture, joining together the Catalan and Basque flags. This added to the atmosphere of symbolic solidarity and was met by the enthusiasm of the crowd, but had additional implications. Prieto's implicit recognition of the *ikurriña*, which had been designed by the Arana brothers as the Basque national flag⁵¹⁵—and had been almost exclusively associated to the PNV—shows that the symbol was already becoming increasingly acceptable to other political actors. Prieto's gesture was a precedent of the general assumption of the *ikurriña* as the Basque flag and the official ensign of the Basque Government in 1936 (see Chapter 6).

⁵¹² This behaviour is an example of *language exchange*, as defined in Section 5. 3. 2 of the present thesis.

⁵¹³ *Euzkadi*, 15/9/1932, p. 2

⁵¹⁴ He also said that he had been assigned by Macià "to carry a salutation to Biscay [sic] in the name of Catalonia [...]", a rather confused statement given he was actually visiting the capital of Gipuzkoa. See *La Humanitat*, 15/9/1932, p. 1. The Catalan nationalist daily also noted the presence of ANV.

⁵¹⁵ See Jesús Casquete & José Luis de la Granja, "Ikurriña", in *Diccionario Ilustrado de Símbolos Del Nacionalismo Vasco*, Madrid: Tecnos, 2012, pp. 508–516.

It is worth noting that not all Basque nationalists saw the event with the same sympathetic eyes. The Basque pro-independence weekly, *Jagi-Jagi*, published its first number two days after the signing. It was openly critical of the *Estatut*, pointing out that it had come 10 years after Catalan and Basque nationalists had signed the Triple Alliance, “born from the impulses of a vertical and integral nationalist sentiment”. *Jagi-Jagi* congratulated the Catalan MP Carrasco i Formiguera, who had been expelled from ERC's parliamentary group for his refusal to accept the modifications imposed by the *Cortes* on the original Catalan text. The same day, the Catalan pro-independence weekly *Nosaltres Sols!* published similar critics of the *Estatut*, including a comparison between its original and modified versions.⁵¹⁶

The attitude shown by the PNV and ERC during the signing of the *Estatut* must not be mistaken for a new, strategic understanding between the two political agents. It was, however, symptomatic as far as it showed that both actors had moved on from their past friction. The new climate achieved little in strategic terms, although it paved the way for increased interaction between Catalan and Basque nationalists during the following year, 1933.

5. 2. 1. Contrasting realities: Catalan institutionalisation versus Basque polarisation

The positive atmosphere of San Sebastian had little to do with how events unfolded during the last months of 1932 and the first half of 1933. In fact, during this period Basque and Catalan nationalist politics took very different paths. Up until September 1932, both movements had shared a strategic horizon: achieving home rule a form that could be accepted by the Spanish Government. The final

⁵¹⁶ *Jagi-Jagi*, 17/9/1932, p. 4, 8; *Nosaltres Sols!*, 17/9/1932. Both Catalan and Basque pro-independence nationalists remained sympathetic to the idea of a revived Triple Alliance. The pact—which never materialised as such—was based on the promotion of Catalan and Basque (and Galician) sovereignty and contemplated the possibility of armed struggle against the Spanish state. See Estévez, *Galeuzca: la rebelión...*, p. 20–22.

ratification of the Catalan *Estatut* had opened a new phase, with Basque and Catalan nationalists facing increasingly different challenges.

ERC now moved towards a new objective: the consolidation of the *Generalitat*, its associated institutions, and the practical realisation of home rule with all of its implications. The PNV was still ‘stuck’ in the previous step, which involved finding a way around the issue of Navarre and achieving a Basque *Estatuto* with the support of the Spanish political left. The two parties held very different positions in the overall correlation of forces within their particular contexts. Desynchronisation had begun.

September 1932 put ERC in a position from which it could again expand its hegemony within Catalan politics, in what historian Anna Sallés defined as a “near-monopoly of power”. *Esquerra* was able to grow as a party, as it was joined by key political figures which had previously revolved around other political actors. It also scored a good result in the first elections to the new Catalan Parliament, ensuring itself a sound leadership position within the Catalan political arena. Conversely, the PNV found itself being the target of the Spanish leftist parties, who precisely wanted to prevent it from reaching a position from which it could lead and control future Basque institutions. This strategy, described by historian Juan Pablo Fusi as “republicanising the Basque Country” aimed for a ‘Basque home rule without Basque nationalism’ solution.⁵¹⁷ In effect, this increased political unrest and slowed down the development of a new Basque *Estatuto*.

A mechanism-process analysis of Basque and Catalan contentious politics consequently shows two very different patterns. The Basque case combined polarisation and repression, whilst the Catalan context was more dominated by institutionalisation. This had a decisive effect on how nation-building was conducted in the two contexts.

The first step in the practical realisation of Catalan home rule was the creation—and election—of a Catalan Parliament. This added an element of democratisation prior to the institutionalisation mentioned above, as it created a new legislative institution surpassing the indirectly appointed *Diputació*

⁵¹⁷ Juan Pablo Fusi, *El País Vasco. Pluralismo y nacionalidad*, Madrid: Alianza, p. 57, in De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 311–312.

provisional, which had failed to incorporate the *Lliga Regionalista* (see Chapter 4). ERC was ready to capitalise on its recent successes to maximise its results, using slogans such as “Catalonia owes *Esquerra* the Republic and the *Estatut*,” and “*Esquerra* has given Catalonia home rule”. Sallés describes how ERC's discourse evolved from “the ‘patriotic’ need to gather around Macià to achieve the *Estatut*”—what the present thesis has identified as the national unity-consensus frame—to a greater emphasis on the party itself.⁵¹⁸ The achievement of home rule was presented in almost cathartic terms:

“Under the mastery [...] of maximum nationalism, under the leadership of supreme prestige [...] the people of Catalonia, granting its trust to the man and the party that, like no other, signify the defence of the maximum nationalist demands, found a moment of historic agreement with the other peoples of Spain, binding it in a common strive for freedom. [...]

Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya has fulfilled its duty and its promises. Let everyone do the same under the leadership of the President of Catalonia, *Don Francesc Macià*, triumphant *cabdill* of the retrieved fatherland.”⁵¹⁹

Macià and ERC were described with the syntax of hegemony, as “*the man and the party*”. The previous framing of home rule and the *Estatut* as a cross-party endeavour had been effectively replaced by the idea of ERC as ‘*the national party*’. The same idea was also employed in Macià's *crida de Lleida* (‘call of Lleida’), a declaration issued in mid-October in which he urged all Catalan left-wing nationalists to join ERC. It began:

⁵¹⁸ Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, p. 178–179.

⁵¹⁹ Original fragment: “Sota el mestratge [...] del nacionalisme màxim, sota la direcció del suprem prestigi [...] el poble de Catalunya, atorgant la seva confiança a l'home i al partit que, com cap altre, significaven la defensa de les màximes reivindicacions nacionalistes, va trobar un moment de coincidència històrica amb els altres pobles d'Espanya, vinculant-lo en un comú afany de llibertat. [...] L'Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya ha acomplert el seu deure i les seves promences. Que tothom sàpiga fer com ella sota el guiatge del President de Catalunya, Don Francesc Macià, cabdill trionfant de la pàtria recobrada,” see Josep A. Trabal, *La Humanitat*, 9/9/1932, p. 1.

“All peoples, especially those in moments of [national] reconstruction, need a great party that ensures [...] discipline. [...] We all know about the impetuous vitality of our people before the solution of any problem [...]. But we are also convinced that these same manifestations [...] if without control could become even suicidal, when led with *seny* can place us at the vanguard of the most modern peoples of the world.”⁵²⁰

The message was clear, and very much in line with what *Esquerra* had been saying in September. This first paragraph brought back the familiar notion of *seny*, this time materialised as the party, in a necessary balance to the Catalan people's “impetuous vitality”—almost an implicit reference to *rauxa*, another traditional attribute of Catalan ‘national character’ and the opposite of *seny*.⁵²¹

Macià's call was answered, and the 24th of October a list of influential Catalan nationalist figures—most of them from *Acció Catalana*— including Antoni Rovira i Virgili, Pere Coromines and Carles Pi i Sunyer, announced that they would join ERC.⁵²² They were soon followed by Pere Foix and Martí Barrera, known for their connections with the CNT. At this point, historian Anna Sallés considered that “the social spectrum over which *Esquerra* projected itself was as heterogeneous as it would ever be.”⁵²³ The *Crida de Lleida*—which can be described as an exercise of brokerage—reinforced ERC as a political actor less than a month before the Catalan election, scheduled for the 20th of November.

The election was another success for *Esquerra*, which mobilised its supporters to obtain 57 out of the 85 seats composing the new Catalan Parliament. Historian Ivern i Salvà showed that ERC had lost some vote compared to the previous Spanish general election, which can be explained by the reduced voter turnout, the

⁵²⁰ Original fragment: “A tots els pobles, sobretot en hores de reconstrucció, els cal un gran partit que assegurí [...] la disciplina. [...] Tots sabem la vitalitat impetuosa del nostre poble davant la solució de qualsevol problema [...]. Però també tots estem convençuts que aquestes mateixes manifestacions [...], si sense control podrien resultar fins i tot suïcides, conduïdes amb *seny* ens poden assegurar l'avantguarda dintre els pobles més moderns del món.” See “Importants declaracions del senyor Macià” *El Dia*, 15/10/1932, p. 3. See Text 14 of Annex III for the full original version.

⁵²¹ If *seny* can be translated as ‘feet-on-the-ground common sense’ (see Chapter 4), *rauxa* is the opposite, and can be equated to rash hotheadedness. See Carla Isabel Velásquez Giraldo, “Ferrater Mora: Entre El Seny i La Rauxa”, *Anuari de La Societat Catalana de Filosofia*, 28–29, 2017–2018, 73–84; Agustí Boadas Llavat, “Seny i Rauxa En Ramon Llull y Francesc Eiximenis”, *Revista Española de Filosofía Medieval*, 22, 2015, 43–52.

⁵²² *La Humanitat*, 24/10/1932, p. 1.

⁵²³ Sallés, *Quan Catalunya...*, p. 189.

Lliga Regionalista's more active role and *Esquerra's* own electoral policy. ERC now favoured standing on its own rather than forming wider republican coalitions, as it had done in 1931.⁵²⁴ In any case, the Catalan Parliament was a success in terms of democratisation, as it successfully incorporated major political actors which had not taken part in the previous *Diputació provisional*. This was particularly true of the *Lliga Regionalista*—re-established as the *Lliga Catalana* in 1933—which, with 16 seats, became the main counterweight to ERC. These two parties were the first two corners of the dominant triangle of Catalan politics during the Second Spanish Republic as defined by Isidre Molas. The third corner was the anarcho-syndicalist CNT, which remained outside institutional politics and marked a clear limit of Catalan political democratisation.⁵²⁵

The Basque Nationalist Party faced a very different political context during the fall of 1932. The appointment of José María Amilibia as Civil Governor of Biscay began a period of repression—aimed at reducing the influence and resources available to the PNV—and a general increase in violent forms of political contention. Amilibia's strategy had two main components. The first targeted the Basque Nationalist Party's political communication, issuing large fines to party speakers, local leaders, and to the daily *Euzkadi*. *Jagi-Jagi* in particular, was subjected to repeated legal and police harassment. The second component of repression was aimed at breaking up the perceived dominance of certain rural areas by the PNV. Amilibia intervened in local conflicts on behalf of leftist political actors, making arrests of Basque nationalists or closing local party offices, such as in Derio and San Salvador del Valle. In the particular cases of Bermeo and Mundaka—both traditional PNV strongholds—the Governor resorted to the suspension of the Town Council and appointing interim managing commissions.⁵²⁶

⁵²⁴ Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 1, pp. 256–263.

⁵²⁵ Isidre Molas, *El Sistema de Partidos Políticos En Cataluña (1931-1936)*, Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1974, pp. 19–21.

⁵²⁶ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 315–316. Amilibia suspended the Mayor of Bermeo for his absence during a visit of the town by the Governor himself, who had been invited by the local republicans. Another officially stated reason for the suspension was that the display of the Basque *ikurriña* flag in the centre of the Town Hall balcony, displacing the Spanish republican flag to one of the corners. See Ander Delgado Cendagortagarza, 'Protesta Popular y Política (Bermeo, 1912-1932)', *Ayer*, 40, 2000, 182. In the case of Mundaka, the Town Council was suspended after it issued a declaration which the Governor described as "separatist". The arrival of the managing commission which was to take over from the local Councillors was followed by clashes between the *Guardia Civil* and local townsfolk. See *Euzkadi*, 4/11/1932, p. 3.

In this context, two shooting incidents took place. The first happened the 16th of October in San Salvador del Valle, during a clash between PSOE and PNV sympathisers, which resulted in the death of one of the former. This prompted the above mentioned closing of the local PNV office, as well as the arrest of half a dozen Basque nationalists.⁵²⁷ The second happened a few days later in Bermeo, before the Town Hall's suspension had been announced, and after months of growing tension between the local Spanish Republicans and the PNV.⁵²⁸ These two incidents show that there was an interaction between repression and political violence, but this did not result in a spiral of escalation. In fact, the political actors involved responded with mobilisation, organising rallies rejecting or supporting Amilibia's actions.⁵²⁹

The strategy to push the PNV to the margins of Basque politics continued well into 1933, but by the end of 1932 its failure was already becoming clear. The 1st of January, *Euzkadi* published a long list of Basque nationalists indicted on political cases, boasting repression was helping, not stopping, the PNV. In fact, the party continued to grow—in terms of its social movement base—during this period.⁵³⁰ The real result of repression was polarisation, as conflict and mistrust grew between the PSOE-republican alliance and Basque nationalism. This was particularly visible in the confrontational discourse of the pro-independence weekly *Jagi-Jagi*.⁵³¹

The end of 1932 in Catalonia was marked by the appointment of Francesc Macià as President of the *Generalitat* by the newly elected Catalan Parliament. The 14th of December a new, all-ERC Catalan Government was formed, led by the founder of *l'Opinió*, Joan Lluhí. This cabinet had one main task: the institutionalisation of Catalan home rule, i.e. incorporating what had until then been claims and demands of Catalan nationalists into 'the routines of organised politics'.

⁵²⁷ *Euzkadi*, 18/10/1932, p. 3.

⁵²⁸ Delgado Cendagortagalarza, "Protesta Popular...", pp. 169–92.

⁵²⁹ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 316.

⁵³⁰ *Euzkadi*, 1/1/1933, p. 2.

⁵³¹ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 316–317. See Text 13 of Annex III for an example.

During the first half of 1933, with Basque nationalism still bogged down in conflict with the Spanish left, ERC achieved a qualitative leap in nation-building terms. The transfer of attributions from the Spanish state to the *Generalitat*, as established by the *Estatut*, began in January 1933 and would continue up until September 1934.⁵³² This came hand in hand with a more detailed regulation of the Catalan autonomous institutions, which became known as the *Estatut interior*, and was approved by the Catalan Parliament as a fundamental law in May 1933.

A closer look at this document shows its importance in terms of nation-building. Even though it was supposed to be an applied version—and within the limits—of the 1932 *Estatut*, the *Estatut interior* seemed to recall some of the content that had been in the original, Núria version of the Catalan home rule charter. This was particularly true of the first four articles:

“Article 1: The power of Catalonia emanates from the people, which exercises it through the organisms of the *Generalitat*.

Article 2: The capital of Catalonia is Barcelona.

Article 3: The language of Catalonia [*la llengua pròpia de Catalunya*] is Catalan.

Article 4: The flag of Catalonia is the traditional four red stripes on a yellow background.

[...]

Article 11: Primary education will be compulsory, free and Catalan in its language and in its spirit. [...]⁵³³

From a purely formal or legal perspective—which is beyond the objectives of the present thesis— these points can hardly be found to be in contradiction with the limits imposed on the *Estatut* by the Spanish Parliament. On the other hand, a more political interpretation reveals that the first four articles of the *Estatut interior* were closer to the spirit in which the Núria *Estatut* of 1931 was written. Establishing a link between ‘the power of Catalonia’—dropping any references to

⁵³² Some of the most important functions included social security (January 1933), law enforcement (April 1933), health (May 1933) telephone services (December 1933), treasury (July 1933 and January 1934), control over the press, associations and events (January 1934), seaports and public works (July 1934), etc. For a full list see Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 1, pp. 267.

⁵³³ *Diari de Sessions del Parlament de Catalunya*, no. 66, 25/5/1933, annex 1, p. 1.

its constitutional nature as an ‘autonomous region’—and popular will, could easily be interpreted in political terms as a declaration of national sovereignty. This was balanced by the immediate reference to the *Generalitat*, but it was still very similar to the opening text of the *Núria Estatut*.

The other three articles seemed to provide with three attributes common to many sovereign states: a state capital, a state language and a state flag. Language had been a very contentious issue in the Spanish Parliament; the *Núria Estatut* had only listed Catalan as the official language of Catalonia, and this had been modified to include Spanish. Article 3 of the *Estatut Interior* avoided the use of the term ‘official’, using *llengua pròpia* instead, thereby giving Catalan a more ambiguous yet exclusive status.

The establishment of the official Catalan flag was particularly relevant from the perspective of nation-building. Catalan nationalism had finally achieved with the *senyera* what Basque nationalism had only glimpsed at San Sebastian with the *ikurriña*. This comparison must be made with caution: unlike its Basque counterpart, the four-striped flag was accepted in some way or another by the vast majority of the Catalan political spectrum.⁵³⁴ The combination of widespread support and official status basically opened the door to a potential ‘banalisation’⁵³⁵ of the *senyera*. Less associated with a particular national movement and slowly becoming integrated as a non-contentious symbol into a hegemonic ‘national’ identity.

Another powerful nation-building tool which became available to the Catalan Government in the first months of 1933 was education. The *Estatut* approved by the Spanish Parliament introduced Catalan language into the education system by allowing the *Generalitat* to open its own public schools—which would co-exist with state and private schools. The *Estatut Interior*, however, developed this

⁵³⁴ Although used as a national symbol only since the end of the 19th Century, it had a long ‘pre-national’ history as both an institutional and traditional symbol. For a complete study on the *senyera*’s ‘nationalisation’, see Pere Anguera, *Les Quatre Barres: De Bandera Històrica a Senyera Nacional*, Barcelona: Rafael Dalmau, 2010. The same cannot be said of the explicitly pro-independence version of the *senyera*, known as the *estelada*, which included a blue triangle with a white five-pointed star. This symbol appeared after the First World War and was adopted by Macià’s *Estat Català* in the 1920s. Its use continued throughout the 1930s by pro-independence groups and also by ERC’s youth wing. See Joan Crexell, *Origen de La Bandera Independentista*, Barcelona: El Llamp, 1984.

⁵³⁵ A fundamental aspect of Michael Billig’s concept of ‘banal nationalism’ is the widespread, inconspicuous presence of national symbols, e.g. flags, in public spaces, that act as silent reminders of the nation. See Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, pp. 39–43.

further, specifying that education would be “Catalan in its language, *and in its spirit.*” In practice, the creation of a Catalan public school system was a gradual process, which was not fully completed by the beginning of the Spanish Civil War.⁵³⁶ Nevertheless, the *Generalitat* devoted a significant amount of resources to the creation of schools, the training of teachers and the production of school material.

One of the most widespread textbooks used in Catalan public schools during this period was the *Enciclopèdia Escolar Catalana*, published by Josep Dalmau Carles. The book included very diverse topics, including mathematics, Catalan grammar, economy, science, manners and hygiene. Geography and history featured as the first two sections, and there was a chapter described as “optional” covering the Christian Old and New Testaments. The *Enciclopèdia Escolar's* contents showed a variety of ideological influences, including republicanism, common contemporary notions on gender and race, Catholicism—God is referenced across the book—and both Catalan and Spanish nationalism. It would be therefore inaccurate to simply describe the book as a tool for Catalan nation-building, although it contained some elements which could serve such a purpose. The mix of Catalan and Spanish nationalist-inspired content makes the national *topos* of the textbook rather unclear. This included the prominent *senyera* in its front cover (see Fig. 5. 2), and the assertion that “Valencia and the Balearics are Catalan countries. These two regions, together with Roussillon and Provence in France, constitute what is known as the great Catalonia.”⁵³⁷ The *Enciclopèdia Escolar* introduced Catalan history and geography, but also tended to represent Catalonia in a subaltern order with respects to Spain.⁵³⁸ This meant that some of the textbook's

⁵³⁶ For a study focused on the Osona area, see Josep; Casanovas i Prat, Joan; Soler i Mata, and Antoni Tort i Bardolet, “L’impuls de l’educació durant La Segona República: L’ensenyament Públic a Osona (1931-1936)”, *Ausa*, 157, 2006, 393–434.

⁵³⁷ Josep Dalmau Carles, *Enciclopèdia Escolar Catalana*, Girona: Dalmau Carles, Pla, S.A., 1931, p. 37. The idea of a “great Catalonia” had been put forward by the influential Catalan nationalist thinker Enric Prat de la Riba in 1907. For an overview of the concept's origin, context and later development see González i Vilalta, *La Nació Imaginada...*, pp. 46–65.

⁵³⁸ This is particularly clear in the chapter dedicated to the “*general history of Spain and the particular history of Catalonia [italics have been added]*,” see Dalmau Carles, *Enciclopèdia Escolar...*, pp. 59–86. The chapter's contents were also clearly shaped by Spanish nationalist historiographical notions of the *reconquista*, see Martín F. Ríos Saloma, ‘De La Restauración a La Reconquista: La Construcción de Un Mito Nacional (Una Revisión Historiográfica. Siglos XVI-XIX)’, *En La España Medieval*, 28, 2005, 379–414.

more blunt lessons, such as the one that follows, were left with an ambiguous meaning:

“The Fatherland *protects* and *shelters* [sic] our family, our friends, and ourselves; we must have love for her, and offer her our interests, and even the sacrifice of our life, if its honour or its integrity is endangered.”⁵³⁹

In the context of the rest of the book's content, it is unclear which exactly is the fatherland that oneself must sacrifice for. The end result was that it was probably up to particular teachers to steer the textbook's guidance to a particular national ‘direction’. In any case, the *Enciclopèdia Escolar Catalana* is an example of the potential tools for nation-building that became available to ERC as it led the materialisation of Catalan home rule during the first half of 1933.

⁵³⁹ Original fragment: “La Pàtria *protegeix* i *empara* [sic] la nostra família, els nostres amics, i nosaltres mateixos; cal que li tinguem amor, i que li fem oferiment dels nostres interessos, i fins el sacrifici de la nostra vida, si perilla el seu honor o la seva integritat.” See Dalmau Carles, *Enciclopèdia Escolar...*, p. 280.

Fig. 5. 2 | Front cover of the *Enciclopèdia Escolar Catalana*



The deployment of Catalan home rule institutions, with their combined capacity for nation-building—suggesting Catalan nationalism was approaching a phase of ‘national consolidation’—stands in contrast to the mentioned situation in the Basque Country. José Luis de la Granja has described 1933 as “the year of greatest conflict between Basque nationalists and [Spanish] republicans and socialists.” His compilation of data on governmental repression against the Basque nationalist movement includes a total of 432 imprisonments, 136 arrests without imprisonment and 514 fines. The total economic cost of such procedures reached 61,889.30 *pesetas*, with a very large portion of this sum raised by the PNV through its solidarity campaigns. These numbers alone show that Amilibia—who died in a car accident in April 1933—and his successors, Teótico Sevilla and Jesús Artola—Civil Governors of Biscay and Gipuzkoa, respectively—maintained their strategy to reduce the political influence of Basque nationalism. This also involved the closing down of PNV offices, additional suspensions of Local Councils—including those of

Galdakao, Plentzia and Gernika—and even the use of deadly force by law enforcement in some cases.⁵⁴⁰

The other arm of this two-pronged strategy, introducing Basque home rule without Basque nationalism, was also activated. The *Gestoras* created a new commission in January to re-launch a Basque *Estatuto*, this time without including Navarre. Except for Ignacio Uría, the single ANV representative, the rest of its 12 members came from the PSOE or republican parties. Although a proposal for a new text was quickly issued, the procedure slowed down during the first months of 1933, as the increase in political unrest took its toll.⁵⁴¹

A mechanism-process analysis of this first half of 1933 in the Basque Country shows that repression against Basque nationalism activated a response which can be characterised as two parallel processes: mobilisation and boundary deactivation.

As in 1932, mobilisation was the almost default reaction of the Basque Nationalist Party to the wave of imprisonments and fines. This time, however, it became more varied and gained more momentum, drawing from different elements of the PNV's contentious repertoire. Contentious performances and events took place *in crescendo*, creating escalation.

An example of such a dynamic was the response to the official trip to Bilbao by the Spanish President Alcalá-Zamora and the Minister and leader of the Basque PSOE Indalecio Prieto. The visit was received by the painting of PNV and anti-government slogans in prominent walls. After this resulted in the arrest of some 80 Basque activists, Basque nationalist prisoners began a hunger strike. This prompted a demonstration of women organised by the PNV's female wing, *Emakume Abertzale Batza*, which was forcibly dissolved by the police leading to further arrests. In response, the Basque nationalist trade union STV organised a general strike in Bilbao and its surroundings, which was also joined by communists.⁵⁴² All these events happened between the 29th of April and the 4th of May.

⁵⁴⁰ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 336–337, 347–348.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.* pp. 391–392.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.* p. 343.

The first half of 1933 also saw an increase in the frequency of acts of political violence—mainly shootings—between Basque nationalists and supporters of the PSOE and republican leftist parties. These happened in parallel to the repression-mobilisation dynamic and, as in 1932, contributed to polarisation. Again, this must also be put into the context of a period when political violence was relatively common. Eduardo Calleja's work shows that there were ten politically motivated incidents resulting in deaths during 1933 in the Basque Country, of which seven involved Basque nationalists, in two of those cases as alleged perpetrators.⁵⁴³ In many ways, this was a repetition of the build-up of tension during the fall of 1931, and the pattern of violence—and how it was politically framed by those involved—was very similar. Shootings and other violent clashes had become almost endemic, particularly in the *Encartaciones* and the *Margen Izquierda* areas west of Bilbao, where Basque nationalists were generally outnumbered by their socialist and republican opponents.⁵⁴⁴ In a particularly serious incident, a Spanish republican woman and a member of the PNV's children's organisation were killed during a shooting in Usansolo.⁵⁴⁵

Boundary deactivation was the second consequence of repression in the Basque Country. The PNV and ANV, who had maintained a frosty relationship ever since the latter's creation in 1930, were brought together by the context. This was the result of three main factors: 1) ANV's disillusionment with the Spanish left and its lack of results in carrying Basque home rule forward, which had motivated the party to leave the *Estatuto* commission in April; 2) shared experiences of political incarceration and 3) the fact that ANV was also the victim of attacks by Spanish leftists.⁵⁴⁶ Government repression also targeted both parties at the same time. The Biscay leaderships of the PNV and ANV were arrested in July after they issued a joint note demanding the resignation of the province's Governor. The response was an unprecedented rally where both parties mobilised thousands of supporters, which represented the high-water mark of collaboration between the two during

⁵⁴³ Calleja, *Cifras Cruentas...*, pp. 342, 344–347, 350–351, 353–354.

⁵⁴⁴ Some degree of violence in these areas seems to have remained a constant. Even during the Spring of 1932, a rare moment of relative cooperation between the PNV and the Spanish left, Basque nationalist Máximo Etxebarria was killed in Ortuella. See *Euzkadi*, 17/5/1932, p. 3.

⁵⁴⁵ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 344–345.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 345–350.

this period. ANV joined the PNV in its rejection of the “governors that the State sends us [who] do not represent our people”, as proclaimed by the leader of *Emakume Abertzale Batza*, Polixene Trabudua.⁵⁴⁷ Elías Gallastegi, writing in *Jagi-Jagi*, framed the event as the beginning of a “vigorous single national front”⁵⁴⁸. This, however, did not consolidate into a formal alliance, mainly because the PNV was reluctant to get too close to its main competitor within Basque nationalism.⁵⁴⁹

Repression was causing both ANV and the PNV to become disenfranchised political actors, marginalised from the ruling institutions, and alienated by the lack of progress in the home rule field. The situation only began to reverse itself after two key changes took place. The first was the reopening of the path towards a Basque *Estatuto*. After months of blockage, the *Gestoras* submitted their new text to an assembly of Local Councils, held in Vitoria the 6th of August. This effectively brought back the PNV's participation through its elected Mayors. With a notable lack of press coverage, the *Estatuto* was passed by the assembly, including an amendment establishing a mechanism for a possible future incorporation of Navarre. The PNV also took part—albeit with a single representative—in the ‘Commission of 18’ which put together the *Gestoras* and members of the Local Councils to organise the next step: a referendum. The second key change was the fall of Manuel Azaña's government in September. The new executive, led by Diego Martínez Barrio from the Radical Party, changed the Civil Governors, thereby putting an end to the strategy of repression.⁵⁵⁰ The political climate of the Basque Country had changed only in a matter of weeks.

Before the above-mentioned changes began to stir Basque politics in a different direction, 1933 had seen two very different realities evolve in Catalonia and the Basque Country. The Basque and Catalan nationalist movements, having already different starting points, underwent a remarkable process of desynchronisation:

⁵⁴⁷ “El mitin de ayer en el Euskalduna”, *Euzkadi*, 19/7/1933, p. 1, 3.

⁵⁴⁸ Gudari, “Como un pueblo en marcha”, *Euzkadi*, 22/7/1933, p. 4. Gallastegi and *Jagi-Jagi* would continue to argue, unsuccessfully, for a ‘Basque national front’ (see Chapter 6).

⁵⁴⁹ Influential figures within the Basque Nationalist Party urged its leadership not to confuse “the tree with the stray branch”, and to avoid any possibility of strengthening ANV through collaboration. See de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 349–350.

⁵⁵⁰ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 400–403. This was accompanied by a very significant decrease in violence between the political factions. Additional sporadic incidents, however, still took place in 1933, such as the shooting of the Basque nationalist Mayor of Mundaka Alejandro Mallona, who was seriously wounded in September. See “El salvaje atentado de Mundaka”, *Euzkadi*, 26/9/1933, p. 1.

they had moved to two clearly distinct phases of nation-building. Catalan nationalism had practically entered ‘phase D’ or national consolidation, engaging in nation-building through state-like institutions. Basque nationalism, on the other hand, was still in ‘phase C’ in which nation-building is still primarily carried out by a national mass movement, after several failed attempts to begin a transition towards the next phase. This was the direct result of the different dynamics of contention which had began in 1931 with ERC and the PNV assuming the respective roles of regime member and challenger. By 1933 some of the most extreme aspects of the dichotomy were terribly visible: whilst Basque nationalism was being the *object* of State repression, the ERC-led government—responsible for public order from April—was a repressive *agent* facing anarchist revolutionary activities.

5. 2. 2. GALEUZCA: an alliance on paper

From the nation-building perspective reviewed in the above section, 1933 can be seen as the year of desynchronisation between Basque and Catalan nationalism. In terms of the relationship between the two movements, however, it was a benchmark. 1933 saw the birth of GALEUZCA⁵⁵¹, an attempted alliance which sought to include all of the Galician, Basque and Catalan nationalist political actors. This section will examine the development of such a project in the context of Basque-Catalan nationalist relations and will continue the ‘diplomatic’ approach employed in the previous chapter of the present thesis.

The way in which Basque and Catalan nationalists—particularly those in ERC and the PNV—saw each other had evolved since 1931. The signing of the Catalan *Estatut* in San Sebastian was used by representatives of both parties to restore a sense of cordiality and even ‘spiritual solidarity’ (see above). Despite this, and despite the reduced strategic distance between ERC and the PNV—once the latter

⁵⁵¹ The acronym was made up of the first letters of ‘Galiza’, ‘Euzkadi’ and ‘Catalunya’, i.e. the three nations which the alliance was supposed to represent. The term has been used repeatedly for alliances between Galician, Basque and Catalan political or cultural actors, often as ‘GALEUSCA’—the letter ‘s’ accounting for the modern spelling ‘Euskadi’ .

had accepted the Spanish left's terms for Basque home rule—the two parties were not particularly close at the beginning of 1933. A comprehensive analysis of the material published in January 1933 by *Euzkadi* and *La Humanitat* shows that the two papers maintained a cordial relationship towards each other's political movement. A sign of this was the absence of any negative images of the Basque or Catalan 'other'.⁵⁵² *Euzkadi* still covered many events in Catalonia, publishing short informative pieces under the section *Cataluña*, and with Lluís Jordà—now much less frequently—writing his more analytical column *Carta de Cataluña*. On the other hand, *La Humanitat* continued to lack any fixed sections on Basque news, even though these had become more frequent.

The PNV's connections with Catalan nationalism remained strongest within its smaller Catholic and pro-independence groups. Luis Arbeloa—who would become President of the PNV's Bilbao branch the following year—visited Barcelona to give a talk for *Unió Democràtica de Catalunya* (UDC) in January 1933.⁵⁵³ UDC sent telegrams to José Antonio Aguirre praising him for the Basque party's opposition to secularist policies in the Spanish Parliament.⁵⁵⁴ The PNV maintained a somewhat closer relationship with the *Partit Nacionalista Català* (PNC), which was partly modelled on the Basque Nationalist Party, combining the defence of the Catalan *Estatut* with the long-term goal of independence.⁵⁵⁵ The enormous asymmetry between both groups—the PNC obtained just over 6000 votes in the Catalan election of November 1932—however, made an alliance in strategic terms

⁵⁵² Occasional comparisons were still made. See for example Engracio Aranzadi, "Ruta invariable", *Euzkadi*, 7/1/1933, p. 1 and also—although in this case it was in the other major newspaper connected to ERC—Cecili Gasoliba, "La banca dels catalans", *L'Opinió*, 11/1/1933, p. 7.

⁵⁵³ *El Matí*, 7/1/1933, p. 6. It seems that Catholic Catalan nationalists also remained on good terms with the Barcelona *Batzoki* and its President, Solano Aguirre. See *El Matí* 20/1/1933, p. 9.

⁵⁵⁴ This included MP José Antonio Aguirre's strong stance against a law which wanted to limit public funding and the educational attributions to religious congregations, see for example "El sectarisme de les Corts de Madrid", *El Matí*, 11/2/1933, p. 1; *El Matí*, 14/2/1933, p. 6; Josep Dachs, "La protesta nacionalista", *El Matí*, 14/2/1933, p. 8; "Què som?" *El Matí*, 28/2/1933, p. 11. *El Matí* also followed closely the PNV's opposition to the project to demolish the Sacred Heart monument in Bilbao, see "Un acte revoltat de sectarisme", *El Matí*, 14/2/1933, p. 8. For additional detail on this conflict and its contribution to polarisation in the Basque Country, see de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 337–339.

⁵⁵⁵ The PNC had many contacts with the *batzoki* of Barcelona, which seems to have supported the Catalan party's election campaign on some level. See "Acte de Propaganda Nacionalista al Batzoki", *La Nació Catalana*, 16/11/1932 and "Un triomf electoral del Nacionalisme", *La Nació Catalana*, 23/11/1932, p. 1. The PNV officially greeted the PNC in a letter which read "you will always find the Basque Nationalist Party side by side with your Fatherland", see "Els germans d'Euzkadi", *La Nació Catalana*, 16/8/1932, p. 3.

impossible. On a more symbolic plane, the PNV invited Francesc Maspons—the PNC candidate in the November election—to the second edition of the Basque national day, the *Aberri Eguna*.⁵⁵⁶ *Nosaltres Sols!* remained enthusiastic about the Basque nationalist cause, promoting it through its press and various political activities.⁵⁵⁷ *Palestra*, a Catalan nationalist youth association led by Josep Maria Batista i Roca, also organised a “Basque-Catalan brotherly event” in Barcelona which included representatives of the PNV's women, youth and children's associations.⁵⁵⁸

With all their enthusiasm, these groups lacked the real capacity to influence the Catalan—or Spanish—political situation. This meant that from the PNV's point of view, close political cooperation with them would yield very modest results beyond the symbolic plane. Only a big player such as ERC could potentially cement a Basque-Catalan nationalist alliance. The first step towards such an arrangement came not from the PNV, but through its only alternative within Basque nationalism: ANV.

During a rally organised by ANV in Bilbao, the 2nd of April 1933, Josep Riera i Puntí, visiting in representation of ERC, proposed the idea of rebuilding the Triple Alliance of 1923 between Basque, Catalan and Galician nationalists. It is unclear to which extent this was just a spontaneous piece of rhetoric—the alliance had been mentioned before—but the fact is that there were immediate consequences. That same day, Riera i Puntí, together with Alfonso Castelao of the *Partido Galleguista* and Gabino Seijo, signed the following declaration:

“Identified [us] Basques, Catalans and Galicians before the problem of the liberation of our respective peoples, we seal today under the tree of Gernika, the pact of mutual solidarity which will bring us the satisfaction of that longing.”⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵⁶ Ucelay-Da Cal, “Política de Fuera...”, p. 89.

⁵⁵⁷ This included commenting on the situation of imprisoned Basque nationalists, including Basque folk dance in *Nosaltres Sols!* rallies, translating Basque nationalist slogans, etc. See *Nosaltres Sols!*, 7/1/1933, p. 4; *Nosaltres Sols!*, 25/2/1933, p. 2; *Nosaltres Sols!*, 4/3/1933, p. 1; *Nosaltres Sols!*, 11/3/1933, p. 4; 11/3/1933, p. 3.

⁵⁵⁸ “Acte de germanor basco-catalana”, *Nosaltres Sols!*, 4/2/33, p. 7. For a more detailed study on *Palestra*, see Lluís Duran, *Intel·ligència i Caràcter. Palestra i La Formació Dels Joves*, Barcelona: Afers, 2007.

⁵⁵⁹ For the original fragment, see De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 337.

De la Granja⁵⁶⁰ has pointed out that the leaders of ANV themselves saw how such an alliance was beyond the capacity of their party, and that it was imperative to bring the PNV into the project. The Basque Nationalist Party joined soon after, quickly displacing ANV as the Basque voice of the intended alliance. In May 1933, as unrest in the Basque Country peaked, a solidarity rally was held in Barcelona. It was organised by the collection of pro-Basque Catalan agents mentioned above: the PNC, UDC, *Nosaltres Sols!* and *Palestra*, as well as by the Barcelona *batzoki* and the *Unió Catalanista*. The last of these was a weakened remnant of one of the first Catalan nationalist groups to emerge at the end of the 19th Century. Among the leading speakers were Manuel Carrasco—a long-time Catalan sympathiser of the PNV—Francesc Maspons—who had been present at the *Aberrri Eguna*—together with PNV leaders Telesforo Monzón and Teodoro Hernandorena.⁵⁶¹

But Monzón, President of the Gipuzkoa leadership of the PNV, and Hernandorena were not there just for the sake of ‘spiritual solidarity’. Their task was to engage in conversations with all of the Catalan nationalist political spectrum with the objective of bringing its most decisive political actors—particularly ERC—into a more developed version of the Gernika pact. Within *Esquerra*, those close to the faction represented by the daily *l’Opinió* reacted to the Basque solidarity rally with mistrust. Referring to the issue of Basque nationalism as “a particularly delicate topic for a Catalan pen”, Rafael Font i Ferran—Companys’ former secretary—insisted in pointing out the Basque nationalists’ alliance with the “reactionary movement.”⁵⁶² In fact, *Esquerra* rejected a Barcelona Town Council motion in solidarity with Basque nationalism presented by the *Lliga Catalana*.⁵⁶³ Others in ERC remained more sympathetic to Basque nationalism⁵⁶⁴.

⁵⁶⁰ For a full account of the development of Galeuzca from the perspective of ANV, see De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 375–385. See also José Luis de la Granja Sainz, “La Alianza de Los Nacionalismos Periféricos En La II República: Galeuzca”, in *Actas Congreso Castela (Santiago de Compostela, 24-29 Noviembre 1986)*, ed. by Justo G. Beramendi and Ramón Villares, Santiago de Compostela: Servizo de Publicacións da Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 1989, pp. 321–47.

⁵⁶¹ The event was also organised by the *Unió Catalanista* and the *batzoki* of Barcelona. See “Miting de solidaritat basco-catalana”, *l’Opinió*, 11/5/1933, p. 4.

⁵⁶² Font i Ferran, “La trista paradoxa del nacionalisme basc”, *l’Opinió*, 14/5/1933, p. 5. A few days later, Santiago Dañobeitia—a member of the Barcelona *batzoki*—responded with another article challenging Font’s allegations. See “El nacionalisme basc”, *l’Opinió*, 18/5/1933, p. 4.

⁵⁶³ “L’ajuntament nega la simpatia al País Basc”, *Estat Català*, 1/6/1933, p. 1.

⁵⁶⁴ “Notes sobre nacionalisme basc”, *El Poble*, 18/5/1933, p. 1.

A Catalan delegation—including representatives from UDC, ERC and *Acció Catalana Republicana*—travelled to the Basque Country later that same month.⁵⁶⁵ During these talks, Monzón and Batista i Roca brokered an agreement, which included the name for the alliance, GALEUZCA, and a symbolic event to launch it, the ‘triangular trip’ to Galicia, the Basque Country and Catalonia.⁵⁶⁶

The following pages will take two approaches on GALEUZCA. The first will be to treat it as the international pact its promoters intended it to be. The second will focus on GALEUZCA as an event, looking into the triangular trip and its implications towards Basque-Catalan nationalist relations. Two key sources will be used in the process: the first approach will draw from the original document of the GALEUZCA agreement, not published at the time, and discovered by José Luis de la Granja at the Basque Library of the University of Nevada, Reno.⁵⁶⁷ The second approach will use the retelling of the triangular trip by one of its participants, Álvaro das Casas, republished more recently by Xosé Estévez.⁵⁶⁸

GALEUZCA was defined in its founding document as an “organism charged with the relations between these three nationalities [Galicia, the Basque Country and Catalonia].” It was therefore strictly speaking not an alliance, but an international organisation. In diplomatic terms, this can be defined as “an association of states deriving its organisational character from its permanence, its quasi-governmental organs, and (generally speaking) its employment of international civil servants.”⁵⁶⁹ Needless to say, GALEUZCA's sub-state nature meant that it was not made up of states and that it did not include ‘international civil servants’ as such, but it was thought as a permanent and defined ‘quasi-governmental structure’ (see Fig. 5. 3).

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⁵⁶⁵ Xosé Estévez points out that the Catalan delegation's visit to the Basque Country was used by ERC—represented by Rossell i Vilar—to assess the PNV's position towards republicanism; see *Galeuzca: La Rebelión...* p. 25. Ucelay Da Cal has pointed out that Rossell, a member of the *Estat Català* faction within ERC and a proponent of a particular Catalan interpretation of scientific racism, was naturally impressed by the PNV; see “Política de fuera...”, p. 90. For Batista i Roca's brief but enthusiastic testimony of this trip to the Basque Country, see “Euzkadi i Catalunya”, *Estat Català*, 19/6/1933, p. 1.

⁵⁶⁶ De la Granja, “La Alianza...”, p. 328.

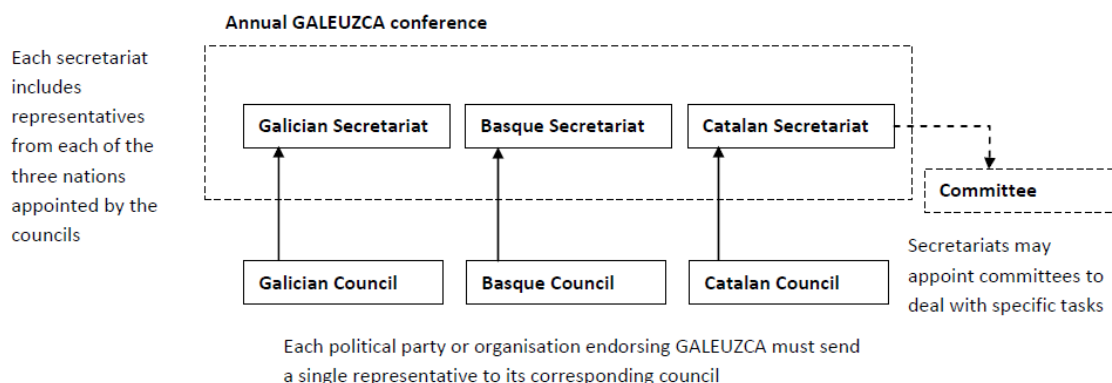
⁵⁶⁷ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 379–381.

⁵⁶⁸ Estévez, *Galeuzca: La Rebelión...*, pp. 27–65.

⁵⁶⁹ *A Dictionary of Diplomacy*, “international organization”, G. R. Berridge and Alan James (eds.), Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. 145.

⁵⁷⁰ For another version of GALEUZCA's organisational chart, see De la Granja, “La alianza...”, p. 335.

Fig. 5. 3 | The planned structure of GALEUZCA



Under this characterisation as an international—or regional—organisation, GALEUZCA was logically prone to face challenges typical of such bodies. These include the fact that

“in political terms, international organisations are in a weak position, in that they depend on their member states for funding and, in respect for their external activity that they conduct, for personnel. Thus any particular proposed activity is dependent on a sufficient number of member states thinking it is in their individual national interests.”⁵⁷¹

In this sense, there was nothing too extraordinary about many of the problems faced by GALEUZCA, particularly the issue of conflicting interests among its members pointed out by historians de la Granja and Ucelay Da Cal.⁵⁷² Other issues, however, were more specific. On one hand, there was a problem with what in diplomatic terms can be described as a lack of “accredited representatives”⁵⁷³ from the Catalan nationalist movement. Josep Maria Batista i Roca, the main architect

⁵⁷¹ *A Dictionary of Diplomacy*, “international organization”, p. 146.

⁵⁷² Both scholars identify the different attitudes towards the Spanish Government by ERC and the PNV as a key factor behind GALEUZCA's lack of practical development. See de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 383; “La alianza...”, p. 338; Ucelay Da Cal, “Política de fuera...”, p. 88–91.

⁵⁷³ *A Dictionary of Diplomacy*, “accredited representative”, pp. 1–2.

behind the triangular voyage, despite having significant personal influence, was in no position to represent the two main Catalan political actors, ERC and the *Lliga Catalana*.

As Ucelay Da Cal has emphasised, the Catalan delegation was dominated by “lower-ranking intellectuals and activists”, in contrast to the presence of Basque and Galician nationalist leaders such as Irujo and Castelao.⁵⁷⁴ The participation of Estelrich and Riera i Puntí on behalf of the *Lliga* and *Esquerra*, respectively, did little to correct the problem. The former was quite positive about GALEUZCA, but not the *Lliga*'s leader, Cambó, who was opposed to the idea of a permanent alliance.⁵⁷⁵ Riera i Puntí, who was supposed to represent ERC, was tolerated by the party's leadership, but also quite out of touch with it.⁵⁷⁶ His lack of endorsement by the official party structure was denounced by *l'Opinió*.⁵⁷⁷

On the other hand, there was also a problem with the actual content of the document signed in Compostela. GALEUZCA's objectives were loosely defined in terms of providing “mutual knowledge” to the signing parties about their “national characteristics” and “nationalist movements”, as well as carrying out “joint international propaganda.” After the triangular trip's stop in Bilbao, this was modified to also include “international action”. There was no anticipation of concrete measures such as a parliamentary alliance in Madrid, joint pressures on the Spanish Government or coordinated mobilisation in some form. Much more text was devoted to the future organisation's structure than to the joint initiatives it was supposed to promote and under which conditions.⁵⁷⁸

GALEUZCA was therefore born from a pact that combined problems with the representation of its parties and with the vague definition of its objectives. Diplomatic convention requires an international organisation to be established by a founding “treaty, which defines and limits the organisation's legal

⁵⁷⁴ Ucelay Da Cal, “Política de fuera...”, p. 87. The PNV's representatives were in contact with their party's national leadership, the *Euzkadi Buru Batzar*, and reported back to it. There was some Basque nationalist opposition to entering in such a close alliance with Catalan nationalism, but this came mostly from Luis Arana, brother of the PNV's founder, whose influence by 1933 was limited. See De la Granja, “La Alianza...”, pp. 328–329.

⁵⁷⁵ De la Granja, “La Alianza...”, p. 339.

⁵⁷⁶ Ucelay Da Cal, “Política de fuera...”, p. 89.

⁵⁷⁷ “Què és el Pacte de Compostela?”, *l'Opinió*, 13/8/1933, p. 1.

⁵⁷⁸ Ucelay Da Cal suggests GALEUZCA's structure was designed by Batista i Roca, who was “obsessed with organisational charts”, see “Política de fuera...”, p. 88.

competence”.⁵⁷⁹ GALEUZCA's initial document simply did not meet these requirements as it 1) did not establish any binding obligations for its parties, which were 2) particularly in the Catalan case, not properly represented by accredited ‘diplomats’. All in all, the document signed in Compostela and later amended in Bilbao can be more accurately described as a ‘declaration’, rather than a treaty, i.e. “a document which is not meant to have the binding character of a treaty but to have considerable political significance.”⁵⁸⁰

The fact that GALEUZCA did not materialise as a formal alliance, let alone as a permanent organisation, implies that it is also possible to treat it as an event. This means to focus the analysis on the triangular trip undertaken by Galician, Basque and Catalan nationalists during the summer of 1933. The best source available for this is the written account produced by Álvaro Das Casas, as mentioned above. This is a very personal chronicle of the voyage, and a reflection of this particular Galician nationalist's point of view. Das Casas, who would go through several political transformations during his life, was at this point the leader of a very small pro-independence party *Vanguardia Nazionalista Galega*. He had recently left, and was critical of, Castelao's *Partido Galeguista*, and had an idealised vision of both Catalan and Basque nationalism. Both things show clearly in his chronological and highly detailed account of the expedition, which began in the Galician town of Pontevedra the 24th of July and ended in Barcelona the 12th of August. For a full list of those participants in the trip who signed the GALEUZCA documents, see Table 5. 1 below.

⁵⁷⁹ *A Dictionary of Diplomacy*, “international organization”, p. 146.

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, “declaration”, p. 65.

Table 5. 1 | Galician, Basque and Catalan signatories of the GALEUZCA pact

Location	Date	Signing representatives		
		Catalonia	Basque Country	Galicia
Santiago de Compostela	25/7/1933	From <i>Palestra</i> : -Josep Maria Batista i Roca -Josep Girona From <i>Acció Catalana Republicana</i> : -Pau Vila From <i>Unió Democràtica de Catalunya</i> : -Rossend Pich Salarich -Pau Muñoz Castanyer	From <i>Partido Nacionalista Vasco</i> : -Jesús Doxandabaratx -Joseba Rezola -Esteban Isusi -Manuel Irujo	From <i>Partido Galleguista</i> : -Alexandre Bóveda From <i>Utreya</i> : -Alvaro das Casas
Bilbao	30/7/1933 and 31/7/1933	From <i>Lliga Catalana</i> : - Joan Estelrich From <i>Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya</i> : - Josep Riera i Puntí From <i>Unió Democràtica de Catalunya</i> : - Manuel Carrasco i Formiguera + all Catalan signatories present in Santiago.	From <i>Acción Nacionalista Vasca</i> : - Andrés Perea + all Basque signatories present in Santiago, except Isusi.	Only Das Casas signs on behalf of Galicia.

Many elements of Das Casas' account confirm the previous 'diplomatic' analysis of GALEUZCA's founding documents: the lack of a truly 'accredited' Catalan representation and the excessive vagueness of the project's objectives. On the first issue, Das Casas mentions how he had known about GALEUZCA only a month

before the trip, having been contacted via personal letter by Batista i Roca. His personal—as opposed to the official, ERC or *Lliga Catalana* sanctioned—initiative is seen as decisive in the planning and execution of the whole project. Das Casas also identifies hesitation in the attitudes of Castelao, Pau Vila—of whom he suspects that he may not be fully in line with his party's leader, Nicolau d'Olivera—and Joan Estelrich. The end of the trip in Barcelona shows that the *Lliga* and *Esquerra* representatives in GALEUZCA were in fact quite out of touch with their party leaders. Both Cambó and Macià show, in Das Casas' eyes, attitudes towards the project which were very different from their supposed representatives, Estelrich and Riera i Puntí.⁵⁸¹

On the second issue, Das Casas' account shows that GALEUZCA's lack of concreteness and binding elements became evident even during the triangular trip. Mentions of ideas for concrete policies to be adopted by GALEUZCA, tended to take place in private contexts, not official meetings. These included discussions with Josep Dencàs—then *Conseller* in the Catalan Government—about possible joint initiatives in the Spanish Parliament, and with Pompeu Fabra—honorary President of *Palestra*—about the creation of a 'young GALEUZCA'. Das Casas noted that his ideas were “unanimously accepted”, but their context was always informal and non-binding. Even the creation of a flag to represent the organisation was the result of another personal alternative by a handful of the trip's participants including Das Casas. It was never discussed in any official meetings and it seems to have been only used during an event at San Mamés stadium in Bilbao.⁵⁸²

A good indicator that GALEUZCA was not becoming the instrument Basque nationalists wanted was their attitude during their stay in Barcelona. Das Casas was horrified when he learned that the Basque delegation had met independently with the Catholic hierarchy, Barcelona Mayor Jaume Aiguader, *Conseller* Ventura Gassol, and Cambó among others. The Galician nationalist had hoped that “any dealings should be made jointly by all of the signatories of the Compostela Pact”. In fact, Irujo's address to Macià during their official reception—also attended by Das

⁵⁸¹ Estévez, *Galeuzca: La Rebelión...*pp. 30, 37, 39, 53, 60.

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*...pp. 32, 41, 58, 62.

Casas and Batista i Roca—was of a complete bilateral spirit, with no mention of GALEUZCA at all.⁵⁸³

Looking into GALEUZCA as an event through the descriptions provided by Álvaro Das Casas shows the extent of ritualisation reached by Catalan-Basque(-Galician) nationalist interaction in 1933. The triangular trip was heavily protocolised, being in itself a constant display of ‘spiritual solidarity’. The different elements of protocol present can be grouped into three main categories: language exchange, border crossings and ‘classic’ elements.

This thesis defines language exchange as the symbolic use of non-dominant languages during interactions between nationalist movements, applied to the particular case of Basque-Catalan nationalist relations. A visiting party—e.g. a Basque delegation in Catalonia—can engage in language exchange by a) using Basque language or b) using Catalan language during a speech. Often, for effective communication purposes, this is limited to an initial salute, an introduction or a final appreciation remark. This temporary overlooking of language barriers seeks to produce a climate of mutual respect and empathy, and in the Basque-Catalan case it is also a symbolic avoidance of the Spanish dominant language.⁵⁸⁴ According to Das Casas' account, language exchange helped to ‘break the ice’ at the beginning of the triangular trip in Pontevedra, producing “moments of true brotherhood” between the participants. Language exchange also took place during a tribute to Sabino Arana in Sukarrieta, and during Jesús Doxandabaratz's speech before the Catalan Government in Barcelona⁵⁸⁵. Most uses of language exchange during the triangular trip took the form a) as described above. An exception was the speech by Irujo at the CADCI office in Barcelona, which he began in Catalan, thus being an example of the form b).⁵⁸⁶

Another key element of protocol during the GALEUZCA trip was the symbolic crossing of national ‘borders’. Welcoming parties had been organised to meet the expedition at the precise points from which it entered the Basque Country—

⁵⁸³ Ibid., pp. 52–53, 57.

⁵⁸⁴ The concept is non-specific and can be applied to interactions between other stateless nationalist movements, including Basque and Catalan nationalist interactions with Galician nationalism, which also took place during the GALEUZCA trip. Language exchange may also be observed in not strictly political contexts such as sports. See for example, *El Matí*, 8/1/1933, p. 12.

⁵⁸⁵ Estévez, *Galeuzca: La Rebelión...* pp. 28–29, 37, 52.

⁵⁸⁶ Daniel López, “Liçó de nacionalisme”, *La Nació Catalana*, 14/8/1933, p. 1.

through the Somorrostro valley—and Catalonia—through the small town of Almacelles—to create a border-like effect. National flags, singing and music were prominent in both occasions. The trip's participants themselves also carried out symbolic gestures as they left Galicia in Ribadeo, where they crossed the Eo estuary singing national anthems in a boat flying the Galician flag. They also marked their exit from the Basque Country in Ledeá (*Liédena* in Spanish) by sending several collective telegrams to Basque nationalist leaders, prisoners and to the Minister of the Interior.⁵⁸⁷

The more prevalent forms of protocol fell under the 'classic' category, i.e. common symbolic elements of all diplomatic relations. The three most salient examples of this are the combined displays of the different parties' national flags, the singing of their national anthems and the sharing of food and drink; all of which were prominent during the GALEUZCA trip. Another feature was the payment of tribute to relevant deceased figures: Rosalía de Castro in Galicia and Sabino Arana in the Basque Country.⁵⁸⁸

Protocol, however, could also be problematic. This was the case when, at different stages in the triangular trip, the nationalist representatives were ceremonially welcomed by local authorities, i.e. Town Councils. These could be sympathetic to GALEUZCA's objectives in terms of home rule, but still belong to Spanish republican parties. This meant that welcoming commissions included displays of regime's symbols—the tricolour flag, or the *Himno de Riego* Spanish republican national anthem—which discomfited many members of the expedition. Variations of this scene happened in Santiago de Compostela, Tafalla and Lleida.⁵⁸⁹ An opposite dynamic took place in Barcelona, when during the above mentioned event at the CADCI. Irujo made a speech attacking the Spanish Government, which caused the attending public—mainly pro-independence sympathisers—to turn against the representatives of the Catalan Government who were also present. This sparked controversy between *l'Opinió*, which now pointed out that the GALEUZCA trip had been organised by “reactionaries”, and said ERC should have not taken part in the event. Aiguader responded in *La Humanitat* by

⁵⁸⁷ Estévez, *Galeuzca: La Rebelión...* pp. 33–34, 47–48, 54.

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 31–32, 37, 55, 61.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 45, 48.

downplaying the incident and defending Irujo.⁵⁹⁰ Religion was also an issue. The trip included attending mass at the Santiago Cathedral in Compostela, the Basilica of Begoña in Bilbao and rosary prayer at the Montserrat abbey.⁵⁹¹ Had ERC been more solidly represented in the expedition, its representatives would have probably found this quite inappropriate given the party's secularist ideology. *La Humanitat* did not carry out an extensive coverage of GALEUZCA's activities, although it mentioned the project in a positive light, framing it as a pro-Republic initiative (see Fig. 5. 4). *Esquerra's* participation in the triangular trip, however, was enough for the *Partit Nacionalista Català* to avoid sending its own representatives.⁵⁹²

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 56–57; “Contra el confusionisme”, *l'Opinió*, 11/8/1933, p.1; J. Aiguader i Miró, “Contra confusionismes i fosquedats”, *La Humanitat*, 12/8/1933, p. 1.

⁵⁹¹ Estévez, *Galeuzca: La Rebelión...*, pp. 32, 39.

⁵⁹² *La Nació Catalana*, 7/8/1933, p. 1.

Fig. 5. 4 | “Unity is strength, yes, but we must all defend the Republic if we want to move forward.”⁵⁹³



Perhaps the only tangible initiative born out of the triangular trip was the delivery of a telegram to the assembly of Basque Local Councils that had approved the new Basque *Estatuto* in Vitoria. The document expressed full support for the Basque home rule project, and was signed by the members of the three delegations, and more importantly by *Conseller* of Culture Ventura Gassol. Days later, again according to Das Casas' account of the trip, Macià made some bold promises—in private—to some of the delegates, including Irujo. These included more direct forms of support for the Basque *Estatuto* and persuading Azaña to put an end to repression in the Basque Country, but had no real consequences.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹³ *La Humanitat*, 5/8/1933, p. 1.

⁵⁹⁴ Estévez, *Galeuzca: La Rebelión...*, pp.54–55. Ucelay Da Cal also refers to these promises from the testimony of the Basque nationalist Ramón Goñi. See “Política de fuera...”, p. 91.

Historian de la Granja has shown that the *Lliga Catalana* never ratified the GALEUZCA pact and that it is unclear whether *Esquerra* finally did. The national councils and three secretariats anticipated by the founding document were not created and the first conference, which should have taken place in October 1933, never did. The idea had been to present GALEUZCA before the 9th Congress of European Minorities in Bern in September, but Basque nationalists failed to send a delegation. This prompted Irujo to declare GALEUZCA “virtually dead” and Batista i Roca to rethink the project as too ambitious.⁵⁹⁵

All in all, protocol helped to create an atmosphere of trust and respect, sometimes even of enthusiasm, during most of the triangular trip. But this alone could not compensate for the serious flaws in the design of the GALEUZCA project as identified in the present thesis and by the conflict of national interests pointed out in previous research. The diplomatic ‘code’ which could have made GALEUZCA viable was present. The same could not be said of the necessary diplomatic tools: accredited ‘diplomats’, an effective tripartite negotiating table and a real ‘treaty’ to act as a roadmap for future collaboration. Decisively, lack of motivation, particularly by the key Catalan players, which never saw the alliance as desirable in terms of their national interests, meant that in 1933 GALEUZCA never went beyond paper. Cambó's *Lliga*'s policy was to avoid any permanent alliances with Basque nationalism, something he would tell Aguirre directly months later.⁵⁹⁶ *Esquerra* was ever wary of getting too close to the PNV, given the latter's poor relationship with Madrid, at a time were the Catalan party was investing great efforts—with Lluís Companys as the Minister of the Navy—in stabilising Azaña's executive.

⁵⁹⁵ De la Granja, “La Alianza...”, p. 339–340.

⁵⁹⁶ Cambó, in a series of letters exchanged with Aguirre, warned the Basque leader that the forming of a Basque-Catalan home rule front would provoke a negative reaction among Spanish parties, arguing for a more subtle approach to “avoid frontal battles”. See José Antonio Aguirre, *Entre la libertad y la revolución, 1930-1935: la verdad de un lustro en el País Vasco*, Bilbao: Geu, 1976, pp. 414–415.

Chapter 6.

Facing new challenges.

**Basque and Catalan nationalists
during the 'conservative' biennium**

The fall of Manuel Azaña's government, the 7th of September 1933, was the closing act of the 'progressive' biennium. The republican-socialist coalition had suffered attrition left and right throughout the year. Anarchist insurrections had been met with violent repression, leading to situations such as the notorious *Casas Viejas* incident⁵⁹⁷. The anarcho-syndicalist CNT grew, worrying its close competitor, the socialist *Unión General de Trabajadores* (UGT). Its leader, Largo Caballero—who had also risen to lead the PSOE—had become disillusioned with institutional politics, and convinced the socialist party to leave the executive. Caballero pushed for a change from an institutional to a 'revolutionary' strategy. On the other hand, the secularist policies of the government—particularly the law limiting the power of religious congregations issued during the summer—had deeply alienated Catholics. This included a large portion of the Spanish population, which was being increasingly mobilised by an awakening political right, and the President of the Republic himself, Alcalá-Zamora, who decided to force Azaña to resign. After an aborted attempt in June—Azaña was able to form another government which included Lluís Companys as Minister for the Navy—Alcalá-Zamora tasked the veteran Radical Party leader, Alejandro Lerroux, with the formation of a new cabinet. This would be the first of a series of centre-right to right governments which would be later know as the 'conservative' biennium. A reshuffle of the Spanish political arena was taking place, one which would pose serious challenges for Basque and Catalan nationalists.

The conservative biennium saw the emergence of new political actors which had a decisive effect on Basque and Catalan nationalist contentious politics. With the Radical Party in power and having turned to the right of the political spectrum, the Spanish centre-left underwent a series of rearrangements. These led to the creation of *Izquierda Republicana* ('Republican Left'), a fusion of Azaña's *Acción Republicana* ('Republican Action'), and Marcelí Domingo's faction of the *Partido Republicano Radical Socialista* ('Radical Socialist Republican Party') or PRRS. The

⁵⁹⁷ A small scale anarchist uprising in Casas Viejas, Cadiz province, was put down by police forces in January 1933. The indiscriminate violence employed by the *Guardia Civil* and *Guardia de Asalto* units included extrajudicial killings, the burning of a house belonging to insurgents and beatings resulting in more than 20 deaths. The resulting public outcry caused a severe government crisis. See Julián Casanova, *De La Calle Al Frente. El Anarcosindicalismo En España (1931-1936)*, Barcelona: Crítica, 1997, pp. 111–113.

rest of the PRRS joined a breakaway group from the Radical Party led by Diego Martínez Barrio to form *Unión Republicana* ('Republican Union'). These two entities would dominate the left-wing, liberal republican political space.⁵⁹⁸ The *Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas* ('Spanish Confederacy of the Autonomous Right') or CEDA⁵⁹⁹, rose as the leading political actor within the Spanish authoritarian right. It exercised a powerful influence on the Radical Party's governments throughout 1934, and finally joined the executive in October 1934, triggering the crisis of that month. The CEDA was quite open about the subversive nature of its politics. To its leader José María Gil-Robles, "democracy is not an end but a means to conquer a new State"⁶⁰⁰. Other parties to the CEDA's right, the Alphonine *Renovación Española* ('Spanish Renewal'), the Carlist *Comunión Tradicionalista* ('Traditionalist Communion') and the fascist *Falange Española* were already considering a violent overthrow of the Republic.⁶⁰¹

The main Basque and Catalan nationalist political actors remained relatively stable. ERC suffered a split in October 1933, as Joan Lluhí, Josep Tarradellas and other leading figures close to the newspaper *L'Opinió* formed the *Partit Nacionalista Republicà d'Esquerra* ('Nationalist Republican Left Party'). The rift, which had been brewing since the beginning of 1932, had a limited effect on Catalan politics. Lluhí and his followers failed to attract enough support to actually threaten ERC's position as the dominant force in left-wing Catalan nationalism. The death of Francesc Macià, the 25th of December 1933, opened the question of his succession. Lluís Companys, after gaining the support of the party's pro-independence youth faction—slightly displacing the *Estat Català* 'veterans' Ventura Gassol and Jaume Aiguader—went on to lead ERC. In January 1934, the

⁵⁹⁸ For a comprehensive outlook on both the right and left-of-centre Spanish republican parties in general, and the Radical Party's governments in particular, see Nigel Townson, *La República que no pudo ser: la política de centro en España (1931-1936)*, Madrid: Taurus, 2002.

⁵⁹⁹ The CEDA was a coalition led by *Acción Popular*, a political party founded by Ángel Herrera, a leader of the lay Catholic activist group *Acción Católica*. The coalition incorporated many conservative regionalist and agrarian parties, and its ideology combined Catholic social teaching with authoritarian influences. See José Ramon Montero Gibert, *La CEDA: El catolicismo social y político en la II República*, Vol. 1 and 2, Madrid: Revista de Trabajo, 1977.

⁶⁰⁰ Robles said these words in the context of a pre-election rally in Madrid. See *El Debate*, 17/10/1933, p. 1. See also Eduardo González Calleja and Carlos María Rodríguez López-Brea, "José María Gil-Robles, El Caudillo Devenido En Villano", in Luder Mees (ed), *Héroes y Villanos de La Patria*, Tecnos, 2020, pp. 291–324.

⁶⁰¹ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 476.

Catalan Parliament also named him President of the *Generalitat*. Basque nationalism continued to be represented by the PNV and ANV political parties, with the exception of the group formed around the *Jagi-Jagi* weekly newspaper. Led by Elías Gallastegi and made up of *mendigoxale* hiking groups in Biscay, *Jagi-Jagi* broke away from the PNV in May 1934.⁶⁰² The group became a Basque equivalent to the Catalan small pro-independence groups such as *Nosaltres Sols!*: critical of institutional politics, committed to activism and promoting a ‘national front’ as a strategic alternative.

The results of the November 1933 Spanish general election (see below) had a major effect on the conditions for political contention faced by Basque and Catalan nationalists. The shift to the right in the political centre of gravity of the regime altered the pattern that had remained more or less stable since April 1931. As the CEDA's influence grew, ERC ceased to be a ‘regime member’, and moved towards the ‘challenger’ position. Madrid became increasingly hostile to both Catalan and Basque home rule, openly rejecting the latter and—after the events of October 1934—suspending the former. The rest of the conservative biennium saw the most acute narrowing of the political opportunity structure for Basque and Catalan nationalists of the whole Spanish republican period.⁶⁰³ The desynchronisation between the two movements that had began in September 1932 with the enactment of the Catalan *Estatut* was reduced, if not completely reversed.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first will examine the developments that took place during the first Lerroux and Samper governments, before the CEDA joined the cabinet in October 1934. Two key episodes of contention will be compared; both conflicts contributing to the build-up of tension throughout 1934: the issue of the Crop Contracts Law in Catalonia and the dispute over the Wine Statute in the Basque Country. The second section will cover the October 1934 Revolution in Catalonia and the Basque Country, comparing how it

⁶⁰² *Jagi-Jagi*'s critics of the PNV included the party's unconditional support for a Basque *Estatuto*, the participation of leading party members in the *Agrupación Vasca de Acción Social Cristiana*, an employers' organisation to promote Catholic social teaching and the PNV MPs' initial positive attitude towards the Radical Party's government. See De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 465–469.

⁶⁰³ Tilly and Tarrow identify “the extent to which the regime represses or facilitates collective claim making” as one of the defining properties of the regime that make up political opportunity structure. In this case, the Radical Party governments—and even more so after they were joined by the CEDA—became increasingly willing to repress Catalan and Basque nationalist claim making. See *Contentious Politics*, p. 59.

developed in both contexts and looking closely at the role played by Catalan and Basque nationalists.

6. 1. Navigating changing winds: Basque and Catalan contentious politics after the fall of Azaña (October 1933-September 1934)

6. 1. 1. The fall of the republican-socialist coalition and the 1933 general election

The crisis that finally removed Azaña from power came with the election of the Court of Constitutional Guarantees, the 3rd of September 1933. The vote, which was cast by the Local Councils, gave a majority to the Radical and CEDA opposition parties. Although Azaña managed to get past a confidence motion in Parliament, Alcalá-Zamora forced the dissolution of the Government by withdrawing his support as President of the Republic. Alejandro Lerroux led a brief new executive which attempted to bring all of the republican parties together—the PSOE now announced it would join the opposition—but failed to secure the support of the republican left. In order to get past this obstacle, Alcalá-Zamora tasked the Vice-President of the Radical Party, Diego Martínez Barrio, with the formation of yet another cabinet for the single purpose of holding a general election. This was scheduled for the 19th of November.⁶⁰⁴

The fall of Azaña had different meanings for Basque and Catalan nationalists. Seeing one of the most committed Spanish defenders of Catalan home rule being ousted from power was not a good prospect for ERC. Less so, when he was replaced by Lerroux, with a notorious history of opposition to Catalan

⁶⁰⁴ Townson, *La República...*, pp. 220–221.

nationalism.⁶⁰⁵ *Esquerra* maintained a cautious attitude during the government crisis. Macià acknowledged the developments as “a black cloud that passes as a threat through Catalonia's clear horizon”.⁶⁰⁶ ERC engaged in a series of negotiations with the Radical Party, which enabled it to maintain a minister in the Spanish cabinet: the future Mayor of Barcelona Carles Pi i Sunyer, who was to hold the labour post. Nevertheless, the prospect of a general election worried *Esquerra*, and its newspaper *La Humanitat* warned its readers that “the [political] right [...], is poised to rectify the work of the Constituent [*Cortes*]”.⁶⁰⁷

Basque nationalists, on the other hand, had little sympathy for the leaving republican-socialist coalition after months of being at the receiving end of its repressive policies. The new civil governors appointed by the Radical Party brought a conciliatory approach which was publicly appreciated by both the PNV and ANV. The *Comisiones Gestoras* which ran the day-to-day governance of the Basque provinces were also renewed by the Radical Party-led government, which gave a green light for the institutional process towards home rule to go forward. Martínez Barrio's cabinet decreed that the new Basque *Estatuto* would be submitted to a plebiscite the 5th of November. This somewhat surprising attitude favouring the Basque nationalist agenda has been characterised by historian Juan Pablo Fusi as a tactical move by the Radical Party to weaken its republican and socialist opponents in Bilbao.⁶⁰⁸

The general strategy of the Radical Party was to use the election as a launching pad to become the dominant actor in Spanish politics. The group's objective was to obtain around 170 of 470 seats, displacing the PSOE as the most voted party and leading a new executive free from socialist influence. Its campaign was a combination of moderate liberalism and Spanish nationalism—“a Republic for all Spaniards”—with more conservative references to authority and order. The

⁶⁰⁵ Born in Andalusia in 1864, Alejandro Lerroux moved to Barcelona in 1901 and founded the *Partido Republicano Radical*, which combined populism, anti-clericalism and anti-Catalan nationalism. His ideology and his appeal to the Catalan working class—often focusing on Castilian-speaking migrants—became known as *lerrouxisme*. Tarred by corruption scandals, Lerroux would eventually leave Barcelona and progressively shift from the political left towards right-of-centre liberalism, causing several splits in the Radical Party. See José Álvarez Junco, *Alejandro Lerroux, El Emperador Del Paralelo*, Madrid: Síntesis, 2005; Joan B. Culla, *El Republicanisme Lerrouxista a Catalunya (1901-1923)* Barcelona: Curial, 1986.

⁶⁰⁶ “Unes declaracions interesantíssimes del senyor Macià”, *La Humanitat*, 9/9/1933, p. 1.

⁶⁰⁷ “Alerta!”, *La Humanitat*, 12/10/1933, p. 1.

⁶⁰⁸ Fusi's thesis is reproduced in de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 404.

Radical Party presented itself as a centrist, cross-class option in the face of the strife between left and right—directing most of its attacks towards the former—which was to moderate, but not neutralise, the previous governments' reforms.⁶⁰⁹

The November 1933 Spanish general election was the first of its kind to introduce universal suffrage as granted by the Constitution of 1931. This more than doubled the census⁶¹⁰, but did not have a significant influence in the political turnout.⁶¹¹ In April, elections had been held for the “rotten boroughs”, i.e. those Local Councils where a single, uncontested list had stood for the 1931 election and no actual voting had taken place. These towns and villages, of which a large proportion was found in conservative areas such as Castille, Leon and Navarre, gave a sounding triumph to the CEDA and the Radical Party, which obtained 37% and 32% of the councillors respectively. The results had already alarmed Azaña, who saw how the political right was gaining momentum for a general election.⁶¹² In the Basque Country, 27% of the new councillors belonged to the PNV, a testimony to the party's strength in rural areas, especially in Biscay, but also in Gipuzkoa, where José Luis de la Granja has shown that it managed to attract many ex-monarchist votes.⁶¹³

ERC and the PNV were in significantly different shapes by the autumn of 1933, which had an impact on both their electoral lists and performance. The Basque nationalists were in the middle of a reactivated drive for home rule, with a referendum on the new Basque *Estatuto* to take place only a fortnight before the general election. The left-wing Catalan nationalists had been implementing home rule for months, but the attrition that was piling up after more than two years in power was taking its toll.

The ‘Commission of 18’—now dominated by the Radical Party—which was leading the process of drafting and ratification of the Basque *Estatuto* initially

⁶⁰⁹ Townson, *La República...*, pp. 223–230.

⁶¹⁰ The total number of voters increased by 119,1% in the Basque Country and by 108,9% in Catalonia, see De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp.425–426; Vilanova, *Atles Electoral...*, p. 31.

⁶¹¹ For a review of the—both contemporary and historiographical—debates surrounding this statement, as well as a summary of the arguments supporting the lack of correlation between the election's results and the introduction of women's suffrage, see Alejandro Camino Rodríguez, “La Influencia de Las Mujeres Españolas En Los Resultados de Las Elecciones Generales de 1933”, *Revista Historia Autónoma*, 11, 2017.

⁶¹² Roberto Villa García, “‘Burgos Podridos’ y Democratización. Las Elecciones Municipales de Abril de 1933”, *Revista Española de Historia*, LXXII.240, 2012, pp. 147–76.

⁶¹³ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 385–389.

proposed a coalition of all parties supporting home rule. The project failed because of the fundamental differences between some of the agents that were invited to join, which included the Carlists and the Communist Party. ANV in Biscay tried to broker an agreement between the PNV and the Radical Party for another coalition. The PNV engaged in the talks, while simultaneously opening dialogue with elements of the Catholic right that were not opposed to home rule. In José Luis de la Granja's view, the triumph of the Basque *Estatuto* in the 5th of November referendum persuaded the Basque Nationalist Party to stand for the election on its own in order to make the most of the plebiscite's results. This proved to be a smart move, for despite the failed negotiations, both ANV and the influential Catholic daily *La Gaceta del Norte* ended up supporting the PNV's candidacy.⁶¹⁴

Esquerra, a year after winning the Catalan election of November 1932 and enjoying the “near monopoly of power” described by Anna Sallés (see Chapter 5) was having cohesion problems. Historian Joan B. Culla describes how these can be summarised into three issues: administration deficiencies, the role of President Macià and the activities of a paramilitary or ‘shirt movement’ element within the party. The first was an uncomfortable reality that had been apparent only months after ERC's initial electoral success in 1931, and was rooted in the new elected representatives' inexperience, but also included notorious corruption cases, particularly in Barcelona's Town Hall.

The second issue had developed after *Esquerra*'s victory in the Catalan election and the subsequent formation of a new Catalan cabinet. Joan Lluhí assumed the role—contemplated in the *Estatut*—of *Conseller delegat*, a post similar to that of Prime Minister. Lluhí's idea was to gradually limit the President's involvement in day-to-day politics, which was refused by Macià and his strongest supporters within the party, many ex-members of the old *Estat Català*. Lluhí, on the other hand, was the leader of the group formed around the newspaper *l'Opinió*, another of the main factions within *Esquerra*, and often accused of lacking strong Catalan nationalist convictions. After it became clear that Macià had lost confidence in his *Conseller delegat*, Lluhí—and other like-minded members of the cabinet—

⁶¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 421–423.

resigned, being replaced by Carles Pi i Sunyer. The *l'Opinió* group evolved from a critical to an openly dissident position throughout 1933.

The final conflict between *l'Opinió* and the rest of ERC erupted over the third main issue: the activities of the *escamots* ('squads'). These were groups linked to the Joventuts d'Esquerra Republicana-Estat Català (JEREC), which operated as the *de facto* youth wing of the party. Lluhí and its followers engaged in a campaign against the *escamots*, rejecting them as "fascists".⁶¹⁵ This led to a mutual exchange of attacks in the press which ended in the official expulsion of the dissidents the 27th of September 1933. The expelled group created the *Partit Nacionalista Republicà d'Esquerra* (PNRE), but ERC retained the vast majority of its members and local branches.⁶¹⁶

The PNRE proposed a "single left front" to concentrate as much vote as possible against the foreseeable rise of a reorganised *Lliga Catalana*.⁶¹⁷ ERC was not opposed to this in principle, but tension between the two recently split parties made the alliance impossible. Lluhí's new party ended up forming coalitions with *Acció Catalana* in the Barcelona-city and Barcelona province constituencies. In Tarragona, the PRRS—its leader Marcel·lí Domingo had left ERC in early 1932—also formed an alternative coalition of republican parties.⁶¹⁸ ERC managed to build its list with traditional allies: the *Unió Socialista de Catalunya* and the *Unió de Rabassaires*, a sharecropper farmer's union.⁶¹⁹ The Republican Democratic Federalist Party and the PSOE leader Amós Ruiz also joined *Esquerra's* ballot. The *escamots'* activities poised some additional problems: in October they held a large, uniformed parade and also attacked the printing offices of *El Be Negre*, a satirical

⁶¹⁵ The activities of the *escamots* involved paramilitary style marches in green shirt uniforms, sports and outdoor events, clashes with anarchists during strikes—including beatings and irregular arrests—and some attacks on political opponents. For a detailed analysis of this phenomenon, including a direct assessment of the purported existence of a 'Catalan fascism', see Enric Ucelay Da Cal, Andreu González i Vilalta, and Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas (eds.), *El Catalanisme Davant Del Feixisme (1919-2018)*, Barcelona: Gregal, 2018. See also Enric Ucelay Da Cal, "Los «malos de la película»: Las Joventuts d'Esquerra Republicana-Estat Català y la problemática de un «fascismo catalán»", *Ayer*, 59, 2005, pp. 147–72.

⁶¹⁶ Culla, *Esquerra Republicana...*, pp. 26–32.

⁶¹⁷ The creation of the *Lliga Catalana* in February 1933 had not been a mere renaming of the *Lliga Regionalista*. The new party also included the right-of-centre *Dreta Liberal de Catalunya*—founded as the Catalan branch of Niceto Alcalá-Zamora's party *Derecha Liberal Republicana*—and another group split from *Acció Catalana Republicana*. See Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 1, pp. 429–430.

⁶¹⁸ Vilanova, *Atles Electoral...*, pp. 45, 47–48, 50.

⁶¹⁹ For the relationship between ERC and the *Unió de Rabassaires*, see Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 2, pp. 545–563.

magazine that had criticised the group. The USC threatened to leave the coalition if the *escamots* were not disbanded, but the situation was defused after a personal intervention by Macià, who also prevented some of the *escamot* leaders from joining ERC's Barcelona list.⁶²⁰

All of these complexities surrounding the formation of ERC's lists for the general election were absent from the PNV's context in the Basque Country. The Basque nationalists' lists were much more homogenous, even though they received external support from the above mentioned political actors: ANV—in Biscay—and the *Gaceta del Norte* Catholics. ERC had managed to include some external political actors in its lists, but was unable to avoid competition with ideologically close alternatives: the PNRE and PRRS-led coalitions.⁶²¹

Both ERC and the PNV gave priority to the election campaign and mobilised their respective social movement bases. *Esquerra's* campaign was marked by two large rallies: the first, at the *Monumental* bullfighting ring the 12 of November, where it presented its candidates. The second final rally took place at the Olimpia theatre the day before the election. The PNV, whose campaign began only once the *Estatuto* plebiscite was over, concentrated its strength in a rally at the *Euskalduna* court in Bilbao. As always, these events were accompanied by dozens of local rallies throughout Catalonia and the Basque Country.⁶²²

ERC and the PNV's campaigns were a reflection of two key elements: 1) the ongoing dynamic of contentious politics at work at the two sites and 2) Catalan and Basque nation-building. The attitudes showed by both parties towards the election differed, and were very much the result of how recent political developments had affected Catalonia and the Basque Country differently. ERC was in a 'defensive' position. It had lost its allies in Madrid, and was preparing to meet a strengthened version of its rival, the *Lliga Catalana*. The PNV, on the other hand, was confidently in 'offensive' mode. The plebiscite on the Basque *Estatuto* had yielded an

⁶²⁰ Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 1, pp. 432–443.

⁶²¹ For the detailed composition of the PNV and ERC lists, see respectively de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 432–432 and Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 1, pp. 454–455.

⁶²² See for example *La Humanitat*, 8/11/1933, p. 4; *Euzkadi*, 11/11/1933, p. 6.

overwhelming 84% of ‘yes’ vote⁶²³, and the Basque nationalists hoped they could exploit this recent victory.

ERC was therefore interested in stressing the importance of the left-right political divide—in which the right was represented by the *Lliga*—in a form of boundary formation or reassertion. Lluís Companys presented the choice as a blunt dichotomy: “not voting for *Esquerra* is voting for the *Lliga*”. This was also presented from a more national angle, in which the *Lliga* was put beside the Spanish right. During his speech at the *Monumental*, Macià said that “this Spanish right which has a flag against Catalonia as its [political] platform, to which the *Lliga Catalana* lends its strength, must know that here stands a *Generalitat*.”⁶²⁴ The purpose of this discourse was to establish a clear, dividing line between ERC-Catalan home rule and *Lliga*-Spanish rightists opposed to home rule.

While *Esquerra* was concentrating on securing votes in the face of a foreseeable surge of its opponents, the PNV was aiming to expand its support base. The Basque Nationalist Party focused its attacks on the leader of the Basque PSOE, Indalecio Prieto, and on the Spanish left, which it described as “sectarian, anti-Catholic and anti-Basque”. It appealed to Basque Catholic voters, many of which had historically tended to support Spanish monarchist parties, by adopting a centrist position and presenting its candidates as “going arm in arm [...] with God and *Euzkadi*”.⁶²⁵

Both ERC and the PNV played the patriotic card extensively during the campaign. The latter had it easier, as it was the only Basque nationalist option. The Carlists and other rightists, which had traditionally presented themselves as defenders of the Basque homeland—while rejecting Basque nationalism—centred their campaign on religious issues and attacked the PNV as “separatist”.⁶²⁶ ERC, on the other hand, had to compete with the *Lliga* for the position of rightful representative of the Catalan nation. This led *Esquerra* to insist in its use of the Catalan *senyera* flag⁶²⁷, and to adapt its national discourse.

⁶²³ For a more detailed account on the plebiscite and its results see de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 415–418.

⁶²⁴ Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 1, pp. 445, 447. Another example of this discourse can be seen in “Una sola candidatura”, *La Humanitat*, 12/11/1933, p. 1. The PNV also made use of dichotomies, see *Euzkadi*, 15/11/1933, p. 1.

⁶²⁵ de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 440–442.

⁶²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 439–440.

⁶²⁷ For two examples of this, see the front pages of *La Humanitat* 12/11/1933 and 19/11/1933.

The PNV's election propaganda included some particularly explicit examples of the rhetoric of hegemony, which blurred the lines between the nation, the nationalist party and its voters:

“Our candidates are *Euzkadi* and are from *Euzkadi*, and will be for *Euzkadi* and will be because of *Euzkadi*, that is, because of you, their voters, who in being good patriots you are *Euzkadi* herself [...]. Voting for them is voting for *Euzkadi*. Not voting for them is to forsake *Euzkadi*.”⁶²⁸

ERC also presented itself as *the* national party, but its approach was more subtle and employed different means. The day before the election, an article in *La Humanitat*, said:

“Vote for *Esquerra*, men and women of the new Catalonia! Your fatherland wants to live to the rhythm of the free peoples of modern Europe [...]. Let the enterprise that has been started so heroically not be interrupted and maimed by the barbarians, [...] because [...] they are the ternal enemies of our land. *Faixa o caixa*, Catalan patriots!”⁶²⁹

The language employed is also suggestive of the syntax of hegemony, as the nation and *Esquerra*'s political program, the ‘heroic enterprise’ are both presented within a single horizon. The party's opponents are portrayed as foreign, using the term ‘barbarians’. However, the idea of a ‘new’ Catalonia and the references to ‘modern Europe’ are an implicit concession to the existence of a ‘national antithesis’, which however wrong, is still Catalonia nevertheless. In other examples of ERC's propaganda, Macià was presented as a “man of loyalty” against Cambó, a

⁶²⁸ Original fragment: “Nuestros candidatos son Euzkadi y son de Euzkadi, y serán para Euzkadi y lo serán por Euzkadi, o sea, por vosotros, sus electores, que al ser buenos patriotas sois Euzkadi misma [...]. Votarles es votar a Euzkadi. No votarles es renegar de Euzkadi.” See “Votad a Euzkadi”, *Euzkadi*, 19/11/1933, p. 1.

⁶²⁹ Original fragment: “Voteu l'Esquerra, homes i dones de la nova Catalunya! La vostra pàtria vol viure al ritme dels pobles lliures de l'Europa moderna [...]. Que l'obra començada tan heroicament no resti interrompuda i mutilada pels bàrbars, [...] perquè [...] són els eterns enemics de la nostra terra. *Faixa o caixa*, patriotes catalans!” See A. Esclasans, *Esquerra*, 19/11/1933, p. 1. *O faixa o caixa* is a popular Catalan saying, which can be translated as ‘all or nothing’, and has been attributed to 19th Century general Joan Prim. See Josep M. Sugranyes, *Garbellada de Refranys*, Cossetània: Valls, 2000, p. 97.

“man of treason.”⁶³⁰ The *Lliga* could be portrayed as a negative force—the accusation of treason cannot be considered light—‘within’ the nation, but its Catalan nationalist nature meant it could not be shown as laying ‘outside’ the nation.

Being the first Spanish general election with women's suffrage, both ERC and the PNV tried to mobilise the female vote. Women in the Basque Country had already voted twice: first in the local election of April 1933 and then in the home rule referendum just before the November general election. This was not the case of Catalonia, where women had been unable to vote in the Catalan election of 1932—the female census was not yet ready—and local elections were not expected until 1934. By November 1933, both ERC and the PNV had their own women's groups: the *Seccions Femenines d'Esquerra* ('*Esquerra's* Female Sections') and *Emakume Abertzale Batza* ('Union of Patriotic Women') or EAB, respectively. The latter was a centralised organisation with its own hierarchy and had been created back in 1922. The former was a network of local female groups, which in June 1932 had given themselves a common set of rules and regulations. In fact, in Catalonia the conservative *Lliga* had a longer tradition of organised female groups, which dated back to 1906. Both EAB and *Esquerra's* women groups took an active role during the election. EAB local sections in particular were well integrated into the party's campaign apparatus, undertaking roles in logistics, coordination and door-to-door propaganda, although they remained under the authority of male-dominated positions or committees. Both groups organised female rallies: the *seccions femenines* did so the 13th of November at the *Coliseu Pompeia* theatre in Barcelona. EAB held a similar event in San Sebastian the 18th. The two organisations, however, had very different approaches to the campaign in terms of political discourse. The leaders of ERC's women section openly declared themselves as feminists. ERC presented civil rights—and their achievement under the new regime—as the main mobilising issue for female voters. By contrast, EAB focused on Catholic and traditional family values. All in all, in respects to *La Humanitat* and *Euzkadi*, the two most important newspapers belonging to ERC and the PNV, appealed to women as yet another ‘target group’, alongside workers,

⁶³⁰ *La Humanitat*, 17/11/1933, p. 8.

students, etc. The attention received by particular women leaders in terms of mentions, photographs, articles, etc, was limited.⁶³¹

The 19th of November election changed the Spanish political landscape, which swung to the right after the CEDA and the Radical Party emerged as the two largest parties in Parliament. This, however, had a limited impact in Catalonia and the Basque Country, where particular electoral dynamics remained dominant. According to De la Granja, the Basque system of political parties moved from a bipolar to a tripolar pattern. This time, the results were more favourable to the PNV: the Basque nationalists obtained 12 out of 24 seats (50%), surpassing both a fragmented left and the Carlists, who remained strong in Araba and dominant in Navarre. This last province remained “the PNV's Achilles heel”, with only 9% of the vote going to the Basque Nationalist Party. In Catalonia, Vilanova has described the situation as evolving towards a bipolar system, with the *Lliga Catalana* obtaining a majority of seats. The leftist parties together had achieved more votes, but their fragmentation cost them many seats. ERC-endorsed lists obtained 26 out of 54 seats (48%). Of these, 18 (33%) were actual party members. The leftist Catalan nationalists lost the majorities of the Lleida, Tarragona and Barcelona-city constituencies to their conservative rivals.⁶³²

⁶³¹ Mercedes Ugalde, *Mujeres y Nacionalismo Vasco. Génesis y Desarrollo de Emakume Abertzale Batza. 1906-1936*, Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco - Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea, 1993, pp. 402–435; Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 2, pp. 341–366. For examples of the political discourse employed to mobilise women voters in both contexts, see “A las mujeres vascas”, *Euzkadi*, 16/11/1933, p. 1; “Dona Catalana!”, *La Humanitat*, 11/11/1933, p. 1. See also Leyre Arrieta Alberdi, “Antes y Después de Libe: La Heroína En El Partido Nacionalista Vasco PNV (1895-1936)”, in Ludger Mees (ed), *Héroes y Villanos de La Patria*, Tecnos, 2020, pp. 357–84.

⁶³² de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 446–461; Vilanova, *Atles Electoral...*, Vol. 1, pp. 48–49; Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 1, pp. 454–460.

Table 6. 1 | 1933 general election results in Catalonia and the Basque Country

Constituency	Results (seats)
Basque Country	
Araba	PNV: 1 Carlists: 1
Gipuzkoa	PNV: 5 Rightist coalition: 1
Biscay (capital)	PNV: 4 PSOE-Republican left: 2
Biscay (province)	PNV: 2 Rightist coalition: 1
Navarre	Rightist bloc: 7
Catalonia	
Lleida	<i>Unió de dretes</i> : 4 ERC: 2
Girona	ERC: 5 <i>Lliga Catalana</i> : 2
Barcelona (capital)	<i>Lliga Catalana</i> : 14 ERC: 5
Barcelona (province)	ERC: 12 <i>Defensa Ciutadana</i> : 3
Tarragona	<i>Unió Ciutadana</i> : 5 ERC: 2

Unlike after the previous Spanish general election (see Chapter 4), ERC and the PNV's framing of the 19th of November election's results was quite different. The Basque nationalist ideologue Engracio de Aranzadi described the outcome as “an unforgettable day in the history of the fatherland”, a display of “the formidable power of nationalism” and a “splendid affirmation of Basque endorsement for the

Estatuto".⁶³³ This interpretation was deliberately oblivious of both the PNV's debacle in Navarre and the fact that the new Spanish Parliament was dominated by forces opposed to Basque home rule. A day later, the party founder's brother, Luis Arana, produced a more 'cold' interpretation of the results, acknowledging the difficulties in Navarre and the challenge posed by the Spanish right. Arana also praised the "always Christian Basque woman" for its "serene and brave" role during the election.⁶³⁴

ERC, on the other hand, did its best to downplay its defeat. *La Humanitat* confusingly proclaimed that *Esquerra* had achieved a "glorious victory", and that the voting in Barcelona would have to be repeated, which did not happen.⁶³⁵ This frame characterised the election as an "anti-12 of April" organised by the political right, that had nevertheless failed in Catalonia, which was to be "the Republic's bulwark" against reaction.⁶³⁶ Of course, this completely ignored the *Lliga's* victory, which was only acknowledged days later, when *La Humanitat* framed the political situation as a rightist "offensive against Catalonia's autonomy". The newspaper predicted that "as Catalan nationalists [the *Lliga's* voters in Barcelona] will regret their vote many times."⁶³⁷

The rebalancing of the political agents represented at the Spanish Parliament led to a series of Radical Party governments, first led by Lerroix, and from April 1934 by Ricardo Semper. The CEDA was not invited to join these cabinets, but its votes were still needed to maintain government stability. The Radical Party was not in an easy position, its strategy—namely incorporating the right to the republican political frame—compromised by its weak parliamentary support. The CEDA had its own plans, which involved subverting the republican regime into a corporate *Estado nuevo*,⁶³⁸ and gradually increased its influence throughout 1934.

⁶³³ Engracio de Aranzadi, "Lo que quieren los vascos", *Euzkadi*, 22/11/1933, p. 1.

⁶³⁴ Luis Arana Goiri, "Breves comentarios", *Euzkadi*, 23/11/1933, p. 1.

⁶³⁵ The new electoral law specified that an election would have to be repeated if none of the individual candidates obtained more than 40% of the vote. The *Lliga* was aware that a second round would be detrimental to its interests—offering the leftist parties a chance to form a united front—and avoided it by skillfully organising part of its sympathisers to vote for Lluís Companys. See Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 1, pp. 452–453.

⁶³⁶ "Catalunya, baluard de la República", *La Humanitat*, 21/11/1931, p. 1.

⁶³⁷ *La Humanitat*, 28/11/1931, p. 1.

⁶³⁸ Manel López Esteve, "Els Fets d'octubre de 1934 a Catalunya: Més Enllà de l'acció Governamental", doctoral thesis, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, 2012, pp. 56–57.

It soon became clear that the new political setting would have a negative impact on Basque and Catalan nationalist aspirations.

The CEDA's political weight in the new Parliament short-circuited the PNV's plans for a relatively swift approval of the Basque *Estatuto*. Its MPs were mainly hostile to Basque home rule, and many supported José Luis Oriol, Carlist MP for Araba, in his attempt to withdraw the province from the text. This, combined with the half-hearted support of the Radical Party—whose government did not need the PNV's votes for a parliamentary majority—and the continued mistrust of the PSOE, made the process painstakingly slow. ERC, who was in contact with ANV via Josep Riera i Puntí, now lent its full support to the Basque *Estatuto*, but this was far from enough. The debates dragged on for the first six months of 1934, and then stopped altogether in June, as the focus shifted to two new sources of conflict involving Basque and Catalan nationalists.⁶³⁹

6. 1. 2. Episodes of contention: the Llei de Contractes de Conreu and the Estatuto del Vino as key points of conflict

This section will focus on two particular episodes of contention involving Basque and Catalan nationalism and the Spanish republican government during 1934. These are the conflicts generated around the *Llei de Contractes de Conreu* ('Crop Contracts Law') and the *Estatuto del Vino* ('Wine Statute'). The two episodes had three common features: they were 1) circumstantial manifestations of deeply rooted historical issues; 2) institutional crises, in which institutional actors were among the main participants and 3) despite not intrinsically about 'the nation', understood and developed in national terms by the main players.

Although both were sparked by the turbulent context of 1934, the conflicts around the Crop Contracts Law and the Wine Statute could be traced back to

⁶³⁹ de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 486–499. See also Ludger Mees, "Tras El Fracaso de Estella: Las Pautas y Claves Del Estatuto de 1936", *Iura Vasconiae*, 10, 2013, pp. 477–479.

rather distant origins. The Catalan Crop Contracts Law was an attempt to reform the situation of Catalan sharecroppers—grape farmers, or *rabassaires*, in particular—which had been demanding more stable, long term contracts with landowners since the 18th Century.⁶⁴⁰ The Wine Statute was a law which established a tax exempt for Spanish wine, as a way of stopping foreign competition. In doing so, it questioned Basque fiscal autonomy, established in 1878 by the *Concierto económico* ('economic agreement'), which many Basques saw as a remnant of the *Fueros* of medieval origin, which had been abolished after protracted conflict throughout the 19th Century.⁶⁴¹

Both episodes of contention involved institutional and non-institutional actors, but the former were the main channels for contention. In Catalonia, the two agents which were affected by the Crop Contracts Law were the *Unió de Rabassaires* sharecroppers union, and the *Institut Agrícola de Sant Isidre*, which represented landowners. The decisive actors in the crisis, however, were the Spanish state, particularly its Tribunal for Constitutional Guarantees, and the *Generalitat*, under whose authority the law was supposed to be enacted. In the Basque Country, although political parties played a decisive role, opposition to the Wine Statute was organised by Local Councils, which tried to organise into a supra-municipal structure. They were opposed by the Radical and rightist political parties, but the crisis was mainly dealt with by the Spanish state, represented in the Basque provinces by its *Comisiones Gestoras* and the Civil Governors.

The Wine Statute and the Crop Contracts Law can be both considered examples of what Miroslav Hroch has described as “nationally relevant conflicts of interest”. These can include “conflicts stemming from modernisation”, which can—under particular circumstances—become factors in the nation-building processes of non-dominant nations.⁶⁴² This was the case in both Catalonia and the Basque Country. The conflict between the sharecroppers and landlords was articulated as a conflict

⁶⁴⁰ Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 2, pp. 83–86.

⁶⁴¹ de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 503–504. The *Fueros* had granted a substantial degree of self-government to the Basque provinces, including fiscal autonomy, customs, exemption from military service, etc. The liberal redrawing of the Spanish state during the 20th century involved the gradual dismantling of the *Fueros* system. Opposition to this process of legal unification was one of the factors behind the Carlist wars and the persistent support for Carlism in the Basque Country, even though not all supporters of the *Fueros* were Carlists. See Coro Rubio Pobes, *Liberalismo y Fuerismo En El País Vasco (1808-1876)*, Vitoria-Gasteiz: Fundación Sancho el Sabio, 2002.

⁶⁴² Hroch, *European Nations...*, pp. 135–162.

between the *Generalitat*, which defended the Crop Contracts Law, and the Tribunal for Constitutional Guarantees, which argued the law was beyond Catalan jurisdiction. This resulted in the conflict being widely read as a question of the political legitimacy of Catalan home rule. In the Basque case, the Wine Statute's challenge of the *Concierto económico*—which among other attributions, allowed Local Councils to collect taxes on wine—could be almost automatically connected to the issue of Basque home rule and the lost *Fueros*. In both cases, a link could be established between particular interests—those of sharecroppers or Local Councils—and the interests of the nation—achieving or upholding home rule—as promoted by ERC and the PNV, among others.

The following paragraphs will proceed to look at these two episodes of contention from a mechanism-process analysis perspective. The two disputes developed relatively parallel to one another, with most of the key events taking place during the spring and summer of 1934, up to the crisis of October 1934. Four main mechanisms have been identified as responsible for the dynamics of contention at work: brokerage, boundary formation, boundary activation and repression.

Brokerage in both sites was necessary in order to connect what were varied groupings of political actors, some of which had not been on good terms. In Catalonia, *Esquerra* had a very important role as a broker entity, as it controlled the main institutional actor, the *Generalitat*, and retained a significant influence over the *Unió de Rabassaires*. With Lluís Companys among its founders in 1922, the sharecroppers' union had been very close to ERC but it was beginning to distance itself from the republican party. In December 1933 it had signed the *Aliança Obrera* ('Workers' Alliance') manifesto, and was moving further towards the revolutionary left. The PNRE, that had recently split from—and was often fiercely critical of—ERC, also supported the *Generalitat's* position.⁶⁴³ In the Basque Country, brokerage was achieved through the combined efforts of several political parties, including the PNV, but also the PSOE and other republican groups.

⁶⁴³ The *Aliança Obrera* would play an important role in the October 1934 crisis and was also joined by the *Unió Socialista de Catalunya*—ERC's socialist coalition partner—, the UGT, the communist organisations *Bloc Obrer i Camperol* and *Esquerra Comunista*, and the moderate faction of the CNT led by Àngel Pestaña. See Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 2, p. 90, 94.

Fernando Sasiain, the republican Mayor of San Sebastian, for example, was particularly active in the Local Councils' movement that opposed the Wine Statute.⁶⁴⁴ This was remarkable given the very recent tensions between Basque nationalists and leftists, including the many shootings and violent incidents, the last of which had only occurred during the November general election.⁶⁴⁵

Political boundaries were crucial in both sites, although in slightly different ways. In the Basque Country, the key mechanism at work was boundary formation. Opposition to the Wine Statute was the foundation for a new political cleavage, which divided supporters of the Spanish government—primarily the Radical Party and to a lesser extent the monarchist right—and the supporters of the Local Council movement. The latter brought together the PNV and the political left represented by the PSOE, Azaña's *Izquierda Republicana* and ANV. In Catalonia, the pre-existing political boundary between the Catalan nationalist left and right, was reinforced, as the *Lliga Catalana* supported the landowners. The left-right cleavage, now being rearticulated through the Crop Contracts Law conflict, assumed a more national meaning. The conservative and Spanish nationalist *Partit Agrari de Catalunya* ('Agrarian Party of Catalonia')—which would eventually join the CEDA—was basically led by landowners and represented their interests. The small array of pro-independence parties and groups sided with the *rabassaires*, as did the Christian democrat *Unió Democràtica de Catalunya*. To these agents, this meant taking the 'Catalan national side' of the conflict, by upholding the *Generalitat's* sovereignty against Spanish aggression.

In both cases, these mechanisms of contention combined into processes of mobilisation. In the Basque Country, this began after a meeting, held the 25th of June 1934, between the Mayors of the Basque province capitals and the Minister of Finance, Manuel Marraco. He expressed his determination to enact the Wine Statute and to eliminate what he described as "borders within the State". The Basque provincial *Comisiones Gestoras* sided with Madrid—their members were

⁶⁴⁴ See Xabier Urmeneta and Iñaki Markez, *Fernando Sasiain Brau: Donostiako Alkate Errepublikanoa: Historiaren Ahanztura / Alcalde Republicano de San Sebastián: El Olvido Histórico* Bilbao: Ekimen, 2013.

⁶⁴⁵ For example, the ANV member Hermenegildo Alvaríño was shot dead during a clash with socialists in Barakaldo the day of the Spanish general election in November. See de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 445.

appointed by the central government—and argued that Basque fiscal autonomy was in no danger. The Mayors decided to seize the initiative, organising an assembly of Basque Town Councils the 5th of July in Bilbao. This was both a meeting to organise opposition to the Wine Statute and a show of strength: it was attended by representatives of 211 municipalities. The assembly agreed to create a new institution tasked with the “defence of the *Concierto económico*” and consisting of 52 provincial representatives elected by the Basque Mayors. The election of this “intermunicipal Commission” was to take place the 12th of August.⁶⁴⁶

In Catalonia, the conflict had been initially absorbed by the Catalan Parliament, where the Crop Contracts Law was passed the 21st of March.⁶⁴⁷ After a failed appeal to the Tribunal for Constitutional Guarantees by the landowners' organisations, the *Partit Agrari de Catalunya*, which had previously demanded a referendum on the new law, changed its strategy. The Catalan agrarians sent a delegation to Madrid towards the end of April. Its goal was to involve the Spanish Government in the conflict, getting the executive itself to appeal before the Tribunal for Constitutional Guarantees, on the grounds that the Crop Contracts Law was legally beyond Catalan home rule. The response was a massive demonstration on the 29th of April in support of the new law organised by ERC, the PNRE and the *Unió de Rabassaires*. Mobilisation in support of the landowners also took place, such as the case of the massive rally organised the 29th of May in Barcelona by the *Institut Agrícola de Sant Isidre*. The Spanish Government announced it would appeal against the Crop Contracts Law the 4th of May, and the final verdict of the Tribunal for Constitutional Guarantees came the 8th of June. The Catalan law was declared unconstitutional, to which the Catalan Parliament responded by passing it again as a show of defiance.⁶⁴⁸ The 12th of June, ERC's group in the *Cortes* left their seats as a form of protest. This escalating tension resulted in a series of negotiations with the new Spanish executive, led by Ricardo

⁶⁴⁶ de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 505–507.

⁶⁴⁷ This step was made easier by the fact the *Lliga Catalana* left the Catalan Parliament after the January 1934 local elections, questioning the validity of the results. See Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 2, pp. 92–93.

⁶⁴⁸ In this context, institutional declarations were often accompanied by mass mobilisations before the *Generalitat* building in Barcelona. See for example *La Humanitat* 13/6/1934, p. 1.

Samper, which explored the creation of a set of rules that would make certain aspects of the Crop Contracts Law compatible with the Spanish Constitution.⁶⁴⁹

Mobilisation was therefore present in both episodes of contention. In the Basque Country, however, it interacted with yet another mechanism of contention: repression. The Spanish Government, represented by its Provincial Governors, took measures to stop the celebration of the election of the 'intermunicipal commission', scheduled for the 12th of August. Police forces took control of Town Halls, many Local Councillors were arrested and some, such as Ernesto Ercoreca, Mayor of Bilbao—had their positions suspended, and fines were issued. Despite these difficulties, voting took place in many areas of Biscay and Gipuzkoa and in ten towns of Araba. This allowed the new 'institution' to begin its activity, creating smaller executive committees—which would continue to work despite the increasing repression—and calling for a new assembly in Zumarraga the 2nd of September. Law enforcement tried unsuccessfully to prevent the gathering, during which the intermunicipal representatives, together many Basque nationalist and socialist MPs—including Aguirre and Prieto—issued a joint declaration denouncing state repression. Visiting Catalan MPs then travelled to Gernika, where the next day the *Guardia Civil* clashed with the gathered crowds. The executive committees of the Local Councils' movement organised a mass resignation of all Town Councillors, resulting in hundreds of insubordination charges. In the case of Bilbao, the Councillors were imprisoned and charged with sedition.⁶⁵⁰

Repression conditioned the dynamics of contention in the Basque Country. It failed to stop mobilisation, but the repertoire of contention displayed by the Basque Local Councils (the assemblies, the mass gatherings, the resignations) became increasingly reactive to the state's repressive moves. Repression succeeded in stopping what could have been a process of institutionalisation, if the 'intermunicipal commission' had managed to consolidate some sort of *de facto* legitimacy. In Catalonia, where the *Generalitat* was already in place and in control of public order, applying repression would have led to unpredictable escalation. The alternative was to engage in negotiation, which opened the door to another

⁶⁴⁹ Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 2, pp. 94–108.

⁶⁵⁰ de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 508–514.

process: co-optation. President Samper even managed to get the *Cortes* to grant him full powers to tackle the Catalan situation. This however, also failed due to the uncompromising attitude of the landowners—who continued their mobilisation, gathering thousands in Madrid the 8th of September—and the CEDA's decision to force Samper's resignation, which came the 1st of October.⁶⁵¹

Basque and Catalan nationalist framings of the Crop Contracts Law and Wine Statute conflicts shared some features but overall, they were quite different. They both made regular use of the patriotic card, i.e. praising the nation or people, using similar qualities of bravery and discipline.⁶⁵² The discourse employed by ERC's newspaper, however, was more epic, developing powerful themes of national rebirth and using civic-militaristic imagery. These included Companys speaking of “the new Catalonia that restarts its history” and the need to “rebuild the soul of the Catalan nationality”, as well as *La Humanitat* painting the image of “the civil army [...] of Catalonia's nationalist democracy”.⁶⁵³ *Euzkadi*, on the other hand, concentrated on framing the conflict in terms of political legitimacy, portraying the Local Councils as “the real popular representations of our people”, as opposed to the Madrid-appointed provincial *Comisiones Gestoras*.⁶⁵⁴ Both movements framed their opponents in more ‘political’ than national terms: *La Humanitat* speaking of “fascism and tyranny” and *Euzkadi* of “the Spanish Monarchy”.⁶⁵⁵ In order to further isolate the *Lliga*, ERC's newspaper framed the alliance of political parties backing the *Generalitat* and the Crop Contracts Law as a “national front” or a “united front of nationalism”. This was a concept rather than a real organic alliance, although *Palestra* led the creation of a “Youth National Front” which held actual meetings and was joined by *Esquerra*'s youth wing.⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁵¹ Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 2, pp. 105–110.

⁶⁵² See for example, Companys' speech in “Paraules a la democràcia catalana”, *La Humanitat*, 1/5/1934, p. 1, in which the President spoke of “the superb pride of feeling Catalan”, or the editorial article in *Euzkadi*, 14/8/1934, which describes the “mettle”, “dignity” and “natural and moving straightforwardness” of the Basque people.

⁶⁵³ See the same speech mentioned in the previous footnote and also “Present, senyor President”, *La Humanitat*, 1/5/1934, p. 1; *La Humanitat*, 29/5/1934, p. 1.

⁶⁵⁴ “¿Servirá de aviso”, *Euzkadi*, 26/6/1934, p. 1.

⁶⁵⁵ *La Humanitat*, 1/5/1934, p. 1; *Euzkadi*, 6/9/1934, p. 1. The antifascist theme became more and more predominant in ERC's mobilising discourse throughout 1934, even before the Crop Contracts Law conflict. See López Esteve, “Els fets...”, p. 48.

⁶⁵⁶ See “Front Nacional” and “S'ha constituït el Front Nacional de Joventuts”, *La Humanitat*, 10/6/1934, p. 1.

These two episodes of contention also saw a new level of cooperation between Basque and Catalan nationalists. In the more structural aspect, the situation of 1933 remained the same, i.e. there was no formal alliance between the two movements. However, the realignment of Spanish politics, with the Radical Party in power with the support of the CEDA and ERC's relationship with Madrid deteriorating, meant that the PNV and the Catalan left-wing nationalists were now closer in strategic terms. The fact that the Basque nationalists had now joined forces with their former leftist enemies also helped. The conflicts that developed around the Crop Contracts Law and the Wine Statute included not only displays of 'spiritual solidarity' between the two movements, but also acts of material cooperation.

The most important of these was the withdrawal of the Basque nationalist MPs from the Spanish Parliament in solidarity with their Catalan colleagues, after the repeal of the Crop Contracts Law. This was no empty gesture: it basically interrupted the debates on the Basque *Estatuto*, which would not be resumed until 1935. After leaving the *Cortes*, the Basque and Catalan MPs were met by enthusiastic crowds in Barcelona. Juan Antonio Irazusta and Telesforo Monzón took part in the rally that followed, and were "received with an enthusiasm really difficult to describe". Symbolic gestures, such as the display of a large *ikurriña* from the *Generalitat* building and elements of language exchange in both Monzón and Companys' speeches were also present. The Catalan President also promised to return the Basques' help in the future: "if there ever comes a day in which Euskadi [...] asks for Catalonia's solidarity, all Catalans shall lend our help."⁶⁵⁷

The opportunity for this 'repayment' presented itself soon after, as tensions grew in the Basque Country. *La Humanitat*'s coverage of the Wine Statute crisis was much more intense than its previous portrayals of conflict in the Basque Country. *Esquerra*'s newspaper produced detailed pieces on the Basque situation, emphasising the repression carried out by the Civil Governors.⁶⁵⁸ *La Humanitat*

⁶⁵⁷ Monzón began his speech by saying "Catalans: in the most moving moment of my life, I regret with all of my soul that you, Catalans, with your own language and we, Basques, with our own, must understand each other in the language of the men that do not understand us." Companys began his intervention with "the only [words] that I know in Basque language: 'Gora Euzkadi Eskatuta!' [sic]". See *La Humanitat*, 14/6/1934, p. 1, 7. See also *La Humanitat*, 16/6/1934, p. 1.

⁶⁵⁸ See *La Humanitat*, 11/8/1934, p. 1; 12/8/1934, p. 1; 14/8/1934, p. 1.

was clear in who to blame for the political turmoil: “If a single drop of blood falls in the Basque Country, a single culprit: the Government”. Antoni Rovira i Virgili wrote in the following terms:

“In these conditions, Catalonia does not doubt, it cannot doubt. With all of the love in its heart and all of the energy in its arm, Catalonia puts itself beside Euscadi. The popular alliance between the two peoples—much more effective than a diplomatic alliance—, again takes action. The Mediterranean nation of the [Iberian] Peninsula, tracing back with its thought the course of the river Ebro, reached out its hand to the Basques, who are friends, brothers and allies of the Catalans.”⁶⁵⁹

This enthusiastic display of symbolic solidarity—still careful to distinguish between a ‘popular’ and a ‘diplomatic’ alliance—shows how the common threat posed by centre-right government in Madrid had changed attitudes towards Basque nationalism in *Esquerra*. Rovira i Virgili himself had been very critical of the PNV in the past (see Chapter 4), when the Basque nationalists had been in conflict with *Esquerra*'s allies in the central government. Now, with Azaña no longer in power and the *Generalitat* having to confront Madrid too, Virgili praised the Basque “friends, brothers and allies”, adopting a comradely tone which matched the new relationship between the two movements.

Later that summer several ERC representatives—including members of both the Spanish and Catalan parliaments—travelled to the Basque Country to personally support the Zumarraga assembly and the Local Councils' movement. The Catalan parliamentaries' role can be seen as one of attempted certification: their presence as legally sanctioned public representatives could lend some sense of increased legitimacy to the Basque intermunicipal commission, unrecognised by the state. They experienced firsthand the tension at the Zumarraga assembly and the violence in Gernika. *La Humanitat* continued with its enthusiastic attitude, even

⁶⁵⁹ Original fragment: “En aquestes condicions, Catalunya no dubta, no pot dubtar. Amb tot l'afecte del seu cor i amb tota la energia del seu braç, Catalunya se situa al costat d'Euscadi. L'aliança popular entre els dos pobles—molt més eficaç que una aliança diplomàtica—, entra novament en acció. La nació mediterrània de la Península, remuntant amb el pensament el curs de l'Ebre, allarga la mà als bascos, que són amics, germans i aliats dels catalans.” See Antoni Rovira i Virgili, “Al costat d'Euscadi”, *La Humanitat*, 11/8/1934, p. 1. The full original version can also be found in Text 5 of Annex I.

sending a “special correspondent”, Lluís Aymamí i Baudina. *Esquerra's* newspaper chronicled the events adopting the same harsh tone against the republican government usually found in the PNV's *Euzkadi*.⁶⁶⁰

Esquerra's new attitude towards the PNV coexisted with a continued interest for Catalan nationalism among Basque nationalists. Furthermore, in the context of the new collaboration between the PNV and the Spanish leftist parties, Catalan nationalism represented a common ground of sorts. To the former, it was the representative of a fellow oppressed nation that had already achieved home rule. To the latter, it was an example of loyalty to republican principles of struggle against the political right. This convergence was visible in the attempted tribute to Francesc Macià organised by Bilbao's Town Hall—then under Azaña's *Izquierda Republicana* and the PSOE—with the support of the PNV, which was banned by the Civil Governor.⁶⁶¹

Both the Wine Statute and the Crop Contracts Law conflicts were displaced by another, wider episode of contention and its consequences: the October 1934 crisis. However, unsolved issues from the previous conflicts lingered. Many Basque Local Councils remained under the control of interim commissions⁶⁶², although Madrid paralysed further efforts to limit Basque fiscal autonomy.⁶⁶³ The Crop Contracts Law was suspended together with Catalan home rule in the aftermath of the October crisis.⁶⁶⁴ Both the Basque Local Councils and the Catalan Crop

⁶⁶⁰ *La Humanitat* described the presence of the Catalan representatives as “not a [calculated] policy, but civic duty”, see 1/9/1934, p. 1. ERC's newspaper included vivid descriptions of state repression in the Basque Country, such as the headline “The Dictatorship regime continues in the Basque Country” in *La Humanitat*, 5/9/1934, p. 1.

⁶⁶¹ The tribute consisted in the naming of a street in Bilbao after Macià. See “El homenaje de Bilbao a don Francisco Macià”, *Euzkadi*, 11/8/1934, p. 2; *Euzkadi*, 12/8/1934, p. 1. Another example of Macià's influence in the Basque Country—beyond the limits of strict Basque nationalism—was the dubbing of the Mayor of San Sebastian, Fernando Sasiain, as “the *Avi* of the Basque Country”, by the Civil Governor. Sasiain was in fact, the leader of the small political party *Ezquerria Vasca Federal*, which had refused to join the new *Izquierda Republicana* led by Azaña and Domingo, and had ERC as its main model. See de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 471–473, 509.

⁶⁶² By October 1934, conflict over local governance in the Basque Country was producing more violent forms of contention. In Gamiz-Fika, the appointed government managers physically clashed with hostile locals. In Zornotza and Mungia, the government managers' houses were bombed. See *Euzkadi*, 5/10/1934, p. 1.

⁶⁶³ In December 1934 Minister Marraco tried to introduce the direct collection of income tax from the Basque provinces, a direct violation of their fiscal autonomy. This time he met opposition from within his own party in the Basque Country and there were resignations within the *Comisiones Gestoras*. Facing a potential governance problem, the Spanish Government finally suspended the projected taxation. See de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 515.

⁶⁶⁴ Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 2, p. 128.

Contracts Law would not be fully reinstated until the Popular Front's victory in the February 1936 election.

6. 2. The October Crisis and its consequences (October 1934-January 1936)

The October 1934 crisis, often referred to in Catalonia as *els fets d'octubre* ('the events of October') or the *octubrada*, was a serious episode of contention which deserves particular attention. In many ways, it was the culmination of a series of processes which had been at work since the beginning of the 'conservative' biennium. Radicalisation—"the shift of social movement organisations towards increased assertiveness"⁶⁶⁵—was one of them. The PSOE had switched from a reformist, institutional strategy to direct confrontation after its defeat in the November 1933 election. The CEDA's influence had the Spanish Government moving from a mere paralysation of the previous years' reforms to an increasingly revisionist program. Throughout 1934 conflicts—such as those analysed in the previous section—fed into growing polarisation. The October crisis is also quite illustrative of the different stages reached by Basque and Catalan nation-building. It shows how desynchronisation still affected the different ways in which Basque and Catalan nationalists responded to the challenge posed by the insurrection. Finally, the crisis' medium and long term consequences must also be taken into account: the crippling effects of repression and the longer lasting impact of the narratives generated around the failed uprising. This section will analyse the October 1934 crisis looking at the strategic options available to Basque and Catalan nationalists, the development of the uprising in both contexts, the way the events were framed and the repressive aftermath.

Samper's 'full powers' to deal with the Catalan situation expired the 1st of October 1934. That day, the *Cortes* met again and the CEDA decided to launch its political offensive, withdrawing its support for the government—which forced Samper's resignation—and demanding ministries in a new executive. Three days later, Lerroux formed a new cabinet with CEDA ministers for Justice, Labour and Agriculture. For Gil-Robles, this was a first step towards eventually leading the

⁶⁶⁵ Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, (1st ed.), p. 217.

Spanish Government and redrawing of the Constitution.⁶⁶⁶ The left saw a very real possibility of a Spanish version of fascism in Robles' vision *Estado nuevo*, which echoed Salazar's regime in Portugal. The creation of the Radical-CEDA coalition government, was the moment the PSOE-UGT duo was waiting for to call a 'revolutionary general strike'. This began the series of state-wide incidents—ranging from slight unrest to armed clashes and local takeovers of power—from the 5th to the 19th of October which comprise the October crisis. Catalonia and, to a lesser extent, the Basque Country, were key points of conflict, only superseded by Asturias.

The insurrection was no strategic surprise. The socialist leadership under Largo Caballero had been considering the move for almost a year. Different political agents, including the authorities, had been aware of this. Basque and Catalan nationalists had different levels of knowledge about the socialist plans, but were more or less able to decide their reactions in advance. Desynchronisation, i.e. the different positions held by Catalan and Basque nationalism in their respective nation-building processes, caused ERC and PNV to make opposite assessments of the strategic situation.

Esquerra's position in the Catalan Government made it deeply concerned by the increasing power of the CEDA. Not only it saw Gil-Robles' party as a possible Spanish manifestation of the rise of fascisms throughout Europe, but a direct threat to the hard-won Catalan home rule. Companys and his *Consellers* were convinced that the best defence was a good offense, and had been in contact with the PSOE throughout the summer.⁶⁶⁷ Neither *Esquerra* nor the Spanish socialists saw each other as 'revolutionary partners', but found it useful to share information. The Catalan leaders saw the coming insurrection as an opportunity to produce their own *coup de force*, a pre-emptive strike that would safeguard, and perhaps even deepen, Catalan self-government.

The PNV, on the other hand, had yet no tangible home rule to defend. Even the Basque Local Councils had been taken over by the Spanish Government in the context of the Wine Statute conflict. The 10th of September, a month before the

⁶⁶⁶ López Esteve, "Els fets...", pp. 56–57.

⁶⁶⁷ López Esteve, "Els fets...", pp. 80–81.

revolt, the Basque nationalist leaders Aguirre and Irujo were invited to a meeting with the socialist and communist parties, as well as Azaña's *Izquierda Republicana* and the UGT union. They were offered to join the insurrection in exchange for an immediate approval of the Basque *Estatuto*. The PNV was not prepared to take such a risk. It refused, arguing that it would only rise against the Spanish republican government if it attempted to bring back the Monarchy or to implement a new dictatorship.⁶⁶⁸ The shared months of joint struggle with their socialist and leftist partners in the Wine Statute conflict were not enough. Supporting a “revolutionary” socialist uprising was simply too far away from the party's conservative tradition. Unlike *Esquerra*, the PNV had no institutional coercive power at its disposal to ensure things would not get ‘out of hand’.

ERC and the PNV therefore opted respectively for intervention and non-intervention. This was parallel to their continued cooperation in the institutional front, agreeing to send their delegations back to the Spanish Parliament—they had left in protest at the Crop Contracts Law was repealed—after a meeting in Barcelona in September. The two parties also talked about the coming situation. The Basque MPs urged their ERC colleagues not to join the revolt, so that “even if Spain burns on all sides, in Catalonia order shall shine”.⁶⁶⁹ The appeal was unsuccessful. The strategic decisions had been already made and it was only a matter of days before the events unfolded.

The October 1934 general strike and uprising has often been referred to as a ‘revolution’. This description is consistent with the severity of the crisis as far as loss of life and political stakes are concerned. From the perspective of contentious politics, however, the term might be considered inaccurate due to the lack of what Tilly and Tarrow have described as a “revolutionary outcome” (see Chapter 2). These authors use instead the term “revolt” to imply that the transfer of power has been small or very small. This can be applied the case of October 1934, which ended with the defeat of all of the political actors that rose against the Spanish republican government. However, when the challenge to the existing regime or “regime split” has been significant, Tilly and Tarrow speak of a “revolutionary

⁶⁶⁸ Jesús Gutiérrez Arosa, *La Insurrección de Octubre Del 34 y La II República En Eibar*, Eibar: Eibarko Udala, 2001, p. 69; De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 519–520.

⁶⁶⁹ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 521.

situation". This is characterised by 1) the creation of a "revolutionary coalition" "advancing exclusive competing claims to control the state or some segment of it". 2) the "commitment of those claims by a significant segment of the citizenry" and finally 3) the "incapacity or unwillingness of rulers to suppress the alternative coalition and/or commitment to its claims."⁶⁷⁰ These three conditions were all present in particular moments and contexts of the October 1934 insurrection⁶⁷¹, so it can be characterised as a revolt incorporating localised revolutionary situations. Now, the following paragraphs will compare the particular developments of the October crisis in Catalonia and the Basque Country using this three-condition "revolutionary situation" model.

There were different 'revolutionary coalitions' present in the two contexts. In the Basque Country, the insurrection was supposed to follow the state-wide plan designed by the PSOE, which had created the *Alianza Obrera* as a broad umbrella of revolutionary organisations. The CNT's refusal to join this coalition meant that, in practice, it was almost completely dominated by the PSOE-UGT, although the Communist Party also joined in September. The decision was the direct consequence of the Third International's replacement of its previous 'class against class' policy with increased cooperation with social democratic parties. Only in the Gipuzkoan coastal town of Pasaia did the CNT join the local *Alianza Obrera*. Basque nationalism, as pointed out above, played no role in the planning and leading of the revolt. This included not only the PNV and its related trade union, ELA-STV, but also ANV, despite it being at least slightly more sympathetic to the revolt.⁶⁷²

In Catalonia, there were at least two entities that can be seen as filling the role of 'revolutionary coalitions'. On one hand, there was the *Aliança Obrera*, which had been formed separately in Catalonia, mainly by the left opposition communist group *Bloc Obrer i Camperol* (BOC). The absence of the CNT and the meagre Catalan PSOE meant that in Catalonia the socialist forces organised as such were comparatively weaker than in the Basque Country, where they bore the brunt of

⁶⁷⁰ Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, p. 184.

⁶⁷¹ David Ruiz, one of the leading experts on the October 1934 crisis, established three different levels of intensity for this episode of contention: 1) passive strikes, 2) insurrectionary strikes and 3) local power takeovers. Some level 2 and particularly level 3 situations may qualify for Tilly and Tarrow's "revolutionary situation" concept. See David Ruiz, *Insurrección Defensiva y Revolución Obrera. El Octubre Español de 1934*, Barcelona: Labor, 1988.

⁶⁷² De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 524.

the insurrection. On the other hand, the *Generalitat* was—in Tilly and Tarrow's terms—fulfilling the role of a second revolutionary coalition. Led by *Esquerra*, it was also supported by the *Unió Socialista de Catalunya*—which was incidentally a member, but also quite critical of, the *Aliança Obrera*—the *Unió de Rabassaires* and several small pro-independence groups.⁶⁷³

The existence of two different 'revolutionary coalitions' also meant different revolutionary claims. In the Basque Country, the insurrection followed a political program which included the state ownership of the land, deeper social reforms and a profound transformation of the army and law enforcement agencies.⁶⁷⁴ In Catalonia, however, three different strategies coexisted. The *Aliança Obrera* wanted to proclaim a socialist "Catalan Republic" and engage in social revolution. Within the *Generalitat*, two other strategic visions could be found. President Companys and most of his cabinet saw the insurrection as about neutralising the CEDA's menace by bringing back the 'spirit of 1931', expanding social reform and putting federalism back on the table. Josep Dencàs, *Conseller* of the Interior and leader of the JEREC, wanted to push the revolt as much as possible towards Catalan independence.⁶⁷⁵

The insurrection in both Catalonia and the Basque Country could count on the support "by a significant segment of the citizenry". In general terms, it is quite safe to say that in Catalonia mobilisation involved a wider section of the total population, given two factors. The first was that the sociological base for the revolt was already stronger in Catalonia than in the Basque Country. A larger proportion of Basques had conservative or Catholic beliefs which were at odds with the insurrection's objectives. This included the monarchist right—dominant in Araba and Navarre, which remained particularly quiet—but also many Basque nationalists. The PNV and the STV publicly instructed their supporters not to join

⁶⁷³ For a more detailed assessment of the *Aliança Obrera's* capacities and weaknesses, USC criticism, etc in the months preceding October 1934, see López Esteve, "Els fets...", pp. 46–47, 108.

⁶⁷⁴ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 522–523. For the full program see *El Liberal*, 11/1/1936, p. 1.

⁶⁷⁵ Dencàs' position as Interior *Conseller* was part of a wider connection between the JEREC and law enforcement, which included the naming of another JEREC leader, Miquel Badia, as the general secretary of the *Comissaria General d'Ordre Public*, which directly supervised law enforcement agencies. This influence enabled many young JEREC members to join the police forces. See López Esteve, "Els fets...", pp. 95–104.

the insurrection, even though some did in particular towns and areas.⁶⁷⁶ In Catalonia, despite the CNT's official stance not supporting the *Aliança Obrera*, a larger proportion of its members and sympathisers naturally supported the revolt's program for social revolution. This meant that significant numbers of anarcho-syndicalists took part in the general strike and in the insurrection in industrial areas of Catalonia, excluding Barcelona.⁶⁷⁷

A second factor was that the insurrection in Catalonia managed to channel previously existing social conflict, i.e. the *rabassaires* and their struggle against landlords.⁶⁷⁸ A similar mechanism with the Wine Statute conflict did not occur, and Basque home rule was basically out of the picture in the October crisis. This meant that wide regions of rural Catalonia joined the revolt, unlike in the Basque Country, where it was mostly confined to industrial or mining working-class areas where the PSOE was strong. According to a report by the Communist Party, more than 150,000 Basque workers took part in the insurrection.⁶⁷⁹ There are no absolute figures for Catalonia, but given the wider scope of mobilised elements—industrial workers, peasants, citizens loyal to the *Generalitat*, etc.—it is quite reasonable to consider that the number was higher both in absolute and relative terms.

Besides revolutionary coalitions, strategies and popular support, perhaps the most defining feature present in a 'revolutionary situation' is the above mentioned "incapacity or unwillingness of the rulers to suppress" the challenge to their authority. The first thing that must be considered when analysing this particular aspect is that the October crisis was at best only a temporary revolutionary situation: all insurrections were eventually defeated by the state. In the Basque and Catalan cases, state intervention was delayed by unwillingness rather than incapacity to act, mostly due to tactical reasons. Armed clashes, especially

⁶⁷⁶ De la Granja has documented several testimonies which point out to Basque nationalist involvement in the *margen izquierda* industrialised area west of Bilbao and in some towns of Gipuzkoa. Also, the STV union passively supported the general strike by recommending its members not to attend work in most cases. *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 528–534.

⁶⁷⁷ Many CNT local sections openly joined the insurrection. In some cases, their experience gained in previous confrontations proved decisive to go beyond the general strike and into temporary takeovers by armed workers. See López Esteve, "Els fets...", pp. 13–14, 213–214, 217–218, 231–252.

⁶⁷⁸ *Rabassaire* leader Nòlit Puig later said peasants had made up 60% of the insurgents. For additional details on the rural/peasant dimension of the October crisis in Catalonia, see López Esteve, "Els fets...", pp. 277–324.

⁶⁷⁹ Most of these as strikers rather than actual 'insurgents'. See de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 523.

shootings, were widespread. The total death toll for the crisis in the Basque Country was 42. López Esteve has found that the Spanish army and *Guardia Civil* lost 16 men during the fighting in Barcelona, where the insurgents lost 28. Eduardo Calleja has put the total number of deaths in Catalonia at 87.⁶⁸⁰

The mining area of western Biscay, for example, saw the withdrawal of the *Guardia Civil* immediately before the insurrection. This was a tactical retreat: the state authorities foresaw the uprising would be strong in towns with a solid support for the PSOE and UGT. So, instead of risking a direct confrontation between large levels of insurgents and the local *Guardia Civil*, authorities opted for a prudent withdrawal. After other crisis points had been neutralised and the general insurrection had been defeated, the army—supported by the air force, which bombed those who fled to the hills—was able to move in relatively unopposed. This, however, still meant that the striking workers were in virtual control of some towns for a full week. In Gipuzkoa the state's reaction came faster: in both Eibar and Mondragón the insurgents briefly took over the local institutions the 5th of October, laying siege to the local *Guardia Civil* barracks. The army arrived from Vitoria in a matter of hours, quickly regaining control.⁶⁸¹

The events in Barcelona were another example of this temporary takeover of power by the revolutionary coalition. The 6th of October around 8 PM, in the context of the general strike led by the *Aliança Obrera* since the day before, Lluís Companys addressed the crowds gathered before the *Palau de la Generalitat*, the seat of the Catalan Government. He announced that the Catalan executive was assuming all political powers, and proclaimed the “Catalan State of the Spanish Federal Republic”.⁶⁸² The decision to make such a bold move was taken with Interior *Conseller* Dencàs' promise that police forces loyal to the *Generalitat* combined with JEREC militia could guarantee “four days” of resistance. Companys had probably gambled that General Domènech Batet, commander of the Spanish army forces in Catalonia, would side with the *Generalitat*. This did not happen,

⁶⁸⁰ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 523; López Esteve, “Els fets...”, pp. 221–222, 224–225; Calleja, *Cifras Cruentas...*, pp. 365–369, 370, 372–373.

⁶⁸¹ In mining areas, revolutionary measures were passed—such as abolishing “bourgeois” domestic service—but there was little conflict and for example religious service went on as usual. See De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 524–525.

⁶⁸² Companys' full proclamation can be found in Text 15 of Annex III.

Batet bought some time with Companys, then enacted the state of war ordered by Madrid in the Catalan provinces and mobilised his troops against the Catalan government and the *Aliança Obrera*. Deserted by most of the police units, who chose to side with the Spanish Government, Dencàs' poorly armed and organised forces and the striking workers were unable to contain the Spanish troops. Infantry and artillery were deployed to attack key locations and to take control of Catalan Government buildings. At 6 AM of the 7th of October, Companys telephoned General Batet to surrender on behalf of his cabinet. Despite the quick defeat, the 'Catalan State' had held for ten hours.⁶⁸³ This slowly began to defuse resistance in many towns all over Catalonia which had also been fully or partly taken over by pro-*Generalitat*, *Aliança Obrera* and/or anarchist insurgents.

All in all, the different features examined in the previous paragraphs show that the October 1934 crisis in both Catalonia and the Basque Country included clear 'revolutionary situations' as defined by Tilly and Tarrow. Comparatively speaking, these were more intense and widespread in Catalonia, due to the existence of 1) more powerful revolutionary coalitions, 2) a broader support base for the insurrection and 3) a greater—if still low—capacity to confront the state forces.

The key difference in the way Basque and Catalan nationalists framed the events of the October crisis was that the former were able to generate a 'national narrative' thanks to their active participation in the uprising. Companys' proclamation of the "Catalan State of the Spanish Federal Republic"⁶⁸⁴ firmly flagged the uprising as a Catalan national endeavour, even if it was still within a Spanish federal frame. The formula spread quickly through the radio and the telephone and became a powerful symbol of *els fets d'octubre* in Catalonia. Pro-independence groups which had been very critical of Companys and the limits of Catalan home rule, such as *Nosaltres Sols!* and the *Partit Nacionalista Català*, rushed to the support of the *Generalitat*. Historian Manel López has considered that Companys's proclamation could have influenced Basque nationalists hearing it

⁶⁸³ For a detailed account of the Catalan Government's actions before and during the insurrection, see López Esteve, "Els fets...", pp. 149–198.

⁶⁸⁴ This formula was the result of a compromise between Companys, who—together with some of his other *Consellers*—had first wanted a simple reaffirmation of the republican 'spirit of 1931', and Dencàs—the interior *Conseller*, backed by Ventura Gassol—who preferred the proclamation of a "Catalan Republic". The final text settled for Catalan State (*Estat Català*), an allusion to Macià's legacy, but still dispelled any pro-independence interpretations. See López Esteve, "Els fets...", pp. 160–161.

on the radio.⁶⁸⁵ Beyond the more institutionally-led aspect of the October uprising, the *Aliança Obrera* also framed its insurrection in Catalan national parameters, using both “Catalan Republic” and “Catalan Socialist Republic”.⁶⁸⁶ No such thing happened in the Basque Country, where socialist and communist revolutionaries used “socialist republic” and “social republic” in their proclamations.⁶⁸⁷

The PNV, on the other hand, could not frame the uprising in Basque national terms. In Gipuzkoa, according to the Basque nationalist paper *El Pueblo Vasco*, the party tried unsuccessfully to issue a note rejecting the revolt and asserting its “social Christian principles”. The perspective of a socialist revolution was framed in very negative terms, and the note claimed that “the foundations of Basque social life are in danger.”⁶⁸⁸ It must be also noted, however, that *Esquerra* was worried too about the possible revolutionary implications of the uprising. Immediately before the revolt, *La Humanitat* called for “absolute discipline”, and once the general strike began, Companys called for “obedience to the [Catalan] government” on the radio. Interior *Consellers Dencàs* actually took steps to enforce this, announcing that the *Generalitat's* forces would take over Barcelona to prevent actions by “extremist elements”, and arresting several leading anarchists.⁶⁸⁹

Despite the differences in the intensity and nature of the October crisis in Catalonia and the Basque Country, the state's response in both contexts was quite similar. The timeframe of the post-crisis repression opened as the actual revolt unfolded and lasted for more than a year. The state of war, which was the legal basis for many of the civil rights restrictions, was extended until November 1935. Only the amnesty issued by the Popular Front government in February 1936

⁶⁸⁵ López Esteve, “Els fets...”, p. 142.

⁶⁸⁶ López Esteve has documented examples of the use of “Catalan Republic” for proclamations in Vilanova i la Geltrú, Badalona, Súria, Manresa, Vilafranca, Porrera, Gratallops, Picamoixons, Selva del Camp, Torregrosa, Sant Adrià del Besós and Premià de Mar. “Catalan socialist republic” was used in Valls and Sant Cugat. “Estat Català” often appeared in towns where the *Aliança Obrera's* influence was more limited, for example Balsareny and Sitges. See “Els fets...”, pp. 233, 240, 249, 254, 257, 286, 301, 308, 313, 347–348, 361, 363.

⁶⁸⁷ López Esteve, “Els fets...”, p. 138. Only the communists were beginning to incorporate certain Basque national elements into their discourse, including the use of the term *Euskadi* and the concept of a ‘Basque Republic.’ A pamphlet seized from a member of the Communist Party in San Sebastian commented on the events in Barcelona, saying “Catalonia [...], has proclaimed its Republic, which will join the one of Euskadi and all of the other Spanish Republics, once we have defeated the fascist tyranny here”. See Jesús Gutiérrez Arosa, *La Insurrección de Octubre Del 34 y La II República En Eibar*, Eibar: Eibarko Udala, 2001, p. 99.

⁶⁸⁸ Gutiérrez Arosa, *La Insurrección...*, p. 76.

⁶⁸⁹ “Catalunya, recull el guant”, *La Humanitat*, 5/10/1934, p. 1; López Esteve, “Els fets...”, p. 158, 161.

finally put an end to the imprisonments and legal cases resulting from the October crisis.

Repression in both Catalonia and the Basque Country shared three common targets: organisational networks, communications and particular people. These usually had ties to organisations which had taken part in the revolt, but also included entities whose involvement was indirect, such as the PNV in the Basque Country and the CNT in Catalonia. The organisational aspect of repression consisted in the closing down of party and union offices. In Catalonia these included a wide range of *Casals*—Catalan nationalist social centres—and workers' *Ateneus*, whose affiliations included the CNT and UGT unions, the *Unió de Rabassaires*, the BOC, etc. The measure lasted until January 1935. In the Basque Country this affected the socialist local party offices, known as *Casas del Pueblo*, but also PNV and ANV centres, particularly in Biscay. Some of these remained closed until May 1935. The introduction of prior censorship disrupted political agents' ability to communicate their political positions and to broadcast their particular framings of different issues. Some newspapers were forced to close for periods of time, a measure which was applied to leftist, as well as Catalan and Basque nationalist media. The more personal dimension of repression comprised a wide range, from short arrests to suspended death sentences. Protests about overcrowding and mistreatment of prisoners were common. Historian Manel López has documented 5200 arrests and imprisonments in Catalonia, estimating that the total number probably exceeded 6000. José Luis de la Granja puts the sum of those arrested and imprisoned in the Basque Country at more than 1600.

Comparing some of the figures provides additional insight. López has found that of a total of 1800 of those imprisoned with a known political affiliation in Catalonia, roughly half had ties to ERC or the JEREC. In Biscay, where repression against Basque nationalism was the strongest, by November 1934 there were 106 Basque nationalist prisoners, out of a total of around 900 arrests and imprisonments in the province. Some key PNV leaders were arrested—including José Antonio Aguirre—most of them released after a few days, except Manuel Egileor and five members of the party's Biscay leadership, who were imprisoned until Christmas 1934. A few months later their case was dismissed in court. Comparatively speaking, *Esquerra's* received a much stronger blow. The whole

Catalan Government was arrested and famously taken to the prison-ship *Uruguay*. Lluís Companys and *Consellers* Joan Lluhí, Martí Esteve, Ventura Gassol, Martí Barrera, Joan Comorera and Pere Mestres all received 30 year sentences in June 1935. They were taken to the *Penal del Puerto* prison in Cadiz. Frederic Escofet, one of the military leaders who had stayed loyal to the *Generalitat*—and was sympathetic towards Catalan nationalism—and two fellow commanders received death sentences which were later commuted to 30 years in prison. All in all, these differences were quite consistent with the different involvement of Basque and Catalan nationalists in the uprising.⁶⁹⁰

Repression had a somewhat levelling effect on Basque and Catalan nationalism. The state, represented by colonel Francisco Jiménez Arenas, took over the *Generalitat* and its power attributions. Its financial capacity was frozen, the police forces were purged of Catalan nationalist sympathisers, Catalan language classes were suspended and new restrictions were introduced to the education system. Local Councils were suspended *en masse* and replaced with managing commissions made up of conservative councillors or local strongmen loyal to the government.⁶⁹¹ By January 1935 the Catalan Parliament was officially suspended and Catalonia was returned to direct rule under a civilian General Governor. The institutional aspect—defined above as ‘phase D’—of Catalan national-building, result of the path opened in September 1932 with the final approval of the *Estatut*, had been brought to a halt. This cannot be considered, however, to be full synchronisation back with Basque nationalism, as the *Generalitat* still existed on paper and Catalan home rule had been suspended, not permanently erased.

The PNV and ERC looked at the aftermath of the 1934 crisis differently. The former was anxious to explain its role during the uprising, and *Euzkadi* was particularly resentful of censorship, claiming it prevented a detailed explanation which would dispel the rumours of Basque nationalist active participation in the

⁶⁹⁰ All of the previous data about the post-October 1934 repression has been extracted from the following sources: De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 527–528, 530, 535; Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 2, pp. 119, 125–133. López Esteve, “Els fets...”, pp. 371–372, 388, 407, 412–413.

⁶⁹¹ López Esteve, “Els fets...”, pp. 370–377.

revolt.⁶⁹² The latter was processing the defeat of Companys' attempt to force the Spanish Republic into a new course, and *La Humanitat* framed the situation in terms of national sacrifice: “there is not a single people that does not have some pages of its history written in letters of blood.”⁶⁹³ This was almost the opposite of what *Euzkadi* was doing, denying the PNV's involvement in the uprising and praising the party's leaders for “having avoided tears and blood for their people”.⁶⁹⁴ Antoni Rovira i Virgili brought up the concept of Catalan national resilience:

“To suppress the limited autonomy that had been achieved, and to erase the text of the *Estatut*, would be an easy task, in the present circumstances, to those who have the mechanisms of public power at their disposal. What cannot be suppressed, what nobody has suppressed, what nobody will suppress is the reality of Catalonia.”⁶⁹⁵

This discourse, revolving around the idea of the perennial Catalan nation, was a way of downplaying political defeat, both by highlighting the “limited” nature of the lost or threatened *Estatut*, and by stressing the inevitability of a final victory. After all, if the nation “cannot be suppressed”, the implied consequence is that the national movement cannot be defeated. These themes were quite common in Basque nationalist discourse⁶⁹⁶, but there was little margin for such epic in the context of the Basque October 1934 crisis. After all, the PNV was not dealing with ‘defeat’ after a moment of ‘national struggle’, but rather trying to distance itself from an uprising which could tarnish its image as a Catholic, ‘order’ party.⁶⁹⁷

⁶⁹² This theme was very present for weeks in *Euzkadi* after it resumed publication the 11th of October. See for example “Otra lección perdida”, *Euzkadi*, 12/10/1934, p. 1 and “La ‘inhibición’ y la ‘colaboración’ del nacionalismo vasco”, *Euzkadi*, 13/10/1934, p. 1. A full version of the latter can be found in Text 16 of Annex III.

⁶⁹³ “En aquesta hora històrica”, *La Humanitat*, 9/10/1934, p. 1.

⁶⁹⁴ “Contra vesania, cordura”, *Euzkadi*, 21/10/1934, p. 1.

⁶⁹⁵ Original fragment: “Suprimir l'autonomia limitada que s'havia aconseguit, i esborrar el text de l'Estatut, seria una feina fàcil, en les presents circumstàncies, per als qui tenen llur abast els ressorts del poder públic. Allò que no pot suprimir-se, allò que no ha suprimit ningú, allò que ningú no suprimirà és la realitat de Catalunya.” See “Allò que no pot suprimir-se”, *La Humanitat*, 10/11/1934, p. 1.

⁶⁹⁶ See for example Engracio de Aranzadi, “Los vascos, raza inmortal”, *Euzkadi*, 4/7/1931, p. 8.

⁶⁹⁷ This ‘damage’ to the PNV's image caused the party to lose some support, and its previous growth in terms of membership came to a halt. Privately, Basque nationalist leaders described the situation as a serious “crisis”. See De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 536–537.

The October 1934 crisis was in many aspects a political catalyst. It altered the conditions for contentious politics. It reinforced both ERC and the PNV's status as regime challengers. Protracted repression and the suspension of Catalan home rule led to a marked narrowing of the political opportunity structure for Basque and Catalan nationalists.⁶⁹⁸ In the longer run, the October 1934 crisis contributed to what would become the Popular Front in Catalonia, bringing together a wide range of political agents that would be the base for the 1936 alliance.⁶⁹⁹ Companys' role during the uprising, his later imprisonment and triumphal return to Catalonia in February provided a clear precedent for his later status as a Catalan national martyr.⁷⁰⁰ In the Basque Country, and despite the PNV's efforts to distance itself from what had happened in October 1934, the episode contributed to the political realignment of Basque nationalism. Although far from *Esquerra's* assumption of a Popular Front, Aguirre—still rejecting the political left's “sectarian” policies—was now convinced that the strengthening of the Spanish right would only make Basque home rule more difficult. When the *Cortes* resumed the debates on the Basque *Estatuto* in 1935, the attitude of the Spanish right was uncompromising. The leader of *Renovación Española*, MP José Calvo Sotelo, summed up the prevailing climate in a famous speech to the PNV's representatives: “giving you the *Estatuto* [...] would be a true crime against the [Spanish] fatherland”.⁷⁰¹

⁶⁹⁸ An exception was the *Lliga Catalana*, which took advantage of the situation to increase its influence. Its ranks filled many positions from which ERC members and sympathisers were expelled, including the interim commissions which replaced Catalan Local Councils. The *Lliga* even managed to have its MP Pere Rahola included in some of the Spanish executives of autumn 1935 first as Minister of the Navy, and later without portfolio.

⁶⁹⁹ López Esteve, “Els fets...”, p. 15.

⁷⁰⁰ This construction of Companys as a Catalan national martyr would only be completed after his later execution by Franco's regime in 1940. See Arnau González i Vilalta, Gisela Bou i Garriga, and Anna Sallés, *La Creació Del Mite Lluís Companys: El 6 d'Octubre de 1934 i La Defensa de Companys per Ossorio y Gallardo*, Barcelona: Editorial Base, 2007. See also Pedro Álvaro Hervalejo Sánchez, “«President Màrtir» y «Ulises Demócrata». Comparando Narrativas Heroicas de Lluís Companys y José Antonio Aguirre.”, in Ludger Mees (ed) *Héroes y Villanos de La Patria*, Tecnos, 2020, pp. 325–356.

⁷⁰¹ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 538–539, 575.

Chapter 7.

(re)Building national hegemony.

**The Popular Front, home rule and
the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War**

This chapter will cover the brief but intense political cycle which begins with the end of the 'conservative biennium' and stops before the eruption of the Spanish Civil War. The months between December 1935—when President Alcalá Zamora responded to increasing government instability with a call for another general election—and July 1936, were full of great changes, ruptures and tension. For Basque and Catalan nationalists, this was an opportunity to regain the initiative after having spent more than a year pushed back by repression.

Once again, Basque and Catalan nationalist political actors remained quite stable during this political cycle. Perhaps the greatest change was the split of ERC's pro-independence faction, which could be found mainly within its youth wing, the *Joventut d'Esquerra Republicana-Estat Català* (JEREC). In the aftermath of the October 1934 crisis, its leader and *Conseller* of the Interior, Josep Dencàs, had fled to France, where he would be eventually arrested and imprisoned for several months. Dencàs and Companys blamed each other for the failure of the October 1934 uprising. During a tense session in the Catalan Parliament, the 5th of May 1936, Companys publicly attacked Dencàs, criticising his preparation and organisation of the *fets d'Octubre*, as well as his decision to flee across the border. Soon after, Dencàs and his supporters organised a JEREC congress in which they decided to leave ERC and to revive *Estat Català* as an independent party. Those loyal to Companys formed a new youth wing for *Esquerra*, renamed as JERC (*Joventuts d'Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*), which is still in existence today. The *Partit Nacionalista Republicà d'Esquerra* (PNRE),—which had been created from a split within ERC during the previous political cycle (see Chapter 6)—on the other hand, became increasingly irrelevant. It was seriously crippled by the post-October 1934 repression, with the imprisonment of its leader, *Conseller* Joan Lluhí, and the closing down of its influential newspaper, *l'Opinió*. After its main adversaries within ERC, the Dencàs-led faction, left to rebuild *Estat Català*, the PNRE moved closer to and finally rejoined its parent party.⁷⁰²

⁷⁰² For a more detailed account of the split, including lists of activists and local branches joining each side, see Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 2, pp. 321–336. For more details on the evolution of the PNRE see *Ibid.* pp. 158–163, 198–202.

In the Basque Country, despite the *Jagi-Jagi* split and some additional tension, the PNV remained essentially solid.⁷⁰³ ANV began to move further towards the political left. Two different factions were pressing for this ideological evolution: one, led by Andrés Perea, was more liberal and wanted ANV to explicitly adopt a federalist position and to move closer to Azaña's *Izquierda Republicana*. Another, was influenced by socialism and intended to transform ANV into a working-class, 'Basque Labour Party'. Many of the party's original leaders, which supported the left-of-centre ideological position contained within the founding *San Andrés* Manifesto, became disillusioned with these changes and left during the first months of 1936. ANV's ideological transition was completed in June, when its National Assembly chose a new leadership and approved a new ideological manifesto, with Basque self-determination and a non-Marxist form of socialism as its two main principles.⁷⁰⁴

From February 1936, and the Popular Front's victory in the general election, ERC quickly regained its status as a regime member. This time, however, *Esquerra* did not join the new cabinets—which were dominated by *Izquierda Republicana*—although its ex-leader Joan Lluhí became Minister of Labour and Health for Casares Quiroga's executive right before the war. The PNV also moved closer to a position of regime member, still keeping its ideological distance from the Spanish left, but lending its votes to the new republican government and to President Manuel Azaña.⁷⁰⁵

The conditions for political contention during this political cycle saw a great change after the Popular Front's victory. The new government put an end to all of the repressive measures still in place after the October 1934 crisis, and issued an amnesty which freed the remaining political prisoners. The political opportunity

⁷⁰³ There was some tension within the PNV about how the aftermath of the 1934 crisis had been managed, particularly by its MPs. Some, such as the leadership of the party in Navarre, the *Napar Buru Batzar*, believed too much support was being given to the Spanish left over the suspension of the Local Councils. Others, such as the more pro-independence sectors, thought that the party was being too soft in Madrid—the PNV's MPs voted for Lerrotx in a confidence motion soon after the uprising—in an effort to distance itself from the October revolt. See de Pablo, Mees, & Rodríguez Ranz, *El Péndulo...*, Vol. 1, pp. 162–163.

⁷⁰⁴ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 542–557, 633–645.

⁷⁰⁵ Supporting Azaña as the new President of the Republic was criticised by Luis Arana and other like-minded elements of the party, which believed that, as a Basque nationalist party, the PNV should stay out of such Spanish 'internal' affairs. See de Pablo, Mees, & Rodríguez Ranz, *El Péndulo...*, Vol. 1, pp. 166–167.

structure for Basque and Catalan nationalists improved, especially after Manuel Azaña became President of the Republic, which meant both the executive and the head of the state were sympathetic to home rule. Another factor affecting the conditions for political contention was the growing atmosphere of political violence in the months leading to the Civil War, although Catalonia and the Basque Country suffered comparatively fewer incidents.

For both Basque and Catalan nationalists, the most relevant stream of contention during this political cycle was the struggle to obtain—or recover, in the Catalan case—home rule. Another important stream of contention which must be taken into account is the rise of the coalition which would stage a coup against the Republic in July 1936, whose claims included a complete recentralisation of the Spanish state. This chapter focuses on two episodes within these streams of contention: the general election of February 1936 and the post-election unrest in the months before the Civil War. Each of these two are covered in separate sections.

A third and final section contains a compared perspective on the social movement bases of ERC and the PNV. Looking back at the whole period between 1931 and 1936, this includes an analysis of party structures, social networks, mobilising traditions and solidarity mechanisms.

7. 1. The end of the ‘conservative biennium’ and the triumph of the Popular Front (December 1935-February 1936)

The February 1936 election was in many ways the result of the failure of the CEDA's revisionist efforts. Throughout 1935, both ERC and the PNV had to live through tough times: isolated from political power, dealing with censorship and taking care of hundreds of prisoners. Their political adversaries, however, found it hard to follow through their triumph in the defeat of the October 1934 uprising. The CEDA's flagship project, constitutional reform, foundered during the summer of 1935. If passed, the proposed alterations to the Constitution would have been a strong blow to Basque and Catalan nationalist claims. The reform, however, failed because of the lack of consensus between the forces to the left and right of Gil-Robles' party. The Radical Party, still leading the Government—first through Lerroux, and after September through Joaquín Chapaprieta—became tarred by serious corruption scandals which brought more instability during the autumn.

By the end of 1935, the CEDA's revisionist project had effectively stalled. In terms of contentious politics, the conservatives had failed to act as an effective brokering agent to create a strong coalition. The Radical Party, on one hand, was too moderate—and corrupt—and the monarchists, on the other hand, were too radicalised. The fascist *Falange* began its campaign of violence against political opponents and the Carlist militia, known as the *requeté*, was already training with weapons obtained from Mussolini.⁷⁰⁶ When Gil-Robles tried to exploit the Radical Party's weakness to obtain the position of Prime Minister, he was decisively

⁷⁰⁶ For the Falange's violent strategy between 1934 and 1936, see Roberto Muñoz Bolaños, “Escuadras de la Muerte: Militares, Falange y Terrorismo en la II República”, *Revue de Civilisation Contemporaine. Europes/Ameriques*, 17, 2018, pp. 3–4. The *requete*'s activities have been documented by several authors, including the previously mentioned work by Jordi Canal. The early connection with Mussolini and weapons training was acknowledged by the Carlists some years later, see *El Requeté*, 1/2/1939, p. 3.

blocked by Alcalá-Zamora. Instead, the President—who never trusted the leader of the CEDA—named his liberal friend Manuel Portela to lead the executive in December 1935. The 8th of January 1936, Portela's government officially announced the dissolution of the *Cortes* and that a new general election would take place the 16th of February. Alcalá-Zamora, wary of Gil-Robles' subversive intentions, wanted a new Parliament which would be able to sustain an alternative government to the previous Radical-CEDA coalitions. Portela, a man who belonged to what Nigel Townson called “the Republic that could not be” (see Chapter 6), wanted to reinforce the political centre. He warned voters, forecasting a “civil war” if what he saw as moderate political options were not strengthened.⁷⁰⁷

The February 1936 election had a great impact on Basque and Catalan nation building because it had a powerful and almost immediate effect on the political opportunity structure. Even as the campaign began, the Portela government relaxed many repressive measures. The election results put a new government in Madrid which was supportive of Basque and Catalan home rule, issued an amnesty and restored the *Generalitat*. This section will once again treat the election as a process of mobilisation, looking at the different mechanisms employed by Basque and Catalan nationalists in their efforts to attract voters.

Mobilisation on its own, however, cannot fully describe the February 1936 electoral dynamic. Another process, which was not particular to the election, also had a strong effect: polarisation. This involved the increasing distance—and tension—between the political left and right ‘poles’. At the centre of each pole lay two main brokering political actors: the PSOE and the CEDA. The socialist party had been invited to join the *Conjunción Republicana* by Azaña's *Izquierda Republicana* and the ex-Radicals of *Unión Republicana*. The PSOE accepted, but only after the communist PCE was allowed in too. This created what would be known as the *Frente Popular* (‘Popular Front’)—echoing France's *Front Populaire* led by Léon Blum—and which was basically consistent with the Comintern's policy at the time to confront the rise of fascisms with broad progressive fronts. The CEDA's brokering activity was less successful. Gil-Robles tried to bring together elements

⁷⁰⁷ María del Pilar Mera Costas, “Proyectos Democráticos En La Segunda República Española. El Discurso de Centro de Manuel Portela Valladares”, *Res Publica*, 25, 2011, 177–98.

of the Radical Party and monarchists into a *Frente Nacional Contrarrevolucionario*, but the alliance varied from province to province. In some areas, Alphonsine and Carlist monarchists formed an alternative coalition, named *Bloque Nacional*, led by Calvo Sotelo. The crisis of the Radical Party, and the weakness of other similar options—such as Portela's *Partido del Centro Democrático*—left little hope any sort of 'third way'.

Polarisation affected Basque and Catalan nationalists differently and, to a great extent, determined their election strategies. For the PNV, it posed a problem. Ideologically, the Basque Nationalist Party could not identify with either of the two opposed poles, so asserting its own political project would be the basis of its campaign. *Esquerra*, on the other hand, was already the largest leftist political actor in Catalonia, so it made the most of the polarised climate by assuming a leadership role within the left pole.

ERC decision to create and lead a broad front of the Catalan left was influenced by two previous experiences: its defeat in the 1933 general election, and its success in the January 1934 Catalan local election. Back then, *Esquerra* had reached the conclusion that a single leftist front was the best way to keep the *Lliga Catalana* at bay. In July 1935, ERC began to broker the creation of a new coalition. It joined *Acció Catalana Republicana*—still led by Nicolau d'Oliver—, its ex-dissidents of the PNRE and its traditional partner, the *Unió Socialista de Catalunya*, to form the "Liaison Committee of the Catalan Left". This was not intended as an electoral alliance, but more as a mobilising platform, although the existing restrictions severely limited its activities. In a separate but parallel sphere, the USC began talks with other socialist agents to form the "Workers' Front of Catalonia", which also included the *Partit Obrer d'Unificació Marxista* ('Workers' Party of Marxist Unification') or POUM, the *Partit Català Proletari* ('Catalan Proletarian Party') or PCP, the Catalan sections of the PSOE and UGT, the Catalan Communist Party and

Ángel Pestaña's Syndicalist Party.⁷⁰⁸ Once the new election date was announced in January and after some additional negotiations, the Liaison Committee and the Workers' Front agreed to form an electoral alliance: the *Front d'Esquerres de Catalunya* ('Left Front of Catalonia').⁷⁰⁹

There was little doubt within the PNV that standing alone for the election was the path to take. That does not mean, however, that there were no other options on the table. The pro-independence *Jagi-Jagi* contacted both the PNV and ANV with the proposal to form a "Basque National Front". This implied a coalition between all three nationalist forces which adopted a *Sinn Féin*-style policy of abstentionism, i.e. not taking any seats won in the Spanish Parliament.⁷¹⁰ Both ANV and the PNV rejected this, as their strategy involved an intense participation in the Spanish *Cortes* to achieve a quick approval of the still pending Basque *Estatuto*. The former party actually joined the Popular Front—except in Biscay, where it allowed a free vote—with *Izquierda Republicana*, the PSOE and the Basque Communist Party after these agreed to support Basque home rule. The PNV also rejected approaches from the centrist option endorsed by President Portela and from the Catholic Church, which pressured the Basque nationalists to join the rightist coalitions. Historian José Luis de la Granja has pointed out that by 1936, the common confessional approach to politics shared by the PNV and the Spanish right was no match for their "antagonistic" positions concerning the "national question".⁷¹¹

The campaign was intense and began almost immediately after the election date was officially set.⁷¹² The announcement, published the 8th of January 1936, came

⁷⁰⁸ The POUM had been created very recently, in September 1935, as a result of the fusion between the BOC—whose legacy of prior development was incorporated into the new party—and the ex-trotskyist *Izquierda Comunista* led by Andreu Nin. The PCP had evolved from the faction of *Estat Català* led by Jaume Compte, who was killed fighting the Spanish army in October 1934. The Syndicalist Party emerged in 1934 in an attempt to become the CNT's political party. See Andy Durgan, *Comunismo, Revolución y Movimiento Obrero En Cataluña 1920-1936: Los Orígenes Del POUM*, Barcelona: Laertes, 2016; Imma Tubella, *Jaume Compte i El Partit Català Proletari*, Barcelona: La Magrana, 1979; Marcelo Guillén, "El Movimiento Libertario Español y Sus Manifestaciones Políticas: El Partido Sindicalista Como Caso Excepcional", *Historia Contemporánea*, 66, 2021, pp. 433–64.

⁷⁰⁹ Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 2, pp. 163–175.

⁷¹⁰ The Basque National Front concept is explained in detailed in *Jagi-Jagi*, 25/1/1936.

⁷¹¹ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 557–567, 573–576.

⁷¹² In contrast to other areas, Catalonia and the Basque Country were relatively free of political violence during the weeks of the campaign. The main exceptions were a series of incidents at the University of Barcelona between leftists and members of the *Falange*, and the killing of a member of *Izquierda Republicana* the day of the election in Navarre. See González Calleja, *Cifras Cruentas...*, p. 394; *La Humanitat*, 18/1/1936, p. 1.

only days before two rallies which ERC and the PNV had been preparing beforehand. *Esquerra* had planned a “propaganda event” at the Price Hall in Barcelona, which was to “set the party position and the criteria to be followed the immediate future”.⁷¹³ The PNV had organised a rally intended as a “homage to our representatives in the Spanish *Cortes* for their brave and brilliant response to the attack unleashed [...] by Calvo Sotelo and his supporters.”⁷¹⁴ Both events were to take place on Sunday, the 12th of January, and effectively became the kick-start to the election campaign. These were the first large public gatherings carried out by the PNV and ERC after the long period of civil rights limitations imposed as a result of the October 1934 crisis.⁷¹⁵ As such, both parties organised the events as real shows of strength, or what Tilly and Tarrow define as *self-representation*.⁷¹⁶ A closer look at them reveals some of the main themes that would be employed in the political discourse of the following weeks, as well as the contentious mechanisms being activated by ERC and the PNV.⁷¹⁷

The speeches given at both rallies clearly showed two different attitudes towards polarisation. José Antonio Aguirre was the most prominent speaker of the PNV rally at the *Euskalduna* court in Bilbao. His words “For Christian civilisation! For the fatherland's freedom! For social justice!” became the PNV's slogan for the general election. Aguirre and other Basque nationalist leaders were engaging in a double form of boundary activation, establishing a clear ‘us-them’ difference with both the political left and right. Polarisation was portrayed as a negative phenomenon that threatened to “make cannon fodder out of our Basque people, placing it under alien leadership”, in Manuel Irujo's words. Pi i Sunyer, on the other hand, showed a very different attitude. Speaking before the crowd at the Price Hall, he recognised that “the Country is currently divided into two camps: right and left. It is not our fault [...]. It is the fault of those who [...] have torn down Catalonia's *Estatut*.” Boundary activation, therefore, was also part of *Esquerra*'s

⁷¹³ “Un gran acte de propaganda d'E.R.C.”, *La Humanitat*, 7/1/1936, p. 1.

⁷¹⁴ “El homenaje a nuestros diputados”, *Euzkadi*, 7/1/1936, p. 1.

⁷¹⁵ In Barcelona serious clashes with the police took place after the crowds that had not been able to access the already full Price Hall were forcibly dissolved by the *Guardia de Asalto*.

⁷¹⁶ ‘Self-representation’ can be defined as “an actor's or coalition's public display of worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment.” See Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 1st ed., p. 217.

⁷¹⁷ For complete chronicles of both events, see *Euzkadi*, 14/1/1936, pp. 1–4; *La Humanitat*, 14/1/1936, pp. 1, 6–8.

electoral strategy, but it was only applied in a single axis. This emphasis on the left-right distinction also involved confronting directly with the *Lliga Catalana*. Josep Trabal, speaking about Francesc Cambó, said that “he has betrayed the fatherland and deserves [...] the scorn of Catalonia”. Conversely, the leftist forces that made up the Workers' Front were praised using the attribution of similarity mechanism. Pi i Sunyer pointed out that even though “*Esquerra Republicana* is not a workers' party. It is, however, a workerist party [...]”, and called for a coalition that included “all of the leftist and workers' forces”.

Despite the two different general approaches to polarisation described above, the speeches of both rallies also contained many similarities. The speakers of both the PNV and ERC praised their parties' social movement bases, and both made particular mention of two components of such bases: the women and youth sections. Events of the recent past—the October 1934 uprising for ERC and the Estella assembly of 1931 for the PNV—were incorporated into the speeches' epic depictions of their respective national struggles. The patriotic card was played in both contexts, praising national values of “discipline” in the Basque case, and “[patriotic] idealism” in the Catalan case. In both instances, the election was framed as “the reality of a people that rises”—in the words of Irujo—or as “the rising of a people that knows its duty”—as expressed by Trabal. The rhetoric of hegemony employed by the speakers of both rallies, as well as by the chronicles of *Euzkadi* and *La Humanitat*, tended to blur, once again, the line between the ‘people’ and the ‘party’ and its supporters.

The campaign went on through the following weeks, picking up momentum from the 1st of February. The familiar pattern of smaller local rallies, conferences centred on particular issues, and large final rallies developed in both Catalonia and the Basque Country. ERC concluded its campaign with an event organised at the Olympia theatre in Barcelona. The PNV had two final rallies, at the Euskalduna and Urumea courts in Bilbao and San Sebastian.⁷¹⁸

⁷¹⁸ At least the PNV considered the 1st of February as the first official day of the campaign, for which it organised around 100 rallies in Biscay only according to *Euzkadi*, 29/1/1936, p. 1. For examples of the decentralised, local-level rallies organised by both the PNV and ERC, proof of both parties' territorial reach, see *Euzkadi*, 9/2/1936, p. 7; *Euzkadi*, 11/2/1936, pp. 6-8; *La Humanitat*, 7/2/1936, p. 8.

Many of the ideas introduced by both parties in their respective 12th of January events were repeated throughout the campaign. Aesthetically, the two campaigns looked very different. The PNV made Aguirre's slogan, the 'Christian civilisation-fatherland-social justice' trio, its central *leitmotiv*, and frequently alluded to religious imagery.⁷¹⁹ *Esquerra*, on the other hand, built its campaign on the October 1934 uprising, and the idea of "Catalan dignity" showed by Companys at his trial, together with a powerful antifascist message.⁷²⁰ However, a closer look at the actual discourse shows that the two parties faced similar challenges when dealing with boundaries.

⁷¹⁹ Aguirre's slogan featured in many of *Euzkadi*'s front pages, see for example its 4/2/1936 and 5/2/1936 issues. See also a note by the Biscay leadership of the PNV in *Euzkadi*, 4/2/1936, p. 1. Once again (see Chapter 3) religious values were promoted not only as elements of Catholic faith, but as expressions of Basque ethnicity, such as in "Por el Bilbao cristiano de nuestros mayores", *Euzkadi*, 18/1/1936, p. 1.

⁷²⁰ The *Front d'Esquerres* was openly promoted as "the 6th of October candidacy", see *La Humanitat*, 6/2/1936, p. 1. Besides the use of antifascist slogans such as "With the Republic or with fascism", the *Front d'Esquerres* used an emblem—four parallel diagonal arrows pointing toward the top-right corner—which resembles a Catalan version of the German 'three-arrow' symbol used in the 1930s by the SPD. See *La Humanitat*, 29/1/1936, p. 1; 14/2/1936, p. 1.

Fig. 7. 1 | ERC and boundary shift during the 1936 general election campaign

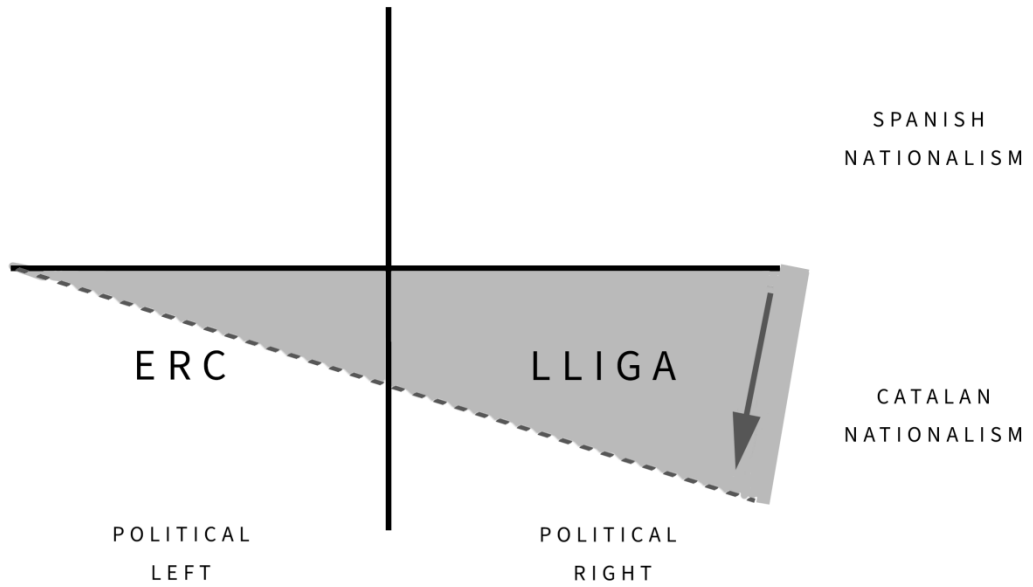


Fig. 7. 2 | PNV and boundary shift during the 1936 general election campaign

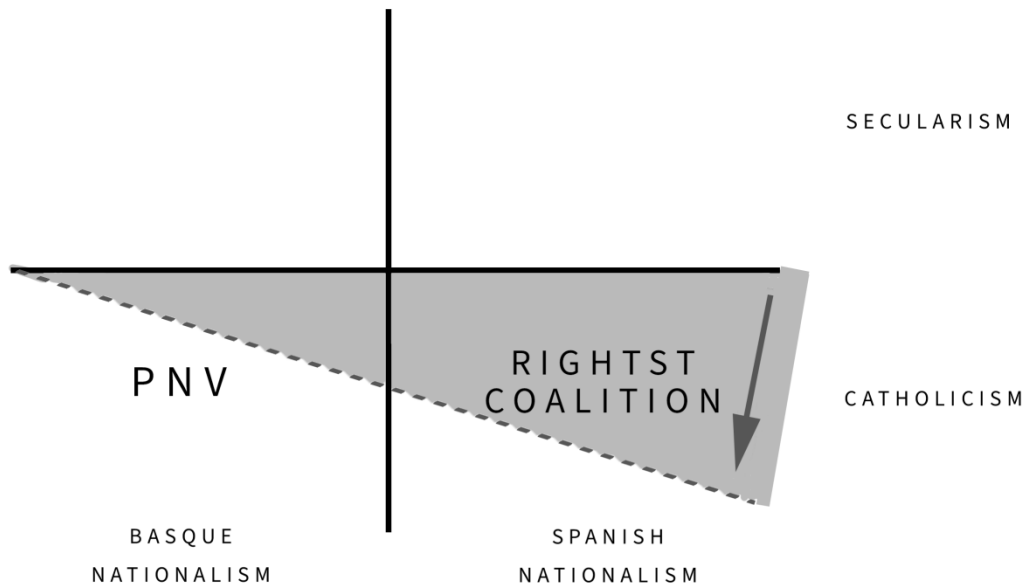


Fig. 7. 1 and Fig. 7. 2⁷²¹ show how the overlapping of different boundaries could be a problem. Both the PNV and ERC used boundary activation against their political opponents—the difference lying in the nature of such boundaries and that the PNV had to activate boundaries not only to its right, but to its left too. Boundary activation could be used to reinforce a positive-negative ‘us-them’. For example, *Esquerra* emphasised the political left *versus* political right—the vertical line in Fig. 7. 1—in its discourse to isolate its main opponent, the *Lliga Catalana*. The fact, however, that both agents lay at the same side of another important boundary, the Spanish nationalist *versus* Catalan nationalist cleavage—the horizontal line in Fig. 7. 1—, was problematic.

The same can be said of the PNV and its strengthening of the Basque nationalist *versus* Spanish nationalist divide—the vertical line in Fig. 7. 2—against the right-wing coalition. This could not hide the fact that both the Basque Nationalist Party and the Spanish monarchist right lay at the same side of the Catholic *versus* secular boundary—the horizontal line in Fig. 7. 2. To overcome this, both ERC and the PNV accompanied boundary activation with another mechanism: boundary shift. In practice, this involved denying the *Lliga* of its Catalan national status, and labelling the Spanish right as not being truly Catholic. Much of the discourse produced in *Euzkadi* and *La Humanitat* was devoted to this boundary shift, which pursued a more complete isolation of political contenders. This mechanism is showed by the dotted line in both Fig. 1 and Fig. 2, which represents a shift of the horizontal line to exclude the *Lliga* and the rightist coalition respectively.⁷²²

Another common form of contentious politics found in both ERC's and the PNV's campaign was reframing, i.e. taking some concept from their opponents' political discourse and giving it an alternative meaning or interpretation. *Esquerra* did this with the idea of ‘order’. The *Lliga Catalana* had brokered a rightist coalition

⁷²¹ Graph designs by Naia Torrealdei Mandaluniz.

⁷²² *Euzkadi* launched numerous attacks against the *Gaceta del Norte*, which by then was politically in line with the CEDA, accusing it of undermining Christian values and of promoting “communism”. See for example *Euzkadi* 22/1/1936, p. 1; 23/1/1936, p. 1; 25/1/1936, p. 1. *Euzkadi* also accused Spanish rightist leaders such as José Calvo Sotelo, Manuel Fal Conde and José María Areilza of contradicting the Church's teachings, comparing fragments of their speeches with declarations by Cardinal Gomà. See 31/1/1936, p. 1. *La Humanitat* often questioned the *Lliga*'s Catalan nationalist nature, to the point of proclaiming “there is no [political] right [left] in the Catalan nationalist movement! The *Lliga* has deserted Catalonia”, see 24/1/1936, p. 1.

together with the Catalan CEDA, the Radical Party and the Carlist and Alphonine monarchists named *Front Català d'Ordre* ('Catalan Order Front'). The *Front d'Esquerres* played on this by including the concept of order in its propaganda (see Fig. 7. 2), which argued that “real order does not exist without common welfare”, and appealed to “calmness”.⁷²³

Fig. 7. 3 | *Front d'Esquerres* election poster⁷²⁴



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The PNV applied a similar process to the concept of ‘counterrevolution’. The rightist coalition, which included monarchists of both branches, the CEDA and

⁷²³ “L'ordre de les esquerres”, *La Humanitat*, 9/2/1936, p. 1; *La Humanitat*, 11/2/1936, p. 1.

⁷²⁴ Col·lecció Cartells del Pavelló de la República (UB); F-751.

some independents used the name *Bloque contrarrevolucionario*.⁷²⁵ The PNV presented itself as “the only real counterrevolutionary force”, arguing that “the antirevolution must not be mere denial nor hysteria nor hypocrisy, but rather Christian affirmation, civility and harmony”.⁷²⁶

The election campaigns of ERC and the PNV shared at least three additional common features. The first was the appeal to rural smallholders, the *rabassaires* in Catalonia and the *baserritarrak* in the Basque Country. Both social groups were organised in unions which were politically close to ERC and the PNV, the *Unió de Rabassaires* and the *Euzko Nekazarien Alkartasuna-Euzko Nekazarien Bazkuna*, respectively. At the time of the electoral campaign, many of these smallholders faced evictions from their landlords, and their demands were channelled into the programs of the PNV and the *Front d'Esquerres*.⁷²⁷ The second shared feature was the participation of political prisoners—actively through letters, or passively with their inclusion in articles, slogans and placards—in the campaign.⁷²⁸ Finally, both campaigns used the figures of past leaders—heroes in the eyes of the supporters of the PNV and ERC—in what essentially was a form of certification. Sabino Arana, often referred to as *el maestro* (‘the master’) was regularly mentioned in relation to the campaign in *Euzkadi*. A large image of Francesc Macià was chosen by *La Humanitat* to be its front cover the day before the election.⁷²⁹

The 16th of February election gave a solid parliamentary majority to the Popular Front, which obtained more than 60% of the seats despite its slim lead over the rightist coalitions. The bipolar voting patterns, a result of the growing polarisation between the political left and right, swept away Portela's project to consolidate a strong ‘centre’. Catalonia was part of this tendency. Parties closer to the political centre had been absorbed by the *Front d'Esquerres*—this was the case

⁷²⁵ The coalition was not possible in Araba, where the Carlists and the CEDA stood separate candidates. See de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 576–578.

⁷²⁶ *Euzkadi*, 31/1/1936, p. 1. See also “Quines son los auténticos revolucionarios?”, *Euzkadi*, 26/1/1936, p. 1; “No basta llamarse ‘antirrevolucionario’. Es preciso ¡serlo!”, *Euzkadi*, 9/2/1936, p. 1. *Euzkadi* also addressed the Basque Popular Front's slogan, *¡Amnistía, Estatuto y ni un deshaucio más!* (‘Amnesty, *Estatuto* and not a single eviction’), incorporating its concepts into the PNV's own slogan. See 6/2/1936, p. 1.

⁷²⁷ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 585–586; *La Humanitat*, 9/2/1936, p. 1.

⁷²⁸ *La Humanitat*, 16/2/1936, p. 6. Although *Euzkadi* often mentioned the issue of political prisoners and the need for a restricted amnesty, the only public declaration of Basque nationalist prisoners at the time came in support of *Jagi-Jagi* and its ‘Basque national front’ proposal. See *Jagi-Jagi*, 25/1/1936, p. 4.

⁷²⁹ *La Humanitat*, 15/2/1936, p. 1; *Euzkadi*, 2/2/1936, p. 1; 31/1/1936, p. 1.

of Nicolau d'Oliver's *Acció Catalana*—or by the *Front d'Ordre*. In the Basque Country, however, the picture resembled what José Luis de la Granja has called “an almost equilateral political triangle”.⁷³⁰

The PNV lost a considerable share of votes, initially receiving only 5 out of 24 seats (20,8%). De la Granja has pointed out to the displacement of voters from the PNV's base to the rightist coalition in Biscay and Gipuzkoa as the reason behind this decrease. Basque nationalism managed to avert the disaster after the elections had to be repeated in some provinces.⁷³¹ Between the first and the second voting rounds, things changed. The Popular Front's triumph made many voters reconsider the PNV as a reasonable alternative to the political left. The Bishop of Vitoria, Mateo Múgica, even issued a public declaration stating voting for the Basque Nationalist Party was a perfectly Catholic option. The PNV ended up with 9 out of 24 seats (37,5%), keeping its position as the strongest party in the Basque Country.

In Catalonia, the *Front d'Esquerres* obtained 41 out of 54 seats (75,9%), out of which 22 (40,7%) were ERC members. The grouping of all left-wing parties had made the most of the electoral system in place, which granted strong majorities to winning lists. Also, the CNT had given a green light to its members and supporters to vote for the *Front d'Esquerres*, mainly driven by the hope of an amnesty.⁷³²

⁷³⁰ De la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 607–608.

⁷³¹ By law, if none of the candidates of any single constituency obtained more than 40% of the vote, the election had to be repeated there. This happened in Biscay (province), Araba and Gipuzkoa, where the second voting round took place the 1st of March.

⁷³² Vilanova, *Ailes Electoral...*, Vol. 1, pp. 51–55; de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 588–608; Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 2, pp. 183–189.

Table 7. 1 | 1936 general election results in Catalonia and the Basque Country

Constituency	Results (seats)
Basque Country	
Araba	Carlists: 1 Leftist coalition: 1
Gipuzkoa	PNV: 4 Popular Front: 2
Biscay (capital)	Popular Front: 4 PNV: 1
Biscay (province)	PNV: 3
Navarre	Rightist coalition: 7
Catalonia	
Lleida	<i>Front d'Esquerres de Catalunya: 4</i> <i>Front Català d'Ordre: 2</i>
Girona	<i>Front d'Esquerres de Catalunya: 5</i> <i>Front Català d'Ordre: 2</i>
Barcelona (capital)	<i>Front d'Esquerres de Catalunya: 16</i> <i>Front Català d'Ordre: 4</i>
Barcelona (province)	<i>Front d'Esquerres de Catalunya: 11</i> <i>Defensa Ciutadana: 3</i>
Tarragona	<i>Front d'Esquerres de Catalunya: 5</i> <i>Front Català d'Ordre: 2</i>

Just like after the November 1933 election (see Chapter 5), the reactions of ERC and the PNV to the results of February 1936 were quite different. This was understandable, given that the *Front d'Esquerres'* triumph in Catalonia was beyond question, while the PNV had only salvaged a decent result after the second round.

Esquerra framed its victory in epic and populist⁷³³ terms, barely mentioning the *Front d'Esquerres* coalition, and presenting the results as “the people's verdict”, and “the civic rising of a people that reconquers its freedoms”.⁷³⁴

These appeals to an abstract ‘people’ were much less frequent in the PNV's discourse, which tended to use ‘Basque people’ or even ‘nationalist people’ among other expressions. The populist component of ERC's political project throughout the Second Spanish Republic, transferred to the *Front d'Esquerres* during the 1936 election campaign, did not have a Basque equivalent. Enric Ucelay-Da Cal's idea of ‘populist Catalonia’ is built upon three particular ingredients of Catalan politics: the first, was the popular identification between ERC and the *Generalitat*. The second, was the existence of a vast grassroots network of Catalan nationalist left-wing social centres, which were grounds for cross-class social interaction. The third key element was the broad popularity of ERC's leader, Francesc Macià. None of these three could be replicated in the Basque Country, particularly before the Spanish Civil War. There were simply no Basque institutions to be identified with the PNV before October 1936 (see Chapter 8). Despite the existence of a comparable network of Basque nationalist social centres and that these were also places of cross-class interaction, these were not permeable enough to other political cultures (see below). Finally, there was no Basque nationalist leader who could muster the kind of broad popular support achieved by Macià, at least before the Spanish Civil War. Aguirre, whose popularity gradually increased throughout the 1930s, only began to emerge as a popular figure beyond the ranks of Basque nationalism after his ascension to the position of *lehendakari*, again in October 1936 (see Chapter 8).⁷³⁵

The Basque Nationalist Party was much more analytical in its assessment of the February 1936 election results, openly acknowledging “we have been defeated”, and that it had failed to overcome polarisation, being “caught between two fires”.

⁷³³ ‘Populist’ in this context is a reference to Enric Ucelay Da Cal's characterisation of ERC's political, social and cultural project during the 1930s as the attempt to create a cross-class, progressive and civic culture that would incorporate the workers' movement and neutralise the *Lliga*. See Ucelay Da Cal, *La Catalunya Populista...*, pp. 341–344.

⁷³⁴ “La Reconquesta” and “El veredict del poble”, *La Humanitat*, 18/2/1936, p. 1.

⁷³⁵ Populism as a concept has recently produced a vast amount of academic research with a scope that lies well beyond of what the present thesis attempts to achieve. For a guided overview of past works and current trends, see Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, Paul Taggart, Paulina Ochoa Espejo and Pierre Ostiguy (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Populism*, Oxford University Press, 2017.

After the second vote of the 1st of March, the PNV was able to change the tune, describing its results as “brilliant” and having regained its status as the largest party in the Basque Country, although still elusive about its results in Araba and Navarre.⁷³⁶

The election results quickly prompted political movements in Madrid. Fearful of a military coup—which did not materialise—Portela handed over power to Azaña, who formed a government the 19th of February. The new executive was a coalition between Azaña's own *Izquierda Republicana* and the ex-Radicals of *Unión Republicana*. Its first measures were the issuing of a general amnesty, the 21st of February, and the restoration of the Catalan Parliament and *Generalitat* five days later. Companys and his *Consellers* would be able to return. The amnesty also had institutional consequences in the Basque Country, as it allowed the suspended Local Councils to reform. All in all, the ballot had consolidated a new political cycle, with new and more favourable conditions for Basque and Catalan nationalist contentious politics.

⁷³⁶ “Otra lección más”, *Euzkadi*, 18/2/1936, p. 1; “Balance aleccionador”, *Euzkadi*, 3/3/1936, p. 1. José Aguerre later commented on the PNV's results in Navarre, describing the province as a “great stain, still hostile to our ideals”. See Gurbindo, “De la pasada elección”, *Euzkadi*, 22/2/1936, p. 3.

7. 2. The Catalan and Basque ‘oases’ in the months before the Spanish Civil War (February-July 1936)

7. 2. 1. The return of Companys and the PNV's strategic shift

The term ‘oasis’ has been used to describe the situation of relative calm in both Catalonia and the Basque Country in the months between the Popular Front's victory and the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. With violence escalating throughout the Spanish state, Catalonia and the Basque Country saw respectively ‘only’ 10 and 15 deaths in politically motivated incidents.⁷³⁷ A solid explanation for this has proven elusive. José Luis de la Granja, who limits the Basque ‘oasis’ to the provinces of Gipuzkoa and Biscay, points out to the lack of a strong extreme right to explain the reduced violence. Ivern i Salvà has commented on the contemporary use of the term ‘oasis’ to describe the situation in Catalonia too. Francesc Cambó and Carles Pi i Sunyer, respective leading figures in the *Lliga Catalana* and ERC, had their own explanations at the time. The former referred to the less strident tone of the electoral campaign, but also pointed out at the strength of Catalan nationalism across the left and right of the political spectrum. For Cambó, patriotism prevented violence, given “the love of the immense majority of Catalans for Catalonia”. Pi i Sunyer, on the other hand, argued that the political left was responsible for the peace, because of its refusal to pursue revenge after the repression of 1934 and 1935. González Calleja, in what is arguably the most

⁷³⁷ These numbers are for the time period between the 19th of February and the 17th of July. By comparison, deaths all around the Spanish state amounted to 384. See González Calleja, *Cifras Cruentas...*, pp. 281–282.

comprehensive study of political violence during the period, still finds the Catalan and Basque—he also mentions eastern Andalusia— ‘oases’ surprising given their “traditionally troubled” nature.⁷³⁸ The matter certainly deserves further research, but a possible explanation may lay in the fact that in both Catalonia and the Basque Country, the small size of *Falange* and Alphonine monarchist groups limited their capacity to carry out a consistent ‘strategy of tension’. Carlist paramilitaries, who were the strongest extreme right force in both contexts—and politically dominant in Araba and Navarre—tended to prefer waiting for a coordinated action with the imminent military coup than to engage in street-fighting.

The aftermath of the February 1936 election had deep consequences in the sphere of Catalan nation-building. The amnesty and the reinstatement of Catalan home rule was not a merely institutional manoeuvre, but also a powerful political performance that involved mass mobilisation. Companys' return to Catalonia was met by thousands of supporters and given an epic, patriotic tone. Antoni Rovira i Virgili predicted the scene:

“[the] flaming of countless flags, mighty sound of crowds, beating of hearts, sparkling of eyes, cheering of lips, crack of hundreds of thousands of hands. [...] Days of struggle, of joy, of mourning and hope, have made our history, have weaved our ensign, have modelled our spirit. [...] and the pain and love of the Catalan fatherland are today symbolised by these Catalans who return, and who will be triumphantly welcomed in a reception which will surpass all similar events of which memory is retained.”⁷³⁹

Rovira i Virgili's text shows how *Esquerra's* leaders saw the event not only as a popular celebration, but as a true act of ‘self-representation’ of its supporters’ “unity, numbers and commitment”. Furthermore, the event itself was to become a

⁷³⁸ de la Granja, *El Oasis...*, pp. 55–57; Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 2, pp. 197–198; González Calleja, *Cifras Cruentas...*, pp. 278–285.

⁷³⁹ Original fragment: “[...] flameig de banderes innúmeres, remor imponent de multituds, batec de cors, espurneig d'ulls, aclamacions dels llavis, espetec de centenars de milers de mans. [...] Jornades de lluita, d'alegria, de dol i d'esperança, han fet la nostra història, han teixit la nostra ensenya, han modelat el nostre esperit. [...] el dolor i l'amor de la pàtria catalana estan avui simbolitzats per aquests catalans que tornen, i que seran acollits triomfalment en una rebuda que sobrepassarà [...] tots els actes semblants dels quals es serva memòria.” See Antoni Rovira i Virgili, “La tornada a la pàtria”, *La Humanitat*, 1/3/1936, p. 1.

true nation-building experience, one of those ‘spirit-modelling days’ described by Rovira i Virgili with his rhetoric of hegemony. Thousands, surrounded by national symbols and slogans, would acclaim the personification of the nation: its resilient representatives. The massive welcome became reality soon enough, as thousands of people took to the streets of Barcelona to receive the freed members of the Catalan Government. Companys' speech to the crowds gathered before the *Palau de la Generalitat* famously included the line *tornarem a sofrir, tornarem a lluitar i tornarem a guanyar* (“once again we will suffer, once again we will struggle and once again we will win”). Rovira i Virgili also commented on this scene, proclaiming that “Companys' and Catalonia's ideals are the same”,⁷⁴⁰ once again blurring the lines between party and nation.

Beyond this symbolic display of political legitimacy and regained power, the fact was that Catalan nationalism had recovered home rule and could now resume nation-building from an institutional platform, i.e. a return to phase D.⁷⁴¹ Basque nationalism had still not reached such a stage. A few days before Companys, José Antonio Aguirre also spoke from an institutional balcony. The performance was not as powerful, both in terms of symbolism—Aguirre was not returning from prison and the gathered crowd was much smaller—and actual meaning. Aguirre's balcony was that of Getxo's Town Hall, whose councillors were being reinstated by Azaña's Government.⁷⁴² *Euzkadi* had framed the return of the suspended Local Councillors in patriotic terms⁷⁴³, but these political representatives were going back to their local governments, not to a Basque home rule institution. Basque nationalists, however, were already bent on a strategic realignment that would allow them to synchronise their nation-building with their Catalan counterparts.

The PNV had been laying down the foundations for a strategic shift to the left ever since it lent its support to the *Gestoras' Estatuto* in 1932. Its poor relationship with the PSOE and Azaña's first governments—particularly the violence of 1933—had made progress difficult. By the end of 1934—“a crucial year” according to

⁷⁴⁰ “La jornada històrica de la Generalitat” and “El balcó de la Generalitat”, *La Humanitat*, 3/3/1936, p. 5.

⁷⁴¹ This refers to Martin and Kamusella's enlarged version of Hroch's schema for nation-building (see Chapter 4). Phase D, also described as “national consolidation” involves the achievement of national institutions.

⁷⁴² An actual photograph of the event was included in *Euzkadi*, 26/2/1936, p. 1.

⁷⁴³ See *Euzkadi*, 21/2/1936, p. 1; 23/2/1936, p. 1; 25/2/1936, p. 1.

historian José Luis de la Granja—shared experiences of repression had somewhat reduced the bad blood between the Basque nationalists and the PSOE. A more decisive factor was the increasingly hostile attitude of the Spanish right to any form of Basque and Catalan home rule, illustrated by Calvo Sotelo's famous assertion that he preferred “a red Spain to a broken Spain”. After the February election, the PNV hardened its discourse on the Spanish monarchists and rightists, which were moved from an ‘adversary’ to an ‘enemy’ status. *Euzkadi* accused the CEDA-monarchist coalition of wanting to ban the PNV, to close down its offices and newspapers, to deport its leaders and to force Basque clergymen to leave for “distant corners of Spain”. Even the conservative Engracio Aranzadi clearly stated: “it is war[...], war without quarter, that has been declared on us”.⁷⁴⁴ This did not prevent the PNV from tactically supporting the moderate Catholic right, such as when it endorsed Pedro Zaragüeta's candidacy—who also had the support of the CEDA and the monarchist parties—for Mayor of San Sebastian.⁷⁴⁵

In any case, the PNV's new strategic position became clear when its MPs voted together with the Popular Front for the destitution of Niceto Alcalá-Zamora—another moderate Catholic—as President of the Republic. The Basque Nationalist deputies presented this move not as an alignment with the Spanish left, but as a gesture of solidarity with *Esquerra*. After all, ERC was interested in having Azaña as President of the Republic—he was more willing to endorse a quick and complete restoration of Catalan home rule—and its MPs had asked for the PNV's support.⁷⁴⁶ The Basque Nationalist Party was effectively using its improved relationship with ERC to pivot left.

The process for the election of a new President involved the election by universal suffrage of delegates—equal in number and distribution to the MPs—which would then, together with Parliament, vote for a new candidate. This showed the different attitudes of Catalan and Basque nationalists to the republican regime at this point. *Esquerra* and ANV, both presented their candidates within

⁷⁴⁴ “Programa Derechista”, *Euzkadi*, 23/2/1936, p. 1; Engracio de Aranzadi, “Se proyectaba nuestro total exterminio”, *Euzkadi*, 22/2/1936, p. 1.

⁷⁴⁵ This happened in the context of the local election that had been planned by Azaña's government for the 12th of April, but was eventually called off due to the climate of increasing political violence. See de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 617–619. Catalonia stayed out of this, as only the Catalan Parliament could call for a Catalan local election.

⁷⁴⁶ “La posición de la minoría vasca en el problema presidencialista”, *Euzkadi*, 9/4/1936, p. 5.

Popular Front coalitions. The *Lliga* stood its own lists against the *Front d'Esquerres*. The PNV refused to take part in the election of delegates, but its MPs voted for the leftist candidate, Manuel Azaña, who became President the 30th of April.⁷⁴⁷

7. 2. 2. A Catalan bridge over the Ebro?

Basque and Catalan contentious politics during the spring of 1936 lay the foundations for the synchronisation of their nation-building processes in the autumn of the same year. The restoration of the Catalan *Generalitat* was not accompanied by institutional innovation in the Basque Country: initially, Azaña's government again resorted to directly appointed *Comisiones Gestoras* for the Basque provinces, with the exception of Navarre.⁷⁴⁸ The prospects for Basque home rule, however, were now much better. Three decisive political agents were ready to lend their support for it: the executive in Madrid, the Basque PSOE—particularly its leader Indalecio Prieto—and also *Esquerra*. A key milestone in the new process towards a Basque *Estatuto* was the tribute to Francesc Macià organised in Bilbao the 14th of April. A similar event was to take place in 1934 but had been banned by the authorities: the unveiling of a street named after Francesc Macià in the Deusto neighbourhood of Bilbao. The occasion took a powerful meaning in 1936. A closer look at it shows its implications in terms of the political foundations of Basque home rule, the brokering role played by Prieto, and the additional legitimacy provided by Catalan nationalism.⁷⁴⁹

In practical terms, the 14th of April event in Bilbao served a particular purpose: it was a bilateral, public announcement that the PNV and the Popular Front would work together to get a new Basque *Estatuto* approved in the Spanish *Cortes*. Those

⁷⁴⁷ Despite not taking part in the election of the delegates, the PNV's decision to vote for Azaña was still criticised by *Jagi-Jagi* or the staunchly pro-independence Luis Arana. See de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 619–622.

⁷⁴⁸ Navarre had its own provincial government, chosen by its Local Councils—32 of them having been suspended and replaced with interim commissions—in January 1935. See de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 610–611.

⁷⁴⁹ For the full accounts of the event, see “La visita de los catalanes a nuestra villa”, *Euzkadi*, 14/4/1936, pp. 1–2; “El homenaje de Bilbao a la tumba de Macià”, *Euzkadi*, 15/4/1936, pp. 1, 3; “Homenatge de Bilbao a la memòria de Francesc Macià”, *Euzkadi*, 15/4/1936, pp. 7–8.

in attendance were Indalecio Prieto, Josep Tomàs i Piera—representing *Esquerra's* parliamentary group—, Macià's daughter Maria, José Antonio Aguirre, Joan Puig i Ferrater—representing the *Generalitat*—, Cristian Cortès—representing Barcelona's Town Hall and Ernesto Ercoreca—Bilbao's Mayor. In this context, the Catalan delegation served as a 'third party' in a diplomatic sense, a witness to the implicit declaration by Prieto and Aguirre.⁷⁵⁰ Francesc Macià—a true patriot in the eyes of the PNV, a loyal leftist and Republican from the perspective of the Popular Front—provided a symbolic common ground for both parties. Macià was praised by all and compared with Sabino Arana by Prieto and Puig i Ferrater. Prieto's good words for Arana, whose traditionalist ideology he had always opposed and condemned, can be seen as an ultimate show of goodwill towards the PNV. Aguirre, on his part, stressed that home rule would be used to protect the “humble [people]” from “the capitalist”.

Given the situation and the preceding visits of Catalan delegations to the Basque Country, it is not surprising that the tribute to Macià in Bilbao was heavily surrounded with elements of protocol. The Catalan representatives were hailed as “ambassadors” by *Euzkadi*. Cortès also spoke of Catalan and Basque “embassies”. Their delegation went for a short tour of the Basque Country, which again included the familiar stops at Sukarrieta—for a floral tribute to the tomb of Sabino Arana—and at the tree of Gernika. Language exchange—Aguirre began his speech by addressing Maria Macià in Basque—and shows of both Basque and Catalan folk dance were also present. Among the participants were members of the Basque community in Barcelona, including Santiago Doñabeitia, but this time Catalans living in Bilbao joined too.

Not everything, however, went ‘according to protocol.’ The day before the tribute to Macià, the Popular Front—including ANV—held a rally in Bilbao where several socialist and communist speakers attacked the PNV. Puig i Ferrater joined in with a speech that was also critical of the Basque Nationalist Party. *Euzkadi* took note of this and published two articles replying to the attacks, but also pointing out that the Catalan leader “forgot his high representation”. The PNV's newspaper was essentially saying that Puig i Ferrater had ‘broken protocol’, describing his role as

⁷⁵⁰ *A Dictionary of Diplomacy*, “third party”, p. 259; “mediation”, p. 171.

“inappropriate” and “dangerous” to the “noble spirit” of the following day's event.⁷⁵¹ In fact, Puig i Ferrater went on to deliver a speech subtly critical of the PNV during the tribute to Macià. In his comparison of Arana and Macià, he hinted that the former had fostered a more advanced and “modern” form of nationalism. He also “recommended the Basque people the same loyalty [for the Republic] that Catalonia [had shown] to achieve the same and happy results”. This certainly paints a picture of the mixture of paternalism and slight mistrust with which, still in 1936, some of *Esquerra's* leaders viewed the PNV.

Nevertheless, the general attitude shown by both sides was very positive, with grand displays of ‘spiritual solidarity’. *La Humanitat* presented the whole event as an act of “Basque-Catalan fraternity”. Aguirre offered “the heart of the Basques” to be placed at the tomb of Macià, and Cortès alluded to past shared moments between Basque and Catalan nationalists, adding that “Catalonia has always had [the Basque people] by its side precisely when we needed your help for the approval of our *Estatut*.” *Pàtria Nova*, a small group linked to ERC, carried out a floral tribute to Sabino Arana the same 14th of April at the street with his name in Barcelona.⁷⁵² The general climate was a testimony to the strategic approach between ERC and the PNV, anticipating future closeness between the *Generalitat* and a still hypothetical Basque self government.

José Luis de la Granja has stressed Prieto's personal role in this “cordial *entente*” between the PNV and the PSOE, when many within the latter were still not too convinced about Basque home rule. Prieto proposed a simplified version of the text passed by Basque voters in the 1933 plebiscite that could be quickly carried through parliamentary procedures and debates.⁷⁵³ Only two days after the tribute to Macià, a new *Estatutos* Commission was created in the Spanish Parliament, headed by Prieto and Aguirre. This time, the Popular Front's majority meant a solid support for Basque home rule. An article by Antoni Rovira i Virgili showed how

⁷⁵¹ “Ante el homenaje de hoy a Macià”, *Euzkadi*, 14/4/1936, p. 1; “Los ataques a los dirigentes del P.N.V.”, *Euzkadi*, 15/4/1936, pp. 1–2.

⁷⁵² Enric Ucelay Da Cal has identified Domènec Latorre, leader of *Pàtria Nova*, as one of the most enthusiast supporters of Basque home rule in Catalonia, even creating a Comité Català Pro-Estatut Basc in June 1936, but states that this group's influence was very limited. See “Política de Fuera...” p. 93. See also Joan Esculies Serrat, “Domènec Latorre i Les Seves Entitats Del Nacionalisme Radical Català: L’Avençada, La Barricada i Pàtria Nova (1918-1939)”, *Recerques: Història, Economia i Cultura*, 66, 2013, 91–121.

⁷⁵³ de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, pp. 626–632.

much things had changed since the previous attempts of 1931 and 1933. The Catalan nationalist ideologue assured that the new Basque text would have the support of the Catalan MPs: “they do it [vote for the Basque *Estatuto*] because of the interest that the cause of *Euscadi* [sic] inspires in them and also for the interest of the Catalan cause”. This time, ‘spiritual solidarity’ and Catalan ‘diplomatic’ interests went hand in hand. Granting home rule to the Basques would, in Rovira i Virgili's view, be “a new step towards the structuring of the Republic as the harmony of free peoples”.⁷⁵⁴

Outside the Catalan and Basque oases, however, events were taking a different path. The violence that had been escalating throughout the Spring of 1936 reached a critical point with the famous murder of Calvo Sotelo—leader of the Alphonine monarchist party *Renovación Española*— the 12th of July. This served as a catalyst for the military coup that had been brewing for months. Emilio Mola, a general who had been transferred from the Army of Africa to the Military Governorship of Navarre, was one of its leading planners. The coup was led by general Sanjurjo—it was his second attempt, after the failed episode of 1932—and joined by many others, including Francisco Franco, who had led the crushing of the 1934 uprising in Asturias. The 18th of July, Spanish army garrisons rose against the Republic, having already done so the day before in Morocco. A new political cycle, and a new war, had begun.

⁷⁵⁴ Antoni Rovira i Virgili, “El segon Estatut”, *La Humanitat*, 8/5/1036, p. 1. See Text 6 of Annex I for the full original version.

7. 3. A compared perspective on Basque and Catalan nationalist social movement bases during the Second Spanish Republic

Up until this point, this dissertation has developed a compared perspective on Basque and Catalan nationalist contentious politics—with a particular focus on nation-building discourses—and Basque-Catalan nationalist relations. For the sake of simplicity and economy of space, this research has concentrated on ERC and the PNV as the two leading political actors with their respective national movements. These two agents, formally political parties, are considered by the present thesis to meet the definition of social movements as understood by scholars Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow. They

“[...] combine (1) sustained *campaigns* of claim making; (2) an array of public performances including marches, rallies, demonstrations, creations of specialized associations, public meetings, public statements, petitions, letter writing, and lobbying; (3) repeated public displays of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment by such means such as wearing colors, marching in disciplined ranks, sporting badges that advertise the cause, displaying signs, chanting slogans, and picketing public buildings.”⁷⁵⁵

Examples of these types of activities by ERC and the PNV have been repeatedly examined in the past chapters. Both organisations spent the first half of the 1930s almost constantly campaigning for home rule, among other issues. They both organised numerous public performances in different formats and created or adapted particular symbols, slogans and displays to further their causes. This

⁷⁵⁵ Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, (2nd ed.), p. 11. This approach, which is grounded in the inclusion of party politics within the contentious politics concept, is also adopted—and comprehensively argued for—in the first chapter of Mees, *The Basque Contention*.

section will now focus “on (4) the organizations, networks, traditions and solidarities that sustain these activities—*social movement bases*.”⁷⁵⁶ Instead of trying to access the vast spectrum of features that could fall within these four categories, the following pages will pick four particular elements to analyse and compare. The time frame has been generally limited to 1931-1936, given the great disruption caused by the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War on social movement bases, once military—and not so much political—mobilisation took the centre stage.

7. 3. 1. Organisations: the PNV and ERC as mass political parties

One of the most obvious ways to look at the social movement base component of ERC and the PNV is to analyse and compare their party structures. This subsection will consider two particular items: the parties' membership and their organisational structures.

A compared analysis of the membership of ERC and the PNV in terms of categories such as class, gender or ethnicity poses a notable challenge. Historian José María Tápiiz has carried out extensive research on the Basque nationalist party's social base in Biscay, using criteria such as class, gender and native language to produce a comprehensive picture of its membership. There are, however, no equivalent investigations for *Esquerra* at the moment. These alone would warrant a full dissertation on their own right. For now, a compared perspective must rely on a limited, qualitative approach based on existing research.

Comparing the gender proportions of the membership of ERC and the PNV is particularly tricky. Very few women were actual card-carrying members of the PNV, only 1,9% of its membership in Biscay according to Tápiiz. However, women sympathisers of the PNV usually joined the Basque nationalist women's

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid.

organisation, *Emakume Abertzale Batza* (EAB), which in Biscay had “as much or even more members” than the PNV itself. In Navarre, on the other hand, the only province where joining EAB implied joining the PNV too, the total female membership was only 10%.⁷⁵⁷ Women joined *Esquerra* directly, forming female sections within its local branches, which were in turn organised at a national level. The lack for equivalent data on the part of ERC makes a direct comparison impossible. Ivern i Salvà has found that only 1,52% of ERC's top-tier cadre were women⁷⁵⁸, an extremely small proportion—actually two individuals—but still larger than the total absence of women from the PNV's leadership positions as shown by Tápiz.⁷⁵⁹

Safer inferences can be made about language based on the existing data. Given the sociolinguistic situation of Catalonia in the 1930s⁷⁶⁰ and the fact that *Esquerra* only used Catalan for its internal and external communication, it is clear that knowledge of the ‘national language’ was higher for ERC members. Still, data for the PNV shows that a very large proportion of its members in Biscay, 95%, were Basque speakers. According to Tápiz, this shows that, allowing for some territorial variation within Biscay, PNV members included a higher than average proportion of Basque speakers.⁷⁶¹ An analysis in terms of ethnicity would be much more complex and would have to include different criteria. A hypothesis worth considering is that ERC attracted more members born outside Catalan-speaking regions given that the PNV still officially restricted its membership to those who could count at least one Basque surname out of their first four.⁷⁶²

Comparing the class composition of the membership of the PNV with that of ERC remains risky. Perhaps if ERC had a politically close trade union, equivalent to

⁷⁵⁷ José María Tápiz, *El PNV Durante La II República*, Fundación Sabino Arana, 2001, pp. 243–244.

⁷⁵⁸ Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 2, pp. 288, 347–348.

⁷⁵⁹ Any comparisons made between Ivern i Salvà's and Tápiz's data must take into account their differing criteria to determine who is included under the ‘leader’ category. Tápiz included the members of the PNV's provincial leaderships, i.e. those of Biscay, Araba, Gipuzoka and Navarre. Ivern i Salvà widened the scope to include members of ERC's central committee, candidates to elections for both the Spanish and Catalan parliaments, and the Mayors of the largest Catalan municipalities: Barcelona, Sabadell, Badalona, Lleida, Terrassa, Tortosa, l'Hospitalet, Manresa, Reus, Tarragona, Mataró and Girona. See Tápiz, *El PNV...*, pp. 252; Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 2, pp. 287–288.

⁷⁶⁰ Francesc Bernat i Baltrons, Mireia Galindo Solé, and Carles de Roselló Peralta, “El Procés de Bilingüització a Catalunya En El Segle XX a Partir de Testimonis Orals”, *Treballs de Sociolingüística Catalana*, 30, 2020, 97–111.

⁷⁶¹ Tápiz, *El PNV...*, pp. 244–245.

⁷⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 268–270.

ELA-STV for the PNV, a comparison based on employment sectors could provide interesting data. The existence of a strong peasant union, the *Unió de Rabassaires*, with notable links to ERC—its leaders often joined *Esquerra's* electoral lists—at least shows that the party had an important base of support among sharecropping farmers. The same can be said for the PNV, given the strength of its smallholder farmer unions in Biscay and Gipuzkoa. Beyond this, existing research suggests that both parties' top-tier cadre had a similar class composition, as shown in Fig. 7.4.⁷⁶³

Table 7. 2 | Professional profile of PNV and ERC leaders according to Tápiz and Ivern i Salvà

Professional category	% of ERC leaders	% of PNV leaders
Industrialists, landowners and professional liberals	57,5	53,1
Office workers	6,0	10,0
Manual workers	3,0	4,6
Agricultural labourers	3,0	0,9

Tápiz observes that the data suggests a slightly more “popular” composition of the PNV's leading circles, although the differences are very minor. Looking at particular groups within the first professional category shows that the PNV's leaders also included less landowners—4,4% against ERC's 6,1%—but more industrialists—16,2% against ERC's 9,9%, or 11,4% if business managers are also included.⁷⁶⁴ When comparing not just the leadership, but party membership as a whole, the PNV shows a more working class social base than other Catalan

⁷⁶³ This table shows the data crossed by Tápiz—obtained from his own research on the PNV—with that of Ivern i Salvà's work on ERC. See Tápiz, *El PNV...*, p. 254; Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 2, p. 292.

⁷⁶⁴ Tápiz, *El PNV...*, p. 253; Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 2, p. 292.

nationalist parties such as the *Lliga Catalana* and *Unió Democràtica de Catalunya*.⁷⁶⁵

ERC and the PNV had a fairly similar organisational structure. The base of both parties basically conformed to Maurice Duverger's branch model of mass political parties, with local units that had to count a minimum of ten members. Also, both organisations had democratic control systems in place which allowed the rank and file to choose their leaders. Beyond this, there were three important differences to note. ERC had an extra level of organisation: its local sections, or *entitats*, were grouped into committees representing *comarques*. These divisions were seen an alternative to the state's province system, which has been often rejected by Catalan nationalism, and were made official by the *Generalitat* in 1936.⁷⁶⁶ The committees were then grouped into territorial federations under the national executive committee. The PNV, on the other hand, had a more simple organisational hierarchy where local *juntas* reported to their regional leadership—one for each Basque peninsular province—under a common national leadership. A second difference lay in the nature of the top executive body. *Esquerra*'s national executive committee was chosen by a secret vote in a party national congress, attended by delegates chosen from the territorial federations. Roughly half of the executive committee was chosen directly by the plenary, and the other half was made up of representatives from the territorial federations. In contrast, the PNV's national leadership, the *Euzkadi-Buru-Batzar*, was chosen by the regional leadership councils. These were the real power holders, particularly the Biscay leadership, the *Bizkai-Buru-Batzar* or BBB. This made the PNV more decentralised than ERC, although the BBB's specific weight relative to the other regional leaderships was always an unbalancing factor.⁷⁶⁷ This organisational model was basically consistent with the party's confederalist tradition, stemming from the Arana brothers'

⁷⁶⁵ Tápiz includes comparisons with many other political parties of the 1930s, but not ERC, for which there is a lack of sociological studies concerning its membership beyond its leading circles. See *El PNV...*, pp. 253–256. For an earlier approach comparing Basque and Catalan nationalist movements' social structure, covering the Restoration period—i.e. up to 1923—see Ludger Mees, *Entre Nación y Clase. El Nacionalismo Vasco y Su Base Social En Perspectiva Comparada*, Fundación Sabino Arana, 1991.

⁷⁶⁶ About the Catalan *comarques*, see Jesús Burgueño, *Història de La Divisió Comarcal*, Barcelona: Rafael Dalmau, 2003.

⁷⁶⁷ Tápiz, *El PNV...*, pp. 63; 92–93; Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 2, pp. 216–286.

original vision of a future independent Basque Country, where each province would remain sovereign.

The third and perhaps most remarkable difference between the two parties' organisational models was the 'shadow state' features present in the PNV. These included the 'shadow government' nature of its regional leadership councils, particularly the BBB, whose members assumed ministerial-like roles; and the existence of a party 'judicial system' with its own courts down to a local level. The PNV's shadow government in Biscay included the posts of presidency, interior, economy and labour, finance, agriculture and public education. The presidency department was also in charge of international relations. Members of the regional councils could not simultaneously hold institutional positions. The PNV's stake-like organisational features allowed the party to be very effective in managing its wide array of social networks, and to make a quick transition to institutional power in 1936.⁷⁶⁸ *Esquerra*, on the other hand, was bent almost from the start on its role as the ruling party in control of the new Catalan institutions. Only two of ERC's executive committee members were required not to be in public office.

7. 3. 2. Networks: the *batzoki* and the *ateneu* as building blocks of nationalist socialisation

Actual party structures and party membership made up only a small fraction of what may be described as the social movement bases of ERC and the PNV. Beyond these lay a larger group of close sympathisers, including those who formed the most loyal core of voters, the quickest to respond to party calls for mobilisation, the first to contribute economically, etc. This layer of supporters did not simply 'float' around the party. It formed a community, fixed in place by a series of peripheral structures which included local and regional groups devoted to sports, music, language, religion, children's activities, etc. Generally speaking, the PNV and ERC followed two different models of relationship with these social networks.

⁷⁶⁸ For the particular attributions of each post and the particular policies carried out by these departments of the BBB during the Second Spanish Republic, see Tápiz, *El PNV...*, pp. 128–135.

The PNV has been defined by many scholars as a community party (see Chapter 1) because of its tight interaction with a wide array of what Tápiz has described as “parallel organisations”. These, despite their “more or less blurred, but well known, links to the political formation”, were able to accommodate any sympathisers not capable or willing to assume the full discipline of being party members. In many ways, these parallel organisations were extensions of the PNV, outer layers of the same framework, or “concentric rings” drawn around a centre represented by the party.⁷⁶⁹ This constituted a ‘closed’ network model, in which all of the different groups sustaining the network shared the PNV as their single, exclusive centre of reference.

ERC, on the other hand, can be seen to have a more ‘open’ network model. Catalonia had a strong tradition of sports, youth and culture networks which, although under diverse ideological influences—Catholic, Catalan nationalist, republican, socialist, etc.—, were largely non-partisan.⁷⁷⁰ This can be traced back to the second half of the 19th Century, and had developed for decades before *Esquerra's* foundation in 1931. ERC's community could, on a local level, engage in leisure and cultural activities in spaces which were not removed from political influence, but were permeable to different political communities. Someone close to ERC, for example, could sing in a local *orfeó*—an amateur choir—with a sympathiser of *Acció Catalana*, or take part in camping activity organised by *Palestra* with a supporter of *Unió Democràtica de Catalunya*. The *orfeó* could be perhaps locally known to be frequented by republicans, and *Palestra* was an openly Catalan nationalist organisation, but both were still non-partisan. A member of the PNV's community, on the other hand, would probably sing in a choir belonging to *Euzko Abesbatza*, or enjoy outdoor activities as a member of a *mendigoxale* group. Both groups were part of the PNV's network, even if they did not require party membership. The result was that the Basque nationalist community tended to be comparatively more immersive, and less permeable to other political communities. However, it is important to note that this contrast

⁷⁶⁹ José Antonio Rodríguez Ranz, *Gipúzcoa y San Sebastián en las elecciones de la II República*, San Sebastián: Kutxa, p. 81 quoted in Tápiz, *El PNV...*, p. 342.

⁷⁷⁰ For some of the latest research on this matter see Montserrat Duch, Ramon Arnabat and Xavier Ferré (eds.), *Sociabilitats a La Catalunya Contemporània. Temps i Espais En Conflicte*, Barcelona: Abadia de Montserrat, 2015.

between the 'open' and 'closed' model of social networks does not mean that Basque nationalist individuals "lived in a segregated world". They would still often include people with other ideologies or political affiliations in their families and circles of friends.⁷⁷¹

At the centre of these two different models of community networks lay social centres connected to the PNV and ERC: the *batzoki* and the *ateneu*, respectively. These were physical hubs, which provided space for political events, cultural activities and leisure. They combined a more technical role as places to hold party meetings and to store propaganda, with the general function of being a meeting point for their political communities. It is not surprising that they were often targets of state repression.

The *batzoki* concept was implemented by Sabino Arana himself during the early years of the Basque Nationalist Party. Although these centres were promoted by the PNV, and could only open with party permission, they were organically autonomous and had their own lists of members. Almost the opposite can be said of *Esquerra's* social centres, which employed a larger variety of names: *ateneu*, *casal*, *centre* and *foment* were all common.⁷⁷² Again, the reason for this apparent chaos was the previous tradition of grass-roots social centres in Catalonia since the 19th Century.⁷⁷³ Many of these did not have links to particular political groups, but could be easily placed within broad ideological coordinates. When ERC was created in 1931, dozens of these local social centres—those with Catalan nationalist and/or republican leanings—joined the new party. These *ateneus* became *Esquerra's* local party structure, and its members became *de jure* card-carrying party members. This gave rise to a paradoxical situation: despite being a 'brand' originally created and directly promoted by the PNV, the *batzokis* remained

⁷⁷¹ Tápiz, *El PNV...*, pp. 277, 351–352, 377–378.

⁷⁷² Examples of the diverse titles used by ERC's social centres, extracted from a list of *Esquerra's* local sections in Barcelona, are: *Avenç Obrer Català*, *Centre Republicà Català*, *Centre Català d'Esquerra*, *Casal d'Esquerra Republicana*, and *Ateneu Republicà*. See Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 2, p. 259.

⁷⁷³ Santiago Izquierdo, "Els Ateneus a Catalunya. Cultura i Sociabilitat Als Segles XIX i XX", *Catalan Historical Review*, 11, 2018, 151–62.

organically separate from the party. *Esquerra's ateneus*, on the other hand, were formally the base of the party's structure, despite their varied nature.⁷⁷⁴

Perhaps as a result of its uniqueness, the *batzoki* carried significant weight as a symbol in its own right, which was not shared by its Catalan counterparts. Different political agents in Catalonia used the term *casal* or *ateneu* to name their social centres,⁷⁷⁵ but only the PNV used *batzoki* in the Basque Country. The party itself had literally grown out of the first Basque nationalist social centre, *Euskaldun Batzokija*. The Arana brothers' house, known as *Sabin Etxea*, was converted into a *batzoki*—and the official headquarters of the PNV's leadership in Biscay—in the context of the 1932 *Aberri Eguna*.⁷⁷⁶ Even the inauguration of a local *batzoki* could justify significant mobilisation and a large coverage by the Basque nationalist press.⁷⁷⁷ References to ERC's *ateneus* in *l'Opinó* or *La Humanitat* on the other hand, were very minor and often only about technical issues such as the dates of particular meetings.

Despite these significant formal and political differences, the PNV's *batzokis* and ERC's social centres played a similar role in the sphere of nation-building. After all, these were small-scale representations of the nation: they often displayed the national flag above their entrance, they were a meeting point for individuals sharing a common vision of the nation, they promoted language and culture in national terms, etc. In many ways, a *batzoki* or an *ateneu* could give the national 'imagined communities' a more tangible—however local and limited—feeling. These were also cross-class spaces—unlike other fields of socialisation such as the workplace and most families—where, for example, working class and middle class members of the political community could share experiences. The *batzoki* and the *ateneu* could both embody the cross-class ideal of the nation present in both the PNV and *Esquerra's* worldview.

⁷⁷⁴ This separation, however, did not mean that *batzokis* had political autonomy: their managing boards were required to be made up of party members. See Tápiz, *El PNV...*, pp. 74, 262.

⁷⁷⁵ This included *Esquerra's* main rivals in the Catalan political scene: the anarcho-syndicalist CNT often used *Ateneo Libertario* for its local offices, and the *Lliga* used *Casal Regionalista* for some of its social centres.

⁷⁷⁶ De la Granja, *El culto...*, pp. 94–95. See also José Luis de la Granja Sainz, "Sabin Etxea", in *Diccionario Ilustrado de Símbolos Del Nacionalismo Vasco*, Madrid: Tecnos, 2012, pp. 674–684.

⁷⁷⁷ See for example "El acto del domingo en Elorrio", *Euzkadi*, 26/5/1931, pp. 1–4.

7. 3. 3. Traditions: the *Diada* and the *Aberri Eguna*

In the past decades, extensive research has been carried on the creation of national symbols, often inspired by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's "invention of tradition" concept. However, looking at tradition as a constituent element of a social movement base puts the focus not so much on its genesis, but on its ability to provide cohesion and mobilisation capacity.⁷⁷⁸ The Catalan *Diada* ('[national] Day') and the Basque *Aberri Eguna* ('Day of the Fatherland') were promoted as national days for their respective nations. Their sole existence is a tribute to the nation-building capacities of nationalist movements, which in the absence of a state, often develop symbols of nationhood on their own initiative. The *Diada*, in fact, managed to become a mass event even before the Spanish national day, the 12th of October, was officially established in 1918.

The *Aberri Eguna*, commemorated every Easter Sunday, was a latecomer to the world of stateless national days, with its first edition being held in 1932. It was officially meant to mark the golden anniversary of the Basque nationalist movement, 'born' in 1882 during a conversation between the Arana brothers, Luis and Sabino.⁷⁷⁹ The Catalan *Diada*, on the other hand, had its roots in the *fin de siècle* fixation of Catalan national symbols. Held every 11th of September, the event remembered the end of the siege of Barcelona during the War of Spanish Succession in 1714. The commemoration began in 1886, gaining strength in the first years of the 20th Century.⁷⁸⁰

Both the *Diada* and the *Aberri Eguna* were highly successful as mobilising traditions. They involved large numbers of participants during the years of the Second Spanish Republic. The Basque national day was a real "show of strength" in first edition

⁷⁷⁸ A similar approach is taken by Giovanni C. Cattini in Giovanni C. Cattini, "Myths and Symbols in the Political Culture of Catalan Nationalism (1880-1914)", *Nations and Nationalism*, 21, 2015, 445–60.

⁷⁷⁹ Historian José Luis de la Granja has comprehensively documented the "invention of tradition" in the case of the PNV's choice to celebrate the *Aberri Eguna* on Easter Sunday. Evidence shows that the celebrated conversation between the Arana brothers could have not taken part on an Easter Sunday, and by 1882 they still thought of Biscay, not the Basque Country as a whole, as their fatherland. See de la Granja, *El culto...*, pp. 70–76. See also "Aberri Eguna", in *Diccionario Ilustrado de Símbolos Del Nacionalismo Vasco*, Madrid: Tecnos, 2012, pp. 33–56.

⁷⁸⁰ The attempt by the Spanish police to stop the *Diada* in 1901 with dozens of arrests and the subsequent response, a 10.000-strong demonstration in Barcelona, greatly contributed to boost the event's notoriety. See Cattini, "Myths and Symbols...", pp. 452–453.

in 1932, which gathered 65.000 thousand people in Bilbao.⁷⁸¹ Later years saw 60.000 attendees in San Sebastian (1933) and 50.000 in Vitoria (1934).⁷⁸² The 1935 edition in Pamplona still mobilised thousands despite the repressive climate of that year.⁷⁸³ In 1936, the PNV opted for a decentralised celebration of the *Aberri Eguna* in every Basque municipality where the party had a foothold. In 1937, the Basque national day was celebrated in Bilbao, Eibar, and in the trenches by Basque nationalist units.⁷⁸⁴ After the fall of Biscay, the next *Aberri Eguna* took place in Barcelona with a more modest format.⁷⁸⁵ The *Diada* usually mobilised larger numbers—which must be viewed in the context of Catalonia's larger population—such as 200.000 in 1932 and 400.000 in 1933.⁷⁸⁶ The event continued during the Spanish Civil War, up until 1938. All of the above figures come exclusively from Basque or Catalan nationalist sources, so their reliability might be variable, which does not downplay the fact that the *Aberri Eguna* and the *Diada* remained mass events during these years. Another clear testimony to the strength of both traditions is their continuity throughout the rest of the 20th Century and to the present day.

The success of the *Diada* and the *Aberri Eguna* in these years was a significant addition to Catalan and Basque nation-building efforts. The present dissertation has showed many examples of mobilisation and its importance within Basque and Catalan nationalist contentious politics. Mobilisation connected to the national day, however, had particular implications of its own. Flooding the streets of a large city with national flags, nationalist slogans and simply large numbers of ‘members’ of the nation—i.e. individuals who saw themselves as part of the nation that was being celebrated—was bound to have a powerful effect. To the participant, the *Diada* or the *Aberri Eguna* would have been a memorable experience of the nation, not as an ‘imagined community’, but as a very tangible one. To the onlooker, such a defiance of the ‘official’ Spanish nation—even if the defiance was not confrontational—would have probably been an impressive sight. As with all mobilisation, self-representation—

⁷⁸¹ De la Granja, *El culto...*, p. 101.

⁷⁸² *Euzkadi*, 18/4/1933, pp. 1–2; 3/4/1934, pp. 1, 3–6.

⁷⁸³ The event was first postponed to the 15th of June, only to be banned the day before. The Basque nationalist celebrations finally took place between the 29th and 30th of that same month, although *Euzkadi* reported harassment by the *Guardia Civil* to many travelling to the Navarrese capital. See *Euzkadi*, 2/7/1935, pp. 1–6.

⁷⁸⁴ *Euzkadi*, 30/3/1937, pp. 1–2, 5; *Gudari*, 8/4/1937, pp. 6–7.

⁷⁸⁵ *Euzkadi*, 17/4/1938, pp. 1, 4.

⁷⁸⁶ Pere Anguera, *L'Onze de Setembre. Història de La Diada (1886-1938)*, Publicacions Abadia de Montserrat, 2008, pp. 291, 315.

displays of strength, worthiness and numbers—was a central aspect of the *Diada* and *Aberri Eguna*. But unlike other forms of mobilisation, the *Diada* and the *Aberri Eguna* constituted a tradition: they were not acting on a particular issue or a response to a particular context. Therefore, they could be read as yearly national ‘plebiscites’, living proof of the existence and good health of the Catalan and Basque nations.

The *Diada* and the *Aberri eguna*, however, must not be viewed as completely static or ritualistic events either. They also acted as ‘political thermometers’: the general political context would be present in the speeches, the slogans and the general mood of each year's celebration. For example, at the “1932 [edition of the *Diada*], with the *Estatut* just passed at the Spanish Parliament, the climate of euphoria was brilliant”, according to historian Pere Anguera.⁷⁸⁷ The same cannot be said of the event two years later, in the context of the conflict between the Spanish and Catalan governments over the Crop Contracts Law. The 1934 edition clearly showed a more defensive mood, as put by Antoni Rovira i Virgili: “this year the emotion of the [...] *diada* is joined by the unease produced in the hearts of Catalans by the rightist offensive [...]”.⁷⁸⁸ The same can be said of the first *Aberri Eguna* of 1932, in the context of the growing strength of the PNV, with that of 1935 in Pamplona, when PNV leadership ordered all demonstrations to be held in silence. The party feared that if the chanting of slogans went too far an excuse could be given to state authorities to ban the event.⁷⁸⁹

After the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, commemorations of the Basque and Catalan national days carried more combative and militaristic themes. The aesthetics of the 1937 *Aberri Eguna* revolved around the image of the *Gudari*, the Basque nationalist soldier (see Chapter 8).⁷⁹⁰ Writing about the *Diada* of 1938, Carles Pi i Sunyer said: “we could not commemorate with dignity the 11th of September without remembering, with the fervour and love of brothers, our soldiers that fight in the lands of the Ebro [...]”.⁷⁹¹

The participation of Basque nationalists in the Catalan *Diada* almost became tradition. Basque nationalists showed a clear interest in the Catalan national day, and the presence of a *batzoki* in Barcelona meant that a Basque ‘delegation’ was always present,

⁷⁸⁷ *L'Onze...*, p. 290.

⁷⁸⁸ “Els Borbons no tornaran”, *La Humanitat*, 11/9/1934, p. 12.

⁷⁸⁹ *Euzkadi*, 30/6/1935, p. 3; 29/6/1935, p. 1.

⁷⁹⁰ *Euzkadi*, 26/3/1937.

⁷⁹¹ “Avui com ahir”, *La Humanitat*, 11/9/1938, p. 1.

with its *ikurriña* flag standing out from the mass of Catalan flags (see Fig. 7. 4). The same cannot be said of Catalan participation in the *Aberri Eguna*, which was often in the form of telegrams showing support for the Basque national day. Clearly, the patriotic climate of these events was very fitting for the usual displays of ‘spiritual solidarity’, but strategic considerations were often also at work. After all, ‘foreign’ presence at the national day celebrations could be read as a form of certification. It was also an opportunity for the ‘host’ nation to showcase its mobilising capacity and for the visiting delegation to make a positive impression on the crowds attending the event. Looking at the Basque participation in the *Diada* throughout the years of the Second Spanish Republic shows the gradual rapprochement between ERC and the PNV. Basque delegations began to visit the *Diada* hand in hand with smaller pro-independence groups or the *Unió Democràtica de Catalunya* of Manuel Carrasco i Formiguera.⁷⁹² From 1934, as a result of the changing political context, PNV representatives would also join ERC rallies.⁷⁹³ *Esquerra's* participation in the *Aberri Eguna* had to overcome the extra obstacle represented by the religious connotations of the Basque national day. Only in 1933 did a Catalan speaker, Carrasco i Formiguera, share tribune with the PNV leaders. Both *Nosaltres Sols!* and the UDC usually sent telegrams greeting the *Aberri Eguna*, and it was not until after the beginning of the Spanish Civil War that Companys showed his support for the 1937 edition of the Basque national day.⁷⁹⁴

⁷⁹² Anguera, *L'Onze...*, p. 292.

⁷⁹³ *Ibid.* p. 333.

⁷⁹⁴ *Euzkadi*, 29/3/1932, p. 6; 18/4/1933, p. 2; 3/4/1934, p. 5; 30/3/1937, p. 8.

Fig. 7. 4 | A Basque *ikurriña* makes its way through the crowds in Barcelona ⁷⁹⁵



Both the *Diada* and the *Aberti Eguna* were, therefore, mobilising traditions with similar functions in terms of nation-building. Alongside this fundamental similarity, a compared analysis of both national days also shows that they presented notable contrasts. These were the result of both the different development of Basque and Catalan nationalist movements during the first third of

⁷⁹⁵ The caption to this photograph read, “The representation of the Basque Country, cheered by the crowd, reaches the monument to Casanova”, see *La Humanitat*, 12/9/1934, p. 1.

the 20th Century, as well as their desynchronisation in the years of the Second Spanish Republic.

The Catalan *Diada* revolved around a well defined *lieu de mémoire*: the ancient quarter of Barcelona in general and the statue of Rafael Casanova—erected in 1888 by the Town Hall— in particular.⁷⁹⁶ This ‘tied’—to a degree, as local events were often held across Catalonia—the Catalan national day to the capital. The statue of Casanova, Mayor of Barcelona and one of the main Catalan leaders during the siege, was covered in wreaths. Different Catalan nationalist groups paraded towards the statue, where they ceremonially laid their own wreaths and made speeches. ERC took part in this, both as a national party and through its local branches, but so did the *Lliga Catalana*, UDC, *Nosaltres Sols!* and many other entities. In fact, the *Diada* could be a political battleground between opposing Catalan nationalist parties and groups.⁷⁹⁷ This format, with a fixed geographical location and a variable number of participating political agents, was almost the opposite from that of the *Aberri Eguna*. The PNV was the sole promoter of the Basque national day, and only after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War did ANV join the commemorations.⁷⁹⁸ Although its first edition revolved around the transformation of the Arana brothers' house in Bilbao, *Sabin Etxea*, into a PNV social centre, the Basque national day switched location every year. Although parades, speeches and folklore exhibitions were always kept in the mix, the *Aberri Eguna* did not have a geographically fixed ceremonial element comparable to the floral tribute at Casanova's statue. The annual change in location was a strategic advantage to Basque nationalism: it meant the mass mobilisation of the *Aberri Eguna* could be used to boost its image in areas where it enjoyed less support, such

⁷⁹⁶ Another important location was the *Fossar de les Moreres*, an open space adjacent to the *Santa Maria del Mar* church where many of those killed during the 1714 siege were buried in a mass grave. Pro-independence Catalan nationalist groups wrote to the Town Hall in 1934 asking the *Fossar* to be officially rebuilt as a “tomb of the unknown patriot”. See Anguera, *L'Onze...*, p. 328.

⁷⁹⁷ During the *Diada* of 1931, the representative of the *Unió Catalanista* criticised Macià for his withdrawal of the Catalan Republic, and Ventura Gassol was interrupted by pro-independence sympathisers, who were often overrepresented in the attending public. See Anguera, *L'Onze...*, p. 280.

⁷⁹⁸ De la Granja has shown that the first edition of the *Aberri Eguna* had much to do with the need felt by the old *Aberri* faction of the PNV felt about the party's recent decision to accept an *Estatuto* within the limits of the Spanish Constitution. This group —led among others by Elías Gallastegi, Ceferino Jemein and Manuel Egileor—wanted a greater emphasis on the party's official *aranista* ideology, and thus proposed the celebration of the *Aberri Eguna*. See de la Granja, *El culto...*, pp. 92–101. For ANV's participation, see pp. 95, 108.

as Araba and Navarre. In Catalonia, where there was no such unequal distribution in the adherence to Catalan nationalism, this was not really an issue. Choosing Barcelona as the place for the *Diada* had more to do with—besides its historical significance—the specific political weight of the Catalan capital, an inescapable cultural and political centre.

The strong religious connotations of the Basque national day were also an obvious difference from its Catalan counterpart, and again a product of the importance of political Catholicism in the PNV's ideology. It is also true, however, that religion was not completely absent from the *Diada*—which had began in 1886 as an attempted funeral Mass “in memory of the martyrs of 1714”—and Catalan conservative nationalists still held religious ceremonies in its context. In the particular context of 1932, the Catholic background of the *Aberri Eguna* also had tactical value for the PNV, as a way to highlight the party's stance on the religious issue in the face of growing Basque opposition to the Republic's secularist policies.⁷⁹⁹

Finally, another key difference between the two traditions was that the *Diada* achieved institutional status earlier, basically as a result of the earlier establishment of Catalan home rule. Although the 11th of September was not established as an official holiday by the *Estatut interior* (see Chapter 5), representatives of the new Catalan institutions took an active role in the commemorations from 1931. This included both Macià and Companys—as Presidents of the *Generalitat*—, Jaume Aiguader and Carles Pi i Sunyer—as Mayors of Barcelona—, the President of the Catalan Government Joan Casanovas and several *Consellers*. The *Aberri Eguna* began to assume a more institutional character after Basque home was secured in the autumn of 1936. The 1937 edition of the Basque national day was already organised with the participation of the Basque Government led by José Antonio Aguirre. The institution would continue to promote the *Aberri Eguna* during the exile years, including its 1938 Barcelona edition.⁸⁰⁰

⁷⁹⁹ Cattini, “Myths and Symbols...”, p. 452; de la Granja, *El culto...*, p. 96.

⁸⁰⁰ Anguera, *L'Onze...*, pp. 278, 292, 314–315, 333, 359; “El VI Aberri Eguna”, *Euzkadi*, 28/3/1936, p. 3.

7. 3. 4. Solidarities: collective responses to repression

A final aspect of social movement bases that must be taken into account is the existence of solidarities: mechanisms of mutual support which strengthened the Basque and Catalan nationalist communities. The need for such collective support may arise in different contexts, but one of the most obvious examples is the response to repression.

As previous chapters have shown, repression was a factor in the contentious politics of both ERC and the PNV, although particular circumstances were quite different. Catalan and Basque nationalism were both seriously affected by repression until the end of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship. After the proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic, however, the situation changed in consonance to the Basque and Catalan nationalists' status with respects to the new regime. The PNV's regime challenger status throughout most of the period made it the regular target of state repression, particularly between June-September 1931 (see Chapter 4), October 1932-June 1933 (see Chapter 5) and August 1934-November 1935 (see Chapter 6). Until 1934, clashes between Basque nationalists and leftists added to the effects of repression because of their legal consequences and the resulting casualties. ERC, on the other hand, after becoming the ruling party in Catalonia and assuming the regime member role, exercised, rather than received, repression.⁸⁰¹ Miquel Badia, leader of the JEREC and chairman of the *Comissaria d'Ordre Públic*—the *Generalitat's* law enforcement supervision body—between December 1933 and September 1934, was notorious for his repressive actions against the CNT.⁸⁰² The October 1934 represented a major change in the reach and scale of repression. Both ERC and the PNV were put in the crosshairs, although the former caught the toughest measures, with its entire leadership spending more than a year in prison.

⁸⁰¹ Smaller, pro-independence groups were still sometimes targets of repression. See, for example, an incident where the police closed down a rally organised by the *Estat Català - Partit Proletari*, apparently to seize an *estelada* flag, in *L'Insurgent*, 8/4/1932, p. 4.

⁸⁰² Miquel Badia had been himself imprisoned by Primo de Rivera's dictatorship because of his involvement in the *Complot del Garraf* (see Chapter 2). His journey, in less than five years, from imprisoned activist to overseer of law enforcement in Catalonia is very indicative of *Esquerra's* climb to power. See Fermí Rubiralta i Casas, *Miquel Badia. Vida i Mort d'un Líder Separatista*, Barcelona: Fundació Josep Irla, 2011, pp. 107–121.

The two parties lacked the ability to stop repression altogether, but could somewhat mitigate some of its effects in three main ways: maintaining specific structures, campaigning and alternative framing.

Coping with repression required having specific structures in place which could be activated to produce both short-term and long-term responses: contingency plans, legal counsel, prisoner support networks, etc. The PNV, being involved in incidents of repression and confrontation throughout the whole republican period, developed a well-oiled structure which became quite experienced in handling repressive action. Tápiz has shown that this included Pro-Prisoners committees active in Biscay and Gipuzkoa, which gave economic and legal support to imprisoned Basque nationalists. These committees provided services that ranged from food and clothing to money for bail bonds. They ensured prisoners received numerous visits, and even inspected prison facilities.⁸⁰³

ERC, on the other hand, was unused to repression when the post-October 1934 blow came, and had trouble dealing with the disruption caused by the imprisonment of almost its whole leadership. Only after the Mayor of Barcelona, Carles Pi i Sunyer, was paroled in February 1935 was ERC able to rebuild a new Executive Committee. A Pro-Amnesty Committee was also created—which included local-level delegations—although it seems it was more dedicated to political campaigning than to prisoner support.⁸⁰⁴ In the past Catalan nationalism had set up its own organisations created to deal with repression, such as *La Reixa* ('The Fence') and the *Associació Catalana de Beneficència* ('Catalan Welfare Association'), but these were largely inactive by the 1930s.⁸⁰⁵ After October 1934, the women of ERC's female section decided to create *Ajut Català* ('Catalan aid'), to support the many imprisoned Catalan nationalists.⁸⁰⁶ Local ERC sections also organised trips to visit Catalan nationalist prisoners, many of which were held at

⁸⁰³ Tápiz, *El PNV...*, pp. 289–290.

⁸⁰⁴ Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana...*, Vol. 2, pp. 137–147. See also *La Humanitat*, 28/7/1935, p. 9. Such campaigning must be considered as a form of contentious politics, not an element of ERC's social movement base.

⁸⁰⁵ Antoni Dalmau i Ribalta, "El Catalanisme Radical i Popular d'un Igualadí: Lluís Marsans i Solà (1866-1955)", *Revista d'Igualada*, 49, 2015, p. 20.

⁸⁰⁶ Maria Dolors Ivern i Salvà, *Les Dones d'Esquerra. 1931-1939*, Fundació Josep Irla, 2007, pp. 43–47.

the Pamplona prison.⁸⁰⁷ Although further research into ERC's solidarity structures is probably needed, at this stage it is safe to say that the PNV was more experienced and effective in this particular sphere.

Campaigning and alternative framing worked together to deal with different aspects of repression. The former tended to be focused on short-term issues. These often involved specific objectives related to actually stopping or slowing down particular repressive measures. Examples of this were the amnesty campaigns of 1931 and 1936, whose main objective was putting pressure on ruling institutions to achieve the release of Basque and Catalan nationalist prisoners. *Esquerra* managed to fully channel the 1936 amnesty issue into its February election campaign, being the only of the two main Catalan candidacies supporting the release of all political prisoners. The PNV, was unable to do the same, having to compete with the Basque Popular Front coalition, which had made amnesty a key element of its programme too. Depending on the particular type of repression involved, campaigning could include letters or telegrams of protest, public accusations of foul play by legal or police institutions, demonstrations, hunger strikes by the prisoners themselves, etc. The former was only part of the Basque nationalist repertoire, and it was used twice: in 1931 (see Chapter 4) and 1933 (see Chapter 5). In both cases it helped to keep the pressure on government authorities in the context of wider mobilisations against repression.⁸⁰⁸

Alternative framing had to do with the more long-term ideological struggle to turn 'turning repression against itself'. After all, the indictments, imprisonments and fines of Basque and Catalan nationalists by the state involved—apart from the obvious legal consequences—their framing as criminals by the state. The Basque and Catalan nationalist press broadcasted alternative narratives, which framed those affected by repressive measures as examples for other activists. *Ara!!*, a newspaper published by ERC's youth wing, openly portrayed those killed, imprisoned or exiled as a result of the October 1934 uprising as examples for new generations of Catalan nationalists:

⁸⁰⁷ "Presó de Pamplona, 1936", *Ara!!*, 5/2/1936, p. 4.

⁸⁰⁸ For a general overview on hunger strikes during the Second Spanish Republic, see Juan Cristóbal Marinello Bonnefoy, "Una aproximación a la historia de la huelga de hambre en las cárceles españolas (1920-1936)", in *Actas Del XIII Congreso de La Asociación de Historia Contemporánea*, Albacete, 2016, pp. 705–717.

“Brothers who fell heroically the 6th of October [1934]; brothers who are in infamous prisons doing unjust and exaggerated sentences; brothers who are in distant lands, in sacred exile [...]. Think, brothers, that your memory guides the youth of the free and just Catalonia.”⁸⁰⁹

The same theme can be found in the discourse of Basque nationalists:

“Blood of youth spilled for the freedom of the fatherland! A remembrance of love and emotion for you! Your lives, broken by steel and the malicious dagger, cannot be sterile. Your sacrifice must be [our] stimulus and austere example until the end.”⁸¹⁰

This text was published in 1936 by *Bizkatarra* together with a list of 25 names of Basque nationalists killed as a result of clashes with police forces and, more often, rival political groups. The Basque nationalist press was quite dedicated in keeping track of repression, publishing lists of prisoners or victims, and sometimes carefully documenting every single incident. This was then displayed as proof of the “[Basque] national outrage”, but also as a testimony to the Basque nationalist movement capacity to endure repression.⁸¹¹ Catalan nationalist press, on the other hand, did not usually publish ‘lists of martyrs’, using instead photographs of the deceased.⁸¹² Both Catalan and Basque nationalism grouped together victims of repression and victims of violence coming from other political agents under the same discourse and themes. *Bizkatarra* showed this very clearly including both

⁸⁰⁹ Original fragment: “Germans que caiguèreu heroicament el 6 d'octubre; germans que esteu en presons infamants complint penes injustes exagerades; germans que esteu en terres llunyanes, en l'exili sagrat [...]. Penseu, germans, que el vostre record serveix de guia a les joventuts de la Catalunya lliure i justiciera.” See *Ara!*, 5/2/1936, p. 4. For similar framings of Catalan nationalists killed during the 1934 uprising see *La Humanitat*, 25/12/1935, p. 5.

⁸¹⁰ Original fragment: “¡Sangre de juventud derramada en aras de la libertad patria! ¡Recuerdo de cariño y de emoción para vosotros! Vuestras vidas, rotas por el acero y el puñal alevoso, no pueden ser estériles. Vuestro sacrificio tiene que ser estímulo y ejemplo austero hasta el final.” See “Muertos en la lucha del ideal nacionalista vasco”, *Bizkatarra*, 28/3/1936, p. 1.

⁸¹¹ See for example the list, in timeline format, included in *Jagi-Jagi*, 19/8/1933, pp. 4–5.

⁸¹² See for example the pieces dedicated to Francesc Piera Esteve, David Redó Monte and Josep Maria Bobé Aleu in *Llibertat*, 1/5/1935, p. 3; and the articles about Jaume Compte and Maximilià Biarreau in *Ara!*, 11/2/1936, p. 4 and 18/2/1936, p. 4.

types of victims in its list. Few Catalan nationalists were killed by political adversaries outside the context of the 1934 uprising, but the exceptional cases were treated similarly to victims of repression.⁸¹³

The most notorious of these was the high profile killing of the Miquel and Josep Badia. After returning from their post-October 1934 exile, the two brothers were shot dead by FAI members as revenge for Miquel Badia's activities against anarchists in the *Comissaria d'Ordre Públic*.⁸¹⁴ *La Humanitat* portrayed the brothers as “heroes” and *morts per la pàtria*, framing the killing in very similar terms to those that can be seen in Basque nationalist publications or applied to those who died fighting in the October 1934 uprising:

“The two patriot brothers have died for the Fatherland, struck by the Fatherland's worst enemies. Catalans can die; Catalans can be killed. Catalonia cannot die; Catalonia cannot be killed.”⁸¹⁵

Discursive framings of the ‘fallen patriot’ figure could sometimes transcend the limits of strictly responding to repression. The best example of this is the case of Sabino Arana for Basque nationalism. Besides being the movement's ‘founding father’, having created the core ideology of Basque nationalism, its symbols and its party, Arana was also the Basque national martyr *par excellence*, as his followers attributed his early death to his frequent imprisonments.⁸¹⁶ The PNV organised funeral masses for Arana every 25th of November—the anniversary of his death in 1903—which became a day of remembrance for “all deceased [Basque] nationalists”.⁸¹⁷ José Luis de la Granja has researched extensively what can be

⁸¹³ See the case of Ramon Guitart, a member of the JEREC “murdered the 10th of March 1936 by fascist gangs” in “Un màrtir”, *Ara!!*, 17/4/1936, p. 4.

⁸¹⁴ Rubiralta i Casas, *Miquel Badia*, pp.161–175.

⁸¹⁵ Original fragment: “Els dos germans patriotes han mort per la Pàtria, colpits pels pitjors enemics de la Pàtria. Els catalans poden morir; als catalans se'ls pot matar. Catalunya no mor; a Catalunya no poden matar-la.” See Antoni Rovira i Virgili, “Morts per la pàtria”, *La Humanitat*/30/4/1936, p. 1.

⁸¹⁶ The symbolic role of Sabino Arana has been well researched, particularly by José Luis de la Granja. See the above mentioned “El culto a Sabino Arana...”, and also “Arana, Sabino” and “Sukarrieta”, in *Diccionario Ilustrado de Símbolos Del Nacionalismo Vasco*, Madrid: Tecnos, 2012, pp. 118–143, 729–745. For a more detailed approach, see *Ángel o Demonio, Sabino Arana, El Patriarca Del Nacionalismo Vasco*, Madrid: Tecnos, 2015.

⁸¹⁷ *Euzkadi*, 24/11/1935.

described as the PNV's "worship" of its founder, which includes the extensive use of religious imagery in the positive portrayals of Arana. In this context, de la Granja notes that "master", and "epithets of clear religious content, specially *apostle* and *martyr*" were often used to describe the PNV's first leader.⁸¹⁸ It is therefore perhaps surprising to see exactly the same language being used by ERC to praise a 'martyr' of its own, Francesc Layret:

"Years have passed and the seed sown by the Master has fructified. Layret was [an] apostle and forerunner. His immolated blood in the tragedy of embarrassing hours of our people was the glorious sowing of redemption. [...] *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* will continue its constructive and ascending march as long as the mirror of its action is the life and the example of the glorious martyr [...]."⁸¹⁹

Layret, a personal friend of Lluís Companys, was a left-wing Catalan nationalist and republican who had also often worked as a lawyer for the CNT in the second decade of the 20th Century. He was shot dead at the height of the *pistolerisme* era in Barcelona by hitmen working for Catalan employers.⁸²⁰ ERC and other left-wing groups gave a yearly tribute to Layret, often around the 30th of November, the date of his killing.⁸²¹ In 1936, Lluís Companys and Carles Pi i Sunyer unveiled a statue dedicated to the lawyer in Barcelona.⁸²² The use of such hyperbolic and religious language—even in the case of a firmly secular political agent such as ERC—is a testimony to the specific weight achieved by figures such as Arana and Layret, well beyond that of 'ordinary martyrs'. Their role, as it has been mentioned above, transcended the sphere of repression, but nevertheless contributed greatly

⁸¹⁸ De la Granja, "El culto a Sabino Arana", pp. 83–84.

⁸¹⁹ Original fragment: "Han passat els anys i la llavor sembrada pel Mestre ha fructificat. [...] Fou Layret apòstol i precursor. La seva sang immolada a la tragèdia d'hores vergonyants del nostre poble, fou la sembra gloriosa de la redempció. [...] *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* continuarà la seva marxa ascendent i constructiva sempre que el mirall de la seva actuació sigui la vida i l'exemple del gloriós màrtir [...]."
See Ernest Ventos, "Layret, exemple", *La Humanitat*, 30/11/1931, p. 1.

⁸²⁰ For a recent biographical study of Layret, see Vidal Aragonés, *Francesc Layret: vida, obra i pensament*, Manresa: Tigre de Paper, 2020.

⁸²¹ See *La Humanitat*, 30/11/1931, p. 1; E. Matos Barrio, "Avui fa dotze anys...", *La Humanitat*, 30/11/1932, p. 1.

⁸²² *La Humanitat*, 21/4/1936, pp. 1, 12.

to the building of a collective sense of self-sacrifice and resilience in the political communities orbiting the PNV and ERC.

A final note must be made about the non-exclusive nature of the different structural and discursive responses to repression exhibited by the social movement bases of the PNV and ERC. Other regime challengers were also regular targets of repression and their social movement bases acted accordingly. One of the most visible examples of this period was how the communist left developed its own solidarity networks within the umbrella of International Red Aid, which was organised in Catalonia as *Socors Roig Internacional*.⁸²³ This organisation had its own structures dedicated to mitigate the effects of repression, and also engaged heavily in campaigning and alternative framing.⁸²⁴ It was the regime challenger status of a political agent, and not so much its particular ideology, which produced the need for collective responses to repression.

⁸²³ See Laura Branciforte, *El Socorro Rojo Internacional En España (1923-1939). Relatos de La Solidaridad Antifascista*, Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2011.

⁸²⁴ *Socors Roig Internacional* channeled much of its campaign and alternative framing through its own specific newspaper, in Catalan, called *Suport*.

Chapter 8.

**Synchronisation, new hegemonies
and defeat.**

**Basque and Catalan nationalists
during the Spanish Civil War**

Although violence had already been in the mix of contentious politics throughout the Second Spanish Republic, the three-year-long war that resulted from the 18th of July coup took things to a whole new level. To Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow the onset of large-scale lethal conflict is a contradictory blend of dramatic change—which sets it apart from more ‘peaceful’ forms of contentious politics—and continuity.

“In one sense, violence changes everything. [...] [But] once we take the analysis to the level of mechanisms and processes, we discover that similar causes and effects operate across the whole range of contentious politics, from viciously violent to pristinely peaceful.”⁸²⁵

The same can be said about the role played by Catalan and Basque nationalists during the Spanish Civil War. The political cycle that opened with the beginning of hostilities in July 1936 and ended with the republican defeat of 1939 certainly included novel features. War, as again Tilly and Tarrow note, means “high stakes [...] [which] affect the survival and the continuing conflict of participants well after the immediate struggle was ended”. As killings became widespread, political actors could be wiped out. Many Basque and Catalan nationalists lost their lives. The end of the war brought an unprecedented wave of repression, and a long exile awaited many of those who escaped the aftermath. Fighting the war was very costly. “Unlike recruiting people for demonstrations or public meetings, creating and maintaining armed force requires extensive resources”.⁸²⁶ Despite this, familiar trends in Basque and Catalan nationalist contentious politics remained. Home rule remained a central issue throughout the war. Political alliances were as decisive as they had been in 1931 or 1934. So was framing: both ERC and the PNV saw the war through national narratives and imageries which had to be promoted and broadcasted.

ERC and the PNV, still the dominant political actors within their respective national movements, followed almost opposite paths during the Civil War years.

⁸²⁵ Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, (2nd ed.), pp. 169, 188.

⁸²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 170.

Esquerra, although nominally still the ruling political party in Catalonia, saw the end of its hegemony. Its influence diminished as the war progressed: first, when the *Generalitat* was all but displaced by the revolutionary *Comitè Central de Milícies Antifeixistes* ('Central Committee of Antifascist Militias'). Then, as the pro-soviet *Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya* or PSUC⁸²⁷, emerged as an alternative to *Esquerra* in the eyes of significant portions of the Catalan middle and working classes.⁸²⁸ Finally, the relocation of the Spanish Republican Government to Barcelona in October 1937 eroded Catalan home rule, as Negrín's executive took over some of the *Generalitat's* power attributions.

The PNV, on the other hand, became the hegemonic power in the Basque Country once Basque home rule became a reality in October 1936. The Provisional Basque Government, which was in the hands of a PNV-Popular Front coalition, converged around the charismatic figure of José Antonio Aguirre.⁸²⁹ The defeat of the Basque armies and the fall of Biscay during the early summer of 1937 sent the PNV leadership to exile in Barcelona, but the political capital gained in the previous months would remain for decades.

A novelty of this political cycle was that, for the first time ERC and the PNV had a very similar relationship with the Spanish republican regime, with both basically being regime members for most of the war. Between September 1936 and August 1938, both parties had ministers in the Spanish cabinet. Manuel Irujo was Minister

⁸²⁷ The PSUC was created as the result of the fusion of several Catalan socialist and communist parties soon after the defeat of the rebel military coup in July 1936. Its founding members were the *Unió Socialista de Catalunya*—which left ERC's orbit after years of close collaboration—the Catalan Communist Party, the Catalan delegation of the PSOE, and the pro-independence *Partit Català Proletari*. The party was led by Joan Comorera, and it unilaterally proclaimed its adherence to the Communist International, adopting its 'unified party' model. However, the relationship between the PSUC and both the *Comintern* and the Spanish PCE remained contentious. See Josep Puigsech Farràs, 'El Peso de La Hoz y El Martillo: La Internacional Comunista y El PCE Frente Al PSUC, 1936-1943', *HISPANIA, Revista Española de Historia*, LXIX.232 (2009), 449–76.

⁸²⁸ The key to the PSUC's surge in popularity lay in its ability to, in Enric Ucelay Da Cal's words, "play both sides" of labour and institutional politics better than its CNT, ERC and POUM rivals. This was partly due to the PSUC's takeover of the UGT union in Catalonia, which had been historically very small, but grew to almost half a million members after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. See David Ballester, "Marginalitats i Hegemonies. La Unió General de Treballadors de Catalunya, 1922-1939", doctoral thesis, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1995. The PSUC also attracted middle classes looking for an alternative to the revolution unleashed by the CNT, and managed to absorb part of the Catalan nationalist legacy. See Ucelay Da Cal, *La Catalunya Populista...*, p. 345.

⁸²⁹ About Aguirre's 'charisma' and eventual transformation into a Basque national hero after his dramatic exile following the end of the Spanish Civil War, see Ludger Mees, "Constructing and Deconstructing National Heroes. A Basque Case Study", *Studies on National Movements*, 3, 2015 <<http://snm.nise.eu/index.php/studies/article/view/0304a>>.

without portfolio—except for six months in 1937, when he held the Justice post—for the PNV. *Esquerra* contributed with Joan Lluhi, Josep Tomàs and Jaume Aiguader at different stages and holding different portfolios.

Conditions for political contention for Basque and Catalan nationalists during the Civil War cycle were varied to the extreme. The ‘Basque oasis’, which included Biscay and small areas of the provinces of Araba and Gipuzkoa, was characterised by a relative lack of political repression and the strong control of the Basque Government. The same cannot be said of Catalonia, where violence against opponents of the Popular Front—including conservative Catalan nationalists—was common. In Araba and Navarre from 1936, and in the rest of the Basque Country from mid-1937, under the control of the Francoist armies, Basque nationalism was pushed to the underground. Catalan nationalists avoided such harsh conditions until 1939, when Catalonia was finally occupied by Francoist forces.⁸³⁰ In many ways, the war was a window of opportunity for Basque and Catalan nationalists. Both the *Generalitat* and the Basque Provisional Government were able to operate as *de facto* states at different times. This was interrupted by the fall of Biscay in the summer of 1937, and by the fall of Catalonia in January 1939—although the *Generalitat* had already seen some of its power attributions limited by then. Under Juan Negrín, the Spanish Republican Government moved to Barcelona in October 1937, significantly undermining Catalan self-government in the process. Negrín implemented recentralisation policies which included seizing back key power attributions from the *Generalitat*. All in all, it can be argued that the political opportunity structure widened greatly between 1936 and 1937, narrowed slightly between 1937 and 1939, and closed abruptly after the final triumph of Franco's armies.

Obtaining and/or maintaining home rule was still the main stream of contention for the PNV and ERC—and most Basque and Catalan nationalists—during this political cycle. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first will cover three main items: the contentious politics of the early months of the war, the evolution of

⁸³⁰ The Catalan nationalist response to the new conditions for contention after 1939 was the creation of the underground *Front Nacional de Catalunya* (‘National Front of Catalonia’), which lies beyond the time frame covered by the present thesis. See Daniel Díaz Esculies, *El Front Nacional de Catalunya (1939-1947)*, Barcelona: La Magrana, 1983.

Catalan and Basque home rule and its implications for nation-building. The second section will move to cover later stages of the conflict and focus on two additional issues. These include the defeat of the Basque Government from the perspective of Catalan nationalists, and the special relationship developed between the two movements during the Basque exile in Catalonia.

8. 1. A touch of statehood: institutions, home-rule and nation-building in the early stages of the war (July 1936-June 1937)

8. 1. 1. A summer of shock and awe

The coup that led to the Spanish Civil War began the 17th of July 1936 at the Spanish northern African enclave of Melilla. The plan was to begin the uprising the next day, but a group of rebel officers seized the initiative after being discovered by the local authorities. With the help of the Foreign Legion, they soon took over the town. That same day, the Army of Africa—probably the best military asset in the hands of the rebels—took control of the Spanish protectorate in Morocco. Francisco Franco, who had been made Captain General of the Canary Islands by the Government to pull him away from more strategic posts, famously flew to Morocco in a *Dragon Rapide* plane to lead the military rising.

The president of the Spanish cabinet in Madrid, Santiago Casares Quiroga, was notoriously slow to take action. Having received notice of the events since the 17th of July, he initially downplayed the severity of the matter to his ministers. Basque and Catalan nationalists—as well as many other political actors—took many hours to fully grasp the situation. The 18th of July, neither *La Humanitat* nor *Euzkadi* included news of the uprising in their front covers. That day, however, would be celebrated for decades by the Francoist regime as the *Alzamiento Nacional* ('National Uprising'): rebel military units, members of the *Falange* and other right-wing groups took over many key cities. Casares Quiroga, quickly overwhelmed by the situation, resigned. He was briefly replaced by Diego Martínez Barrio, who telephoned the brain behind the coup, General Emilio Mola—known as *el Director*—in a failed attempt to reach an agreement with the rebels. Martínez

Barrio resigned too and Manuel Azaña named José Giral to lead the Spanish executive. Facing rapid advances by the rebel military units, Giral resorted to arming the socialist, communist and anarchist workers' militias. This sparked many revolutionary situations across the republican regime-controlled territory. During the rest of the summer, the central executive struggled to maintain political and military control. Unlike the many left-wing organisations, such as the UGT and CNT unions, which had been preparing for the coup—stockpiling weapons, watching military garrisons, etc.—most Basque and Catalan nationalists were caught quite off-guard.

The coup had different consequences in Catalonia and the Basque Country. In order to produce a compared analysis of the different scenarios generated in its aftermath, this section will look at the different mechanisms and processes operating during the first months of the war. Two main premises must be first pointed out: the strategic dominance of Barcelona over the rest of Catalonia and the heterogeneous geographical and political reality of the Basque Country. Once the coup was defeated in Barcelona, which happened after serious fighting during the 19th of July, the possibilities of it spreading to other Catalan cities were scarce. The Basque Country, on the other hand, was effectively split in half after the coup triumphed in Araba and Navarre, and failed in Biscay and Gipuzkoa.

Before getting into the details of the contentious politics developed by Basque and Catalan political agents in this context, it is necessary to take a look at the general picture of what had happened in each of the particular post-coup scenarios. These are basically four:

1) The 'successful coup' scenario developed in Araba and Navarre. Here all of the conditions defined by Tilly and Tarrow to describe a "revolutionary outcome" can be applied to the complete power transfer that took place from the republican authorities to the military rebels.⁸³¹ The coup quickly took over the state apparatus, as the main institutions capable of using armed force—the army, the *Guardia Civil*, etc.—defected from the republican regime. The uprising could count

⁸³¹ Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, (2nd ed.), pp. 186–187.

on mass popular support, especially in Navarre⁸³², given that the two provinces were Carlist strongholds. The Carlist *requeté* militia had been training and preparing for months, so it was able to quickly provide thousands of fighters against the Republic.⁸³³

2) The 'successful regime' scenario can only be applied to Biscay. Its provincial authorities, led by governor José Echevarría Novoa, acted quickly to arrest the leading conspirators in Bilbao. The coup failed because the armed forces present in the province, particularly their top officers, stayed loyal to the regime. The *requetés*, despite being present and organised in the province, were too few to make a difference. Echevarría led the creation of a *Junta de Defensa*, an emergency institution which channelled the efforts of the pro-regime coalition, quickly securing the border with Araba.⁸³⁴

3) A 'mixed' scenario emerged in Gipuzkoa out of the combined weakness of the different political agents involved. The coup—which came late, was poorly organised and lacked support—failed to achieve its objectives. However, the flight of the governor, Jesús Artola, left the task of stopping the coup to a confusing mix of loyal military or police forces and workers' militias. After a week's fighting the military rebels had been defeated, but power was in the hands of a series of *Juntas de Defensa*, many of which assumed a revolutionary character that went beyond the strict defence of the republican regime. General Mola soon attacked Gipuzkoa from Navarre, taking the town of Irun by the 5th of September, thereby cutting off the rest of the republican-controlled Basque Country from the French border.⁸³⁵

4) The 'revolution' scenario developed in Catalonia, where the attempted coup was defeated, but effective power was seized by armed workers' militias, mostly belonging to the anarcho-syndicalist union CNT. Companys himself, in a famous meeting with the anarchist leaders, recognised the situation and apparently was prepared to hand over all powers, but offered an intermediate solution, which was

⁸³² For a detailed study of the social and cultural dimensions of the coup's popular support in the Basque Country, particularly in Navarre, see Javier Ugarte Tellería, *La Nueva Covadonga Insurgente: Orígenes Sociales y Culturales de La Sublevación de 1936 En Navarra y País Vasco*, Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1998.

⁸³³ De la Granja, *El Oasis...*, pp. 294–295.

⁸³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 295.

⁸³⁵ See Pedro Barruso, *Verano y Revolución. La Guerra Civil En Gipuzkoa (Julio-Septiembre de 1936)*, San Sebastián: Hiria, 2006, pp. 71–118.

accepted. The new revolutionary power would be exercised through the *Comitè Central de Milícies Antifeixistes* or CCMA, a ruling committee with representatives from the main antifascist political agents. This new institution was officially created through a decree by the *Generalitat*, and the two co-existed, creating what has been described as a 'dual power' situation, although the CCMA was the *de facto* authority for the rest of the summer.⁸³⁶

Basque nationalists arguably had to face a much more complex challenge than their Catalan counterparts: three different scenarios with three different political opportunity structures. First and foremost, once it was more or less clear that the coup would lead to civil war, the PNV had to make a decision about where it was going to stand. This was not an issue for ERC, which was part of the Catalan Popular Front and was already fully positioned in every sense. Neutrality, which to an extent would have been consistent with the PNV's tradition of non-intervention in 'Spanish affairs', was definitely on the table for some time. A meeting of the party's national leadership in San Sebastian the 18th of July, only agreed to overrule a statement issued unilaterally by its MPs for Gipuzkoa Manuel Irujo and José María Lasarte, in which they expressed their support for "the legitimate incarnation of popular sovereignty represented by the Republic." It was the Biscay leadership of the PNV that finally settled the matter, after a nightlong discussion at *Sabin Etxea*. The BBB published a note in *Euzkadi* which framed the conflict initiated by the coup as "between citizenry and fascism, between republic and monarchy", and opted for the former, considering "the direct and painful repercussion" the situation could have for the Basque Country.⁸³⁷

Looking at the scenarios with a reasonably open political opportunity structure, it appears that the dominant contentious process affecting Basque and Catalan nationalists was coalition formation. In both the 'successful regime' and 'revolution' scenarios of Biscay and Catalonia, the new coalitions were not simple alliances between political actors, but actual institutions, although their relationship to the republican regime was very different. The *Junta de Defensa* of

⁸³⁶ The members of the CCMA were as follows: ERC and the unions UGT and CNT received three representatives each. Two went to the anarchist FAI. The USC, *Acció Catalana Republicana*, the *Unió de Rabassaires* and the POUM were each given one representative. See Pelai Pagès i Blanch, *Cataluña En Guerra y En Revolución (1936-1939)*, Espuela de Plata, 2007, pp. 58–59, 62–68.

⁸³⁷ De la Granja, *El Oasis...*, pp. 316–321.

Biscay was formally under the authority of the Spanish Republican Government, even if it was basically autonomous in its day to day operation. The Catalan CCMA, on the other hand, was a revolutionary institution which, even if it did not openly challenge the legally existing *Generalitat*, it was created and operated independently from other powers.⁸³⁸ This fundamental difference between the two coalitions was related to the different mechanisms at work behind their formation processes.

The PNV's decision to join the Biscay *Junta de Defensa* was carried out through the attribution of similarity mechanism. The Basque Nationalist Party assumed the shared 'antifascist' umbrella with the Spanish left after the BBB's decision to support the republican regime. This attribution of similarity was rooted in a strategic reading of the situation post-coup situation, as expressed by Juan Ajuriagerra⁸³⁹, President of the BBB in 1936:

"[...] the military uprising had been organised by the rightist oligarchy whose slogan was unity, an aggressive Spanish unity pointed towards us. The right was ferociously opposed to any self-government *Estatuto* for the Basque Country. On the other hand, the legal government had promised it to us, and we knew we would end up obtaining it."⁸⁴⁰

The logic was, therefore, not only that the PNV had more to gain from an alliance with the Popular Front and the republican regime, but also that victory for the rightist rebels would be a deadly threat to the whole Basque nationalist political project. This was something the PNV shared with the Spanish left, which also had a lot to lose if the Republic fell.

⁸³⁸ For a more detailed investigation of the CCMA, its local committees and intermediate structures, and its relationship with the *Generalitat*, see Josep Antoni Pozo González, *Poder Legal y Poder Real En La Cataluña Revolucionaria de 1936*, Sevilla: Espuela de Plata, 2012.

⁸³⁹ For a recent biographical study of this influential PNV leader, see Eugenio Ibarzabal, *Juan Ajuriagerra. El Hermano Mayor*, Donostia-San Sebastián: Erein, 2019.

⁸⁴⁰ Original fragment: "[...] el alzamiento militar lo había organizado la oligarquía derechista cuyo eslogan era la unidad, una agresiva unidad española apuntada hacia nosotros. La derecha se oponía ferozmente a cualquier estatuto de autonomía para el País Vasco. Por otro lado, el gobierno legal nos lo había prometido y sabíamos que acabaríamos consiguiéndolo." Ajuriaguerra's testimony is reproduced by de la Granja in *El Oasis...*, p. 319.

In Catalonia, however, ERC's decision to join the CCMA can be best described as a form of co-optation. Although the armed forces loyal to the *Generalitat*—including the local *Guardia Civil*—had responded to the attempted coup and contributed to its defeat, the brunt of the fighting had fallen on the workers' militias led by the CNT. These basically controlled Barcelona thanks to the power vacuum caused by the coup, their strength in numbers, and the fact that they managed to seize thousands of weapons from the defeated rebel garrisons. ERC as a party was completely overwhelmed, particularly in the first days. In this context, Companys proposed the creation of the CCMA to the anarchist leaders, so it can be argued that ERC co-opted itself into the revolutionary institution, which would *de facto* replace the *Generalitat*. This horrified many Catalan nationalists, some of which wanted to confront the CNT, but from Companys and other like-minded ERC leaders' perspective, the move bought time and prevented a full take-over by the revolutionaries.⁸⁴¹ By mid-September, after negotiations between the different political agents involved, the CCMA was dissolved and the CNT agreed to enter the Catalan Government with three *Consellers*, assuming the posts of economy, provisions and health and welfare. This, which can be seen as a second co-optation action, was the first step in the restoration of the *Generalitat's* power, although workers' militias would still retain significant control of the streets until May 1937.⁸⁴²

In Gipuzkoa, the process of coalition formation was very fragmented, almost to the point of chaos. The *Junta de Defensa* of Gipuzkoa, created in San Sebastian after the defeat of the coup, lacked control over the many local committees that were created throughout the province. The PNV engaged in three different mechanisms before these local processes of coalition formation. In some local *Juntas*, such as those of Tolosa and Hondarribia, the PNV was completely marginalised. This can be likened to a forced version of the mechanism of defection: the Basque nationalists were barred from joining the coalition formation process by local leftists. These were unwilling to let a Catholic and conservative party into what they saw as a revolutionary coalition that would not only fight the military rebels'

⁸⁴¹ Culla, *Esquerra Republicana...*, pp. 45–46.

⁸⁴² Pagès i Blanch, *Cataluña En Guerra...*, pp. 76–77.

threat, but also enact radical social change. Most of these local committees, however, incorporated representatives of the PNV, often assuming public order posts to protect the clergy and right-wing prisoners from the workers' militias. The PNV was usually underrepresented in these local bodies, which it joined half-heartedly, in what can be described as a form of co-optation. The reasons for this lack of enthusiasm were similar to those for not joining the 1934 uprising: the revolutionary agenda of many of the local *Juntas* was difficult to digest for the PNV. Finally, the exceptional *Junta* of Azpeitia, was made up exclusively of Basque nationalists. It included representatives from the PNV, its youth wing, ANV, STV and the *Euzko Nekazarien Bazkuna* farmers' union. The leading role assumed by the PNV in its creation must be defined as a form of brokerage. It was under the immediate authority of this committee that the first Basque nationalist militia units were created, soon to see combat against Mola's *requetés*.⁸⁴³ This was before ERC managed to consistently organise its own militia units, the Companys and Macià columns—soon unified as the Companys-Macià Column—between late August and early September.⁸⁴⁴ However, the PNV's engagement in military action was defensive and low-key before the approval of the Basque *Estatuto*. The Basque Nationalist Party's general attitude towards the war during the summer was still “without much enthusiasm”—its militia was not mobilised for the crucial defence of Irun—, mainly because it still had no tangible Basque home rule to defend.⁸⁴⁵

In Araba and Navarre, options were very limited. The PNV and ANV were practically neutralised as political actors. This happened through three different mechanisms: repression, defection and co-optation. Repression included the closing down of the Basque nationalist press and its social centres, and also the formal dissolution of its organisations. In Navarre at least 21 Basque nationalists were shot, including the Mayor of Estella.⁸⁴⁶ Defection was also common—Tilly and Tarrow describe it as one of the typical features of lethal conflict situations⁸⁴⁷—and often went hand in hand with co-optation. This involved many documented cases

⁸⁴³ Barruso, *Verano y Revolución...*, pp. 119–132.

⁸⁴⁴ Francesc Xavier Hernández and David Íñiguez, *La Columna Macià-Companys*, Barcelona: Fundació Josep Irla, 2013, pp. 43–51.

⁸⁴⁵ de Pablo, Mees, & Rodríguez Ranz, *El Péndulo...*, Vol. 2, pp. 9–15.

⁸⁴⁶ De la Granja, *El Oasis...*, p. 326.

⁸⁴⁷ Tilly & Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, (2nd ed.), p. 170.

of PNV members leaving the party and joining the Carlists, sometimes issuing public statements calling on others to do the same. Historian José Luis de la Granja has found instances of both forced and voluntary co-optation.⁸⁴⁸ The combined effect of repression, defection and co-optation was a severe process of demobilisation, which drained the PNV's ability to engage in any form of contentious politics in Araba and Navarre. Despite this, a moderate degree of clandestine activity was carried out.⁸⁴⁹

Most Catalan nationalists did not have to face such harsh conditions for political contention until 1939. The exception was the *Lliga Catalana*, which was subject to systematic repression. The conservative Catalan nationalists had attempted a shift to the political centre after the February 1936 election, but were still identified as the main rightist force in Catalonia by the time the coup took place. Also, many in the left resented the *Lliga's* support for the post-October 1934 repression. One of the first measures taken against the *Lliga*, was the seizure of its newspaper *La Veu de Catalunya*, by members of ERC. In the repression that followed, at least 383 members of the *Lliga* were killed by the workers' militias, including some of its MPs. Francesc Cambó and most of the Catalan conservative leaders finally opted to support the military rebels, seeing a more dangerous menace in the revolutionary situation that had developed in Catalonia.⁸⁵⁰ On a different level, left-wing Catalan nationalists were also harassed by anarchist militias, particularly during the rule of the CCMA. This was often a result of attempts by particular individuals to protect others from repression—such as members of the clergy and local rightists—or to resist the power of local revolutionary Committees. The most serious of these cases involved the shootings of the ERC Mayors of Garriga, Capellades and Isona. Other

⁸⁴⁸ De la Granja, *El Oasis...*, pp. 321–332.

⁸⁴⁹ Formally as an entity of the Basque Government, but under the control of the PNV, the *Servicio Vasco de Información* ('Basque Information Service') was created to coordinate underground activities. These included the *Red Araba*, which transported people and material across the border with France. See Fernando Mikelarena Peña, 'Contrabandistas de Ganado y Redes de Evasión En Navarra Durante La Guerra Civil Española', *Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea*, 42 (2020), 273–80; Juan Carlos Jiménez de Aberasturi, 'Los Vascos En La II Guerra Mundial: De La Derrota a La Esperanza', *Oihenart*, 14, 1997, 57–84.

⁸⁵⁰ For the *Lliga Catalana* during the Spanish Civil War, see Borja de Riquer i Permanyer, *L'últim Cambó (1936-1937). La Dreta Catalanista Davant La Guerra Civil i El Primer Franquisme*, Vic: Eumo Editorial, 1996. The number of members of the *Lliga* killed is mentioned by de Riquer in p. 47, from Josep Maria Solé i Sabaté and Joan Villaroya i Font, *La repressió a la reraguarda catalana, 1936-1939*. Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, Vol. 2, 1989-1990.

leaders of *Esquerra* were forced into exile, which was sometimes temporary or disguised as a diplomatic mission, including Joan Lluhí, Ventura Gassol and Joan Casasnovas.⁸⁵¹ A particularly obscure case was that of Josep Dencàs, whose initial escape to Italy in August 1936 motivated his expulsion from *Estat Català*.⁸⁵²

8. 1. 2. Between home rule and statehood

The chaos and confusion of the summer of 1936 gave way to one of the most crucial moments in the history of Basque nationalism. The naming of Largo Caballero as President of the Spanish cabinet by Azaña in early September gave the PNV an opportunity to resume the institutional procedure for Basque home rule. The process, which had begun in April but was interrupted by the outbreak of the Civil War (see Chapter 7), could now be accelerated. Caballero wanted a diverse executive, capable of integrating the different political agents that had formed militias—even the CNT would join with several Ministers—and that included offering a post to the PNV.

José Antonio Aguirre and Francisco Basterrechea were sent to Madrid, where they negotiated a fast approval of the Basque *Estatuto* in exchange for Manuel Irujo joining the Spanish republican government as Minister without portfolio. It was a bold and controversial move which went against the PNV's tradition of strict and exclusive adherence to Basque politics. Luis Arana, still one of the most orthodox voices within the party, gave up his membership in protest. The 1st of October, the *Cortes* voted unanimously for what became known as the 'Elgeta *Estatuto*', a

⁸⁵¹ Culla, *Esquerra Republicana...*, pp. 44–45. For a general perspective on repression in Catalonia during the whole conflict, before its fall to Franco's armies, see Rubèn Doll-Petit, "Repressió, salvament i fugida a la reraguarda catalana, 1936-1939", *Ebre* 38, 2, 2004, 49–60. A particularly obscure case was that of the ex-*Conseller* Josep Dencàs. In August 1936 he left for Italy,

⁸⁵² Dencàs was in fact imprisoned upon his arrival in Geneva. He would later relocate to the *Catalunya Nord* and finally settle in Tangier, where he died in 1966. The whole Italian episode seemed to confirm suspicions about the ex-*Conseller's* fascist sympathies which dated to his days as leader of the *escamots*. For a specific study on Dencàs' ideological flirtings with fascism and his diplomatic contacts with Mussolini's Italy, see Arnau González i Vilalta and Enric Ucelay Da Cal, "La Possibilitat Feixista a Catalunya: Josep Dencàs, Estat Català i La Diplomàcia Italiana (1931-1938)", in *El Catalanisme Davant Del Feixisme (1919-2018)* (Barcelona: Gregal, 2018), pp. 435–77.

reference to the small town where the Basque armies had stopped the advance of General Mola.⁸⁵³

The new home rule charter was an open door to the synchronisation of Basque and Catalan nation-building. A compared analysis of the Elgeta charter⁸⁵⁴ and the Catalan 1932 *Estatut* shows that the former was essentially a Basque version of the latter. In fact, some articles had been copied word by word, with ‘Catalonia’ or ‘*Generalitat*’ being simply replaced by ‘the Basque Country’. Like its Catalan counterpart, the Elgeta *Estatuto* allowed for the devolution of important power attributions, including aspects of law enforcement, economic policy, health, and education. It established the same bilingual model for language policies, with two parallel state and Basque public education systems. Unlike the 1932 Catalan *Estatut*, the Elgeta text allowed for the creation of a Basque university fully dependent on the new Basque institutions. Both home rule charters contemplated the possibility of a unilateral modification of home rule by the Spanish Parliament, even against the will of Basque and Catalan voters.

Chapter 5 of the present thesis, in a compared analysis of the Basque and Catalan home rule charters of 1932, defined them as a transition from a ‘sovereignty-based’ approach to a constitutional, ‘autonomy-based’ approach to home rule.⁸⁵⁵ In terms of nation-building, they were characterised as “an incomplete or partial CD transitions”, because despite their limitations, they still contained ‘phase D’ features with a considerable potential for nation-building.⁸⁵⁶ Can the same be said about the Basque *Estatuto* that was finally passed by the Spanish Parliament in October 1936?

Just like the Catalan *Estatut* of 1932 and the Basque *Gestoras*’ project of the same year, the Elgeta *Estatuto* fell far from a recognition of nationhood. It was a heavily modified version of the project approved by Basque voters in 1933, with the 53 articles of the original text being reduced to just 14. The changes included a

⁸⁵³ De la Granja, *El Oasis...*, pp. 381–383.

⁸⁵⁴ For the full version of the Basque *Estatuto* of 1936, see *Gaceta de Madrid*, 281, 7/10/1936.

⁸⁵⁵ By now, it is clear that the Catalan transition “from sovereignty to autonomy” was much quicker, from the Núria *Estatut* of 1931 to the final, 1932 version. The longer Basque road towards home rule had seen three previous projects in successive years: the Estella *Estatuto* of 1931, the *Gestoras*’ project of 1932 and the text approved by the referendum of 1933 (see Chapter 6).

⁸⁵⁶ Once again, this is a reference to Martin and Kamusella’s enlarged version of Hroch’s schema for nation-building (see Chapter 4). Phase C involves a national mass movement, and phase D the achievement of national institutions.

notable reduction in power attributions for the new Basque institutions, and also some deeper issues. The reference to Basque “historical rights”—which had been present in the version approved by Basque voters—had been erased in the modifications made by the *Cortes. Euzkadi*, the term for ‘Basque Country’ in Basque language,—traditionally used by Basque nationalists⁸⁵⁷—was omitted and only the Spanish version, *País Vasco*, was used. Finally, all references to Navarre and its future incorporation into the Basque self-governing frame—which only included Biscay, Araba and Gipuzkoa—were dropped. In José Luis de la Granja's words, “the *Estatuto* of 1936 reflected more the ideas of [the Basque PSOE leader] Prieto and the left than those of the PNV.”⁸⁵⁸ It is important to note that these last two obstacles to Basque nation-building, affecting the name and territorial frame of the entity that was to govern itself, were not an issue in the Catalan *Estatut* of 1932. Catalonia's name or its territorial limits were not a subject of contention. Notwithstanding these items—particularly the Navarre handicap—other core elements of the Elgeta *Estatuto* must be considered. The text and its approval still represented the legal recognition of a community which transcended the provincial administrative divisions, and created several Basque institutions with a significant potential for nation-building. The presence of these ‘phase D’ features is enough to consider the Elgeta *Estatuto* a ‘partial CD transition’, which means that by October 1936, Basque and Catalan nation-building had finally synchronised.

The practical consequences of this synchronisation cannot be assessed without taking into account the decisive effects of the war and its developments between 1936 and 1937. Both the Catalan *Estatut* of 1932 and the Elgeta *Estatuto* were intended as simplified texts primarily about defining home rule within the limits of the 1931 Constitution, which would then need complementary legislation. This had been solved in the Catalan case by the approval of the *Estatut interior* in 1933 (see Chapter 5), but there was no time for a Basque equivalent in October 1936. Instead, the war situation imposed a faster solution. A temporary disposition established the creation of a Basque Provisional Government, with its President

⁸⁵⁷ The fact that ‘Euzkadi’ is a term developed as a neologism by Sabino Arana gave it strong connotations of nationhood. See Ludger Mees, “Euskadi/Euskal Herria”, in *Diccionario Ilustrado de Símbolos Del Nacionalismo Vasco*, Madrid: Tecnos, 2012, pp. 294–319.

⁸⁵⁸ José Luis de la Granja Sainz, “El nacimiento de Euzkadi: el Estatuto de 1936 y el primer Gobierno Vasco”, *Historia Contemporánea*, 35, 2007, pp. 432–433.

chosen by Local Councillors. The PNV and the Popular Front reached an agreed to let José Antonio Aguirre be the only candidate for the post.⁸⁵⁹ Thus, the beginning of Basque home rule cannot be separated from the needs of the raging armed conflict.

The Spanish Civil War created a series of special circumstances which had a profound impact on the implementation of Basque and Catalan home rule. The context of 1936 in particular, as described above, was characterised by a severe weakening of Madrid's capacity to exercise centralised control. The void was filled by many different institutions, many of which were revolutionary in nature. In Catalonia and the Basque Country, this led to a level of self-government which had not been contemplated by the Basque and Catalan home rule charters. At the time, and also by later scholars, this has been described as a *de facto* independent status.⁸⁶⁰ The following pages will compare the extension of Catalan and Basque home rule during the first year of the war, to verify its proximity to statehood and enable a later assessment of its effects on nation-building efforts in the two contexts.

In Max Weber's famous definition, "the modern state is an institutional form of rule that has successfully fought to create a monopoly of legitimate physical force as a means of government within a particular territory."⁸⁶¹ For the sake of establishing solid criteria, and to avoid the many debates on state theory, which lay well beyond of what the present thesis intends to ascertain, this definition will be used as a starting point. Institutions, physical force and legitimacy, i.e. governance structures, armed forces and justice systems will be considered as key indicators of statehood, along with other items which will be mentioned below, namely foreign relations and economics.

⁸⁵⁹ De la Granja credits this decision to the PNV's greater electoral support in Basque areas under the control of the republican authorities, and to the need to motivate the Basque nationalists into full commitment to the war effort. See De la Granja, *El Oasis...*, pp. 383–384.

⁸⁶⁰ About the Basque Country, see for example Núñez-Seixas, *¡Fuera El Invasor!...*, p. 356; de la Granja, *El Oasis...*, p. 388, and Santiago de Pablo, "La guerra civil en el País Vasco: ¿un conflicto diferente?", *Ayer*, 50, 2003, p. 127. Several examples for Catalonia can be found in Leandre Colomer, "La preparación de la independencia de Cataluña durante la guerra civil", in Enric Ucelay-Da Cal, Arnau González i Vilalta (eds), *Contra Companys, 1936*, Universitat de València, 2012.

⁸⁶¹ Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation", in David Owen and Tracy B. Strong (eds), *Max Weber: The Vocation Lectures*, Hackett Publishing Company, 2004, p. 38.

The creation of the first Basque Government came only two weeks after the reorganisation of the *Generalitat* and the dissolution of the CCMA. Both cabinets were presented as ‘national unity’ governments⁸⁶², and their composition was a clear reflection of the different correlations of forces present in Catalonia and the Basque Country. The CNT, which was barred from joining the Basque Government, held the economy, provisions and health and safety posts in the *Generalitat*.⁸⁶³ ERC, which had enjoyed a solid hegemony in the previous Catalan cabinets, was now reduced to three seats in a government shared with anarchists, communists and socialists. The left-wing Catalan nationalists still controlled key areas including the presidency of the *Generalitat*, and the posts of culture and interior security. On the other hand, the Basque Government put the PNV into a position of hegemony which the party had not enjoyed the preceding months of the war, with its representatives holding the strategic posts of presidency and defence—both under José Antonio Aguirre—, interior, finance and justice and culture—these two under José María Leizaola⁸⁶⁴.

The Basque cabinet proved much more stable than its Catalan counterpart, seeing no changes until the fall of Biscay in June 1937, after which it had to replace Alfredo Espinosa—who was shot by the Francoist authorities—and go into exile in Catalonia. Juan Astigarrabia also left the Basque Government after he was expelled from the PCE, accused of having become too close to Aguirre's political agenda.⁸⁶⁵ The *Generalitat*, on the other hand, underwent four different restructurings during the same time. These were the result of different tensions, which in simplified terms pitted the CNT and the left-opposition communist POUM, against the pro-

⁸⁶² *Euzkadi* brought back the national-consensus frame, describing the Basque Government as “born from the unanimous consensus of this people. Born from the unanimous will of the Basque people, without distinction of ideologies”, see 8/10/1936, p. 1. *La Humanitat*, after explaining that “all the forces of the antifascist front of Catalonia form the *Consell* of the *Generalitat*”, also stated that “the Catalan people [...] is fully represented [...] in Catalonia's instrument of Government”, see 27/9/1936, p. 1. Of course these framings strategically sidelined the fact that large sections of the population of both Catalonia and the Basque Country were in fact not represented by the new governments. This included the Carlist and other conservative segments of the populations of Araba and Navarre, and the *Lliga Catalana* and other rightist actors in Catalonia.

⁸⁶³ For the full composition of the Basque and Catalan executives, see De la Granja, *El Oasis...*, p. 385; Pagès i Blanch, *Cataluña En Guerra...*, p. 171.

⁸⁶⁴ About Leizaola, see the biographical work Carmelo Landa Montenegro, *Jesús María Leizaola. Vida, Obra y Acción Política de Un Nacionalista Vasco (1896-1937)*, Bilbao: Fundación Sabino Arana, 1995.

⁸⁶⁵ De la Granja, *El Oasis...*, p. 386.

soviet PSUC and ERC. The conflict reached its culminating point during the *fets de maig* ('May events') of 1937, were after days of violent clashes in Barcelona, the anarchists and the POUM lost much of their previous power and were expelled from the *Generalitat*.⁸⁶⁶ After these events, the Spanish Government—which had moved to Valencia in November as Madrid came under direct attack by the rebels—began to limit Catalan home rule. The period between October 1936 and May/June 1937, therefore, is the best timeframe to analyse how far did the Basque and Catalan Governments go in terms of approaching statehood.

The Catalan governance structure distinguished between the head of state-like figure of President of the *Generalitat*—held by Companys since 1933—and the prime minister-like *Conseller delegat* or *Conseller en cap*—in the hands of Josep Tarradellas. This was not the case in the Basque Government, probably due to its provisional status, where both figures were effectively concentrated in Aguirre. The element of both cabinets with the most statehood qualities, however, was the post of defence, a power attribution that was beyond the constitutional limits of Basque and Catalan home rule. The war context naturally gave defence a considerable degree of prominence. It boosted Aguirre's role in the Basque Country, but in Catalonia it was significantly first held by Felip Díaz, an air force captain, and after December 1936 by the CNT representative Francesc Isgleas.⁸⁶⁷

A compared analysis of the programmes of the Catalan and Basque governments reveals their initial attitudes to the prospect of assuming a position of *de facto* statehood.⁸⁶⁸ Much can be said about the different nature, particularly in the economic sphere, of the two agendas. The *Generalitat* was effectively reassuring its position before the CCMA—which was officially dissolved the 1st of October—it was also “legalising the revolution”, giving legal cover to the prior collectivisations of land and industry. On the other hand, the Basque Government proposed a “reformist” economic policy which “basically respected the capitalist

⁸⁶⁶ Pagès i Blanch, *Cataluña En Guerra...*, pp. 169–209. About the ‘May events’, see also Ferran Aisa i Pàmols, *Contrarevolució, Els Fets de Maig de 1937*, Barcelona: Base, 2007.

⁸⁶⁷ Pagès i Blanch, *Cataluña En Guerra...*, p.187.

⁸⁶⁸ It must also be noted that Companys had already—the 28th of August 1936—issued a decree by which only the legal dispositions issued by the *Generalitat* would be mandatory in Catalonia, effectively creating a legal base for sovereignty. See Colomer, “La preparación...”, p. 348.

order”.⁸⁶⁹ The important element at this point, however, is to compare the two programmes' interpretation of the limits of Basque and Catalan home rule.⁸⁷⁰ The Basque Government's first declaration contained no explicit affirmations of sovereignty, and referred to the Spanish Republican legal framework or institutions several times. For instance, it described itself as “in compliance of the precepts contained by the autonomy *Estatuto* of Euzkadi, approved by the *Cortes* of the Spanish Republic.” The Basque Government also presented its welfare policies as built “over the minimum foundations of the State's social legislation”, and introduced its foreign policy with “those countries which respect the sovereignty and rights of the Republic and of Euzkadi.”

The Catalan Government's programme, on the other hand, began with the statement “fascism in arms against the Republic has plunged the country into the horrors of civil war”, only to then avoid any mention of the Spanish Republican institutions. The declaration signed by Companys and his *Consellers* could have almost been one of an independent state, speaking of military operations outside Catalonia with an internationalist tone, saying “we will continue to offer the other peoples of Iberia our assistance against fascism”. It even included a proclamation of “the recognition of the right of peoples to govern their own life according to the principles of self-determination”, also emphasising that “[the members of the Catalan Government] are fervent defenders of Catalonia's freedoms”. The Basque Government's statement did not go that far, vowing instead that it would “safeguard the national characteristics of the Basque people”, and that it was the “guarantee” of “the recognition of the Basque [collective] personality”.

These declarations are quite telling of the spirit that reigned in the Basque and Catalan autonomous governments during the autumn of 1937, but their content must be contrasted with the practical realities of the two institutions. In terms of what Charles Tilly has defined as *state capacity*⁸⁷¹, the Basque Government would

⁸⁶⁹ Pagès i Blanch, *Cataluña En Guerra...*, p. 173; De la Granja, *El Oasis...*, p. 386.

⁸⁷⁰ For the Basque Government's initial declaration, see “Bajo el Árbol de Gernika”, *Euzkadi*, 8/10/1936, p. 3. For the *Generalitat*'s declaration, see “La Declaració del Consell”, *La Humanitat*, 27/9/1936, p. 1, 5. The full versions of both can be found in Texts 17 and 18 of Annex III.

⁸⁷¹ This refers to “the extent to which governmental action affects the character and distribution of population, activity, and resources within a government's territory. When a high-capacity government intervenes in population, activity, and resources, it makes a big difference [...]. Low capacity governments might try to do the same things, but they have little effect.” See *Contentious Politics*, (2nd ed.), p. 170.

have surely ranked higher, particularly during the early autumn. The *Generalitat* first had to deal with the fact that, at a local level, power was still in the hands of a series of committees and revolutionary militias which operated almost independently. The Catalan Government had announced that it would “impose itself to anyone that for whatever reason acted against the discipline that the circumstances impose.”⁸⁷² The executive ordered the replacement of all local committees by Mayors and Local Councils the 12th of October, a process which took at least two weeks and met some resistance. To convey the impression that the revolution was being taken through legal channels, the *Generalitat* issued the Decree of Collectivisations and Workers' Control. Steps were also taken to stop all forms of extrajudicial repression, putting the notorious *patrulles de control* (‘control patrols’)—responsible for many irregular arrests and executions—under the authority of the Interior *Conselleria*.⁸⁷³ Aguirre's team faced none of these challenges, and it was able to carry out its policies with relative efficiency despite dealing with a more difficult military situation. There was no revolution to be ‘undone’ in Biscay, which comprised most of the territory under the control of the Basque Government. The areas of Gipuzkoa that had been taken over by workers' militias were already in military rebel hands by October 1936. Also, Aguirre's charisma and good relationship with the non-Basque nationalist members of his cabinet smoothed much of the ideological tension, in contrast with the continuous disputes that plagued Catalan governance.⁸⁷⁴

In terms of building and sustaining exclusive armed forces, the Basque Government was, with little doubt, much more successful than its Catalan counterpart. Aguirre led the organisation of a ‘Basque Army’ out of the previously existing militias operating in the territory controlled by the Basque Government. These were militarised and organised as the *Ejército de Euzkadi*—XIV Army Corps to the Spanish republican authorities—which was by decree under the control of the Defence Department of the Basque Government, headed by Aguirre himself. The Basque President resisted all efforts by the Spanish Republican Ministry of Defence to include the Army of Euzkadi within the Army of the North—which

⁸⁷² “La Declaració del Consell”, *La Humanitat*, 27/9/1936, p. 1.

⁸⁷³ Pagès i Blanch, *Cataluña En Guerra...*, pp.173–177.

⁸⁷⁴ De la Granja, *El Oasis...*, pp. 388–390.

included other units operating in Asturias and Cantabria—under General Llano de la Encomienda. This led to a strained and contentious relationship between the Spanish Republican and Basque military leadership up to the fall of Bilbao in June 1937. Nevertheless, the Army of Euzkadi remained under the almost exclusive control of the Basque Government.⁸⁷⁵

In Catalonia, a similar project to create an *Exèrcit Popular de Catalunya* ('Catalan Popular Army') failed completely. The plan was to integrate the existing militias manning the Aragón front into an army under control of the *Generalitat*, parallel to the reorganised *Ejército Popular Republicano* ('Popular Republican Army') that Madrid began to establish from October 1936. The Catalan Government encountered two major difficulties: the first was the slow pace of militarisation.⁸⁷⁶ This, which had been rather uneventful in the Basque Country, was initially rejected by the CNT and the POUM, slowing down the process until the summer of 1937. The second obstacle was the successful integration of the Catalan military units by the Popular Republican Army, which counted with the support of the PSUC. All along, *Esquerra* and the *Generalitat* were handicapped by the fact that they had comparatively few Catalan nationalist militias to use as a solid core from which to build a politically loyal army. This issue will be further addressed below.

Besides strictly military units, directly tasked with waging war on Franco's armies, both the Basque Government and the *Generalitat* could count on their own police forces: the *Ertzaña* and the *Mossos d'Esquadra*. The former were created directly by the Basque Government, initially as military police, and were placed under the authority of Interior Councillor Telesforo Monzón. The *Ertzaña* was therefore well under the influence of Basque nationalism. Not only because it adopted Basque nationalist symbols—common to all Basque self-government institutions—but also as a result of most of its members coming from the PNV. The Catalan *Mossos d'Esquadra*, on the other hand, had a more complex *esprit de corps*.

⁸⁷⁵ These conflicts are reviewed in detail in Núñez-Seixas, *¡Fuera El Invasor!...*, pp. 357–361. They included disputes over promotions of officers, the creation of a Military Academy of Euzkadi—to which the Spanish Republican Government responded by creating its own equivalent in Bilbao—and mutual accusations of lack of commitment.

⁸⁷⁶ Militarisation refers to the introduction of military discipline and protocol to the militias, which were often organized more or less horizontally and rejected the traditional chain of command. See *Diari Oficial de la Generalitat de Catalunya*, 28/10/1936, in Pagès i Blanch, *Cataluña En Guerra...*, pp. 178–179.

Their creation can be traced back to the 18th Century, as a force loyal to the new Bourbon dynasty that could guard the Catalan countryside against bandits and remaining supporters of the Austracist cause. The *Mossos'* legacy was therefore not particularly prone to be assumed by Catalan nationalism. However, their transfer to the direct control of the *Generalitat* after 1931 brought them closer to ERC, and they remained loyal to the Catalan Government during the October 1934 crisis.⁸⁷⁷

Establishing reliable justice systems was a particularly sensible issue for the Basque and Catalan governments in the light of the numerous killings of political opponents during the summer—particularly in Catalonia and to a lesser extent in Gipuzkoa. Between October 1936 and the summer of 1937 both administrations succeeded in developing their own judicial powers, although these presented notable differences. In the Basque Country, the *Estatuto* already provided a wide margin for the creation of an autonomous justice system, with only military justice reserved exclusively to the state. This was superseded by Aguirre who, soon put all military causes under his own department's jurisdiction. In Catalonia, where the Catalan *Estatut* had only placed civil—not criminal—justice in the hands of the *Generalitat*, extrajudicial punishment remained a serious issue. The Justice *Conseller* and leader of the POUM Andreu Nin created People's Courts the 13th of October 1936 to keep 'revolutionary justice' under administrative control.

The 'People's Court' formula was also implemented in the Basque Country, where a *Tribunal Popular de Euzkadi* began to operate, but apart from the name, the two systems shared significant differences. While the Catalan courts were created with the political mandate to "guarantee the integrity of proletarian conquests", in the Basque Country the motto was that "the Republic goes on", meaning that the courts would serve no revolutionary purpose. This was reflected in the People's Courts composition: in Catalonia, besides a president and a prosecutor, they were made up of political representatives from the antifascist organisations. The People's Court of *Euzkadi* was structured as a more balanced mixed system, with three magistrates and a jury made up of political

⁸⁷⁷ See Carmelo Landa Montenegro, "Órden Público y Guerra En El País Vasco Autónomo: Creación y Balance de La Ertzaña (1936-1937)", in Francisco Rodríguez de Coro (ed.), *Los Ejércitos*, Fundación Sancho el Sabio, 1994, pp. 341–94; Manel Risques Corbella, *Identitat Democràtica o Tradició Espanyolista? La Repressió Sobre Els Mossos d'Esquadra a La Postguerra*, Barcelona: Edhasa / Departament de Justícia i Interior de la Generalitat de Catalunya, 2003.

representatives, apart from the prosecutors. The actions of the People's Court of *Euzkadi* led to comparatively less executions: 19 against the roughly 40 only by the Peoples' Courts of Barcelona and specifically between November 1936 and February 1937.⁸⁷⁸

Already, the three items analysed above—institutions, armed forces and justice systems—provide a balanced overview of Basque and Catalan 'state-building' during the Spanish Civil War. Therefore, and leaving enough margin for the further investigation of particularities, it is reasonable to assert that the Basque Government achieved a higher degree of *de facto* independence than the *Generalitat*. Aguirre's decisive action in the military sphere clearly tipped the scales, giving the Basque administration exclusive access to all coercive forces available in its territory.

This 'Basque advantage' was repeatedly pointed out by the Catalan pro-independence group *Estat Català*⁸⁷⁹, which often compared the "Basque oasis"⁸⁸⁰, to the *Generalitat*'s loose grip on power amidst the revolutionary situation sparked by the CNT. This genuine admiration for Basque policies also had a good touch of 'mirror effect' (see Chapter 4), as this fragment shows:

"We [Catalans] envy your spiritual strength, we envy your patriotic mettle. [...] The admirable Basque Country has been fixing and strengthening the positions that will make it valuable as a people [...] without foreign interference. [...] Euzkadi behaves as an independent nation. [...] The title of Basque Republic is applied everywhere. [...] The flag of Euzkadi flies on warships. [...] Euzkadi has its own army. [...] The government of President Aguirre deals with international matters directly."⁸⁸¹

⁸⁷⁸ It must be noted that extrajudicial killings also happened in Biscay and during the rule of the Basque Government. These consisted of mass shootings of prisoners following bombing raids by the rebel military, the most notorious of which happened in Bilbao the 4th of January 1937, see De la Granja, *El Oasis*..., pp. 407, 424–432. For a comprehensive review of both systems, see De la Granja, *El Oasis*..., pp. 405–433; Pelai Pagès i Blanch, "La Justícia Revolucionària i Popular a Catalunya (1936-1939)", *Ebre* 38, 2, 2004, pp. 35–48.

⁸⁷⁹ The new *Estat Català* included the JEREC that had split from ERC, as well as *Nosaltres Sols!*, *Partit Nacionalista Català* and other smaller groups. See Ucelay Da Cal, "Los «malos de la película»...", p. 166.

⁸⁸⁰ De la Granja, *El Oasis*..., pp. 297–304. In April 1937, *La Humanitat* also informed its readers about the special situation in the 'Basque oasis', through an interview with Santiago Aznar, the socialist Councilperson for Industry in the Basque Government. See "Manifestacions del Conseller d'Indústria, del Govern basc", *La Humanitat*, 6/4/1937, p. 7.

⁸⁸¹ "Comentari nacional", *Diari de Barcelona*, 23/5/1937, p. 6.

Estat Català's admiration for Basque policies were clearly in part due to the PNV's greater success in 'nationalising' the war effort and operating as a *de facto* state. The group, however, also tended to exaggerate the achievements of the Basque Government, which never presented itself as an independent republic. Key facts were ignored, such as that the Elgeta *Estatuto* was similar to its Catalan counterpart, or that the Basque Government, like the *Generalitat*, included Basque branches of Spanish political parties.⁸⁸² This enthusiastic support for Basque nationalist had much to do with attacking what *Estat Català* saw as Companys' lack of Catalan nationalist policies and soft approach towards the CNT.⁸⁸³

That being said, two additional points must be also made clear. The first is that the development of this undoubtedly extensive self-government in both Catalonia and the Basque Country came in a very particular context, which involved a near-collapse of the Spanish Republican Government's state capacity. Decentralisation was the norm, not a Basque or Catalan exception, although the particular political dynamic of these two territories resulted in the creation of more or less coherent alternatives to the central state's power. For example, the issuing of currency by the Basque and Catalan administrations had important state-like connotations, but it does not belie the fact that many local entities all over the Spanish Republican territory also issued their own currency.⁸⁸⁴ A second point in relation to this is the accidental character of Catalan and Basque 'state-building'. Winning the war and, as historian Núñez Seixas puts it, "proving their capacity to rule the destinies of their own country", were the guiding concerns in the minds of Basque and Catalan nationalists with government responsibilities. At no point did the *Generalitat* or the Government of Euzkadi take decisive steps towards a *de jure* rupture with the Spanish Republic, at least before 1938. Tarradellas and Companys openly stated their respective preferences for a federal and confederate state model. That said, the possibility of using the broadened home rule to actively pursue an independent

⁸⁸² "Som bons diplomàtics?", *Diari de Barcelona*, 8/10/1936, pp. 3–4; "Editorial", *Diari de Barcelona*, 14/10/1936, p. 3.

⁸⁸³ Some leaders of *Estat Català*—including its chairman, Joan Torres Picart—were involved in an obscure plot to, allegedly, stage a coup against Companys to install a new *Generalitat* that would assume full powers and give a new Catalan nationalist direction to the revolution. See Enric Ucelay Da Cal and Arnau González i Vilalta (eds), *Contra Companys, 1936*, Universitat de València, 2012.

⁸⁸⁴ De la Granja, *El Oasis...*, p. 393; Pagès i Blanch, *Cataluña En Guerra...*, pp. 181–182.

Catalonia fuelled rumors and obscure plots.⁸⁸⁵ The Basque and Catalan governments did not seek a formal state recognition from abroad either, despite the intense diplomatic activities of both administrations. Many foreign delegations considered Catalan independence—which they saw as an unlikely possibility that nevertheless could not be completely ruled out—a risky diplomatic scenario which would threaten more international instability.⁸⁸⁶

All in all, this Basque and Catalan ‘state-building’ was short-lived. The fall of Biscay in the summer of 1937 put an abrupt end to the Basque experience of *de facto* statehood. In Catalonia, the initial assault on the extended autonomy enjoyed by the *Generalitat* came not from the advance of Franco's armies, but from the Spanish republican government. In November 1937, Juan Negrín moved his cabinet to Barcelona, beginning a gradual erosion of Catalan home rule. Different power attributions of the *Generalitat*, some of which in direct compliance with the 1932 *Estatut*, were gradually brought under central government control: war industries, military academies, supplies, foreign trade, etc. The *Generalitat*'s defence department was taken over by the *Ejército Popular Republicano*, and the state's security and law agencies—including the special *Tribunales de Guardia Permanente*—operated freely in Catalan territory. This recentralisation took place throughout 1938 amidst protests by Lluís Companys and his *Consellers*. In January 1939, the fall of Catalonia to Franco finally swept away all traces of Catalan home rule.⁸⁸⁷

⁸⁸⁵ For Tarradellas' and Companys' statements see Colomer, “La preparación...”, p. 344. See Colomer's full article for several references to a variety of low-key plots and plans to achieve either the independence of Catalonia with French or Soviet backing, or a separate Catalan peace with Franco.

⁸⁸⁶ The Basque Government's diplomatic activity has been thoroughly researched in Alexander Ugalde Zubiri, “La actuación internacional del primer Gobierno Vasco durante la Guerra Civil (1936-1939)”, *Sancho El Sabio*, 1996, pp. 187–206. An opposite path for the Catalan context—shifting the perspective to the actions of foreign diplomacy—is taken in Arnau González i Vilalta, *Amb Ulls Estrangers. Quan Catalunya Preocupava a Europa. Diplomàcia i Premsa Internacional Durant La Guerra Civil*, Barcelona: Base, 2014.

⁸⁸⁷ Núñez-Seixas, *¡Fuera El Invasor!...*, pp. 111–113.

8. 1. 4. War and nation-building: big opportunities and even bigger challenges

What was the impact of these Catalan and Basque *de facto* states on nation-building? A logical assumption would be to consider that the increased autonomy would enable nation-building to complete the transition to ‘phase D’, which a strict application of the legal limits of home rule made impossible otherwise. Reality, however, proved to be much more complex. The particular context of the war, which had created the opportunity for Basque and Catalan ‘state-building’ in the first place, could also at times be very disruptive, posing challenges that went beyond the capacities of the Basque and Catalan administrations.

For one thing, synchronisation—i.e. the creation of the Basque Provisional Government in October 1936—allowed the PNV to get to speed with some of the ‘basics’ of institutional nation-building that the *Generalitat* had been able to implement since 1932 (see Chapter 5). The new Basque administration quickly began to use the formula *Gobierno de Euzkadi*, dropping the word ‘provisional’, and adopted the Basque nationalist *ikurriña* as its official flag by decree the 19th of October.⁸⁸⁸ These cannot be seen as merely symbolic, ‘tick-in-the box’ measures. As historian José Luis de la Granja has noted, this effectively meant that the PNV “transferred its symbols to the whole Basque community, in a clear manifestation of its hegemony.”⁸⁸⁹ In terms of Basque nation-building, it was an enormous achievement. Unlike the term *Catalunya* or the four-striped *senyera* flag, which had been continuously used and widely accepted since the middle ages, *Euzkadi* and the *ikurriña* were recent nationalist creations and had been very contentious.⁸⁹⁰ Their adoption effectively opened the door towards a potential banalisation of these national symbols. The transfer to other political agents and identities,

⁸⁸⁸ *DOPV - EAE*, 20, 28/10/1936, pp. 154–155.

⁸⁸⁹ De la Granja, *El Oasis...*, p. 391.

⁸⁹⁰ The *ikurriña* in particular had been designed as the flag of Biscay by the Arana brothers, and had only been officially designated by the PNV as the Basque national flag in 1933. ANV had its own flag: a white *lauburu* or Basque swastika on a green six-point star over a red background. See de la Granja, *Nacionalismo y II República...*, p. 245. See also Jesús María Casquete Badallo and José Luis de la Granja Sainz, “Ikurriña”, in *Diccionario Ilustrado de Símbolos Del Nacionalismo Vasco*, Madrid: Tecnos, 2012, pp. 508–531.

however, was slow. It began with the Communist Party, whose Basque branch already used *Euzkadi* and whose military units adopted the *ikurriña* during the war.⁸⁹¹

The first nation-building measures taken by the Basque Government can be therefore equated to those implemented by the Catalan *Estatut interior* of 1933. The three attributes often associated to consolidated 'nation-states' were in place: a national capital, a national flag and a national language. Bilbao became the *de facto* capital of the Basque 'state', being the seat of the Government of Euzkadi and the centre of its administrative network.⁸⁹² The *ikurriña* ceased to be the Basque *nationalist* flag to become the Basque *national* flag. Basque language achieved a co-official status, as contemplated by the Elgeta *Estatuto*, and the Government vowed to watch for its special protection. Even the PNV's anthem *Euzko Abendearen Ereserkija* (see Chapter 2)—and not the much more popular and widely accepted *Gernikako Arbola*—was adopted as the official Basque anthem, although without its original lyrics.

Having established the effects of synchronisation, the next step is to look at how the Basque and Catalan administrations developed other tools for institutional nation-building. In his classic work, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, Eugen Weber identifies military service as one of the main powerhouses behind modernisation and nation-building.⁸⁹³ This model was derived from the study of 19th Century and pre-World War I France, so it can only be carried over to Catalonia and the Basque Country during the Spanish Civil War with extreme caution. For the most part, the Basque and Catalan governments were not turning 'peasants into Basques' or 'peasants into Catalans'. Modernisation had already taken place, and the particular challenges of nation-building were notably different. A large proportion of the recruits would already harbour varying degrees of national allegiances,

⁸⁹¹ Núñez-Seixas, *¡Fuera El Invasor!...*, p. 362.

⁸⁹² De la Granja, *El Oasis...*, pp. 73–78. See also Lorenzo Sebastián García, "Bilbao, Capital de Euzkadi (1936-1937). Memoria Histórica, Arquitectónica y Simbólica", *Bideberrieta: Revista de Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales de Bilbao*, 18, 2007, 151–67.

⁸⁹³ Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen. The Modernisation of Rural France, 1870-1914*, Stanford University Press, 1976, pp. 292–338.

particularly those who were volunteers and would tend to be highly politicised.⁸⁹⁴ However, it is still valid to focus on the military system as one of the potentially most powerful tools for the top-down promotion of Basque and Catalan national allegiances.

Weber worked with the historical process by which the French state used conscription to turn the multi-ethnic mass of 'peasants' that inhabited its borders into effective French citizens. Building national-consciousness through military service, however, had never been in the plans of Basque and Catalan nationalists. Rather, military mobilisation was a necessity caused by the war which could potentially be turned into an opportunity. Basque nationalists were in a much more favourable position to do so. The Basque Government had effective control over the Army of Euzkadi, greatly reducing the political influence from the central government. Basque nationalist organisations were also very effective in raising military units, especially after the *Estatuto de Elgeta* was in place. The *Generalitat*, on the other hand, was unable to materialise its plans to create an *Exèrcit Popular de Catalunya*, but the real handicap was the Catalan nationalist organisations' comparative lack of effective military mobilisation. The Army of Euzkadi was organised into 90 battalions, of which 37 had formal ties to Basque nationalist organisations: 28 to the PNV, four to ANV, two to the pro-independence *mendigoxales* and three to the ELA-STV workers' union. The different units present in Catalonia added up to 116 battalions, but only eight of them could be described as Catalan nationalist: seven belonged to ERC and one to *Estat Català*. The specific weight of Basque nationalist units was therefore much higher than that of their Catalan counterparts. They made up 41,1% of the Army of Euzkadi. In contrast, Catalan nationalist units represented less than 7% of the pro-republican forces operating in Catalonia.⁸⁹⁵

The correlation of forces described above allowed the PNV to achieve what can be considered one of its greatest triumphs of the war in terms of nation-building:

⁸⁹⁴ Conscription and volunteer service co-existed, particularly in the early stages of the war. At least initially, Catalan and Basque conscripts could still choose which particular unit they wished to join, so they could suit their political preferences. See Pedro Corral, *Desertores. La guerra civil que nadie quiere contar*, Barcelona: Debate, 2006, p. 94, in James Matthews, *Reluctant Warriors. Republican Popular Army and Nationalist Army Conscripts in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939*, Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 26.

⁸⁹⁵ Núñez-Seixas, *¡Fuera El Invasor!...*, pp. 361–362, 393–394.

the creation of a unique Basque national war imagery. This was built around the concept of the *gudari* ('[Basque] soldier'). This term, adapted from a Basque word for 'soldier', was used to describe the members of the Basque nationalist military units, known collectively as *Euzko Gudarostea* ('Basque Militia'). Both terms transcended strictly partisan limits: soldiers of ANV were also often described as *gudaris*⁸⁹⁶ and the two batallions formed by the *mendigoixales* that had left the PNV in 1934 formally joined the *Euzko Gudarostea*.⁸⁹⁷ The *gudari* was a figure of strong political connotations but it also had a powerful aesthetic component. Both aspects were promoted by the homonymous magazine, *Gudari*. This weekly, which was intended for the members of the *Euzko Gudarostea*, included many large and colourful images containing the particular *gudari* iconography: a tall and strong figure with a prominent *txapela* or Basque beret (see Fig. 8. 1).⁸⁹⁸ The units belonging to the *Euzko Gudarostea* used exclusively Basque nationalist symbols, such as the *ikurriña* for unit colours and the military anthem *Euzko Gudariak*, as well as particular practices such as having military chaplains and regular mass services.⁸⁹⁹

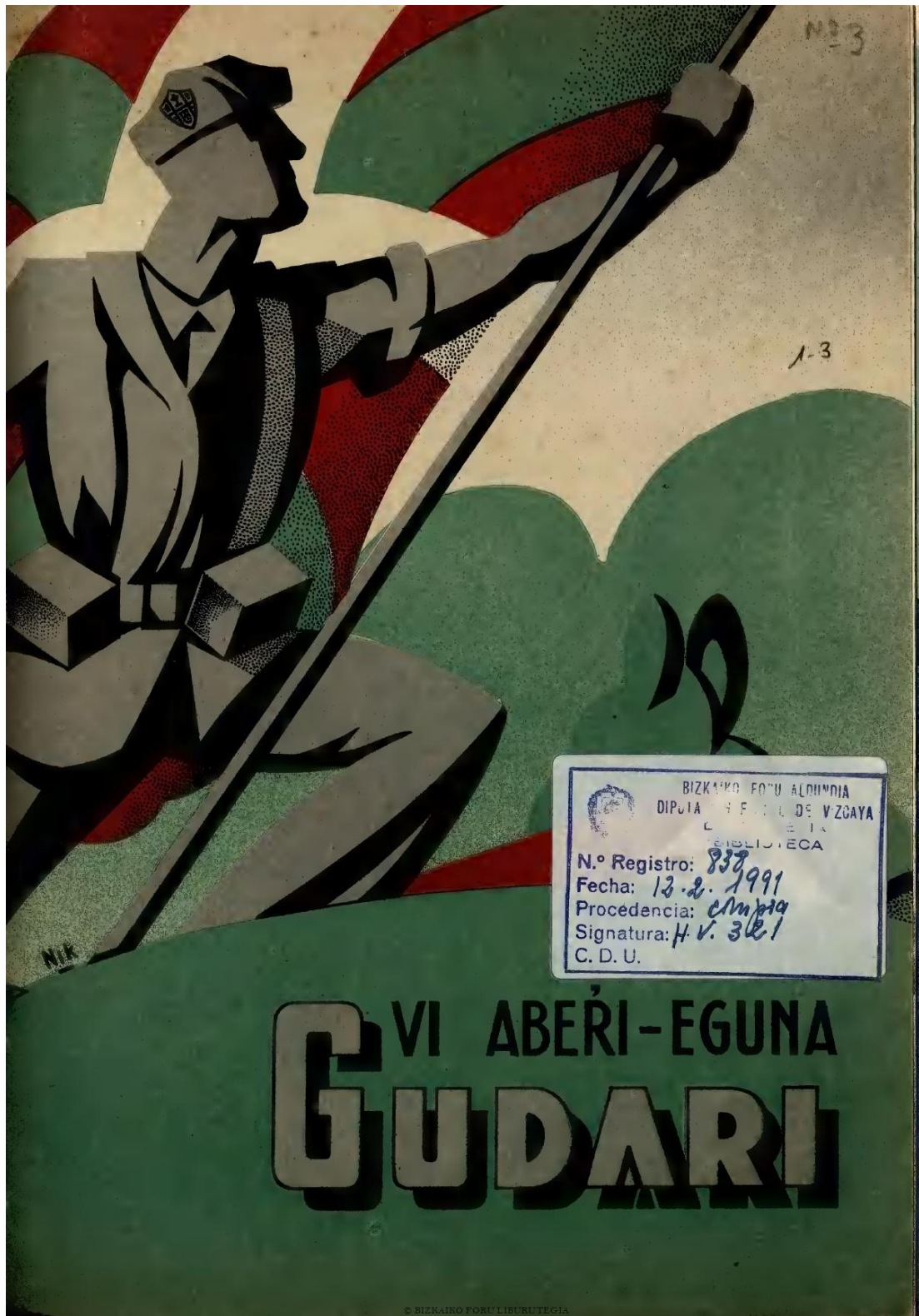
⁸⁹⁶ The four battalions of ANV were collectively referred to as *Euzko Ekintza Gudarostea* ('Basque Action Militia'). See Francisco Manuel Vargas Alonso, 'Los batallones de los nacionalismos minoritarios en Euzkadi: ANV, EMB, STV (1936-1937)', *Vasconia: Cuadernos de Historia - Geografía*, 32, 2002, pp. 517–47.

⁸⁹⁷ Lorenzo Sebastián García, "'Euzkadi Mendigoxale Batza' durante la Guerra Civil Española (1936-1939)", *Cuadernos de Sección. Historia-Geografía. Euzko Ikaskuntza*, 23, 1995, p. 344.

⁸⁹⁸ The *txapela* and other clothing elements often portrayed in *gudari* iconography were actually used by all kinds of units in the Army of Euzkadi. However, the fact that only the *gudari* aesthetic promoted by Basque nationalism emphasised these elements probably contributed to their popular association to Basque nationalist troops. Moreover, the terms *gudari* and *Euzko Gudarostea* have been often incorrectly used to describe the Army of Euzkadi as a whole. See Guillermo Tabernilla, "Uniformidad Del Ejército Vasco", *La Voz Del Frente*, 15, 2012, pp. 21–23.

⁸⁹⁹ Other symbols included variations of the cross of Saint Andrew. See Núñez-Seixas, *¡Fuera El Invasor!...*, pp. 362–363.

Fig. 8. 1 | An example of *gudari* iconography in a poster for the 1937 *Aberri Eguna*⁹⁰⁰



⁹⁰⁰ *Gudari*, 27/3/1937, p. 1.

There was no Catalan equivalent for *gudari*. The term *escamot*, which could have been analogous—it was used for Macià's failed expedition of Prats de Molló and for green-shirted nationalist militants in the 1930s (see Chapters 2 and 6)—was not used in the Spanish Civil War. Instead, *milicià* ('militiaman'), *soldat* ('soldier') and *soldat català* ('Catalan soldier') were common. These terms, however, did not have specific nationalist connotations, and were used to describe fighters of all political creeds. There was no Catalan military anthem equivalent to *Euzko Gudariak*. The Macià-Companys column—by far the largest Catalan nationalist military unit—on the other hand, combined the Catalan *senyera* with the Spanish republican tricolour in its official pennant.⁹⁰¹ The only equivalent to the *Euzko Gudarostea*'s strict use of national symbols was probably the *Regiment Pirinenc Número 1*, a small unit joined by many members of *Estat Català* and Catalan nationalist hiking clubs. Its flag only included the *senyera* and the *edelweiss* typical of mountain infantry. Its uniform included the Catalan traditional cap, known as the *barretina*.⁹⁰² Members of both the Macià-Companys column and the *Regiment Pirinenc* would sometimes also carry the *estelada* (see Fig. 8. 2), the pro-independence variation of the *senyera* flag, but this remained an unofficial symbol.⁹⁰³ The closest Catalan equivalent to the magazine *Gudari* was *Amic*, a Catalan language periodical created by the *Generalitat* and addressed at Catalan soldiers of the Republican Popular Army in 1938. Although *Amic* included many Catalan patriotic symbols and themes, it was hardly the space for the creation of some form of Catalan national military aesthetic. Catalan soldiers were effectively indistinguishable from other soldiers of the Republican Popular Army. The government of Juan Negrín—whose military censorship controlled *Amic*—wished

⁹⁰¹ The flag is currently exhibited at the *Museu d'Història de Catalunya* in Barcelona. See “Banderí de La Columna Macià-Companys”, *Museu d'Història de Catalunya* <https://www.mhcat.cat/col_leccio/el_museu_presenta/banderi_de_la_columna_macia_companys> [accessed 1 October 2020].

⁹⁰² Jaume de Ramon i Vidal, *El Regiment Pirinenc Número 1 de Catalunya*, Barcelona: Rafael Dalmau, 2004.

⁹⁰³ The use of the *estelada* within ERC had been somewhat controversial. In early 1936, before finally leaving the party, the pro-independence faction that dominated the JEREC youth complained about what they perceived as the marginalisation of the *estelada* by ERC. See J. Sala, “Procediments i Banderes”, *Som-hi*, 29/2/1936, p. 1.

to promote an image of Spanish national unity, which included the symbols displayed by the armed forces.⁹⁰⁴

Fig. 8. 2 | Militiamen belonging to *Estat Català* carry the pro-independence *estelada* flag⁹⁰⁵



The clear conclusion from this compared analysis of national military symbols, is that ERC failed to create a coherent Catalan national war imagery. This was partly due to the technical disadvantages it faced, i.e. insufficient mobilisation of Catalan nationalist military units and the failure of the Catalan Popular Army, which would have been under the *Generalitat's* control. *Esquerra* also showed a lack of political will to create an exclusively Catalan nationalist fighting force. The PNV—and *Estat Català* in Catalonia—had wanted strictly national military units out of a common vision of the Spanish Civil War as a Basque/Catalan national liberation conflict. Even independence was considered as an option, if the opportunity should arise.⁹⁰⁶ Within ERC different perspectives coexisted, but most saw the defence of the Republic and of the Catalan nation as part of the same

⁹⁰⁴ Núñez-Seixas, *¡Fuera El Invasor!...*, pp. 403–409.

⁹⁰⁵ *Diari de Barcelona*, 24/12/1936, p. 1.

⁹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 363–382, 399–400.

common weal.⁹⁰⁷ In fact, towards 1938, the *Generalitat*—which by then included the PSUC as well as ERC—would assume what Núñez-Seixas has described as the discourse of “double patriotism”:

“One of a more civic nature, expressed as loyalty for the Republic, the ‘lands of Spain’ or simply Spain, and that is presented in similar terms as the rest of the republican war propaganda, that is, as an independence war against ‘the onslaught of mercenary and foreign troops’; and another [patriotism] of a more ethno-cultural and emotive nature, the defence of Catalonia, as the fatherland or simply *la terra*, for which it resorted to historical myths which represented Catalan resistance against centralism [...]”⁹⁰⁸

Within Basque nationalism, only ANV saw itself as part of a common Spanish Republican struggle, which could end in some ill-defined confederate state.⁹⁰⁹

Núñez-Seixas has studied individual testimonies of Basque and Catalan nationalist servicemen, to find that these were mostly a reflection of the dominant narratives present in their particular units. About Basque nationalist soldiers, “contemporary, autobiographical and epistolary testimonies [...] are very eloquent with respects to a point: they only fought for the freedom of Euskadi.”⁹¹⁰ The same cannot be said about their Catalan counterparts:

“[...] exclusive [Catalan] patriotism [...] does not appear to have been the predominant note among Catalan combatants, among soldiers of the Republic's army and even among units of militiamen which were directly instigated by ERC. As the exception, [...] fighters close to or members of *Estat Català*, [...] in their reports from the front they used to insist

⁹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 394–395, 403–415.

⁹⁰⁸ Original fragment: “Uno de cariz más cívico, expresado en la lealtad a la República, a las «terres d'Espanya» o a España a secas, y que es presentado en muy semejantes términos al conjunto de la propaganda de guerra republicana, es decir, como una guerra de independencia frente al «allau de tropes mercenàries i estrangeres»; y otro de carácter más etnocultural y emotivo, la defensa de Cataluña, como la patria o simplemente *la terra*, para lo que recurrió a los mitos históricos que simbolizaban la resistencia catalana al centralismo [...]” See *¡Fuera El Invasor!...*, p. 404.

⁹⁰⁹ Núñez-Seixas, *¡Fuera El Invasor!...*, p. 383.

⁹¹⁰ Ibid. p. 384.

in the cause of [Catalan] independence as the only important motivation for fighting away from the fatherland and for a Republic with which identification was simply tactical.”⁹¹¹

It is difficult to extract firm conclusions about Basque and Catalan nation-building through military service during the Spanish Civil War. A quantitative evaluation of the matter would require the mass examination of a large number of testimonies coming from ordinary soldiers, particularly those without strong pre-war political loyalties. Only this would allow judgement on how effective was military service in creating an increased attachment to the Basque and Catalan nations among young men.

On a more qualitative plane, it is quite clear that Basque nationalists were much more successful than their Catalan counterparts in creating an ‘nationalising’ military climate complete with its own unequivocal national symbols. In the Army of Euzkadi, it was conceivably more likely for young men to adopt or reassert a strong Basque nationalist identity as a result of being immersed in the *gudari* military culture. On the other hand, Catalan nationalism failed to create a Catalan nationalising military environment beyond a few particular units—basically those close to *Estat Català*—which tended to be made up of fully committed Catalan nationalists in the first place. The extraordinary charisma of José Antonio Aguirre also proved to be a particular nationalising factor: Ramón de Aldasoro and Juan Astigarrabia, members of his government for *Izquierda Republicana* and the PCE respectively, were expelled from their parties, which perceived them as having become too close to Aguirre and his Basque nationalist agenda. Núñez-Seixas has documented cases of other leftists who became sympathisers of the PNV as a result of the Basque Government's policies during the war and its management of the challenges of exile.⁹¹²

⁹¹¹ Original fragment: “[...] el patriotismo exclusivo y únicamente identificado con Cataluña no parece haber sido la nota predominante entre los combatientes catalanes, entre los soldados del ejército de la República con simpatías catalanistas e incluso en las unidades de milicianos directamente instigadas por ERC. Como excepción [...] los combatientes próximos o militantes de Estat Català, que en sus crónicas desde el frente acostumbraban a insistir en la causa de la independencia como única fuente de motivación importante para luchar fuera de la patria y por una República con la cual la identificación era simplemente táctica.” See Núñez-Seixas, *¡Fuera El Invasor!...*, p. 419.

⁹¹² See Núñez-Seixas, *¡Fuera El Invasor!...*, pp. 392–393.

However, two additional factors must be taken into account. The first is the brevity of these experiences. Just as the *de facto* statehood analysed above, the duration of Basque and Catalan ‘national’ military service very short. The first basically came to an end with the defeat of the Army of Euzkadi the summer of 1937. The second, limited as it was, was halted completely as all Catalan military units were absorbed into the *Ejército Popular Republicano*. In the Basque case, geographical limits must also be taken into account, considering that Navarre⁹¹³ and most of Gipuzkoa and Araba were not under the Basque Government's control, and so recruitment in these provinces was scarce.

The second factor that must be weighed in is the Spanish nationalist discourse and climate—present in many Basque and in most Catalan units—and its own nationalising effects. This has also been extensively studied by Núñez Seixas, who notes that the Spanish republican left—including the communists and anarchists—was quick to characterise the conflict as a national war against foreign invaders. The Basque communist leader Dolores Ibárruri, known as *la Pasionaria*, spoke of “a war of [Spanish] independence and social liberation”. This discourse often focused on Franco's Italian and German allies, as well as on the Moroccan colonial troops, and made use of traditional Spanish nationalist imagery. It also adapted to the Basque and Catalan contexts by adopting forms of more ambiguous “dual patriotism”, which often praised different degrees of Basque and Catalan home rule, always under a general Spanish national frame.⁹¹⁴ This would be gradually replaced with discourses emphasising Spanish national unity after mid-1937 and the rule of Juan Negrín, as explained in the following section.

⁹¹³ In Navarre, military service in units loyal to the rebel Military *Junta* was a vehicle for Spanish nation-building. Núñez-Seixas' account of how “sometimes officers had to voice their orders [in Basque] to *requeté* volunteers of Basque-speaking areas of Navarre who only had a deficient knowledge of Spanish” resembles Weber's descriptions of Breton language being used in the French army. See *¡Fuera El Invasor!...*, p. 307; *Peasants into Frenchmen*, p. 299. In both cases, despite the need for translation, military service provided with a decisive contact with the ‘national language’ and a step towards bilingualism. Weber's affirmation, “even the most reluctant troopers could not help picking up a smidgen of French”, can be very well applied to Spanish for the Basque monolingual soldiers.

⁹¹⁴ For Ibárruri's quote see *Mundo Obrero*, 20/7/1937, p. 4 in Núñez-Seixas, *¡Fuera El Invasor!...*, p. 41. For the “dual patriotism” concept and its application to war narratives in the Basque Country and Catalonia, see *Ibid.*, pp. 96–109. For a general, detailed analysis of the Spanish nationalist narratives of the republican side of the Spanish Civil War, see *Ibid.*, pp. 29–176.

8. 2. The first Basque exile and the “Bilbao-Barcelona axis” (June 1937-January 1939)

In March 1937, the contentious politics of Basque and Catalan nationalism were greatly affected by two crucial events. The first was the rise of Juan Negrín to the leadership of the Spanish Government, in substitution of Largo Caballero. Negrín, who had the support of Prieto's more moderate wing of the PSOE, led a new, heavy handed approach to what he saw as the main priority: strengthening the Republican state in order to win the war. This was accompanied by the promotion of what Núñez-Seixas has defined as “republican neopatriotism”. In terms of policy, this meant the adoption of measures against Catalan home rule and general recentralisation. In terms of political discourse, it involved de-emphasising the political left *versus* right component of the war in favour of more traditional Spanish nationalist themes, including national unity and national pride.⁹¹⁵

Negrín's intentions to limit Catalan and Basque home rule brought the PNV and ERC even closer in strategic terms. After the experience of *de facto* statehood, the Catalan and Basque governments were both reluctant to make any steps backward in terms of self-government. *Esquerra* and the PNV in particular shared the objective of developing a bilateral relationship with the Spanish Government, developing what President Manuel Azaña named the “Bilbao-Barcelona axis”.⁹¹⁶

The second key event of March 1937 was the beginning of General Mola's *Ofensiva del Norte*, a series of military operations against the territory still in the hands of the Basque Government. The initial fighting included the aerial bombing of important Biscayan towns, such as Durango and Bilbao, as well as the notorious destruction of Gernika by the German Condor Legion. Despite its lack of heavy weapons, artillery and warplanes, the Basque Army was able to hold for almost

⁹¹⁵ Núñez-Seixas, *¡Fuera El Invasor!...*, pp. 110–123. See also Ricardo Miralles Palencia, *Juan Negrín: La República En Guerra*, Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 2003.

⁹¹⁶ Ludger Mees, “Tan lejos, tan cerca. El Gobierno Vasco en Barcelona y las complejas relaciones entre el nacionalismo vasco y el catalán”, *Historia Contemporánea*, 37, 2008, p. 573.

three months. The incomplete line of fortifications protecting the Basque Government's capital, known as the *cinturón de hierro* ('iron belt') proved too weak. Its chief engineer, Alejandro Goicoechea, famously gave up the defensive line's plans to the enemy. By the 19th of June, Bilbao fell to the Francoist troops.

The last two subsections of this chapter will look, respectively, at how the Basque defeat was framed by Catalan nationalists, and at the political relationship between Basque and Catalan nationalism in the last years of the Spanish Civil War.

8. 2. 1. Basque defeat, Catalan solidarity

The loss of all Basque territory was, logically enough, a disaster for Basque nationalism. In terms of political contention, it activated two processes: demobilisation and repression. The latter assumed a wide variety of forms, from executions to purges of civil servants, mass imprisonments, a strict ban on all Basque nationalist or leftist political activity, etc. Franco set up a new authoritarian regime which had significant fascist influences but was primarily based on Spanish nationalism and conservative Catholicism.⁹¹⁷ Demobilisation was both political—the new repressive climate made most forms of previous contentious politics unfeasible—and military. After a series of secret negotiations between the PNV and Italian fascist *Corpo Truppe Volontarie* units, some 30.000 Basque soldiers surrendered in the town of Santoña.⁹¹⁸

The Basque struggle and eventual defeat activated familiar discourses of solidarity in Catalonia. Back in October 1936, news of the Elgeta *Estatuto*'s enactment had been greeted by *La Humanitat* with enthusiasm. Antoni Rovira i Virgili wrote a front cover piece to address the recent Basque acquisition of home

⁹¹⁷ See Javier Sánchez Erauskin, *Por Dios hacia el imperio: el nacionalcatolicismo en las Vascongadas del primer franquismo, 1936-1945*, Donostia: R & B, 1995. The most complete study of Francoist repression for any Basque province is Pedro Barruso, *Violencia Política y Represión En Guipúzcoa Durante La Guerra Civil y El Primer Franquismo (1936-1945)*, San Sebastián: Hiria, 2005.

⁹¹⁸ The PNV had hoped for some form of conditional surrender to the Italian troops, but the Basque prisoners were soon handed over to the Francoist army, which quickly executed 15 officers. See de la Granja, *El Oasis...*, pp. 304–305.

rule.⁹¹⁹ *Esquerra's* ideologue was particularly lucid about what Basque nationalism had achieved: “from now on, the Basque Country is more than a geographic and ethnic denomination. It is the denomination of a publicly recognised political body.” It is worthwhile to look closely at this text, since it was almost a summary of the defining elements of Basque and Catalan nationalist relations as shown throughout the present thesis. It included the usual rhetoric of ‘spiritual solidarity’, expressed as the “intense joy for Catalonia to have Euscadi [sic] by its side in this tragic and glorious moment”. Nevertheless, Rovira i Virgili also recognised the underlying cultural and political differences between the two national movements, and the realisation that common interest was the base for direct political cooperation: “What has united us the most, is our reciprocal understanding and the menaces that have hovered above both [Catalonia and the Basque Country] at the same time”.

Unintentionally, Rovira i Virgili even included another recurring element of Catalan-Basque nationalist relations: mutual unfamiliarity with each other's political culture that could lead to awkwardness and misunderstandings. The piece ended with “From Catalonia, beyond the black fascist stain of Aragon and Navarre, we cry with our heart: good health to the Basque Country!” This would have probably been seen as inappropriate by a Basque nationalist reader, to whom Navarre was an integral part of the Basque Country under occupation by the enemy, not a ‘black fascist stain’.

In any case, discourses of solidarity against the common threat from the Francoist enemy had been present since 1936. They became particularly intense during the final Francoist offensive against Biscay. As the fighting raged on, reaching the famous ‘iron belt’—a weak chain of fortifications surrounding Bilbao—, Catalonia saw one of the most powerful displays of symbolic solidarity with the Basque Country of the decade. The *Setmana Pro-Euzkadi* (‘Pro-Euzkadi Week’) was a campaign to give political and economic support for the Basque war

⁹¹⁹ See “Salut al País Basc!”, *La Humanitat*, 2/10/1936, p. 1. The full original version can be found in Text 7 of Annex I. A day later the same newspaper also published most of the text of the Basque home rule charter in Spanish, highlighting that the Basque Country would receive the same power attributions to legislate and to manage public order as Catalonia.

effort. Besides raising money and awareness of the Basque situation, the campaign also called for an offensive in Aragon to relieve the Basque front.⁹²⁰

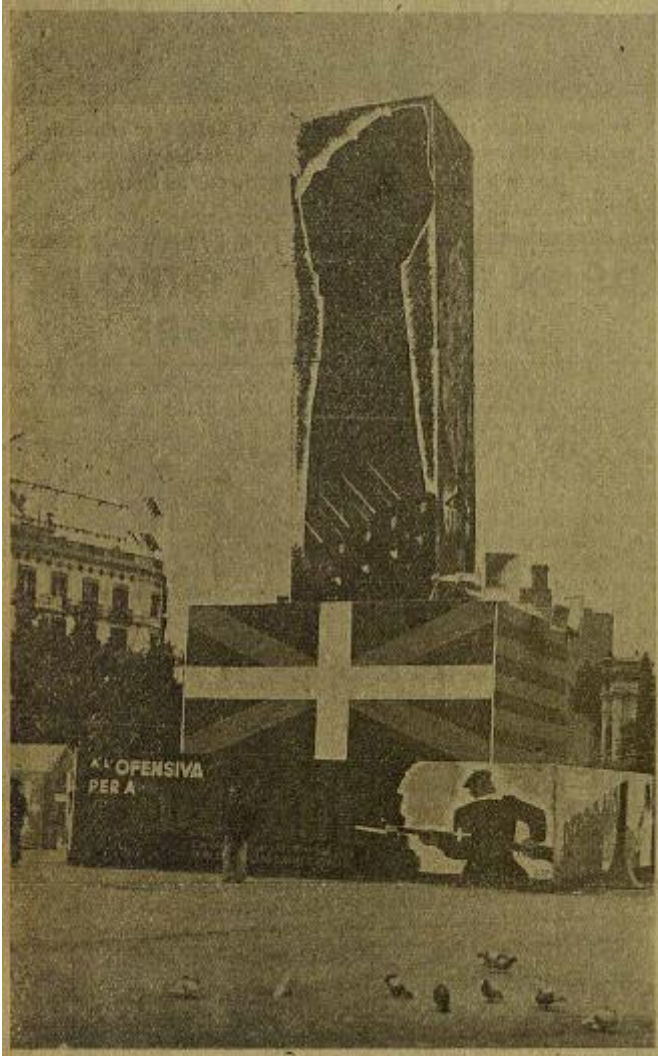
The initiative was carried out by a committee which included representatives from *Estat Català*, the youth of the PSUC, the UGT socialist union and from ERC. The Basque Government was still in Bilbao, and was represented in Barcelona by an official delegation headed by the ANV leader Luis Areitioaurtena. The campaign consisted of a varied array of events that took place between the 30th of May and the 6th of June. These included the performance of the Basque nationalist play *Pedro Mari* at the Liceu Theatre in Barcelona, the exposition of a large monument representing the Tree of Gernika (see Fig. 8. 3), and the celebration of various sports activities, military parades, and political rallies.⁹²¹ The Basque solidarity week ended with a large demonstration after which representatives of different political organisations made several speeches. The *Setmana Pro-Euzkadi* was remarkable because, in many ways, it represented the evolution of the ‘international solidarity’ protocol that had developed in the years of the Second Spanish Republic. The familiar exhibitions of folk dances and sharing of national anthems were now joined by new formats which could mobilise much larger audiences—such as the *Pedro Mari* performances—or take up more public space—such as the Gernika monument. Both the Basque and the Catalan representatives—Companys as President of the *Generalitat* and Areitioaurtena as the President of the Basque Delegation—took part in an official capacity. Compared, for example, to the *GALEUZCA* events of 1933, the *Setmana Pro-Euzkadi* showed how the language of Basque-Catalan solidarity in the context of the Spanish Civil War had become more institutionalised. This enabled the participation of wider scope of political agents, beyond the strictly Basque and Catalan nationalist political parties.⁹²²

⁹²⁰ Some groups had already been calling for such a military operation. The leader of *Estat Català* Manuel Cruells did so on the grounds of Catalan national prestige, asking “what will the Basque people think of the Catalan people?” See “Moments”, *Diari de Barcelona*, 20/5/1937, p. 3.

⁹²¹ F. Xavier Media and Jordi Bou, “¡Cada Día, Catalanes, Acordaos de Euzkadi! La Semana Pro-Euzkadi”, *Sancho El Sabio: Revista de Cultura e Investigación Vasca*, 13, 2000, pp. 141–148.

⁹²² “L’acte culminant de la Setmana Pro-Euzkadi”, *Diari de Barcelona*, 8/6/1937, p. 8. See also *Euzkadi en Catalunya*, 12/6/1937, pp. 1–2, 4.

Fig. 8. 3 | The large monument representing the Tree of Gernika, displayed in Barcelona as part of the *Setmana Pro-Euzkadi*⁹²³



The *Setmana Pro-Euzkadi* campaign, however, was not accompanied by strong military action. An offensive was finally carried out in Huesca to take pressure of Bilbao, but it was never a very ambitious operation and failed after a few days. *Gudari* magazine published an article about the solidarity week with a rather harsh tone:

⁹²³ *Euzkadi en Catalunya*, 12/6/1937, p. 1.

“Undoubtedly, it has flattered us greatly that this sister nationality remembers us, when we had believed, righteously, that it had forgotten us completely. [...] The film of our tragedy, with the retouch of our heroism, should wake the sleepy consciences of many of our circumstantial allies.”⁹²⁴

The text, which also indirectly questioned aspects of Catalan government policies, is a reminder that symbolic solidarity was not always received uncritically by those at its receiving end.

After the final defeat of the Army of Euzkadi, the Basque Country became the ‘martyr nation’ in Catalan nationalist depictions. By June, the *Diari de Barcelona* declared that “Euzkadi, the martyr nation [...] is overtaking in pain and sacrifice the martyr Belgium of 1914-1918”. The destruction of Gernika, which famously aroused wide international interest, also took a central place in Catalan nationalist discourse, which described the town as the Basque “moral capital” and “holy city”.⁹²⁵ *La Humanitat* described Aguirre as “the President of the martyr people”.⁹²⁶ The ‘martyr Euzkadi’ concept was also used as warning about the consequences of defeat to Catalan audiences: “Euzkadi's martyrdom [...] has the teaching value of an experience that we must not forget”.⁹²⁷ In fact, the same narrative was brought back in the desperate context of the final Francoist offensive against Catalonia in January 1939: “The tragic and painful moments that our people is stoically suffering remember us of those glorious and magnificent days in the history of a brotherly people: Euzkadi”.⁹²⁸

⁹²⁴ Original fragment: “Indudablemente, nos ha halagado sobremanera el que esta nacionalidad hermana se acuerde de nosotros, cuando creímos, fundadamente, que se había olvidado completamente de nosotros. [...] La película de nuestra tragedia con los retoques de nuestro heroísmo, deberían servir para despertar las conciencias adormecidas de muchos de nuestros circunstanciales aliados.” See “Atención, Catalunya. ¿Has hecho algo por Euzkadi?”, *Gudari*, 7/6/1937, p. 5. See Text 8 of Annex I for the full original version.

⁹²⁵ “Comentari Nacional”, *Diari de Barcelona*, 16/6/1937, p. 6. See also *Diari de Barcelona*, 29/4/1937, pp. 3, 6, 9; 30/4/1937, pp. 3, 6.

⁹²⁶ *La Humanitat*, 22/7/1937, p. 1.

⁹²⁷ *Diari de Barcelona*, 22/6/1937, p. 1. In p. 3 of this same issue, Manuel Cruells, one of *Estat Català's* leaders, even promised “Basque people, Catalonia will avenge you.”

⁹²⁸ Vicenç Borrell, “Davant l'ofensiva, els dirigents d'Estat Català parlen”, *Diari de Catalunya*, 17/1/1939, p. 1.

8. 2. 2. The end of a journey: from *de facto* states to a *de facto* alliance

Another consequence of the Basque military defeat was the relocation of Aguirre's Government to Catalonia, where a large community of Basque refugees had been building up since the months after the fall of Gipuzkoa. After some discussion the PNV's leadership did the same, although its President Doroteo Ziaurriz remained in France for the rest of the war. In October 1937, the Basque Government officially moved to the Catalan capital. Only days later, the Spanish Republican executive did the same from Valencia, making Barcelona “capital of three governments”.⁹²⁹

Was the ‘Bilbao-Barcelona axis’ the final materialisation of a long-awaited alliance between Basque and Catalan nationalists? Bearing in mind what has already been said about formal alliances in previous chapters of the present thesis, the short answer is no. The PNV and ERC, or the Basque and Catalan Governments, did not sign any documents defining a common program of opposition to Negrín's policies which would have been the equivalent of a bilateral treaty. However, after its second party plenary, ERC issued a declaration which included the following statement:

“Any action carried out to voluntarily diminish the self-government attributions of Catalonia or the Basque Country, is not only a grudge inflicted on these two peoples, but an obstacle that stands in the way of Iberian freedoms. It must not be forgotten that in Spain centralism is the usual vehicle of feudal reaction and that any attempt to return to this centralism, even if it is to the tune of a popular neo-Spanish nationalism, is in reality a victory of feudalism.”⁹³⁰

⁹²⁹ Mees, “Tan lejos, tan cerca.” pp. 566, 559–560.

⁹³⁰ Original fragment: “Tota acció que es faci per tal de disminuir voluntàriament les atribucions autonòmiques de Catalunya o del País Basc, no és solament un greuge que s'infereix a aquests dos pobles, sinó un obstacle que es posa en el camí de les llibertats ibèriques. Cal no oblidar que el centralisme és el vehicle normal a Espanya de la reacció feudal i que tot intent de retornar a aquest centralisme, encara que sigui al so d'un neo-espanyolisme popular, és en realitat una victòria del feudalisme”. See “Declaració política d'Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya”, *La Humanitat*, 15/6/1937, p. 8.

This basically contained the main underlying principle of the ‘Bilbao-Barcelona axis’: a common front against Negrín's new brand of Spanish nationalism. *Esquerra* not only framed the issue as a matter of Basque and Catalan nations *versus* the Spanish state, but as a wider contention for “Iberian freedoms”. Had Aguirre and Companys signed a joint declaration with the above words, an perhaps with a written commitment to joint action, the result would have been a formal alliance, but this was not the case.

However, as historian Ludger Mees has shown in his research of Basque-Catalan nationalist relations during this period—and the subsequent first years of exile—these were exceptionally good during the Basque Government's stay in Catalonia.⁹³¹ This section will now take a detailed look at the main elements which characterised the ‘Bilbao-Barcelona axis’, in order to at least determine how close it was to becoming a formal alliance.

On one hand, a fundamental aspect of the relationship between Basque and Catalan nationalism during this period was the physical presence of the Basque Government in Barcelona and large Basque refugee community in Catalonia. In diplomatic terms, Aguirre's executive operated like a true government-in-exile under the formal ‘recognition’ of the *Generalitat*.⁹³² It was allowed to retain authority over its citizens, which were identified by an official card. The Basque Government enjoyed what Mees has described as a Catalan version of its historical economic agreement with the state: it received funds from the *Generalitat*, which it then used to provide goods and services to its refugees.⁹³³ Aguirre, as the highest representative of his institution, took part in many formal activities, such as official

⁹³¹ For a comprehensive study of the Basque exile in Barcelona, see also Gregorio Arrien and Iñaki Goigana Mendiguren, *El Primer Exilio de Los Vascos: Cataluña, 1936-1939*, Barcelona: Fundación Sabino Arana, 2002.

⁹³² The situation of the Basque Government was virtually that of “a body which claims to be the legitimate government of a state, but which is unable to establish itself in the state in question”, while the *Generalitat*'s act of “acknowledgment of [the] [...] situation, with the intention of admitting its legal implications”. See *A Dictionary of Diplomacy*, “government-in-exile”, p. 116; “recognition”, p. 225.

⁹³³ Services included Basque language schools for children, a Basque military unit, a “Basque Chapel”, two health clinics, the newspaper *Euzkadi en Catalunya*, radio programmes, etc. See Media & Bou, “¡Cada día, catalanes...”, p. 139; Mees, “Tan lejos, tan cerca.” pp. 567–568, 570.

receptions, public meetings and commemorations.⁹³⁴ These events included the farewell ceremony to the International Brigades and the tribute to Francesc Macià in December 1938, one of the last mass public gatherings before the fall of Catalonia in January 1939.⁹³⁵

On the other hand, the strategic understanding between the PNV and ERC led to several instances of cooperation between the two. In August 1938, both Manuel Irujo and Jaume Aiguader resigned from Negrín's second cabinet in protest for the Spanish Government's decision to take over the Catalan war industry.⁹³⁶ Irujo, in his resignation letter, openly presented his decision as a gesture towards Aiguader, almost giving the impression that there was some form of agreement between Catalan and Basque representatives with respects to these 'solidarity resignations':

“the rule of the common criteria followed by Catalans and Basques, which had its initial parliamentary manifestation with our withdrawal from the *Cortes*, due to the derogation of the Crop Contracts Law, requires me to follow suit with Mr. Aiguader [...].”⁹³⁷

Another front of cooperation, which personally involved Aguirre and Companys, was international diplomacy. Already in mid 1938, Josep Maria Batista i Roca and José Ignacio Lizaso, as representatives of the Catalan and Basque Governments respectively, managed to open a channel of communication with the British Foreign Office. In this first contact, the Basque-Catalan proposal was an internationally mediated peace that would still guarantee, and even expand, Basque and Catalan home rule. Later, in October 1938 after the Munich

⁹³⁴ See for example “Amb tota solemnitat fou commemorat el centenari de la restauració de la Universitat de Barcelona”, *La Humanitat*, 14/12/1937; “El senyor Aguirre, invitat pel President Companys”, *La Humanitat*, 22/2/1938, p. 2; “A la Presidència de la República”, *La Humanitat*, 15/4/1938, p. 1; “El President d'Euscadi, senyor Aguirre, visita l'audiència”, *La Humanitat*, 6/2/1938, p. 4; “Catalunya ha commemorat el corpus de sang de 1640”, *La Humanitat*, 8/6/1938, p. 3; “L'adhesió del President Aguirre”, *La Humanitat*, 11/9/1938; “12.000 catalans caiguts en defensa del dret”, *La Humanitat*, 11/10/1938, p. 1.

⁹³⁵ *La Humanitat*, 29/10/1938, p. 1; “El President Aguirre i el Govern Basc”, *La Humanitat*, 27/12/1938, p. 1.

⁹³⁶ Mees, “Tan lejos, tan cerca.” pp. 565–566.

⁹³⁷ Original fragment: “La norma de inteligencia seguida por catalanes y vascos, que tuvo su manifestación parlamentaria inicial en nuestra retirada de las Cortes, con motivo de la derogación de la Ley de Cultivos, me obliga a seguir con mi actitud al señor Aiguader [...]”. See “Una nota de la Presidència del Consell”, *La Humanitat*, 17/8/1938, p. 3.

Conference, Aguirre and Companys again tried to play the international card, this time asking the application of the principle of self-determination, just as it had been done with the Sudetenland. Both leaders were clearly on the same page in strategic terms: “the main concern of Basque and Catalan nationalists was not the Republic, but the fate of the Basque Country and Catalonia.”. Both of these appeals to the Foreign Office failed, for two main reasons. The first was context: at the height of the policy of appeasement, Britain and France were unwilling to do anything that could alienate Germany. The second was an increasingly evident lack of leverage, with Franco's victory clearly a matter of time given the military situation.⁹³⁸

This cooperation at different levels between the Basque and Catalan governments—and between ERC and the PNV—was accompanied by the usual discourses of ‘spiritual solidarity’ between the two nations. The Basque President's arrival in Barcelona was the lead story in *La Humanitat* for several days. Aguirre was presented in a somewhat tragic light, as “the President of the martyr people” mentioned above, and as “the President without country”, but also as Catalonia's “guest of honour”. An official welcome took place the 22nd of July 1937, attended by a large crowd, included speeches by Aguirre and Companys from the *Generalitat's* balcony. A central concept in both leaders' interventions was the consideration of Catalonia and the Basque Country as ‘brotherly nations’. Aguirre also emphasised the perennial nature of the Catalan and Basque nations: “it does not matter that those enemies of ours kill our bodies, because they will never kill the soul of Catalonia nor of the Basque Country”. Antoni Rovira i Virgili echoed the same idea in an article published the next day: “The Basques have lost their Country, but have saved their soul. [...] The material loss of a Country is temporary, if the spirit persists.”⁹³⁹ If the *Setmana Pro-Euzkadi* had already shown the evolution of the Catalan-Basque nationalist solidarity protocol, Aguirre's welcome in Barcelona can be seen as clear proof of its institutionalisation. As well as the epic contained in the discourse of the ‘brother nations’, the event with *els dos Presidents*

⁹³⁸ Mees, “Tan lejos, tan cerca.” pp. 575–581.

⁹³⁹ “Salut, President Aguirre!”, *La Humanitat*, 22/10/1937, p. 1; “Discurs del President d'Euscadi” and “Discurs del President Companys”, *La Humanitat*, 23/7/1937, p. 1; Antoni Rovira i Virgili, “El President sense Terra”, *La Humanitat*, 24/7/1937, p. 1. The full versions of Aguirre and Companys' speeches can be found in Text 9 of Annex I.

(‘the two Presidents’) had the presentation of a bilateral meeting between two heads of state.

More than a year later, in a Christmas radio message, Aguirre still spoke of Catalonia as “this noble and beloved land, where we have found so much warmth and love”⁹⁴⁰. The situation of the Basque refugees, however, was not easy, especially with the hardships and shortages of 1938, and despite the genuine solidarity there were also incidents of tension with local populations.⁹⁴¹ Two days after Aguirre's radio message, Franco unleashed the last offensive against Catalonia. The Catalan units of the Republican Popular Army still managed to slow down the enemy advance for several weeks, but the military situation was hopeless. As the frontline neared the capital, the Basque, Catalan and Spanish governments decided to leave for Figueres, further north. It was in this town that they received the news of the fall of Barcelona, the 26th of January 1939.

The last moments of republican Catalonia would become another gesture of Basque-Catalan solidarity. Aguirre and Irujo—who by mid-January were already safely in Paris—returned to Catalonia and joined Companys for the final evacuation across the French border. The Catalan and Basque leaders completed the crossing, on foot, the 4th of February.⁹⁴² It was the end of the political cycle that had begun in 1936, and also of a period of particularly good relations between the Catalan and Basque nationalist movements, personified in Companys and Aguirre. A mutual understanding that had been slowly building up during the previous years, but that would soon deflate during the first years of exile. Companys was arrested by the German military police during the occupation of France and handed over to the new Spanish authorities, who had him shot in October 1940. Aguirre managed to survive a dangerous exile, which included living undercover in Nazi Germany, before escaping to South America.

Unlike the Basque Government—which remained the dominant institution of the Basque exile, despite the challenge posed by ETA from 1958—the *Generalitat*

⁹⁴⁰ “El President Aguirre es dirigeix als bascos”, *La Humanitat*, 22/12/1938, p. 3.

⁹⁴¹ Media & Bou, “¡Cada día, catalanes...”, p. 147.

⁹⁴² For a more detailed account of these last days and Aguirre's return from Paris to join Companys, see also Iñaki Goigana Mendiguren, “Recuerdos de unas vísperas de Santa Águeda: la evacuación de Catalunya y el lehendakari Aguirre”, *Hermes: Pentsamendu Eta Historia Aldizkaria = Revista de Pensamiento e Historia*, 30, 2009, pp. 76–82.

struggled to assert its authority. In fact, many of the difficulties faced by Basque-Catalan nationalist relations, particularly in the aftermath of the Second World War, stemmed from the serious political divisions present in the Catalan camp.⁹⁴³ Lluís Companys dissolved the Catalan Government in 1939 and created the *Consell Nacional de Catalunya* ('National Council of Catalonia') which after the President's death was led by Carles Pi i Sunyer. This institution coexisted with the *Generalitat* and attracted those who thought the defeat of 1939 meant that Catalan self-determination was the only way forward. Those who remained convinced of upholding the 1932 *Estatut* sided with Companys' successor as President of the *Generalitat*, Josep Irla i Bosch.⁹⁴⁴ Irla managed to negotiate the dissolution of the *Consell Nacional* but his attempt to consolidate a new Catalan Government failed in 1948. From then on, the *Generalitat* was effectively concentrated on the figure of its President.

In contrast, the Basque Government maintained a solid network throughout Franco's dictatorship, usually operating from *Iparralde*, the 'French' Basque Country. Possibilities for a new alliance between Basque and Catalan nationalism—and even the inclusion of Galician nationalism in a new GALEUZCA—emerged during the first half of the 1940s. Despite Aguirre's efforts, the above mentioned Catalan divisions and the weakness of the *Generalitat*, made such an alliance impossible. As an alternative to a pact between the Catalan and the Basque exiled governments, a cooperation agreement between the PNV and ERC was signed in Montpellier in 1947, but its consequences were very limited. Josep Irla was succeeded by Josep Tarradellas in 1954. The new Catalan President, who had been ERC's party chairman since 1938, never got on well with Aguirre, and always prioritised a bilateral relationship with Spanish agents rather than a more broad alliance with Basque or Galician forces. When Aguirre died in 1960, Basque-Catalan nationalist relations had grown cold, a far cry of the closeness achieved in

⁹⁴³ Mees, "Tan lejos, tan cerca." pp. 582–591.

⁹⁴⁴ About Irla and his time as President of the *Generalitat*, see Mercè Morales Montoya, *La Generalitat de Josep Irla i l'exili Polític Català*, Barcelona: Base, 2008.

1938 and 1939.⁹⁴⁵ By then, the contentious politics of both Basque and Catalan nationalism were drastically different from those of the 1930s. Clandestine activity, fierce repression and political manoeuvres in the French exile became the norm, at least until Franco's death in 1975 slowly opened new opportunities.

⁹⁴⁵ Aguirre's attempts to build alliances with the Galician and especially the Catalan exiled political agents, as well as his complicated relationship with Tarradellas, have been covered in detail by Ludger Mees in *El Profeta Pragmático: Aguirre, El Primer Lehendakari (1939-1960)*, San Sebastián: Alberdania, 2006.

Conclusions

This thesis embarked on a compared study of Basque and Catalan nationalism during the 1930s, departing from a triple hypothesis which the past chapters have repeatedly put to the test. These were certainly intense years for both national movements, containing many of what Antoni Rovira i Virgili described as “spirit modelling days”. This research has worked through this crucial decade, looking for new meanings and explanations that would contribute to the general knowledge of Basque and Catalan nationalism in particular, as well as stateless nationalism in general. Now, the following pages will return to the initial hypotheses for a final assessment of the degree to which they have been proven, or disproven, by the sum of the preceding chapters.

The first hypothesis stated that “ERC and the PNV both led essentially similar processes towards political hegemony during the Second Spanish Republic.” The results of the present thesis have been quite consistent with the core of this initial hypothesis, given the crucial elements shared by the paths of both parties during the 1930s.

The journey towards political hegemony undertaken by ERC and the PNV in the context of the Second Spanish Republic has been observed to include two common and defining characteristics. The first of these is that in both cases, the path towards political hegemony went hand in hand with the Catalan and Basque nation-building processes. Home rule, which was both parties' prime strategic objective, was in fact a mechanism which could unlock key tools for nation-building. These had not been available to Catalan and Basque nationalists during their phase C, the mass movement stage of nation-building as defined by Miroslav Hroch. For both ERC and the PNV, the achievement of political hegemony came parallel to the materialisation of home rule and the consequent approach to phase D. This stage, added to Hroch's schema by Terry Martin and Tomasz Kamusella, is one in which national movements achieve state power. The margin for Catalan and Basque self-government provided by the Second Spanish Republic fell well short of full statehood, but it still included many power attributions often reserved to states. Basque and Catalan home rule mustered enough of this power to engage in powerful and often pioneer experiences of institutionalisation of national symbols, national administrations and nationally-guided policies in various fields such as education, language, security, etc. For both ERC and the PNV, party hegemony was

tied to national hegemony. When “Macià's party” was proclaimed to be “the whole of Catalonia” after the 1931 election, or when Aguirre was named the first Basque *Lehendakari* in 1936, it was not just that ERC and the PNV reached a position of predominance within the Catalan and Basque political systems. These were moments of what John Coakley describes as “national consolidation”, which saw the imagined Basque and Catalan nations acquiring a fixed, institutional form.

The second shared characteristic found in both ERC's and the PNV's paths towards political hegemony is the nature of the contentious politics displayed by both agents. Two elements must be highlighted here: 1) the importance of successful alliances and 2) the omnipresent limitation posed by the political opportunity structure. The first has been clearly documented down to the fact that neither ERC nor the PNV attempted to fight for home rule on their own. Consistent with a logic of hegemony, they both looked to attract others to the peripheries of their political projects. Who precisely these actors were varied according to the circumstances. At different times, ERC reached out to the CNT, to *Acció Catalana* or to the Catalan sections of Spanish republicans and leftist parties. In 1932, *Esquerra* even managed to get its main rival, the *Lliga Regionalista*, to give its full support to the *Núria Estatut* despite not having taken part in its creation. The PNV made a dramatic shift in its alliance policy, from shaking hands with the Carlists in 1931 to finally achieving home rule alongside the Popular Front in 1936. On another level, one of the keys to the party's success was to achieve the political decantation of moderate Catholics. Time and time again, both ERC and the PNV worked—with varying success—with the same logic: the achievement of a central strategic position within their respective political arenas and the attraction of other political agents. Even if sometimes this involved making concessions, which had to be accepted, in Engracio de Aranzadi's words, “with the exemplarity of selflessness”.

The second element that must be underlined here is the common efforts made by ERC and the PNV to adapt to the political opportunity structure. This does not belie the miscalculations that were also made by both agents. Perhaps the two clearest examples covered by the present thesis are the failed Basque municipal assembly of Gernika in April 1931 or Companys' 10 hour-long *Estat Català* of October 1934. For the most part, however, both Basque and Catalan nationalist contentious politics were quite mindful of the conditions present at their

respective sites. Both ERC and the PNV were relatively quick to resort to *realpolitik* and to readjust their claims according to the political opportunity structure. The acceptance of the blunt limitations imposed on the Núria *Estatuto* and of the ‘amputation’ of Navarre from the Basque *Estatuto* are two good examples of this. It is also important to note that despite the wishes of many Basque and Catalan nationalists, the Second Spanish Republic never assumed a federal or confederate form. Also, the Spanish nationalist paradigm establishing that the limits of Basque and Catalan home rule could only be definitely decided upon by the Spanish Parliament—and not the Basque and Catalan populations—remained firm. Neither ERC nor the PNV were successful—or insistent—in questioning this framework.

With respects to the first hypothesis, the results of discourse analysis throughout the present thesis have remained quite consistent with those produced by the contentious politics approach. The language of national hegemony, as described by Michael Billig, is a true constant in the political discourse of ERC and the PNV during the 1930s. The blurring of party and nation, the playing of the patriotic card, double representation and other elements of the syntax and rhetoric of hegemony can be found repeatedly in texts belonging to the two parties.

The present thesis has used the comparative method to produce a significant amount of evidence pointing to crucial similarities between the hegemony-building and nation-building processes led by the PNV and ERC during the Second Spanish Republic. It may be considered a counterbalance to research that, adopting the ‘difference hypothesis’ mentioned in the introduction, has instead departed from the—often more visible—contrasts between Basque and Catalan nationalism in an attempt to explain them.

The second hypothesis presented at the beginning of this research can be seen as an addition to the first. It stated that “these processes [towards the political hegemony of ERC and the PNV] faced different challenges and circumstances, specific to each case's particular context, and as a result materialised in different formulas and rhythms.” This hypothesis therefore conceded that, beyond the similarities relative to their fundamental nature, the political processes led by ERC and the PNV during the 1930s saw notable differences in terms of format and timing. The possible explanation offered was that particular and specific “challenges and circumstances” were responsible for these differences. In

retrospect, this was clearly a very open hypothesis, so it is fair to say that rather than a confirmation, the present thesis' results offer a more detailed explanation.

This research has confirmed that, in effect, the politics of Basque and Catalan nationalism during the 1930s could be very different, often almost opposite. Many particular episodes covered throughout the present thesis can be brought as examples to illustrate this. ERC's initial top-down, first steps towards Catalan home rule with the establishment of the *Generalitat* came at a time when the PNV was attempting to create a bottom-up Basque equivalent in the spring and summer of 1931. The enactment of the Catalan *Estatut* in early 1933, a particularly good period of relations between ERC and the Spanish Government, coincided with a period of increased repression and confrontation in the Basque Country. During the autumn of 1936, while the PNV was negotiating home rule with Madrid, ERC was agreeing to form a government with the revolutionaries that were controlling Catalan streets. But beyond noting these often wildly different dynamics, this thesis has tried to offer explanations for them.

The first comes from the methodological framework of Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, and it is the regime member *versus* challenger relationship. This thesis has shown that many of the differences in the contentious politics of Basque and Catalan nationalism during the Second Spanish Republic stemmed from the different relationships maintained by ERC and the PNV with the regime. ERC quickly adopted a role as a regime member, a fluent relationship with Madrid with direct access to institutional political power via the *Generalitat*. The PNV, which soon became a regime challenger for strategic and ideological reasons, was consequently prone to isolation from institutional power and repression. Furthermore, *Esquerra's* advantageous position enabled it to make much faster advances towards home rule which could not be replicated by Basque nationalism. This basically stands in line with the 'false analogy' concept proposed by Anna Sallés and Enric Ucelay Da Cal to explain the PNV's position during the first months of the Second Spanish Republic.

The regime member *versus* challenger asymmetry eventually led to desynchronisation, another term that has been employed by the present thesis to explain the diverging politics of ERC and the PNV. The concept is grounded in the Martin-Kamusella expanded version of Mirolsav Hroch's schema for nation-

building. It has been used to describe the situation generated when Basque and Catalan nationalist movements have found themselves at different stages of the nation-building process. With Basque nationalists still stuck at the mass movement phase C and their Catalan counterparts already moving towards phase D, and therefore implementing an institutional framework for nation-building, differences in their politics are hardly surprising. From late 1932 up until the October 1934 crisis, Basque and Catalan nationalists were at two clearly different stages. The former were still trying to achieve home rule, struggling with what was still a difficult relationship with the PSOE and the rest of the left. The latter were bent on consolidating and maintaining their own institutions. The suspension of Catalan home rule had a somewhat levelling effect, but full synchronisation between Basque and Catalan nation-building would have to wait until the approval of the Basque *Estatuto* in October 1936.

And yet the member-challenger dichotomy and desynchronisation alone have not sufficed to explain all of the different challenges and circumstances faced by Basque and Catalan nationalists. This thesis has often touched upon other, more structural causes. One of these is the uneven distribution in the support for Basque nationalism across the Basque Country, compared to the much more homogenous and firmly established position of Catalan nationalism within Catalonia. This represented a permanent challenge for Basque nationalists, who had to deal with the existence of these 'national peripheries'—which included most of Araba and Navarre, but also industrial areas of Biscay and Gipuzkoa. Two of the most evident consequences of this reality were Navarre's defection from the Basque *Estatuto* project in June 1932, and that same province and Araba's quick fall to the right-wing coup in July 1936. Another structural factor found behind many of the asymmetries in the politics of ERC and the PNV were the profound differences in the two parties' political cultures. In particular, this thesis has highlighted their different ideological substrates—republican for ERC and Catholic for the PNV—which contributed to their development of different collective worldviews.

The third and final hypothesis brought forward as part of the present thesis' introduction was about the relationship between Basque and Catalan nationalist movements. It stated that "Catalan and Basque nationalists did not arrive at significant strategic agreements, although they did engage in what can be

described as protodiplomatic relations.” This hypothesis rests upon previous research, which has repeatedly pointed out the contrast between the frequency and protocolised nature of Basque-Catalan nationalist relations, and their shallowness and inability to produce any solid alliances. It also, however, proposed an alternative approach to the study of these relations. Instead of focusing on looking for cracks and inconsistencies in the internationalist discourse of Basque and Catalan nationalists, this hypothesis proposed that a deeper understanding of the dynamics of these relations could come from a diplomatic approach.

This diplomatic perspective has guided the analysis of the relationship between the two movements, which have been found to be in constant evolution throughout the 1930s. The results of the conducted research show that, as long as a strategic barrier between ERC and the PNV was in place—i.e. the two agents assumed regime member and challenger roles respectively—the relations between the two were kept to a bare minimum. This minimum was defined by what the Catalan nationalist historian Josep de Calassanç Serra described as “spiritual solidarity”, a term adopted by the present thesis to mean the use of protocol and often vague discourses of internationalist solidarity. Alone, this was a purely symbolic phenomenon with little political consequence. At times of increased confrontation between the PNV and the Spanish Government in the autumn of 1931, even spiritual solidarity could be eroded and give way to the exchange of verbal attacks between ERC and the PNV. Protocol had its limitations but it continued to evolve during the years, incorporating an array of performances which would become almost standardised in the contacts between Basque and Catalan nationalists. These included language exchanges, joint displays of symbols and singing of national anthems, paying tribute to the ‘other’s’ national heroic figures, etc. All of these were particularly visible during episodes such as the GALEUZCA pact and trip of 1933, although this thesis has also shown its shallowness from a diplomatic perspective.

Once the strategic barrier between ERC and the PNV began to lift, however, spiritual solidarity and protocol remained as the foundation for improved relations between the two parties, eventually leading to direct cooperation. Antoni Rovira i Virgili’s remark that the “very cordial friendship” between Catalonia and the Basque Country had been “created by common ideals and by common enemies”

has been observed to be true. During the conservative biennium Basque nationalist MPs left the Spanish *Cortes* together with their Catalan colleagues in defence of the Catalan Crop Contracts Law, and Catalan nationalist representatives joined protests in the Basque Country. By then, the Spanish political right was increasingly becoming the common enemy that could motivate some kind of real strategic cooperation—if not a full blown alliance—between ERC and the PNV.

The third main hypothesis was specific in denying “any significant strategic agreements” between Basque and Catalan nationalists during the period. Given the present thesis’ results, it cannot be considered disproven. There were no formal alliances—defined by treaties with specific and binding clauses—between the two movements. However, it is true that after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, with no strategic barrier between the PNV and ERC, and synchronisation taking place in their respective nation-building processes, conditions for such an alliance were at an all-time high. Particularly during the Basque exile in Barcelona, Basque and Catalan nationalist leaders often talked and acted as if they had forged some kind of alliance. This “Bilbao-Barcelona axis”, as dubbed by Manuel Azaña, was nevertheless never formalised.

This thesis may help to bring closure to the Estévez-Ucelay Da Cal debate on Basque and Catalan nationalist relations. On one hand, its results show that, during the 1930s, these relations were indeed made up of many symbolic episodes with little practical implications as argued by Ucelay Da Cal and others. However, this thesis has also pointed out that the symbolic element of these relations was not ‘empty’. It played an important role in establishing a common code between the two movements. This would become more relevant in the particular instances when actual cooperation took place. On the other hand, this research has followed up on Estévez’s idea that the Basque-Catalan nationalist relations should be viewed in a similar light as the relations between established states. After all, Basque and Catalan nationalists perceived each other as representatives of different nations within the Spanish state, seen in turn as an international arena. However, it is precisely the use of a diplomatic approach that verifies the limits of Basque-Catalan national solidarity, as a shallow code which was always ultimately subordinate to the particular (Basque or Catalan) national interest.

Beyond this review of the initial three hypotheses, an additional note must be made on the issue of banalisation. Although the present thesis' introduction does not openly predict Basque and Catalan nationalism would become more banal during the 1930s, this possibility was positively on the table early on in this research. At this point, it is very clear that the results do not point in this direction. Certainly, Basque and Catalan home rule created the potential for certain symbols, such as the *senyera* and the *ikurriña*, to achieve some sort of banal status. The enactment of Basque and Catalan *Estatutos* involved unprecedented mass assumptions of Basque and Catalan nationalist tenets and symbols. However, Basque and Catalan nationalism simply remained too contentious throughout the Second Spanish Republic and the Spanish Civil War to allow for any sort of real banalisation. To use Michael Billig's terms, they never became 'cold' enough for their symbols to become banal, silent additions to the landscape.

The process of carrying out this research has been a constant source of new questions related to the study of Basque and Catalan nationalism, as well as nations and nationalism in general. Some items have been picked up on the way and incorporated into the present thesis. Others have proven to be too far removed from the core of the present research, or too complex in their own right. A final word must be made to note these possibilities for future works.

There are perhaps countless 'smaller' items of interest that may still warrant additional, more focused, investigations. Many aspects of the political culture of ERC and the PNV—and of other Basque and Catalan nationalist agents—deserve further research. Sociability and social networks, which have been covered by the present thesis, remain a very promising ground. Much new work can still come from comparing political calendars, performances, the cultural role of Catholicism and republicanism, the impact of social centres, etc. All of these could continue to produce new insight on the development of Basque and Catalan nationalism, and perhaps could test the ERC 'open' *versus* PNV 'closed' social network model proposed by this thesis. Another additional area of further interest can be found in discourse analysis. Particularly in the interaction of Spanish and Catalan nationalist discourse. The "double patriotism" documented by Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas in accounts of Catalan nationalist combatants during the Spanish Civil War, or the elements of banal Spanish nationalism sometimes found in ERC's discourse

point out to an interesting nexus. Finally, another interesting option would be to expand the present thesis into more recent chronological framework. A compared analysis of the impact of Franco's dictatorship on Basque and Catalan nationalist politics, nation-building and relations would serve to test the present thesis hypotheses further, putting them before a radically different historical context.

Wider, perhaps more ambitious possibilities also lay in the paths ahead. A more structural approach to the comparison of Basque and Catalan nationalism in the 1930s would be a welcome advance. A comprehensive study of both movements' social base in terms of class, ethnicity and gender during the Second Spanish Republic would certainly require a tremendous amount of work, but its results would be surely very rewarding. There are other alternatives. Language, for example, has not been a very prominent feature of this thesis, but could work very well as a completely different entry point. This could focus on the linguistic attitudes and policies of the two movements, looking at the interaction between native language, ethnicity and national consciousness. Exploring these alternative approaches to the compared study of Basque and Catalan nationalism during the 1930s would help to build a more complete, all-round knowledge of these historical phenomena.

Off course, the scope can be widened even further to consider other stateless nationalist movements in other geographical and chronological contexts. Compared analysis, the contentious politics framework and discourse analysis are all highly adaptive methodologies. Perhaps a rather intuitive option would be to use the diplomatic approach included in the present thesis to analyse the relations between any other two or more nationalist movements. Even broader questions may be considered in order to make the connection with more general aspects of the theory of nations and nationalism. If anything, this thesis shows how nations are able to develop and thrive *without* a state of their own, and yet their ultimate consolidation seems to depend on the amount of state power they manage to secure. The contentious relationship that arises from this contradiction, as well as its implications for those approaches that focus on the relationship between national identity and state power, is surely fertile ground for future research. The continued use of the methods included in this thesis, combined with new

approaches and new objects of study, can certainly only contribute to a deeper understanding of nations and nationalism.

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Gudari

Jagi-Jagi

La Catalunya Insurgent

La Humanitat

La Nació Catalana

La Publicitat

La Rambla

La Vanguardia

La Veu de Catalunya

L'insurgent

Llibertat

L'Opinió

Nosaltres Sols!

Som

Som-hi!

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**Annex I | A selection of texts
showing the evolution of Basque-
Catalan nationalist relations**

Text 1: *El problema catalán y el problema vasco*

Un editorial de “El Debate”—en el número que hoy será puesto a la venta en Bilbao—se ocupa de lo que el diario titula “El Estatuto de la región catalana”. Unas observaciones sobre el reciente libro de Cambó, “Por la concordia”, sirven de introducción al artículo. Y en ellas es de notar como cosa a la que los catalanes ni los vascos estamos, en verdad, muy acostumbrados, un propósito de suprimir asperezas.

Sean ellas efecto de una convicción o fruto del ambiente actual, que permite florecer ¡hasta en Madrid! más de un pinito descentralizador, es siempre grato recoger el hecho. Sin concederle, desde luego, desmedida trascendencia; porque no es esta la primera vez, ni muy probablemente ha de ser la última en la que la realidad haya dado al traste con esperanzas concebidas sobre no menor fundamento aparente que en los actuales tiempos.

“El señor Cambó—dice luego “El Debate”—pide en “Por la concordia” dos cosas; respeto para la lengua catalana y constitución de un organismo que represente la unidad de Cataluña. En principio, no hay por qué oponerse a ninguna de las dos, y he aquí por qué hemos empezado diciendo que elogiábamos sin reservas dos cosas en este libro. Y como el presidente de la Diputación de Barcelona acaba de dirigir una nota a los presidentes de las Diputaciones de Gerona, Lérida y Tarragona para llegar a la constitución de un organismo que represente la unidad espiritual de Cataluña, nos parece caso de ocuparnos de nuevo del problema catalán.”

Hay una razón más para que esta atención sea del todo merecida. Y es que el señor Malúquer ha realizado, a nuestro juicio, un acto de la más alta y sabia política. Plantea una cuestión muy concreta muy real, y, por añadidura, la plantea en el terreno legal. Si, como esperamos, las Diputaciones catalanas se disponen a seguir el camino indicado en la nota del señor Malúquer, el gobierno y la nación entera deben seguir con la máxima atención este movimiento.

Y enfocado así el asunto, ve “El Debate” la posibilidad de que otros pueblos peninsulares sigan el ejemplo catalán, hacia el que reiteradamente los alienta en los siguientes términos:

“Veríamos complacidos que los deseos del presidente de la Diputación de Barcelona se convirtiesen en realidad y que una vez puestos de acuerdo Ayuntamientos, diputaciones y fuerzas políticas del principado, y articulado el proyecto de un Estatuto, viniese éste a Madrid y ocupase la atención del Gobierno, de la Prensa y de toda España. Porque es posible que Cataluña señalase con esto el camino a otras regiones. Ya advertimos hace poco el ejemplo de las Diputaciones castellano-leonesas, movidas, no por la actuación de los partidos políticos, sino por las necesidades de la vida en aquellas comarcas. ¿Se ha pensado en Valladolid, en Palencia, en Burgos, en Zamora, en lo que significaría que un organismo regional representase los intereses colectivos?”

De estos párrafos, y del contexto del editorial, podríamos los vascos obtener una enseñanza. De ellos, desgraciadamente, no extraemos otra cosa que una pesimista consecuencia.

Agrupación étnica más definida, concreta y netamente dibujada que cualquiera otra de la península; de más perfecta línea que cualquiera otra agrupación europea, el pueblo vasco ve, al parecer impasible, que mientras el “hecho diferencial” catalán ha ganado terreno en la mismísima mentalidad castellana y es aceptado ya sin contradicción hasta allí donde se le negó siempre y sistemáticamente existencia, su “hecho diferencial”, el nuestro, el más vigoroso y real de cuantos pueden invocarse, queda, no ya en la controversia ajena, sino perdido en la indiferencia general.

Cuando Cataluña, tras la dictadura, ha elevado su voz, todos han simulado, al menos, prestarle oído. Y no sólo prestarle oído, sino hacerle eco al parecer cordial. El problema catalán está en pie, y desde los periódicos madrileños hasta los políticos en boga reconocen su existencia y están de acuerdo en que su resolución apremia. Los publicistas se ocupan del problema catalán; los conferenciantes explanan el problema catalán; los políticos abocados a la gobernación opinan sobre el problema catalán; los gobernantes mismos confiesan la necesidad de abrir cauces al problema catalán. No hay otro problema de agrupaciones étnicas, no hay otro problema de pueblos peninsulares que el problema catalán.

¿Quién ha levantado en Madrid su voz por el problema vasco? Y, lo que es más triste y lamentable, ¿quién ha levantado aquí, aquí mismo, su voz por el problema vasco, por el “hecho diferencial” vasco, por el derecho que asiste al pueblo vasco?

Cataluña, hoy mismo, según sus preferencias que desde allí nos llegan, planteará su problema en el mismo banquete de gala ofrecido a don Alfonso, hoy su huésped. Cataluña ha de obtener indudablemente algo, probablemente mucho más de lo que pide. Mientras que nosotros, más netamente dibujados como pueblo, como raza—dicho sea sin agravio de nuestros hermanos los catalanes—, seguiremos como hasta ahora, sin lograr otra cosa, si logramos, que aquellas concesiones mínimas que vengan como a remolque de las otorgadas a Cataluña.

No culpemos a nadie de esto, como no sea a nosotros mismos. Cataluña ha sabido merecerlo y ha puesto noble esfuerzo en lograrlo. Partiendo de más abajo que nosotros ha llegado a una altura que hoy nos produce envidia por lo inaccesible que en muchos extremos nos resulta. Si nosotros, con más sólido cimiento no hemos sabido levantar edificio comparable al catalán ¿a quién sino a nosotros mismos nos debemos culpar? ¿No ha encontrado Cataluña los mismos obstáculos con que nosotros tropezamos, y no ha sabido vencerlos?

No de envidia celosa, sino de noble estímulo ha de servirnos lo que hasta ahora contemplamos. Sintamos tristeza, no por el bien que los otros lograron, sino porque no hayamos sabido merecerlo para nosotros mismos.

Porque esta es la verdad, triste y amarga. Como es la verdad siempre para los que la negaron con sus hechos o la desconocieron con su indiferencia.

Source: H. de E., “El problema catalán y el problema vasco”, *Euzkadi*, 21/5/1930, p. 1.

Text 2: *Per la federació*

Sembla que cada dia va guanyant camí la idea que sigui federal el projecte de Constitució que hom presenti a les Corts futures.

Per compte de limitar-nos a dur-hi, com a Ponència de Govern, l'Estatut de Catalunya, fóra molt més convenient d'anar a una estructuració definitiva de les realitats polítiques de tot el país, evitant, però, de caure en l'encarament de les ficcions inútils.

Altrament, sempre viurem en una interinitat perillosa, i ens trobarem, de bell antuvi, amb la complicació d'haver de coordinar, dintre el nou Estat, els Estatuts de Catalunya, de Bascònia, de Galícia i els d'altres països que vulguin viure autonòmicament.

La bona solució seria arribar, pel procediment més pràctic i més senzill possible, a una veritable estructuració federal.

El que convindria és que els entesos en aquestes matèries es possessin ben aviat d'acord per començar una tasca conjunta, tenint en compte que, com més clarament plantegem la qüestió de l'auto-determinació dels Pobles hispànics, més prop estarem d'aconseguir el triomf dels nostres ideals.

Un canvi d'impressions amb els Partits republicans d'esquerra de tot Espanya, abans de redactar definitivament el Codi de l'estructuració política de Catalunya podria facilitar les coses d'una manera molt considerable.

Convindria tenir-ho molt present.

Source: "Per la Federació", *l'Opinió*, 9/6/1931, p. 1.

Text 3: *Els aliats de Catalunya*

Està en el convenciment de tots que l'aprovació de l'Estatut català per les Corts Constituents, encara que probable, no s'aconseguirà sense lluita. No és possible que manquin nuclis d'oposició, val a dir-ho, tal vegada no entre els veritables demòcrates i republicans, sinó entre la massa temible dels neo-republicans del 14 d'abril. Ara bé ¿amb quines forces d'aliança pot comptar Catalunya per aquells moments els meus greus de tota la nostra història contemporània? Hi ha en primer lloc els seguidors i adeptes de les personalitats que formen el Govern provisional, lligades per un pacte, precisament per lliure, més solemne que cap. Però no cal negligir unes forces noves que estaran segur al nostre costat per un motiu igualment poderós: el de la solidaritat espiritual provocada per la comunitat d'interessos. Ens referim als representants d'altres comunitats hispàniques que amb igual dret aspiren a reivindicacions semblants.

D'aquests nuclis n'hi ha només dos de ben definits, és a dir que tenen el nacionalisme per denominador primordial, el nucli basc i el nucli gallec. Fora d'ells el nucli valencià en estat de formació molt més endarrerida, haurà de lluitar molt per desprendre's dels partits generals espanyols a què han estat sempre sumades les forces poderoses del republicanisme a València. Respecte a les Balears passa quelcom de semblant. A Aragó es dibuixa fa temps un moviment nebulosament «regionalista», menys interessat per tal com no pot sortir de l'estadi «regional» per mancar-li de fet la base «nacional».

Dels dos moviments nacionals paral·lels al nostre, el basc és el més antic; però, per què no dir-ho?, de moment ens sembla el més feble. El seu obstacle més gros és el caràcter reaccionari, catòlic, ultradretista del seu nucli originari. És veritat que en certa manera a Catalunya hem passat pel quelcom semblant. Durant uns quants anys la Lliga Regionalista va adjudicar-se (encara que fos gratuïtament) la nostra representació integral, i per això, de fora estant, catalanisme i reacció semblaven coses idèntiques. Ara, a Bascònia, comença a formar-se una força nacionalista d'esquerra en què cal xifrar l'esdevenidor del renaixement basc.

A Galícia el moviment nacional, fins ara ofegat pel caciquisme més oprobios de les terres peninsulars, no havia pogut manifestar-se amb tota la seva força autènticament democràtica i liberal.

El grup més selecte de la intel·lectualitat galleguista, aplegat en el «Seminario de Estudos Galegos», nom modest on s'amaga el futur nucli de la veritable Universitat de Galícia, ha elaborat un «Anteproyecto de Estatuto da Galiza» publicat en forma de fascicle per la impremta Paredes de Sant-Iago de Compostela.

Heu-vos ací les principals forces del país.

Source: Josep C. Serra-Rafols, "Els aliats de Catalunya", *L'Opinió*, 22/7/1931, p. 2.

Text 4: La “Ezquierda Republicana” y Euzkadi

La suspensión y clausura de EUZKADI —¡todavía es tiempo de hablar de ellas!— nos ha proporcionado ocasión de recibir manifestaciones de simpatía y adhesión de diferentes periódicos y de leer, en otros, protestas por una medida tomada con primaria injusticia.

Citemos “El Debate”, “Informaciones”, “La Correspondencia Militar”, “El Siglo Futuro”, entre los de Madrid; “El Ideal Gallego”, de Galicia; “Diario de Valencia”, de Levante; “La Voz de Aragón”, de la capital aragonesa; “Diario de Valladolid” y el periódico parisino “La Croix”. Sin olvidar a “Eskualduna”.

Pero ha sido en Catalunya donde más protestas levantó la suspensión y censura de nuestro periódico, y a ese particular hemos leído en “La Veu de Catalunya”, “El Matí”, “El Correo Catalán”, de Barcelona; “Gazeta de Vich”, de Vich; “Joventut”, de Valls, y “Recull”, de Blanes, frases de cordialidad y afecto a EUZKADI, que vivamente agradecemos.

Ha habido una excepción—no sabemos de otra, por lo menos—y la ha constituido “L’Opinió”. El órgano de “Ezquierda Republicana de Catalunya” no ha creído conveniente sumar su protesta a la de otros periódicos, y ha hecho más, puesto que ha tratado de justificar tal decisión gubernativa bajo la alegación de se trataba de perturbar el orden. Digamos que al escribir ocurrencia tan peregrina no se refería a EUZKADI en particular, sino, en general, a todos los periódicos norteños con el nuestro suspendidos.

Tal actitud de “L’Opinió” ha sido causa de que “La Veu de Catalunya”, al atacar al primero rompiese otra lanza en favor de los periódicos del Norte.

Reiteramos, por tanto, nuestra gratitud al órgano de la Lliga Regionalista por su nueva intervención en defensa nuestra.

Nos cuesta creer que el órgano de “Ezquierda” escribiese lo que escribió creyendo que, en efecto, tratásemos de perturbar el orden que aquí, en Euzkadi, han perturbado únicamente los elementos exóticos. Pero, en fin, allá el colega con sus apreciaciones y sus escritos, porque, al fin y al cabo, no es la primera vez que en la “Ezquierda Republicana de Catalunya” se habla y se escribe contra nosotros.

Comenzaremos recordando unas manifestaciones del jefe de su minoría parlamentaria, señor Companys, formulada en los primeros días siguientes a la apertura de Cortes, según las cuales entre “Ezquerria” y los diputados vascos defensores del Estatuto mediaba un abismo, y que por tanto toda inteligencia era imposible. Y conste que si no entrecomillamos el párrafo es tan solo por no poder asegurar que sean esas las mismas palabras que pronunció el señor Companys, no porque no reflejen, con exactitud, la idea que querían expresar.

Otros casos podríamos citar, pero por no extendernos demasiado nos limitaremos a mencionar algunos de los párrafos de las crónicas del redactor de “L'Opinió” en Madrid, que en alguna ocasión han revestido todos los caracteres de un exabrupto grosero, a todas luces injusto e inmerecido.

Ahora bien, ¿creen algunos elementos de Ezquerria Republicana de Catalunya y “L'Opinió” que nosotros, siguiendo como seguimos, con la máxima atención, la marcha de la política catalana y la actuación de sus representantes en las Corporaciones, creen, repetimos, que no hemos podido formar opinión sobre diferentes cuestiones y que no tenemos bastantes elementos de juicio para formular censuras? Pues los tenemos; y sería incurrir en un error crasísimo el suponer lo contrario.

Y sin embargo, ¿cuál ha sido la actitud de EUZKADI? ¿Pueden presentar los hombres de Ezquerria Republicana o de “L'Opinió” algún texto escrito en nuestro periódico en el que se combatiese su actuación ni, mucho menos, en cuanto ella se relacionase con asuntos de orden interior? No podrán presentar ni uno solo, ciertamente.

En cambio, en la colección de EUZKADI se puede demostrar cómo casi a diario en el “Carnet Político” se ha reservado una sección a Catalunya para recoger en ella todas las noticias importantes facilitadas por la Generalitat y publicar cuanto pudiese tender a aumentar el prestigio de Catalunya y sus gobernantes en Euzkadi y entre los miles de vascos de América que a diario nos leen, y muy especialmente en cuanto se refiere al ilustre presidente de la Generalitat, don Francesc Maciá, patriota cumbre, cuya filiación en el Partido Nacionalista Vasco es motivo de orgullo para nosotros.

Y hemos hecho más, todavía, por cuanto hemos dirigido ataques a dos escritores incursos en catalanofobia, no obstante no haber escrito nada contra de Euzkadi.

Comparen la actitud suya y la nuestra.

Lo ideal sería que las tres minorías—catalana, gallega y vasca—hubiesen formado apretado haz en defensa de sus reivindicaciones respectivas. Y votar las demás lo que cada una de ellas para sí pidiera.

Lejos de obrar así, *Ezquerria Republicana de Catalunya* votó en favor de la aplicación de la guillotina al debate contra la suspensión de los periódicos del Norte—*EUZKADI* entre ellos—y ha votado también en contra de las aspiraciones de nuestro pueblo de concordar directamente con la Santa Sede. Sin embargo, no podrán demostrar que la *Minoría Defensora del Estatuto Vasco* haya votado ni una sola vez en contra de algo que interesara a Catalunya. Y no dude de que si hubieran sido los periódicos catalanes los que se hubieran hallado bajo el peso de una clausura gubernativa, no fueran nuestros diputados quienes hubiesen votado en pro del “guillotinado” del debate; y si se hubiese tratado de confeccionar una Constitución a base de obligar a Catalunya, Euzkadi y Galicia a concordar directamente con la Santa Sede, en cuanto ello hubiera estado en contra de los deseos de Catalunya, no hubieran sido tampoco ciertamente los nacionalistas vascos quienes hubiesen dado su voto para obligar a Catalunya a algo que ella, o la mayoría de ella, rechazase. Y ya se comprenderá que presentamos con este último, un caso hipotético por sernos bien conocidos los sentimientos católicos de Catalunya.

Con la actitud observada por la *Ezquerria* sólo se ha conseguido fortalecer las ansias unitarias de socialistas y otros elementos afines.

Concretemos. Acaso hubiera sido mucho esperar que *Ezquerria* y “*L'Opinió*” observasen con relación a nosotros la misma actitud que el órgano de la “*Lliga Regionalista*” o “*El Matí*”. Pero creemos que por nuestro bien probado amor a Catalunya merecíamos si no una actitud de defensa a nuestras aspiraciones, un piadoso silencio como el observado por otros significados elementos catalanistas, quienes si por su ideología no podían ponerse a nuestro lado, no han querido enfrentárenos tampoco, por entender que no es lícito ni arguye espíritu de solidaridad entre pueblos de aspiraciones comunes el dificultar la consecución de ajenos anhelos que al verse satisfechos en nada nos han de perjudicar.

Tome ejemplo “*Ezquerria*” y “*L'Opinió*”. Días atrás se planteó en las Cortes una petición de los canarios de volver a formar una sola provincia. Nuestros diputados

vieron que se trataba de derrocar una disposición de la Dictadura, y que además era deseo del pueblo canario, e inmediatamente se puso de su parte y supo dar cara protestando contra la actitud de los socialistas que, con la cooperación del señor Besteiro, privaron a los insulares de una votación que tenían ganada.

Source: Ibaialdekoa, “La ‘Ezquierda Republicana’ y Euzkadi”, *Euzkadi*, 1/10/1931, p. 5.

Text 5: *Al costat d'Euscadi*

En defensa del concert econòmic, última resta d'unes llibertats mil·lenàries, els bascos han entrat en conflicte amb el poder central d'Espanya, tristament representat avui pel lerrouxisme. Per acord dels Consells municipals d'Euscadi, el vinent diumenge, dia 12, han d'efectuar-se eleccions per a designar unes Juntes directives que s'encarreguin dels treballs en pro del manteniment del concert. I el Govern de Madrid, reincidint en el pecat de provocació que va cometre contra Catalunya amb motiu de la llei de conreus, ha declarat faccioses les eleccions convocades i assegura que està disposat a impedir-les.

Tot l'aparell unitari i centralista es posa en funcions per a vexar i humiliar el poble basc. Els governadors de província —flagell que Catalunya ha pogut treure's de damunt— a Euscadi fan aquests dies el valent i criden fort i amenacen a tort i dret. Petits virreis ridículs, els governadors del centralisme són titelles grotescos moguts de Madrid estant per uns quants ministres. Contra la clara voluntat d'Euscadi, es dreça el Govern Samper, atiat o encoratjat per les dretes, i àdhuc pel silenci d'algun sector de Catalunya.

És un nou episodi de la llarga lluita entre l'Espanya vella, que persisteix en la seva doble negror reaccionària i unitària, i les múltiples nacions sotmeses que senten cada dia amb més força l'anhel de la nova llibertat.

En aquestes condicions, Catalunya no dubta, no pot dubtar. Amb tot l'afecte del seu cor i amb tota l'energia del seu braç, Catalunya se situa al costat d'Euscadi. L'aliança popular entre els dos pobles —molt més eficaç que una aliança diplomàtica —, entra novament en acció. La nació mediterrània de la Península, remuntant amb el pensament del curs de l'Ebre, allarga la mà als bascos, que són amics, germans i aliats dels catalans.

El cas actual d'Euscadi és una altra prova de la buidor del pretès autonomisme de certa gent republicana i monàrquica, quan presenta l'autonomia de les regions i dels municipis com un dels punts essencials del seu programa, i que l'ataca i la vulnera quan esdevé una realitat.

El veritable autonomisme, a la Península ibèrica, és el nacionalisme, és el principi de la llibertat nacional. Tots els qui s'oposen a aquesta llibertat, per

autonomistes que ells es vulguin dir, no són altra cosa sinó varietats doctrinàries o formulàries de l'unitarisme ancestral.

Per als unitaris espanyols, fins per als qui tenen l'estrany caprici de disfressar-se de amb la denominació d'autonomistes, el màxim enemic és el nacionalisme, concretat en els moviments d'Euscadi, Galícia i Catalunya. Allò que uneix profundament una gran part dels polítics, dels buròcrates i dels periòdics castellans de les més diverses etiquetes exteriors, és l'odi a aquests moviments, que signifiquen una revolució autèntica en la història peninsular.

I és aquesta revolució la que esporugueix i esglaia als unitaris espanyols de la dreta, del centre i de l'esquerra. L'experiència ha demostrat, en els darrers temps, que és perfectament possible d'asfixiar i anul·lar a Espanya les més impetuoses revolucions republicanes. Però és evident que no poden ésser asfixiades o anul·lades les revolucions nacionals. Els monàrquics i els monarquitzants, valent-se de l'eina tarada del lerrouxisme i comptant amb altres complicitats, han pogut fer caure als socialistes, Azaña i Martínez Barrio; han pogut desfer o sabotejar l'obra laïcista i obrerista del bienni. Però no han pogut —ni podran— destruir les primeres llibertats reconquistades per la nació catalana, ni les últimes llibertats conservades per la nació basca.

Caurà, caurà, caurà la vella Espanya. I allò que farà caure serà el veritable autonomisme, que és el de l'autonomia plena de les nacions peninsulars renaixents.

Source: Antoni Rovira i Virgili, "Al costat d'Euscadi", *La Humanitat*, 11/8/1934, p. 1.

Text 6: *El segon Estatut*

Represa la tramitació parlamentària del projecte d'Estatut basc, havem de creure que aquest no trigarà gaire a ésser una realitat efectiva. L'autonomia que Euscadi no va poder aconseguir a les Corts cedo-lerrouxistes, i serà reconeguda per les noves Corts d'esquerra. I mentre que, en el període de la Mancomunitat, Catalunya va trobar-se sola en la creació d'aquell organisme, en el període de la Generalitat tindrà la noble companyia del País Basc.

És d'un interès vital per al nostre poble l'extensió del règim estatutari als altres pobles vius de la República. Cada nou Estatut que sigui establert damunt al base d'una vertadera personalitat col·lectiva, serà un esforç valuosíssim per l'Estatut català. A mesura que nous Estatuts entrin en vigor, anirà dibuixant-se el mapa nacional de la República, per damunt de la uniformitat centralista i de la divisió artificial en províncies burocràtiques.

Sota el règim estatutari, l'ordre en la implantació dels Estatuts diversos respon als graus d'intensitat del sentiment nacional en la present època. No és pas per atzar que el primer Estatut és el de Catalunya i que el segon serà el d'Euscadi. A major vitalitat peculiar, major ímpetu i major pressa per a l'assoliment de l'autonomia.

Era cosa prevista i natural que els bascos seguiren ben de prop els catalans en el camí de la llibertat. Units per ideals en gran part comuns, els uns i els altres es disposen a augmentar per la mutual ajuda la respectiva puixança dins l'Estat republicà.

Els diputats catalans a les Corts d'Espanya cooperen cordialment a l'èxit del projecte de l'Estatut basc. Ho fan per l'interès que els inspira la causa d'Euscadi i també per l'interès que la causa catalana. L'elaboració d'un nou Estatut oferirà l'avinentsa d'ampliar les facultats que consten a l'Estatut Exterior de Catalunya. En aquest no figuren totes les possibilitats autonòmiques que hi ha a la Constitució de la República. Convé, tant als catalans com als bascos, que les possibilitats al·ludides es tradueixin en realitats dins l'Estatut d'Euscadi. Si així fos, una reforma parcial de l'Estatut català —reforma que avui fóra fàcilment tramitable— podria

posar l'autonomia nostra a l'alçada de la que aconseguirien els nostres amics i aliats del Cantàbric.

Més encara: la qüestió de la immunitat dels diputats dels Parlaments anomenats regionals, qüestió que no ha de quedar tal i com la deixava temps enrera el Tribunal de Garanties, és susceptible d'ésser resolta favorablement amb motiu de la discussió de l'Estatut basc.

Mentrestant, Catalunya, que acaba de refer el primer Estatut establert per la República, allarga les mans a Euscadi, i saluda el pròxim establiment del segon Estatut, nou pas cap a l'estructuració de la República com a convivència de pobles lliures.

Source: Antoni Rovira i Virgili, "El segon Estatut", *La Humanitat*, 8/5/1936, p. 1.

Text 7: Salut al País Basc!

Ahir va ésser un gran dia per als bascos. L'autonomia de llur pàtria, que era setmanes ha un fet real, ha esdevingut també un fet legal. Les Corts de la República, en reprendre les tasques, han donat prova claríssima de les noves orientacions. En la primera sessió del període parlamentari han reconegut la voluntat del País Basc, segons la fórmula fixada de comú acord.

El País Basc! Aquest nom és, com el d'Euscadi, el nom oficial de la vella nació que acaba de veure proclamat el règim de la seva autonomia. Des d'ara, el País Basc és més que una denominació, geogràfica i ètnica. És la denominació d'un organisme polític públicament reconegut.

Salut al País Basc! Bascos i catalans alcen avui els braços—els braços armats—en defensa de la llibertat nacional i humana. Uns i altres paguem amb coratge, per aquesta doble llibertat, el preu de la sang.

Només els orbs poden deixar de veure la profunda significació de la coincidència d'Euscadi i Catalunya en el mateix camp de lluita. Apareix claríssimament, amb la gran claredat de les hores històriques, que els defensors autèntics de la llibertat nacional han de lluitar contra els facciosos.

No és sols Catalunya, esquerrista, la que ha pres aquesta posició en la present guerra. És també Euscadi, dretista, amb un dretisme humà, liberal i verament cristià.

Com a homes i com a patriotes, els bascos—igual que els catalans—cooperen amb tota l'embranchida a l'esforç per batre l'enemic ferotge que ens voldria vèncer, esclafar i anihilar.

¡Quin goig, quin intens goig és per Catalunya el tenir Euscadi al seu costat en aquest moment tràgic i gloriós!

Tan diferents com som en moltes coses bascos i catalans, sentim, no obstant, temps ha la mutual amistat cordialíssima creada pels ideals comuns i els enemics comuns. Allò que més ens ha unit, és la recíproca comprensió i les amenaces que han gravitat damunt tots alhora. I quan l'amenaça a pres la forma violenta del cop feixista, els dos pobles s'han trobat. I s'han trobat en el camp de la llibertat republicana, de l'autonomia política i de la renovació social. Catalunya s'honora de

tenir per companys els bascos. El nou pas que ha donat la República en el camí de les llibertats nacionals—camí en el qual no ha d'aturar-se, ans ha d'anar endavant resoltament—ens acosta a la transformació d'Ibèria en una República de pobles lliures, forjada enmig d'aquesta guerra que hem de guanyar.

De Catalunya estant, a través de la negra clapa feixista d'Aragó i Navarra, cridem amb crit del cor: Salut al País Basc!

Source: Antoni Rovira i Virgili, "Salut al País Basc!", *La Humanitat*, 2/10/1936, p. 1.

Text 8: Atención, Catalunya. ¿Has hecho algo por Euzkadi?

Se ha celebrado en Barcelona la semana pro Euzkadi. Indudablemente, nos ha halagado sobremanera el que esta nacionalidad hermana se haya acordado de nosotros cuando creíamos, fundadamente, que se había olvidado completamente de nuestra suerte.

Esta semana, este homenaje, nos forza [sic] a hacer unas consideraciones sobre la actitud de Catalunya, cuyos hechos han estado muy lejos de demostrar el significado de esa palabra que hoy la llevan miles de catalanes en sus solapas.

El significado histórico de las nacionalidades autónomas nos obligaba a firmar en esta guerra el contrato de nuestra independencia. Euzkadi, con una ruta demarcada, ha ganado el derecho a la autodeterminación. Para ello se ha conocido la guerra con todas sus consecuencias. Se ha aceptado el reto guerrero y seguimos aceptándolo valiéndonos todos los sinsabores que implica este acto.

Frente a Euzkadi, la insólita actuación de Catalunya. Lejos de nuestro ánimo el dar una lección de política autonomista. Solamente nos limitamos a recoger los frutos de unos errores que tanto daño nos han hecho. Quisiéramos adentrarnos en esas palabras que los ciudadanos catalanes llevan en sus pechos.

¿«Has hecho algo por Euzkadi»? Pregunta universal que abarca todos los resortes morales de los sectores democráticos.

Solamente un vistazo a la obra gigantesca de este pueblo. La película de nuestra tragedia con los retoques de nuestro heroísmo, deberían servir para despertar las conciencias adormecidas de muchos de nuestros circunstanciales aliados.

En Catalunya se ha reconocido esa necesidad. Nuestra ayuda, con nuestros impulsos, ha sido eficiente. Nuestras batallas han tenido el doble fin de abarcar nuestras defensas con la de los demás. Este homenaje a la lucha épica que sostenemos contra el invasor nos es grata. Pero el derecho a la autodeterminación nos lleva a otras consideraciones más graves.

Catalunya ha trabajado mucho, pero debe hacerlo más. La conciencia universal de esta lucha nos simplifica, es cierto, pero estamos jugándonos unos derechos

futuros ante los cuales no se puede claudicar, so pena de eliminarnos de nuestras particulares determinaciones.

Atención, Catalunya. Nosotros no hemos sustentado nunca el prurito de una superación legislativa sobre los demás. Catalunya debe comprender esto y practicarlo. Se han conseguido eliminar factores nocivos en Catalunya. Acaso una de las primeras medidas de sinceridad moral habría sido esa pregunta que flota en toda Catalunya cual clarín del juicio final.

Juicio final que para las nacionalidades determinadas ha de ser en conformidad con los derechos adquiridos en la lucha.

Esa pregunta de ¿«Has hecho algo por Euzkadi»? tiene un doble significado: primero, que se ha eliminado aquella afrentosa de ¿«Has hecho algo por Catalunya»? y que con esto el balance de los factores morales y patrióticos de los catalanes ha dado un superavit que le permite el lujo de preocuparse por los demás.

Agradecemos la deferencia y hacemos votos para que esa pregunta despierte a Catalunya y nos sea eficiente a los patriotas vascos.

Source: “Atención Catalunya. ¿Has hecho algo por Euzkadi?”, *Gudari*, 7/6/1937, p. 5.

Text 9: Speeches by José Antonio Aguirre and Lluís Companys upon the former's arrival in Barcelona after the fall of Bilbao

Discurs del President d'Euscadi:

Des del balcó del Palau de la Generalitat, contestant a la benvinguda que li donà el President de Catalunya, el senyor José A. Aguirre, President d'Euscadi, pronuncià el següent discurs davant la multitud que aplaudia i vitorejava:

Catalanes:

En nombre de Euzkadi, muchas gracias. A vuestro Presidente, representante de este noble pueblo, muchas gracias también. Son afectos que nacen de lo más íntimo del corazón, porque vosotros habéis visto en nosotros a unos cumplidores del deber, a unos hombres que han hecho verdadera gala de su lealtad.

Allí hemos dejado, tendidos en las tierras de Euzkadi muchos compatriotas nuestros que con su sangre, magníficamente derramada en aras de la causa de la libertad de la patria, serán la semilla más fecunda de un futuro esplendoroso para los pueblos que de veras quieren ser libres y que en aras de la libertad no hacen otra cosa sino cumplir con su deber, arrojando hasta la última gota de su sangre. Muchos compatriotas nuestros están allí tendidos, pero ésa semilla maravillosa fructificará, como os digo.

Con honda emoción del corazón os saludo en nombre de Euzkadi, catalanes que me escucháis. Nuestro futuro nos corresponde porque nos corresponde el alma de nuestro pueblo y si allí en los campos de Euzkadi, y mañana en los campos de Cataluña, pudiera haber cadáveres, no importa; no importa que aquellos enemigos nuestros maten los cuerpos, porque jamás podrán matar el alma ni de Cataluña ni de Euzkadi. (Gran ovació.)

Pero no lo conseguirán si todos nos ponemos de pie, con el ánimo dispuesto a aplastar a esa nueva doctrina que asola las ciudades y deja a las familias sin sus miembros. Todos en pie para la lucha gigantesca en la cual a Euzkadi le tocó —lo

he dicho en un pueblecito de aquí cerca, donde con tanto cariño me han recibido por lo que yo represento, no por mí— representar el yunque del sacrificio. Cataluña ha de ser el yunque de la victoria y entre los dos, sacrificio y victoria, labraremos un porvenir mucho más venturoso porque, catalanes que me escucháis, si nosotros luchamos es porque no nos sentimos bien hasta ahora; queremos un porvenir de mayor ventura, donde aquel que trabaje, sepa porqué trabaja y para qué trabaja, y donde el pueblo que es colectivo y tiene alma, sepa también que si lucha, se sacrifica y mueren sus hijos, es para que la aurora de la libertad ondee para siempre en nuestras montañas. (Grans aplaudiments.)

Por eso, recibid mi cordial saludo, mi cordial agradecimiento, que he ido depositando con el cariño que sale de mi alma en todos esos pueblos que hemos atravesado, en medio de demostraciones entusiastas de cariño.

Gracias, catalanes. Estos actos tienen gran trascendencia; la tienen hoy y la tendrán mañana. Nosotros, hermanados, no tendremos enemigo en frente, catalanes que me escucháis. ¡A la victoria! ¡Todo por la libertad de la patria!

Discurs del President Companys:

En donar la benvinguda al President del Poble Basc, l'honorable President de Catalunya, senyor Lluís Companys, pronuncià des del balcó principal del Palau de la Generalitat, el següent discurs, que la multitud congregada a la Plaça de la República subratllà amb ovacions entusiàstiques:

Catalans:

Amb tot i que el President Aguirre m'ha manifestat el seu desig de dirigir-se demà al poble de Catalunya per mitjà de la ràdio, no podia en aquest moment, davant aquesta multitud que s'ha congregat per saludar-lo, deixar de dirigir-li la paraula.

Les meves, han d'ésser curtes; és per a dir únicament al President Aguirre que aquesta és Catalunya (grans aplaudiments), la de sempre, l'eterna, amb la seva senyera. Aquesta és Catalunya i aquesta és l'autèntica representació del nostre poble. (Molt bé! Molt bé! Aplaudiments.)

I aquesta Catalunya, senzilla, treballadora, amiga de la pau, tolerant, aquesta Catalunya és germana espiritual d'Euscadi (grans aplaudiments) en el passat, en el

present, en el dolor i la tortura de les hores amargues i glorioses, i en el futur en què s'ha de recobrar la nostra independència contra la facció estrangera. (Ovació.)

Euscadi i Catalunya, amb la República, són les germanes que han de lluitar i lluitaran amb braó. Euscadi és l'honor i és sacrifici.

Heu vingut ací, President Aguirre, amb l'ànima adolorida, sense perdre el coratge, com a representant autèntic del vostre poble. És tanta, tan fervent, tan emocionada la nostra fraternal solidaritat amb vosaltres, és tan intens el nostre amor, que la paraula no respon a allò que voldria dir l'ànima catalana, germà nostre, President d'Euscadi. Visca Euscadi!

Source: "Catalunya tributà una entusiàstica rebuda al President Aguirre", *La Humanitat*, 23/7/1937, p. 1.

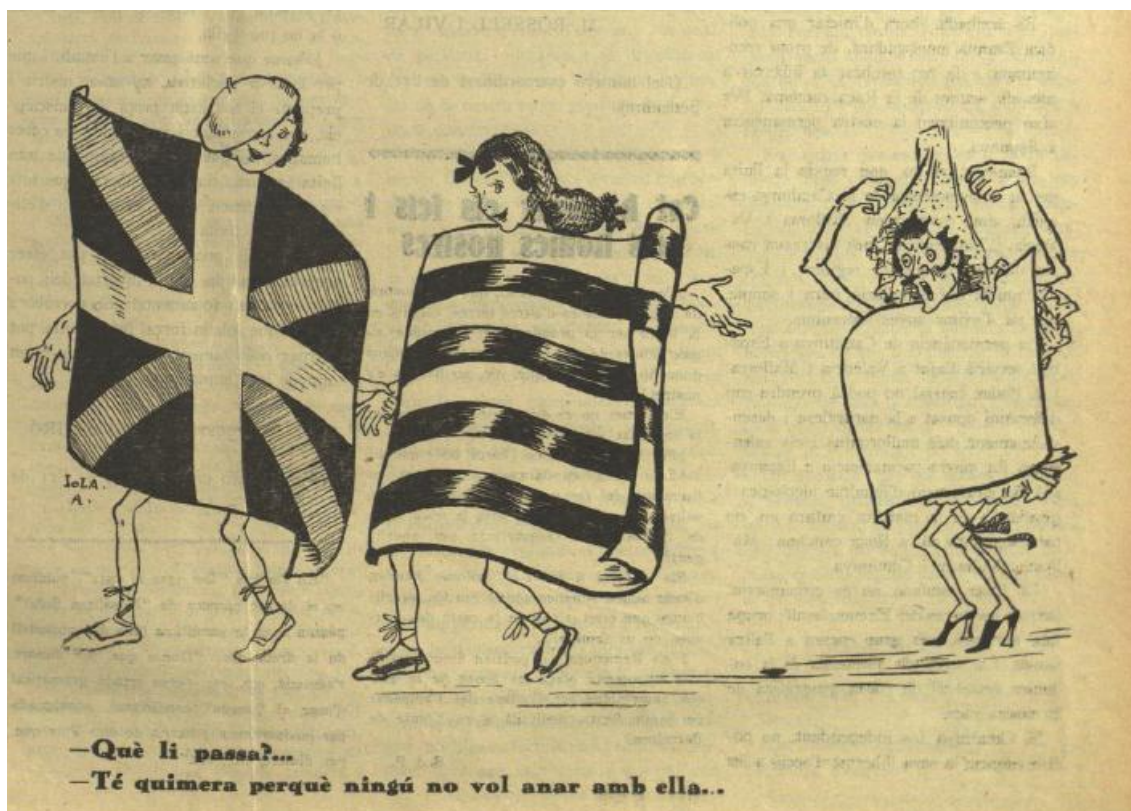
Annex II | A selection of visual representations of Basque-Catalan nationalist relations

Item 1



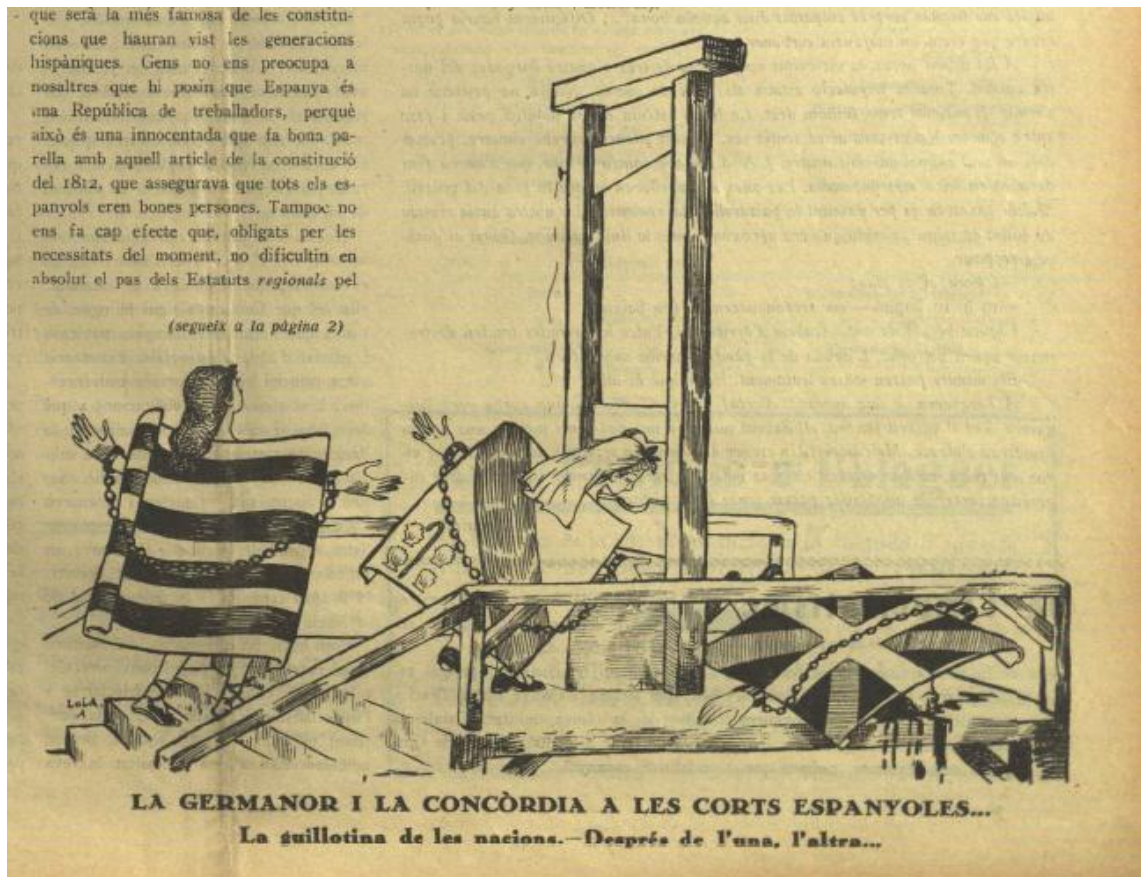
Source: *Euzkadi*, 9/8/1931, p. 1.

Item 2



Source: *Nosaltres Sols!*, 19/9/1931, p. 1.

Item 3



Source: *Nosaltres Sols!*, 3/10/1931, p. 1.

Item 4



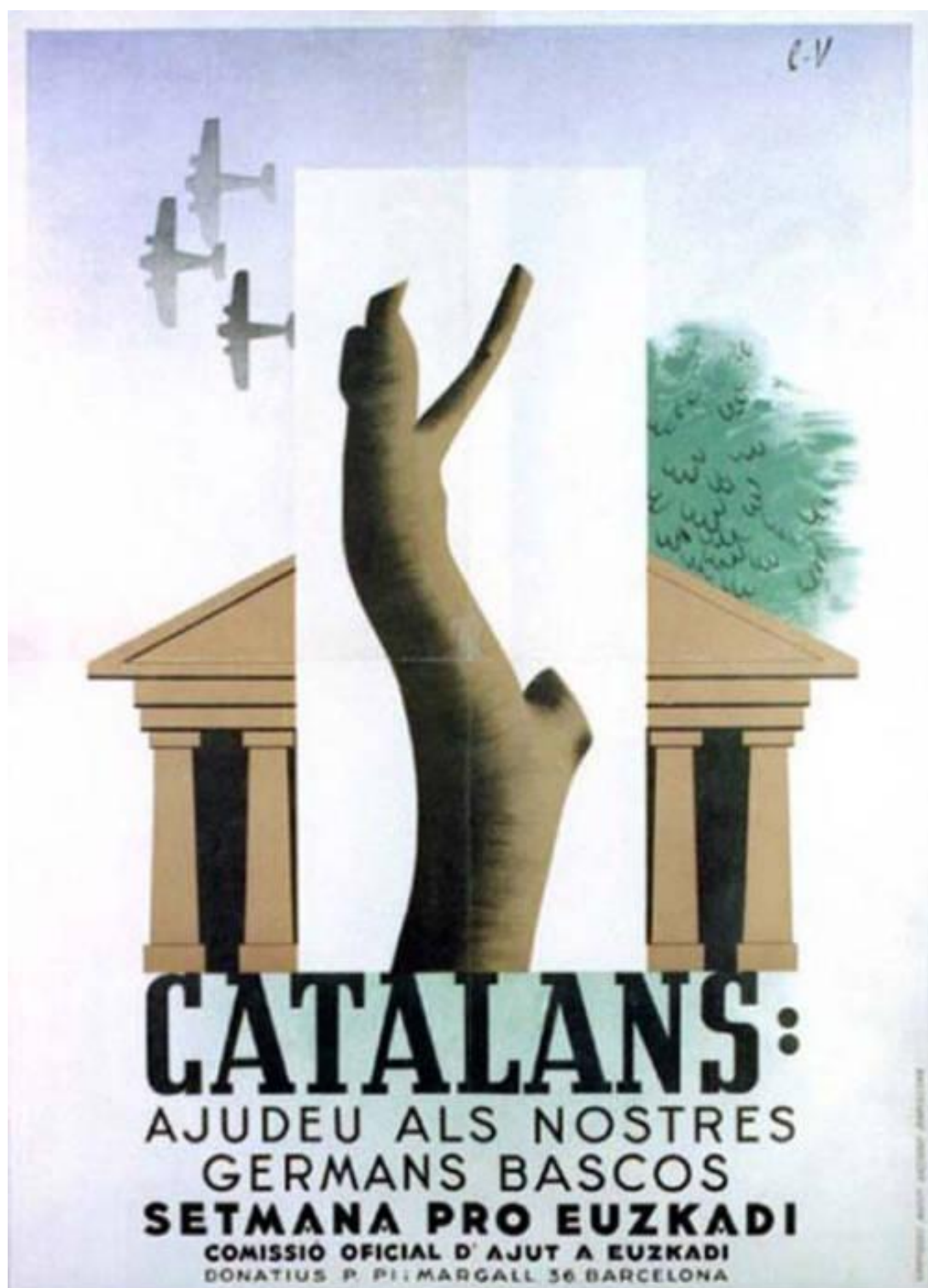
Source: *Nosaltres Sols!*, 13/8/1932, p. 1.

Item 5



Source: *Euzkadi en Catalunya*, 12/12/1936, p. 4.

Item 6



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Source: Col·lecció Cartells del Pavelló de la República (UB); F-900.

Item 7



Source: Col·lecció Cartells del Pavelló de la República (UB); F-885.

Annex III | Other significant texts

Text 1: *Manifest de les dones catalanes*

Una amnistia massa estreta ha deixat en la reclosió [sic] dels establiments penitenciaris o en la llunyania de l'exili molts compatricis nostres que són mereixedors de la llibertat i de la tornada a la terra parial. Hi ha especialment en un dels articles del Decret d'amnistia una excepció que no pot explicar-se per cap raó de dret ni per cap sentiment de justícia i que afecta d'una manera directa una part considerable dels presos i exiliats polítics catalans.

Davant aquesta estretor i aquesta excepció, un gran nombre d'entitats i de corporacions han demanat que l'amnistia sigui ampliada. I les dones catalanes hem d'ajuntar la nostra veu a aquest clamor. Nosaltres, les dones, sabem més que ningú quina és la tristesa desolada de les llars on manca el pare, el marit, el germà, el fill que són reixes endins o viuen fora de la Pàtria. Nosaltres, les dones, comprenem més que ningú el turment anguniós dels qui estan separats de la família, dels amics, de la vida lliure en la terra pròpia. Nosaltres, les dones, coneixem més que ningú la cremor i l'amargor de les llàgrimes d'enyorament; doble enyorament dels qui són, a l'un i a l'altre costat de la reixa, a l'un i a l'altre costat de la frontera oficial.

Per amor humà, per sentiment terral, per solidaritat en el dolor per imperatiu d'equitat, les dones catalanes demanem que l'amnistia sigui ampliada, que tornin a casa llur tots els exiliats i reclosos per causes polítiques i socials.

Source: "Les dones catalanes i l'ampliació de l'amnistia", *El Dia*, 6/3/1930, p. 1.

Text 2: *Por nuestros presos*

Se hallan en nuestro poder, y a disposición de todos los vecinos que sientan ansias de liberación por el caído, los pliegos en los que cada cual puede estampar su firma para recabar del Gobierno español una más completa amnistía para los delitos que llaman de carácter político que la recientemente concedida para tales casos.

La insensibilidad de algunos que se dicen indiferentes (?), su carencia de educación "política", su apatía, su pasividad, no pueden motivar el abandono de nuestros hermanos, expatriados unos, presos otros.

Las puertas de las cárceles en tiempos de la Dictadura se abrían con frecuencia suma para que en su interior penetraran los paladines de una causa mil veces santa. El aislamiento oficial, la reclusión a la que el poder dictatorial condenó a nuestros hermanos en lucha no debe ir acompañado de nuestro abandono espiritual.

Espiritualmente, la clase obrera vasca, y más si siente latir en su corazón la idea sabiniana, no debe silenciar la expatriación y el encarcelamiento de los luchadores; nuestra solidaridad moral debe trasponer los muros de la prisión y penetrar en el interior de los palacios de justicia, donde el odio de una Dictadura tan poco escrupulosa los recluyó; en torno de ellos debe quedar perdurable una estela de amor, de compenetración. Sus luchas, sus afanes, sus enseñanzas, plasmaron en nosotros y deben tener continuidad; la persecución dictatorial no ha de motivar el rompimiento de los lazos morales que a ellos nos ligan.

Esta identificación espiritual, esta compenetración moral con los perseguidos, no debe manifestarse de una manera puramente platónica; hay que ir en auxilio de los nuestros, hay que ejercer la solidaridad de una manera práctica. Convertidos en blasón de nuestra causa, deben presidir nuestros actos todos. Y cuantas manifestaciones efectuemos como idealistas conscientes, debe ir a ellos nuestro recuerdo.

Las peticiones de una amnistía general deben ser puestas en el orden del día y constituir nuestra más ardiente preocupación.

Nadie que se precie de ecuánime y justiciero debe abstenerse de estampar su firma para pedir la libertad de quienes cayeron bajo la garra dictatorial.

Impongámonos, por tanto, esta pequeña labor y será una satisfacción la del deber cumplido. ¡A firmar, pues, todos, antes hoy que mañana!

Source: “Por nuestros presos”, *Euzkadi*, 08/3/1930, p. 6.

Text 3: *Otros pormenores*

SAN SEBASTIAN 18 (9 m.) —

A pesar de la reserva guardada por cuantos asistieron a la reunión de las izquierdas, hemos podido obtener alguna ampliación a los puntos de vista recogidos en la nota oficiosa facilitada a la Prensa.

El problema referente a Cataluña, que es el que más dificultades podía ofrecer para llegar a un acuerdo unánime, quedo resuelto en el sentido de que los reunidos aceptaban la presentación a unas Cortes Constituyentes de un estatuto redactado libremente por Cataluña para regular su vida regional y sus relaciones con el Estado español.

Este acuerdo se hizo extensivo a todas aquellas otras regiones que sientan la necesidad de una vida autónoma.

En relación a este mismo problema se defendió en la reunión que los derechos individuales deben ser estatuidos por las Cortes Constituyentes, para que no pueda darse el caso de que la entrada en un régimen democrático supusiera un retroceso en las libertades públicas.

Tanto para las Cortes Constituyentes como para la votación del estatuto por las regiones se utilizará el sufragio universal.

Los reunidos se mostraron en absoluto de acuerdo en lo que se refiere a la acción política solidaria.

Source: "Otros pormenores", *El Sol*, 19/8/1930, p. 5.

Text 4: *Optimisme*

Tanmateix és força agradós poder fer elogi d'algú i de quelcom. Sembla que la ploma escriu amb més facilitat i que, com el pensament, treballi amb més delit i joia.

Cal que siguem exigents amb nosaltres mateixos, però no podem fer arribar les exigències més enllà de les nostres possibilitats.

La política catalana s'aclareix. Ja quasi tothom és al seu lloc. Si continuem el camí que ara darrerament hem emprès, ben prompte estarem preparats per a totes les lluites, des de les més dignes, fins a les més electorals.

La reunió a San Sebastián la conferència d'En Carrasco [sic] i una sèrie de fets i mots recollits en la intimitat política de casa nostra, fan preveure que les esquerres catalanes, fins les burgeses, tenen una catalanitat i desig de millorament individual suficient per a fer el necessari allà on calgui fins a aconseguir fer desaparèixer l'obstacle que impossibilita la nostra incorporació a la civilització europea.

La unió s'ha produït tan bellament, tan intensa, que palesa la sinceritat amb què sentim el programa mínim que ens acosta fins a fer de tots nosaltres una sola voluntat, tan ferma, que si les llibertats que perseguim fossin arrapades a un estel, sabríem enlairar-nos fins a ell per conquerir-les.

La unió, en produir-se diu a bastament el poc enverinament de les nostres lluites internes, aquelles lluites que són per tot, però que en nosaltres no poden degenerar en disputes grolleres, baralles sense noblesa en les quals el mot baix i feridor és cercat minuciosament i dit i repetit amb fruïció. Les nostres polèmiques, fins les més intenses i aguditzades no tenen mai de traspasar els límits de la correcció. Per comprendre les aventatges [sic] de no emprar un to estrident en les nostres converses, n'hi ha prou amb constatar, cada vegada que públicament proclamem la nostra unió, l'esverament dels nostres enemics. Cada vegada que Catalunya parla, digui el que digui, en arribar la nostra veu a les orelles dels adversaris, té un so tant mascler, que malgrat la inexhaurible paciència del nostre poble, a ells els hi sembla un ultimátum [sic] i es preparen, com si la nostra entesa fos una declaració de guerra.

En front dels opressors de pobles i homes, tots els partits de Catalunya, la ideologia dels quals no estigui divorciada amb la voluntat del poble, que avui afortunadament no deixa lloc a dubtes, tenen de continuar units per a ésser sens [sic] treva, no una amenaça pedant i eixorca, sinó la prova de les nostres possibilitats el dia que de les unions, pactes i intel·ligències, passem als fets, a les realitzacions.

La intransigència hermètica, benefactora en la infantesa d'una ideologia, esdevé contraproduent en la seva plenitud.

La posició del contrincant, que no pot fer-nos oblidar mai qui és i el que representa, ens obligarà a modificar o afermar la nostra pròpia posició, sense perdre ni un instant de vista la fita que ens ha portat a la palestra.

Aquestes modificacions de tàctica, petits-grans sacrificis, és allò de més bell que produeix la política; en aquella política que significa el màxim de noblesa, sinceritat de conviccions i generositat.

Avui, nosaltres, més catalans que mai, hem pogut assistir a la reunió de Sant Sebastià [sic] a ratificar i enfortir el nostre desig de llibertat.

Ni avui, ni demà—si aquest demà existeix—cap català digne, no podrà tenir el més lleu contacte amb res ni ningú que representi la política espanyola del 1874 fins 1930, tota plena d'anticatalanisme i d'opressió, tota idèntica en el fons i més aspre i vergonyosa darrerament, perquè qui pervertia la política espanyola d'amagat, s'ha decidit a fer-ho públicament.

Enteses com la que es produí en la reunió de Sant Sebastià [sic] palesen la plenitud del catalanisme.

Ernest Renan, l'any 1881 en una conferència a la Sorbona es preguntà:—“Què és una nació?”—i respongué:—“Una nació no es justifica ni es determina per una raça, ni per una llengua, ni pel curs dels seus rius, ni per les serralades; una nació la formen tots els que estan animats d'un mateix principi espiritual. Aquest principi espiritual es compon de dos elements: La possessió en comú del mateix feix de records i el consentiment instintiu, l'acord espontani, el desig de voler viure junts i la voluntat de fer prevaler i respectar l'herència indivisible.”

Avui el problema de Catalunya ja pot prescindir dels arguments més o menys reals de la etnopsicologia i no té necessitat tampoc de cercar raons geogràfiques ni històriques. Avui posseïm un estat d'ànim [sic] col·lectiu, que no té necessitat de

recolzar-se en cap teoria. És la voluntat de tot un poble que farà triomfar els ideals de llibertat que perseguim.

Source: Roc Boronat, "Optimisme", *l'Opinió*, 12/9/1930, p. 7.

Text 5: *El deure de Catalunya*

Els pobles, com els homes, tenen drets innegables a defensar, més, però, tenen també certs deures, l'acompliment dels quals constitueixen, per a moltes vegades, la glòria més alta. El deure primer dels pobles capaços de sentir la pròpia responsabilitat davant la Història, és el de situar-se com capdavanters en la conquesta dels nobles ideals humans i nacionals.

Heus ací el deure altíssim de Catalunya en l'hora present.

L'acompleix com tenim dret a esperar de la seva capacitat política i de les seves possibilitats d'acció?

Hem de confessar sincerament que no.

Aquella Barcelona que se'ns mostrava anys enrera [sic], com predestinada a un alçament formidable, alliberador d'homes i de pobles, no vibra amb l'emoció que voldríem aquells que hi tenim, de tota la vida, posada l'esperança més ardent.

La gran Ciutat, de tradició rebel i gloriosa, resta muda i com indiferent a la crida que li fan, tot recordant les seves gestes exemplars d'altres vegades, les altres ciutats de Catalunya i arreu d'Espanya.

Això és degut a què ha perdut la confiança en ella mateixa, com l'ha perduda en la seva força tot el poble de Catalunya.

Durant la primera dictadura del Règim, exercida pel seu mandatari general Primo de Rivera, a Catalunya,—podem dir-ho sense pretensions,—era tan poderosa la protesta latent, tan forta era la passió combativa de les minories selectes, que arribàrem a veure'ns, moltes vegades, que aniríem endavant, com a poble lliure, del moviment alliberador de tot Espanya.

Poc a poc ha vingut després el desengany amarg.

On la gent pensava trobar entusiasme, acció, programes concrets, afany desinteressat, voluntat ardida, hi descobria només excepticisme [sic], vacil·lacions, confusió, petiteses, despreciable [sic] covardia.

Si hagués reeixit l'ampla Unió d'Esquerres, propugnada fa molt més d'un any per L'OPINIÓ, Catalunya hauria donat exemple als pobles hispànics, d'un aplegament estructurat d'homes lliures disposats a actuar per a la implantació d'un programa mínim, noble i generós, i en el darrer moviment de desembre no

ens hauríem vist obligats a anar a remolc dels altres, sinó que ens hauríem trobat en el lloc d'honor i al davant de tots.

Alguns dels mateixos que sabotejaren aquella Unió anaren, fa poc temps, a Madrid, a pidolar als qui havien assolit la direcció del moviment, un reconeixement dels drets de Catalunya.

No és aquesta la manera d'enaltir un poble davant la posteritat.

Cal que no ens mostrem moralment i políticament inferiors, com es mostraren els pidolaires, a aquells que exposen la vida, la llibertat i la hisenda per un ideal. El que convenia era dir-los ben alt als homes d'acció d'Espanya: "Compteu amb nosaltres, sense reserves, per la lluita, i després de la victòria establirem com a pobles i com a homes lliures les noves normes de convivència entre nosaltres".

Victoriosos els uns i els altres, no hauria d'haver-hi qui demani i qui concedeixi, sinó que, tots plegats, voluntàriament, ens unirem, d'una manera ferma, amb llaços d'amistat fraterna, consagrada per la sang de les nostres víctimes gloriosament caigudes.

No es tracta de demanar coses que si guanyem ens les podrem prendre amb les mans sense que cap home liberal s'hi oposi.

Es tracta d'acudir a la lluita i de dur-ne la iniciativa si és possible.

Si no ho féssim així els catalans, res no podríem reclamar dignament, perquè res no ens mereixiríem. No ens caldria altre remei que seguir la lluita dels vencedors.

No és, certament, aquesta la nostra voluntat.

Millor ens escau el gest rebel i el sacrifici dolorós, que no la veu del pidolaire.

El que no hem d'oblidar és que la República serà d'aquells que més hagin fet per a guanyar-la.

És innegable que a Madrid hi ha una minoria intel·lectual selecta, producte de la Institució Lliure d'Ensenyament de la qual pot esperar molt el nou Règim, però també és cert que la veritable República només pot sostenir-se si l'ajuda el poble.

D'altra manera o cauria tot seguit o es faria, fatalment, pretoriana.

Només el concurs fervent i coratjós del poble pot salvar-la, i és evident que el poble de Catalunya, Barcelona especialment, posseeix, si hom sap aprofitar-la, una capacitat de xoc formidable.

Barcelona sola és prou, si hi posa l'entusiasme, de sostenir la República a Catalunya i a tot Espanya, per poc que sigui ajudada per la resta del país.

De la Conferència d'Esquerres pot i ha de sortir-ne el partit combatiu capaç de fer que Catalunya, retrobada la seva ànima, i enaltida ella mateixa pel foc purificador de l'entusiasme, ocupi el primer lloc en les properes lluites per l'enaltiment de tots els pobles hispànics.

Source: "El Deure de Catalunya", *l'Opinió*, 20/3/1931, p. 1.

Text 6: Speech by Manuel Egileor at the *Euskalduna*

Terminada la ovación, don Manuel de Egileor manifestó que el acto que se iba a celebrar más era de afirmación nacionalista que de propaganda electoral, porque al Nacionalismo le interesa mucho más conquistar la patria que los escaños concejiles. Preferimos—afirmó—conquistar un corazón juvenil que dominar, sin una base firme, todas las Corporaciones de Euzkadi.

Es éste un acto en el que da fe de vida y de potencial insuperable el ideal que se quiso expulsar de la tierra vasca, labor en la que colaboraron de consuno la Dictadura y todos los “moros leales” de Euzkadi. Querían sepultar nuestro ideal y lo sepultaron, sí, pero fue en nuestros corazones, e ignoraban sin duda, esos sepultadores de ocasión, que aunque nuestro ideal lo hubiesen enterrado en lo más profundo de la tierra vasca había de fructificar, porque esta tierra esta amasada con los huesos de nuestros antepasados muertos en Mungia y Gordexola.

Es éste un acto de afirmación porque el Partido Nacionalista Vasco vienen a dar fé [sic] de que se presenta solo, en completo aislamiento, ante las primeras elecciones que se celebran a ocho años fecha de haber sido decretada la disolución de este Partido.

Ved, pues, cómo los que parecían complacerse extendiendo la partida de defunción a los demás, en realidad solo consiguieron cavar su propia sepultura.

Se refirió después a los bloques de izquierda y derecha, de los que dijo que no nacieron aquí para defender a la patria, sino para oponerse al avance irresistible del Partido Nacionalista Vasco. Los hemos visto arremeter muchas veces contra nosotros y aún hemos de verlos nuevamente.

Pronunció después breves palabras de presentación de los oradores y al referirse a Elías de Gallastegi afirmó que fue tan desterrado como el propio Unamuno; que cruzó el Atlántico llevando en su corazón la patria Vasca y, ya en América, dió a conocer a medio mundo nuestra tierra, que en muchos aspectos allí era desconocida.

El señor de Egileor, que en curso de su peroración había sido aplaudido muchas veces, escuchó, a la terminación de la misma, una gran ovación.

Seguidamente dió lectura a unas cuartillas del prestigioso presidente del Bizkai Buru Batzar, don Ramón de Bikuña, cursada desde la capital de Normandia, cuartillas de adhesión cordialísima al acto que se celebraba. Se aplaudió con entusiasmo el recuerdo del señor Bikuña.

Source: “El grandioso mitin del Euskalduna”, *Euzkadi*, 7/4/1931, p. 1.

Text 7: Francesc Macià proclaims de Catalan Republic

A las dos de la tarde llegó al Ayuntamiento el líder de la Izquierda Catalana, don Francisco Macià. A duras penas logró abrirse paso entre la multitud que llenaba la Plaza de San Jaime. El público se abalanzaba sobre él, pretendiendo besarle y abrazarle. Tuvieron que intervenir varios guardias urbanos que le protegieron, permitiendo que pudiese entrar en el Palacio municipal.

Mientras el señor Macià era recibido en los salones de la Alcaldía con todos los honores, un individuo salió al balcón y con un cornetín, interpretó la Marsellesa, coreándola el público estacionado en la plaza.

A las dos y cuarto y entre una ovación clamorosa apareció en el balcón el señor Macià. Después de hecho el silencio, el señor Macià dijo:

«Ciudadanos: En nombre del pueblo de Cataluña yo proclamo desde aquí el Estado Catalán y proclamo la República catalana.

Además, solemnemente os digo que con todo cariño vayamos a la Confederación con las demás Repúblicas de España.

Ahora formemos el Gobierno de la República catalana y aquí estaremos dispuestos a defenderlo hasta morir.»

Nuevos vivas y aplausos subrayaron las últimas palabras del señor Macià.

Momentos después, éste, acompañado de los señores Companys, Casanovas y demás concejales electos se trasladaron a la Diputación provincial.

Source: “El líder de la izquierda Catalana”, *La Vanguardia*, 15/4/1931, p. 6.

Text 8: The Basque nationalist Town Councillors of Bilbao speak after the proclamation of the Spanish Republic

Las minorías nacionalistas hablan por boca de don José D. de Arana y don Juan de Abando, el primero en nombre de Acción Nacionalista Vasca y el segundo en nombre del Partido Nacionalista Vasco.

El primero, don José D. de Arana, expresa que Acción Nacionalista Vasca ha colaborado a la implantación del régimen republicano porque entiende que representa un ambiente más propicio al desenvolvimiento de las aspiraciones nacionalistas y porque los elementos que han cooperado a él han reconocido los derechos del nacionalismo vasco, y el nuevo régimen representa también ese reconocimiento de la personalidad nacionalista.

Las palabras del señor Arana son acogidas con muestras de asentimiento por el público.

Después, el señor Abando saluda a la República implantada en nombre de la minoría del Partido Nacionalista Vasco; expone que para ellos la manifestación de la voluntad popular de España por la República es un hecho desde el día 12 pasado y que, como sustancialmente demócratas que son por razón de su ideología nacionalista vasca, esa voluntad cuenta con todos sus respetos. En cambio, a los representantes de esa República española, especialmente a sus representantes de momento en el País Vasco, exige el reconocimiento de la personalidad vasca integral aquende el Pirineo y en particular la personalidad histórica demócrata de Bizkaya. Como consecuencia, exigen el reconocimiento del derecho vasco a la propia gobernación y en particular de Bizkaya, reuniendo sus Juntas Generales históricas con todas sus genuinas facultades, mediante la reunión inmediata de los delegados de todos los Ayuntamientos recientemente constituidos.

Terminó el señor Abando diciendo que saludaba a la República española y aclamaba en nombre de la minoría la República Vasca.

Source: “Manifestaciones de los nacionalistas”, *Euzkadi*, 15/4/1931, p. 1.

Text 9: A todos los vascos

Como parece que existen elementos interesados en desvirtuar los hechos y que quieren dar a los actos que para ayer en Gernika se preparaban una interpretación tendenciosa, nos interesa hacer constar:

Primero. Que la reunión convocada de apoderados de los municipios bizkainos en Gernika obedeció a la única y exclusiva iniciativa de los alcaldes de Mundaka, Getxo, Bermeo y Elorrio.

Segundo. Que el espíritu de la reunión está expresado en el manifiesto que más abajo transcribimos, para que todos conozcan la verdad y sepan todos quiénes son los que desean la ruina de nuestro pueblo.

Con estas advertencias creen los que suscriben que está suficientemente clara la posición de nuestros Municipios, que acudieron ayer en Gernika en masa, testimoniando así sus nobles sentimientos en pro del país, y demostrando a la faz de la nación vasca ser ellos los únicos mandatarios legítimos del pueblo, a quien en aquellos momentos representaban, y en cuyo nombre pensaban adoptar acuerdos importantes. La libertad bizkaina fué ayer quebrantada, porque no se nos permitió siquiera acercarnos a Gernika.

Los acuerdos a adoptar eran los siguientes:

Reconocimiento de la República española como expresión legítima de la voluntad popular manifestada el día 12.

Manifestación del deseo de los Ayuntamientos bizkainos de constituir un Gobierno republicano vasco vinculado a la República federal española.

Recabar a estos efectos el respeto al principio de auto-determinación.

Aprobación del Manifiesto de los apoderados bizkainos.

Nombramiento de una Junta Gestora en representación de los Ayuntamientos, para llevar a efecto estos deseos.

Enviar telegramas de saludo y colaboración al señor Alcalá Zamora, presidente provisional, y al señor Maciá.

Y el manifiesto que se llevó a la aprobación estaba redactado en los siguientes términos;

NOSOTROS, Apoderados de los Municipios bizkainos, reunidos en junta general so el Arbol de Gernika, al ser rescatada la libertad, destruida por las leyes de la Monarquía de España, queriendo restablecer a la Nación Vasca en la plenitud de su vida, que se constituya según el espíritu de su historia y las exigencias de los tiempos, para garantizarla su libre y pacífico desenvolvimiento y asegurar el bien común y los beneficios de la libertad a todos sus ciudadanos presentes y futuros;

En nombre de Dios Todopoderoso y del pueblo bizkaino,

PEDIMOS se proclame y reconozca solemnemente la República Vasca, cuya constitución y leyes serían desarrolladas sin demora, ingresando Bizkaya en ella en virtud del natural e inalienable derecho de los pueblos a regirse por su libre determinación;

Invitamos a las representaciones de Araba, Gipuzkoa y Naparra a una similar expresión y adhesión para llegar al establecimiento de la República Vasca o del organismo que libremente represente a nuestra Nación.

Y a fin de que ésta sea un miembro civilizado, pacífico, democrático y progresivo de la comunidad de los pueblos libres, se establecerá sobre las bases de gobierno propio y Federación con los otros Estados de la Península Ibérica, y sus Poderes se encaminarán a asegurar: a la Nación Vasca entera, bajo los eternos principios del derecho y la libertad, el desarrollo de sus fuerzas morales y materiales en bien de toda la humanidad; a los ciudadanos, la igualdad en la República y el imperio de un justo orden jurídico y social vasco que, enlazando la tradición fundamental con las necesidades del progreso, descansa en el principio de solidaridad nacional, en el reconocimiento de la fundación trascendental de la familia y de la propiedad privada y colectiva, justificada por el interés social como estímulo y fruto del trabajo intelectual y manual, necesario y libre, con una intervención supletoria del Poder público, que permita a los vascos actuar su propia civilización, garantía del máximo bienestar terreno.

Asimismo, defenderá la República la libertad e independencia del Estado, garantizando a la Iglesia católica, como Corporación rectora de la religión de la mayoría de los vascos, la libertad e independencia en su esfera.

La Asamblea de Apoderados de los Municipios Bizkainos saluda a la República Federal española y a las nacionalidades peninsulares, esperando de su proclamado

amor a la libertad y respeto al derecho, que la unión con ellas sea equitativa, justa y mutuamente beneficiosa.

A diecisiete de abril de 1931.

Source: "A todos los vascos", *Euzkadi*, 18/4/1931, p. 1.

Text 10: *Catalunya i el Govern Federal*

En altre lloc d'aquesta mateixa plana publiquem el text de la nota que va posar fi a la dualitat de Repúbliques i de Governos. L'aspectació [sic] amb què era esperat l'acord, la gentada congregada a davant el Palau de la Generalitat, mentre deliberaven els ministres federals i els ministres del Govern de la República Catalana, demostra l'interès i l'apassionada angoixa amb què tot el poble català seguia el primer problema plantejat a la naixent República.

El text de la nota al·ludida és prou clar perquè quedin esvaïdes temences i rezels [sic] a una i altra banda de l'Ebre. Catalunya no ha de témer res de l'Espanya nova, de la República Democràtica i Federal. El Govern de Madrid no ha de témer tampoc els homes que en el primer acte de la nova etapa històrica han recordat i afirmat els drets dels catalans a l'autodeterminació i a la llibertat. Fidels tots a la paraula donada i al Pacte de San Sebastián, com escau als homes que lluiten per l'ideal i per la justícia, res no pot entorbolir [sic] l'harmonia essencial per la creació d'una Pàtria nova.

Catalunya té reconeguda de fet, des d'ara la seva personalitat jurídica. Un govern català amb el nom de «Govern de la Generalitat de Catalunya» nom gloriós que ens recorda el temps en què Catalunya no era esclava dels Borbons, elaborarà un projecte d'Estatut que serà sotmès a una Assemblea d'Ajuntaments de Catalunya, genuïna representació del poble, en nom del qual serà portat a la resolució de les Corts Constituents.

No cal dir que per una altra banda i per l'altra l'acord representa essencials renúncies. Però és precisament per aquestes renúncies, pel sacrifici d'ideals i d'il·lusions en mires a la salut de la República, com es demostra amb la decisió i la voluntat que l'harmonia i la cordialitat no s'han de rompre per res entre els ciutadans de recta intenció que tenen a les seves mans el Govern de Catalunya i el Govern d'Espanya.

Source: "Catalunya i el Govern Federal", *El Dia*, 22/9/1931, p. 1.

Text 11: José Antonio Aguirre's speech at the Estella assembly

Seguidamente el concejal de Lizarra señor Agirre, que presidía, dijo:

“Va a hacer uso de la palabra don Antonio de Agirre, que ha llevado el peso del movimiento.”

Estas palabras son acogidas con ovaciones y vivas al alcalde de Getxo, que duran mucho rato.

Restablecido el silencio, el señor Agirre se aproximó al micrófono y pronunció una corta pero afectuosísima salutación en euzkera.

Después, en erdera, dijo:

“No son palabras, no más bien latidos los que se perciben; los corazones laten por Euzkal Erria, como dicen unos; por Euzkadi, según decimos nosotros. Unos y otros, todos sentimos el mismo anhelo. Todos somos uno y todos sois la Asamblea que se ha celebrado esta mañana y que trae a mi mente el recuerdo de vuestros antiguos batzarres, que regían nuestra patria, nuestra amada patria, con plena e indiscutible soberanía.

La Asamblea me ha llegado al corazón por el orden y compostura con que ha transcurrido y por la alteza de miras de que han hecho gala los asambleístas todos, con lo que se demuestra una vez más que el pueblo vasco es lo bastante digno y está bien capacitado para vivir libremente, porque un pueblo de la cultura del nuestro merece ser libre y debe serlo.

Hoy llegan a mi mente escenas gloriosas de nuestra historia patria, el de hoy es un día de triunfo.”

Y el orador hace un contraste entre los largos años en que unos y otros hemos parecido vivir divorciados los vascos de las diversas regiones y los actuales momentos en que todos nos mostramos unidos, con un solo corazón, un solo afecto y un solo anhelo: la libertad.

Vivimos un día de amor y ni sentimos ni debemos sentir envidia ni odio hacia nadie; ni siquiera por los que en Iruña hicieron todo lo posible para impedir que allí se celebrara la Asamblea magna de Ayuntamientos vascos, con lo que se creía

restarle importancia y brillantez. Nos han enviado su adhesión y estamos dispuestos a abrirles nuestros brazos, porque si ayer eran nuestros enemigos, hoy están ya con nosotros, y es posible que mañana sean más nuestros todavía.

Hay en el Estatuto Vasco que hoy hemos aprobado en la Asamblea magna, modelo de orden y hermandad, parte muy importante de nuestras reivindicaciones, y hemos ratificado en ella nuestro lema: Jaungoikoa, por encima de todo, y Lagi zarra.

Insiste el orador en que en el acto de mañana hemos celebrado nuestro lema, y hace con tal motivo una cariñosa alusión a Arana Goiri'tar Sabin.

Afirma que todos los vascos somos hermanos, aunque sustentemos diferentes idearios políticos. Recuerda las dos guerras carlistas.

Dirigiéndose después a los republicanos, les saluda y les dice que si cumplen lo que prometen podrán tener a su lado a quienes, como nosotros, oímos la voz de la sangre y deseamos alcanzar nuestras libertades; queremos la libertad de nuestro país y así lo hemos proclamado al aprobar esta mañana el Estatuto.

Al empezar nuestra campaña los alcaldes del País Vasco invitamos a los gobernadores, no como a tales gobernadores, porque eso hubiese sido un contrafuero, sino por ser de hecho los gobernantes de de nuestro pueblo. Después fuimos a las Comisiones gestoras, a las que no quiero censurar pues es hoy es día de amor y no de odios. Esta es la gestión de los Ayuntamientos de Euzkadi, para que nadie pudiera pensar que ellos querían hacérselo todo en obra de tan trascendental importancia como es el Estatuto.

En hermosos párrafos dice que éste es una continuación de nuestras viejas leyes que nos hablan de las Cortes de Naparra, soberanas y libres; de las Juntas veneradas de Bizkaya celebradas bajo el glorioso árbol de Gernika; de las de Gipuzkoa, que tuvieron lugar en diferentes localidades gipuzkoanas, y de las Hermandades de Araba, que gobernaban en el libre ejercicio de su soberanía. De allí—dice—salieron embajadores que, tratando de potencia a potencia con los grandes países del extranjero, establecieron tratados y convenios. El Estatuto es una continuación de nuestras sabias leyes, a las que se ha rendido cumplido homenaje de admiración en el mismísimo Capitolio de Washington.

Conviene recordar que nosotros no vamos contra nadie; pero si, contrariamente a lo estipulado en el Pacto de Donostia, no se satisficieran nuestras aspiraciones,

entonces tendríamos que enfrentarnos contra quienes se opusieran a nuestras reivindicaciones con aquel mismo espíritu que informaba a nuestros antepasados en las luchas por la defensa de su suelo.

Voy a terminar (Se oyen todavía gran número de voces diciendo “¡No; todavía no!” El orador hace signos llevándose la mano a la garganta para indicar que no le es posible continuar el esfuerzo a que viene sometido desde hace muchos días). Y pone fin a su discurso que diciendo que todos somos de una misma raza, raza de noble corazón, y refiriéndose al Estatuto que se ha aprobado esta mañana concreta las conclusiones que de él se desprenden en la siguiente forma:

“¡Dios por encima del País Vasco y todos nosotros para Euzkadi!”

En diferentes ocasiones los aplausos habían sonado con entusiasmo por los brillantes períodos del discurso del alcalde de Getxo, pero a la terminación del mismo la ovación estalló delirante, incontenible y expresiva de todo el agradecimiento del pueblo al hombre que tan intensamente ha laborado en el alzamiento de las cuatro regiones en pro del Estatuto.

Source: “El alcalde de Getxo”, *Euzkadi*, 16/6/1931, p. 2.

Text 12: *La nostra fe*

Catalunya ha arribat a una hora solemne—única i decisiva en la seva història. Diumenge que ve, en l'elecció dels homes que a la Generalitat hauran de redactar l'Estatut, el poble català començarà a realitzar, en una concreció de realitats, aquella aspiració liberal i europea que posava la signatura dels nostres representants al peu del Pacte de Sant Sebastià.

Cal que el poble s'adoni, en tota la seva grandesa, dels moments que passen i la transcendència que guarden per a l'esdevenidor; i cal també, ara més que mai, la unió espiritual, el contacte moral, de tots els catalans de bona voluntat. Ara més que mai, hem d'exigir l'actuació de tothom en els rengles compactes de la més pura ciutadania: els uns—els que han contribuït amb l'esforç del seu braç a la victòria de les democràcies republicanes—, han d'actuar públicament; els altres—els que no han tingut part activa en la lluita però que poden presentar neta la seva executòria de patriotes—, han de prestar el seu ajut i la seva força moral als primers. Tots amb la mirada posada en Catalunya; tots amb una emoció als cors i una paraula de coratge en els llavis.

És l'hora decisiva—hora liberal—del diàleg amb Espanya; que els que parlin siguin homes nous de Catalunya i les promocions que han lluitat amb les seves per la República. Però les seves veus han de portar l'aval de tot Catalunya i l'ajut de tots els catalans: convé que Espanya s'adoni que darrera els homes que aniran a l'Assemblea Constituent hi va, com un home sol, tot el poble. El que ens ha de donar més força, allò que ha de pesar més decisivament en la consolidació de la nostra llibertat i de la nostra ànima és la sensació d'unitat—d'unitat liberal, de força democràtica i compacta.

I en pensar en nosaltres, no hem d'oblidar, no podem oblidar, els germans dels altres pobles d'Ibèrica [sic]. Germans de llibertat i de civilitat, ja que no germans d'ànima i de llengua. Decisivament, l'erm borbònic d'una Espanya feudal ha esdevingut, per obra de les democràcies republicanes, fecunda possibilitat de convivència europea.

I nosaltres que érem separatistes de la Monarquia—separatistes d'Àfrica, separatistes d'una abjecció d'absolutismes—proclamarem el nostre federalisme

cordial, el nostre afany de llibertat, germà del de la nova Espanya. I la nostra confiança en els homes que han hissat, a Bascònia i a Galícia, a Castella, a Andalusia i a Aragó la bandera tricolor de la República. Amb ells ens hem d'entendre i hem de conviure. N'estem segurs i ho esperem amb joiosa confiança. L'afany liberal de tots i la comuna esperança democràtica venceran d'una vegada, fins a reduir-les a un silenci definitiu—les estridències d'alguna veu que encara—encara!—s'ha aixecat per acusar d'imaginades culpes...

Source: “La nostra fe”, *La Rambla*, 18/5/1931, p. 1.

Text 13: *¡Quietas las makilas!*

Te lo voy a decir en secreto, mendigoxale: tú no eres un deportista. Oyelo bien; tu eres un soldado de la Patria. No es diversión, pues, lo tuyo, sino obligaciones, responsabilidad... y más, mucho más. La cumbre que tu persigues no se puede percibir; está muy alta, rodeada de un mar de nubes que la ocultan a tus ojos. Pero existe, la presientes, la quieres... y sabes que termina en una Cruz.

Sí; eres soldado... soldado de un Estado que no existe, pero cuya existencia depende en gran parte de ti. Por eso habrás de medir los pasos con cautela, domar la intención y refrenar el entusiasmo... Creeme, que no siempre que levantas tu makila con buena intención, beneficias a tu Patria. Antes por el contrario, puedes ofenderla en lo más íntimo de su ser. Por eso, por ahora, no alces tu makila en homenaje a nadie en esta tierra; un día llegará... Hasta entonces, elévala hacia el Cielo, para que éste la infunda las virtudes que conducen a la Victoria.

Un hombre no puede tener dos patrias. Tu tampoco las tienes. Y solamente a una debes servir. Y con más ahínco aun, si a esta patria tuya, la otra la menosprecia y subyuga. Desde este momento, tu deber es, amparar a tu verdadera patria—verdadera y desgraciada—y negar todo acatamiento a la usurpadora. Dime, mendigoxale; si pasas por el verdadero trance de tener madrasta, una madrasta que niegue la maternidad de tu verdadera madre y además la humille, ¿serás capaz de levantar con júbilo la makila para saludar a aquella, traicionando el amor de la que te dio el ser? No, no puedes hacerlo, aunque la madrasta te alague con el más precioso regalo, para aplacar tu ánimo ofendido.

No tienes gobierno propio, mendigoxale, porque otro gobierno no lo permite; no tienes lengua, porque otra lengua la ha desterrado; no te riges por tus leyes propias, porque otras leyes las prohíben; careces de personalidad nacional porque otra te la usurpa; no eres vasco, en fin, porque otro pueblo te impone su nacionalidad... Media con ahínco todo ello, mendigoxale, y percatate de que ocupas en este mundo una posición de ser inferior. Y piensa, que alguna vez, pudieras levantar tu makila en homenaje a algún personaje o a algún emblema, haciendo lo cual, prestas homenaje a ese gobierno que suprime el tuyo, a esa lengua que destierra la tuya, a esas leyes que prohíben las tuyas, a esa personalidad nacional

que usurpa la tuya, en fin, que te desposee de tu carácter de vasco... Y si lo has hecho, rompe esa makila y arrójala al fuego, porque has ultrajado la madera de los bosques de Bizkaya, por cuyas fibras solo corre la savia de la suprema libertad.

Una insobornable makila de paz, llevas en tu mano, mendigoxale; con carne de roble la hiciste, y para que el Roble Santo extienda su follaje de Soberanía nacional existe. Recta como ella, es la senda que has de seguir hacia el Ideal, sin torceduras, sin claudicaciones: este es el mensaje que entona en tu puño vasco la makila vasca.

¡Quietas, pues, las makilas, mendigoxales, hasta en tanto que cruce el campo la bandera de la Patria, o atraviese frente a vuestras filas el caudillo libertador!

Source: A. C. L. (A.), "¡Quietas las makilas!", *Jagi-Jagi*, 24/9/1932, p. 3.

Text 14: Francesc Macià's *Crida de Lleida*

A continuació reproduïm una part de les interessants manifestacions del senyor Macià, fetes un cop acabat el Consell de la Generalitat, celebrat ahir a Lleida.

Aquestes declaracions a més de la importància que enclouen en tenen doblement per estar en vigílies del Congr s del Partit Catalanista Republic . No tardarem a saber si les paraules cordials del senyor Maci  han estat ben acollides o b  si es persisteix en l'actual situaci :

Heus ac , doncs, les paraules de m s inter s, pronunciades pel senyor Francesc Maci :

A tots els pobles, sobretot en hores de reconstrucci , els cal un gran partit que assegurari en tot moment la disciplina. Molt m s a Catalunya. Tots sabem la vitalitat impetuosa del nostre poble davant la soluci  de qualsevol problema que l'apassioni. Per  tamb  tots estem conven ts que aquestes mateixes manifestacions convulsives a qu  sovint es llen a, si sense control podrien resultar fins i tot su cides, condu des amb seny ens poden assegurar l'avantguarda dintre els pobles m s moderns del m n.

Aquest gran Partit  s per a nosaltres el que diuen hauria d' sper per altres aquelles unitats i d'aquells fronts  nics que sovint senten predicar i que tan nocius s n a tot partit i tant mancats d'efic cia. Aquests fronts  nics, solament necessaris en moments greus i per poca durada de defensa i lluita per coses comunes, s n imprecisos tots els idearis —els grans partits, gr cies a l'oposici  que han se sofrir, els fan cada dia m s nets i m s precisos—. I cal que els partits siguin precisos en la soluci  de tots els problemes, ja siguin de car cter pol tic, ja social.

Aquest gran partit a Catalunya nom s pot  sper un partit netament catalanista i esquerr . Sense aquest sentit de catalanisme, que ha d' sper imprescindiblement la base de tots els partits a Catalunya i sense aquesta tend ncia esquerrana, que  s el que lliga a la revoluci  que ha fet possible a Espanya la Rep blica i a Catalunya l'Estatut de les seves llibertats, no f ra un partit que respongu s a les necessitats de l'hora present.

Tend ncia esquerrana,  s l' nica que pot dur a terme els principis d'ordre pol tic i, sobretot, social de la qualitati  [sic] pels quals dep n que la revoluci  resti

una obra inacabada i per tant assegurada i completa, i per tant garantida per sempre.

En cridar a col·laborar amb aquest gran partit de Catalunya, que avui per avui no és altre que el que m'honoro en presidir, m'adreçava, no solament als partits polítics, sinó a tots aquells elements que sentint-se preparats sàpiguen sentir també la veu del deure i comprendre l'útil que podria ésser la seva aportació a l'obra de reconstrucció de la nostra Pàtria, obra que dintre poc farem al Parlament de Catalunya. Cap com aquesta podria tenir un caràcter tan plenament nacional que no li manqui l'esforç de ningú. Si les dretes endutes d'aquell esperit de convivència, avui més necessari que mai, que sàpiguem respectar-nos els uns als altres tots i acatant la voluntat del poble manifestada pel sufragi que li aportin també dels altres camins.

Pels camins de l'aprovació tan apassionada com vulguin, però sempre noble i inspirada en els altres interessats de la Pàtria. Tant de bo que aquesta crida meva arribés també a aquells elements obrers —que enganyats per un sol apoliticisme tan nociu en tots els sentits, sobretot dintre ells mateixos, no aporten altra cosa als governs que una oposició de caràcter negatiu i com tal mancada d'eficàcia. —Si volen restar al marge dels partits polítics que ajudin almenys aquells que més afinitats tinguin amb llur ideari i més que realitzable el facin aquells que més institucions els donin de caràcter social on preparar-se i capacitar-se per al dia de demà imposant-se, no pel pes d'una major força material, sinó per una preparació intel·lectual i tècnica i per una millor capacitat de govern; aquells que més lluitin per les reivindicacions socials, aquells que més combatin el privilegi de les classes, aquells, en fi, que més assegurin contra el triomf d'ahir, que tornarien a posar en perill les realitats que ja han assolit fins ara.

Catalans! Si avui us adreço la meua veu ho faig impulsat per aquest sentit de responsabilitat que voldria que sentíssiu també tots vosaltres. I amb la fe i l'esperança plena que sempre he tingut en el poble de Catalunya cridant com el prec a realitzar una de les empreses més grans i més plenes d'ideal i de justícia que pugui assegurar les rehabilitacions de la humanitat.

Source: “Importants declaracions del senyor Macià”, *El Dia*, 15/10/1932, p. 3.

Text 15: Lluís Companys proclams de Catalan State

Pocs moments després de les vuit del vespre, el Govern de la Generalitat sortí al balcó principal del Palau i el senyor Companys llegí el següent:

«El President de la Generalitat, d'acord amb el Govern i el Parlament, acaba de fer públic el manifest següent:

CATALANS:

Les forces monarquitzants i feixistes que d'un temps d'ençà pretenien trair la República, han aconseguit el seu objectiu i han assaltat el Poder.

Els partits i els homes que han fet públiques manifestacions contra les migrades llibertats de la nostra terra, i els nuclis polítics que prediquen constantment l'odi i la guerra a Catalunya, constitueixen avui el suport de les actuals institucions.

Els fets que s'han produït donen a tots els ciutadans la clara sensació que la República, en els seus fonamentals postulats democràtics, es troba en gravíssim perill.

Totes les forces autènticament republicanes d'Espanya i els sectors socials avançats, sense distinció ni excepció, s'han aixecat en armes contra l'audaç temptativa feixista.

La Catalunya liberal, democràtica i republicana no pot estar absent de la protesta que triomfa arreu del país, ni pot silenciar la seva veu de solidaritat amb els germans que, en les terres hispanes, lluiten fins a morir per la Llibertat i pel Dret. Catalunya arbora la seva bandera, crida a tothom al compliment del deure i a l'obediència absoluta al Govern de la Generalitat, que des d'aquest moment trenca tota relació amb les institucions falsejades.

En aquesta hora solemne i en nom del poble i del Parlament, el Govern que presideixo assumeix totes les facultats del poder a Catalunya, proclama l'Estat Català de la República Federal Espanyola i, en establir i fortificar la relació amb els dirigents de la protesta general contra el feixisme, els invita a instaurar a Catalunya el Govern provisional de la República, que trobarà en el nostre poble català el més

generós impuls de fraternitat en el comú anhel de bastir una República Federal lliure i magnífica.

El Govern de Catalunya estarà en tot moment en contacte amb el poble. Aspirem a establir a Catalunya el reducte indestructible de les essències de la República. Invito tots els catalans a l'obediència al Govern i a què ningú no desacati les seves ordres. Amb l'entusiasme i la disciplina del poble ens sentim forts i invencibles.

Mantindrem a ratlla a tothom, però cal que cadascú es contingui i se subjecti a la disciplina i a la consigna dels dirigents. El Govern, des d'aquest moment obrarà amb energia inexorable, perquè ningú no tracti de pertorbar ni pugui comprometre els objectius patriòtics de la seva actitud.

CATALANS: L'hora és greu i gloriosa. L'esperit del President Macià, restaurador de la Generalitat, ens acompanya. Cadascú al seu lloc i Catalunya i la República al cor de tots.

Visca Catalunya! Visca la República! Visca la Llibertat!

Palau de la Generalitat, 6 d'octubre del 1934.»

Source: "Es proclamant l'Estat Català", *L'Opinió*, 9/10/1934, p. 3.

Text 16: *La “inhibición ” y la “colaboración” del nacionalismo vasco*

No podemos—y ya lo decíamos ayer—enjuiciar todos los aspectos del movimiento que ha sacudido el Estado español y tenido repercusiones de tanta importancia en nuestro pueblo. Ignoramos cuándo nos será posible hacerlo con la libertad que deseáramos. Porque la exposición de antecedentes y la relación de hechos y la precisión de actitudes nos exigiría detalles e informaciones cuya oportunidad sería más que dudosa en estas circunstancias, y que, por otra parte, no podrían, con toda seguridad, llegar al público.

Sólo una cosa podemos afirmar, repetir, remachar, con la máxima energía, porque es preciso que llegue a la conciencia de todos: que después de a Dios, que ha dado bien claras pruebas, bien patentes, pruebas de que ha querido usar de su Misericordia para con nosotros, al nacionalismo vasco le será deudor nuestro pueblo de haber salvado el trágico escollo que las circunstancias pusieran en su camino.

[2 censored paragraphs]

Mucho se ha censurado desde los más opuestos campos al nacionalismo vasco. Su “inhibición”, interpretada caprichosamente por unos y por otros, ha suscitado acres censuras.

Ninguno de los que así hablaban querían saber, ni pretendían adivinar, que los abrumados por una responsabilidad que bien puede calificarse de histórica, no han perdido en estos días ni por un solo instante el conocimiento de la situación general en nuestros pueblos, ni el contacto—alcanzado a fuerza de muchos sacrificios—con los núcleos de nuestra organización.

Si el problema aparecía relativamente fácil respecto a las zonas en las que nuestro dominio es absoluto; si en todos esos lugares las indicaciones no podían tener otro alcance que el de respetar y salvaguardar escrupulosamente los escasos elementos que allí nos distinguen con su animadversión y que, desguarnecidos en absoluto aquellos pueblos, por hallarse concentrada la fuerza en otros sitios, quedaban por completo a la merced de cualquier movimiento popular; si en esos

puntos el problema era relativamente fácil, no lo era, ni con mucho, en otros lugares donde la preponderancia política está compartida, ni mucho menos en aquellos donde nuestra fuerza se halla en franca, y, a veces, en abrumadora minoría.

No ha de olvidarse, además, que el movimiento ha tomado diferentes caracteres en cada pueblo, correspondiendo al de su predominio político. Tinte meramente federal en unos sitios. Socialista, en otros. Comunista puro, en los de más allá. Y mientras que en unos pueblos hasta los mismos partícipes del movimiento escuchaban sensatamente las indicaciones y contribuían también a garantizar el orden, en otros los nacionalistas mismos estaban señalados en la lista de rehenes a detener y hasta de víctimas a sacrificar. El caso de Ernani, hecho público en la Prensa madrileña, y donde las víctimas elegidas para reproducir en serie los asesinatos de Mondragón eran más de veinte, todas ellas, excepto dos tradicionalistas, afiliados al Partido Nacionalista Vasco.

Quienes voluntariamente han prestado estos días servicio en las calles de Bilbao, mezclados a masas importantes de fuerza pública, creen ahora haber salvado no sabemos cuántas cosas, y vociferan contra nosotros en tertulias y periódicos, y nos injurian, no comprenderán acaso, en su embriaguez de heroico civismo, que no estaba aquí el problema, sino en los pueblos desguarnecidos. Y se negaran cerradamente a comprender que si el nacionalismo habría tomado en los pueblos sin fuerza pública la actitud que ellos han adoptado en Bilbao, lleno de guardias y soldados, ello habría significado en muchos puntos—aquellos donde nos está asignada una minoría—escenas análogas a las de Mondragón, aun cuando en escala infinitamente mayor.

En otros pueblos, como algunos de la zona minera bizkaina, elementos de derecha HAN SIDO OBLIGADOS A PRESTAR SERVICIO, hasta de centinelas, al servicio de los revolucionarios de aquella zona, que alejados de los pueblos durante el día, se posesionaban de ellos al llegar la noche. Estos elementos, que han sido tratados con toda clase de consideraciones por los mineros en armas, como han sido respetados por ellos los sacerdotes, ¿qué suerte hubieran corrido si el nacionalismo hubiera adoptado otra actitud? ¿No les habría sido aplicada la misma que estaba reservada a los rehenes señalados en las listas negras?

[1 censored paragraph]

Todo eso, expuesto en líneas generales, es lo que deben los elementos de derechas a la actitud del nacionalismo, que con tanta ingratitud como saña se permiten comentar.

Y en cuanto a las izquierdas de puro orden político, a los sectores societarios de alguna templanza, y hasta a los mismos extremistas de todos los matices, hemos de apuntarnos análogo resultado, siquiera sea obtenido por motivo inverso. El terrible ejemplo de Asturias, cuyas noticias no hacen ahora más que comenzar, pero que ya anuncian los trágicos horrores alcanzados por la lucha y por la represión consiguiente, les convencerá de cuanta verdad hay en lo que decimos.

Sólo cuando se establezca al detalle el macabro balance, sólo cuando se diga cuánta ha sido la riqueza destruida, los pueblos arruinados; sólo cuando se haga público el número de muertos registrado—del que tenemos ya nosotros detalles aterradores—se podrá medir en toda su exactitud el servicio prestado por el nacionalismo vasco a su pueblo. A derechas y a izquierdas. A izquierdas y a derechas. Que unas y otras forman parte del pueblo, aun cuando haya quienes pugnen por expulsar de él a quienes no comparten su modo de pensar.

Esperemos a ese día, ya próximo, en que sea conocida TODA LA VERDAD para que se haga al nacionalismo la justicia que su conducta leal, irreprochable, merece.

Para que se mida y se aprecie, y se reconozca el servicio prestado por su “inhibición” o con su “colaboración”—de todo ello se habla—por el nacionalismo vasco al pueblo a que por encima de todo se debe.

Servicio, quizá, como fuerza alguna política prestó a nuestro pueblo a todo lo largo de su historia.

Source: “La ‘inhibición’ y la ‘colaboración’ del nacionalismo vasco”, *Euzkadi*, 13/10/1934, p. 1.

Text 17: La Declaració del Consell

El lector trobarà al seu lloc corresponent la important informació de la crisi del Govern de la Generalitat (que anunciàvem en la nostra edició d'ahir) i la constitució del nou Consell, la llista del qual publiquem en aquesta mateixa plana.

Ahir, a la nit mateix, el nou Consell es reuní sota la presidència del senyor Companys —artífex d'aquestes hores catalanes— i aprova la interessantíssima declaració oficial que donem, íntegra, a continuació:

Enfront del feixisme criminal

El feixisme en armes contra la República ha enfonsat el país en els horrors de la guerra civil. Volent salvar els privilegis de les grans castes tradicionals i del gran capitalisme, el feixisme els ha destruït [sic] i ha sumat a les angoixes d'una guerra les inevitables dificultats d'una reconstrucció econòmica sobre bases noves. El Consell de la Generalitat es proposa amb la màxima fermesa fer front a la realitat imposada pel feixisme criminal, guanyar ràpidament, decisivament, la guerra i construir tot seguit sobre les ruïnes del règim que el feixisme enderrocà el 19 de juliol, una economia més justa, les línies generals de la qual siguin l'avenç del què haurà d'ésser l'endemà de la victòria.

Coincidència de forces sindicals i d'esquerra

Aquest Consell, que és la coincidència de les forces sindicals dels partits obrers i de les masses populars, representades pels organismes d'Esquerra i que manté la unió de la lluita victoriosament gloriosa del 19 de juliol va a assumir la responsabilitat d'aquests moments i a imposar, per la voluntat nascuda de les organitzacions representades, les seves directives a tot Catalunya; directives de les quals no es podrà apartar ningú sense que sigui declarat facciós i tractat com a tal.

El Consell s'imposarà a tots...

El Consell assenyalarà les directives necessàries a la millor eficàcia de la guerra i les normes de la nova economia i revestit de la representació unànime de tot el poble antifeixista, s'imposarà a tots els qui per qualsevol motiu pretenguin actuar

fora de la disciplina que les circumstàncies imposen i sense la qual no podríem guanyar la guerra (objectiu suprem que tots perseguim) ni resoldre els greus problemes econòmics per ella suscitats; i extirpar els últims vestigis dels aprofitadors i de grups incontrolats i de tota mena de tèrboles iniciatives que tractin de tacar l'honor i la humana sensibilitat del poble antifeixista i donarà plenes garanties de seguretat, de confiança i de justícia en el públic enjudiciament davant del Tribunal Popular. Les crueltats repugnants dels feixistes a les zones per ells dominades, els horrors a que sotmeten les poblacions que han de sofrir la barbàrie del seu jou han escandalitzat tot el món. Lliurem aquesta conducta al menyspreu de la consciència universal, i tots hem de contribuir perquè cap instrument isolat, inconscient o morbós pugui enterbolir la nostra tasca i serveixi de motiu per a campanyes malèvoles i tendencioses.

El programa del Consell.

El programa immediat del Consell és el següent:

a) Concentració del màxim esforç en la guerra no escatimant cap mitjà que pugui contribuir a la seva fi ràpida i victoriosa. Comandament únic, coordinació de l'acció de totes les unitats combatents, creació de les milícies obligatòries i reforçament de la disciplina.

b) Reconstrucció econòmica del país, al qual li es portarà immediatament a la pràctica el programa del Consell d'Economia, creat per decret de l'11 d'agost proppassat, que comporta:

I. — La regulació de la producció d'acord amb les necessitats del consum.

II. — Control del comerç exterior.

III. — La col·lectivització de la gran propietat rústica i el respecte de la petita propietat agrària.

IV. — La desvaloració parcial de la propietat urbana, mitjançant la reducció dels lloguers o l'establiment de les taxes equivalents quan no es cregui convenient beneficiar els llogaters.

V. — La col·lectivització de les grans indústries, dels serveis públics i dels transports.

VI. — La incautació i col·lectivització dels establiments abandonats per llurs propietaris.

VII. — La intensificació del règim cooperatiu en la distribució dels productes i en particular l'explotació en règim cooperatiu de les grans empreses de distribució.

VIII. — El control obrer dels negocis bancaris fins a arribar a la nacionalització de la banca.

IX. — El control obrer sobre les indústries privades.

X. — La reabsorció enèrgica per l'agricultura i la indústria dels obrers sense feina, per la revalorització dels productes agrícoles, el retorn al camp dels obrers que pugui absorbir la nova organització del treball agrícola, la creació de noves indústries, l'electrificació general de Catalunya, etc.

c) Enlairament de la cultura popular en tots els seus múltiples aspectes, sota el signe de l'Escola Nova Unificada que faci que pel damunt dels privilegis que havien imperat fins ara, tot infant dotat pugui passar de l'Escola Primària als estudis superiors i estímul de totes les altres manifestacions culturals.

Hora de sacrifici

Les necessitats de la guerra, el bloqueig efectiu a què ens veiem sotmesos i les dificultats nascudes de la transformació social que s'està operant, imposen sacrificis que les masses treballadores suportaran si tenen el convenciment que no treballen per enriquir les classes parasitàries, sinó per a crear una societat nova. Tenim a les mans l'instrument invencible d'un poble que sap que lluita i que pateix per una humanitat millor. El que aquest poble vol ara és que se li doni una direcció, que es coordinin i juntin [sic] tots els seus esforços i els seus anhels. El Consell que ve a satisfer aquesta profunda aspiració popular demana el concurs i l'entusiasme que en aquests moments són necessaris i que te la seguretat que no li mancaran. La unió és indispensable sota el signe de la confiança, de la lleialtat i del sacrifici. La unió és la victòria i la victòria és la glòria dels que l'hauran forjada i l'avenir més feliç dels nostres fills.

El nostre concurs

Mentre ací construïm un nou ordre de coses basat en la justícia social, al front foragitarem de les nobles terres aragoneses els enemics que les trepitgen i seguirem oferint als altres pobles d'Ibèria el nostre concurs per a la lluita contra el

feixisme i per una societat millor, de la qual sigui bandejada per sempre l'explotació de l'home per l'home.

Respecte a la menestralia catalana

El Consell declara que respectarà i ajudarà els esforços de la fecunda menestralia catalana; i s'adreça especialment als camperols i els diu que el seu treball serà estimulat, que res no han de témer per tros de terra que posseeixin i que cultivin amb llurs suors, que el nou ordre de coses respectarà els fruits de llur treball mentre atacarà despietadament el latifundisme, mitjançant l'expropiació dels grans terratinents i dels enemics del règim i anul·larà totes les càrregues i servituds que pesaven damunt la pagesia.

El concurs de tots

El Consell s'adreça a totes les masses populars de Catalunya per tal de recavar llur concurs a la magna obra iniciada. La grandesa de la nostra lluita estimularà l'esforç i l'heroisme de tots. Penseu que en aquesta lluita es debaten els interessos superiors de tota la humanitat. Si fóssim vençuts, el feixisme s'enfortiria en tots els països, i les masses treballadores de tot el món es veurien sotmeses a una monstruosa dictadura en la qual quedaria submergida tota la civilització humana. Si guanyem (i la victòria és segura si coordinem els nostres esforços) el nostre triomf tindrà una immensa repercussió més enllà de les nostres fronteres, per tal que les revolucions tenen una incontenible força expansiva i la barbàrie feixista serà definitivament vençuda, i s'obrirà al món una nova era de justícia social.

El dret dels pobles

Tots els elements polítics i socials proclamant el reconeixement del Consell proclamen el reconeixement del dret dels pobles a regir llur pròpia vida segons els principis de l'autodeterminació, i són fervents defensors de les llibertats de Catalunya.

Salutació a les Milícies

Finalment, en el moment de constituir-se el Consell de la Generalitat no compliria amb el seu deure si no adrecés una emocionada salutació a les glorioses

Milícies que lluiten al front. A elles correspon, en el moment present, la tasca més feixuga. L'heroisme recolza totes les possibilitats de demà i ens permet tenir la plena seguretat d'una ràpida i gloriosa victòria.

Source: "La Declaració del Consell", *La Humanitat*, 27/9/1936, pp. 1, 5.

Text 18: *Bajo el Arbol de Gernika*

Al constituirse el Gobierno provisional vasco, nacido de la voluntad popular, en cumplimiento de los preceptos que contiene el Estatuto de autonomía de Euzkadi, aprobado por las Cortes de la República española, expone ante el pueblo vasco los puntos fundamentales del programa a que someterá su actuación, y que siendo el centro de coincidencia de todas las fuerzas políticas que lo constituyen, tienen por finalidad inmediata el supremo designio de conseguir la victoria y establecer y organizar definitivamente la paz, como Gabinete de guerra que es en toda la significación que este vocablo integra.

En su virtud:

Respetará y garantizará los derechos individuales y sociales de todos los ciudadanos vascos y, en consecuencia, la libre práctica de las confesiones y asociaciones religiosas, la seguridad de sus componentes y la de sus bienes, dentro siempre de las prescripciones establecidas por la Constitución. El carácter religioso no eximirá de las responsabilidades que se deriven de actuaciones políticas contrarias a la ley.

El Gobierno provisional vasco llevará a través de su presidente y del Departamento de Defensa la dirección suprema de la guerra, establecerá el mando único y militarizará rápidamente todas las milicias con sujeción al Código de Justicia militar, entendiéndose incluidos tanto los elementos pertenecientes a la Marina mercante como aquellos que trabajen en las industrias movilizadas.

El Gobierno vasco mantendrá inexorablemente el orden público, llegando si fuese preciso a la adopción de medidas extremas y excepcionales. Vigilará cuidadosamente la población civil de retaguardia, extirpando severamente toda suerte de espionaje.

Procederá con la mayor urgencia a la formación de un Cuerpo de policía foral, organizado moderna y eficazmente con arreglo a las necesidades presentes.

Sobre las bases mínimas de la legislación social del Estado, el Gobierno desarrollará una política de acusado avance social, respondiendo al principio de que todo ciudadano tiene obligación de contribuir con su trabajo, su capital y su

actividad intelectual al bienestar general del país; recíprocamente, tiene derecho a participar en los bienes sociales según el progreso civil.

En consecuencia, el Gobierno vasco promoverá el acceso del trabajador al capital, a los beneficios y a la coadministración de las Empresas, pudiendo llegar a la incautación y socialización de los elementos de producción que estime necesarios para organizar rápidamente la victoria. Procurará en todo momento evitar lesión innecesaria en los intereses de los productores y protegerá decididamente al modesto industrial y comerciante.

Estudiará y llevará a cabo un plan de obras públicas que absorban el paro de la clase trabajadora e impulsará las fuentes del trabajo y de la riqueza.

El Poder público regulará la producción y en consumo y fijará los precios de las mercancías que el mismo designe, dentro del país.

Regulará el arrendamiento como contrato social y facilitará el traspaso de la propiedad de las tierras y caseríos a sus cultivadores sobre las normas que las Corporaciones provinciales del país han venido estudiando con sentido de liberación social.

Formará un presupuesto circunstancial que permita desarrollar la magna obra que las circunstancias actuales reclaman y en cuya confección tendrá presente la función social del impuesto, regulándolo de un modo progresivo. Exigirá indemnizaciones económicas a cuantas entidades y personas hayan contribuido de una manera positiva al movimiento insurreccional.

Resolverá rápidamente la situación de los presos políticos y militares, sometiéndolos sin dilación a los Tribunales populares creados por la ley.

Revisará escrupulosamente los escalafones de todos los funcionarios públicos, examinando su lealtad a las instituciones republicanas, en beneficio del mayor rendimiento de los distintos servicios.

Garantizará a los ciudadanos vascos de posición precaria el libre acceso a los grados de enseñanza media y superior, condicionado solamente por la aptitud y vocación.

Cumpliendo los requisitos constitucionales en materia de instrucción pública, regulará las condiciones de la enseñanza libre y el uso del euzkera en todos los grados y establecimientos docentes.

El Gobierno Vasco salvaguardará las características nacionales del pueblo vasco, prestando al fomento de las mismas toda la consideración y protección a que le obliga el reconocimiento de la personalidad vasca, de la que es exponente y garantía este Gobierno, viniendo por ello obligado a la defensa de la libertad y de los valores espirituales y sociales reconocidos por la ley y sellados por la sangre.

No afectando la situación actual a las buenas relaciones que han de mantenerse con cuantos países respeten la soberanía y derechos de la República y de Euzkadi, el Gobierno vasco cuidará celosamente de que los extranjeros, sus representantes y agentes sean respetados en sus derechos y libertad en lo que no fuere obstáculo a las operaciones militares; especialmente estrechará los vínculos que le unen a los pueblos que mantienen las formas democráticas de gobierno y singularmente con aquellos otros en los que viven importantes colectividades vascas.

Finalmente, el Gobierno provisional del País Vasco declara que, respondiendo a las circunstancias presentes y a su particular significación, dedicará sus mayores desvelos a la mejor organización y encuadramiento de las milicias del país y a prodigar atenciones y cuidados al soldado del frente, considerándolo como ciudadano privilegiado, a quien dirige un emocionado y agradecido saludo en nombre de todo el pueblo, haciendo votos por la rápida reconquista de las tierras vascas y por que la victoria corone para siempre la lucha de los defensores de un régimen justo, de la democracia y la libertad.

En Gernika, a 7 de octubre de 1936.

El presidente del Gobierno provisional y consejero de Defensa, **José Antonio de Agirre**.—El consejero de Gobernación, **Telesforo Monzón**.—El consejero de Hacienda, **Eliodoro de la Torre**.—El consejero de Trabajo y Comunicaciones, **Juan de los Toyos**.—El consejero de Justicia y Cultura, **Jesús María de Leizaola**.—El consejero de Asistencia Social, **Juan Gracia**.—El consejero de Comercio y Abastos, **Ramón María de Aldasoro**.—El consejero de Obras Públicas, **Juan de Astigarrabia**.—El consejero de Industria, **Santiago Aznar**.—El consejero de Agricultura, **Gonzalo Nardiz**.—El consejero de Sanidad **Alfredo Espinosa**.

Source: “Bajo el Arbol de Gernika”, *Euzkadi*, 8/10/1936, p. 3.



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